



Christian Educators Journal

VOLUME 17.

NUMBER 3

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1978

**EARLY ADOLESCENT
CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE
TERMS GOD AND PRAYER**

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nice color -

BETWEEN

THESE COVERS

How does an early adolescent picture God? What does prayer mean to an early adolescent? More importantly, does a Christian education make any difference in the way God and prayer are conceptualized? DAVID TJART and FREDRIC BOERSMA have examined these questions in "Early Adolescent Conceptualizations of the Terms of God and Prayer."

Values clarification and moral education, the currently popular concern in public education, are an integral part of Christian learning. Yet, we teachers sometimes fail to continuously examine the foundations of our methodology. GORDON OOSTERMAN challenges "Methods Without Metaphysics" and speaks sharply and lucidly about this vital concern.

KAREN WHITESIDE, in "Journal of a Book Celebration," shares her delightful diary of a summer project in which young children are encouraged to enjoy good literature while learning to read. GRETA REY, editor of the regular feature, IT WORKED, deals with the "clique" problem, which begins in early elementary school and often hurts and haunts students until they graduate from high school. Her article, "Change-a-Friend Day," details a practical method which can be used by elementary teachers anywhere in combating this ever-present problem.

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Back to the Basic(s)

Basic Christian education — what?
Reading? Writing? Arithmetic? and more.

Read about it in the March-April issue
of CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL

Your responses are invited!

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

Indexed in Christian Periodicals Index

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Editorial

An International Christian Teachers' Convention

Marshall McLuhan (quoted in Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*) states disparagingly, "Figuring all possible combinations of styles, options, and colors available on a certain new family sports car, for example, a computer expert came up with 25,000,000 different versions of it for a buyer . . ." *Overchoice*, Toffler calls it.

Although no twenty-five million options existed, for a teacher from the "boonies" (as one sectional speaker jestingly labeled Colorado, this writer's state), the Christian Educators Association (CEA) convention, held in Chicago in October, 1977, provided a delightful, practical and abundant *overchoice* of educational inspiration and information. All this and more was united under the theme, "Educating With a Difference." The CEA Convention Planning Committee deserved the abundance of praise voiced by many teachers who attended.

But few of us from the "boonies" get an opportunity to attend conventions of this size and variety regularly — if at all! This should not and need not be. The time has come for the various Christian educational associations throughout Canada and the United States to unite at one international convention on an annual or at least a biennial basis.

PRACTICAL PURPOSES

A quick glance at the calendar published by the National Union of Christian Schools (NUCS) reveals that many regional Christian teacher associations do hold conventions annually. An analysis of membership in these associations shows that geographical proximity determines the membership and attendance.

Geography, however, should not be the determinantal or decisive factor in the planning,

scheduling and location of Christian teacher conventions. We have far too much to share with one another to permit miles to separate us! We need also to make our voice heard, not only by each other but also across the continent as the promoters of "education with a *difference*." It is this *difference* which demands that the various Christian teachers' associations move towards an international convention.

We Christian teachers, from kindergarten through college, need to look together at the *difference*, the difference in Christ which unites us in our reason for being. The Christian philosophy, theory, and psychology taught us in college need constant reinforcement, scrutiny, and contemporary interpretation. An international convention can fill this need.

We need also to profit from the differences in ideas, methods, and principles as practiced in schools from British Columbia to Florida, from Nova Scotia to California, from Edmonton to Arizona. The small staff in an isolated country school can learn much from and teach much to the faculties of the big urban schools.

A three-day international convention could also bring sufficient numbers of people with similar interests together to warrant the scheduling of concentrated workshops in areas of special needs. Our Christian colleges could contribute much by structuring such workshops and granting college credit for continued professional education.

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

Factors which militate against such an endeavor are real . . . but they are not insurmountable. Finances are usually cited first. Finances did not, however, prevent over twenty-five hundred Young Calvinists from attending their annual

convention. Nor did it prevent several hundred Calvinette and Cadet counsellors from attending the 1977 convention in the beautiful setting of the Rocky Mountain National Park. Most of the counselors with whom I spoke had arranged family vacations to coincide with convention dates and areas. Surely, if they can then we . . .

The calendar presents another difficulty. Traditionally Christian teacher conventions are scheduled early in the school year. Why? Origins of this tradition are obscure to me, and any tradition that is preserved without reason or rationale may be questioned. Elbert Hubbard, writer and essayist in the late 19th century (the good ole' days), said, "Progress consists in discarding a good thing as soon as you have found a better."

Already one hears, "Who says it will be better?" Success cannot be measured prior to existence, but several reasons suggest the time is here to consider movement towards an international convention. Whether the ideas, sharing and inspiration of a convention carry into the classroom depends, of course, on the individuals attending. The late Professor Henry Zylstra said, "The salutary result [of Christian learning] is that we gain more to be Christian with." Surely we need that fully as much as our students.

And then there are the teachers who attend summer school. A vacation from learning and studying probably provides more necessary rest and recreation than a busy convention. But no one goes to school every summer! For the others of us, whence comes the input so sorely needed for the output of the coming nine months? Teachers who during the summer supplement the family income especially need inspirational and stimulating orientation before September.

An August convention could replace much of the often-innocuous required orientation sessions, and would not impinge on the school calendar. Where better could inspiration and learning be provided than at a carefully — planned international convention of teachers who are expected to give their students education to be "more Christian with."

PRACTICAL APPROACHES

The NUCS convention (which teachers may attend, but usually do not) is scheduled in August. Although this convention focuses on the needs of administrators, school board members, and friends of Christian education, it could be rather conveniently promoted and expanded to serve Christian teachers as well. Teachers, administrators, and board members can profit from a better understanding of and empathy for each others' needs and problems.

Geographic distance does create problems, closely related to finances. NUCS provides a practical solution by selecting convention sites in various locations of the countries in which substantial numbers of members reside. (This also adds to the allure of making such a time a family vacation outing.)

To help minimize financial difficulties a formula could be devised to share costs equally and assist all teachers who desire to attend. Costs could be shared by boards, education associations, and teachers themselves. Teachers interested in professional growth set aside regular amounts for continued learning. Replacing annual regional conventions with international, biennial conventions would save many dollars and days. A three-day biennial convention would not cost twice as much as several regional one-and-one-half day conventions.

NEEDED: ACTIVE INNOVATORS

We Christian educators need to let our countries know that there is alive and active an education that helps young students to "be more Christian." We have *truth*. We know that Christian education is not merely a viable alternative to the growing disenchantment with public education; we know that all truth is God's truth. On that our *difference* is based. We know the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

We hear a different Drummer, but we are muffling the drumbeat. With an international convention, leading perhaps to an international organization, we can beat our drums unitedly and the decibels will rise. Ideas are only ideas until acted upon. Said Oliver Wendell Homes, "The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving." Can we move?

Of course! But moving to explore the possibilities for an international convention requires enthusiastic leadership and support from the teachers themselves. It needs participation from many sources. The CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL suggests that the concept be explored by the convention planning committee of the National Union of Christian Schools, the executive boards of the now-existing regional Christian educators' associations in Canada and the United States, and the education departments of our Christian colleges. The CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL offers its pages to associations and individuals interested in discussing the possibilities of an international Christian teachers' convention.

How about 1980 as a target date for the first international Christian teachers' convention?

Early Adolescent Conceptualizations of the Terms of God and Prayer

David Tjart and Frederic Boersma

The existence of numerous Christian creeds and confessions of faith bears historical record to the fact that at various times in the history of the Christian church, its leaders have found it advantageous to emphasize the importance of holding correct beliefs about God and His desire for man. In times of social, political or cultural upheaval, such confessions have served to preserve historical Christian values.

In addition to underlining the importance of correct beliefs, the Scriptures state that profession of the Christian faith should make a difference in the way we live our lives. Our *explicit* expression of values, as found in the Scriptures and stated more formally and systematically in creed or confession, is to be matched by our *implicit* expression of values, as found in our daily lives.

The man who claims to know God but does not obey His laws is not only a liar but lives in self-delusion. In practice, the more a man learns to obey God's laws the more truly and fully does he express his love for Him. Obedience is the test of whether we really live 'in God' or not. The life of a man who professes to be living in God must bear the stamp of Christ (I John 2:4-6, Phillips).

In various places in the Scriptures one finds "catalogues of Christian virtue." The "fruit of the Spirit," spoken of in Galatians 5:22-23, "is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, tolerance and self-control" (Phillips). The apostle Peter exhorts his readers in II Peter 1:5-7 to "faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, devotion to God, brotherliness, and love" (Phillips). Christians who profess to follow the teachings of the Scriptures are expected to exhibit certain outward behaviors as an expression of inner convictions. Their value system needs to coincide with what the Scriptures teach.

How do the values of the members of the Edmonton Society for Christian Education compare with those of the average Edmontonian? Is it possible to measure these values and seek to gauge the success of the Society's school program by comparing the value-orientations of Christian school pupils with those of pupils from public schools? What, if any, are the distinguishing characteristics which set apart those enrolled in

the Christian schools from those attending public schools?

Purpose

The general purpose of this study was to compare a sample of Edmonton public and Christian school children's religious values, or perhaps more specifically, their conceptions of the terms *God* and *prayer*. We hoped that the results of this study would provide useful information as to the extent to which such values are understood and assented to by early adolescents. Such information might also prove valuable in some aspects of curriculum planning and in personal and group religious counselling.

Research

It seems from a review of recent research that some non-public schools are experiencing more success than others in achieving their stated objectives. Roman Catholic schools, at least in some parts of North America, do not appear to differ significantly from public schools regarding effectiveness in the inculcation of values (Lechiara, 1969; Perkins, 1972; Murphy, 1974; Biollo, 1975). On the other hand, several other Christian groups seem to enjoy at least a measure of success in achieving some of their objectives. According to research by Feather (1970), Hautt (1971), Brekke (1974), and the Red Deer regional office of the Alberta Department of Education (1974), students from private schools appear to place a higher value on loving, forgiving, honesty, and the importance of a personal devotional life, than do their public school counterparts.

Sample

The sample for the present study was made up of grade eight students drawn from two Edmonton public schools and three Edmonton Christian schools. The entire Christian School (CS) population consisting of 91 children was used in the study, whereas the Public School (PS) sample contained 100 children. Thus a total of 191 students were tested. The PS sample was chosen from middle class areas, supposedly reflecting

similar socio-economic backgrounds to those of children in the CS system.

Text Instrument and Procedure

At the very heart of any person's religious value system is his concept of God and how man may approach God. Consequently, the concepts God and prayer were chosen for use in this study because they are central to Christian beliefs. It was hypothesized that CS pupils would be more positively inclined towards these terms than PS pupils.

Students' perceptions of these concepts were measured by C.E. Osgood's (*The Measurement of Meaning*, 1957) semantic differential technique. Specifically, students were asked to rate these two concepts on a series of bipolar adjectives, and then the mean scores of the groups as a function of adjective pairs were compared. Because of the

margin

religious nature of the study, participation in the public schools was made voluntary; however, no students chose not to participate. The actual testing was carried out in the schools during April, 1976.

Results and Discussion

In Figures 1 and 2 the two groups of students are quite clearly differentiated in terms of their conceptualization of the concepts *God* and *prayer*. The asterisks beside 20 of the 24 pairs of adjectives indicate that statistically significant differences exist between the average scores of the two groups in about 83% of the cases. A closer examination of the figures shows that almost all the adjectives to the left of the scales have "positive" connotations. It appears that although both groups have basically positive orientations to the terms *God* and *prayer*, that CS students are generally more positively inclined toward them than PS students.

Figure 1
Semantic Differential
Graphic Comparison of Group Mean Scores

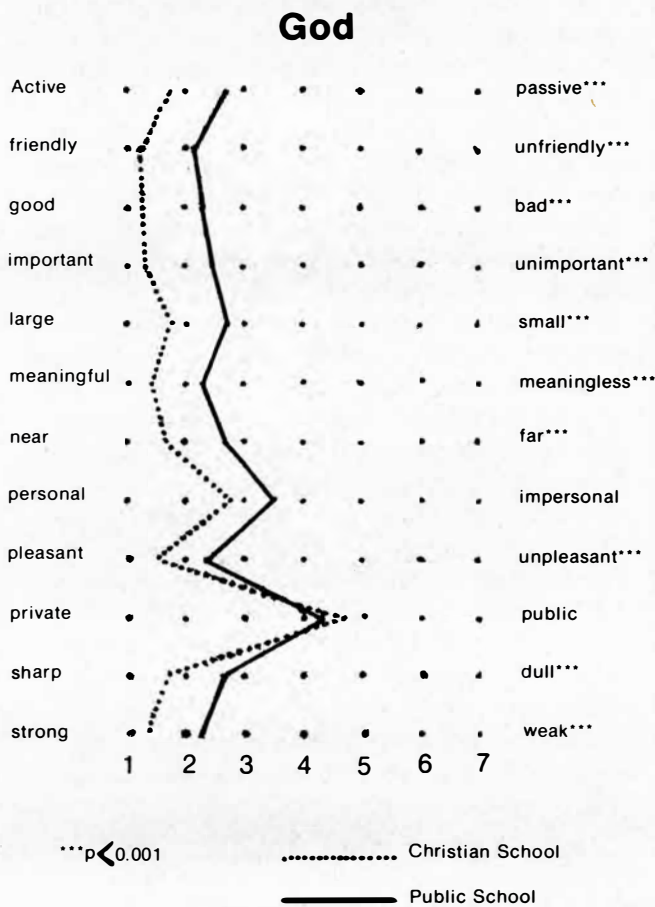
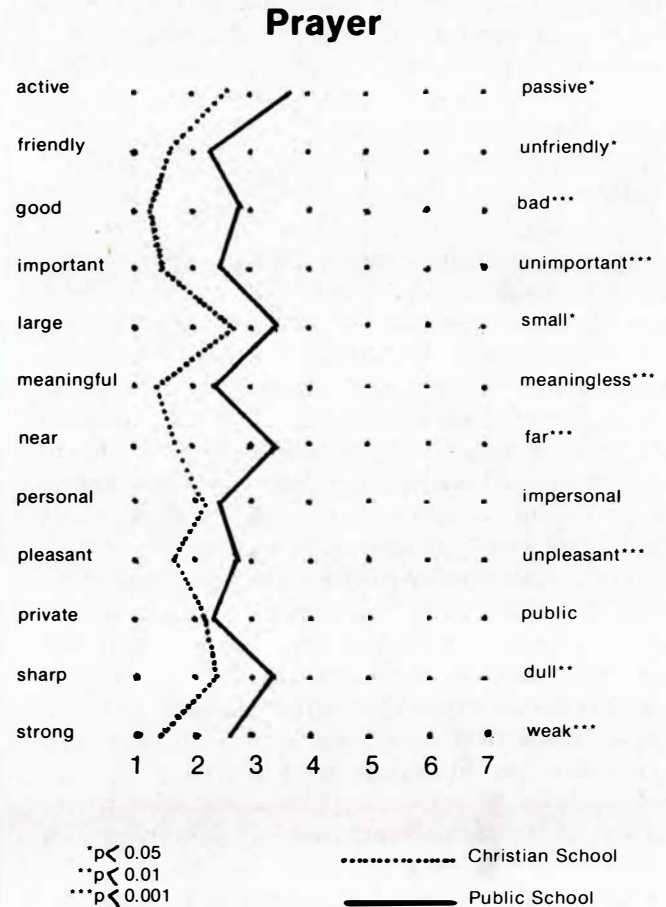


Figure 2
Semantic Differential
Graphic Comparison of Group Mean Scores



85.00
+8.00
-2.00

A detailed discussion of group differences for the concepts *God* and *prayer* necessitates consideration of several tenets of Christian theology such as the nature and character of God, and prayer as a "means of grace." Though the present study was not primarily a theological one, it is proper to seek to relate the findings of the study to the teachings of Christian doctrine.

Note the individual adjective pairs on which group scores differed significantly. For example, CS pupils viewed God as "stronger" and "larger" than did PS pupils. Perhaps those with a specific Christian background and influence tend to agree more fully with a Christian doctrine like the omnipotence of God.

Similarly, an examination of some of the other scales reveals that CS pupils saw God as more relevant (active, important, meaningful, personal), and more intent on establishing a relationship with man (friendly, good, near) than did PS pupils. These findings suggesting a deeper commitment to Christian doctrine on behalf of CS students are expected from a group which is receiving specific Christian teaching. CS pupils, by achieving lower group mean scores on most scales under the concept *prayer*, conceived of prayer as both playing a more meaningful part in their lives and as being in itself more pleasant and rewarding than did their PS counterparts.

On two pairs of adjectives the groups did not differ significantly for the concept *God*. Both groups had similar conceptions of God as being "personal" and "public." While a discussion of the personality of God is outside the scope of this study, the group scores may reflect traditional Christian teachings. The designation "public" possibly indicates the influence of various biblical accounts which portray God as acting in a public manner from time to time. The groups also regarded *prayer* as "personal" and "private"—a view that seems to coincide with general practice.

Apparently both groups have been influenced in their views of *God* and *prayer* by Christian teaching which still prevails in North American culture and implies that God is, in the main, kindly disposed toward man, and that it is "a good thing" to approach Him in prayer. The significant differences in group scores, however, shows that CS pupils hold a more positive view towards these terms than PS pupils. This finding is supportive of both the aims and educational policies of the Edmonton Society for Christian Education; the basis of the Society is the "infallible Word of God" which states that God loves man and that it is man's privilege to seek Him in prayer.

Implications

What implications do the above data have for

day-to-day conduct? Do CS eighth graders' views of God and prayer affect their everyday behavior? Knowing what to report on a pencil-and-paper test is one thing, but actually living a life which demonstrates this more positive orientation toward God and prayer is another. An intriguing follow-up to this study may ascertain if CS pupils indeed respond differently in real life situations. Further investigation to determine the relative influence of church, home and school in the development of religious values could greatly assist in educational planning, both for the church and the Christian school.

David Tjart is the minister at Alliance Church, Edmonton, and a counseling graduate student at the University of Alberta. Frederic Boersma is a professor of Educational Psychology at the same University.

COMMANDMENTS FOR TAKING A STANDARDIZED TEST

- I. Thou shalt not make subtle distinctions. (The universe must fit into four or five boxes.)
- II. Thou shalt not think broadly. (Only one given answer can be correct.)
- III. Thou shalt not have thine own ideas. (Adopt the fantasy world of the test maker, or else fail.)
- IV. Thou shalt not devise unusual relations among things. (A is to B as C is to what Somebody Else has in mind.)
- V. Thou shalt not be different in unique ways. (You are being compared with others along a single line according to a "normal" curve.)
- VI. Thou shalt be better at naming a concept than at using the concept. (Word recognition is the easiest skill to test.)
- VII. Thou shalt not try too hard. (Let your middle-class background guide your choice of answer; if you are not middle class, too bad.)
- VIII. Thou shalt not be confused by misleading or crowded graphic layout.
- IX. Thou shalt not confuse the answer with the name of the answer, with the number or letter of the answer, or with the box to be shaded to tell the computer the number or letter that corresponds to the answer thou hast chosen.
- X. Thou shalt not be frightened.

("... don't be nervous [said the King], or I'll have you executed on the spot.")

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METHODS WITHOUT METAPHYSICS

or

WHY TEACH A PROCESS IF IT LEADS NOWHERE?

Gordon Oosterman

NEWS ITEM:

Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J., announced that in its testing services it is making "an attempt to evolve a value-free concept of the moral domain."

Keeping Up, July 1974, p. 2

PURPOSE ITEM:

"When a good moral discussion class ends, students should feel that it is incomplete. They should leave the classroom still wondering about the best response to a different moral problem."

"Teaching Strategies for Moral Dilemmas; An Application of Kohlberg's Theory," by Ronald E. Galbraith and Thomas M. Jones

Social Education, January 1975, p. 22

STRANGE ITEM:

"The values clarification approach does not aim to instill any particular set of values."

Values Clarification, by Simon, Howe, and Kirchenbaum, p. 21

TRUE ITEM:

Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. Ecclesiastes 4:7.

APOLOGIA:

Values and value-teaching and/or value clarification has been given its needful place in educational discussion these past few years. This keystone of all educational endeavors has been shunted aside and Kohlberg has long remained unchallenged in his endless editorializing, but values are being recognized as an essential part of educational experiences.

In this recent turn of events Christian educators should rejoice and be prepared to say something worthwhile in educational dialogues. It is disheartening to hear that Christian teachers whose training and experiences have equipped them to make a worthwhile contribution choose rather "to look the other way."

Their reasoning, if I hear them correctly, goes something like this: "Methods are practical. We'll leave that theoretical stuff to those experiencing or suffering from advanced academia." I cannot disassociate the "practical" and the "theoretical," and at the same time maintain a sense of academic integrity. "Practical" invariably strikes me as a derivative of sorts from a transitive verb, and the question always haunts me, "Practical for what?"

Education Is a Form of Value Education

All education is predicated upon some system of values or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are implicitly or explicitly communicated. A basic

most inconsistent -
much spacing
see - of pp 4-5

I cannot disassociate the "practical" and the "theoretical," and at the same time maintain a sense of academic integrity.

assumption that knowledge is more desirable than ignorance is inherent in compulsory education laws and serves as a lowest common denominator for all school systems. Some school systems claim their justification from a more specific ideology. In the broad family of school systems known as Christian schools, the identification and articulation of specifically Christian values, commitments, and expressions are among the first in the hierarchy of operational values in a Christian school.

action?

A pitfall is a hidden or not easily recognized danger of difficulty. This does not imply that the direction or path, in this case of teaching value clarification, is not a good or desirable one. Quite the contrary; simply because the concern for values is a commendable goal, one should be on the alert not to be engulfed or ensnared by deceptive distractions.

antecedent

Cleverly Camouflaged Pits

Hole?
alternative?

Hole one is the mentality which claims the detached position, espousing no particular set of values and having no more emotional attachment to values than a computer would have. A purist on this score, though difficult to find, would hold that the killing of a chicken or the killing of a child are equally "value-free"; yet much of the literature points strongly in the direction of no-value commitment as an ideal in teaching value clarification. For maximum teaching effect a wise teacher should, and at times must, momentarily hold in abeyance his own values which presumably coincide with the values of the institution under whose auspices he teaches, but it should be recognized throughout that no teacher is or can be as value-free as a jar of pickles. One way to avoid this sinkhole is by acknowledging that all sane persons hold to some system of values, and the one who pretends otherwise, knowingly or not, is a phony.

issue

... it should be recognized throughout that no teacher is or can be as value-free as a jar of pickles.

Another slough is putting all values into one category, concealing that people live in terms of a hierarchy of values. When the Master calls us to seek first the kingdom of heaven, He tacitly recognized that people also live by other values - cultural, national, family, or personal values, to mention a few. For a Christian to get his prime allegiance confused with lesser allegiances is the essence of idolatry. Personal preferences regarding colors, foods, or clothes can scarcely be labeled "values" in the same discussion of whether or not to let the people of Bangladesh die of starvation. Failing to delineate between kinds of values quickly leads into a swampland in teaching value clarification.

When the Master calls us to seek first the kingdom of heaven, He tacitly recognized that people also live by other values . . . for a Christian to get his prime allegiance confused with lesser allegiances is the essence of idolatry.

Perhaps the most alluring of all is the quicksand of assuming that the method of value teaching can be quite divorced from the substance. Advocates of value clarification obviously value the skill of value clarification above ignorance in this area. (This unmistakably is a value position which advocates a value.) Value clarification is essentially an echo of value education.

?

The triumvirate of value clarifiers in American education, Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum, in their book *Values Clarification* actually state "the values - clarification approach does not aim to instill any particular set of values." They are "not concerned with the content of people's values, but the process of valuing." In spite of their very valuable techniques in value clarification, these men lack the consistency of the position they endorse. Both throwing out the baby of value analysis with the bathwater of obvious inconsistency, and embracing the position advocated by Simon et al. is to confuse the substance of an underlying value system with a method which has limited applicability in its implementation.

Process Is Not A Substitute

? One of my remaining concerns deals with a bottomless or foundation-lacking attempt which badly confuses a philosophy and a technique. This attempt is something other than claiming they are disjunct and separable; it is the compound confusion of claiming one while in fact practicing the other. It is the notion that value clarification can (almost) be adequately handled by mastering a technique, sort of doing it by the numbers. T. S. Eliot once wrote in his satirical fashion of "a system so perfect that men will no longer have to be good."

The Ten Commandments have been numbered from one to ten by Bible commentators, but God gave them as one — His Law. The Apostle James explains that he who has broken the law in one aspect has broken it all. The Sermon on the Mount was not a by-the-numbers discourse; it indirectly acknowledges that relationships between God and men as well as between men and men are more encompassing than a value-clarification technique can engender. Men try to live by the values they believe in, not by a value-clarification process. Process has its rightful place, but may it never serve as a substitute for the substance or essence of education.

Here is part of the tragedy of much effort carried on in the name of education on the North American continent. Having abandoned all theistic pre-suppositions including such concerns as actual truth and purpose, many educational enterprises have degenerated into a "how-to" type of operation. Is an organization democratic or undemocratic? This seems to be *the* question, not whether it is just or unjust. The democratic *method* is the alleged touchstone of propriety, and I suppose by this thinking one would be hard pressed to fault thieves if they acted democratically.

Another concern is whether something is scientific, or more specifically, based on the empirical method. The *method* involved seems to be *the* main item, not on what assumptions or to what purpose any new knowledge or technology may be used. In point of fact seeking truth (if this is still a legitimate goal) by the democratic method (majority vote) or the scientific method (usually a minority) are contradictory to one another, but in an American commitment to *process* we have never paused to reflect seriously on this. Now this mentality of process as paramount emerges as a hazard in value clarification, running a risk of confusing process with reality, and worse, communication that life's basic questions can be answered by a process or technique. ?

For the would-be learners in the romper-room to the allegedly learned ones in graduate school, there are processes prescribed to record their educational attainments — how many courses, and in which sequence. The record is not basically what they are to know or do, but whether they have "experienced" this and that course in their educational experiences and "processes." Because the proof is in the pudding and not in the cookbook, there is much we learn from illiterate cooks.

A conscientious doctor uses his knowledge, skills, and techniques to promote good health, not as ends in themselves. The Christian teacher has a corresponding obligation to use all his knowledge, skills, and techniques, including that of value-clarification, not as devices which lead to nothingness, but to promote the educational and spiritual health of all who are called to know and walk in the ways of the Lord.

Gordon Oosterman is the social studies consultant for the National Union of Christian Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better or worse as his portion. The power which in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

We become poor in the profoundest sense when we become afraid of modest circumstances, and rich when we come to value and enjoy all the marvelous things which do not have to be bought. We get so much for nothing . . . our enormous heritage of ideas, inventions, music and forms of government previous generations bled and died to create.

F. Alexander Magoun



ASYLUM

H. K. Zoeklicht

“Snip, Rip, and Smoke”

H. K. Zoeklicht

It was 10:30 A.M. on a Monday morning. Chapel was just over. The teachers at Omni Christian High School crowded in the asylum for a quick cup of coffee, that heady brown tonic which would enable them to educate the masses for the rest of the morning. John Vroom, fleshy Bible teacher, was chewing religiously on a *vet bol*, a kind of greasy donut without the hole, washing down each half-chewed mouthful with gulps of coffee. From time to time he punctuated this ritual with a puff on a long Pall Mall cigarette, the tipped kind. There were grease spots on the bow tie that crowded his double chin. Karl DenMeester, teacher of English and speech, was flexing his biceps while running in place next to the coffee urn. He had already jogged five miles to school that morning, but now, before the intake of his daily yogurt, Karl felt the urge to recondition his muscle tone. Home ec teacher Ginny Traansma and English teacher Lucy Bright compared weekend notes while sipping tea on the green vinyl sofa at the far end of the faculty room. Coach Steve Vander Prikkel perused the sports pages of the morning *Chronicle*, while other teachers looked nervously through their lesson plans for the third hour classes. And then it happened.

The door opened suddenly and in stalked Jenny Snip, the school secretary, her right claw wrapped around the left arm of Egbert Rip (known affectionately around school as “Chip”), the oldest son of principal Peter Rip. Young Rip was obviously as frightened as Snip was angry; his eyes rolled fearfully around the room. Snip’s left hand waved a package of cigarettes for all to see. “I caught one!” she exclaimed triumphantly. “He was smoking in the boys’ room right during chapel. He had these in his pocket. Where is Dr. Rip?”

Bob DenDenker, history teacher, calmly re-

moved his Dr. Grabow pipe from his lips to respond, “Well, Jenny, Dr. Rip, as you should know, is at his usual Monday morning volley ball game with the area principals and preachers. What seems to be the trouble here? And how, pray tell, did you find this young man in the boys’ room?”

“Fanny Freswick came into the office and said that someone was smoking in the boys’ john,” said Jenny. “What else could I do? I went in there and caught him. Someone is going to have to exercise some responsibility around here.”

Chip Rip took advantage of the occasion to release his arm from Snip’s bony fingers, but he saw no opportunity to escape with half the Omni faculty staring at him. He rocked nervously on the balls of his feet, his eyes directed to the floor.

“But Jenny,” said DenDenker quietly, “aren’t you overreacting a bit here? Do you think . . .”

“Well Bob,” shrieked Jenny, “you know students may not smoke, and as far as I’m concerned, smoking is a dirty, filthy habit! I think you guys should be ashamed of yourselves, puffing away on your smelly pipes and things, polluting the air here in the faculty room for all the rest of us to breathe into our lungs, and setting an awful example for the young people you’re supposed to be teaching. If you won’t do anything about it, well, *I* will.” She turned her pythoness gaze on poor Egbert. “Chip,” she said in unyielding tones, “who else in this school has got cigarettes? You and I are going to check a few lockers. We’ll have something to show your father when he comes back.”

John Vroom was nervously trying to snuff his Pall Mall and furtively slip it into the nearby wastebasket. DenDenker had stopped puffing his Dr. Grabow, although the aroma of the Sir Walter

Raleigh was heavy in the room. Karl DenMeester stopped his gymnastics to grin patronizingly at the little drama.

"She's right, you know," said Karl. "Smoking is not only a stench for sensitive nostrils, it's just plain bad. It hurts the people who smoke. It hurts the people who don't smoke. It costs a lot of money that could better be given to Kingdom causes. I just can't understand why anyone would want to smoke anyway. Did any of you ever see those pictures which compare the lungs of a smoker with a nonsmoker? That alone should . . ."

Karl was interrupted by the preachy tones of John Vroom, who, confident that he had successfully hidden the incriminating evidence of his cigarette, offered, "Now, now, let's keep our perspective here. I think we need to remember the wisdom of moderation . . . all things in moderation. The Bible neither recommends nor forbids smoking, isn't that right? I see smoking as being in the category of the *adiaphora*, that is to say," and he looked around to see whom he was impressing, "I see this as a matter of Christian liberty." He reached for another *vet bol* as he waited for response to his wisdom.

But there was none. Instead a glowering Jenny Snip turned on him and raged, "And shame on you, John Vroom. In your classroom you tell these kids that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, but when you're in here you fill that temple with filthy smoke and vet balls." Turning to Bob DenDenker, she continued, "And you're not much better. You think you need a pipe to make people think you're a philosopher or something. Well, instead of all those philosophical airs, why don't you think a little more about the *stink* you raise around here!" Jenny wrinkled her face and thrust it at the astonished history teacher.

The asylum had become tense, and it now became silent too, for into the room walked Dr. Peter Rip, the smiling principal of Omni Christian. He had thoroughly enjoyed his weekly Monday morning workout at volleyball, and he now looked forward to a pleasant morning of ordering janitorial supplies. But it was not to be. He was halfway to the coffee urn when he sensed the tension in the room, looked around him, and saw his red-faced son trying to be invisible between Bob DenDenker and Jenny Snip. "Why, Eggie," said the startled administrator, "what, uh, what brings you here? Shouldn't you be going to third hour?"

Egbert didn't answer. Jenny Snip did, "Dr. Rip, just Friday I heard you say that the next time you caught a student breaking the no-smoking regulation around here, you'd make an example of him. Well, here's our Chip." And she pointed a shaking finger at Egbert Rip.

Glancing from his son to the school secretary, Peter Rip forced an awkward smile as he quickly sized up the situation. "Jenny," he said soothingly but nervously, "let's take this from the beginning. What happened?" And Jenny Snip told the whole story, while for the first time that anyone could remember, no one was smoking anything, not even a pipe, in the faculty room at coffee time.

When the story had been told, Peter Rip cleared his throat a few times and said, "This is, to say the very least, a very difficult situation. Uh, we must do nothing hastily, of course. That is to say, Mrs. Snip, inasmuch as the boys' room is off-limits for a lady, we really can't say that the evidence is, uh, admissible in this case. But, on the other hand, Egbert here—well, uh, Egbert, you know how strongly I feel about smoking on these premises, and I . . ."

The father was interrupted by the son. "But Dad, they were your cigarettes. I took them off your desk in the study."

Peter Rip seized his son by the arm and escorted him rapidly out of the door, leaving an embarrassed but somewhat amused faculty behind them. John Vroom broke the silence.

"Well now," he said, "can you beat that?"

"Yes, I can," said Jenny Snip. "There you have a good example of what I was talking about. All of Rip's platitudes about smoking haven't influenced Chip at all. Chip has seen his father smoking. So he wanted to try it too. And your students are seeing you people smoke. And that is good enough for them." Then she paused. "Maybe I did get too carried away. But I sure would have liked to find all those cigarettes in the kids' lockers. It's high time this place gets cleaned up around here. And I might add, aired out too." And Jenny Snip walked to the asylum window and thrust it open to the cold January air.

DenDenker spoke up next. "Well, tell you what, Jenny, I'll promise not to smoke my pipe here at school—not even here in the faculty room. Fair enough?"

Jenny shrugged her shoulders as she walked to the door, but something of a smile tugged at the corners of her thin lips.

DenDenker looked at Vroom. "How about you, John?" But Vroom muttered something about being late for third hour, grabbed his Bible, and walked out the door.

H. K. Zoeklicht is a serious Christian educator who helps expose our foibles and flaws.



IT WORKED

“Change-a-Friend Day”

by Greta Rey

In just about every way they were an ideal fourth-grade class: bright, talented, creative, responsive, enthusiastic, well-behaved, fun-loving, nice kids with few problems. But as the school year progressed, one other characteristic became apparent. They were clustered in closely-knit, beautiful, but *exclusive* little friendships of two's and three's, with very little mixing across the lines. The boys as well as the girls formed these patterns.

I did some investigating. It wasn't that they had intentionally formed cliques for unfriendly reasons; rather, nature and circumstances had followed their courses. Most of the friendships went back to kindergarten days, family friendships, or neighborhoods. Many had not been separated through the annual shuffling of classes. By fourth-grade they were so accustomed to and unconsciously dependent on their own friends, some of the children didn't really know how to approach other children. Clearly they were insensitive to each other's needs and needed help in learning to feel they were “*many members of one body.*”

One Friday right after the lunch hour, without giving a reason, I distributed paper and told the children to answer the following questions.

1. With whom did you play today?
2. Name *one* person you *most* like to play with.
3. Who is your best-of-all friend? (You may include persons outside the class and the school.)
4. Name persons in our class you hardly ever play with.

5. Name one boy/girl in our class you never play with.

On the last two items boys name boys and girls name girls.

Over the week-end I paired the children with those they never or almost never played with, and Monday was the special “change-a-friend” day. Although at first they were a bit wary of their assigned partners, they were quickly and easily convinced of the need (smart kids!) and became enthusiastic over the day's activities.

After the desks had been rearranged so that the partners were sitting together, everyone was given a sheet containing the day's schedule and assignments. They were to follow the list and do everything in partnership, including playing together during recesses (larger groups and old friends might play together, but all of the day's partners must be included).

Here are some of the items on the sheet, which could be adapted to any day's curriculum.

CHANGE-A-FRIEND DAY Grade 4 Date ____
My name _____ My partner's name _____
Schedule and task list. As each task is completed by you and your partner, place a check by it.

- I. Whole class activities, teacher directed.

- ___ BIBLE LESSON
- ___ SOCIAL STUDIES test
- ___ LANGUAGE ARTS lesson (Introduction to day's creative writing)
- ___ SCIENCE

II. Work-study time items to be done with partner. Throughout the work-study time watch the chalkboard for additional directions and schedule changes. If you have any problems, or if you and your friend cannot understand or agree on something, ask the teacher to help you with the rough spots.

—MATH, page____. Agree on the answers, and check in the teacher's book. Do not hand in.

—READING, story on pages____. Read the story aloud to each other; then write the answers to the questions. Agree on the answers and hand in both your papers.

—CREATIVE WRITING. You will be assigned a story starter to use together. You will *not write* the story; rather, *tell* it to your partner. You may each tell a different story, or you may make one together. It must be a well-planned story, with a problem and steps leading to the conclusion. You may then write it down if you like. Be prepared to share it with the class.

—PENMANSHIP. Do this alone. Practice page____ on separate paper. Do not hand in.

—SPELLING, page____. Write the answers and check together in the teacher's book. Do not hand in.

III. Spare time activities.

—Work on stitchery designs.

—Use the library together. Twenty minute limit; each one must have a pass.

—Study the Bible memory text.

By late afternoon some beautiful things had obviously taken place. We had time to listen to some results of the creative writing. The children were highly appreciative of their partners' stories and urged each other to share them with the class.

The final activity was probably the most rewarding of all. Each person was given a piece of paper and told to write two or more good things he had discovered about his partner. Each was asked to face his partner and read aloud what he had written about his partner.

We then sang some favorite songs together, and everyone went home with warm happy feelings.

The following morning each child wrote an evaluation of "Change-a-Friend Day;" all gave enthusiastic approval. "I like 'Change-a-Friend Day' because we get more attached to other kids in the class." "You get to know other kids and they

get to know you and then you become very good friends and that's fun to have friends." The many requests to repeat it with different partners were granted a couple months later.

As the year continues we need fresh ideas or new approaches to reinforce what we've been doing all along. Harry Vriend shares his idea on helping with individual courtesy problems. G.R.

Have you ever had a student who kept blurting out the answers before anyone else?

It's not hard to silence such a person, but it's not so easy to do it in such a way that it doesn't create fear, resentment, and other negative feelings. It is possible to bring out the best in a student (and the teacher) in such situations.

Have a private conference with the student. Praise him for his eagerness and enthusiasm but also point out that his behavior does not allow other students, who perhaps aren't as fast as he, to contribute. Give him ten cards—3 x 5 cards will do. On each card write his name and number the cards. Tell him that every time he violates the "wait-your-turn" rule you will require him to give up a card. Agree not to let anyone know why he has these cards, and that you will ask for them at some inconspicuous time. You can work out a signal with the student so that he will know when he has lost a card.

It is equally important to reward him positively by returning the cards to him for no violations for a designated period of time. If he can retain his ten cards for a length of time, he probably won't need them any more.

Harry Vriend is a fourth grade teacher at West Side Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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Journal of a Book Celebration

Karen Whiteside

Seniors at Covenant College were asked to write a paper or do a project as an expression of their philosophy of Christianity. Karen Whiteside, a student in elementary education, drew upon her knowledge of teaching reading, her interest in children's literature, and her love for and experience with inner city children in Chattanooga to begin an informal workshop in reading. The plan began in May, 1976, with an afternoon "Book Celebration."

The plan grew during the summer into Book Celebration II, a workshop for reading skills and sharing the joys of books. What follows are entries from Karen's journal.

Bruce Hekman, Ass't Professor of English
Covenant College



Last April, a Book Celebration was held. Children from New City Fellowship and St. Elmo were invited. For many of the children, the idea of celebrating books was new. Most of them are black, and from low income backgrounds. Their exposure to books has been mostly within the context of a system which neither expects nor encourages them to enjoy literature. What the system does expect is that they will graduate from high school semi-literate . . . at best. The system will excuse itself by saying that these children are disadvantaged; that they have "learning disabilities," or "dyslexia" . . . that they are essentially unteachable, and that their background has left no room for the appreciation of literature.

It was my assumption, in organizing Book Celebration I, that books are enjoyed when they are shared in an atmosphere of appreciation and celebration. Underlying this was the assumption

that it is not the children's background which excludes enjoyment of books, but the environment in which they are introduced to the world of written language. Book Celebration I was an attempt to provide an atmosphere in which children's literature could be savored as "honey for a child's heart." Book Celebration II is basically an extension of this idea. With it goes the realization that books cannot properly be appreciated without certain basic reading skills. Thus Book Celebration II is both a celebration and a workshop.

July 30

Today was the first day of our workshop. The morning sky threatened rain, so I set up the chalkboard, games, and the fruitcrates which serve as bookshelves on the front porch, instead of outside. On the chalkboard was written the

schedule for the morning: 10:30 meeting/sharing time; 11:00 group time; 11:20 game time; 11:40 lunch; 12:10 *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Meeting and Sharing:

We sit in a circle on a blanket on the porch to talk about reading. Why are we having this workshop? So we can teach reading, says Robyn. Why is reading important? Stephany says: so you can get a job. I talk about some of my ideas for the workshop: about working on skills together in small groups, learning from each other; about keeping a journal . . . a notebook for writing about what we are doing, thinking, feeling, seeing, reading . . . Or for copying poems, words, letters. I read two passages from *The Diary of Anne Frank* to the group. The first concerns Anne Frank's reason for keeping a diary . . . her need for a friend to whom she can "unbosom" herself. The children are attentive. I had wondered whether Anne Frank's use of language would be too sophisticated for the little ones. Yet her aliveness and sense of humor make up for words they don't know.



Stephany reads two poems. Wanda shares two passages from her new journal, a short poem, and a paragraph about snakes. Both sound as if they have been copied. No one asks.

Group Time:

We break up into groups of two or three for reading and working on skills. Some work with magnetic letters or letter cubes while others read to each other. There is a pleasant sound of quiet and fruitful activity. Like a tree full of birds, it is the music of learning and involvement.

I am reminded of our first Book Celebration last spring. This is what I want for us, this music.

Ran and Chuck and I sit on the swinging couch. Ran and Chuck read *Little Bear* aloud, alternating pages. Ran reads the first page slowly and haltingly. It sounds like a list of words . . . or a Dick and Jane reader. Chuck reads page two smoothly and rhythmically. For him it is not an exercise, but a story. Ran catches on; page three begins to sound like language instead of Morse code. I notice that he makes no effort to figure out words he doesn't know. Either he guesses, or he looks away, apparently waiting for an answer to make its appearance. Is this the result of the whole word approach to reading taught in the schools?

August 3

Plans are transformed when they take on flesh and blood. Suddenly there are all kinds of things to contend with that were not considered in the blueprint of the lesson — things like weather, and mosquitoes . . . and the T.V. program Robyn had wanted to watch when the van arrived. Today the distractions take precedence over the plans. There is teasing and bickering. Peaches is not here. I am left with the role of disciplinarian as Robyn, Stephany, and Wanda are not ready to take the responsibility that comes with leadership. Today it is more fun to bicker and tease.

Somehow my phonics lesson isn't "organic" in spite of the wind, trees, and grass which surround it. There is a taste of school in the presence of the blackboard, which stands in a central position, with an older person in front demanding attention. (The older person is me.) I don't want it to be like school any more than the children do. Yet I want to make sure that we deal with basic phonic principles. I have decided to try having a short lesson each time on a specific sound/symbol correspondence. It will come after meeting/sharing time. This morning's lesson is on the short vowel sound of "a." The younger children do not participate. The older children are bossy and aggressive. They monopolize the lesson, which was geared for the little ones . . . Inadequate planning on my part.

Group time:

Again I am faced with the problem of short attention spans. All kinds of activities lurk around corners, luring the children from their involvement in the activity of the moment. Passivity invoked through hours spent gazing at TV has the children accustomed to a steady diet of canned entertainment. Action, plot, development, characterizations . . . all are absorbed instantaneously.

Their entertainment is like bread which, depleted of its natural sources of nutritional value, is pumped full of artificial flavors and additives.

Group Time:

Duke, Chuck, and I are sitting on the steps of the porch. We are engrossed in *The Story of Babar*. I enjoy sharing my relish for Babar books... for the minute details in the illustrations, for the aliveness of the character, for the stilted and musical language of translation. I remember the illustrations and can almost hear the text as it was read by my father years ago... my sister and I sitting on both arms of his armchair, listening with rapt attention. I am delighted that the book brings back a taste or smell, and with it the whole atmosphere from my childhood. I feel that my enthusiasm is catching, which gives me pleasure. That's what I want: for us to share our enjoyment of language and literature. I want us to appreciate and to celebrate together.

August 6

Robyn, Duke, and Chuck are reluctant to come to our book celebration. We have a confrontation this afternoon. I tell them that the purpose of the workshop is learning and enjoyment. If these are not happening, we should consider discontinuing our meetings. The little ones express a desire to continue. Robyn, Duke, and Chuck are both negative and noncommittal. Peaches suggests changing our schedule. What about having lunch at home? This suggestion finds strong support. Slowly, the source of reluctance starts to unravel: it has to do with lunch. Our picnic lunches have consisted of peanut butter sandwiches, whereas at home they have bologna and cheese. Peaches says she will bring bologna and cheese sandwiches to the workshop. With this new development Duke, who had been sulking, gives me a big hug. Peaches and I look at each other in wonder. A break-through discovery has been made. The children are now enthusiastic about coming back to celebrate books... with their bologna and cheese sandwiches.

Today we talked about phonics. I am including phonics in our schedule, and I want to be straightforward with them. I want them to know that learning to read is not a mysterious process whose key lies hidden in the inner chambers of the teacher's storeroom of knowledge. I want them to know that tools are available to them... tools which they may learn to use with independence. I want them to recognize that there are many ways

to find out about things they don't know... that they can learn from each other.

August 7

I find myself falling into a rut. The kind of energy that has gone into thinking about and planning this workshop is no longer required. We have a routine. I rely upon our routine instead of planning each lesson with new and creative energy. It is not the routine which is at fault. I like the routine. We all do, I think. We are creatures of habit. It is comforting to have a familiar and predictable pattern to our days, especially for the children. That is why I write the schedule on the chalkboard each morning. Yet routine and ritual must not be allowed to replace the constant flow of creative and responsive energy needed to keep the workshop alive. Coasting only works when you're going downhill. Our path is an uphill climb, involving positive energy on the part of each of us. This is true especially on my part, as I am the one who has invited the children to celebrate with me.



Yesterday's Group Time:

Cory and I sit under a tree. Cory has three blank index cards. I have decided to try Sylvia Ashton-Wagner's organic reading methods. We begin with word cards. What word does Cory want me to write for him on his card? Cory wants to write his own word. What word does he want to write? He thinks, looks around for ideas, thinks some more. Finally he comes up with something. "F" he says with decision. But "F" isn't a word, Cory. It's a letter. I

try to explain the difference. Cory can't think of a word, so I suggest "tree." I write the letters for him on a card. He copies them onto his card. He writes slowly; carefully. His "e" is upside down. I start to tell him that it is good, but upside-down. He cuts me off. It's not good, he says. It's upside-down. (Oh, Cory . . . how could I be so thick?).

Ready for another word. Cory looks around, squints his eyes, deliberates. He comes up with another suggestion. What about "d?" He quickly realizes that "d" is a letter. That's all right; "d" is fine. He wants to practice writing letters. So, tucking the organic writing theories into a corner of my mind, I fetch the magnetic letters. Cory is excited about each letter he copies.

August 9

Having made the discovery that the learning environment includes a wide variety of factors, I want to use this discovery to create a more positive environment even if this includes such non-literary devices as ice cream.

We have been opening our workshop with prayer. I have wondered how meaningful it would be for the group to pray. I don't want the children to go through motions . . . Yet, I am aware that what we do, we do before God. And that it is only through Him that this workshop may be fruitful. We do not want to be building houses upon sand. Perhaps our prayers are not meaningful to some of the children; yet I see a need for us to consecrate our time together to God and to acknowledge, as a group, that we need God's help.

August 10

What made yesterday different? Was it the presence of KeeKee, Tammy, and Rebecca, who met with us for the first time? Or was it that Peaches brought cheese sandwiches for lunch? Whatever the reason, there has been a substantial change in attitude. All were enthusiastic; all were eager to share.

Meeting and Sharing:

Stephany and Robyn read poems out of a book of children's poetry. Robyn does not want to share from her journal — it's personal. She may have found in her journal a friend in whom she can confide. Randall wants to share a passage from his journal by telling it. He says he knows it by heart, but he is finally persuaded to read it. It is written in the short-phrase style of language

experience charts. He reads it word by word. Randall does not yet recognize the existence of rhythm and music in written language. Reading for him is the painstaking, laborious task of decoding messages. By the time the messages are unraveled, they are no longer alive.



Robyn gave the phonics lesson. It happened spontaneously. In the van on the way over, Stephany had informed me that she had changed her mind about teaching the lesson; she was unprepared. Robyn took over by writing the vowels on the chalkboard. Underneath the vowels I wrote a sentence we had used last week for the short vowel sounds: "fat Ed is not up." (It was rather a joke because of our friend Ed Kellogg.) I thought it would be a good taking off place. I had planned for us to review the short vowel sounds; then go on to the sounds of the consonants. Instead, Robyn talked about the long sounds of the vowels. Under each vowel-word of our sentence, she had the children write words using the long sound of that vowel. The chalkboard looked like this:

A	E	I	O	U
fat	Ed	is	not	up
fate	she	I	note	use
lake	see	ice	oh	you
bake	he	lice	so	Luke
shake	be	died	toe	Duke
fake	feet			
	KeeKee			
	seed			

The lesson was alive and full of energy. The children were all eager to make contributions. Their enthusiasm was catching. I was excited to see them so involved.

Group Reading Time:

Rebecca reads *A Kiss For Little Bear* to me. When she comes to a word she doesn't know, her eyes move straight to the illustration. Her guess fits the picture, but not the printed word. We work on unfamiliar words as they come, using phonics principles. Rebecca catches on quickly; she is bright and capable, but has been inadequately prepared on her own.

August 11

Again, a question asked about the workshop . . . the door opens, and words come pouring out. I can't seem to sort out what is interesting and important to other people, and keep the rest to myself. Again I am thankful for this journal . . . this patient paper which receives ideas and impressions as they come. The editing will come later.



Tonight I talked about the workshop in prayer meeting. Mr. Schmidt asked me what it was called. I said sometimes a reading workshop; sometimes a book celebration. Really, it is meant to be both. I was glad to have yesterday to talk about. Arline said that Stephany read more smoothly and confidently. Could it be that Stephany is learning that she has something positive to offer?

Yesterday's success came as a group success in their reading and writing. Their involvement was a response to a lesson which came spontaneously from among them.

I watch the workshop progress like a pot formed on a potter's wheel from a lump of clay which is constantly changing shape. I want the pot to be strong and beautiful. I take pride in its formation;

inside I sink at the dents caused by the unsteadiness of my hands. I want to remember that the product belongs to the Potter who first formed us out of clay. Seen in that perspective, pride and disappointment slip into place. Product building seen only in human terms of success and failure is a self-centered endeavor. I see the self-centeredness of my attitude in this workshop. He knows that our frame is dust and our motives off center, yet manages to use us as earthen vessels. What freedom there is in the knowledge of this!

Karen Whiteside, 1976 graduate of Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, and a resident of New York, New York.

THE UNDERSTANDING TEACHER

Though I teach with the skill of the finest teachers and have not understanding, I am become only a clever speaker and charming entertainer.

And though I understand all techniques and all methods,

And though I have much training so that I feel quite competent,

But I have no understanding of the way my students think, it is not enough.

And if I spend many hours in lesson preparation, knowing my concepts without error, and become tense and nervous with the strain, but have no understanding of the personal problems of my students, it is still not enough.

The understanding teacher is very patient, very kind; is not shocked when young people bring their confidence; does not gossip; is not easily discouraged; does not behave himself in ways that are unworthy, but is at all times a living example to the students of the good way of life, of which the teacher speaks.

Understanding never fails, but whether there be materials, they shall become obsolete; whether there be methods, they shall become outmoded; whether there be techniques, they shall be abandoned; for we know only a little, and can pass on to our class only a little; but when we have understanding, then all our efforts will be creative. And our influence will live forever in the lives of our pupils.

paraphrase of 1 Cor. 13:1-10
(author unknown)

The Importance of Teacher-Aiding

Leon Schaddelee



Teacher aiding can be a valuable means of achieving our end of a better and more Christian education. It benefits the teacher, the student, and the aide himself. Some of the dysfunctional aspects of aiding, I believe are less a failure of the system itself than of the participants in the system. Like any good thing, aiding can be abused, and sometimes it is.

Aiding the Teacher

The first question I was asked when being interviewed for an aide position at one of the Grand Rapids, Michigan, public high schools was, "What do you think being an aide means?" The answer may seem obvious, but the point of the question was to clarify the fact that the aide is subordinate to the teacher, who runs things and gives the orders. Some aides, apparently, find it difficult to assume such a secondary role and would rather see themselves as the teacher's

partner, equally responsible for the classroom. (Indeed, there have been those who have tried to assume the *primary* role!) The smart teacher will respect his aide's opinion and consult him often, but the smart aide will maintain an attitude of deference to the teacher's authority.

In my situation, the teacher did all the planning, testing, consultations, and progress reports. My job was to list the work each student had to do for the day, give it to him when he came in, see to it that he had all the materials he needed to complete the work, help him when he needed it (a task shared by the teacher), grade the work when it was done, and tabulate the grades. I also made up work sheets according to the teacher's specifications.

The teacher examined samples of each student's work with an eye to detecting problem-areas.

Some aides do complain that teachers do not look at the students' work or spend enough time with the students to really know what is going on. They feel that they are doing all the work

and know the students better than the teacher does. This, of course, should be avoided if the program is to be effective.

Such was not the case in our classroom. Since we both worked one-to-one with all the students, and I took care of the routine work, the teacher had more time to spend with them, as well as to plan and organize, all of which is so important to the success of a class. Teacher and aide had different, clearly-defined roles which overlapped only when it came to working with a student who needed help.

Aiding the Student

While the aide is a help first of all to the teacher, he is, of course, also a help to the student. He may, in fact, be of *more* help than the regular teacher. Sometimes the aide will be able to communicate with a student better than the teacher, just as in other instances the teacher is more successful than the aide. Where personalities of teacher and student may clash, those of aide and student may mesh.

The point is, if meeting a student's need is important, and the chances of meeting that need are greater with two adults in the classroom than with one, then aiding is important as far as the student's welfare is concerned. Even if the aide never worked directly with the students, simply by freeing the teacher to do so, he indirectly benefits the students.

Aiding, I think, is the compromise solution to the teacher-student ratio problem. No school can afford the ideal ratio, which magic number varies according to situation. The use of an aide brings the situation closer to the ideal. It is affordable because an aide's salary is much lower than a teacher's. Many aides in the elementary grades are parents who volunteer their services. Although the aide does not get a good deal financially, the school certainly does. For the school that wants to offer quality education but cannot afford more teachers, hiring aides is one way to go.

Aiding the Aide

Many aides have teaching certificates but are not able to find jobs as regular teachers. Aiding gives them valuable experience beyond that gained as student teachers, a chance to observe in depth another teacher at work, to practice with students, and to gain confidence and a surer sense of their calling. Certainly, a teacher can take over a class of his own better prepared for having aided first. Aiding can be a kind of apprenticeship.

For those who do not intend to teach, it is still, of course, a fine learning experience. It offers many of the rewards of teaching, yet one goes home at three o'clock, and the rest of the day is his. While the teacher's day continues, and with it the pressures, the aide's does not, and some of us welcome that.



Summary

As student or teacher, I have always felt uneasy in the traditional classroom, which often seemed to have too much in common with a factory. The teacher as the factory hand must shape the raw materials, students, into some impossible ideal, using the same monotonous process. Instead of education conforming to the needs of the student, the student is expected to conform to education. Respect for the individual, for his dignity and integrity, is hard to find in such a system. It shouldn't be, because that respect is required by God, who made each of us a unique person, each with his own set of abilities and needs. Any education which fails to recognize that and fails to gear its methods and materials accordingly is less than Christian. Because aiding helps make the educational process more humane, more respectful of the individual, we might well expect our *Christian* rather than our public schools to make more use of it.

Leon Schaddelee is a teacher-naturalist at Fernwood, Inc., a nature center near Niles, Michigan. Schaddelee served as a teacher-aide during 1975-76.



Meditation

Stanley Mast

COMPELLED BY CHRIST

For the love of Christ constraineth us . . .

But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

(II Cor. 5:14a, 18-20, RSV)

Preachers and teachers have one very important thing in common; we've been called by God and entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation.

It is all too easy for me to think of my job as preaching, teaching, counselling, evangelizing, and leading committees. Teachers can get caught in the same trap. They prepare lesson plans, carry them out in the classroom, discipline, and do administrative work. Our job is not first of all to do tasks, but to make disciples.

When we approach our work as though it has to do first of all with performing a task, rather than with helping people, it soon loses its excitement and enjoyment, its meaning and purpose, and even its character as truly Christian work. *Why* we do something is as important as *what* we do.

Perhaps we can get to the heart of the matter most quickly by reflecting on the question: Why do you teach? Some teach because they like the work—its hours, its pay, its challenges, its rewards. Others teach because, frankly, as they progressed through college, it was all they could think to do. Still others teach to meet some inner need — to satisfy their ego, to please someone else, to be like someone they once admired. Others teach because they like young people. Many teach because they believe God has called them. Whatever else may be the reason, the bottom line ought to be (II Cor. 5:14), "the love of Christ compels us."

Paul's phrase, the "love of Christ," refers to at least three different things. We should work in our own disciplines because Christ loves us. He loved us even unto death, and we should desire to do anything for Him. We should be working not because we fear His rejection, but because we believe He has accepted us completely, because in this hostile, alienated world there is One who loves us without question, qualification, or exception. Our gratitude should move us.

Jesus loves the students. Verse 14 speaks of Christ's dying for all, and although that is a controversial theme, it certainly means that a Christian educator should consider all of his students as persons for whom Christ has died. If Jesus loved them enough to die for them, can we do anything else than love them, too, and teach them for Christ's sake?

We should work because Christ wants to love those students through us. His love is already in us through the working of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), and He wants us to let it pour through us to them. Our ace-in-the-hole as Christian helpers, is that whenever we say, "I just can't," Jesus says, "But I can!" We teach because the omnipotent Christ loves those children and young people through us.

Paul says that love "controls us" (RSV). The word in the Greek is a rich one, meaning "to hold together, crowd, absorb, or compel." We could meditate on each of those nuances, but let's focus on the last. The love of Christ compels us! For a compelled teacher, a driven educator, it is the love of Christ that drives, motivates, and gives work meaning, direction, and purpose. We must be compelled by His love, or we'll lose the joy, the purpose, the commitment Christ wants us to have. Then our work will become the sweaty toil of Gen.

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Media Review

Frederick Nohl

If yours is a class of young children, no doubt you've often been asked, "Teacher, what's God like?" Though a fair question, it's a tough one. Any answer will be less than the whole truth, but try using, *GOD IS LIKE*, a charming sound filmstrip kit from Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556.

Taking its cue from both Scripture and the Julie Walters/Barbara De Leu book of the same name, the filmstrip spells out its answer in three reality-based parables. God the Father is like a rock, the Son is like a spark of light, and the Spirit is like a breath of wind.

The kit lists for \$24.50 and includes a 69-frame filmstrip, a 12-inch LP record, a teachers guide, and a copy of the 96-page Walters/De Leu paperback. Extra copies of the paperback are \$1.65 each.

Mary Reed Newland leads a busy life as a Christian teacher, writer, and lecturer. She is also a gifted storyteller, a talent amply demonstrated in two albums available from NCR Cassettes, P.O. Box 281, Kansas City, MO 64141. Each album lists for \$17.95 and includes an eight-page study guide and fifty-four minutes of sound on two cassette tapes.

The first is titled *HOW TO TELL BIBLE STORIES*. In a breezy, informal style, Newland shares her thoughts about thirty-nine Old Testament stories ranging from the creation in Genesis 1 to martyrdom of Eleazar in the apochryphal 2 Maccabees 6:18-31. Though listeners may want to argue the twists she gives some of the stories, few will argue her ability to make the ancient narratives seem positively contemporary.

Newland views the stories as having many levels. As a result they are often able to "say a dozen different and valid things to as many different people." Furthermore, they "are stories not only of a particular people who lived in a particular place at a particular time. They are a portrait of ourselves. They show us in all our strength and weakness, virtue and sinfulness."

The tapes are designed for either individual or group use by teachers and parents. The study guide supplies a rationale for using Bible stories with children, youth, and adults. Also supplied are biblical references, comments for each story, and a list of suggested readings.

Teachers and parents are also the audience for Newland's second album, *STORYTELLING TO TEACH RELIGION*. Unlike the first album, this one actually tells eighteen myths, fables, and other stories as models against which would-be storytellers can check their own performance.

Each story is prefaced by (and sometimes interspersed with) comments about how best to tell it. Also supplied are ways the story can be used to further the Christian nurture of children. Thus the story "Stone Soup" is offered as an example of selfishness and ingenuity, while that of the "Fisherman and His Wife" becomes an illustration of how blessed the poor in spirit are.

Though many of the stories have morals, Newland cautions against clubbing listeners over the head with them. For her "the point of using stories instead of preaching, scolding, admonishing, or informing is that one is brought face to face with the lesson. Listeners are free to make the choices, regret the false steps, savor the triumphs, and identify with the characters in the story."

The study guide lists the stories told on the tapes and the books in which they may be found. Sources of other useful stories are also listed. Most important, the guide provides nine "simple rules and suggestions to help the storyteller in every person gain confidence and become an expert."

pages interchan

3, rather than the exciting task of Mt. 28:18-20.

We may strive with all we have to love our students, but unless Jesus is really living in us, we simply can't do it. Preachers and teachers, take spiritual stock. You can't make disciples unless you are one yourself. You can't love with Christ's love unless He is in you and you in Him.

Each morning should begin with recommitment to Christ, a renewal of fellowship with Him, and a

revival of devotional life. *Then* the love of Christ will compel us to make a difference in their lives.

Stanley Mast is pastor of Cragmor Christian Reformed Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado. The meditation is adapted from his inspirational address to the faculty of Denver Christian Schools during orientation, August, 1977.



READER RESPONSE

Critique Criticized

Editor:

Tiemstra's main concern in this book review, *Economics: Principles and Policy From a Christian Perspective*, (CEJ, Sept., 1977) is that certain currently popular issues be the major topics of a Christian economics text. It is reasonable to argue that such issues need to be a part of an economics text; however, that argument is not a Christian review of a Christian textbook.

Tiemstra spends half his review discussing matters such as poverty, unemployment, pollution, and Rose's interpretation of Scripture. Tiemstra claims that Rose should have discussed the causes of poverty, which is more appropriate to a book on sociology. Rose does say that the government is necessary to "punish fraud, theft, and coercive actions by private parties." His statement is general and includes the coercive acts of pollution of the atmosphere and water by various companies, and coercive acts such as robbery, rape, burglary, hijacking, and murder. Rose makes a special point to include the economics of unemployment and pollution but omits the economic details of grand theft, arson, racketeering, embezzlement, prostitution, mail fraud, dope peddling, alcoholism and gluttony. Every one of these items of concern to the Christian must be limited in an introductory text in economics.

Tiemstra criticizes Rose's use of Acts 5:4 in

defense of private property. Acts 5:4 is not an accusation against Ananias because he was selfish and rich, but because he lied to the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Peter says that Ananias had the right either to give or not to give his property to the Apostles. Peter's statement is at least an indirect defense of private property.

Tiemstra's quotes from Rose's book suggest that Rose implies a Christian's responsibility is to self rather than to God. The specific quote mentioned is on page 348 of Rose, where reference is made to "free and self-responsible individuals" and to "self-responsible voluntarism". The quotes do not say responsibility to self, but self-responsibility. This implies that the individual must take personal responsibility rather than that the individual answers only to himself.

Rose makes this very clear on page 54, where he states: "Man's God-appointed purpose in being free and self-responsible is that he might serve his creator and Lord, that is, that he might do God's will". In contrast to Tiemstra's implication, Rose clearly states that man is responsible to God. Tiemstra's quotation is an "out-of-context" approach.

The foreword of the text has a good Christian point of view expressed, and any critique of the text should be supplemented with that foreword.

D.J.C. Keister, Associate Professor of Physics, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, TN.

Electronic calculators are becoming standard equipment, even for the very young. Given the unique shape of their numerals, which become letters when viewed upside down, the gadgets lend themselves not only to mathematical games, but also to word games. Thus 573 x 66 equals both 37818 and BIBLE.

Bennie Rhodes capitalizes on this feature in **CALCULATOR WORD GAMES**, a \$2.25 paperback published by Mott Media, Box 236, Milford, MI 48042. Included in its 127 pages are ninety-eight games that involve biblical, ecclesiastical, and ethical situations. Though the games can hardly be classified as prime resources for Christian education, playing them could be fun for children between nine and fifteen. At the very least, this book plus a calculator will give those students who arrive or finish their work early a pleasant energy outlet.

“Let’s get people back into the Bible” is a call often heard today. Noble though the sentiment may be, the truth is that it’s easier said than done. Meaningful Bible study does not come naturally; it’s a skill—maybe even an art—that must be learned and practiced.

Fortunately, the number of resources that seek to help Christians penetrate the Scriptures is growing. Some focus on the Old Testament, some on the New, and some on both. Whatever their focus, all are designed to enable Christians to see where they’ve come from and where they’re going.

A good example is the material developed by Richard L. Rohrbaugh and published by Griggs Educational Service, 1731 Barcelona St., Livermore, CA 94550. Basic to this New Testament introduction is a 168-page paperback text titled **INTO ALL THE WORLD**. Divided into twelve chapters and sprinkled with charts, maps, and “Try This” exercises, the text has a single main objective, which the author states as follows:

“Our objective . . . is to gain an overview of the New Testament that can provide a foundation on which to build life-long study. It is an attempt to look at the tree before one focuses in detail on the leaves. While many people in the church are familiar with isolated parts of Scripture, gaining a grasp of the whole has eluded them and consequently made the parts hard to relate to one another.”

The text takes an inductive approach, allowing learners to discover for themselves rather than have discoveries proven to them. This meshes neatly with a statement found in the accompanying Leader’s Guide, which says that Bible study ought not be an end in itself, but rather a means for “encounter with the living God.” The Guide, incidentally, lays out various schedules for teaching the text, including a series of seventeen ninety-minute sessions.

Suggested for many of these sessions are resources found in **THE NEW TESTAMENT WORLD**, a multimedia package designed for use either with the text or independently. Besides a copy of the **INTO ALL THE WORLD** Leader’s Guide, the package contains a two-part 74-frame color filmstrip that presents the geography of New Testament lands; four cassette tapes that include the filmstrip narration and fourteen 15-minute lectures by the author on subjects such as “Greek and Hebrew Thought in the First Century,” “Crucifixion,” and “Worship and Sacraments,” and a filmstrip projectionist’s guide.

This is a versatile, tested resource for older youth and adults. All items are available from the publisher at the following prices: text, \$5.00 (1 to 9 copies) or \$3.95 (10 or more copies); guide, \$1.50 (one free with 10 or more texts, also part of multimedia package); multimedia package, \$24.00.

Frederick Nohl, editor of this column, is a special assignments editor for the Lutheran Church in America’s Division for Parish Services, Philadelphia, PA.

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REVIEWS

SCIENCE FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Author: Joseph Henson, et. al., *Grade 1 and Grade 2*
Bob Jones University Press, Inc., Greenville,
So. Carolina 29614, 1975

Grade 1, Student Edition \$1.60

Grade 2, Student Edition \$5.00

Reviewed by

Norman De Jong, Superintendent,
Eastern Christian School Association
New Jersey

A disciple once asked, "What good can come out of Nazareth?" If you are asking the same question about Greenville, put aside your idle scepticism and read on.

Science of Christian Schools is a very worthy addition to the growing list of distinctively Christian teaching materials. In preparing this series, now only partially complete, the editors set for themselves the following goals:

- 1 To present a proper Christian approach to science,
- 2 To present material suitable for each grade level,
- 3 To present material that can be taught without requiring an undue expenditure of money or classroom time, and
- 4 To prepare students for further study in the sciences at the secondary or college level.

Wisely avoiding the tendency to concentrate on only one approach, the authors build the material around a variety of methodologies, including experimentation, problem-solving, discovery, reading, memorization, and observation.

One of the most significant characteristics in this series is its permeating attitude toward science. On the very positive side, the Bob Jones

press instills a consciously Biblical perspective already in grades 1 and 2. God is clearly central, for He is given honor and recognition as the source of everything, but especially of the various senses necessary to do the observing, classifying, and judging essential for "scientific" activity. The emphasis is clearly and unashamedly theocentric.

The definition of science around which the series revolves is another matter though. Defining science as "solely a collection of man's observations of his surroundings," the editors do less than full justice to a complicated problem. Their approach is excellent in that it demythologizes science and puts it back into a subordinate position, *beneath Scripture*, but it is deficient in that it still treats science in a secular fashion, regarding it as an independent, almost totally separate entity which must not be positively related to Christianity. Their view does represent a vast improvement over the non-Christian mind, but it is not yet a truly integrated approach in which science is understood essentially as "knowledge," therefore applicable to all fields of study, including theology, history, and psychology as well as "natural" phenomena. The Bob Jones position is unmistakably a *Christian* effort, but is regrettably still tied too much to the "natural science model," thus limiting the application of science to a narrow field. For example, the Teachers Edition states unequivocally that "science deals only with the physical universe" (grade 1, p. VIII).

By relying on this limited natural science model, the scientist, as scientist, can say nothing about God, creation, faith, or anything spiritual. To talk of such things in a science class, would be to deal in extraneous or, at best, tangential material, to continue to foster the notion that science has very

little or nothing to do with God and all matters spiritual. This error is frequently made in Christian circles, but needs to be corrected if ever we are to break the grip in which secular thought still holds us.

The typical classroom teacher should not shy away from these materials because of the philosophical limitations expressed here. This set is such a vast improvement over the strictly secular materials on the market that each Christian school should order examination copies and seriously consider their adoption until such time as an improved, more philosophically justifiable approach comes off the presses.

Both the teachers and the student editions are durably bound, attractively illustrated, and systematically organized. Grade 1 focuses on such topics as the senses, weather, classifying, sound, teeth, and pets. Grade 2 expands the emphasis on sensory experience, but also presents units on What is Science?; Measuring Distance; Measuring Time; Matter; Motion and Force; Machines; and Your Body. In both levels the metric system is introduced and applied as are conventional units of measure. Most of the experiments should be highly motivating to students at the primary level; they rely on such inexpensive supplies as spools, suckers, and wire to construct facsimiles of human skeletal parts. I judge from a cursory examination that even the teacher could greatly enjoy these projects.

If you are planning to change your science series in the next year, order your examination copies today. You, too, will be pleasantly surprised.

The above review was submitted to Elmer L. Rumminger, executive director of Bob Jones University Press, Inc., Unusual Publications, Greenville, South Carolina. Rumminger's reply follows:

Dear Mr. De Jong:

Thank you for your letter of July 8. We appreciate your kind words about our elementary science textbooks.

After reading your review, I think I should note for your consideration that the philosophy underlying the science series was not conjured up as the books were being written. The authors have made a careful study of these problems over the years, and they have discussed these philosophical questions frequently in their faculty meetings, their Bible-science seminars, and their team-taught philosophy of science classes over the past ten years.

As you state your philosophical premise, part of the problem is one of semantics, but in addition to this, the authors have a basic disagreement with your approach. I do not believe that this difference will be resolved in any future editions.

To equate "science" with "knowledge" is not without its inherent dangers. Science is ephemeral; knowledge, presumably, is permanent and enduring. There is no theory, hypothesis, law, or "fact" of science that is completely immune from change. Even the very data themselves are continually being revised; thus, the laws and theories based on the data are subject to continual revision and reformulation. Who can say, then just what portion of science is truly knowledge in the strict sense of the term? This is where the philosophical difference of opinion lies; and although I respect your position, I as the publisher will have to align myself with the authors on this one. Perhaps the disagreement could be partially resolved if the term "science" as used by the authors were revised to read "the natural sciences."


In any event, if you wish to quote from this letter in order to give the authors' and publisher's position as related to yours on the philosophy of this matter, you are perfectly free to do so.

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PHYSICAL SCIENCE FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Author: Emmett L. Williams and George
Mulfinger, Jr.
Greenville, South Carolina: Bob Jones University
Press, 1974
628 pp. \$12.00

Reviewed by
William Eskes, biology instructor,
Valley Christian High School,
Bellflower, California.

More Christian textbooks like this one should be prepared for use in Christian schools. It has been written by two well-known men in chemistry and physics. Christian high-school instructors should immediately secure copies for their schools; using them will draw teachers closer to God and enable them to help students see that true science supports the claims of Scripture. It is wonderful to know that the Christian student has the necessary scientific facts at his disposal, but he should also be able to use his mind to develop a Christian philosophy of science. I was excited to read how metal working, for example, is traced to Tubal-Cain (Genesis 4:22) rather than to some speculative "neolithic man." The material on the first and second laws of thermodynamics uses Scripture extensively to show the student that he should have respect for their Creator whom he will someday face.

This textbook is not only Christian; it is also creationist. Creationism gives the teacher and the learner hope as God's crown of creation—hope for this life, and hope for eternity. Included are six biographical sketches of outstanding Christian men of science. The sketches give not only a brief description of each scientist's work but also his testimony, beliefs, and insights. The photographic illustrations are superior to those in many other physical science textbooks. The authors have used cartoons to depict different scientific ideas. Therefore, the forty chapters are enhanced with humor, which increases student interest in God's universe.

A bibliography of hundreds of items of selected creationist literature is presented for additional reading and reports. At the end of chapters one finds important terms and an adequate number of questions for the thinking mind; starred material throughout the textbook is for the advanced or highly motivated student.

As a Christian leader, put physical science into Christian perspective in your classroom. Get your copy and present it to your curriculum committee for approval.

UNDER GOD

Author: William C. Hendricks.
William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976
Paperback, 252 pp., \$5.95.

Reviewed by
Jim Den Ouden,
social studies teacher,
Valley Christian Junior High School,
Bellflower, Ca.

Under God is a government textbook put out by the National Union of Christian Schools. The colorful red, white and blue cover with an American flag across the front marks this book as a Bicentennial edition.

The title *Under God* reflects one of the basic values of the book. It leaves the student with no doubt that God is the supreme authority in all levels of government; every chapter begins with a discussion of His place. This systematic inclusion of God and Christianity at times seems perfunctory.

The book does a creditable job of teaching the student the importance of citizenship. A Christian should assume extra responsibilities of citizenship, and *Under God* promotes that idea. Apathy to government at all levels is unfortunately common among many Christians today. Teaching a government course using *Under God* is a good way to start breaking down that apathy.

Chapter by chapter study could be monotonous for many junior high students. There are some useful exercises at the end of each chapter, but the teacher would have to be selective. The book could include more suggestions to keep the students motivated. For example, often officials from different levels of government are willing to come to school to bring government to the classroom.

Some of the Unit Research Projects suggested at the end of each unit are good and should be used to get students involved. Setting up debates, legislatures, and courts in the classroom may seem like a game, but students respond well to meaningful variety.

If a full year U. S. history course is taught in the junior high, it is not necessary to spend so much time on the historical background of government which is important, but not important enough to be taught twice in the junior high and twice in the senior high.

Often the federal government appears complex and distant to students. Local and state government is therefore an area that students should especially understand and appreciate. Only twenty-eight of two hundred and forty-five pages

in *Under God* cover local and state government. The teacher should supplement this area.

Possibly a selection of chapters or units would be necessary to implement the book *Under God*. However, our Christian schools should be encouraged to use *Under God* since it is a textbook which emphasizes God's authority and Christian responsibility in government.

1776: YEAR OF ILLUSIONS

Author: Thomas Fleming

New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975
485 pp. \$12.50.

Reviewed by

Paul A. Beverly, social studies teacher,
Valley Christian High,
Bellflower, California.

In a year celebrated as the Bicentennial of the United States, this book is highly interesting. Rather than glorifying the events of 1776 or being critical of everything that happened during this year, Fleming simply attempts to put the events in their right perspective.


The book opens on December 31, 1775 with a small group of American soldiers huddled outside Quebec, waiting to attack. From there, Fleming gives the reader a rather in-depth view of events in the colonies and in England. He spends considerable time on what he calls the illusions of 1776, e.g., the idea that the war could be won in one major battle, or the idea that the high ideals of the American cause would inspire the untrained militia to drive seasoned British regulars out of the colonies. While discussing these illusions, he takes the reader back and forth across the Atlantic from America to England to France to the West Indies.

Fleming avoids the danger of becoming so detailed that the reader is bored. His writing style gets the reader involved with the characters in the book whether they are generals or common people. The one man whom the reader really starts to understand is George Washington. The author presents him as very concerned that civil authorities remain in power over the army. Until he shook off that idea, Washington took no initiative and nearly lost the war. However, by the

end of 1776 Washington became the commander-in-chief of the army, and with this new confidence, he defeated the British at Trenton on December 26, 1776.

Fleming is at his best with the turmoil leading up to the Declaration of Independence, and with Washington finally taking total command of the army at Trenton (ch. 32, 34). Maybe the most noticeable flaw in this otherwise fascinating history is the placement of Chapter 33. In Chapter 32 Fleming brings the reader to the banks of the Delaware with Washington's troops on December 26, 1776, but instead of ending the story in the next chapter, he suddenly jumps over to Europe, leaving the reader stranded on the river bank while he discusses diplomacy in England and France.

Having discussed the illusions and flaws of those involved in the Revolutionary War, Fleming ends with a plea to modern Americans to live with their faults and failures and to strive for the goals in which they profess to believe. It is this balanced and sane approach to the events of 1776 which impressed me.



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ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE

Author: Lee Canter with Marlene Canter
Seal Beach, California: Canter and Associates,
1976, 191 pp. \$4.95

Reviewed by

✓ Anne KeKreek,
kindergarten teacher,
Artesia Christian School,
Artesia, California

The purpose of this book by Canter is to provide the teacher with the necessary skills to become assertive in the classroom. Canter feels that the more assertive a teacher is, the greater influence she will have on her students' behavior. He points out that the position of teacher no longer holds the prestige it once did. Today teachers need more than just words to get the behavior they want—they need to be assertive. Not every student will accept the teacher's authority simply because she is a teacher.

Canter defines an assertive teacher as "one who clearly and firmly communicates her wants and needs to her students, and is prepared to reinforce her words with appropriate actions," without violating the best interests of her students. Throughout the book the assertive teacher is contrasted with the passive, indifferent, "unassertive" teacher and the sarcastic, unreasonable, "hostile" teacher. Canter explains that even though it takes more effort and planning to deal assertively with students, in the long run it benefits both the students and the teacher.

The book emphasizes that the teacher should always be prepared with a discipline plan and know exactly what she will do when a child engages in inappropriate behavior. One comment that made me see the value of a book such as this was the author's observation that the typical classroom teacher will rarely enter her classroom without a lesson plan to reach her academic objectives. Yet, she will consistently face her class without having done any planning for classroom control and discipline.

Canter gives detailed instructions and numerous suggestions for working out a discipline plan. He has some creative consequences for inappropriate behavior besides the typical sit-in-the-corner or stay-after-school approach. He strongly refutes the myth that a "good" teacher should be able to handle her class alone, and encourages teachers to seek assistance from principals and parents when necessary.

Besides making the teacher aware of the

importance of planning consequences for negative behavior, this book also points out the value of concrete positive consequences for good behavior. Although words of praise and encouragement are fine, most students will work especially hard for a "good" phone call to parents, a "Good Citizen" note, or some free time at the end of the day.

As a first-year teacher, I found the book very helpful. Although my education classes prepared me to teach academic subject matter, very little time was spent on classroom control and discipline methods. This book helped to make up for that shortcoming.

The only part of the book I found objectionable was a small section where Canter was explaining how to be assertive with uncooperative parents. He was rather harsh, and as a Christian teacher I could not be quite as demanding as he encourages teachers to be in this situation.

My overall impression of the book, however, was very favorable. I think it would benefit every teacher (especially those with hard-to-control classes), and it's a *must* for those just beginning their teaching careers.

Anne DeKreek
Kindergarten Teacher, Artesia Christian School

It is great, and there is no other greatness — to make one nook of God's creation more fruitful, better, more worthy of God; to make some human heart a little wiser, manlier, happier — more blessed, less accursed.

Thomas Carlyle

We act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life, when all that we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about.

Charles Kingsley

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