

# christian educators journal

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JANUARY 1976



*(See Page 23—  
Evolution and the  
Christian School)*

## The End of Love

When you've  
you quit  
quit loving  
loving the  
all Teacher.  
students,

For those of us who do not remember, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an anxious pedagogue in a strange classroom. Especially when several unpleasant things happen in classrooms, such as having your ignorance exposed by a wrong answer to an easy question, being laughed at for stumbling over your own feet, being whispered about for wearing old, out-of-style hand-me-downs, being trimmed down for breaking a rule you really haven't heard about, or being slandered by a heartless teacher.

Probably half of the guff kids lay on us stems from fear, and is a defensive reaction which wouldn't be necessary if they didn't feel threatened.

Let us learn the art of scaling kids' defensive walls with the hands and feet of love. If we will touch the inner lives of the empty, the weary, and the lonely kids in our classrooms, we will have contributed immensely to the peace of the future and the future of peace.

And—though some would deny it—there's no better way to a kid's mind than through his heart.

### O Father

Teach me the truth that perfect love casts out fear and let Your love shine in my classroom through me.

### Today I Will

Choose one or two students, either the unassuming sort, or the problem kind, and by a touch of love, a look of love, or by giving them some time, I'll let them know I care.

**Bible Fragment:** Matthew 22:37, 38, 39.

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

## Child of God

**Scripture:** I John 2:28-3:3

"Here and now . . . we are God's children" (I John 3:2, NEB).

"Identity crisis!" We hear the cry all around us. Take the above text, put it on your tongue, and let it act as a lozenge and as a tonic for you and for those whom you teach. Meditate on it for a few minutes.

Christians know who they are. They also know that the present—the "here and now"—is very important. We must know about the past, but we cannot dwell there. We must prepare for the future, but we cannot really live beyond today.

Rejoice in the certainty that "here and now we are God's children." We have identity and purpose. We are *alive now!* May God show us how to be alive for Him—to enter into life today with joy and vigor.

This chorus, old and familiar, has often helped me keep my perspective:

I'm a child of the King,  
A child of the King;  
With Jesus as my Saviour  
I'm a child of the King.

**Suggestion:** Make a Bible bookmark for yourself (and for your students if conditions allow). Take a ribbon (1 inch wide, 6 inches long) and with a felt-tip pen write: I BELONG TO GOD. That thought will give you (and your students) substance for the greatest comfort in life and the most reliable guide for all decision-making.

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*From Devotions for Teachers by Nelle VanderArk. Copyright 1975 by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and used with permission.*

# CONTENTS

JANUARY 1976

## I. EDITORIALS, COLUMNS, FEATURES

- 2 **MORNING MEDITATIONS**  
The End of Love, D. Mainprize; Child of God, N. Vander Ark
- 4 **GUEST EDITORIAL**  
Behavioral Determinants, P. Patchen
- 5 **ASYLUM**  
Small Talk, H. K. Zoeklicht
- 8 **What Worked!** G. Rey
- 9 **Thursday's Child: The Middle Child,** L. Grissen

## II. ARTICLES

- 11 **Two Student Letters on Grade Getting,** D. Coray
- 14 **Thank You—I Have My Occupation,** G. Rey
- SPECIAL FEATURE**
- 15 **The Community Ideal in Christian Education,** R. Klapwyk
- 19 **Local Level Strategies for the Development of Christian**  
**Educational Communities,** Sister F. Ruden
- 23 **Evolution and the Christian School,** J. Kuipers
- 27 **School Newspapers and Sports,** G. De Blaey

## III. REVIEWS

- 28 *Many Infallible Proofs,* A. Mennega
- 29 *Hide or Seek,* R. Bulten
- 30 *The International (SI) Metric System and How It Works,* W. Nance
- 30 *The Teacher in the Primitive Church and the Teacher Today,* N. De Jong

- 32 **CARTOON**  
**The New School Building,** R. Jensen \*



*Continuing in this issue we offer to our readers this new service of providing meditations 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 one of them: "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*

## BEHAVIORAL DETERMINANTS

by Pat Patchen\*

A man, on his way to work, picked up the morning paper each day from a young vendor on the street corner. The boy was sullen, arrogant and completely disrespectful to his regular customer who took the paper with a cheerful greeting, paid for it with a smile and always left a tip.

One morning a friend asked the man how on earth he could tip a person who acted like that boy did. "Because," was the reply, "no fourteen-year-old kid is going to determine my behavior."

What a wonderful, practical thought for all of us. How many times have we let the manners and actions of some fourteen-year-old ruin our day or cause us to stew and worry and fret even into the night. Or perhaps it wasn't a fourteen-year-old who did it. It might have been an adult, but the effects were the same. We have allowed someone else to upset us, ruin a good day and spoil our good nature.

We may even willfully attempt to establish our behavior and determine in advance all our actions and reactions for the day. We try and try, resolve and resolve—then along comes some unexpected jolt and all our good intentions disappear and we respond with an automatic "knee jerk" reaction that results in bitterness, resentment and frustration. None of this is from the Lord, nor does it bring glory to His Name.

Habit is a great stabilizer for our behavior. No doubt the man mentioned above could just get into a habit of smiling at the newsboy and cheerfully tipping him. This action when repeated enough times would tend to become automatic and habitual. But habits are not always dependable. Variable conditions and situations influence responses, and some unexpected stimuli will often bring forth a surprising reversal of studied amenities.

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\*Pat Patchen is the Executive Secretary of the National Educators Fellowship, an organization of Christian professional educators. This article was reprinted with permission from the May, 1975 issue of Vision, the publication of that organization.

There is a surer way. If we commit our behavior to the Holy Spirit and lean upon Him for direction there will be no offguard "knee jerk" reactions no matter what other people do. We will be letting the Holy Spirit influence our behavior patterns and determine our reactions—not others, not fourteen-year-olds in our classroom, not fellow teachers, the custodial personnel or a secretary in the principal's office. In fact, not even the principal himself.

If the Holy Spirit is not determining our behavior, Satan will surely move in. He never misses a chance to take over, and when this happens all the wonderful fruit of the Spirit dries up on the vine.

But when we commit our behavior to the Holy Spirit we are assured of certain rewards from Him (Gal. 5:22,23) Our lives bear fruit, and this is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

If we permit the bad actions of others to determine our own behavior, then we can expect to reap the opposite—strife, hatred, greed, wrath, arrogance, impatience and everything else that is the very opposite of love, joy and peace. We have no record of Jesus ever going into shock over sin, and He has sent to each one of us the very same spirit that filled and controlled His life.

Has there been gossip in the faculty lounge today? Has some fourteen-year-old student been particularly devilish in class? Has another teacher goofed off and increased your own work load? Has the principal shown favoritism to another and treated you unfairly? Are things like these determining your behavior today, making you act the way you are acting? Have you reacted from hurt, resentment and bitterness and let this poison infiltrate your very being?

If so, your day has been ruined. You will never see this day again nor have a second chance to rejoice and be glad in it. It is a gift from the Lord. Receive it with thanksgiving and do not permit it to be spoiled by some "fourteen-year-old."



## THE ASYLUM

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# Small Talk

by H. K. Zoeklicht\*

The path which Bob Den Denker followed from the door to the coffee urn was well worn into the tan carpeting of the Omni Christian High School faculty lounge. He wearily but carefully placed the stack of just collected term papers into his comfortable old brief case, edged his teacher's edition of *Vital Issues of the Constitution* gently beside them, and drew a cup of coffee into a styrofoam cup initialed BDD. Classes were over for the day, but in just fifteen minutes the weary history teacher was obligated to keep a promise he had made two weeks before while on an airborne football excursion with several of his colleagues and board member Casey Voddema. Den Denker had reluctantly agreed to articulate for the faculty what he thought was essential in Christian education, or, to make the matter concrete, just why a parent like garage mechanic George Cooper should be willing to pay the tuition to keep his five children in Christian schools. The question was not just academic; tuition was almost \$1000 per student, and enrollment at Omni was slowly declining. Den Denker grimaced as he sipped the old coffee and sank into John Vroom's chair, the one that didn't show stains, to collect his thoughts.

The door opened again, and Klaas Oudman entered, followed closely by Steve Vander Prikkel, both of whom took the ritual path to the coffee urn. Oudman waved at Den Denker and said to Coach Vander Prikkel, "Dummit—a faculty meeting now. You'd think we didn't have anything better to do than to listen to old Rip discuss public relations, chapel schedules, and . . ." "Not today, Klaas, not today. Today Bob is going to tell us why

Christian education is worth it after all. This is one faculty meeting I'm actually looking forward to," interrupted Vander Prikkel.

Other teachers had been drifting into the lounge. John Vroom downed a huge bite of the jelly doughnut he had found in the school kitchen, glared reproachfully at Den Denker for sitting in his chair, and emitted a long, reverberating rumble which came from the deeper recesses of his ample stomach and lost itself in the off-white acoustical squares which made up the ceiling of the lounge. "I don't see the problem," he said, sending his lithe, red tongue expertly over his mustache to pick up a reluctant blob of equally red jelly. "In Christian education we permeate all of learning with the light of God's Holy Word. Everything from a Christian point of view. If we neglect that, Christian education is worth nothing. But if we do it, it's worth everything. Is there any coffee left?"

Oudman put his coffee down. "Ya, you can talk, Vroom, from the safety of your Bible class. But dummit, how do we do that in home ec and typing class?"

"And why should a guy like George Cooper pay all that money, probably a third of his total income, to keep five kids in this school, when only one of them really likes the academic fare we offer around here. Why shouldn't he send them to the public school where they could take courses they like? You yourself said you were probably going to flunk Marty Cooper." Steve hurled his question in rather prickly tones.

"Don't feel so sorry for George Cooper," retorted the Bible teacher. "Last Saturday he charged me fifty-two dollars for a simple brake job. Probably took him an hour. And Marty Cooper spends every evening and all day Saturday working

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\*This continuing cast of characters was created by a Christian educator and controversial coffee cup clatterer writing under an illuminating pen name.

in that gas station. No wonder he doesn't learn anything."

Den Denker grimaced again, this time not from the coffee. But he said nothing. However, Ginny's voice rose an octave. "Really John, can't you understand anything? Except jelly doughnuts? If we of all people can't make Christian schools seem right and sensible and worthwhile to all those people out there, we may as well hang it. Do you ever teach anything about the eighth commandment in your classes?"

Vroom's face reddened. "Now look here, Ginny," he said. "That kind of insinuation is uncalled for in a Christian school. Maybe you ought to take a look at the next command— . . ."

The intercom scratched and stuttered and then the unmistakably cheerful voice of Principal Peter Rip filled the room: "The faculty meeting is about to begin. Room 101 please. Let's not be late."

Bob Den Denker rose grimly from his chair and followed the crowd toward room 101. As they walked down the hall he muttered to Ginny Traan-sma, "I wish I were going Christmas shopping right now." She smiled as she said, "I'm glad you're not. We need you here, right now."

The next thirty minutes were consumed by Peter Rip's agenda which, contrary to promise and expectation, had not been limited to Den Denker's ruminations. Instead Rip had a series of "urgent announcements" about exam schedules, mini-course enrollments, a Mary-Martha Society Tea, and revised class times to accommodate a pep rally. Announcements were followed by Rip's lengthy report on his recent convention trip to New Orleans. At last he concluded: "I hope to take up several of these new ideas I encountered there with you in the near future, and if you don't mind, I'd like to show off some nice slides I took there with my new Mamiya. There was no Mardi Gras of course while we were there, but there are some interesting spots in the old city. And now, Bob, I think we're all ready to hear what you've got to say."

Bob Den Denker looked glum as he straightened in his chair and glanced at his watch. There was a heavy touch of chagrin in his voice when he said, "Well, Rip, how much time do I have left?"

Rip, vaguely sensing some rebuke, reached out for his used Lipton teabag, squeezed the dark red liquid in his half-cup of tepid tea, and answered apologetically, "I didn't think you had a major speech prepared, Bob. But we've got fifteen, twenty minutes left—why don't you just give us a small talk."

Bob ignored Rip's wan smile of encouragement and looked at his colleagues. He felt the slender

vibrations of hostility from some and noted the interested looks of others.

"If I seem hesitant," he started, "it's because I'm not sure how I'm going to cut down what I had planned to say. I think I'll just hit the main points and count on some other occasion to elaborate and explore the implications for ourselves here at Omni Christian."

"The question on the mind of many people, including myself now and again, is whether the dividends Christian education pays out make anyone's investment a worthwhile one. It's our responsibility to take that five thousand dollars of a George Cooper as a serious self-sacrificing investment on behalf of his children. We should be able to prove to him and to all others how seriously we take their trust in Christian education as a worthwhile investment. Let me suggest some ways in which we must prove ourselves trustworthy."

"No school is better than its teachers and no witness is more influential than the mature adults who model Christianity before young learners. Parents have a right to expect not only that we are that brightest and the best in our subject matter and the most competent in making that subject matter interesting and understandable to their kids, but also that we have the highest of spiritual credentials." 48

"Let's be honest. Parents don't get their money's worth if we're too lazy to plan a decent lesson or too unprofessional to keep up with the best thinking and writing in our subject. And parents don't get their money's worth if we're less than devout, committed, Spirit-filled Christians who really try to consistently apply their convictions and values to all the things kids learn about, wonder about, worry about."

"If we're going to prove ourselves trustworthy, we must be dedicated to a personal and collective pursuit of excellence. No person smugly satisfied with mediocrity is going to motivate a student toward high aspirations. By our example and our effort we must instill respect—for knowledge, for creativity in the arts and in the sciences, for competence, for individual differences, for authority, for wisdom, for humility. Let's be done with the narrow concept of excellence that thinks only in terms of high GPA's. Omni Christian must be a place of excellence not only for the few National Merit scholars, but also for the Casey Voddemas that come in and drop out, and also for the vast majority that fits somewhere in between."

Peter Rip, ill at ease now, had again reached for the squeezed-out tea bag, but accidentally dropped the whole bag in the bit of tea left in his cup. He

coughed nervously as Bob continued.

“Excellence implies too that we are obedient and discerning followers of the Way. That Way is not necessarily synonymous with the American Way. We compromise our calling as Christian teachers if we do not help students to clearly see the differences. No one should graduate from Omni Christian without a keen sense of the secular mind and of the points at which it clashes with the Christian mind. Students may not leave here as committed Christians, eager to serve God’s Kingdom on earth. Though we all pray and work for that, of course, that’s finally the Spirit’s work. But no one should be in doubt about the difference between the Christian and the secular mind. We must help students analyze contemporary problems and issues. We must help them evaluate with Christian discernment possible solutions and answers. We must help them think with a Christian mind about scientific theories, about the entertainment world, about books, about political systems, about sex, about money, about church, and worship, about mores, and about a host of other forces and influences in their lives that call out for Christian discernment and response. Unless we do that, consistently, cohesively, individually and collectively, inside the classroom or out—we fail to make the students intellect develop as an integral part of the Christian life. We’re wrong if we separate Christian education from its spiritual-ethical concerns. Let’s remember that the parents don’t just send a brain to school—they send the whole kid who in his totality as a child of God must be educated and developed.

“Let me hit on just one more thing. We must also strive for excellence in love and humility. No scriptural mandate is more clear. We must love and serve our students. No student should go through a day of classes at Omni Christian without sensing and experiencing that spirit of love and service. That doesn’t mean coddling; love knows also how to deal with laziness, with disrespect, with anger, with irresponsibility, with cruelty. But love never rejects a person; it never fails to give and forgive. It discovers students who need help; it gives to students who need a word or a touch or a prayer; it promotes mutual concern and helpfulness; it builds up a sense of Christian community.

“I’ve talked to too many kids who couldn’t tell me how and why their Christian education had been different from what they might have expected in a public school. It’s our responsibility to God, to parents, and to students to do all in our power to insure that no Omni Christian student will ever be able to say that again.

“To do all in our power means much more than sitting here and listening to me. It means that we must work together, many another hour, to search out the implications for the way we teach and run this school, to develop concrete ways for pursuing excellence in Christian education.”

Peter Rip had regained his composure. He turned to Bob brightly and said, “Well, Bob, that wasn’t such a small talk after all. Thank you very much. Meeting adjourned.”

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# WHAT WORKED!

by Greta Rey\*

Christian community is vital for the Christian school, and learning activities involving cooperative interaction among students are both important and gratifying. The following two activities have been successful for Harry Vriend, a fourth-grade teacher from West Side Christian School in Grand Rapids. One is for the classroom community; the second gives children a sense of the broader community of Christians.

## Mathematics game: MARKETPLACE

*Purpose:* to review and reinforce basic addition and subtraction skills after they have been mastered by each student.

*Time:* five one-hour periods, minimum

*Materials:* each student has the following:

- a) Three 8 x 10 tagboards. On each is pasted a sales-catalogue picture of an item and its price.
- b) Play money (may be made by students): five each of 100, 20, 10, 5, and 1 dollar bills; five each of 25, 10, 5, and 1 cent coins (\$682.05 total)
- c) One ledger sheet: first column heading, "Items Bought and Sold"; second, "Cash In"; third, "Cash Out"; fourth, "Cash Balance"

*Activities:*

First day. Review and practice addition and subtraction of money. Mastery is essential.

Second day. Students learn to record the ledger. Each practices two transactions, a sale and a purchase. Sell an item, record in first column, record price under "Cash In", add money received to \$682.05, and show a new "Cash Balance." Follow a similar procedure for a purchase. Be sure each student understands.

Third day. Pass play money and tagboards. Each

student buys and sells one item with his nearest neighbor. He immediately records each transaction, which is computed on a separate sheet of paper to be saved for checking.

Fourth day. Students buy and sell with anyone they please, using only the prices on the cards. Computation and recording are done after each transaction.

Fifth day. Like fourth day, except students may change the prices to whatever they feel the market will support, justifying any changes. It is desirable to have teacher aides or parents to help slower students. A small prize may be given each student who after five days has the same amount of cash as is shown in the ledger.

## Language arts: LETTER WRITING

A simple but practical and rewarding way to reinforce the skill of letter writing is for each student to write to a child in another school. Make a deal with some teacher(s) to swap student names. Communicating with children in another state or country makes letter writing more exciting.

Some very beautiful and lasting friendships can result from this experience. Two former students of mine began writing in grade six. One came from Ontario, Canada, and the other from Michigan. Not only did these two become very good friends, but their families began visiting each other. The students became roommates at Calvin College and graduated together.

Harry suggests that teachers who do not have personal contacts for letter writers in other states or countries try to make arrangements at conventions. Or, you may send me your name and address, grade level, and number of students. I will try to match you and put you in touch with each other. Send to: Greta Rey, 3617 Duke St., Apt. C, Kalamazoo, Mich. 49008.

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*Greta Ray, a teacher of fourth grade at North Christian School, Kalamazoo, Michigan, edits this column designed to give practical, usable plans for the elementary classroom.*



## The Child in the Middle

by Lillian V. Grissen\*

Monday's child is fair of face;  
 Tuesday's child is full of grace;  
 Wednesday's child is full of woe;  
 THURSDAY'S CHILD has far to go;  
 Friday's child is loving and giving;  
 Saturday's child works hard for its living,  
 And a child that's born on the Sabbath day  
 Is fair and wise and good and gay.

(author unknown)

They are facile and adept; they are awkward and uncertain. They act like responsible adults; they act like cantankerous children. They contribute generously when there is psychic payoff; they refuse cooperation when it is costly. They are eager to please when the mood fits; they are adamant in refusal when the mood does not fit. They want total release from parental guidance and authority; they require support and comfort from parents—and teachers—when life gets rough.

They are THURSDAY'S CHILDREN . . . they have far to go.

No longer in elementary school, not yet in high school, transescents are the almost-forgottens. They are like a family's middle child. A mother, in introducing her children to a friend, said, "Here is Tom, my oldest son; Jodi, my oldest daughter; Matthew, my youngest son; and Marcia, my youngest daughter." Then, after a perceptible pause, she added, "And here is Diane, my little nothing-child."

Transescents are the almost-forgottens, not only at home, not only in society, but also and particu-

\*Lillian Grissen is a teacher at the Denver Christian Middle School, Denver, Colorado, and newly-appointed editor of this continuing column.

larly in the educational system of the United States—including Christian schools.

### The Bridge in the Middle

Transescents walk a bridge, the bridge from elementary school to high school. Historically the bridge has been called "junior high school." During the last two decades the bridge has been creaking ominously. M. Ann Grooms says:

If the high school drop-out problem is a fair indication of how well the bridge is operating, it is time to scrutinize the bridge idea. Rather than easing the transition problem, the junior high school may well be alienating the student toward educational achievement later. Educational leaders have discerned an alarming difference in student attitudes towards their personal responsibility for learning during the past twenty years. (Grooms, M. Ann, *Perspective on Middle School*, Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc. 1967)

At the 1973 International Reading Conference in Denver, the speaker said if Booth Tarkington were to write *Seventeen* today, he would have to retitle it *Twelve*.

Twelve, the midpoint between ten and fourteen, statistically makes a convenient average for educators to use in planning education for Thursday's children. But transescents are not statistics; in the space of five minutes or one disturbing event an apathetic amoeba can become an erupting volcano. Does education today recognize that current volatile 10-to-14-years-olds are Tarkington's 17-year-olds of yesteryear?

Education for the middle-school student reminds me of the relatively new American gadget for waste disposal, the merchandized wastebasket into which our weekly waste can be dumped and then compacted into a small cube. Neil Postman, the controversial educator and author, has suggested that we teachers too often act as "bucket-fillers."

Knowledge increases exponentially. SAT scores drop annually. Employers moan, "Kids can't add anymore." College professors wail, "Freshmen can't recognize a sentence when they see one." And we teachers, pressured by the dilemma, try to solve the problem by "dumping" data, facts, figures and concepts into transescent "buckets," hoping that the marvelous brain God gave us will somehow serve as an automatic compactor of knowledge.

Students cannot step right from infancy to adulthood, and they cannot step from childhood to adolescence without traipsing over the bridge. Puberty rites are universal, but in most societies they are more obvious, simpler than ours—and

shorter. Our culture has not-so-obvious rites, and passage is not directly to adulthood but to adolescence. In Nigeria the transition is short and decisive. When a boy has hair under his arms, he is a man; he pays taxes. When a girl is biologically able to bear a child, she is a woman; she marries. But in our land it takes 3½ to 5 years to cross from childhood to adolescence; most of that time is spent in school.

### The Need to Re-evaluate

Our failure to recognize that the 10-to-14-year-old period has phases of development that are more erratic and more widely ranged than those in any other period of time coinciding with years spent in school has created problems in the school-in-the-middle.

We seem to recognize only two *stages*: very early childhood and adolescence. However, there are *three* stages; transcence lies in between. Too often we teachers realize that there is a stage, just what kind we are not sure of, and we treat the *stage* rather than reach the *person* with whom we are working.

Educators realize that today's 75-year-old junior-high school is often inadequate. The junior high school has become a mini-high school. There seems to be frequent agreement that the ninth grade should be part of high school, and sixth grade part of the school-in-the-middle. There is less frequently agreement on whether the fifth grade is elementary or, with the ever-accelerating maturation rate, part of the middle.

Growing disenchantment with the functions and achievements of present junior high schools has led serious educators to study the original junior high school concept. Now called the "middle school concept," it is in reality a return to the original junior high school principles.

This column will speak for and about the school-in-the-middle.

The writing on the subject is increasing in quantity and quality. But what is being written is unsettling for many of us "junior-high" teachers. Who is equipped, qualified, or certified to teach in either the junior high or the school-in-the-middle? Who is *specialy* trained to teach Thursday's child? Many of us have an elementary (K-8) certificate or a high school (7-12) certificate. Most of us, then, are "qualified" to teach the in-between.

Some of us, however, who teach Thursday's children do not dare cross the bridge with our students when we hardly know whether the bridge will carry them safely from the security of early childhood to the excitement of adolescence.

WANTED: WRITERS

If you  
teach—  
you have  
ideas.

*Write  
them  
down!*

Send your thoughts  
and reactions to:

C.E.J.  
c/o MRS. BETTY HESSELINK  
1406 SCENIC HIGHWAY  
LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, TENN.  
37350

# TWO STUDENT LETTERS ON GRADE GETTING

by Don Coray\*

*The following two letters were written by seniors at Eastern Christian High School, North Haledon, New Jersey. The first, written in the spring of 1974, tells why one girl decided not to apply for membership in the National Honor Society, even though she was fully eligible to apply and had an excellent chance of being accepted.*

*The second letter concerns the grading system. It was written in the spring of 1973 by a boy who was critical of the very grading system that had been singling him out for special honors for twelve years. Both letters, in a sense, bite the hand that has fed them. Both are answerable (though neither was officially answered), and, while each letter claims to represent only its author's views, each is probably representative in a broader sense. For the authors' Christian seriousness speaks for itself, suggesting that the questions raised in these letters deserve better institutional answers than the Christian schools of the 1970s are giving them.*

## **To the Sponsors of National Honor Society,**

At first I was going to write you a long letter about my character traits and my leadership qualities and my service to school and community. In fact, I even started it. But then I started to ask myself *why* I wanted to join the National Honor Society. Was it because it would make me feel important? Was it because of the status this club seems to give a parent? Why? What's the purpose of this special elite class of students?

Well, for one thing, their eligibility was first determined by little marks on a card. So I've got some A's and B's and at least 17 points. I've made the first step. But what do those marks mean? That I'm "smart." Either I am brilliant and just whizz through all my courses, so my I.Q. gets me elected, or I really worked my brains out for the "A." Or, perhaps I didn't work for the grades at all. Perhaps

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the grades are totally irrelevant to me. All that matters to me is that I do the best I can in the job in which God has placed me. All I wanted to do was to glorify Him and learn more about His creation. I wish I could say I was like the last one, but I know myself too well to say that. Because for so long grades have been the thing to get. Wow, an "A" and you've really made it! I try so hard not to care about that mark, but I know it does influence me to a certain extent. But what about the kid who worked just as hard as I did, perhaps coming even closer to the calling that God had for him? That person worked with everything he had, simply so he could learn more about God and glorify His holy name. But he just doesn't make the grades, because he's not as intelligent as I am. Of course, he is never even considered for the Honor Society, because he's not intelligent enough.

Sure, I know that in order to get into the Honor Society the members also have to meet other standards, such as leadership and service (and perhaps a certain talent at writing letters). But no one is considered just for his other God-given talents and dedication; he must first get 14 or 15 points, whatever the case may be. Even if he is a much more dedicated Christian than the kid pulling A's and B's.

I really, really wanted to be in the Honor Society. Ever since I saw my first graduation exercises, I wanted to be one of those kids with the all-gold tassels. It was sort of my one goal. Just think: all those people knowing how smart I was. Just think of the feeling of self-satisfaction I would have. *But*, always, always that word comes up. What was that dream? Nothing more than a dream. Just within my grasp, but still a dream. For what does it really mean to belong to the Honor Society? Whether I do or not, I'm still me. If I did belong to it, what would I gain? Already my "A" in chemistry has caused a lot of pain for me. Perhaps it's mostly that I'm overly sensitive. I don't know. But I don't like being labeled the

“smart” one, the one who knows everything in chemistry. Because I don’t and I never will know that much. There’s just too much to know. The creation is just too intricate for my mind to comprehend, and I know that a lot of kids look at the Honor Society kids and say, “Wow, they’re smart.” They envy those kids. Instead of looking at the talents *they* are given, they envy what another person has. It’s like there are two groups in the school: the “smart” ones and the “dumb” ones. And that’s not right. I always think of Christ’s prayer for unity when I hear kids on report-card day. And I want to cry. Because how can we love each other, how can we have real unity, when such a division is caused by something which doesn’t mean all that much? When education—learning about God and His universe—is reduced to mere competition for a silly thing like a letter on a card, then I think it’s about time to reconsider our values. I know that this letter might not do anything. I know that I’m not the only one frustrated about the grades. And I know that I probably can’t do anything to change it all, because even if the grading system could be changed, the students’ minds most likely could not. If for almost 17 years you’ve been told that competition and grades are a way of life (not only in school, but in work and politics and practically every place else—“May the best man win!”), that’s pretty hard to change. And I just wish there were some way I could.

It hurts me not to be in the Honor Society. But it’s not the kind of hurt from disappointment

because I didn’t or couldn’t “make it.” I don’t know if I could have or not. It’s the kind of hurt that you feel when a dream you’ve had for so long has been shattered. It’s the kind of hurt that a little child feels when he’s told that there really isn’t any Santa Claus. That’s the pain I feel. I know I must put away childish things. “When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinkings were all those of a child; now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways.” It hurts to put away that favorite doll or that favorite bottle. It hurts to put away a dream. But it is necessary.

So, instead of a letter which tells you why I am worthy to be in the Honor Society, I am sending you a letter about my shattered dream. And most people will think I’m absolutely crazy and they’ll laugh at me. But even though this will hurt, it would hurt even more for me to join something whose goals I question. And I hope maybe you’ll understand just a bit of what I have been trying to communicate to you. Perhaps my ideas are wrong, but I just couldn’t belong to something which, to my limited vision at least, causes disunity (although unwittingly) in Christ’s body.

Sincerely,  
Ellen Rietveld

**To the Members of the Curriculum Committee,**

I am writing this letter because of the way I feel about our present grading system. I could work around this more tactfully perhaps, but I want to

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come out and say it. I feel that our grading system is not only harsh and unfair to many students, but is also based on something which should be recognized as against our way of life as Christians; its basis tends to lead many students astray. Now that statement probably rubs you the wrong way, but that is not at all my reason for saying it, and I hope that I have not insulted anyone.

But let me explain my statement. First, our grading system is harsh and unfair. You probably disagree, but for many students who are trying to do their best and are being run down by others who do better, it is true. There are students who try their hardest and get mediocre grades; because of these grades they are deemed "not as good" by parents, faculty, and fellow students. I think that this whole attitude is (and here I can't stay away from my second point) wrong. Why should we look down on a fellow human being, a fellow Christian, because his gifts are not in the field of study. And let's face it, this is done continually by most members of our school community, including students, parents, and faculty.

But you might say, "Our looking down at that person is a wrong attitude perhaps, but it really doesn't concern our grading system. We must change our attitudes, not the system." I think, however, that kind of change is impossible. The very grading system itself is the cause of many of these attitudes, and we will not change them until we modify the cause. As students, from kindergarten right on up, our grading system instills in us the belief that A or B is good while C and downward are not as good, no matter how you try. If your best is C work, then face it, pal, you just aren't as good as some others. This is the attitude that we have. I have always done reasonably well in school, and I have been led at times to believe that I was better than other students. I wasn't born with that attitude. It was fed into me by our entire system. And let's face it, that is a wrong attitude, especially for us as Christians. All persons (including students) are equal in God's sight. Who are we as measly humans to elevate ourselves above one another? Agreed, some people do study better than others, but that doesn't make them any more *people* than others. If we knocked off our present grading system, I think it would greatly reduce these feelings. Oh, bad attitudes would still be there, but the whole "good grade, good person; bad grade, bad person" consciousness would be greatly reduced, as I feel it must be.

Another major argument against our grading system is that it makes students lose sight of the whole purpose of going to school. What is the

purpose of going to school? What is the purpose of life? We as Christians have the only true purpose: to glorify God. And yet, what do many of our students look for in school? The grade. Now surely one can glorify God by doing well in school, but all too often that is not the case. All too often the grade is an end in itself and not at all a means through which to glorify God. But for that matter, God knows more accurately than anyone else how well or poorly we are doing in school; He doesn't need a report card (He who knows our very hearts and lives). So, there you have it; a few arguments very important to me. But let me also consider a few of your possible counter arguments.

"If we had no grades," you might ask, "how would colleges know whether to accept our students?" Well, you are right: in spite of the growing importance of college boards, colleges still rely heavily on grades and may have to. After all, they want to know what kind of students they accept or reject. For this, one of the main arguments, I must compromise my stand. Until our entire system, country-wide, changes (which may happen) we do need some standard. My suggestion would be to keep two records, one a simple pass-fail mark to show to the student (information he should have anyway), and the other a regular scale kept confidentially in the guidance office for college use only. This, you might say, would be unfair to the student. Why let others but not him know how he is doing? My answer is simple: if a student is curious, let him talk to the teacher, something which I feel should be done more often. The teacher would not secretly give the student his grade but would talk with him about his strengths and weaknesses; this, I think, would be much more helpful than a scratch mark on a piece of paper. This might mean more work for teachers, for they would have to be concerned somewhat more personally with all of their students. But shouldn't it be that way anyway?

"But," you might say, "wouldn't this teacher telling a student how he is doing be the same as what we have now?" Not at all. I think it would be much more personal, would mean more, and would help a lot in eliminating some of the bad attitudes which I wrote about earlier. Also, if the parents of a student want to know how the student is doing, let them talk to his teachers, or, more important, to the student himself, something which isn't often done.

One of the final arguments might be, "Without grades, students would have no incentive; they would become lazy." I would say to that: if a student, especially in this Christian school, is

working only for the grades, then perhaps he had better reconsider his priorities.

I guess that's about all I have to say for now. I would just like to add that I have thought seriously about this and am sincere and have hoped and prayed that you will consider this seriously. I know

my proposal is far from being all worked out, but I don't think it is impossible and would be willing to discuss it with anyone. I thank you for reading this lengthy discourse.

Yours in Christ,  
Jack Van Hoff

## Thank You—I Have My Occupation

by Greta Rey\*

Last winter when we were hearing so much about the recession, I looked around and wondered where it was. The stores where I shopped were always busy, the concerts well-attended, the restaurants crowded, parking lots full. The children in my class always had money for whatever they needed and wanted. I knew of no parents out of work, and realized that the Christian community in which I work constitutes a very blessed group of people.

Some time during the winter, when I was feeling blue, I made a list of all the good reasons why I should quit teaching. One was that we older teachers grow stale in the job, and should give way to the younger, vibrant, visionary teachers coming out of college, and who are having such difficulty finding jobs. It was a noble thought, when I wasn't facing the reality of having to find a new job. But when spring came, I became practical, got cold feet about giving up security, and found it very easy to sign.

Then one day I happened to pass the building of the Employment Commission. It was mobbed. There was a regular traffic jam outside. Suddenly the reality of the recession hit me, and I knew how utterly fortunate I was to have a job. I began singing the song line, "Thank you—I have my occupation."

Sure, I'm in teaching for the money. I have to support myself. But that doesn't have to detract from the nobility of the job. As I thanked God for my occupation, it occurred to me that there is a lot more to thank Him for than job security. We older teachers may well consider, as school opens again next fall, that this is one of the few occupations in which we *can* be repeatedly noble. We might try to recapture some of the idealism we had when we started teaching. We would do well to appreciate the parents who still have the vision for their

children that prompts them to send them to us, to the extent that in these hard times they will make financial sacrifices to do so. We, too, are persons of vision, with a vision to be passed on the children. We can step out of our well-worn molds, and make teaching and school new and exciting. We can learn from the responsible youngsters coming out of college into our professional ranks. And all this, thank God, can be done in the spirit of love in which the Christian school community operates.

At the beginning of this new calendar year, let's join our hearts in singing, "Thank you—I have my occupation."



**If you are in Christ,  
you can do as you please....**

Here's why. Ideally, if you are close to Him, your will and His are so closely tied together that you live as He wants you to.

That's the kind of issue that the NUCS's new Biblical Perspectives series for young people raises. And, because the Christian life in today's world is so complex, these books give you no simple answers to any of those issues. Rather they ask you to learn a process, based on biblical guidelines, for doing your own deciding. A set of six discussion-starter cassette tapes are also available for group or classroom.

Want more details? Write . . . .



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\*Greta Rey is a teacher of grade four at North Christian School, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### FOR STAFF MEETINGS OR FACULTY-BOARD COMMITTEE USE

*The following two articles, one theoretical and one more practical and programmatic, are provided to help those school faculties and boards who wish to strengthen their educational distinctiveness through a series of meetings among themselves concerning their Christian commitment.*

*The first article, by a Protestant educator, and the second, by a Catholic educator, comple-*

*ment each other and call us all both to re-think our concept of Christian community and to act on it collectively. Together they suggest both a clarification of our vision about Christian education and an agenda to follow in realizing it more fully. They are offered by CEJ as a service to those administrators and teaching staffs who wish to undertake a year's project of staff meetings to build greater feelings of community.*

*Managing Editor*

# The Community Ideal in Christian Education

by Ray Klapwyk\*

The sociology of education was a major emphasis during my graduate studies in education. The reason was that I believed a study of the social relationships in an educational system (pupil-pupil, pupil-teacher, staff-staff, staff-board, and school-community) would lead me to a more comprehensive perspective on what education is all about.

I would like to lead you on a brief journey into this sociology of education, presenting you with some Christian perspectives and then applying them to some specific practical situations.

Let me begin with a few warnings. I am not an expert in sociology, and I do not intend to throw around a lot of technical jargon. So my first warning is that if you are reading this article to learn some principles of educational sociology in a systematic way, you might as well stop here. That is not my bag, nor do I believe it should be. I have read quite a bit of literature about how things *are* in various school systems, but it seems obvious to me that in Christian school systems we should be concerned about how things *ought to be*. If we

forget that, all we do is mimic, copy what goes on in the secular world around us. Christian schools ought to be leaders in a secular world. Is yours? My examples will illustrate to you why my concern is more talking about *ideals* and about what *ought to be*. That is why I intend to throw aside much of what you will likely read elsewhere, and instead write to inspire you and your schools to be Christian examples.

My second warning is that I cannot present you with formulas and easy solutions to your practical problems. As a member of the Ontario Christian Teachers Association I served on committees which planned inservice summer programs for teachers. I often heard the remark, "Why do we have to hear this philosophy again? Why not make it *practical*?" It should speak to me as a teacher. The course should help me teach, not just help me philosophize about teaching." I used to agree, but after a few years of teaching and administration I now am convinced that this desire to be spoon-fed helps few teachers become better Christian teachers. They will end up doing something because someone suggested it or it worked for someone else, but they should be doing only what they believe they can responsibly do in answer to their God-given

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calling to Christian teaching. My point is: finding solutions to practical problems is *your* responsibility. You can become a kind of machine when you tune in to the suggestions of others. You can be a good Christian teacher when you tune in to the Word of the Lord.

Now my subject, "The Community Ideal in Christian Education." Since I am a Christian, and since you are likely to be Christian teachers in the Reformed heritage, my perspective will be quite different from that in many books on the sociology of education. In my search for Christian writings on this subject, I was appalled by the lack of material. So if I do not quote often in these introductory remarks, except from the Bible, that is simply because few Christian educators have written on the subject.

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**Dr. Vrieze defines a community as a body of people driven by a fundamental motive that governs them in all their thoughts and actions.**

**I have learned to accept this idea of community as an important concept for Christians.**

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Let me begin by mentioning some of the writings which influenced me in forming the basis for my writing.

First there is the intriguing notion of studying history as the history of communities; it is found, for example, in Dr. M. Vrieze's *The Community Idea in Canada*. This booklet was published in 1966, after Dr. Vrieze's lectures that summer to a summer student conference. It suggests that the Canada of today consists of a number of interests that find their cultural root in the histories of various European countries, including Britain. Each root was transplanted to Canadian soil, ultimately becoming an ideal shared by a community of people. He mentions the ideal of Corpus Christianum, the French Roman Catholic heritage spread by the Jesuits; the ideal of Anglicanism, which proclaimed national unity in the name of human reason and the universality of the Christian religion; and finally the ideal of democracy, which attempted to bring all Canadians together under the notion that because individual man is supreme the various cultures ought to co-exist in peace.

Dr. Vrieze defines a community as a body of people driven by a fundamental motive that governs them in all their thoughts and actions. I have learned to accept this idea of *community* as an important concept for Christians. It means in a real

sense that the whole (community) is greater than the sum of the parts (members), because the ideal which binds the community together also guides the life of every member of that community.

This dynamic of the community ideal is an important key to an understanding of the Old Testament. Moses, the leader of God's people, kept the people together by guiding them in all their actions via an appeal to their common allegiance to God and His law.

O Israel, listen: Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. You must love him with *all* your heart, soul and might. And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. Tie them on your finger, wear them on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house.

In the years to come when your son asks you, "What is the purpose of these laws which the Lord our God has given us?" You must tell him, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with great power and mighty miracles—with terrible blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. We saw it all with our own eyes. He brought us out of Egypt so that he could give us this land he had promised to our ancestors. And he has commanded us to obey all of these laws and to reverence him so that he can preserve us alive as he has until now. For it always goes well with us when we obey all the laws of the Lord our God!" (Deut. 6)

A secular humanist might say, "Look, that Moses was a real guy. He coerced the people of Israel into submission by making them serve a God they could not see. To doubt the existence of such a God was like committing the unforgivable sin, and that led to excommunication. Moses used the tactic of instilling fear and trembling in his subjects, so that you became persona non grata if you so much as broke a single commandment or in any way opposed his autocratic hold on every Israelite." Christians who have been taught that *love* is the fulfillment of the law look at it differently. God's people were a true community. They were bound together by a common bond of faith, taught first by Moses and later by the Levites. Christians can understand why they had to be Israelites to be saved. Faith in the one God determined every action, it even determined geographical boundaries, and it set the pattern for the growth of every tribe and every family and every person.

This background of the Old Testament ethic gives Christians a good insight into the dynamic of community consciousness in New Testament times.

What was seemingly imposed on the Israelites externally by God through Moses now forms the basis for the integration of the human personality upon which is built the social structures of the new humanity. Let me explain.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit signaled the start of a new era for God's people. They no longer had Moses and his law. Now they had the Spirit and a renewed heart; this heart, in response to God's call, became the moving force upon which God has built His church. That is why when Christians progress in faith in the communion of the saints, they no longer think of the burden of the law but are reminded of the promises inherent in the gospel. They do not think merely of Sunday worship, but of life as worship. In fellowship with God's people everywhere, they are caught with a fire which turns the world upside down; they no longer regard part of life as secular, part as sacred, but want to dedicate *all* of life to God's service.

This reminds me of the community confession which Paul writes to the Romans:

May God who gives patience, steadiness, and encouragement, help you to live in complete harmony with each other—each with the attitude of Christ toward the other. And then all of us can praise the Lord together with one voice, giving glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:5-6).

Let me summarize some of the elements essential in this concept. Then I will apply them to some educational settings.

1. *A Common Faith*. In John Dewey's book of that title, he suggests that *all* men have enough in common to disregard their differences and still live at peace. History can prove him wrong. Men's differences create numerous communities at war with one another. The peace he seeks for all men is possible only within communities, and even then it is only temporary.

2. *A Desire to Serve*. When the ideal of a community has been acknowledged as the bond which unites, the community will last only as long as all members give their undivided loyalty to that ideal. The tasks may be different, as Romans 12 points out, but the aim, the objective, is understood and shared by all.

3. *Mutuality*. Each member must acknowledge the peculiar way in which the other wishes to serve the community. Under the supremacy of the ideal is a division of tasks, but an equality of persons. All the members are created in God's image and called to live with others in such a way that they also can be imagers of God. This element is the

essence of true "communication." I distinguish this from "dialogue," a statement of opinions not shared because the ideals which gives rise to them are not compatible.

These three elements can be made more explicit by citing some specific applications.

Dr. D. Oppewal has written "The Roots of the Calvinistic Day School Movement," an interesting study of faith, credo, as the driving force behind school communities. He makes it clear that the *faith* of a people binds them in such a way that they decide to combine forces and build for their children schools where their ideal is promoted. At the same time, he writes, Christian school communities, because they are not *really* communities, have their difficulties. The Christian schools, in his opinion, are supported by Calvinists who do not

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**All the members are created in God's image and called to live with others in such a way that they also can be imagers of God. This element is the essence of true "communications."**

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stand together because they are divided by different credos and educational philosophies.

Some time ago, Mr. John Olthuis and Mr. Adrian Peetoom collaborated on a series of articles entitled, "Schools and Communities." This study of the community ideal in Christian education states that the Christian community, consisting of homes, schools, and churches, combines to prepare the young and improve the older members for living a life of Christian discipleship in a world torn by sin.

In December, 1973, I worked in Ontario with three other Christian school principals on a document to present our philosophy and practice to the Ontario government and public. We explained our idea of a Christian community as a community within a body politic that consists not of a majority culture but a multitude of communities differentiated according to their respective faiths and respective functions. We also made the following case for viewing the classroom as a "mini-community":

The class is more than a group of individuals. Together the teacher and students form a 'mini-community' in which the total living and learning can be practiced daily according to the Lord's blueprints. The stronger students help the weaker ones. The right ways of living are practiced and corrected. Obviously much of the learning must provide room for making mistakes. Together the students share, forgive, acknowledge each other's duties and privileges. Little

ones learn from simple experience in their daily activities what the authority of the teacher is and how children can live together in a wholesome way. Older children explore with their teacher the distinctiveness of the typical task, for teacher and student. They learn that authority, freedom, and obedience are meaningfully related without conflict when everyone in that class community places himself in the service of the Lord.

Within such a setting, the interaction leads to insights that involve the students. Solutions aren't quick applications of Bible quotes. No, the students begin to search together to solve problems of oil shortages in the understanding that any concrete action must reflect the guiding principle 'Love me and my neighbour.'

A congenial class climate is a crucial factor in providing the setting for meaningful learning. Mutual trust opens up the possibility of learning. In an atmo-

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**I wonder how many of us take seriously the importance of involving the community in the school. I do not just mean inviting volunteers to help or having a good Home and School Association. I mean ensuring that the Christian community is at work with the teaching staff as curriculum changes.**

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sphere of teacher lack of interest or tug-of-war mentality between teacher and student, little meaningful activity does take root (pp. 26-28).

Another application: When I arrived in Edmonton I discovered that the Christian school community there had just been through several years of intense infighting on the matter of teacher salaries and working conditions. This had left a sour atmosphere in many a staff room. It created such tensions that even the teaching was affected adversely. What was the problem? The community failed to function as a community. The labor relations concept of adversaries had predominated. Teachers were on one side. The school board was on the other. And the school board treasurer was the chief negotiator. Decisions were arrived at by means of offers and counter-offers. No wonder that when the fighting was over, both parties felt that the cause of justice had not been served. Our later solution was simple and an important application of the community ideal. We appointed a committee consisting of representatives from the staffs, the board, and the community (neither teachers nor board members). This committee conducted hearings with all the staffs and the board, then

prepared a preliminary proposal. When it was clear that the interest of the community as a whole was so reflected in the report that a fair salary was met by a plan for equitable income, the committee submitted the proposal for adoption. (A similar procedure, incidentally, is advocated by the National Union of Christian Schools in its handbook for board members.)

Within our West Edmonton Christian School too I see reflections of the community ideal, especially in two current projects.

The first is an attempt to recognize the interests and the potential of each pupil through a personalized reading program. I will not extol the virtues of personalized reading now, but I am sure that members of our staff will tell you this program does justice to each student and enriches the other parts of the curriculum as well.

The second is a combined effort to integrate Christian curriculum by using the Biblical view of man and society as the focus. At the primary level we are using the *Joy in Learning* program. The staff needs ideas on precisely how to work this out, and we will have to be certain that changes are pedagogically responsible. We certainly do not plan to de-emphasize skill-building, nor to use the students as guinea pigs. But we do want to guide them through experiences designed to help them see themselves and others as children of God who live as stewards on His great earth.

I wonder how many of us take seriously the importance of involving the community in the school. I do not just mean inviting volunteers to help or having a good Home and School Association. I mean ensuring that the Christian community is at work with the teaching staff as curriculum changes. That the Christian homes and the Christian school remain partners in Christian education. That the Christian churches cooperate with the Christian school by providing compatible programs of study. In our world this is a necessity.

Finally, in my concern for community teachers I want to stress that while *teaching* used to be the focus, Christian teachers should be conscious that *learning* is what it is all about. Often we become frustrated; we plan but see so few plans materialize, because we act as if it all depends on us. Teachers in the Christian school should consider themselves part of a community. Beside them stand the parents and the rest of the community. Besides, the objective of teaching is not to be an effective manipulator of the lives of students. The objective is to become redundant as teachers because all students teach themselves and take for themselves the responsibility for learning.

# LOCAL LEVEL STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

by Sister Frances Ruden, OSF\*

This article could be entitled "Moving from the Concept of Faith Community to the Reality." Focus throughout is on strategies designed to assist local schools in moving from the theory of faith community to its dynamic existence. We do not mean to say that a strategy can cause faith community, nor does such planning hope to manipulate God. However, we do hold that planned activities are helpful in preparing an environment in which believers can open their hearts to receive God's gift of Himself. The Lord Himself gives the growth.

In the developing faith community, strategies become loving actions which prepare members for religious growth and for commitment to the Lord Jesus.

To facilitate this move from concept to reality, leadership in the Archdiocese of Dubuque designed a procedure which has been used successfully both in our diocese and in other parts of the country. That procedure accompanied by a model plan is contained in a manual entitled *Community of Faith: A Self-development Process*.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this article to explain that process and its use. In addition, a variety of alternatives to the process will be given as possible strategies to use

\*Reprinted with permission from Notre Dame Journal of Education, Fall, 1975.

<sup>1</sup>Published and distributed by Office of Education, Archdiocese of Dubuque, 1229 Mt. Loretta Ave., Dubuque, Iowa 52001.

for the development of faith community.

To initiate the use of the self-development process and to train local leadership, area workshops were conducted for the coordinating teams from the schools in our system. In preliminary directives to schools, it was recommended that teams be made up of competent and willing persons—lay and religious teachers who had the support of their peers; the principal and whenever possible a priest associated with the school. In order to be authentic, team members would have to witness personal conviction for faith community as they presented the process to their confreres.

During the workshop the teams were involved in a simulation which brought to life the self-development process. Though all experienced the

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**In the developing faith community, strategies become loving actions which prepare members for religious growth and for commitment to the Lord Jesus.**

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same process, teams were free to adapt it for local use or even to use another procedure. Whatever their choice, there was the expectation that they be leaders in initiating a plan for their school. Hopefully, they would serve as facilitators leading their entire faculty in the development of a faith community plan.

## The Self-development Approach

In the local school the trained team began the process with the challenging questions:

What makes our school unique?

How are we different from our neighboring public school?

Lively discussion groups grappled with these questions. Personal values and educational philosophies had to be laid on the line and thoroughly discussed before a uniqueness statement could be written. After a presentation of the statements by each group to the total faculty, the concepts had to be combined into a single goal statement. Participants were told that the process of coming to agreement on a shared goal was more important than a perfectly worded statement. Actually when a faculty responds honestly, they will arrive at the goal they are ready to pursue. For example, in their initial year, a faculty may agree only that there be togetherness in a Christian environment. In succeeding years after the group has grown

together, they will be ready to articulate that Jesus is Lord of their community; His life unites them and calls them to service.

Upon completion of the goal statement, simulation is interrupted and the presuppositions that underlie faith community presented. Those seeking to be united in faith community must recognize that faith is a gift from God, that Jesus the Lord is their unifying bond, that prayer is essential and that the school community is interrelated with other communities.

A goal statement is but a group of words until its meaning is envisioned. Step two of the process focuses on the ideal community of faith:

What are the characteristics of an ideal community of faith?

What qualities would you find in the members?

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**Since teachers tend to focus on activities for their students, . . . they will need reminders to project activities for teachers and parents as well as for students. They will need encouragement also to make their activities practical and specific.**

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What activities would be going on there?

In a brainstorming activity faculty members listed words/phrases describing a faith community as it would be observed if visited. This task accomplished, participants sat back and reflected on the word picture before them. Their task now was to develop intermediate steps that would enable them to move from their present reality toward the ideal just described. Focusing again on their representation of the ideal community, the group selected themes (categories) which encompassed the descriptive words and phrases. Each general theme that emerged was later to be formulated as an objective or, if you prefer, an outcome to work toward. In our experience the themes that emerge usually center about worship (celebration), fellowship (love, concern) and service or, in some cases, combinations of these.

In step three the move is from themes to objectives. A single objective replaces each theme which has now served its function. In writing the objectives, emphasis is on clarity and simplicity, thus avoiding needless delays as a result of semantics and/or the formulation of the objectives.

As soon as the objectives are stated, the faculty working in small groups writes numerous activities for each objective. Since teachers tend to focus on

activities for their students, rather than for themselves, they will need reminders to project activities for teachers and parents as well as for students. They will need encouragement also to make their activities practical and specific. Generalizations such as "acts of service" are made concrete in activities such as "visit to patients in the nursing home"; "bulletin board assistance to fellow teachers"; "pupil tutoring," etc. Many activities are needed for each objective so that members of the community can select the appropriate activities for a given time. Focus is always on the objectives; appropriate activities must be chosen to facilitate growth toward each objective.

No plan is complete without a procedure and time schedule for self-assessment. Step four adds this essential component, for the best-laid plan would soon be ineffective without periodic assessment. As the evaluative procedure is developed, it must be remembered that the objectives are in the affective domain, hence not readily measured. Still there must be a plan to assess the growth of the community toward each objective; activities are not assessed though their usefulness will probably enter the discussion. Following the assessment, positive action for growth is projected.

In step five the plan which now includes a goal statement, objectives, numerous activities, and a self-assessment procedure is given to an editing committee. Their task is to coordinate the whole in an attractive manner while retaining the content and flavor as written by the group. Again, the process of designing and coming to an agreement on a single plan which is "owned" by the faculty is far more important than a perfected product by a few. In some cases faculties have become so committed to their production that they spontaneously added their signatures.

Just as in other kinds of planning, the faith community plan must be reviewed annually with adaptation and/or revision as appropriate. Somehow this review ought to be a renewing experience which again calls the faculty to commitment.

### **Alternate Strategies**

Schools with which we work have frequently adapted the Self-development Process to meet local needs and circumstances. Whatever the process used, we would say from experience that a coordinating team is of prime importance both in initiating and in keeping the program moving. This team which usually includes the principal is the core group responsible for this important dimen-

sion of the school program.

The variations of the Self-development Process that follow have been found useful both in establishing an initial plan and/or as a developmental approach in succeeding years. It is up to the coordinating team to consider faculty readiness and then determine which approach is more suitable at the given time.

In any approach the faculty, directed by a coordinating team, designs the plan. This kind of participation brings about a plan that belongs to the group and which will most likely obtain its active support. Readers will note that procedures for each alternate process are similar to those described earlier.

#### Statement of Uniqueness Approach:

1. A statement of uniqueness is written in response to the question, "What makes our educational program different from that of the public school?"
2. Present strength/growth areas are defined.
3. Needs; areas to be improved are listed.
4. Objectives for the year are established in the light of the first three responses.
5. Activities for each objective are projected.
6. A method and time of assessment are planned.
7. A committee edits and distributes the plan.

#### Brainstorming Approach:

1. The leader asks the faculty to focus on a well-developed faith community. What would be observed? What are the qualities of the members? What activities are going on?
2. The brainstorming technique is used to list on the chalkboard or a large paper phrases which describe the faith community they envision.
3. The strengths of the present school community are defined.
4. The needs of the present school community are listed.
5. A plan of action is designed which includes objectives, activities, and assessment.
6. A committee edits and distributes the plan.

#### Theme Approach:

1. The faculty selects a broad faith community theme for the year.
2. Themes which flow from the broad goal are brainstormed; a selection is made for each month (or quarter) of the year.

- a. A committee is named to develop each theme.
- b. Throughout the year each committee with some faculty input develops the theme:
  - activities for faculty and students
  - culminating activity (liturgy, assembly, ...)
  - assessment.
3. Themes for the year/month with the names of persons on committees are distributed to the faculty.

#### To Teach As Jesus Did:

1. Faculty members gather in small groups to study selected passages from *To Teach As Jesus Did* (Sections 13, 23, 28, 104).
2. After study and silent reflection the following

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questions are answered individually and then shared in small groups.

What is the message for us?

What have we done thus far?

3. Each small group reports to the entire faculty.
4. The following question is considered individually, then answered either in small groups or in the total group if the faculty is small.

What are our next steps?
5. As the next "steps" are given in large groups, they are listed for use in formulating objectives for the year.
6. Activities for each objective are written.
7. A method and time of assessment are planned.
8. A committee edits and distributes the plan.

#### Planning Process:

1. The faculty working in small groups with consistent feedback from the entire faculty answers the following questions and designs the community of faith plan.

Where are we in the development of community faith? (needs)  
Where do we want to be? What is the ideal we want to strive for? (goal)  
What must be done to get there? (objectives)  
How will we do it? (activities)

After we have begun, how will we assess ourselves? (assessment)

**From Values to Action:**

1. The faculty is provided with value questions based on statements from *To Teach As Jesus Did*.

After reflecting on a given quotation, participants are to rank order the values.

Sample items follow:

- a. "Christian education is intended to make men's faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction. . . ." TTJD 102.

WHICH "LIGHTS" OF INSTRUCTION DO YOU SEE CONTRIBUTING MOST?

- moral education
- a Christian curriculum
- a community of believers
- a professionally competent teacher

- b. "Christian fellowship grows in personal relationships of friendship, trust and love. . . ." TTJD 24.

WHICH ARE OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE IN BUILDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF FRIENDSHIP, TRUST & LOVE?

- consistent discipline requiring respect from all
- the teacher's example of love and trust
- a variety of experiences that build each person
- allowing friends/groups to work cooperatively.

2. After individual rankings are completed, a quick large group tally on an overhead projector usually fascinates the group for it graphically reveals diversity and at the same time much similarity in the values of participants.
3. Choices are clarified in small group discussions. This part of the process is extremely important because participants come to realize that though differences exist, the group has much in common. It is important that each person's values be respected and that opportunity be given for clarifying minority choices.  
Groups are asked to discover their consensus of values.
4. The entire group hears the consensus of values that emerged in each small group. Thereafter, the facilitator leads the group to the articulation of a shared vision and goal statement.

5. Objectives are now formulated as intermediate steps toward the group goal.
6. Activities for each objective are written.
7. A method for assessment is planned.
8. The plan is edited and distributed to the faculty.

We offer these strategies for what they are, simple procedures that have worked for our people. It is our joy to share another piece of good news that is coming from our faith communities. The needs and strengths of our people have brought to life a Source Book for Faith Community by educators and for educators. Its rich contents are not dreams but actual "creations" that have been successfully used in the schools. Included are ways to keep the program moving; faculty development services; activities and processes; fully and partially developed themes; numerous liturgies and prayer services; modes of assessment; and dozens of idea starters. As its title suggests, *Seeds, Signs, and Promises*<sup>2</sup> contains "seeds" and "signs" gathered from the field to be reused creatively by faith-filled people who want to come to still greater "promise."

The signs and promises of faith community are widespread. We realize that ours is but one contribution among numerous other effective procedures and materials being developed and used by educators. One highly effective tool that immediately comes to mind is *Give Form to the Vision*, developed by NCEA. The reader will have other favorites to add.

In conclusion, it is important to say again that growth in faith community is the work of the Lord. The most elaborate plan implemented by people who are simply doing activities cannot yield much fruit; growth will likely spring up for a time and then wither away. On the other hand, even a very simple plan in the hands of faith-filled people desirous of sharing love and service will likely yield one hundredfold. Whatever the plan, focus throughout must be on the Lord Jesus. No matter how earnest our efforts, we will never really understand the resulting growth. Faith community endeavors are like seeds thrown on the land. "Night and day, while we sleep, when we are awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, we do not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mark 4:26-28). The mystery is Christ among us (Col. 24).

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<sup>2</sup>Published and distributed by Office of Education, Archdiocese of Dubuque, 1229 Mt. Loretta Ave., Dubuque, Iowa 52001.

# EVOLUTION

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## AND THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

by Joel Kuipers\*

I sometimes wonder whether people ever change. I don't mean just their clothes, cars, and life-styles, but their ideas, and their way of looking at the world. Maybe a thousand years from now as Anton Chekhov wrote, "Men will fly in balloons, change the style of their coats, discover a sixth sense, perhaps, and develop it, but life will remain exactly the same—difficult, full of mysteries, and happy."



In this last decade, many traditional ideas were challenged in the Christian schools. During the

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\*Joel Kuipers, a senior secondary student at Calvin College, wrote this for *Dialogue*, the Calvin College student-faculty periodical, and it is reprinted with the author's permission.

sixties, one of the most hotly-debated issues was evolution, for traditional religious thought was in conflict with the scientific theory of evolution over many questions. First of all, the age of the earth was questioned: How long has it been here? Are the geneologies of the Bible unreliable for dating it? Did creation take longer than six days, or were there longer days back then? Secondly, when anthropologists began finding prehuman fossils, and speculated that man might be a million years old, many more questions appeared: Did man come from the apes and not from the dust? Were Adam and Eve actually the first humans, and were they specially created? Were there other men living at the same time? And thirdly, does natural selection rule out God's sovereignty? The validity of the Scriptures was questioned along with the validity of the scientific method.

But as Donald Wilson, anthropologist in Calvin's sociology department, says, for most people, the "question of evolution is not on the front burner anymore." While at one time he had from 75 to 100 speaking engagements a year on this topic, now, he thinks, "for all practical purposes, people regard evolution as a dead issue." In the aftermath of this controversy, which peaked out in 1970, it might be fruitful to take stock of what has happened. The problem stemmed from the question, "What do I tell the children?" Many parents were angry with what their children were being taught in the Christian schools, and dismissal of a teacher because of his or her stance on the issue was not unheard of. Trying to find out what the present policy is, I went to several schools and talked to teachers and students, most of whom preferred to remain anonymous. The sampling is not intended to be representative, but only to discover how some people are handling the issue.

One school administrator reported that the cur-

riculum materials are structured so as to make teaching evolution in the school difficult. Most of the materials, the administrator said, are topical in organization, not historical. Emphasizing that he does not teach any facts with regard to the age of the earth or man, he feels that there is not enough evidence in the fossil record to warrant teaching this type of history to children. "Dinosaurs probably existed," he admits, but man is certainly not the result of the process of evolution.

"If it ever came up, I would not be afraid to present theories as to what some people believe," he said. Although in general he avoided the subject of evolution, he repeated that he was not afraid of it. He used the word *fear* several times in this context. He said that he teaches the "Biblical account of Adam and Eve as the first man and first

*Separation*

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**I asked the children certain questions  
about the origin of man, and the elaborate nature  
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"Cave men lived because I saw them on T.V.  
They weren't real men.  
Adam and Eve were the first people."**

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woman," and the universality of the flood, "in spite of contrary evidence," for when teaching the Bible, "what scientists say is not important." In short, he makes no attempt to integrate the Bible and evolution.

Why? Because, he contends, "children just aren't interested in the problems of evolution until much, much after elementary school." Therefore, he does not encourage them to fit evolutionary ideas into what they know of Scripture. And while he says he is "not afraid to stop and expose them to ideas," he feels that kids are very limited as to what they can assimilate."

However, this administrator admits that "a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing," meaning that if one knows too little about a subject, it will come back to haunt him. But that still does not mean that one should therefore *study* evolution, he says, because this also can be dangerous. He knew of one fellow who was not "careful" where he did his research, and as a result, lost his faith. Did he know too much? I wondered. Or did he fail to integrate his faith with his learning? The administrator never brought the subject up again.

He sees no need for more materials regarding evolution in the curriculum, especially now that his

program is topically and not historically oriented. He emphasized preparing his students for high school and college, and therefore, he "anticipates no changes in the future."

Wandering around in the same school, I questioned a teacher's aide, whose response was considerably less detailed. Evolution? "Oh yes, we talk about it. It's one of those theories that we don't believe." Why? "Because we believe the Bible," came the honest reply. There seemed to be no middle ground in her replies—one either "believes" one or the other. Like her principal, she chooses to avoid unpleasant topics.

Questioning the children drew considerably different responses. Apparently they hadn't heard that they weren't supposed to be interested in such things, and they greeted my questions with splendid answers. Indeed, their imaginations seemed to manufacture interesting theories which, while fanciful, contained an astonishing amount of logic. Nor did they reflect the certainty of the teacher's aide. One teacher told me he has been fielding such questions as "Is there a God?" "Did Jesus really live? How do you know? Can you prove anything by the Bible?" These questions, he told me, reflect the learning in the home, and from television, and not from the school.

I asked the children certain questions about the origin of man, and the elaborate nature of their responses was truly remarkable: "Cave men lived because I saw them on T.V. They weren't real men. Adam and Eve were the first people." Another: "Adam and Eve were the first people written down in books, and all the people before them, they just didn't have any books." "Did you come from the apes?" I asked. "I think we look something like them," said one little fellow. "How do we know God isn't an ape?" asked another. I asked them about dinosaurs: Did they live before people? "Yes they lived then, but I don't believe what I see in the museum." Why not? "Those bones are plastic and not real." Although in general, the interest and curiosity of these elementary school children was very high, they seemed somewhat suspicious of the issue, and felt deceived by what they had heard.

In the high school, of course, the position is more clearly developed. The head of the science department has formulated a clear and concise statement as to their stance on evolution. In it, he makes a distinction between using evolution as a theory, and as a philosophy, pointing out the dangers of the latter.

One high school biology teacher feels that treating evolution as a philosophy leads logically to a world governed by survival of the fittest. He feels

that this concept and Christianity are unalterably opposed. However, he does not avoid the data of the fossil record and explicitly presents it to his classes, although he himself believes in a fossil discontinuity between man and the apes, which allows for creation. The danger with evolution, of course, is that one might "lose one's faith," so he tells his students, "If what you have to accept in science in any way affects your faith in God—you better not." Although this might seem like a stick-your-head-in-the-sand policy, he says, "You have to live with what is comfortable for you." This rather unaggressive stance toward the integration of faith and learning is in contrast to the impressively modern theories and up-to-date textbooks dealt with in class.

In one junior high, I talked to a science teacher also well-informed as to the modern theories of evolution. But like the elementary schools, he complains that the materials he is working with skirt the issue of evolution, opting for the more immediate aspects of science. He suggests that the students will get into the subject in high school, so there is not much need. He also says that he is well aware of the latest scientific data, and he reads it with great interest.

He doesn't believe that evolution causes any conflict in the students' minds. He presents them in class with a continuum of geologic time as it is accepted in scientific circles: the age of earth is put at 4.5 billion years with the first life forms appearing 500 million years ago. He says that he makes no attempt to integrate this into the contradictory Biblical account. Although he stated that he did not think they really do contradict, nonetheless, he admits that on a superficial level at least, it would appear that the accounts of seven days and 4.5 billion years are two distinct ideas of time. His response to this was much like many other teachers: "Kids would stare blankly at you if you asked them, 'Do you see the difference between the fossil record and creation?'"

The religion teacher in the same school also mentioned curriculum problems. Her *Revelation-Response* textbooks also emphasize the "now" aspect of education, at the expense of historical matters, and interpretation. She emphasizes in her classes the personal experience of Christianity, rather than examining its historical validity. Avoiding problems of scriptural interpretation, she feels that the student must "first understand what the Bible is saying."

Some of the junior high students I talked to reflected a different attitude. Yes, they saw the

difference between the fossil record and creation, and after some hesitation one student blurted out, "I don't believe it!" What? I asked. "What I saw on T.V." The others shook their heads in agreement. They were referring to the television special on "Primal Man." One said regretfully, "They made it sound true." Another wrathfully denounced it as "interesting fiction." Most of them felt defensive, saying, "If it contradicts the Bible, it's not true, is it?"

When I asked them about certain fossil remains they had learned about in class, they began to construct some interesting theories. "Perhaps the dinosaurs in American museums are really as old as they say, y'know, evolution," one proposed, "but over in Israel, in Bible times, it happened according

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**At one rural Christian school I visited, no evolution whatsoever is accepted. Yet in spite of their "conservative" stance, they have a curiously integrated approach.**

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to creation." Several of them thought that the earth once turned much more slowly than it does now, so that the seven days of creation were actually long periods of time. And while they did not think evolution was possible from apes to humans, many thought that man could evolve into a higher form, and cited television examples, including "Planet of the Apes," and several Saturday morning cartoons.

These children felt threatened, deceived, confused at the very least. Although their answers reflected interest and good deal of time spent in thought, they felt compelled to reject whole areas of their learning experience as "interesting fiction," while accepting similar ideas in a different context involving "higher beings." Why is this? Whether or not the administrators "believe" in evolution or not, is it right to let the issue just ride? It leads one to wonder whether they are being supplied with adequate conceptual equipment for the more penetrating questioning they will confront later on in life.

At one rural Christian school I visited, no evolution whatsoever is accepted. Yet in spite of their "conservative" stance, they have a curiously integrated approach. Although the principal at the school says they accept a literal interpretation of the Bible, there is much awareness as to what is going on in science in this community. Because the

constituency feels threatened by the advances in scientific knowledge, "they must be students of the world as well as of the Bible." Scientific knowledge is then integrated into a literalistic interpretation of Scripture, with evolution generally coming up on the losing end. Under this view, the fossil record merely represents "man's ideas" as to what happened in history, and only "God's ideas," recorded in the Bible, count.

This second principal had a very positive image of the children, saying that they are inquisitive, and that they are capable of grasping such matters as evolution. However, they are taught to resolve all such "conflicts" in the home at a very early age. Therefore, they feel very little need to teach such matters in the schools, and their emphasis is mostly on the "three R's." The school had no science

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**If no attempt is made to reconcile two conflicting ideas, they will be in perpetual tension, until the more appropriate one overcomes the other, just as in natural selection.**

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program until last year.

I questioned a young junior high science teacher in the same school. Although she felt that the students were generally very bright, and they actively questioned her on evolution, she admits that her policy thus far has been one of strict avoidance, mainly out of fear for her job. She skips all sections in the textbook that deal with origin of the stars, geological time, or natural selection. This type of attitude occasionally caused some trouble, as when she took her students to a planetarium. They were disrespectful and inattentive during the lecturer's presentation, because they felt they had no need to listen to his theories on the origin of the stars, saying, "It's all lies, anyway."

One very positive aspect of this conservative attitude is the parental concern it entails. She cites the fact that at the last parent-teacher conference only two parents, out of a total class of sixty-eight students, did not show up. Although it is rather restrictive at times, this type of attitude in the home, she feels, leads to a well-integrated education. At times the parents may not agree with an accepted scientific theory, but they try to come up with what they feel is an equally compelling argument in response. To many people in this rural community the issue of evolution is still alive and important.

But obviously, in the wake of such issues as

women's rights and homosexuality, most of the schools in my random sampling seem to feel that evolution is an issue of the past. They all seem to share a general policy of avoidance. To avoid the issue, many of the schools I visited have had to change a few things. For example, in the elementary and the junior high schools, the curriculum is changed so that it deals with the academic subject matter topically and not historically, thus effectively avoiding the controversy. In other words, they have changed in order not to change.

Why should they avoid the issue? In some cases, it makes sense, as in the communities where a teacher will lose his job if he doesn't. Some teachers didn't think the children were interested or ready for it, or even realized there was a conflict in the student's mind. One principal I talked to simply seemed afraid of the idea, and of the prospect of having to upset a stable pattern.

It is still an open question to me as to whether people ever change, but one would hope that we can actively respond to issues at hand (like evolution) and progress from misconceptions of ourselves to a greater understanding. If no attempt is made to reconcile two conflicting ideas, they will be in perpetual tension, until the more appropriate

## 200 years old?

That's how old the United States of America will be this July 4th. To celebrate that birthday the NUCS has prepared a BICENTENNIAL EDITION of *Under God*.



Attractively and colorfully bound in a newly-designed soft, yet durable, Kivar cover, this text for junior high students provides a strong foundation for the study of government from a Christian perspective. A variety of illustrative photographs, charts, and graphs; a running commentary on the U.S. Constitution; and a wide range of challenging student activities add to its usefulness.

A Teacher Guide and short-answer tests based on clearly-stated teaching objectives are available.



Curriculum Department  
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one overcomes the other, just as in natural selection. So it might be with the conflict between evolution and the Christian school. If the teachings of the denomination do not present a reality which meets the needs of its coming generation's desire for meaningful religious life and a coherent worldview, it will be ground under, perhaps for a new form, perhaps for none at all.

This lack of integration can also be seen in moral terms. We live in a throwaway culture. We look for packaged, mass-produced commodities, disposable experiences, instant solutions to complex problems. And even the curriculum reflects this attitude

with its "now" emphasis on learning. But if this "Pepsi generation" is ever going to make it out of the decade with a system of standards which have any value beyond right "now," the emphasis has to shift from instant experiences to an awareness of process, of history, of change. It seems to me that such a theme is involved in the teaching of evolution. We musn't look apprehensively at anthropologists with avoidance, fear, and disdain, but rather actively seek out knowledge with which to examine creatively the processes, selections and developments at work in history. After all, people might change.

# School Newspapers and Sports

by Gordon De Blaey\*

During the 1975 Interim session at Calvin, Dr. Steen and myself offered a course entitled "The Sociology of Sport." A number of small projects were worked on by students in that course and one of those projects may be of general interest to readers of the *CEJ*. Nancy De Vries and Sandy Zwiép compiled the data presented in the accompanying table.

These data are based on high school newspapers received during the last six months from 24 Christian High Schools listed in the directory of the National Union of Christian Schools. The 24 papers represent approximately 52 percent of all the high schools listed in the NUCS directory.

The table indicates the mean proportion of space (measured in column inches) devoted to a number of different areas in the school papers. The first column shows the mean percentage of space

devoted to the specific topic listed at the left. This mean was computed on the basis of all 24 papers. The second and third columns take into account the fact that some papers simply did not cover some topics at all. So column three lists the mean percentage of space computed only on those papers dealing with the topic, and column two indicates the number of papers involved in each of these computations.

Some observations we think particularly interesting are:

1. General School News and Fun Stuff (jokes, cartoons, etc.) are the only two areas covered in every paper.

2. Religious topics take up only about 6½ percent of the paper space.

3. Sports coverage is dominantly male sports and interschool sports.

4. Of these papers utilizing photos, 20 percent of the space is made up of photos.

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## BOOK REVIEW SECTION



*MANY INFALLIBLE PROOFS* by Henry M. Morris. San Diego: Creation-Life Publ., 1974. 381 pp. \$4.95. Reviewed by Aaldert Mennega, Associate Professor of Biology, Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa.

The author, director of the Institute for Creation Research and Professor of Apologetics at Christian Heritage College, deals with what the subtitle of the book calls "practical and useful evidences of Christianity." In this book he presents to the reader "in systematic and comprehensive fashion the 'many infallible proofs' of the unique truth and authority of Biblical Christianity, together with a refutation of its alleged fallacies and reconciliation of its alleged discrepancies." Some of the reasons he lists for using evidences apologetically are that the Bible commands their use and that they are often instrumental in bringing men to Christ. His stated purpose for writing the book is therefore "to win souls, and also to win a more favorable intellectual environment for the presentation of the Gospel"; he fully realizes, however, that a person cannot be argued into believing, because evidences can never replace the work of the Holy Spirit.

After showing the uniqueness of Christianity, Dr. Morris writes that the Old and New Testaments are authentic and demonstrates that they are what they claim to be, i.e., historical documents written by real people and dealing with actual events and individuals. He writes several chapters on the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ, taking a conservative stand and showing that Christ is the promised Messiah. Interestingly, he emphasizes that Christ could have "no genetic connection with either mother or father, both of whose hereditaries were contaminated by both biological defects and inherent sin." The following two statements reflect the essence of his view: "The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is of course the greatest proof of His deity and therefore of the truth of the Christian faith" and "If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion. If it did

take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth."

There are three chapters on the existence, character and plan of God. While his position is basically sound and worthy of support, Morris insists that "logical and rational analysis of the world which God created leads directly to the necessary existence of the Christian God." He thus fails to make clear that only believers can be convinced by these evidences and that they are convinced because they *already* know Him and thus *confirm* their knowledge of Him. His emphasis on the rational is evident again at the conclusion of his otherwise sound treatment of the place, purpose and destiny of man. He writes that "we have arrived at the conclusions above by straightforward logical reasoning, based on cause-and-effect relationships and on what we know about both physical and spiritual realities," and does not realize that he could arrive at these correct conclusions *only because he believes* the Bible.

He deals with the Bible's inspiration, prophecy, structure, alleged contradictions, and relation to science. He adduces good evidence for "plenary verbal inspiration" and shows that the alleged contradictions in the Bible are only apparent ones that God allows for His own reasons. He then gives guidelines for dealing with such contradictions, illustrating how to apply such guidelines to apparent doctrinal, ethical and factual contradictions.

The chapter on the Bible and science I find difficult to appraise because of the mixture of laudable and regrettable elements. Morris correctly insists that for scientists the Bible is reliable, and there is no conflict between what the Bible says and what we find in the created world. But when he writes that "The Bible is a book of science" and tries to justify this, he unfortunately reads modern science into a number of texts. His major point, however, that the Bible is neither "an antiquated religious book, filled with scientific fallacies and mistakes" nor "a book of true religion dealing solely with spiritual subjects" is well taken. His treatment of miracles and alleged scientific mistakes is good.

After showing the inadequacy of the theory of evolution, Morris writes that the Creation account provides a framework of prehistory, that the geologic age system is incompatible with this account, and that theories of accommodation are unsatisfactory substitutes. He insists that the rocks and fossils must be dealt with and believes that they can be explained in terms of catastrophism. For this explanation he posits "a complexly heterogeneous phenomenon such as the Genesis Flood," involving ecological zonation, physiological mobility and hydrodynamic sorting.

Morris places the date of Creation at about 10,000 years ago and demands more than the usual caution in dealing with radiometric dating methods and uniformitarian assumptions. The ample quotes in this chapter are from a variety of such respectable scientific journals as *Paleontology*, *American Journal of Science*, *Journal of Geophysical Research*, *Journal of Geology*, and *Science*.

In his treatment of archaeology Morris writes that the Hebrew Scriptures are unique because only they "incorporate great sections of sober history stretching back to the days before Abraham

and, for that matter, back to the very Creation itself!" He also writes that archaeology has confirmed Biblical places and events instead of disproving them and has shown "over and over again, that the geography, technology, political and military movements, cultures, religious practices, social institutions, languages, customs, and other aspects of every day life of Israel and the other nations of antiquity were exactly as described in the Bible."

The two appendices, one on numerical design in the Bible and one on the book of God in the heavens, are interesting but not significant.

In summary, Morris has a sound position and knows how to defend it, but his eagerness to share and to prove it should have been tempered with more caution. Confession of basic beliefs would have been more appropriate than rational constraint, and would have made his book more valuable to the Christian community. Still, many people can benefit from reading the book and be stimulated and encouraged to contribute to the ongoing development of Christian ways of dealing with the problems that confront Bible-believing scientists.

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*Hide or Seek* by James Dobson. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1974, 156 pp. Reviewed by Robert Bulten, M.D., school board member, Sylvan Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*SP* In a day when most adults are experiencing feelings of uselessness and inferiority, and when children are learning, even if indirectly, to see themselves as less valuable than they really are, Dr. James Dobson has brought together in this book a workable approach toward building a child's self-esteem.

After examining what society has established as the criteria for "worthiness," namely beauty and intelligence, he spends the bulk of his time presenting ten strategies for building self-esteem. These include such things as examining the value system of the home, teaching children not to down-grade themselves, helping children to compensate and compete, disciplining without damaging self-esteem, and preparing for adolescence.

For those who have read Dr. Dobson's previous book, *DARE TO DISCIPLINE*, you know that he places proper emphasis on parental authority and control over children as the most effective means of discipline, as well as manifesting parental love. He counters many of the currently popular human-

ists' views of permissiveness and reasoning with a more Christian discussion of proper discipline, without destroying self worth.

As a former teacher, he draws heavily on this experience with children, giving helpful insight into discerning the best approach toward building their self-esteem in the classroom, as well as at home. For example, he distinguishes between the "under-achiever" and the "slow learner," and gives reasonable advice to parents on how to cope with each of these frustrating problems in children.

I am certainly impressed with his practical approach, but undoubtedly the most impressive fact is that Dr. Dobson makes it very clear that his entire philosophy is based on Christian presuppositions, as found in Scripture. Without being "preachy," he freely quotes from both the Old and the New Testaments to illustrate and substantiate his viewpoint. At one point in his discussion of avoiding overprotection and dependency, he asks for special attention by Christian parents, inviting others "to read along," even though they possibly will not comprehend the full significance of what he has to say.

The highlight of the book comes in the last chapter when he portrays the only true values:

I believe *the* most valuable contribution a parent can make to his child is to instill in him a genuine faith in

God. What greater ego satisfaction could there be than knowing that the Creator of the Universe is acquainted with me, personally? That He values me more than the possessions of the entire world; that He understands my fears and my anxieties; that He reaches out to me in immeasurable love when no one else cares; that His only Son actually gave His life for me; that He can turn my liabilities into assets and my emptiness into fullness; that a better life follows this one, where the present handicaps and inadequacies will all be eliminated—where earthly pain and suffering will be no more than a dim memory! What a

beautiful philosophy with which to “clothe” your tender child.

May I suggest that you, as teachers, not only read this excellent book, but use it in your conferences with parents as a means of promoting proper value structures and building self-esteem in the home. Quoting Dr. Dobson on page 13: “By a proper use of parental influence and direction . . . perhaps we won’t reconstruct the world, but we can certainly help our children cope with it more successfully.”

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*The International (SI) Metric System and How It Works* by Robert A. Hopkins. Tarzana: Polymetric Services, Inc., 1975. 287 pp. \$12.95. Reviewed by Wesley E. Nance, mathematics instructor at Valley Christian High School, Cerritos, Calif.

This book is a rather thorough collection of metric measurement standards in use throughout the world. It provides a single reference location for a large amount of information dealing with a fairly technical subject, one which as yet has no consistently agreed upon set of international standards. One of the purposes of this book is to provide a basis for standardizing the meanings and usage of the ten thousand or so basic and derived units of the metric system of measurement.

The book provides concise histories of the major systems of measurement, a very detailed history of the development of the metric system, much information about the practical relationships between the metric system and the economic position of the United States in the world market and also

about the metric versions of standardized manufactured paper, lumber, machine bolts and threadings, and plumbing and household items.

The basic units are defined in large, bold type on separate pages, making them easy to locate. There are recommendations by the International Electrical Congress (IED) and extensive tables of conversion factors.

Besides a chapter for the housewife, the book includes a model for the change-over of industry to metric measurements and a well-written section on the education of educators from kindergarten through the university. It recognizes that a strong deterrent to successful metrication in the United States will be the lack of preparation of the teachers in its schools, especially at the elementary level.

The comprehensive nature of this publication makes it an invaluable reference tool in many phases of the metric discussion. It could be used as a teacher training text, although its price is not attractive for quantity purchase.

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*The Teacher in the Primitive Church and the Teacher Today* by Joseph A. Grassi. Santa Clara, Ca. 95053: Univ. of Santa Clara Press, 1973. 140 pp. paper, \$2.95. Reviewed by Norman De Jong, Principal, Bellflower Christian Schools.

Here is a short and worthwhile book which should be profitable to anyone who thinks seriously about Christ as the Perfect Teacher. Recognizing that the central qualities of good education are not diminished by time, Grassi writes clearly and convincingly about pedagogical practices and principles as they are enunciated in the Scriptures and early church writings.

Grassi divides his book into five parts, as follows:

- Part I—Teaching Models in the First Century
- Part II—Jesus the Teacher
- Part III—The Teacher in the Early Church
- Part IV—The Teacher in the New Testament and the Teacher Today
- Part V—Women’s Liberation and the Female Teacher in the Modern World

Each part has a number of short chapters which can be read in short intervals.

Grassi seems to treat the Scriptures with a great deal of reverence, but the reader should nevertheless be aware, especially in Part V, that the author might be twisting them to fit his preconceived interpretations.

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