

christian educators journal

NOVEMBER 1975

MORNING MEDITATIONS

The Break of the Day

Groggy
Grumpy
Owly
Ornery
Hungry

Focused
Cheerful
Chirpy
Sociable
Soulful

Good lord! Morning!

*Good Morning, Lord!
(Perhaps we might
call this Breakfast
at Epiphanies.)*

An epiphany is a manifestation of the Lord. In the Christian year Epiphany is January 6, the day the wise men found Jesus. Wise teachers seek to breakfast with the Lord.

Someone has said that men should see the face of God before they see the face of men. If so, it's doubly true of teachers who daily face scores of students. Starting a day with thirty kids is traumatic enough, but to do so without having your spiritual eyes in focus is to invite trouble.

Students today need a teacher who is alert, friendly, and, even, inspiring. Kids come to us in all stages of emotional and spiritual disrepair. Some are near the breaking point, others at decisive crossroads. To act as a safety valve and to point out the best route takes a teacher with ears tuned in to the Holy Spirit and with eyes focused clearly enough to see beneath the facade of "playing it cool."

The teacher bogged down under his own personal burdens will find it onerous to take time to lift the burdens of others. The teacher who learns to leave his burden with the Lord in his quiet hour can be a blessing to kids.

O FATHER

Help me meet You at daybreak that I may
share Your presence with my younger, less
experienced brothers and sisters.

TODAY I WILL

Be of good cheer
because that's why I'm here.

BIBLE FRAGMENT: Luke 5:16.

From Good Morning, Lord: Meditations for Teachers by Don Mainprize. Copyright 1974 by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and used with permission.

An Invitation to Joy

Scripture: Psalm 34

"Come, my children, listen to me:

I will teach you the fear of the Lord"

(Ps. 34:11, NEB).

Today is new. You and I greet the Lord in the freshness of the morning, and we want to meet our students with vigor and cheer. We can. We have an invitation to hand out to them—like inviting them to a party. We can say, "Listen, I've got something exciting to tell you this morning. So, gather round, listen, and I'll tell you about it."

In that spirit of invitation, excitement, and expectancy, the Lord teaches us and gives us direction for teaching others. The words are simple: "Come, my children, listen to me."

The writer of this psalm, as well as the writer of the Book of Proverbs, knew the secret—the indispensable first step—in real teaching. LISTEN! Read the psalm once again and just sit back and listen. Note the appeal to all your senses—hear, look, taste, see, delight, enjoy! then, be on the alert for fresh ways and the many, little ways in which you hear God today, taste His goodness, and enjoy Him.

And then, rather than seeking to exercise all the cautions we often set in the minds of children by undue emphasis on such songs as: "O, be careful, little hands, what you do . . .", catch the spirit of Psalm 34: BLESS! PRAISE! EXALT THE LORD!

Use my heart, use my mind, use my hand.
To scatter love and sunshine through the land,
The love of Christ display,
Helping someone day by day.
Use my heart, use my mind, use my hand.

Thomas Dorsey

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**NOTE: All educators listed in the NUCS Directory 1975-76
receive this issue. If you are not a member**

of a supporting organization or have not paid for an individual subscription
and you wish to receive the remaining three issues this year,
forward your \$4 subscription fee to the Business Manager
listed in the masthead. Should your school faculty decide to subscribe as a group,
the rate is \$3.50

Beginning in this issue we plan to offer to our readers this new service of providing meditations (opposite page) for personal or staff devotions. The books from which these are reprinted are available from the publisher indicated. Our wish for you is expressed in the following excerpt from the dust jacket of the Mainprize volume: “These unique mini-mirror meditations will startle, prod, and spur all who read to take a good look at themselves . . . and to breathe more than one fervent prayer for divine help and guidance, not only in their classroom activities but in all their comings and goings.”

—Managing Editor



EDITORIAL LAMENTABLE LETHARGY OVER LITIGATION



For reasons not fully clear to me educators and parents of Christian schools have been loathe to go to court in defense of the principles which they profess to hold dear. This is characteristic of not only the small Protestant groups, some of which may still have lingering minority group and immigrant mentalities, but also of the major Protestant and Catholic groups. With rare exceptions they have all consistently avoided the courts as a means of securing their parental rights in education.

This is not to say that they have been passive and inarticulate about their rights to a share of the tax dollar allocated for education. For various private organizations representing Christian school interests have indeed joined to attempt to influence both public opinion generally and legislatures specifically. The most widely known of these are Citizens for Education Freedom and CREDIT, both national coalitions of Christians concerned about present inequities in the distribution of finances for education in America. But the point

remains that they have almost exclusively concerned themselves with *legislative* action, with lobbying for appropriate legislation, state and federal, and have largely ignored *judicial* action, ignored the courts as a means of securing redress of grievances.

The reasons for this focus on senators more than Supreme Courts are perhaps both tactical and theological, but both seem to be mistaken. The tactical advantage of working through legislatures rather than courts is that it is easier and less expensive to convince senators, who are accountable to their constituents, than it is to convince judges, who are accountable to no one but their understanding of the Constitution. The events of the past decade reveal that it was a tactical blunder to put all our faith in legislative action, while largely ignoring judicial action. These events reveal that in education, but also in other areas of social policy, the chief shapers of the future reside in the judicial branch of government. Legislative bodies only propose; judicial bodies dispose. Those are the social realities. For at least five years the disposing by judicial bodies has been consistently to rule against parents rights in Christian education.

Misreading of historical forces is second in seriousness of consequences only to misreading of biblical mandates concerning Christians and their government.

Two kinds of biblical evidence may be operative in our thinking, both of which could explain our present passivity in confronting the judicial system with our witness. One of them is the general injunction by Paul to be in submission to the higher powers (Romans 13: 1, 2). The second and perhaps more pervasive biblical influence is his vehement denunciation of contentious Corinthian Christians as described in I Corinthians 6: 1-11. Their contentiousness was evidenced by their constant use of Roman courts to settle disputes. St. Paul explicitly says that he wants them to be ashamed of themselves when

one Christian sues another and accuses his Christian brother in front of unbelievers. To have such lawsuits at all is a real defeat for you as Christians. Why not just accept mistreatment and leave it at that? It would be far more honoring to the Lord to let yourself be cheated (vv. 6, 7, *The Living New Testament*).

St. Paul himself had personal experience with being hauled into a Roman court in Corinth by Jews (Acts 18:12-16) and this made his criticism even stronger. To make matters worse, Corinthians were both contentious and licentious, and he condemns both in one fell swoop (vv. 9, 10). No

wonder Christians have an intuitive aversion for confrontations in court.

However, as the above passage indicates, the objection to litigation is when Christian goes to court against fellow Christian, and not when Christian goes to court against civil government. Here the example of both Old Testament prophets and New Testament leaders should be enough. Both types did not hesitate to confront directly the executive and judicial branches of their governments with Christian witness, whether these figures were the kings and judges of Old Testament times or the Roman governors of the New Testament. Where are the modern Nathans who will prepare the briefs and use the legal channels to tell the contemporary Davids that they have acted unjustly? Where are the modern St. Pauls who will address the Roman governors in black robes behind judicial benches to witness to the cause of Christ in education?

Both our theology and the present social realities cry out for a concerted effort by Christians to bring their claims to the courts. Legislative action has proved to bring only temporary relief. Legislation after legislation enacted has been struck down by either state or federal Supreme Court judicial review and the end is not yet in sight. Public referendums have achieved the same

effect in some states, like Michigan for example. Landmark cases, all based on the establishment clause of the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, have reversed what little progress was made in securing parental rights to educational benefits.

What is needed is a series of lawsuits brought simultaneously in various parts of the country, and with the issue framed in the context of the freedom of religion clause in the 1st Amendment rather than the establishment clause. It is time to change our lamentings into legal briefs and our hand wringing into writs. It is time to abandon our let's-wait-and-see-what-happens stance in favor of a let's-see-what-we-can-make-happen approach.

If the parable of the widow and the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8) has a relevant point, it is that even an indifferent court will be worn down by constant pleading and will grant justice eventually.

In a loose paraphrase of the words of an early American patriot we may say: Why stand we here idle? What is it gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is peace so sweet that it is to be purchased at the price of Supreme Court chains and submissive slavery? Forbid it, almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me give me educational liberty or give me the demise of my rights.

—D.O.



THE ASYLUM

Football Flight

H. K. Zoeklicht*

(The usual setting for the events of this column is the faculty lounge at Omni Christian High. However, there have been some exceptions, and this is another one of them. Casey Voddema, a former problem student at Omni Christian who appeared in this column some years ago, has achieved indisputable success in the garbage business; he is flying some of his former teachers and principal in his recently-acquired Piper Aztec, a sleek twin-engine

craft with room for six. Casey Voddema is also a newly-elected member of Omni Christian's school board. His guests for this outing to the Iowa-Michigan State game are Peter Rip, Omni's principal; Bob DenDenker, history teacher and outspoken but thoughtful critic; Karl DenMeester, conservative English teacher; and Steve VanderPrikkel, husky biology teacher and athletic director. What brings them together on this Saturday is their mutual love for football and the gracious offer of Casey Voddema.)

The altimeter showed 3000 feet and the air speed was steady at 160. Both engines droned

*H. K. Zoeklicht, the illuminating pseudonym of an experienced Christian school teacher who writes regularly about mythical but typical Omni Christian High and its teaching staff, tackles the touchy topic of the cost of commitment to Christian teaching.

steadily and reassuringly. It was a bright October day. Everybody enjoyed watching the midwest landscape below them slide slowly past. The plotted fields and the fall-colored trees provided a visual feast. Karl DenMeester took his eyes away from the side window for a moment to exclaim to Casey Voddema in front of him: "I must say, Mr. Voddema, this surely is an exhilarating experience for me! It gives one a new appreciation for the handiwork of God. Do you fly much?"

Casey switched the plane to auto and turned halfway around to face Karl: "Well Karl, I don't mind telling you that I try to fly this baby as often as I can get away with it, you know. Of course, I can usually manage to write it off as a business expense. Like today, you know. I'm gonna check into some special equipment for my trucks. I'm probably not gonna buy anything, but the thing is it qualifies, you know what I mean?"

Peter Rip, in the front with Casey, could almost feel Bob DenDenker wince behind him. To prevent DenDenker from jumping in, Rip quickly queried Voddema, "And how is business lately, Casey?"

The wide grin on Casey's face as he turned to Peter Rip gave ample warning that he was ready for this one.

"I don't mind telling you, Rip, it stinks; you know what I mean?" Hearty laughter and a vigorous punch to Peter Rip's shoulder accompanied Voddema's reply.

Before Rip had a chance to fully recover, Casey went on. "Other than that, Rip, I'd say business is picking up. Ha, ha, ha!" Again the principal felt a playful but painful jab. He squirmed but the seatbelt held him as a convenient target for Voddema's puns and punches.

The three in the back exchanged glances; they enjoyed the ribbing Rip was taking from his former, obstreperous charge. Rather mercifully, however, DenDenker cut in.

"To get this conversation on a little higher plane—ahem!—how does the financial situation look for the school this year?"

Peter Rip, obviously relieved by this change in direction, answered promptly. "I think we're hurting a little as such, Bob. Not only do we have a drop in enrollment, but people are also very slow in meeting their obligations. Recession and inflation seem to be definite factors. Though I must say, on the surface at least, people seem to be living as high as ever."

Sensing that his last remark was veering toward dangerous territory again, Rip quickly added: "By the way, Casey, how is your mother doing lately?"

Casey's attention for the moment was on the

Omnidirection Finder, so his answer came rather matter-of-factly: "About the same, you know. About the same."

Steve VanderPrikkel resumed the topic. "I was talking to my neighbor, George Cooper, the other night. You know, he's got five kids in Christian school. He told me that he'll have to send some of them to public next year, 'cause he just can't afford it anymore."

Karl DenMeester saw his opening. "What is most lamentable about all this is the evidence that people's convictions have dulled, which in turn, of course, blunts the spirit of sacrifice. Materialism threatens to make hedonists of us all."

DenDenker could not resist challenging the rather smug expression with which Karl had delivered his maxim.

"Say, Karl, tell me precisely just what convictions would lead you to sacrifice one-third of your gross income for Christian school tuition."

"Are you suggesting once again it's not worth it?" countered Karl. But Bob wouldn't let him off so easily.

"Come on, Karl, just try to answer my question. I think it's really important for people like George Cooper to know just what convictions they're sacrificing for. Maybe it's important for all of us to know."

"All right, then, let us all remind ourselves that we are duty-bound before God to train our children, including their minds, in the fear of the Lord. And only when the light of God's infallible, inspired Word falls on the education of their minds, can such education redound to God's glory. How dare we do less!"

Steve VanderPrikkel, rather testily, faced Karl next to him. "Do you mean to tell me, Karl, that all those Christians who for one reason or other send their kids to public schools are committing a terrible sin? I think that's a lot of garbage, if Casey will excuse the expression."

"I don't mind telling you, Steve, that I like a lot of garbage; you know what I mean?" Casey responded with his characteristic horse laugh.

"Well, let's change the topic just a bit," suggested DenDenker, "and try to pin down just what it is or should be about Christian education that will make people like George Cooper eager to sacrifice, assuming that they're able. In other words, what makes Omni Christian the place to send your kid, even if it costs a \$1000, because there's something going on in that place you wouldn't want to deprive him of. What is that something to you, Rip?"

P.R. didn't like being put on the spot, especially

by DenDenker, who had a knack for ripping off all kinds of masks. "Well, uh," he started hesitantly, looking down on the occasional farmhouses far below him, "there are many ramifications of that question as such, but one should say that in a good Christian school there is respect for authority; there should be a code for the dress and the . . . uh . . . behavior of the students; there should be chapel regularly; there is . . . uh . . . of course an emphasis on excellence, as the achievement of many of our students proves; and uh . . . uh . . ." he continued as he again caught himself in a *faux pas*, for he suddenly became acutely conscious of Casey next to him, whose grossest sin in school had been underachievement—" . . . uh . . . it's in general a place where parents can trust their children to receive a sound Christian education." Rip concluded rather lamely, dimly realizing that his answer lacked something but unsure what that something was.

Bob DenDenker turned to Karl. "Okay, Karl, what to you is or should be going on at Omni Christian that makes it invaluable?"

"I'm not sure what you're trying to prove, Bob, but instead of reiterating what I've already said, I would just add this: In my thinking, a Christian school is primarily an academic institution. As such it seeks to form the mind of the student. The means of doing so is, to be sure, the teacher who brings God's Word to bear on his subject, but it is also the Christian textbooks which place the subject matter in a fundamentally Christian perspective. Indeed, it's some of the courses as well, such as your Modern Problems course, Bob, and John Vroom's course in Ethical Decision-Making, not to mention the regular Bible courses, of course. So, I would say that the curriculum, its materials, and courses, plays a significant role in setting Christian education apart from secular education."

Steve had been listening somewhat impatiently. "You English types sure can get lofty on words. Casey, how about getting back down to earth a little bit?"

Casey obliged by throttling back, also because the airport was only eight miles away.

Steve continues. "I meant getting our heads out of the clouds in more than one way. You must have some ideas too on what we've been talking about. You had some rough times and all at Omni; maybe you've got some strong feelings on how a Christian school should be different."

Casey had the air speed down to 120 now and hit the landing gear button. The slight shudder and reduction in speed alarmed Peter Rip for a moment, but Casey reassured him: "Just getting

ready for the landing is all Rip—nothing to get hives over, if you know what I mean."

He set the flaps and switched on the electric fuel pump before returning to Steve's question.

"I don't mind telling you, Steve, that Omni Christian was often a pretty bad scene for me. I'll admit, you know, that I wasn't exactly what Rip would consider a model student, but I dunno. I guess I never thought about it much. I have a hard time remembering, though, what was so Christian about the place. I guess it was okay for kids who were smart and gonna go on to college, but for kids like me—I dunno, it seems like school should be a good place for everybody, you know what I mean?"

They were on final landing approach now and Casey had to concentrate fully on his controls and instruments.

Steve turned to Bob. "Okay, Bob, you always get the last word in, what is it this time?"

Peter Rip sensed a chance to redeem himself a bit. "Say, Bob," he said, "since this is such a crucially important issue, I should like to have you give a half-hour presentation at our next faculty meeting, outlining what you think should make a Christian school worth George Cooper's sacrifice as such. Would you do that, please?"

"Let me shock you and accept," DenDenker shot back. "Not that I have the answers—I don't. But there's got to be more to it than we've said so far, and I'd like to discover what that is."

"That was an excellent suggestion," exclaimed Steve to the somewhat chagrined Rip who had really thought he had called Bob's bluff. I'm sure I'm interested in what Bob's going to come up with, and so will a lot of others. It's high time all of us, including our students, get it clearer in our heads just how and why our education is different from Omni public, and what makes it worth the dough."

Casey Voddema cut the throttle, skillfully kept the wings level and the nose up, until the wheels smoothly touched the runway of football city airport.

With a sigh of relief, Peter Rip complimented Casey with "Bravo!" In a burst of generosity and goodwill he added, "Let me buy your lunch as a token of my appreciation for treating us to such a nice flight today."

To which VanderPrikkel added, "And a cup of coffee says Michigan State takes Iowa today!"

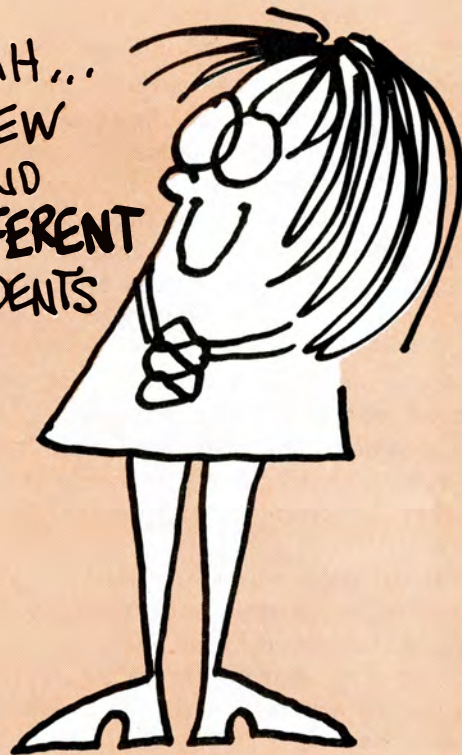
(Note: The sequel to this episode will be featured in the next issue: a faculty meeting back at Omni Christian.)

HMM, I WONDER IF THE
SAME OL' JOKES WILL WORK
FOR YET
ANOTHER
YEAR?

ROBIN



AH...
NEW
AND
DIFFERENT
STUDENTS



WELL...
HERE
GOES
10
YEARS
OF
EXPERIENCE
AND
MY
FIRST
YEAR
OF REAL
CONFIDENCE



A WHOLE
NEW
CURRICULUM,
ALL NEW
LESSON
PLANS,
6 MORE
HOURS
TOWARDS
THE MASTERS,
A BRAND NEW
WARDROBE...
MAN, AM
I READY?



THE "VETS" IN A NEW YEAR

What Worked!

by Greta Rey*

If a professional magazine is read, it is because it serves the needs and interests of its readers. *Christian Educators Journal* has been chided for failure to do this, particularly where elementary teachers are concerned. Therefore, in order to be more attractive and practical, we are introducing this column as a means of sharing our workable classroom ideas. While elementary teachers have expressed a desire for this type of column, we wish to appeal to teachers of all levels. Good teaching can be adapted to any grade.

What kinds of ideas do we hope to share? First, we are teachers with a certain perspective of Christian children and the Christian life. This inspires us

*Greta Rey teaches fourth grade at North Christian School, Kalamazoo, Michigan. In this issue she introduces a new and continuing column designed to give practical, usable plans for classroom lessons.

to teach things and to have classroom experiences which are especially cherished by us as Christian teachers.

Second, we are creative, innovative teachers. How often do unplanned things happen in our classrooms which set our wheels spinning, resulting in teaching which is successful beyond any plan we could have lifted from a teacher's manual. These spontaneous lessons may be only for the moment, or may result in week-long units. By sharing these experiences, we can encourage each other to be creative and innovative.

Third, we are always evaluating current trends in education. For example, many of us, if we don't go all the way in establishing open classrooms, are experimenting with what seem to be some of the better ideas coming out of that movement. Some we retain, others we disregard. With exposure to so many new materials and suggestions from so many new movements in education, it would be helpful to know what has been successfully used in other Christian classrooms.

Won't you share your ideas with us? The important thing is that it has to be something that worked for you. Let me make it simple for you with these suggestions:

(1) *Don't put it off.* If something works for you, send me the results immediately. Your own ideas generally aren't as attractive when they are cold.

(2) *Things you submit* can be as simple as lesson plan formats, with headings such as objectives, materials, activities; or as complex as prose articles.

(3) *You don't have to be a writer to share your ideas.* I will even be your ghost writer if you like.

READER RESPONSE

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank you for a very fine issue, May, 1975. I was happy to know that special education is alive and healthy in so many of our Christian schools.

I liked the article by Barbara Hudspith, "I Don't Want to Send Him to School." I am a teacher, yet I sympathize with her feelings about sending her child to school. I would be just as scared as she is to send my child, if I had one. I think school can almost ruin kids, and is structured to knock the creativity out of them.

On the other hand, parents like her can also take courage. Today's schools, and especially the

new teachers just coming out of college, are much more aware of children's creative needs and urges, and in many instances are actively fostering creativity. It seems to grow each year.

Finally, I believe that God has a purpose for giving each child to his teacher each year. Even the teachers who seem to be very poor, and may even ruin a child, will still have something to offer that child, and he will be richer for having had the experience.

I hope we can have more articles from parents like Mrs. Hudspith.

Sincerely,
Pearl King

Simply mail your notes to me, or call me collect to tell me about them.

(4) *We prefer original ideas*, but if you want to refer us to someone else's ideas and tell how they worked for you, be sure to give proper credit to your source. Any reference to printed or commercial materials must include complete publishing and ordering information.

(5) *Send all articles, lesson plans or ideas to:*

Greta Rey
3617 Duke St., Apt. C
Kalamazoo, Mich. 49008
Phone: 616 342-0030

So, get into the act. Let's encourage each other and show ourselves that Christian teachers are to be counted among the best. Since this is introductory material containing basic information, cut it out for future reference. And keep those ideas flowing my way.

To get things started, I offer the following example from my own experience. It fits the category of the spontaneous response to a classroom situation.

A couple weeks before summer vacation began, the city was putting a sanitary sewer in the road outside our classroom. As we stood at the windows watching the fascinating machine that gouged out the trench, the children were impressed by the huge chunks of gray wet clay being discharged alongside the road. Our school is built on former swampland, and I happened to know that about 50 years ago when the neighborhood was being developed, some

mastodon bones had been excavated about a block away. We began to imagine what the area may have been like in pre-historic times.

Suddenly I had an idea. "Let's each get a piece of the clay and make our own pre-historic animals. We can truly say they were dug up from the road by our school. What a souvenir of fourth grade that would make. You'll be able to show them to your grandchildren." Need I say any more about the excitement *that* idea generated? The clay worked up perfectly, and the creatures the children made were exquisite. Of course, I first slipped in a bit of an art lesson about working the clay by pinching out the form the essence of sculpture, and the desirability of each making his own original design. The children were delighted with the results. Many said that those creatures were the best clay things they'd ever made.

The trial lumps of clay fired in the kiln turned a light brick red, but because of the impurities, there was some crumbling, so we decided not to fire our pieces. But the clay dried very hard, anyway. Since the drying and trial firing brought us into the next-to-last week of school, we didn't have time to go on and make a table-top model of a pre-historic swamp for the animals, although it would have been the logical thing to do. But we were able to display them in the art fair.

Much is being written about outdoor education and using the immediate environment for teaching. By telling you of this experience, which touched science, social studies and art, I am urging you to use the world right outside your classroom, city or country, to help children respond to the world God has given them. And I encourage you as a teacher to seize such opportunities to be creative yourself.

Free Catalog of Children's Plays for the Bicentennial

A catalog of plays and programs for children and young people suitable for the celebration of the Bicentennial will be sent without charge by PLAYS, INC. Plays are original, royalty-free, and one-act, and are excellent for presentation by schools, clubs, and amateur drama groups.

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Boston, MA 02116



After the Mid-Semester Blues

My depression's over. I feel like a war.
With slant-eyed leers I drive my Zeroes
Across the broad decks of those paper ships
Anchored in the harbor of my navyyard desk.
Banzai! I dive in to smash a comma splice
To kingdom come. Bam! Pow! A dangling modifier bombed,
A hole blown through a paragraph. The
Blood begins to gush and ooze from mangled
Sentences. The gore fills the deck. The smoke
Swirls up like a cloud from Harper's pipe. I pull
Out of my dive and cruise back for another run.
The ship now lies like an open page before me.
The riddled sentences offer no resistance and I drop
The final bombs with the perfect control of a textbook case.
The vessels sunk or damaged beyond recovery, I rise up and
Soar triumphantly into the glorious Western sun.

Clarence Walcott
English Department
Calvin College

A CALL FOR DISCIPLING IN MENNONITE SCHOOLS

by William Kruger*

We as a Mennonite people again have become preoccupied with discipline. As in the past, we are emphasizing the idea that to be disciplined means to be disciplined. Fortunately, the sharing of good insights on the part of a few in our midst has enabled us all to benefit and grow in this matter of discipleship.

To discipline in the manner and spirit as Jesus commands, according to the Matthew account (Matthew 18:15-20), provides a guideline for the Christian school. We need to heed this Christian mandate to discipline. But for what purpose do we discipline? Our intentions must be analysed.

Today I personally am concerned. I sense that we are emphasizing the *discipline* aspect more than the discipling. I feel we are cashing in on a wholesale swing to the right, without adequately analysing the cause of such a shift to nostalgic conservatism. I fully realize that we have been a sane, conservative, carefully calculating type of people. But this is something different; it rather frightens me.

I am not so sure that the great growth of Christian schools across the country and in our circles is necessarily a good sign. Our schools need to grow—but for the right reasons.

I suspect that many parents are turning in a state of panic to our institutions, demanding something for their children which they themselves have not been able to do or haven't bothered doing. Unfortunately (or fortunately, perhaps) many parents have lost their Christian credibility with their offspring. The children sense too great a discrepancy

between their parents' verbal religiosity and the actual expression of the Christian way in their daily life—discipleship.

I don't want to be overly critical in this matter; however, as responsible leaders we need to be aware of underlying factors. Mennonite history has taught us that merely treating symptoms instead of remedying the cause of illness does not build a healthy Christian brotherhood. We need to be warned not to build on shallow or perhaps even unChristlike motives. We are stationed at important crossroads of change. The move we make is perhaps much more crucial than we realize.

I trust it is not primarily a guilt feeling caused by our affluence, by our "financial squalor," that has occasioned this renewed emphasis on Christian education. One becomes especially anxious that discipline has again become such a crucial factor in education. I don't think it is too helpful to glibly pass it off by empty-headedly quoting, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chastens." God disciplines us to make us better and not simply to rid us of our guilt complex. It appears to me that we want to be spanked by God, or at least want our children spanked, without really changing our ways.

Why are we concerned about discipline? For whose sake and welfare? Our institutions? Our own job security? Our youth? I hope we will continue to struggle with this question.

Central to our Anabaptist Mennonite faith is respect for the free will of the individual. A person, young or old, is an individual. True, a young person needs discipline, just as older persons do, but never to the point of violating his spiritual freedom and his humanity.

When Jesus Christ was an infant His parents presented Him to the Lord in the temple (Luke 2:22-39), according to the law. They returned to

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Nazareth, "And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him" (verse 40). This verse covers 12 years of Jesus' life.

Again the parents brought Him to the temple. Jesus at this point was about the age of many of the young people when they come to our schools. Here at the age of 12, according to Luke 2:41-52, Jesus communicated to His parents that He now stood in a new relationship to them. He exhibited a new awareness of God's claim on His life, apart from the claims of His parents. When they finally found Him in the temple, their frustration resulted in their scolding Him, only to be met by His surprise, "Did you not know . . . ?" Jesus was telling them He had a free will that needed to be exercised in obedience to God.

Years later, we again see His mother get impatient with Him at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1-11) and He tells her to stop crowding Him: "Keep off my back, my hour has not yet come." Jesus must exercise His own free will in obedience to the go-ahead from God. On another occasion, His brothers try to goad Him on to Jerusalem (John 7:1-10). Later on, Jesus does go but only when He has the green light from within. When Jesus faced the cross He double-checked, and checked again, whether it really was necessary for Him to endure such an ordeal. When he personally

was sure, only then did He say yes in a free manner.

I am suggesting that in matters of the spiritual, which is certainly what our schools are about, we must exercise due respect for the free will of the individual. When we discipline in the Christian sense, we help make possible the happening of obedient acts and not merely the curtailing of bad behaviour. George B. Leonard begins his timely book, *Education and Ecstasy*, with the following lines: "Teachers are overworked and underpaid. True. It is an exacting and exhausting business, this damming up of the flood of human potentialities. What energy it takes to make a torrent into a trickle, to train that trickle along narrow, well-marked channels." I think we get the point.

Too often we do waste enormous amounts of energy trying to dam up this tremendous potential of our students till we reduce their contribution to a sick, heartless equivocation. To discipline does mean discipling our students, our teachers and ourselves. To discipline means to apply our faith, knowledge, love, hope and Christian expectations to the total of our existence. This certainly means more than trying to squelch negative behaviour and attitudes. To discipline in the face of tragedy and need is not hard, but to discipline in the Christian sense while in the midst of our affluence is the challenge of the century.

Dear Teachers of Writing...

by Henry J. Baron*

(All semester we had been talking about composition. The students were college seniors, enrolled in a course called The Teaching of Writing. Most of them were future English teachers. They had been working on their own craft as writers, had evaluated compositions by other members of the class and by high school students, had read extensively in the field of the teaching of composition, and had discussed most of the issues raised by that reading. Now it was final exam time. I decided to include one question that would give them a

chance, by evaluating their past experiences as composition students, to reflect on their future task as composition teachers. I asked them to assume that they had three minutes in which they would address all their past composition teachers. The following is a composite of their responses.)

You were all so different that it is difficult to address you all at once. Some of you instilled in us the desire to write. You took time to show a personal interest in our writing, time to encourage us by comments such as "good sentence structure" or "good insight here." Sometimes such comments meant the world to us, especially when we felt insecure and even undeserving about our writing.

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And some of you instilled in us the desire to read examples of good writing. With you we thrilled to the power of the written word and felt challenged by those splendid models to improve our own craft of writing with clarity and vividness. You showed us how concrete details add both sharpness and interest to writing. The positive attitude you brought to the classroom and the kinds of assignments you gave us inspired us to want to teach composition ourselves one day. Through you we felt that writing could be enjoyable and worthwhile, and we thank you with a sense of deep appreciation.

We are appreciative of some others of you too. You were very thorough about formal matters of writing. You taught us to write the orderly, organized formal essay, complete with thesis statement and transitions. That skill has pulled us through exemption tests, bluebooks, and written-in-one-night term papers. We mastered grammar for you, learned to avoid “dashing about,” and received the stern punishment of lowered grades for everything from papers an hour late to those ragged at the edges. We appreciate that discipline you imposed on us; it smoothed the way for us. But we wonder why you never seemed to care much about our own thoughts and feelings. You frowned upon personal expression in the writing you asked us to do. So we learned to turn out formally correct papers that we cared little about because they had nothing of ourselves in them.

Others of you stood at the opposite extreme. You wanted our personal opinion in anything and everything we wrote. Spontaneous reactions, seldom well thought out, were welcomed. It's not that we didn't enjoy your classes: it's just that we didn't learn much and usually gave you careless work because you never asked for more. Perfection didn't matter, so we never tried to improve. Deadlines didn't matter either, so work often wasn't even done.

But some others of you we remember with even less enthusiasm. You assumed that we knew how to write, so you never taught us. You gave us grammar, but no reason to learn it. You gave us assignments, but no motivation for doing them. You wrote cryptic comments such as “comma splice” and “dangling participle,” but never explained what they meant or how such violations could be avoided. And such caustic comments as “use your brain” and “cut out the drivel” forbade us from ever writing honestly and personally about anything. Often your cruel criticism undermined our confidence, and often that constant fear of failure you nurtured strangled our aspirations. Be-

sides, we knew that the grades you accorded our papers reflected more your like or dislike of us personally than the quality of our writing. So we quit caring about writing, for in your classes you never did anything real to open up the beauty and wonder of language as a means of expressing a keen mind and a sensitive soul.

All these experiences lead us now to do some wishful thinking and hoping. We wish that some of you had come together and taught us composition. We would have had to learn the technical skills to make our writing more effective, but we would also have been encouraged to write about what mattered to us, to clarify our own thoughts, feelings, and reactions through words. For we realize now, as we vaguely intuited then, that the power in writing is dependent on more than structure and form, the correct use of grammatical and rhetorical conventions, and the techniques of expository writing.

And we hope that as we join you as composition teachers, we will be able to encourage one another to serve the needs of the students. They often need to write out of personal experience and interest to communicate committed concern and sincerity. Therefore we hope to involve them personally in their writing. We hope to give them the chance to write as real people about real things. And we hope to let them write for real people, too. They should often write for one another; they should learn to evaluate one another's papers. We think that they will learn much more then and become more sensitive to their own errors. But more than that, they will really say something because, frankly, their peers are more important to them than their teachers. Finally, we hope to stimulate their ability to write poetry, fiction, and drama as well as expository prose. To do that well, we know that we must be enthusiastic about our profession as language teachers and sensible about our role as critics. We must pay attention to our students as people and remember that it isn't the “A” student who needs our praise so much; his success is often its own reward. But it is the “C” and “D” students who lack incentive and self-esteem; these especially we must encourage and guide, not bury their personalities under an overemphasis on correctness or their ideas under a slashing red pen. Our influence should effect in every student the confidence to write and the conviction that good writing is alive, charged with emotion and feeling and careful thought.

That is our challenge as we see it, and we hope that we—and all of you—will be able to measure up.

A MINI-COURSE EXPERIMENT

by Ron Holwerda and Arlyn Schaap*

During the last two weeks of every nine-week period, the junior-high students of the Ireton Christian School, Ireton, Iowa, undergo a change in their daily routine. They may choose a unit in which they have a special interest. Every nine weeks the teachers of the junior high offer learning experiences passed over lightly or generally not offered during regular courses. The following are units of special interest offered last school year:

Photography
Emergency First Aid
Crystallography
Geography Scavenger Hunt
Famous People of History
Mysterious Plants
Relief Maps
Geological Interests

Goals and Objectives

Although each mini-course has its specific set of goals and objectives from the individual teacher, each also has the following set of general goals:

1. Students should see that all of life reflects the greatness of our God and Creator.
2. Students should develop greater interest in traditional subjects if a greater variety of learning experiences is provided.
3. The teacher should personalize education to meet the individual needs of each student.

Content

Each mini-course includes a certain amount of basic required material and a variety of extra or supplementary material selected according to each student's interest. This gives each student not only

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the basic material necessary for each mini-course but also enough flexibility for exploring material of his own interest. The mini-courses emphasize experiments and practical application along with textbook learning. The student finds time to do enough research in various reference and library materials to satisfy his curiosity and gain the necessary points to pass the course.

Evaluation

The mini-courses are not graded by conventional methods: a pass-incomplete method is used instead. Most of the mini-courses are set up on a point system. A certain number of points, determined by each teacher, is required to pass the course. The student earns points by meeting the basic requirements and exploring areas of interest he chooses. A student who does not earn enough points to pass the course by the end of two weeks can choose additional experiments, projects, reports, etc., to earn enough points. Since he is studying a topic of special interest to him, and does not feel the pressure of having to work for a grade, the atmosphere is very informal and relaxed.

Future Courses

In the future the student will be able to choose from a wide range of units. Other units offered include:

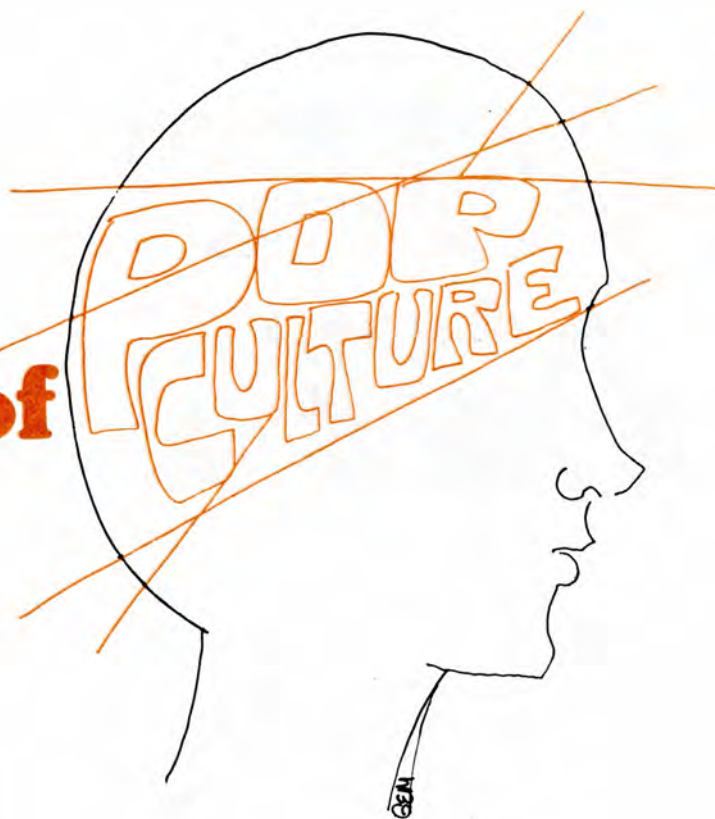
The Black Man in America
Transportation
Christian Citizenship
Nutrition
Newspaper Reporting
Weather Forecasting
The Stars and Beyond
Space and Rocket Power
Ecology—Your Problem and Mine
The Wonderful World of Insects

Conclusion

The idea of mini-courses is new in the Ireton Christian School, but the courses correlate easily with the existing social studies, science, and career education curriculum. The two-week period takes the time otherwise used for social studies and science. It is a refreshing change of pace for both the students and the teachers. The first experience has been very favorable, and the junior-high students and teachers can look forward to additional enjoyable learning experiences in the future.

The "Message" of

by Marlin Vanden Bosch*



"I'm an agnostic who goes to church to keep his parents happy," an intelligent high-school student said to me recently. I suspected this stage of uncertainty was not rare among young people, but this young man seemed more certain of his agnosticism than most people are of their belief. So I wondered if I could discover why.

I had taped my discussions with this student over the past several weeks. They were discussions about books he had read for Individualized Reading, movies he had seen in his leisure time, and his favorite pop songs. I now read the transcripts again, and although I don't claim to have pinpointed all the elements that converted this young man into an agnostic, some possible contributing factors became clear.

The first book we talked about was *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. The story is autobiographical, beginning with a description of the author's month in New York as a result of winning a journalism award. The month's experiences prove frustrating for her when she finds that she can neither get drunk and make love with the reckless abandon of her roommate Doreen nor identify with the rat-race existence to which she is exposed. She has affairs with various men, all of whom are perverted in one way or another. Her experiences lead to her attempt suicide, only to fail. So at the end she is

alive but has resolved none of her problems satisfactorily.

Q. How did you like *The Bell Jar*?

A. I liked it. The author uses good description, and her outlook on things was like my own. It was kind of depressing in places. But there were things I noticed, that I'd seen through my eyes. There were a few places when I'd say, "Wow! I've seen that before."

Q. What was the author's reaction to the month in New York?

A. I think that it started her down; it really disturbed her, some of the things. I think it started her downhill into a "bell jar" for sure. I don't think she was prepared for big city life. I think it really shocked her. She couldn't get into the rat race of new clothes and having to be watched by people all the time and things like this. I don't think she liked it. It was a good experience for her, but I don't think she really enjoyed herself.

(I neglected to ask the student why it was a "good experience" when it "started her downhill into the bell jar.")

Q. The author says, "People were made of nothing so much as dust." Do you think this is a part of the basic cynicism of the book?

A. I think so. I think it's her basic outlook on people. They live, and if they die, it's of no consequence, they will anyway. And you can speed it up, you can slow it down. But it always happens. And people are expendable, I think, is her basic outlook.

Q. Her mother had an effect on her attitude toward sex . . .

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A. Very puritan.

Q. Yes.

A. And that other lady, it was Buddy's mother, had an attitude too with all her little sayings, her little clichés about what a girl should and shouldn't do, and giving her little articles about . . . or maybe that was her mother, I don't know, but the two women really influenced her.

Q. Yeah and later . . .

A. It had a reverse effect later. She started to turn against them.

Q. Who was the one who finally gave her the courage to break out of it completely?

A. It was that one female psychologist, wasn't it?

Q. Yeah, I think so.

A. I don't know. I think there's a big buildup, making you think that it would, but I don't know it made a whole lot of difference. It was a kind of letdown for her, especially, you know, when she was bleeding all over the place. This wasn't the ideal sex that she had thought of.

Q. Do you draw any conclusions from this beyond what the book gives you?

A. Well, I think to her it was kind of a shock, finding out that there isn't that perfect love in life, you know. It isn't like in fairy tales. I think it was just one contributing factor. This was kind of after she hit the low point, but I think it still depressed her. It wasn't what she thought it would be.

Q. There's a woman hater in there. Do you understand that character?

A. Yeah, well that really scared her, that part. He was a really suave, sophisticated guy, and she fell in love with his diamond or something, but then when they went on, he started slapping her around and throwing her in the mud and stuff. I think that turned her against men. Made her scared of them.

Q. How did the book affect your view of life?

A. It won't influence my life greatly, that I'll start going crazy or anything, but I could feel for her in quite a few instances.

Q. What about suicide, which she deals with extensively? Does she make that seem to be the only logical way out of her troubles?

A. That's what she indicated for herself. She thought about it quite a bit and different ways that she could do it. And when that one attempt failed . . . I think that was her idea, you know, that the bell jar will always be hovering over, why not break the bell jar and kill herself.

About three weeks later I talked to this student about *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein, a popular science fiction writer. In this book a man born and brought up in a Martian environment comes to earth as an adult. Common earthly traits such as jealousy, greed and cruelty of any kind are so foreign to his character that he either withdraws into a kind of hibernation or "discorpo-

rates" the doer of evil. The government in power tries to find the Martian, Mike Smith, but he is hidden in South America. Eventually he starts a new religion, which in some respects resembles Christianity and in others parodies it; the religion advocates a communion of water brothers. As in traditional Christianity these brothers (water brothers) translate and spread the "gospel" (of Mike Smith). But all water brothers and sisters are free to "grow close" or make love to any other water brother or sister, an aspect that differs from traditional Christianity. The new religion also diminishes the importance of death by distorting the significance of the Last Supper, at which Christ said, "This is my body. Take, eat. . . ." Mike Smith and his disciples relish the thought of dying and of being eaten by other water brothers.



Q. What were some of the adjustments the man from Mars had to make?

A. His main difference was in his mind. He had completely different views on about everything.

Q. Can you think of specific things that really threw him?

A. Well, he couldn't see the concept of jealousy or war or selfishness or some of these things. He didn't consider death anything important. You just incorporate, and he didn't think that was anything big. He would make people, whatever, disappear. And the only thing wrong with that was that he was wasting food.

Q. Okay. When he sees wrong, he wants to make it disappear. How'd that strike you, kind of a good quality to have?

A. Well, I don't think it would work. I think everybody would be gone in a few days if that would happen here. But if you had a makeup that made you think most people wouldn't do bad things, than that might be the only way to administer justice or something. You know, if you've been brought up like that. What's interesting, I was told about a book that's called, I think, *The Family*, can't remember who it's by, but it's about Charlie Manson's family, and one of the main driving forces was this book.

Q. No kidding.

A. Behind the killings and stuff. And you can kind of see why, really. That attitude of death, and of people doing wrong, and I suppose they could fantasize that other people were against the real code of the water brothers. But supposedly, you know, this was one of the books that Manson read before the killings.

Q. What's your impression of the ending?

A. That bothered me, you know. I still don't really know. Ah, "Certainly thou art god," but *who* is?

Q. There's a statement, I think it's made by Mike, "I Am that I Am," which is a quotation out of the Old Testament.

A. Is it? I didn't know that. I really don't know what he wants us to see in this book, that he is the God or that all of us are gods, and sure, this guy can say, "I Am that I Am," implying that he is god because everyone can say that, implying that they are god too, you know. Whether he's indicating that Michael is superior or maybe is the new Messiah or something like that. Maybe since he was born on Mars, he comes back down to earth, if that is heaven, you know, from the last page. Who knows?

Q. What is the discipline they talk about?

A. Well, it's "grokking" everything in fullness, I think, you know, is about the best description of it.

Q. What is their moral code? Is this developed rather convincingly?

A. I think so. I thought it was very easy to take. It was kind of eased onto people, and that kind of took the shock away, and you could see it developing more and more as the discipline was really formed as such on this planet. And it wasn't hard for me to take at all. I could understand it.

Q. What makes it more rational than the views it replaces?

A. What makes it more rational? Well, it takes away the . . . I mean in this there's no adultery, there's no jealousy between people, you know, and people are sharing their body and their souls, really. I think it took away a lot of the unhappiness that would be caused by one-to-one marriages, you know, where there aren't any interrelations between people.

Q. A couple of the people had trouble accepting this. Caxton was one. Was his reaction quite typical?

A. I think so. He was very cynical about the whole thing. But I think his main objection was that he was too old, that he really didn't have much to offer to other people. At least that was the impression I got, that he thought, you know, you can't teach an old dog new tricks and don't mess up these other people.

Q. You're talking of Jubal.

A. Yeah. Oh Jubal, yeah, you said Caxton.

Q. Yeah.

A. Oh, what was the question again?

Q. Well, he had the same kind of reaction that Jubal did first.

A. At first, yeah, but then it was just that he was putting his moral code up and trying to define this new one by his old one and trying to encompass it, but he couldn't so he just accepted the new one and broke down his old one to broaden the other one and it worked.

Q. Did he really have a moral code of his own?

A. I think he must have, yeah. And the code was that the thing that bothered him especially was that both Mike and June and he were there together rather than just two of them, you know. He couldn't see three people interrelating like that, and that was the whole part.

Q. Yeah. But from what we know of Caxton earlier in the book, was he one who lived by a strict puritan ethic?

A. No, but still he did have some morals, you know. If you read about Caxton in the beginning of the book, you would say well, you know, he'd take this lock, stock and barrel, and not worry about a thing. But I think it shows that everybody has a few moral quirks, you know, as such. That just those things, he can do so far, but if it comes upon this one thing, no go. That was the thing that did it, but if he just tells himself then to try to forget it for awhile, and try to accept something else, you know, then he did grok it fully.

Q. Yeah. There was a limitation though, not so much imposed on him, but what was their limitation on sex? Or didn't you sense this?

A. Hmm. I don't know. Like what?

Q. Well, for example, their relationship to someone outside . . .

A. Oh.

Q. . . the circle.

A. It was just that . . . okay, well, it wasn't a rule as such, but the people just didn't have any desire to

make love to people who weren't their water brothers, so that came first, and then this was just a growing closer after sharing the water.

Q. Okay. Now what's different about that in contrast to a traditional marriage where supposedly you start in the same way—you grow closer and then you share all?

A. Well, once you're married you're not supposed to go outside of your group of two. I think that's the basic difference, at least in my life. While in this, if there was another water brother or sister nearby that you loved, you know, it was perfectly all right to grow closer to them too.

Q. So it's just a question of numbers?

A. Well, I think basically, you know, if you keep very close to someone, there just aren't any rights or wrongs about it. It was all right.

Q. How'd this book relate to the first book that you read? Do you see any of the same cynicism?

A. Yeah, well, I think they were similar maybe in part—the view of death by Sylvia Plath anyway. She was very curious about death. It was ever-present in her mind. I don't think she thought it was a terrible cut-off of everything.

Q. The fact that sex is a big part of the water brothers' sharing—how does this strike you?

A. How does that strike me?

Q. Yeah, do you think that he's being sacriligious in making this kind of comparison or is this merely a legitimate interpretation, quite different from the usual, but a legitimate interpretation of Christian love?

A. Yeah, I think it is legitimate. I don't think it's sacriligious certainly. Umm, I think Mike preached love in the highest possible way which was what Christ was for anyway.

Next we discussed some popular songs this student liked. "The Hangman" was the first one. I think the student gives the sense of the lyrics as well as I could.

Q. What's the subject of "The Hangman"?

A. Well, basically it's about a person who goes against, well, who's a freak, really, who doesn't really conform to what society says is right or wrong, and so they expect other people to condemn this person, you know, to say that he's no good, whatever, being the hangman, you know, just cutting down another person's beliefs, and this person doesn't want to conform either, so they're both, they're both condemned.

Q. Are there any references to particular dissenters today?

A. Any particular ones? No, I don't think so, it's just general, saying the laws are obsolete, and stuff like that, you know. Just people who are going against the norms of society, and society can't handle it. That's what they're saying, and Uncle Sam is involved with

it, and it's knocking the United States government cause a lot of its laws are obsolete.

Q. You said you liked this song for its words. Why did these words appeal to you?

A. Well, 'cause I feel that way, you know, that we should be able to have these . . . ; if people don't believe the way other people do, I think they should be able to think that way and not be criticized for it, you know. We should be receptive to their views and listen to them, not just do as this thing says.

Q. Uhhuh. Do you think this song captures your thoughts or helps you crystallize your thoughts on this score?

A. It kinda captured my thoughts. I thought they put it pretty well. I kinda like the sort of song where they tell the story, you know, develop this, and you know you're sort of caught up in it.

Q. Does it make you more cynical regarding the people around you?

A. Oh, not *more* cynical. I always was pretty cynical.

Q. Some psychologists have said that it's essential that young people be able to find heroes that they can have faith in. Would you say that this song would help you find heroes that you can have faith in? Or does it deter you from finding heroes?

A. It would deter me from finding a hero, but it's not like a real specific thing, you know. This can be anybody in society, really, who doesn't go along with the norm all the time, and I know a lot of people like that, and it helps me relate to some people more I would say.

Q. But those who don't relate, those kind could be your hero.

A. Right, yeah, if their causes are just.

Next we talked about "The Triad." Again the student explains the lyrics quite thoroughly.

Q. What do you like about the lyrics?

A. Oh, it's just good. This guy thinks, well, he doesn't want to get tied down to one person, and he's being very honest with . . . he's talking to one of the girls that he, you know, one of the two that he digs, and so he's telling her that he can't see being with just one of them, tied down like that, and he doesn't see any reason why they can't go on as three. That's the main theme of it. And then all the other things come into it like, "Your mother's ghost stands at your shoulder." And she says, "You can't do that. It breaks all the rules you ever learned at school," you know. But we can break the rules if you're crazy too, you know. That kind of thing, being different. That's what he wants to do.

Q. This is one guy and two girls you think?

A. Yeah. That's what the implication is anyway. A three-way relationship.

Q. Does the argument appeal to you as well as the lilt of the lyrics?

A. Well, you know, I suppose, I mean there's no way you can get married to both of them, but you know, if that's the way you want it and if it's agreeable to

all three, then there's no reason why you can't.

Q. Is there a way in which he loads the argument against the mother?

A. Oh yeah, heh heh. "Your mother's ghost stands at your shoulder/Face like ice a little bit colder." Something like that. And just the natural way he puts it. He's just saying, well, why not? He can't see any reason why not to. These other people are implying that it can't be done. It's just like he had never heard of the idea that you have to be married to one person. He doesn't see any reason why not to marry more. I think that's his best argument. He's just saying, you know, there's no reason why not to.

Q. Well, except he says, "It breaks all the rules you learned at school." Those don't seem very strong?

A. No. they don't apply to him, I guess, is what he's saying. They're irrelevant anyway.

Q. Uhhuh. And that's appealing to you too.

A. Oh, yeah. I've always tried to break rules, heh heh.

Note the following concerning these discussions:

A. *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath

1. He could "feel for" the author . . .
2. The author's outlook: people are expendable
3. People who take a stand for chastity are stereotyped as "puritan." The hero of the book rejects them
4. The book debunks notions that life is as presented in fairy tales. (This debunking is a plus.)
5. The book presents suicide as a viable alternative.

B. *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein

1. He "could see why" the book might encourage a Charles Manson.
2. The moral code is "easy to take . . . there's no adultery, there's no jealousy between people, . . . and people are sharing their body and their souls, really . . . took away . . . unhappiness . . . that would be caused by one-to-one marriages, . . .
3. The character with a traditional moral code couldn't adjust until he broke down his own moral code "to broaden the other one *and it worked*" (italics mine).
4. He comments that there are "no rights or wrongs about it."
5. Death is viewed as "no terrible cut-off."
6. He see Mike's interpretation of the gospel as quite similar to Christ's.

C. "The Hangman"

1. The song says "laws are obsolete, . . ."
2. He liked the words because we shouldn't criticize people who think differently. (Again, a plus.)

3. The song "put it pretty well."

4. The song reaffirmed his cynicism about people around him.

5. The song helps him relate to people who can't conform, if their causes are just. (Another plus.)

D. "The Triad"

1. "It's just good . . . he's being very honest . . . he can't see being with just one of them, tied down like that, and he doesn't see any reason why they can't go on as three."

2. "If it's agreeable to all three, then there's no reason why you can't . . . I think that's his best argument."

3. Rules are irrelevant.

How these books and songs reiterated some basic attacks on traditional laws and values is apparent. To be dogmatic in such an environment is to be a prude. Is one view better than another? Each writer makes his case compellingly. "Man can't know" is the only answer that allows complete acceptance—and complete loss of faith.

My contention is that the random exposure of this young man to the values advocated in pop culture is not atypical for a high-school student today. The "message" of much pop culture varies too little. And pop culture is the steady diet of today's high-school student. This for several reasons.

First, Individualized Reading has, in many schools, degenerated into "free" reading, where the individual needs of the student are neither known nor considered. So the student reads what comes into his hands by way of recommendations from other students. In the schools where I observed, these books were usually contemporary. And although the view of life varies from book to book, students who select all their books from the present are never freed from the provincialism of their own time.

Second, movies and popular songs are products of the same culture that produced the contemporary books the students are reading. Their plots and specific subject matter vary, but the themes recur too often to provide education. They batter traditional beliefs so consistently that pop culture, ironically, is more likely to brainwash than educate. Of course I have not allowed for the teacher who may intercept the passes that pop artists are making at young minds. But I hope I have suggested why that teacher faces formidable opponents when he takes on the insidious pied pipers of pop culture.

Christian Teachers: *Quiet Revolutionaries*

by Lillian V. Grissen*

In his provocative, controversial book entitled *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, Dr. Neil Postman diagnoses the illness of the American educational system as terminal. Terminal, that is, unless teachers become *subversives* in the classroom. His ideas and suggestions can create much argument and healthy introspection in faculty lounges.

Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer, the intellectual Christian theologian known to many truth-seekers from many backgrounds and nations for his work at L'Abri, Switzerland, makes a curiously similar assertion. In his book *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, he declares that teachers, because they are Christians, must be *revolutionaries*.

Here the similarity stops.

Postman emphatically rejects "religious indoctrination," using the contention of Alan Watts that

irrevocable commitment to any religion is not only intellectual suicide; it is positive unfaith because it closes the mind for any new vision of the world. Faith is, above all, openness—an act of trust in the unknown (Postman, p. 6).

Not so, according to Schaeffer. He expounds a God of reason and traces the decline of the philosophical basis of man's search for knowledge from Galileo's glory in the beauty of his Creator to Camus's "You're really damned" in *The Plague*.

Schaeffer addresses his book primarily to Christians, not directly to teachers. But certainly Christian teachers can study it, not for "intellectual suicide," but rather for a call to be Christian *revolutionaries* in the classroom. Educational status quo is worse than insufficient. Christian education in an era of increasing secularism, misnamed tolerance, relative ethics and wavering convictions must not be merely distinctive; it must be *revolutionary*.

For two generations we have been battered with the dismal, the absurd, the meaninglessness of life—battered so artfully that we haven't realized it. Literature. Advertising. Mass media. Movies. The latter scream it worst of all. There are two kinds of films—those that merely entertain and the awful ones, because they teach that we are without truth, meaning, and absolutes, that it is not only that we have not found truth and meaning but that they do not exist (Schaeffer, p. 18).

Who of us cannot see that this has happened and is happening exponentially to the students entrusted to us? True, says Schaeffer, the WASPs have a sense of values, but they are based merely on the *memory* of the Judeo-Christian ethic. They have become so inextricably enmeshed with material values and tradition that often young people accurately detect the facade, the hollowness of being urged to accept a value system for which there is no absolute basis. Situational ethics, relative morals—these have become the order of the day.

Christians are called to be revolutionary, and we



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Christian teachers must teach our students to be revolutionary, not following the revolution of the free speech, hippie, or filthy speech movements, not seeking the simplistic emotional experience of "taking a trip with Jesus" or becoming a "Jesus freak." Jesus initiated a revolution which must continue until He returns. In a 30-day disposable world, our task is to keep to God's communication with man, the Holy Bible, absolutely relevant.

We cannot be what Postman calls "bucket-fillers," because knowledge is multiplying faster than population, but we can keep the absolutes of God's communication with the man He created relevant and contemporary. Our curriculum requires ongoing study to determine relevance. Curriculum must stand the test of meeting student needs today and tomorrow. Defending "we've always done it that way" makes tradition a hitching post instead of a guide post. An intellectual and growing knowledge of our discipline is required so that we do not sacrifice our integrity in teaching it and in integrating it with the entire curriculum.

Are there alternatives to Christianity? Three, according to Schaeffer: hedonism (which loses its force when two men in a rushing stream desire the same rolling log); the rule of the 51%, where the majority preclude the minority from applying the absolutes of God's Word; and an elite establishment or dictatorship. In the Western world four groups are active: the drop-outs, parasites tolerated until they bring more pain than society is willing to bear; the New Left, with no absolutes to guide or limit them; the Establishment elite, with arbitrary absolutes imposed on others; and that vast Silent Majority.

We fool ourselves if we do not realize that we committed Christians are a very small minority in that vast Silent Majority.

Does it not seem hopeless for such a small minority to attempt Christian revolution? Perhaps. It is demanding, costly. It demands not simplistic love, love that has been reduced to near meaninglessness as it is tossed to and fro like a frisbee, bounced back and forth like a ping-pong ball or whizzed by on a bumper sticker. Love is visible action.

Christ, however, demands even more: He demands holiness. That is God's verbal proposition to those who follow Him. As Christian teachers, can we incorporate Christ-love and Christ-holiness into our subject matter, our personal lives and our relationships with students, parents, colleagues, administrators and board members? Far-reaching and costly, isn't it? It cost Christ his life.

Schaeffer makes clear precisely how costly it is. He distinguishes between co-belligerents and allies.

Christian revolutionaries must select from the plethora of ideas and causes begging attention. We cannot in blanket fashion champion the establishment, the liberals or what-have-you. We must ally ourselves only with causes that need co-belligerents in the search of justice. Christian revolutionaries are choosy.

Truth, he emphasizes, is serious and must be taken seriously. What we teach now of God's word and its application must not require unteaching in several years. (That's a tough one, too.)

And what is most practical, and also the most difficult, we must demonstrate Christian revolution. Personally, of course. But it requires more than a vertical relationship with our King; it requires horizontal love and holiness. Our students must see the revolutionary beauty and holiness in our *community*. We the faculty are the model, the microcosm, of Christian *community*, the pilot plant. This requires proof by demonstration that we believe in SOMEONE, not something.

Of course we cannot do this perfectly, but we can do it *substantially*. Students should not graduate from Christian schools feeling, saying and believing that "there really isn't that much difference" between our schools and public schools. If they do, our demonstration has not been merely less than perfect; it has not been substantial. And substantial it must be.

No, our work is not evangelism first. Schaeffer takes some exception to on-the-spot evangelism and seemingly sudden decisions for Christ as the norm. He insists that pre-evangelism, seed-planting, knowledge-sowing integrated curriculum (undergirded with love authentically received from Christ) is vital. Can you think of a better defined task for Christian teachers?

Reflecting soberly, Schaeffer points out that Christ has given the world the right to judge us Christians by our visible revolutionary Christian community. We must live—and teach—so "that the world (including our students) may believe You sent me" for "by this shall all men (again, including our students) know ye are my disciples."

Revolutionary Christianity is not noisy, but extremely visible. It means saying we are sorry. It means forgiving, freely and openly, forgiving before the offender even knows he has offended. It means disagreeing in love when necessary. It means desiring problem-solving more than argument-winning. It means exhibiting *holiness*.

Do we Christian teachers dare to be Christian revolutionaries?

Do we Christian teachers dare NOT to be Christian revolutionaries?

The Truth About Anthony

by Wilma Knoll*

"But how do you know that is true?" Anthony quietly asked. The question and the questioner surprised me, but it was one of those happy moments in teaching. In our eighth-grade art class we had been discussing some artistic principles. We had been looking at Gerard David's painting "Flight into Egypt." Mary is the dominant character in the picture. She is holding the baby Jesus on her lap. The scene is a study of tranquillity, which seems paradoxical when we realize the parents were fleeing to save the life of their little son from King Herod. The peaceful theme of the painting was developed by repetition of horizontal line and the unusual handling of many shades of blue. My dogmatic statement that certain kinds of line and certain colors give a definite quality to a painting prompted Anthony to raise the question. "But how do you know that is true?" I attempted to explain to him that this was a body of knowledge passed down through the ages and now accepted as truth.

Anthony had been a model art student throughout the quarter. His paintings were excellent, indicating powers of observation and retention; he showed strong imagination and unusual sensitivity in all his assignments. And now, this perceptive question. I was curious about him. I checked his academic file and was surprised to learn that his general academic record was not outstanding. His grades were average and below. I also learned that he had a poor self-image. Anthony obviously had some abilities and talents not reflected in his academic record. In art class he had worked quietly and earnestly, hardly ever speaking to his classmates, a most unusual phenomenon in an informal art class of gregarious and very verbal eighth

graders. I strongly suspect that Anthony's social insecurity, academic problems and inability to think much of himself, like the difficulties of many other students with similar problems, are tied into our competitive grading system.

Honest evaluation of students by teachers is a difficult and subjective task, and I do not think that we have arrived at truth in the matter. Neither do I think that we are being as energetic as we could be in searching for truth here.

The important motivating competitive forces generally operative in our Christian schools have been grades: A, B, C, D, F, honor rolls, dean's lists and National Merit Scores. We do confess to some casualties along the way, student who will never learn to read or spell well, be able to do well on an objective test or acquire any mathematical skill. Other casualties we confess to are the gifted students who go through our schools; they never take a book home but get A's and do well on all the objective tests.

Sometimes we advise students who can't make it under our roughly competitive system to attend a vocational or trade school; we say that they will be happier there even though there may be no such schools with any kind of Christian educational philosophy. Or otherwise we just struggle along with the poor students, giving them low marks and reinforcing their self-concept as second-rate



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persons. Better students, we console ourselves, will do all right when they are challenged in college or on their jobs in the work world.

In Christian schools we are dedicated to the ideals of making students accountable and responsible. Our grading system has been helpful in this. We have been successful. For example, managers of companies say, "Send us your graduates from your Christian high school." Those students may be readily accepted in the colleges of their choice and do well when they get there. Those graduates of Christian high schools who go on to Christian colleges and apply for graduate schools may be accepted in good graduate schools throughout the country.

But in spite of all the good accomplished in Christian education, there remains the unknown of what we could be doing to educate students for the Christian life if the traditional competitive grading atmosphere were replaced by a created environment with greater respect for the whole person,

with students not pitted against one another academically but rather permitted to develop according to their own potential. Perhaps this kind of an environment would serve to develop a healthy lifelong attitude toward loving our neighbor, a healthier one than is sometimes demonstrated by the students in and the graduates from our schools.

What will happen to Anthony, my former student? Will he be able to see himself, as he matures, as a unique and worthy person, and overcome some of the insecurities he might have developed as a result of his education? Or will he be so devastated that he can never see he has important gifts and talents? Looking at Anthony now, I think he could go in either direction.

Surely there is no easy formula for helping students do the very best they can with what God has given them. Nor can the secular educators supply many answers in the vital matter of evaluating students. Our task is an ongoing search for truth in the matter.

PERSONALIZED READING: **A Christian Method?**

by Debbie Barnes*

The more or less useful method of teaching reading called Personalized Reading Instruction is in vogue today. I contend that this method is more useful than other methods currently employed.

Description of Method

How can this method be described? First, it is considered personal for several reasons. The student selects the material he will read. When he is interested in what he is reading he is more motivated to learn how to read better. Also, he progresses according to his own rate. He does not have to

wait for others in the group to catch up to where he is or make them wait for him, as often happens in the basal reader method. Finally, and most importantly, the teaching relationship is one-to-one a good deal of the time. It is well known that a one-to-one teacher-student relationship can result in better learning.

Second, this method—and its personal quality—offers formal instruction in skills (although less formal instruction than the basal reader method does). Instruction in skills is systematically presented and the development of competence in the use of skills closely watched. The teacher has individual reading conferences with the student and checks and records the comprehension ability and skills acquired and lacking. The teacher also records what material the student is working on, gives individual help at the time of the conference, and organizes students with the same needs into temporary groups not labelled according to the ability. The teacher's way of working with the

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individual student is orderly, yielding neither chaos nor rigidity; during the conference the other students could be working on reading-related activities.

Advantages and Disadvantages

This method, then, is a combination of reading for pleasure and for learning fundamental reading skills. Its two most significant virtues are its flexibility and its one-to-one teaching relationship. Its goal is to instill and develop a love of reading in students, since the love of reading can enhance the quality of life. The method has two potential drawbacks, however. One, it requires an abundance of reading materials. They must be interesting in terms of content, style of writing and illustration. They must also cover a range of reading levels, since the students are taught at the level at which they are reading and will progress according to their own rate. Two, it requires an extremely competent teacher, to keep track of and guide the reading interests and skill development for many students at the same time. Unless these two drawbacks are realized and handled, the program will likely be ineffective.

In What Way Christian?

This method is consistent with Christian education. Assume that abundant reading materials covering a multitude of subjects are available to the teacher. Then assume that this teacher has the potential for opening up all kinds of areas of knowledge to a student, starting with his basic interest and showing how it relates to other areas of knowledge. It is possible for two things to happen, showing the consistency of this method with Christian education. First, the teacher may open areas the student may use to express his response to God. Since Christians are to give praise and respond to the God of creation in all areas, opening such areas is an important part of the Christian teacher's function. Second, the teacher may show the student the interrelatedness of the disciplines, illustrating that in Christ all things hold together. The student who knows the interrelatedness of content is able to achieve intellectual meaning that helps him remember better what he is learning. Here he might also be made aware of his relationship to the object of knowledge.

But in what other ways is the method Christian? It allows for a student's uniqueness and ability to make choices. Since each student is unique and has different interests, one book, such as a basal read-

er, cannot have stories appealing to everyone in the class. Personalized Reading takes individual differences into account. Each student chooses what he wants to read. Thus he has the opportunity to exercise his God-given ability to make choices and, because he is reading books that he wants to, is likely to find reading more meaningful.

Teacher As Guide

In the reading conference the reading teacher has many opportunities to exercise the task of a responsible guide. As mentioned, the student's interests can be steered into areas related to his main interest, thereby opening up new areas of cultural activity in which he can respond to God. The concept of saturation, "which refers to the materials used in every classroom to induce the child to enter the door of literacy," can be implemented, and the teacher can draw on the content of different disciplines for books to read. (*Hooked on Books*, Daniel N. Fader, Ph.D., and Elton B. McNeil, Ph.D., Berkley Publishing Corporation, New York, N. Y. 10016, 1968. \$.75. p. 26). Thus the reception learning, i.e. "learning acquired through deductive methods using the processes of definition and preorganized content," going on in other subjects can be complemented with discovery learning, as students are directed to books which give a vicarious experience of the content (From an unpublished essay by Geraldine Steensma). Such an effort of directing on the teacher's part will yield personal meaning because it will elicit a response from the whole person to the object about which he is learning and will overcome his inability to think abstractly. Learning can also be made more meaningful and authentic by instructing the student in a particular skill that he needs to understand what is being read.

Cooperative Planning

The reading conference is an ideal time to plan cooperatively what skills the student should try to develop. Cooperative planning recognizes that the student is a responsible person and gives him an opportunity to function as such. It is an effort to elicit responsible obedience in that the student and the teacher have made a contract agreement concerning which course of study the student should pursue. The student commits himself to an assignment or project and *usually* does so willingly, since it is not an arbitrary imposition by the teacher, ignoring needs or interests. If the student fails to keep his commitment, there is opportunity to con-

front him with his responsibility to keep it. The personal relationship between teacher and student established as an outgrowth of the one-to-one reading conferences is an appropriate emotional setting for carrying out the confrontation and working toward reconciliation.

Teacher and Student As King

The teacher, in accord with the Christian view of man, is given an opportunity to fulfill the kingly aspect of office during the reading conference. During this time teacher and student are able to jointly plan those activities which will nurture the student's growth or shape his potential. The teacher perceives each student as a unique person with different interests, needs and rates of learning. The teacher is a responsible guide when directing the student to other areas of interest related to his main area and to books at his reading level; when jointly prescribing for development the skills which he is lacking; and when grouping him temporarily with students who have the same needs. Incidentally, by grouping students on the basis of need the teacher helps do away with that competitive spirit of ability groups which sometimes breaks student relationships.

The student, in accord with the Christian view of man, is given an opportunity to fulfill the kingly aspect of his office. When he is not reading or in a reading conference or skill practice group, he can make products which express his cultural response to God. The products might also fulfill the prophetic aspect of his office by putting knowledge and interpretation in concrete form. Also, if designated a reader's helper, he can function in the kingly aspect of the teacher's office, nurturing other students by responsibly guiding them in their search for a book at their level or in their difficulty with some vocabulary. Thus he learns to use his gift for the benefit of others, a principle definitely in accord with the Biblical teaching on community.

In the groups based on common need, the student would be given an opportunity to develop his social as well as his reading skills. Developing social skills is consistent with Christian education because God requires Christians to love the people they come in contact with. In order to do so people need to know how to interact constructively with other people. Working in groups with other students requires that each student learn to listen to the others in the group. Listening skills need to be developed if the student is to be able to fulfill the priestly aspect of his calling effectively.

Student As Priest

The student should become aware of how to fulfill the priestly aspect of his office by following his teacher's example—an example the teacher can easily set within the structure of personalized reading instruction. The teacher who has used many individual reading conferences to listen to a particular student and read between the lines should be able to perceive his problems and deal with him accordingly. An atmosphere of forgiveness pervading the classroom should cause the students to feel freer to confess and repent if necessary, the first steps toward healing. Also, the students will probably be more creative if they know they will be forgiven their failures. Being creative is definitely consistent with Christian education since a basic Christian premise is that man, made in the image of God, who created the world, should point to the existence of his God. Surely a student points to God's image within himself by creating.

Teacher As Prophet

The teacher fulfills the prophetic aspect of office in terms of reconciliation, commitment, authenticity and community. This fulfillment the method allows with relative ease. The message of reconciliation is communicated when a student is forgiven for not living up to the commitment he made in the cooperative planning of the reading conference. Commitment instead of conformity is requested when the student is allowed a choice of what to read and a vote in the prescription of practice exercises to help him learn reading skills. Authenticity is achieved when the student chooses books according to his interests and also when an authentic method of teaching reading is implemented, that is, phonics skills are developed in the context of reading the student's choice of books. The meaning of community is apparent when a student uses his gifts for the benefit of others by being a reader's guide.

Prophet, Priest, and King

Thus this method allows student and teacher alike to fulfill the prophetic, priestly, and kingly aspects of their office. It takes into consideration the uniqueness and responsibility of man. The total effect of this program that is tailored to student needs is that the value of man is communicated, a value consistent with Christianity. Thus, all the above seems sufficient reason for a Christian teacher to use this method of teaching reading.

Books

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE by Lester DeKoster.
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975.
Reviewed by Stanley Cole, English teacher at Valley Christian High School, Cerritos, California.

Although it should always be the profoundest of our intentions in the Christian schools to found words and deeds on the Bible, right use of the Bible in actual practice can be a nettlesome problem. Controversies about the precise nature of Bible studies in these Christian schools versus Sunday schools and catechism persist. Devotionals for the classroom and chapel require great energy and vigilance lest they become empty ritual or downright sacrilege. We are disconcerted when cold intellectualism seems to chill our spiritual fervor.

The title of this little book illustrates the directness with which DeKoster treats his subject, the right approach to and use of the Bible. We have all come to expect a great deal of eloquence and wit from Dr. DeKoster, but in this book he seems almost deliberately to have set aside his other gifts for the sake of perfect and unadorned clarity.

The thesis of the book is that the true reading of the Bible requires a subservient approach and an obedient response. We may have learned to beware of higher criticism, but especially if we are in the academic world, we can be tempted to treat the Bible with tricks of scholarship we have learned. Also, we often are enamored of endless talk about the Bible; indeed this might seem hard to avoid in the Bible classroom. But DeKoster puts all arid intellectualizing, whether lofty or low, in its place with the telling epithet, gossip, i.e., talk for its own sake, to no higher end. All theorizings and speculations about the nature of revelation, infallibility, and the like tend to place readers above the Bible and safely remove them from acting upon it. Even the most pious talk by itself is "gossip." The true reading of the Bible comes only when the reader is humbled before it and responds to it in loving acts of obedience, tantamount to the life found in

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salvation.

When reading this book, one can at first be inclined to think of it as anti-intellectual. It is not, but puts human intellect firmly in its place, under the Bible. Thus this is a most important and fresh reminder of our true business in Christian education. It should also have a specific value in designing and testing Bible courses.

TEST ITEMS FOR GRADE FOUR, REVELATION-RESPONSE: A RESOURCE POOL OF ITEMS MATCHED WITH OBJECTIVES by Marian Nienhuis, Edgar Bosch and Louis Vos. Grand Rapids, Mich.: NUCS, 1975, 150 pp. *Reviewed by Shirley Wright, fourth-grade teacher at the Bellflower Christian Schools.*

While examining the above materials, I appreciated discovering that the objectives stated vaguely in the Teacher's Guide are here set out clearly at the beginning of each unit. Once those objectives are clarified, the test items as given certainly become useful in classroom questioning and in composing quizzes and tests.

Using these helps will enable the classroom teacher to determine how well the class is meeting the objectives. I was reassured to discover that often I had been using basically these same test items (though only after teaching the series for several years). A teacher using the series for the first year will find this book extremely helpful; all teachers can use it for new slants and ideas.

A few remarks, however, are not this positive. Specifically, some of the objectives will be too lofty and some of the test items too difficult for many students in a typical fourth-grade classroom. Also, there is much more material than I could possibly use in one schoolyear. This, of course, requires the teacher to be selective, a characteristic of good teachers anyway.*

CURRICULUM COMPONENTS IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES FOR THE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL, Second Edition by Samuel Greydanus and Gordon Oosterman. Grand Rapids, Mich.: NUCS, 1975. 98 pp. \$3.95. *Reviewed by Norman De Jong, principal, Bellflower Christian Schools.*

This updated version of *Curriculum Components* is a handy tool if you are as ambitious as the authors. If you want to know what is available for

*Editors note: Similar materials are available for Grades 5-8 also. Each level bears the mark of careful scholarship.

your history classes and what to do in them, here are hundreds of answers. Do you want Simulation Games to enliven your study of economics or political theory? Look on pages 52-58. Do you want to know who publishes Christian analyses of current topics? Look on pages 49-51.

Your course will not come alive overnight, but if you use this handy, well-organized resource tool, you can gradually acquire materials and ideas to challenge your students year in and year out. A periodic dose of it will keep you out of your ruts.

READING WITH A SMILE—90 READING GAMES THAT WORK by Audrey Ann Burie and Mary Ann Haltshe. Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books Ltd., 1975. 200 pp. \$6.95. paperback. *Reviewed by Judy Jansma Kool, part-time reading teacher, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

With the increasing emphasis on individualized instruction in the classroom, many books with ideas for reading games and learning devices have been published. *Reading With a Smile* is one of these, but it appears to have more utility than many I have seen.

The book has three types of games: (1) reading

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readiness games for developing visual motor skills, visual discrimination and perception, and mental development; (2) basic reading skills games to provide practice for word perception, phonetic analysis, structural analysis, dictionary skills, and comprehension; and (3) reading games for the content subjects. Also included are hints for game making, instructions for organizing games, and simple patterns for tracing games. In short, the book provides ideas for games to be used in many facets of the reading program through third and fourth grade.

A real strength of this book is that the emphasis is on using the games to practice, not teach, the skills. Almost all the suggested games can be used independently of the teacher, and most are self-checking to provide immediate reinforcement for learning. The objectives of the games focus on learning skills rather than playing the games. Also, each of the games provides much repetition for learning a particular skill. The book, therefore, is pedagogically sound in meeting most of the criteria for a good practice.

In order to ensure that the child makes the correct response and can retrieve the learning without additional teacher help, the teacher should provide a reference point which highlights the way the skill works. Since the book does not contain suggestions for reference points, the teacher would have to supplement the author's ideas with her own teaching ideas.

For many teachers the price of the book will be a drawback. However, the wide use of inexpensive and common materials and the practical suggestions provided should encourage teachers to overlook the price and purchase the book.

TWENTY-FOUR WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR TEACHING by Kenneth Gangel. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1974. 131 pp \$1.95. *Reviewed by Norman De Jong, principal, Bellflower Christian Schools, Bellflower, Calif.*

A distinctly Christian approach to teaching methods? Here it is. If you teach teachers or really teach, do not pass by this book.

Kenneth Gangel, the recently appointed president of Miami Christian College, is a non-Calvinist every Christian could enjoy and profit from on practically every page. His book is immensely practical, yet written in such a delightful style that you may want to share passages aloud with those nearby. Listen:

In a very real sense testing evaluation is always going on. But it does not always take the form of a teaching

method. Sometimes tests are used as evaluation instruments (that's good). Sometimes they are used as a threat (that's bad). Rarely are they used as a means to convey truth (that's unfortunate).

The examples and illustrations cover many age levels from Sunday school to college classrooms. Some of the examples on the elementary level may taste sour to the sophisticates, but such a possibility should not deter you from wide usage, for this kind of medicine may be just what the good educator ordered.

Recommended highly for college "methods" classes and for in-service enrichment at every level. At this reasonable price administrators may even want to order one for each staff member as a present for the next staff meeting. Whatever you decide, at least get one for your school's professional lounge.

"DIRTY" BOOKS IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS: PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION, NUCS Curriculum Resource Paper No. 8 Henry J. Baron, Grand Rapids, Mich: National Union of Christian Schools, 1970, 1975. *Reviewed by Stanley Cole, English teacher at Valley Christian High School, Cerritos, California.*

Dr. Baron gives a lucid and well-balanced statement of the problem of "dirty" books in the classroom. He underscores the necessity of developing discrimination between truly dirty books and those that are called dirty by some but that have an overall positive impact. He also makes a quiet but forceful case for us and our students to read books which portray the real world with its warts, not an imaginary, air-brushed one. He outlines plainly the responsibilities of writers and Christian readers, teachers, and parents to their reading and to one another.

A large part of this paper is devoted to a detailed application of the criteria Baron has set forth to that *bete noire* of the English classroom, *The Catcher in the Rye*. He provides a concrete example of how tests of appropriateness, potential, and worth are developed and applied.

Baron's most important contribution is the suggestion that criteria for book selection should be established openly and in concert with administrators, and parents, and other teachers. To this end he proposes an adult education program engaging parents in a course for the study of valuable books, some of them "dirty." This seems an excellent suggestion, and this paper would be an excellent manual for such a course.

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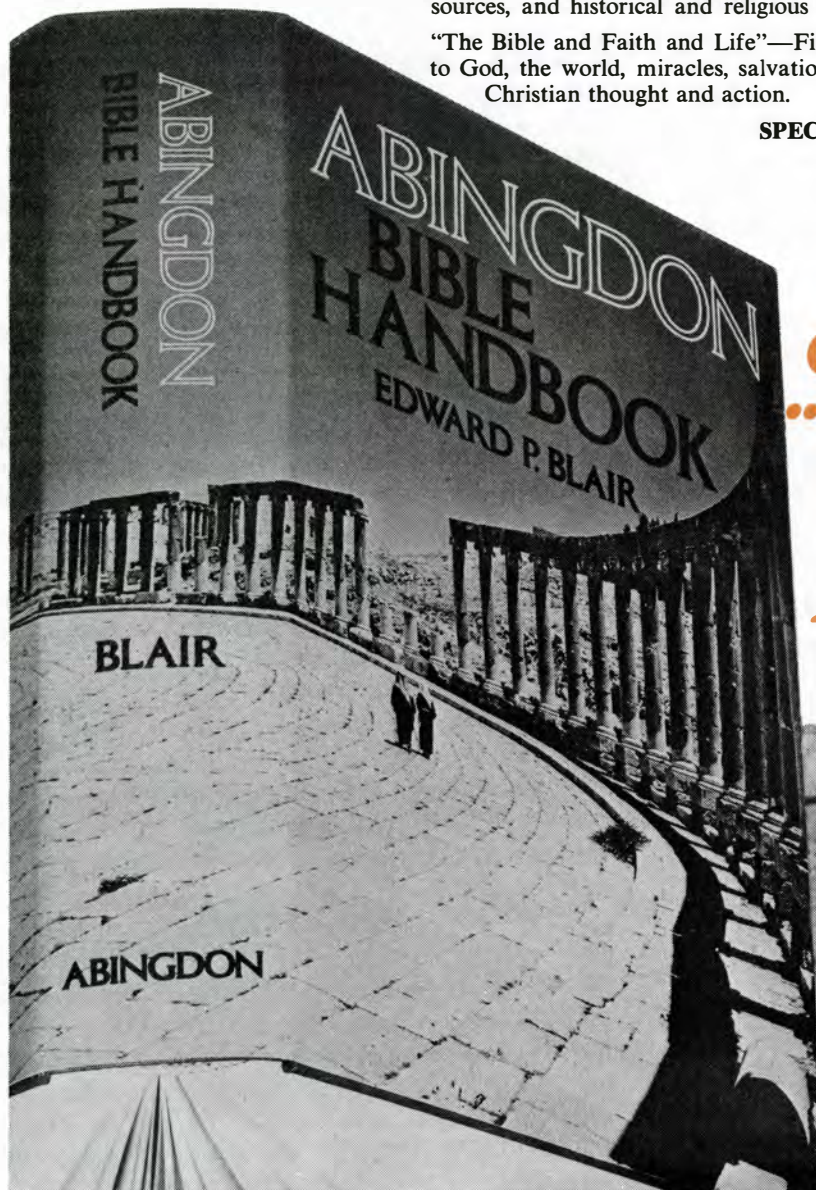
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