Secretary's Copy -

# christian educators journal

NOVEMBER 1976

*Up With Decisional Learning (See Page 23)*

# MORNING MEDITATIONS

## Festus Again

*"Much learning doth make thee mad," is still the sad cry of too many a dad.*

In A.D. 54, give or take a little, the governor of Caesarea voiced the philosophy of the parents of many of our children when he yelled to Paul of Tarsus, "Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (Acts 26:24).

A friend of mine, a successful published author, has often told me of his father's ranting about the foolishness of "book-larnin." The attitude and actions of our students reflect their homes. If reading invites criticism at home, it will be considered useless in school. If at home a child is cut down for drawing pictures or writing, you can't expect him to get ecstatic in the classroom at the mention of art or creative writing.

The teacher unaware of this deep vein of anti-intellectualism expects his students to be automatically interested in a given subject, book, or lesson. That teacher needs to spend some time with parents.

A mother who never cracks a book, magazine, or newspaper in the presence of her kids may be a fine person, but she inadvertently makes the teacher's job twice as difficult. An industrious father who excels in manual labor probably has a son who needs vocational training, but since many schools do not provide it, he'll need an interest in reading and books to survive in the jungle of ink and paper.

The ink-stained, book-oriented pedagogue must think behind the face of the facts or she'll kill some of her students with ink-poisoning.

O FATHER

Teach me to individualize my teaching and meet the kids where they live with what they need, as You did for me.

TODAY I WILL

Find out why _____ hates to read
And look beneath his skin to meet his need.

BIBLE FRAGMENT: Ecclesiastes 12:12f.

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

## Big as the World

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 11:7—12:14

*"... The use of books is endless, and much study is wearisome" (Eccles. 12:12, NEB).*

It is clear from this scriptural reference that excessive devotion to books brings weariness. But if we read on only one more verse we will discover that relating our studies to the fear of God brings them out of the wearisome stage.

Exactly how can this be done? I am steadily working on answers to this question. I can suggest to you only a thought or two. When you reflect on these ideas and begin to teach accordingly, you will find that one idea breeds many more.

First then, begin to think of "the fear of the Lord" in elementary, down-to-earth ways. One way in which we can show that we "fear God"—that we "think the world and all of Him"—is to know more of God's world. If "the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it", then in order to honor God, we need to know the earth, what there is in it, and what's going on in the world.

We sing "This is my Father's world," and that truth is rightfully a wonderful comfort. It ought also to be a furious spark that ignites our whole being and sets us on fire to plant His claim stakes on it.

How do we proceed in such ventures? At a testimonial Father's Day service, a child said, "I like my daddy because he takes me places." Teachers, too, ought to take their students places—explore the world with them. Such exploration need not be a physical transportation, but it ought to be a real experience, nonetheless. And studies will come to life—they will be life itself!

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

# CONTENTS

**NOVEMBER 1976**



**NOTE: All educators listed in the NUCS Directory 1976-77 receive this issue.**

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EDITORIAL

FROM ME TO THEE

# More on Moral Education

The response to our request for manuscript on moral education has been so overwhelming that CEJ had to expand its usual thirty-two pages to forty pages for our special issue on this topic (May, 1976). We received much that we could not publish then. Articles and responses to articles continued to pour in even this summer. Truly, our editorial cup runneth over, and the results will spill over into at least this issue. If reader interest matches writer interest, this topic has captured the imagination of Christian educators in a way that no other "special issue" has before.

In this issue the concern for moral education, or the affective domain as Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives has it, is evidenced in articles all the way from "Up With Decisional Learning" by Henry Triezenberg, to Seminary Professor Hoekema's article on "The Teacher and Self-Image," focusing on the learner, and in between several articles and columns which deal with specific applications of the theme to curriculum areas and levels (e.g., the "Thursday's Child" column by Lillian Grissen).

I firmly believe that in this area, consistently pursued, we have the chance to maximize our distinctiveness as Christian schools. The rhetoric of our distinctiveness has often run ahead of the reality of our differentness, and this is because we have often concentrated on the cognitive or intellectual aspects of education. We have often talked as if our distinctiveness lay in teaching our students to have nobler *motivations* for achieving math mastery or musical proficiency. Or we have referred to classroom atmosphere and teacher-pupil relations as the qualitative difference between Christian schools and public, secular schools. While nobler motivations and loving classroom interpersonal relationships should characterize our classrooms, these do not yet express a plan of instruction which is captured in the slogan "teaching the whole child."

Taking that slogan seriously as an *instructional* mandate means that instructional objectives should be articulated to supplement the intellectual goals of education with those in the affective and psychomotor domain (as the Bloom taxonomy has it) or with those in the decisional and creative areas (as the NUCS curriculum materials have it). It means taking these latter as seriously as the first whenever we construct units, design courses, or plan instructional strategies.

Jesus Himself seemed to refer to all the domains of learning when He said: "If ye know the truth (cognitive), happy are ye (affective), if ye do them (psychomotor)."

Whatever the term or terms we use to identify the beyond-the-intellectual goals of Christian education (and we have no single, agreed-upon terms for these), we need to realize that our claims for distinctiveness lie not so much in the intellectual sphere as in these others. We as teachers cannot alter the laws of physics, the rules of grammar, or the rules of computation: Newton's laws of motion and six times six equals thirty-six remain forever fixed. What we can alter by our lesson planning are the *attitudes* toward these entities and others, the *decisions* students make about them, and the *actions* that flow from them. Herein lies our chance for the greatest difference between Christian schools and others.

Maybe what we as Christian educators ought to do, amidst all the technical jargon of educational objectives, is resurrect some language from the Christian tradition, redolent with Scriptural and theological overtones, and use the terms head, heart, and hand. These would stand for three kinds of objectives of all Christian education, the objectives of training the head, shaping the heart, and improving the hand.

The thesis of this editorial is that for educational objectives (with a nod toward I Corinthians 13) there now abideth three things: head, hand, and heart. And the greatest of these is heart.

That's what moral education is all about, and that's where our chance for greatest distinctiveness lies.

—D. O.

THE ASYLUM

# Double or Nothing

**by H.K. Zoeklicht***

Bob Den Denker, history teacher at Omni Christian High, frowned, then thoughtfully folded his copy of the *Christian Science Monitor,* and walked over to the well-used urn to pour himself another cup of coffee.

He seated himself next to his student teacher, Avery Ellesley. "All set to take on the fifth hour class?"

Avery glanced up from his lesson plan and smiled at Bob. "I think so. I like those kids and I like the New Deal era, so I think we'll get along."

But something else was obviously preoccupying Bob's mind. He turned to Steve Vander Prikkel who was just digging an orange out of his brown bag.

"Say, Steve, did I hear right that your wife is teaching full time again?"

Steve's stubby fingers began to peel his Sunkist as he answered expansively, "You bet, Bob. We've got old Stella back in the harness again. I've already got my eye on a new set of clubs for next spring. But first she's going to have to pay off that '72 Pinto we had to buy for her transportation. Oh well, it's a real good feeling getting those two checks every two weeks, let me tell you!"

John Vroom, Omni's Bible teacher and paragon of piety if not of decorum, had been listening to Steve's account of his good fortunes while his fingers kept busy wiping the bottom of the Tupperware dish that had held a soggy wedge of banana cream pie. Now one finger disappeared into his mouth. He sucked it with a loud smack, then sternly addressed Steve.

"You are contributing to the breakdown of the home, and if the home breaks down, the church and the school and yes, the whole nation will follow. Mark my words."

What Steve marked was another loud smack as finger number two was cleaned.

"Well, I tell you, John, I can't wait for my kids to grow up so my wife can start bringing in some shekels again too," chimed in Bill Silver, the new teacher of business courses. "The way this inflation is going, you can't hardly survive on one income anymore."

John Vroom finished licking his last finger and then pontificated, "*We're* doing it and we believe it's right. We don't have boats or a second car or anything fancy, but the Lord provides. He always does if you are faithful to Him. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy path." Vroom stood up, and almost stumbled over his briefcase as he went after another cup of coffee.

The teachers lounge, otherwise known as Asylum, was coming alive. After another mundane sack lunch, this issue looked good enough to bite into.

Ginny Traansma, music and home ec teacher, watched Vroom tipping the urn to get one more cupful and said, "I know you're against wives working, John, but you don't really think that all wives do it only for the money, do you?"

School Secretary Jennie Snip cut in with her usual sharp edge. "Do you think for one minute that this world, this school even, could survive one day without working women?"

"Well, John, I guess you asked for it," smiled Karl Den Meester, English and speech teacher. "I wonder about this though: is it right for wives to usurp scarce jobs when the family doesn't need the extra income and others who need the income go begging for jobs? What do you think, Bob? You started all this, you know."

**H.K. Zoeklicht is the spurious name of a serious educator who now and then, among clattering coffee cups, likes to focus his spotlight on some provocative person or problem.*

But Steve was still nettled about John's remarks. Glaring at John who was dipping his week-old oatmeal cookie in his half cup of coffee, he barked: "You give me all this pious poop about the woman's place being in the home. But you know and I know darn well that your wife has worked part time for Penneys and that she quit because she *prefers* to be home. I wouldn't make my wife work either, if she didn't want to."

Bob Den Denker tried to redirect the course of the conversation. "You know," he began slowly, "I guess I did start this whole thing because I just got through reading an article about the sad state of the teacher market. And last night my nephew from Denver stopped by. He's one of thousands who want to teach, in his case because he likes kids and likes the challenge to influence them through Christian education. He's looked forward to it for six years, prepared for it through four years of college, but now there's no job for him. He's in love with a girl and would like to get married, but there's no job. He's disillusioned, to say the least. And I guess that started me thinking."

"That's what I mean," exclaimed John Vroom, casting a baleful look at Steve Vander Prikkel, "there's no jobs because too many women want to be moneymakers instead of homemakers." Smiling smugly about his own phrase-making, John settled his plump physique a little deeper into his vinyl-covered armchair.

"Well, I don't quite see it that way, John," Den Denker continued, "but I think the whole situation does raise an ethical problem for the Christian community. If there are, let's say, only ten available jobs and there are thirty people who want those jobs, who should get priority consideration? Those with the most experience, those best known or with the most pull, or those who need the job most? I'm not so sure what the answer is, but it seems to me that somewhere along the line we ought to face up to the problem."

Bob turned to Mike Stewart, the chairman of the Omni School Board, who frequently dropped in during the faculty lunch break. "Maybe it ought to start with the Board, Mike, and the teacher selection committee."

Lucy Bright, Omni's young, pert and intense English teacher, had been listening with interest. Now she swept back her long, honey-blond hair and spoke up.

"Whoever is going to face up to the problem, if it is a problem, better remember a few things. Maybe there are a lot of wives teaching today who don't exactly *need* that second income. But maybe they have a need to fulfill that urge to serve as much as your nephew, Bob, or as much as their husbands. Maybe they need a sense of recognition and esteem and satisfaction that staying at home doesn't give them. Maybe they have a psychological need, or an intellectual need for stimulation, or who knows what. The answer just can't be to pick on the women and kick all married ones out of their jobs!"

Lucy's face flushed and Bob hurried to smooth the ruffled feathers. "I didn't mean to suggest, Lucy. . ."

"I'm not so sure about that!" snapped Snip. "When it comes to women, you men are all the same!"

"Right, we all love 'em or leave 'em," quipped Matt De Witt. But his laugh suddenly died; he remembered, a bit late, that Jennie Snip was a recent divorcee.

Karl Den Meester filled the awkward silence.

"Well, let's see what we have so far: There are a lot of young people, ready to start their career, but there are few open doors. And there are a lot of working wives who may or may not need that second income. Bob thinks that poses an ethical problem, and maybe he's right. But who in the Christian community is going to resolve that problem, that's what I'd like to know."

Bob Den Denker re-lit his pipe as he reflected for a moment.

"I think the *who* is probably much easier than the *how*, Karl. In a Christian community all of us face a problem together. We should continually sensitize each other's conscience. And then we should help each other act on that conscience. For some of us who can afford to, that may mean an earlier retirement, let's say at age 62, if it means making room for a young person who qualifies and desperately needs a job. Or it may mean that if a wife has time and a need for service outside her home, she should conscientiously evaluate where time and talents are most needed. There's so much need, of course for capable, dedicated volunteer service that the option, if there's no financial hardship, should at least have serious consideration."

Mike Stewart now entered the discussion.

"I'll confess that I've never considered the problem in just this light before, but I think you have a point, Bob, when you suggested that maybe the Board should address itself to the problem, too. I've always pushed for hiring the most experienced people even though they cost us more money, but I'm beginning to see another aspect to this whole thing."

Den Denker turned to his student teacher. "Avery, this whole discussion maybe concerns you

more than anybody here. How do you feel about it all?"

Avery grimaced a bit. "To be honest, I do sometimes resent the fact that so many families start picking up a double income just when they don't seem to need so much money anymore. Every time they get double, somebody else gets nothing. But," he shrugged, "I don't know; it's a complicated problem."

The one o'clock buzzer reverberated through Omni Christian High. Teachers began to get up to head for their classes.

Lucy turned to Mike Stewart as she stood up.

"Whatever you're going to do, I just hope it isn't going to turn out to be another form of discrimination against women."

"Don't bet your booties on it, honey!" was Snip's grim prophecy.

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# VALUES: *Fact or Fiction?*

**by Lillian Grissen***

"The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" knew the difference between a belief and a value:

> Hadleyburg was the most honest and upright town in all the region round about. It had kept that reputation unsmirched during three generations, and was prouder of it than of any other of its possessions. It was so proud of it, and so anxious to insure its perpetuation, that it began to *teach* the principles of honest dealings to its babies in the cradle, and made the like *teachings* the staple of their culture henceforward through all the years devoted to their education. Also, throughout the formative years temptations were kept out of the way of the young people so that their honesty could have every chance to harden and solidify, and become a part of their very bone.

Mark Twain's insight fascinates me every time I read his story. The townspeople detested lying and deceit. Little did they dream they only thought they valued honesty and uprightness. Through a cunningly cruel scheme a stranger exposed what Hadleyburg really valued—self-righteousness and money.

One cannot be sure of one's values until and unless they are tested. As the stranger in the story wrote to the townsmen, "Why, you simple creatures, the weakest of all weak things is a virtue (value) which has not been tested in the fire."

It is during transescence that reality begins to shatter innocence. The ideal parent, minister, teacher image tarnishes. The transescent experiences that his ideals do not always practice what they preach. If this is where middle-school students are (and I think it is), the middle-school teacher is in an appropriate position for introducing and encouraging the idea of looking within, looking at one's own beliefs and values, examining them, questioning them, and helping students to clarify and choose.

### Inconsistency, Thou Art My Jewel

Transescents do not need to be told *what* to value; they have been told that from the cradle. Try a simple activity with your class: "List the 10 things, activities or ideas you value most. If you may keep only nine, which one would you eliminate?" Continue the procedure until only one value is left. Often the answer is "God."

A few days later ask the same students to list the factors they would consider in choosing a career. Money, by far, predominates. Consideration of God, their "highest value," is rare. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Can they see the inconsistency? Often they do not; I am not sure they cannot.

That God is our highest value is what they have been taught since early childhood. This does not necessarily mean God is the student's highest value—even though he thinks it is.

Neat confession . . . their highest value is God. What would logically follow would be to honor and glorify his name. Yet "many the slip 'twixt cup and lip." It is not easy (and I am not sure it is always probable or possible) for them to honor God by not cheating when a good grade will please

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**Columnist Grissen makes this contribution to this special issue by continuing to concentrate on the middle school student.*

parents, when a friendly act to the shunted one will incur the ostracism of friends. To honor God with money is especially difficult for them to comprehend (It's my money! I earned it. Nobody can tell me how to spend it.).

The student honestly *believes* that God comes first. But beliefs are not synonymous with values. Beliefs are value indicators, hints and no more, of a genuine value. It is not uncommon to *believe* in one set of values and in reality, hidden to self, value another. Read Twain's "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" yourself. It is a stirring, self-teaching, one-hour course in understanding the experiencing of values and how hard it is to "teach" them to others.

Pointing out to transescents the inconsistency between asserted and actual values is simple. But as facilitators of learning our task is to encourage the thinking about values. Embarrassing students publicly by pinpointing inconsistency invites hostility; it discourages honest and open questioning of moral and ethical values. Sweeping their disdain, doubts, and questions under the rug only creates bumps over which they will stumble later. They need room for expression and experience in an atmosphere where the teacher understands what is happening.

### "He's just unspiritual . . . "

They have a deep belief in right, wrong, and fairness *generally* speaking. But specifically and personally speaking their own true, as yet unidentified, values often conflict with their beliefs.

"That's not fair," is a knee-jerk response to any apparent infringements of their or others' rights or dignity. Tim's face was as dark as his Indian-black hair when he exploded into his homeroom, bumping and pushing any object or person that had the temerity to be in his path. "What's the matter?" I asked.

"I've got a detention, and it's not fair."

"How come?"

"I don't know. I wasn't doing anything. Well, I wasn't."

"It's tough getting a detention for nothing, isn't it?"

"Yeah, teachers here sure aren't fair. And they call this a Christian school." And in a final sputter of indignation he muttered, "That teacher . . . he's, he's, he's just unspiritual, that's what he is."

A later conversation with the teacher showed clearly that Tim's needling annoyance had lasted a period, and the detention had been given when Tim "accidentally" pushed his partner's books on the floor. Tim's rationalization was the "unspirituality" of the teacher. His sense of fairness had been trampled on; in his anger he was *unable* to see that his actions were unfair to both class and teacher. But it did provide an opportunity for student and teacher to discuss values—after the tempers cooled.

Values cannot be separated from the matters of daily, vital concern to the students themselves. Sidney Simon (known with L. E. Raths and M. Harmin for *Values and Teaching*) found that "most people have very few values." That may be a conclusion based on the semantics of the word "value," but by definition a Christian's value is Jesus Christ and in presenting one's self as a living sacrifice for Him.

The transescent's ability to think is developing, at widely varying rates, from concrete to abstract. Since he/she knows how he/she should think

Values cannot be separated from the matters of daily, vital concern to the students themselves.

(although he/she may need reminding), our task lies in helping him/her recognize what he/she *does* think. L. E. Raths, M. Harmin and S. Simon have contributed much towards values clarification, an important process if a student is to recognize his need for a new set of values. God, through Christ, presents us with the true values and, through Christ, will give the power to enact these values when a person accepts Him and His values. Unless and until a person knows his present value system, however, he cannot be aware that in Christ, as Paul stated, the "old has passed away . . . and . . . the new has come." (2 Cor. 5:17)

The student's true values must come from within. At this point in his moral development need for peer-group approval constrains not only his willingness but also his ability to change his values, because the new value frequently eliminates that essential peer approval.

Students may feel old enough to *choose* and resent being told. It is entirely appropriate then that they be taught that values are *chosen* too.

### Operational Levels of Learning

Values cannot be taught but can be learned. Values lie in the affective domain of education, and it becomes important that we teachers know in which domaino ur students are operating.

Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg has done extensive work and study in human development. His findings suggest that age and mental growth are related to moral reasoning and behavior. Kohlberg's findings indicate three levels, each with two stages:

(1) pre-conventional: the child is punishment-and-obedience oriented or he defines rightness as that which satisfies his needs.

(2) conventional: the child's mode is to get along with the group (good-boy, nice-girl), or he feels he must show respect for authority and obey fixed rules (law-and-order).

(3) post-conventional: the person's decisions are autonomous and principled. (This stage is less common. It would include acting out of a Christ-molded conscience).

Of ten-year-olds, Kohlberg says, 60% are at the pre-conventional stage while 30% are at the conventional stage. Of 13-year-olds, 32% are in the pre-conventional stages, and approximately 50% have reached the conventional stage (Frederick A. Meyer, "See How They Grow," *Interaction*, October, 1975, p. 15–19). Basic pedagogical principles tell us it is illogical to teach students operating at pre-conventional and conventional levels as though they operate on a post-conventional level.

The least we teachers can do is not block their questioning and testing of values. It would be better to encourage this and utilize the opportunities presented to us. We are in the exciting position of standing on a threshold with transescent learners. Middle School need not attempt to *teach* values. Again, values are not taught but are learned. Ours is the task to help students understand that values are artificial, weak, and perhaps hypocritical unless they can withstand the rigors of testing.

Our task is to introduce students to their need to examine their own values, choose which are worth adapting and work to enact those they choose.

It may mean we teachers must examine or re-examine our own values. We may be in for a rude awakening. But the process will enable us better to "teach" values to Thursday's children.

# ACTIVE INSERVICE PROGRAMS

**by Wilson Haarsma***

In some schools inservice meetings produce a lot of negative feelings among staff members. These feelings are often a result of inservice sessions that were nonproductive and poorly planned. The person in charge of planning inservice programs should ask himself/herself: "What kinds of inservice programs do we need that will be well received by the staff?" Hilmar Wagner, associate professor of curriculum and instruction of U. of Texas, offers 10 suggestions on what teachers prefer at inservice meetings:

1. Teachers like meetings in which they can be actively involved. Just as students do not want to be passive, most teachers prefer "learning by doing."
2. Teachers like to watch other teachers demonstrate various techniques in their teaching field. Demonstration teaching can serve as a model that teachers can take back to their classrooms.
3. Teachers like practical information—almost step-by-step recipes—on how others approach certain learning tasks. Too often, inservice programs are theoretical and highly abstract.
4. Teachers like meetings that are short and to the point. The introduction of guests at a meeting is often ego-filling for those introduced, but cuts into valuable inservice time.
5. Teachers like an in-depth treatment of one concept that can be completed in one meeting rather than a generalized treatment that attempts to solve every teacher problem in one session.
6. Teachers like well-organized meetings.
7. Teachers like variety in inservice programs. If the same topics are covered every time, attendance may drop off.
8. Teachers like some incentive for attending inservice meetings; released time, salary increments, advancement points on rating scales.
9. Teachers like inspirational speakers occasionally. Such speakers can often give a staff the necessary drive to start or complete a school year.
10. Teachers like to visit other schools to observe other teachers in situations similar to their own. These visits, even when observing poor teachers, are highly educational.

You may have noted several things while reading this list. One thing is very evident, however; teachers like "active" programs. They like to be involved in a structured learning experience. In view of these feelings I'd like to suggest that you try the following for inservice programs:

1. Do a needs assessment with your staff and prioritize inservice programs for the school year (see suggested form and listing on the next page).
2. Take care of business matters on a weekly basis in planned "Decision Sessions" (*e.g.*, Wednesday after school from 3:30-4:00). Separate them from planning sessions if possible.
3. Plan monthly staff breakfasts at a local restaurant and invite pastors and others for short inspirational talks.
4. Plan a half-hour schoolwide silent reading time weekly for students and staff.
5. Have a "Teacher Exchange Day" (*e.g.*, 4th grade teacher exchanges with 1st grade teacher, *etc.*)
6. Allow staff members released time to attend area workshops and visit other schools.
7. Have consultants demonstrate teaching techniques as well as strategies for classroom management.

Inservice meetings of this nature will help meet the needs of many staff members if they are planned carefully. They will also provide meaningful experiences for professional growth.

**Carl Mulder, Principal at Oakdale Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan, is the editor of this continuing column by administrators. This column was written by Wilson Haarsma, principal of Jenison Christian School, Jenison, Michigan, and is based on a presentation at the Michigan Assoc. of Non-Public Schools in August, 1976.*

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

(Directions: Please check all items according to your degree of interest. Return this completed form to the principal's office.)

| | DEGREE OF INTEREST | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Some | Much |
| 1. Method of Motivating Students | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 2. Behavioral Objectives | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 3. Dealing with Individual Differences | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 4. Teaching Critical Thinking Skills | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 5. Programmed Learning | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 6. Designing Independent Study Projects | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 7. Career Education | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 8. Using Performance Objectives | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 9. Teacher Made Tests & Mechanical Scoring | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 10. Elementary Science (Experiment & Demonstration) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 11. Developmental Reading | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 12. Audiovisual Aids Workshop (Teachers) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 13. New Directions in Social Studies | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 14. Outdoor Education Workshop | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 15. Ecology Workshop | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 16. Music for Elementary Teachers | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 17. Seasonal Art Projects for Elementary Classroom | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 18. Public Library Resources | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 19. Math for 1st and 2nd grade Teachers | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 20. Learning Disabilities (Identification & Remediation) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 21. Social Studies for 5th and 6th grade Teachers | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 22. Field Trips | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 23. Physical Education Specialties | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 24. School Library | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 25. Pupil Services | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 26. Speech Therapy | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 27. Learning Center (Elementary) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 28. Math Enrichment (Elementary) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 29. Early Childhood (Kindergarten Curriculum) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 30. Teachers Legal Limitations & Liabilities in the School | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 31. Learning and Behavior | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 32. Behavior and Discipline in the Elementary School | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 33. Language Arts (Elementary) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 34. Elementary Library Facilities | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 35. Parent-Teachers Relations | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 36. Involving the Child in Social Studies (Elementary) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 37. Involving the Child in Science (Elementary) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 38. Personalizing Math (Elementary) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 39. Orientations for New Teachers | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 40. Classroom Management | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 41. Behavior Modification | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 42. Special Education on Elementary Level | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 43. Guidance Workshop | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 44. Seminar in Your Subject Area | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 45. General Trends in Education | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 46. Newspaper in the Classroom | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 47. Teacher Made Training Aids | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 48. Rap Sessions in Your Subject Area | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 49. Creative Classroom (Display & Bulletin Boards) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 50. Individualized Reading | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 51. Instructional Games | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 52. Constructive Seat Work | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 53. Community Resources | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 54. Effective Questioning | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 55. Interaction Analysis | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 56. Metric Measurement (International System) | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 57. Year Round School | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 58. Time Management | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 59. Student Councils | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 60. Other Suggestions | ____ | ____ | ____ |

# READER RESPONSE:

## QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

**by Joel R. Brouwer***

The March, 1976 issue of *CEJ* featured a questionnaire designed to elicit reader response to the magazine. Sixty people, or about 2% of the subscribers, filled out the questionnaire, with a good representation from all grade levels.

The overall impression created by the responses is that readers are satisfied with *CEJ*, and that their satisfaction stems from the balanced nature of the magazine. A significant minority feels that articles are too theoretical and general, but the majority indicates that there is good balance between theoretical and specific articles. The satisfaction seems to span the grade levels, with the single exception being that only 50% of the high school teachers responding rate the magazine as practical and useful.

The questionnaire also asked for reader opinions of specific articles and regular features. Of the seven specific articles listed, "Conferences Are for Kids" by Laura Bartleson and "Two Student Letters on Grade-Getting" by Don Coray were the most read and best received. Six of the seven articles received ratings of "good" or "excellent" by a majority of those responding to the article. The seventh, "Critique and Response to Scientific Creationism" by Menninga, Morris and Jansma, was rated similarly by those who read it, though it had the highest number of responses (17) in the "did not read" classification.

The regular features which are read the most are "The Asylum," the editorial and the cartoon. The most ratings of "excellent" were received by "The Asylum" (19) and the cartoon (14). All features were rated "excellent" or "good" far more often than they were rated "mediocre" or "poor." The book reviews elicited the most "never read" responses (14), but more than twice as many respondents (43) said that they read the reviews occasionally or always.

Finally, we learned that most readers spend from 15 to 45 minutes per sitting with *CEJ*, that most prefer to receive the magazine at home, that most prefer the present publication schedule, and that most are satisfied with the layout, though a significant minority asked for more illustrations.

The questionnaire, of course, is only one way in which readers can react to the contents of *CEJ*. Letters to the Editor will be printed whenever there is space available. Reasoned and reasonable comments and critiques are always welcome.

**This summary of questionnaire results was prepared by Joel Brouwer, C.E.A. Board representative and member of special Board committee to assess reader response.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

The discussion between Dr. C. Menninga, and Dr. H.M. Morris and Mr. S. Jansma in the March issue of *CEJ* interested me because it illustrates the renewed debate about origins that is taking place across North America. As you know, the "textbook controversy" in California and other states is one of the causes of this new interest.[1] I should like to comment, if I may, on some of the topics raised by the two articles in the March issue.

One of the more interesting and complicated aspects of the discussion is the one on the Second Law of Thermodynamics. To Menninga's assertion that the Second Law holds only for *closed* systems while the earth is an *open* system, Morris and Jansma reply that disorder always increases in *open* systems such as the earth unless a created program or converting mechanism exists which makes growth into a higher order possible. They state that Menninga has distorted the arguments of Morris in connection with the Second Law of Thermodynamics in *Scientific Creationism.*

Before evaluating this situation or commenting on it, I should like to point out that Morris in his books has discussed the Second Law in connection with two points. In the first place, Morris has suggested in previous books that the Second Law can be equated with some of the effects of the Fall: death, decay, and deterioration.[2] In other places

*1. Most of us are familiar with the stand of the Creation Research Society in supporting the idea of equal time in the classroom for the evolution and creation theories. Two articles that give an opposite view are: Nelkin, D., "The Science-Textbook Controversies,"* Scientific American, *April 1976; Moore, J.A., "On Giving Equal Time to the Teaching of Evolution and Creation,"* Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, *18, 405, 1975. To my (biased) view, both speak eloquently for the necessity of Christian education! These authors would undoubtedly disagree with me on that.*

*2. See e.g.* The Bible Has the Answer, *Baker, 1971, pp. 63-64;* Studies in the Bible and Science, *Baker, eighth printing, 1974, pp. 50, 78, 95, 115, 129. Similar passages can be found in some of Morris' other books.*

he states that evolution contradicts the Second Law of Thermodynamics.[3] Since in most theories the origin of living creatures precedes the Fall, there is room for only one of these (mutually exclusive) opinions. I shall comment briefly on both. As you can see, I prefer to choose neither.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics, defined informally in the March articles, deals with the idea that "energy runs downhill." Processes which we commonly associate with the Fall—death, decay, randomization—undoubtedly obey the Second Law. However, when we, or plants, absorb the rays of the sun, when we digest our foods, when birds incubate eggs, to choose but a few examples, the processes also obey the Second Law. Menninga is correct in saying that a world, before or after the Fall, without the Second Law is incomprehensible. We simply cannot talk about it. I realize that the world before the Fall is a mystery to us when it comes to physical and biological phenomena. I have not been able to find evidence in Scriptures in support of Morris' view that connects the Fall and the Second Law. To speculate about natural processes at that time, *i.e.,* before the Fall, does not seem to me to be a fruitful activity.

Morris has also suggested that evolution contradicts the Second Law of Thermodynamics. It is true that Menninga's criticism that the earth is an *open* system dismisses Morris' ideas in *Scientific Creationism* too hastily. As I stated before, Morris does not say that the earth is a closed system, but states that it is open and that disorder increases even in open systems with an input of energy unless a program or converting mechanism exists which makes development into a higher order possible. In view of the wealth of evolutionist literature on this subject[4], I feel that this is too simple

*3. See e.g.* The Bible Has the Answer, *p. 80;* Studies in the Bible and Science, *p. 146;* Biblical Cosmology and Modern Science, *Craig Press, 1970, pp. 127-133;* Scientific Creationism *(General Edition), Creation Life Publishers, 1974, pp. 37-46.*

*4. Two titles may serve as an example: Calvin, M.,* Chemical Evolution, *Oxford University Press, 1969; Kenyon, D.H. and Steinman, G.,* Biochemical Predestination, *McGraw-Hill, 1969.*

an answer to a complex question. Also, Cramer's article[5], quoted by Menninga, has never received the attention from Morris it deserves, especially since arguments involving the Second Law form such an important component of his (Morris') books. Some quotes from Cramer:

> Improperly limited parts of the universe do not necessarily obey the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The Law is followed only when a sufficient part of the universe is included. . . .
>
> It should be noted that the processes of all living organisms are processes of organization. Thus, all living organisms are continually *increasing* the order of the molecules and atoms which they take in for nourishment. If then we are to believe that General Evolution contradicts the Second Law, we must then also conclude that all living organisms continually violate the Second Law. . . .
>
> The argument from the Second Law is sometimes confused with the argument from mathematical improbability, but they are, in fact, distinct. The general theory of Evolution is a fantastically improbable theory in a mathematical sense and I think this is an important weakness. I know of no other theory which at all approaches the improbability of General Evolution. Unfortunately, the argument from the Second Law of Thermodynamics is not in the same sound position.

Maatman takes a similar stand in his book *The Bible, Natural Science, and Evolution.*[6] Because Morris uses the Second Law argument so extensively in most of his books, I would hope that he will be able to reconsider his views on this matter.

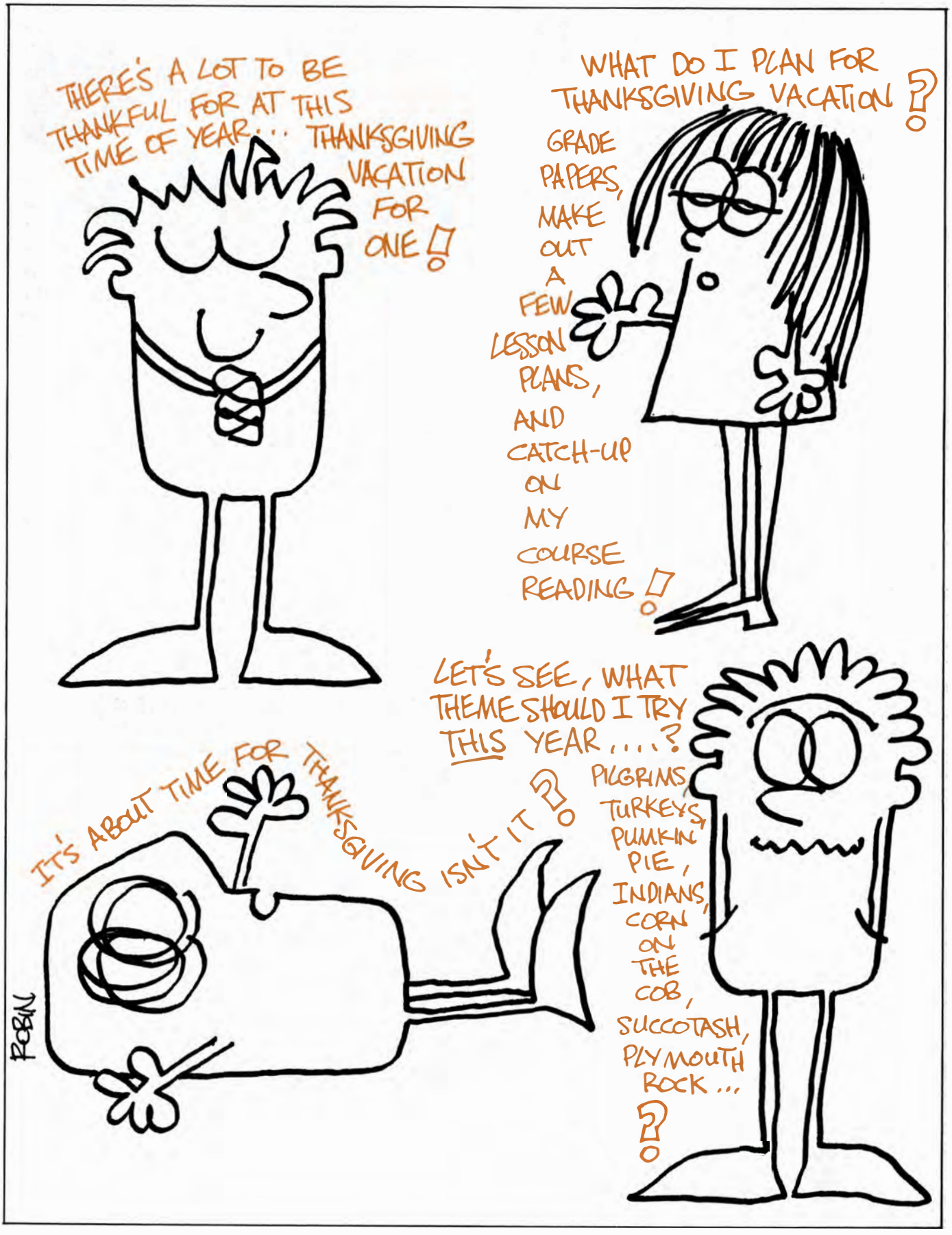
Finally, it seems valuable to me to have Christians like Menninga and Morris continue discussion on this subject. I would hope this could be on a less personal basis. One of the first items to be considered could be the concept of "grammatical-historical exegesis" of the Scriptures. This is important to the matter at hand. Such discussion would seem to be very necessary to me because the sooner we can arrive at a common mind on this subject, the sooner we can go on to some other topics connected with science which at present are not receiving the attention they deserve.

I would like to express my thanks to you, Mr. Editor, for placing these articles and this letter. A forum for this type of discussion is difficult to find.

Harry Cook
Trinity Christian College
Palos Heights, Illinois

*5. Cramer, J.A., General Evolution and the Second Law of Thermodynamics.* J. Amer. Sc. Affil., 23, *20, 1971.*

*6. Reformed Fellowship, 1970*


THERE'S A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR AT THIS TIME OF YEAR... THANKSGIVING VACATION FOR ONE!
WHAT DO I PLAN FOR THANKSGIVING VACATION?
GRADE PAPERS, MAKE OUT A FEW LESSON PLANS, AND CATCH-UP ON MY COURSE READING.
LET'S SEE, WHAT THEME SHOULD I TRY THIS YEAR....?
PILGRIMS, TURKEYS, PUMKIN PIE, INDIANS, CORN ON THE COB, SUCCOTASH, PLYMOUTH ROCK...?
IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR THANKSGIVING ISN'T IT?
ROBIN

# GEOGRAPHY

# Calling and Curriculum

## PART I

by Henry Aay*

Geography has often been a traditional subject in the curriculum. Many educators have consistently held that it must have its place. Yet it is recognized more as a body of *facts to be taught* than as a subject matter with a particular focus; thus much may be placed under the umbrella of geographic education, from customs of dress in Japan, to ways of making a living in Peru and generation of hydroelectric power in Canada. Indeed, the scope of geography is so wide that often, especially in grade school, it encompasses the whole of social studies and approaches being an inventory of all facts about all people and places.

It is not surprising that with such latitude both teachers and students find it difficult to sort facts and, even more important, to understand their meaning. Many teachers find it difficult to put their finger on what they want to accomplish and what the central themes of geographic education are or should be. Are teachers simply trying to give students an awareness of other people and places, extending their horizons beyond home and community? Are they only trying to fill in gaps of knowledge about the world? Admittedly these aims are important, but many other studies share them. Besides, they largely beg the question of a distinctive geographic task.

### SHARPENING THE FOCUS

For reasons that should become clear below, I will define geography not as disparate knowledge about people and places, but as the study of the mutual interaction between man and the natural world. Among the major components of the natural world are: geology, topography, climate, water, soils, plants, and animals. Each of these components considered separately but also together interacts with the total activity of man (Figure 1). It is important to note that the interaction is mutual: on the one hand, man in his activities uses and adapts himself to his natural setting, and, on the other hand, he modifies and transforms this setting.

My narrowed definition of geography—and there is a good deal of historical justification for it—allows us to sharpen the educational objectives considerably. It permits us to concentrate on *one* vital activity of man, his ecological life style. It qualifies us to descend to a level of understanding and explanation logistically and epistemologically impossible with a geography that only serves as an introduction to people and places. In short, this definition enables us to ask the important questions. How must man respond to the norm to love and take care of the earth? How have societies, in the context of culture, adapted themselves to and transformed their environmental setting?

Without such a focus we run the risk of the common educational practice of reducing geographic concerns to their physical and technical dimensions only. Weather is treated as a physical process only, without regard to the way that man and weather interact. Natural hazards such as earthquake and hurricane are described only in terms of their natural causes, without regard to how they affect human life and how man adjusts to them. A geography of energy becomes obsessed with the technical details of extraction and processing; it pays scant attention to people and energy.

### GEOGRAPHY AND OUR CALLING

Even more significant than the need to sharpen

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Geographic education must be an integral part of their being and becoming doers of the Word of God, living the life of service to which it calls them.

the focus of geographic education is the need to relate it to the present and future *calling* of the students. Geographic education, as indeed all education, must be an integral part of their being and becoming doers of the Word of God, living the life of service to which it calls them (James 1:19-27; Psalms 119:112). It must equip them to discharge their many offices, all having a geographic dimension.

Such an educational perspective immediately underscores the bankruptcy of much of geographic education as presently practiced. First, it calls into question the prevailing *scientistic* attitude. In attempting to make academic geographers of everyone, this attitude places undue emphasis on cognitive and academic development; it stresses head knowledge, abstraction, and techniques. Even though these have their limited place, they cannot be allowed to function as the basis and purpose of the educational enterprise. When the intellectual mastery of geographic concepts and techniques is the hallmark of educational success, then geographic education is divorced from our central calling to walk in the way of the Lord. Also, such a scientistic attitude favors the few academically inclined students and makes geographic education a frustrating experience for the rest. Yet all students, whatever their powers of logical discernment, need to be equipped for a life of service.

Second, relating geography to our calling challenges the *inductivism* currently dominant especially in elementary geographic education. Geography is often regarded and stereotyped as encyclopedic knowledge of people and places. Statistical generalizations or norms are induced from factual states of affairs. For example, generalizations about the land settlement and agriculture of a particular region might be induced entirely from summary statistics. Such a preoccupation with factual states of affairs violates the distinction between *is* and *ought*. Also, it does not allow factual situations to be seen as cultural responses,

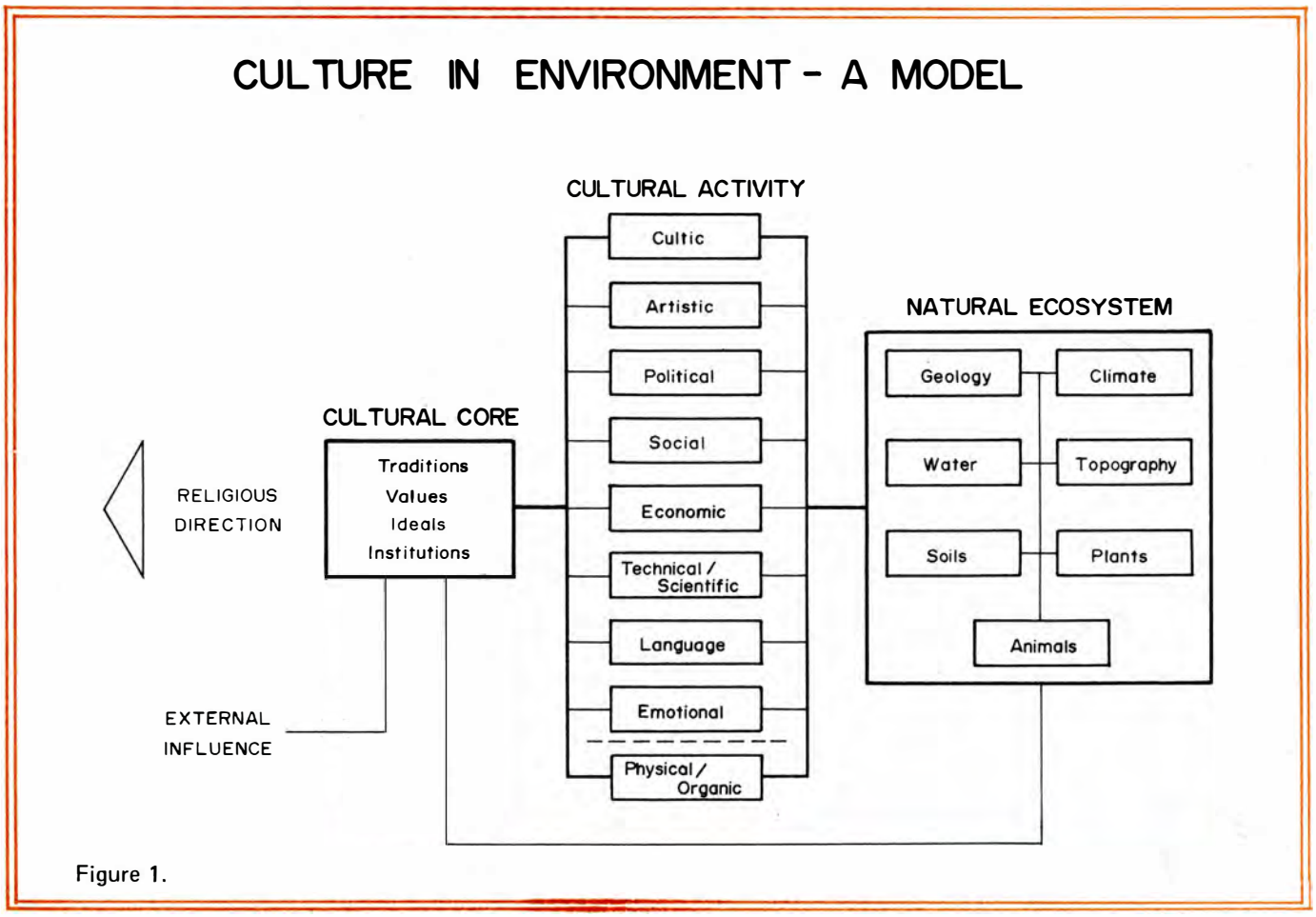


Figure 1.

obedient or disobedient to the Word of God. Finally, inductivism, though supposedly neutral, does not acknowledge that values are present both in the selection of the facts to be presented and in the summary conclusions drawn from them.

## THE DIVERSITY OF OUR ECOLOGICAL TASK

Now that we have underscored two needs, one to define geography as the study of the mutual interaction of man in his manifold functions with the natural world in its diversity, and the other to regard geographic education as preparation for a life of service, we are in a position to join these central themes and examine the diversity of our ecological task.

This diversity can first be seen by the all-encompassing nature of our ecological or geographic calling; everywhere we turn we find human life inextricably associated with the biophysical world. Individual persons and societies cannot help being geographically or ecologically busy; this is an inescapable part of human life.

Whether we buy a car or a home, have a baby, use aerosol sprays, go on vacation, plan our meals, work in the construction industry, vote in a local or national election, we make demands upon and modify the natural world. That sets out a broad educational objective already: geographic education must serve to remind students that human life is associated with natural processes at every point and that *whatever we undertake* we in some way draw from and impinge upon the natural environment. Also, students must cultivate their inescapable ecological calling in the Lord's service to bring ecological healing where they find ecological brokenness.

The diversity of their ecological calling can also be seen in the distinct offices the students will discharge now and in the future. Even though the curriculum should not apply itself directly and at every point to these distinct offices—for then teaching would be reduced to exemplary preaching and moral lessons—its overriding aim must be to lay the groundwork, for men and women to freely discharge their respective offices. Our overall educational objective can be made more concrete if we now relate it to several specific offices.

### Consumer

An ecologically responsible consumer has to be aware of the environmental demands that the provision of goods and services creates, in terms both of natural resources and the environmental impact of their production, use, and disposal. Within our culture consumers can still make important choices; they can consider what products demand from the environment and how they affect it. More and more we recognize that increasingly sophisticated consumer goods make greater and greater demands on dwindling resources and natural ecosystems.

As North American consumers we must also

become aware of where in the world our consumer goods are making environmental demands (land use, resource depletion). The rampant materialism of Western societies is possible largely because they exercise a highly disproportionate share of control over the environments of the earth. Environmental imperialism deprives many of the peoples of the world of a full life as God's creatures. Only if we are informed of the ecological consequences of our activities as consumers can we exercise our calling in this area; we can adopt not only strategies that exact less from our own environment and that of other socieites but also a personal life style that strives for the least amount of ecological disruption.

### Parents

Our calling as parents involves a measure of ecological nurture. Parents are called to foster in their children, through example and training,

responsible ecological habits in the purchase, use and disposal of energy resources and consumer goods. Probably the best ecological upbringing for children is firsthand observation of parents discharging their ecological tasks. Parents can also instill in their children a deep and abiding respect for the natural world by camping and travel, by keeping pets, and even by providing them their own garden.

Geographic education needs to prepare students to take up a political calling to involve themselves in environmental issues in their local community.

### Citizens and Community Members

The political process is largely responsible for forming the human landscape today. Energy and resource policies, planning and legislation for urban and rural land use, transportation and environmental impact studies all give form to the human landscape. Yet participation in the political process has to a large degree been abdicated by the Christian community.

Geographic education needs to prepare students to take up a political calling to involve themselves in environmental issues in their local community. Such issues might involve channeling urban growth in ecologically constructive ways, preserving delicate natural areas incompatible with any kind of development, providing adequate open space for the wellbeing of the community, and developing community strategies for recycling wastes and curbing pollution. A voice in the media must articulate and activate a Christian position on local environmental issues.

Issues of environmental justice of course extend beyond the local community. Participation in provincial/state, national, and international environmental issues will mean supporting those organizations, political parties, and candidates that seek to articulate and implement environmental justice, for example, Sierra Club (USA), Environmental Action (USA), the League of Conservation Voters (USA), the Committee for Justice and Liberty (Canada). Men and women trained in geography will be able to respond much more positively to the leading of such organizations.

### Church Members

Our ecological calling as church members requires a confessional response. Here we can say a communal *Amen* and *Hallelujah* to what the Word of God has to teach us about ecological stewardship. Here we may be reminded again of the sanctity of the natural order and of God's providential care for it; here we may be commissioned in the words of René Du Bos to woo the earth. Such proclamation to remind us can only serve to deepen our commitment to be agents of ecological reconciliation.

### Workers

Our ecological calling as members of specific work communities depends heavily on the nature of our work. Clearly those employed in primary and secondary manufacturing face larger and more immediate environmental responsibilities than those employed in the service sector. Yet even here management and labour have ecological obligations. For example, several American firms recently decided to experiment with van pooling to reduce gasoline consumption by employees traveling to work. In the primary and secondary sectors, workers (management and labour) must strive to provide a working environment that does not endanger the health of the employees; and they must also take care not to pass on to society at large environmental obligations in the form of air, water, and land pollution.

**(Continued in next issue)**

# The Teacher and Self-Image

By Anthony A. Hoekema*

Since a negative self-image hinders our efficiency and detracts from our happiness, educators agree that the cultivation of a positive self-image is one of the important goals of education. In this article I wish to explore some specific ways in which a Christian teacher can help his or her students attain and maintain a positive Christian self-image.

Though what will be said applies to all teachers, I shall be thinking particularly about teachers in the elementary grades, since the first years of school are most significant for the formation of a child's self-image. It will be assumed that the teacher we are talking about is a Christian, whether he or she is teaching in a public school or in a Christian school.

As a matter of fact, the school often fails to give a child a positive image of himself. William Glasser has some strong words to say about this subject. Very few children, he alleges, come to school as failures, and none are labeled failures when they come. But during the next five formative years the school may pin the label of failure on him. When that happens, the child begins to identify himself with failure, and it becomes extremely difficult to help such a child attain a positive self-image (*Schools Without Failure*, pp. 25–27).

The teacher plays a vital role in the development of a child's self-image. What the teacher thinks about a child will be of the highest significance for that child. In the case of children who come from inadequate homes, a teacher may actually be the only person in the world who makes that child feel that he is of value and worth. In the case of children who come from good homes, the teacher's acceptance of a child will support and reinforce the child's acceptance at home. On the other hand, a teacher who has a rejecting attitude may break down the positive self-image a child has formed at home.

The ultimate basis for our positive self-image as Christians must be God's acceptance of us in Christ. But this divine acceptance is communicated to us through people. One of the most important ways, therefore, in which others can help us maintain a positive self-image is to communicate to us the fact that God has fully accepted us in Christ.

What is of primary importance, therefore, is that the Christian teacher should *help each pupil understand that God loves him*. This may be done either by direct or indirect means. In a school where the

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**What is of primary importance, therefore, is that the Christian teacher should help each pupil understand that God loves him.**

Christian teacher is not free to give full expression to his or her Christian convictions, he or she will do her best to communicate God's love for every child by her own attitude toward her pupils and her own way of dealing with them. By expressing her love for the children under her care, she can help each child feel valued.

If, on the other hand, the teacher is teaching in a Christian school, where she has complete freedom to express her Christian beliefs, she will be able to communicate God's love for the children more directly. She will be able to tell her pupils that God loves and cares for each child as His creature. She can go on to say, in the words of John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." The teacher can then explain that the blessing of salvation from sin is conditional upon faith, repentance, and commitment to Christ. Though it is true that only the Holy Spirit can enable us to repent and believe, it is also true that each child, whether born of believing parents or not, must in the strength of the Spirit personally repent, believe, and commit his or her life to Christ. The teacher should make clear that it is only after such a commitment has been made that a person can fully enjoy the benefits of a positive Christian self-image (what the Christian self-image is and what it implies for our daily life is set forth more fully in *The Christian Looks at Himself*).

I go on now to make some specific suggestions on how teachers can help their pupils develop a positive self-image.

(1) *The teacher should have an attitude of acceptance and love toward students.* The teacher should accept each child as a person of worth, precious to God and therefore precious also to the teacher. Children of varying abilities and personalities should be accepted as evidence of God's variety in creation. Children with unusual needs and problems should be viewed as a challenge rather than as an inconvenience. There must be an atmosphere of acceptance in the classroom, in which the contribution of every child is welcomed and considered important. Take care that children are both spoken to and spoken about in a way which conveys acceptance rather than rejection. If discipline must be administered, the teacher should make clear that rejection of certain types of behavior does not imply rejection of the person.

(2) *The teacher should give each child as much encouragement as possible.* The damaging effects of ridicule on a child's self-image are well known. On the other hand, every teacher worth her salt has seen what encouragement can do for a student. Children should be praised for their attempts to think things through, rather than belittled because their efforts are childish and ineffective. Mistakes should be treated as opportunities to learn rather than as major disasters.

(3) *The teacher should encourage growing independence in her students.* Excessive dependence on the teacher goes hand in hand with low self-esteem. It is often easier for a teacher just to make decisions for her pupils, to have everything laid out for them, to do all of the planning herself. But the children should be trained to make decisions for themselves in their younger years, so that

they will begin to feel significant.

(4) *The teacher should set realistic goals.* Goal-setting should be realistic: not so high that the student gets discouraged and not so low that he makes little progress or is insufferably bored. The goals must be varied for different students. The brighter students should be sufficiently challenged and the slower students should be encouraged. Teachers should help each student to set goals for himself which will be realistic, attainable, and yet challenging.

(5) *The teacher should help her students act responsibly.* A teacher can, of course, always appeal to the rules: "You must do this or else stay after school"—and the like. But the trouble is, as William Glasser puts it, motivation with a "gun" often does not work (*op cit.*, pp. 18–19). Mere conformity to rules for fear of punishment is not necessarily living responsibly. Responsibility is learned when a child himself evaluates his own wrong action and chooses better ways of fulfilling his needs.

One of the most important things a teacher can do is to teach responsibility to the entire class. If the class can develop an understanding of what kind of behavior is wholesome and helpful for the whole group, the students will encourage each other to conduct themselves in responsible ways. If the members of the class, for example, have decided on certain penalties for irresponsible behavior, their sense of fair play will make them willing to suffer such penalties when they have deserved them. Working with the entire class will be a more effective way of teaching responsibility than working only with individuals.

(6) *The teacher should use grades with care.* The teacher should be aware of the many dangers involved in grading. Since marks tend to compare a child's achievements with the achievements of other people, it follows that the habitual slow learner will generally get low marks no matter how hard he tries. The net result is that marks often saddle a child with a poor self-image. Marks, further, may often be identified with moral values, so that bad marks are interpreted at home as meaning bad behavior. Poor marks may, in fact, limit a person's effectiveness for life, since without superior grades a person will find many schools and many jobs closed to him. The effects of all this on one's self-esteem will be obvious (see Glasser, *op cit.*, pp. 59–75).

Let the teacher, then, be extremely careful in the use of marks. If marks are considered the all-important measure of a student's ability and promise, they can be very misleading. Studies have shown that students who received brilliant grades at school are not always the most successful in their chosen professions.

It would be much better if marks were given on the basis of a student's own progress in a certain field of study, rather than on the basis of his relationship to the achievements of others. It is also highly important that a student should be evaluated, not just on the basis of his grades, but on the basis of his total ability, including his personality, character, and social adjustment.

(7) *The teacher should make a special effort to preserve the positive self-image of the gifted child.* Though we usually think of slower, less gifted children as having difficulties with their self-image, a gifted child may have these difficulties as well, particularly in the upper grades. He may find himself or think himself to be rejected by his peers because they are jealous of his gifts or of his higher marks.

Let the teacher, then, find ways in which the entire class will come to appreciate the contributions made by its most gifted members, so that the latter, instead of being rejected or envied, will be cheered along. If students are directed to work in groups, so that those of varying abilities will have to work together, the class as a whole will learn to appreciate the abilities of the abler students. Class projects of various kinds can also help to promote this kind of appreciation: science projects, plays, programs, and the like.

(8) *The teacher should create a classroom atmosphere in which students accept and help each other.* It is important that a child learns to make a realistic appraisal of his own abilities and limitations. But it is equally important that each child in a class learns to accept and appreciate his classmates, with their abilities and limitations—neither envying his more gifted classmates nor belittling the less gifted ones.

Let the teacher, then, find ways in which the brighter children in the class can help the slower ones. Let her do all she can to encourage the brighter children to cheer on the slow learners as they make progress, and to be happy along with them when they do well. Let the teacher also find ways in which the less gifted children can contribute significantly to the class, especially in areas where they are strong.

The classroom attitudes and procedures suggested above are ways of putting Christianity into practice. For Christian discipleship requires that we accept others, recognizing their value, and help them develop as persons—in other words, that we love others as ourselves.

# UP WITH DECISIONAL LEARNING

by Henry J. Triezenberg*

The Holy Spirit produces the faith in our students' hearts and the basic direction of their lives. Then what is the task of Christian educators concerning their students' decision regarding Christ and growth in Christian faith? How should teachers go about their task? Since the Holy Spirit works by the preaching of the holy gospel, we must do that. I take it that this is not restricted to formal preaching but includes informal communications. We need to speak and listen, write and read the gospel, applying its principles in the discussions and actions of our daily lives. Students interpret our words and our examples—and whether they match. All this you know and yet the question nags: what and how?

## The Language of Decision-Making

In the early days of the Revelation-Response curriculum development, the National Union of Christian Schools (NUCS) produced a cassette tape of Dr. Gordon Spykman's lecture: *Down with Moralism.* Moralism is the attempt by one person to predetermine or program the moral choices of another person. Dr. Spykman rejected moralistic methods of promoting growth in the faith and the NUCS agreed as a matter of policy. Then the NUCS curriculum policy committee began to develop its statement, *Principles to Practice*, and considered various educational terms in vogue to describe how people learn to make decisions: affective domain, value clarification, moral growth, and so on. It was noted that the terms *affect* and *value* have inherently superficial meanings because that's the way philosophers have defined and used them. Moral growth is only part of what we were after. So the committee also rejected this language as a matter of curriculum policy in favor of the term: decisional learning. It is one of three dimensions in which people can grow simultaneously in the faith: intellectual, decisional, and creative. The committee defined decisional learning as:

> DECISIONAL: This dimension focuses on growth in right choosing, in accepting or rejecting what *is* in the light of what *ought to be.* It includes both moral and aesthetic choosing, legal and logical, based on relevant Christian standards. Included in this dimension is growth in appreciations, right attitudes, appropriate feelings, and the making of value judgments and commitments (*Principles to Practice,* NUCS, 1973).

Our choice of language is important; we should not use minor terms like *value* for major meanings like *commitment.* The decisional dimension of Christian education includes commitment and it is too important to reduce it to "value clarification," the "affective domain," or "moral reasoning." God created people to desire meaning in their lives. If they do not recognize the great meanings of Biblical faith in the historical context of Christian tradition, if they do not know their own potential and limits within this context, they can easily be seduced by the trivial, vulgar, materialistic and transitory values of modern mass media. People need a stable framework of belief to preserve an open mind, to be capable of self-criticism, and to be universal in motives and sympathies. Christian students in a changing world must learn to change within their Christian commitment.

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### Our Shared Commitment

Christian education exists because a community of Christians share a commitment to God through Christ as revealed in the Bible and in the creation and providence of His universe. It is not through our own efforts that we can unite as a diverse community of believers; only Christ pulls us together. The NUCS community of schools has a common belief in its covenantal responsibility for an education in which Biblical principles are applied to all of life. Since life changes, our application of those principles is a continuous process, but the Biblical principles themselves remain absolute and unchanging.

God sent John the Baptist to prepare people to receive Christ (Matt. 11:7-19). And what was his message? Repent! In teaching my first class at Cornell University several years ago, we considered environmental problems. I could not help feeling the students' unyielding sense of despair for the survival of our culture because of pollution, population, and resource limits. They predicted the end of the world in this century. One cannot feel any better about the arms buildup in the world, both private and national. We, sinful humans, have the gun power to kill each other, the nuclear power to destroy this planet, and the technical means to manipulate our environment as well as our own physiological and mental processes. It may well be that Christ will return in our lifetime. But the point is that John the Baptist's message is at least as relevant now as ever. Repentance from any sin, said he, is not something you can impose on people. The Holy Spirit must work it from within. You cannot truly impose external forms on people. Every historical attempt to do so has failed. People can and do choose to say yes or no to Christ. Only God knows in advance how each person will decide and He has provided the decision as a human responsibility. Our duty is to tell people about Christ in an atmosphere conducive to acceptance. Call it preaching if you will; people are free to accept or reject what is preached. And right decisions are clarified in preaching.

But one's duty in Christian education goes beyond formal acts of preaching; teachers must also work out the meaning of Christian standards in their own lives and help students make their own choice for Christ "always more humanly and culturally and practically significant . . ." (Henry Zylstra, *Testament of Vision*, p. 94). A covenant community has an exciting opportunity to do this in Christian schools. It is free to demonstrate its conviction in the operation of these schools. In the process, it presents to the public an institutional witness, a model, of what Christian community is. We have an awesome responsibility in bearing the name of Christ, both individually and collectively. But "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Being a Christian without commitment is a contradiction in terms. Value clarification encourages free personal choice but not commitment; Christian decisional learning encourages both. An imposed commitment is another contradiction in terms. That is why we believe in a composite or pluralistic society whose persons and communities are free to accept or reject the Christian way, a society whose members are also free, individually and collectively, to call on their fellow citizens to repent and prepare to receive Christ. Given the present world condition, He is the only hope for survival. The Biblical way does not impose rigid forms on people; it releases them from such rigidity to the work of the Holy Spirit and to freedom within a Christian framework or structure.

If the commitment of students is the work of the Holy Spirit, then teachers cannot be accountable for it. But they can be accountable for stimulating honest communication in the classroom and establishing an atmosphere conducive to right choices. They can share their own commitment verbally and demonstrate their own integrity nonverbally through their lifestyle. Their life is a model and an example of the Christian life for their students, whether it is a true or false representation. They limit the range of student options by their own choice of curriculum materials; let them be honestly Christian options to the extent that is possible. "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1, NIV). But thank God teachers can neither take credit for nor be judged for the work of the Holy Spirit in their students' lives. In fact, they are not even to judge students' commitment. "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?" (James 4:12, NIV). The commitment is between students and their God. Students are to show faith by their deeds. "Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do" (James 2:18, NIV). "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are

young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. . . . Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress" (1 Timothy 4:12, 15, NIV).

Teachers cannot expect evidence of complete success in decisional learning while their students are still in class. To do so would presume that they are better than the master teacher whom they follow. His class size was only a dozen, yet all but one fell asleep on an important assignment, and that one dropped out to report him to the local authorities. Later the same night one even disowned his teacher, and repeated it twice for emphasis. The dropout eventually committed suicide and the weak one became the strong one. All of them at first missed the truth of what He taught, but one doubted even after the others had confirmed it. Judged by modern standards of performance accountability, the master teacher was a failure, yet the commitment of His class later proved so strong that it has lasted for 2,000 years and still binds people together today. The modern way of accountability is wrong for judging commitment. Teachers should not fear to do what they can with their students by encouraging them to consider and choose various actions. Within a common commitment to Him, they can share their own commitment openly, individually building one another in the faith and together witnessing to the whole educational world.

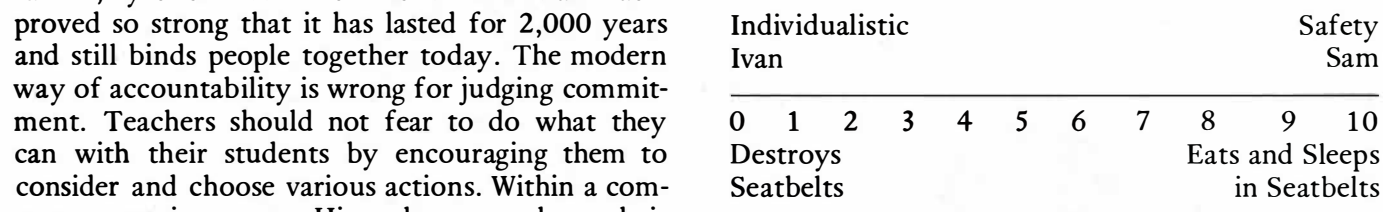
### Structure for Decisional Learning

Consider the seatbelt dilemma in driver education. That is a good example because faithful Christians differ in their actions regarding seatbelts. And, as pointed out earlier, actions are both the product and the evidence for decisional learning (James 2:17, 18). Major decisions on human life and individual responsibility are at stake in this example. Students learn decisionally through three phases: (1) consider, (2) choose, and (3) commit. The 3 C's are three levels of decision-making; "consider" comes first in the decisional learning process.

#### (1) *Consider*

I stated the importance of communication and that is where one has to begin. In the classroom most communication is oral, through both talking and listening, although written communications are obviously important. Many teachers like to talk, so they found a profession that capitalizes on talk. But as a result teachers are often poor listeners. To consider, they have to listen as well as talk, read as well as write. Many listening strategies have been developed today. One listening strategy from value clarification is the gradient, which can be used to present the seatbelt dilemma. It simply enables a teacher to learn where people stand on an issue and what the prospects for learning are.

Well, what do you think? Here is Individualistic Ivan; he believes so strongly in the right of free choice for individual persons that whenever he sees an interlock system he becomes angry at the government, bypasses the buzzer, and cuts off the seatbelts. Few people choose this position, nor do they choose the position of Safety Sam, who feels so secure in seatbelts that he eats at a drive-in so he will not have to untie them.




A teacher presents the gradient and the students who wish to participate take a position along it, somewhere between the extremes. But then the discussion starts: why do people believe the way they do?

Differences of opinion on this issue that existed in my workshops with Christian teachers indicate that they themselves should be open to consider the seatbelt issue. It's not at all settled. If teachers are open, they can learn from their students as well as teach them. But here is where I begin to depart from the value clarification people: it is important, after all is said and done, for a teacher to state his or her stand on an issue. That is how teachers indicate the importance of both making decisions and reconsidering their own choices. If a teacher's choice is to tie up the seatbelts and bypass the interlock system, the superintendent may wish to hire another driver educator. But that is another matter. The point here is that it is important for the teacher to listen openly and state his or her own decision with its justification in Christian principle. But it is in the listening part of the considering process that Christian teachers most need to

improve their practice. They can find more listening strategies than they can use in communications, effectiveness-training, value clarification, and moral judgment publications. What is important is that they use these strategies with Christian discretion.

### (2) *Choose*

Besides considering, teachers need to create an atmosphere that encourages right choices. This might be as simple as limiting the options for choosing songs to a particular songbook or as complex as implementing a science curriculum that encourages students to choose their own pace, path, and evaluation of learning, along with the care of laboratory equipment and the tutoring of fellow students. In our seatbelt example, driver education teachers will not usually ride with a student unless the seatbelts are fastened. A student who is eager enough to drive will fasten the seatbelt. A student can begin to understand what the talk means and how important the decision is in guiding actions. The job of Christian teachers is to promote integrity between decision and action; their example goes a long way. Everyone is fully aware that the student will eventually make his or her own choices regarding seatbelts, but meanwhile we have created learning conditions that encourage right choices.

Many educators argue that teachers have no right to impose their own decisions on a student to that extent. But that is an unrealistic argument. By their very presence, teachers bring their own ideas, decisions, and actions to the classroom. Even not to decide is to decide, meanwhile subversively teaching that there are no right decisions. They obviously should not teach so individualistically that they refuse to transmit the ideas and decisions of their culture and community. But that does not mean that within the framework of their culture and community teachers cannot be free to be themselves in the classroom, displaying personal strengths and weaknesses. They have their own dignity to uphold as image bearers. That is precisely the joy of working in Christian education. Teachers are free to be themselves as Christian persons.

### (3) *Commit*

After considering with a Christian community the dilemmas, options, Biblical guidelines and relevant evidence (largely intellectual input) for a decision and then choosing to do something in accordance with this input, teachers and students can

decide to commit themselves to a pattern of actions. This is the third and final phase of decisional learning. Teachers and students commit themselves to sequences of actions toward persons, groups, sets of objects, or a series of events. In the example used, they either decide to tie seatbelts as a matter of long-term habit or to forget about them. A pattern of action could be as little as picking up litter or as big as committing one's life to Christ. Obviously teachers cannot impose commitment, big or little; it must come from within a person. The Holy Spirit works within a person in the matter of committing one's life to Christ. But God does use the covenant community to work out His will; He tells its members to spread the gospel in word and deed. Work as teachers is largely done at the "consider" and "choose" phases of decisional learning. During the commitment phase teachers can only notice persons who live out their commitment and commend them for it, building one another up in the faith. If they are faithful to His Word in all areas of life, God will grant the increase.

The best source for decisions to which a Christian should be committed is the Bible. Reading the Bible daily and considering its application to life in regular small group Bible study discussions are prime factors for constant growth in faith. Traditional creeds are another good source. For specifically educational principles there are policy statements like the NUCS' *Principles to Practice* (1973). More specifically, the NUCS curriculum goal cards, *Priorities in Christian Education,* include ten decisional goals with a procedure for community decision-making. The NUCS policy and curriculum consultants have committed themselves to a thorough review of decisional learning; hence the title of this essay. You can expect to hear more about decisional learning from the curriculum department as it works out the implications of decisional learning for curriculum materials.

### The Potential for Decisional Learning

The NUCS study has the potential for a revitalized inspiration and greatly improved practice of an important dimension of Christian education. A sampling of Christian school administrators recently gave decisional goals a higher priority than either intellectual or creative ones. Already we believe our structure enables Christian educators to overcome the limitations and avoid the relativism trap of the value clarification and moral reasoning methods. It also avoids the trap of moralism.

Decisional learning is not susceptible to the twin traps of moralism and relativism because it provides for open learning of a faith that has stood the test of time and avoids the subversive teaching of situational values. It is sensitive to the inner person of the student and to the Holy Spirit's work there. It begins with an intellectual process and ends in creative action, encouraging integrity between means and ends. It employs Biblical guidelines and advances a community commitment, encouraging the development of the highest Christian ideals in an imperfect world. It has the potential for depth of character, permanence, and stable growth. Finally, decisional learning is an active approach of reflective response in obedience to God's Revelation.

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I believe we are on to something that can lead to a renewal of Christian education at its best. I hope the whole NUCS community of Christian educators will join us toward decisional learning in Christian education. Practice the three C's in your classroom, and send us your evaluations and ideas. Be assured that each will be carefully and prayerfully considered. This is a fine opportunity for diverse professional individuals to build one another up in the community of faith.


*GOD IN AMERICAN HISTORY:* A Documentation of America's Religious Heritage by Benjamin Weiss. Pasadena, California: Geddes Press, Printers, 1966. 258 pp. *Reviewed by Gary L. Van Halzen, teacher of American history and government, Valley Christian High School, Cerritos, California.*

The purpose of this book by Weiss is to remind the reader that the foundation and strength of the United States has been her faith in a sovereign God. Weiss proceeds to document this with samplings from early colonial writings, inaugural addresses by presidents, American mottos, song lyrics, and inscriptions on American buildings and monuments. All give evidence of a calling on the name of God for divine guidance.

I found this book refreshing because it did not mythicize the founding fathers, as many past historians have done, providing them with an aura of purity and goodness that made them almost superhuman idols and certainly not the men with inherent shortcomings the Calvinistic idea of man presents. Instead Weiss stresses not the men but the Christian ideals which aided them. We see writings from men who argued, worried, struggled, and many times stumbled in their effort to bring about a new nation under God and keep it going. We can learn from these men, not from their purity, but from their reaction to their own impurity. They frequently exhibited a desire to call on the name of God, depend on Him, trust Him, and believe His promise that out of evil man can come good things.

An important lesson can be learned from the book: that man should not copy men but the ideals that aid them. And those ideals of the founding fathers, Weiss points out, are contained in the Christian faith.

We read of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. Why did the writer of Hebrews include this? So that we could worship the men or worship the God whom these men followed? I believe the latter. So we are not to worship the founding fathers but the God these men followed, the God who has given the United States the blessings that these founding fathers fervently prayed for.

Throughout the book, Weiss reminds us with his words and the words of many great Americans that for the United States to survive the uncertain future she must return to the roots of her past. "We need to be reminded of our great spiritual heritage and our responsibility to bring these truths to each on-coming generation. This is our sacred responsibility and trust." I recommend this book for that purpose alone, especially in this bicentennial year.

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*LIVING TOGETHER ON GOD'S EARTH,* Christian Light Publications, Inc., 1974. Harrisonburg, Virginia. *Reviewed by Debbie Fisher, senior student in elementary education, Calvin College.*

In the "Introduction for Adults," the authors state their purpose for the development of such a text. Alarmed by the boldly asserted concepts of humanism which now pervade most modern social studies texts, the authors have labored to build their curriculum upon the solid principles of the Bible. The authors state,

> In contrast to other social studies texts, this series assumes the depravity of man since his fall in the Garden of Eden. It develops a system of social values based on God's revealed Word, recognizing the New Testament as God's final revelation to men. The way of salvation through Jesus Christ is presented as the only remedy for man's present deplorable condition both individually and socially. The spread of this Gospel of salvation is presented as the responsibility of the Christian community.

As I went through this social studies text I was very impressed with the effort made by the authors to present the area of social studies within a Christian world and life view. To support this positive aspect, I would like to cite a few examples which particularly impressed me. There were also aspects of this text that left me feeling somewhat uncomfortable. I would like, also, to cite a few examples of those aspects.

The text followed a sequential pattern in introducing concepts of the community. The first section is entitled, "Communities of Bible Times." In this section the communities in Egypt, Palestine, Jerusalem, and Corinth were studied. The second section talks of communities where Christians have lived, such as, Amsterdam, Philadelphia and Germany. I like the comparison of different cultures, past and present, in relation to God.

At the end of each study unit, there are special questions which relate unit concepts and events to the Bible. In addition, there are over 160 direct quotations from the Bible in the body of the text. The authors' point in doing this, is to move from a "man-centered" view of the universe, to a God-centered one. This is very good, for it gives students a basis from which to think, statutes by which to guide their lives. An example of this is given in the first chapter of the book, in a section entitled, "God's Earth Supplies Our Needs." In summary, this section lists and explains the various resources that God has filled the earth with for our use. It states that every natural resource belongs to God. But it doesn't end there. It goes on to say (using several Biblical texts) that each person has a duty to use God's property carefully. "God trusts us to be His stewards. A steward must use the owner's property carefully and wisely." This section teaches students about the resources of the earth, and also gives reasons and sets guidelines why we, as stewards, must be aware of conservation and anti-pollution.

The text is a good effort by the authors to integrate man's living on earth in relation to the principles set by God in the Bible. But, as I stated earlier in the paper, there are certain aspects of this text which left me feeling somewhat uneasy. This might be due to my own personal Christian values, yet these are my guidelines for making responsible decisions and evaluations (positive and negative).

One of the authors' stated objectives for this text, was to show how sin (man's total depravity) has caused corruption, evil and decay in man's world. While this is probably basically true I think the authors are missing something essential in the way they are presenting this concept. Let me state an example to clarify my point. The section on pages 184-185 is entitled, "Philadelphia Today." In summary, this short section deals with contemporary Philadelphia as an industrious, growing city. It goes on to say that in Philadelphia sin has become a greater and greater problem. A good government can help a city, but it cannot solve the problem of sin. So what is the answer? The authors give this: "Today Christians can help Philadelphia most by witnessing for Jesus. By doing that, Christians can help bring true brotherly love back to the city." Now, all of this is very true, but it needs to go farther. What we need is *active* involvement of Christians in government. Praying and witnessing is the first step, but we must also use our talents and abilities to "get in there" and work within the system. It is one thing to blame sin and pray, but then we must actively change to complete the process.

I got the general impression in going over this text that all Christians are happy (no matter what happens to them) and all nonChristians are unhappy. I will give two examples in support of this. On page 210 there is a picture of a group of young people. The caption reads, "Some of the boys in this picture still need to give their hearts to Jesus. You can see the unhappiness of their faces." I object to this type of interpretation of a picture. And, also, are we to assume that unhappiness never invades the life of a Christian? On pages 150-153 there is the true story of Ellert Jans who dies for his faith. One paragraph reads,

> The men squeezed Ellert's fingers with iron clamps until the blood ran. They stretched his body with ropes until pain shot through his arms and legs. But Ellert would not believe their lies. Finally they took him back to his cell. He was bleeding and sore, yet singing praises to God.

Ellert was later burned alive at the stake. Is a story such as this appropriate for third grade? Aren't the concepts which need to be understood here far beyond the developmental level of these children? The whole point of this story might be missed; the only thing this story might produce is fear. The only emotion Jans had was that of happiness. If Jans had any fear it wasn't stated, and is it so wrong for a Christian to be afraid?

My overall general reaction was favorable. If I had to use this text, there would be some revisions I would make. I do believe in a God-centered view of the universe, but I do believe in a child-centered curriculum. I do feel that some concepts were beyond the grasp of some children (if you take into account individual differences). I don't believe that it is right for young children to dwell on the thought of persecution. Neither do I feel that children should think that a Christian's life is only one of exceeding happiness. I guess I want my students to realize that there are non-Christians who lead happy and ethical lives. It is basically the reasons and motives behind our actions which make us different—Christians work for the Kingdom of God.

# christian educators journal

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