



Christian Educators Journal

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NUMBER 3

FEBRUARY - MARCH 1979

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CHRISTIAN COLLEGES:
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*Four walls confine:
Methodical, obedient workers
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Somnolent, wasting brains
Gum-snapping, sassy mouths
Expelled, rebellious now-tamed tongues
And pitchers — — of pennies.*

*Clairol blond hair — with dark parts
Revlon blue eyes
Maybelline dark lashes
Krazy Kurl hair do's
T.V. commercial kids?*

*Fresh, scrubbed skin
Shining, shampooed hair
Sparkling, alert eyes
Ready to learn — and live?*

*Soft-bloused, full-skirted slim figures
Restless, jumpy, blue jean legs
Messaged, action-defined, T-shirted shoulders.*

*Low drone, exchange of news splinters:
Cars, dates, scores, jobs, money, tests, ideas?
How? "Never read a book."*

*Earnest, searching, inquiring, bold, fearless
"dare-you" eye encounters.*

*Defiant, promising revenge
Alluring, promising love.
Staring, minus meaning
Bored — — — closed eyes
Windows of the soul?*

*Diligent, purposeful pencils
Open, marked, devoured books
Shaggy-haired tolerance — of four walls
with apertures to a red brick wall
and a stone-studded cemetery.*

*Free bodies? When?
To:*

*Drive trucks, trim trees, fix cars,
tame tractors, dress "dolls," dust,
dream or dilly-dally
Or study in other halls.*

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Editorial

CONTRACT TIME ... ALREADY!

As sure as spring come the dis-ease and turmoil of contract time for teachers, administrators, and boards. For whom is it most difficult?

The system of contracting in some 300 Christian schools which abide by the policies of *Christian Schools International* (CSI) appears to be weighted to the advantage of the schools and the boards and against the teacher seeking a contract elsewhere, particularly teachers with several years' experience. A closer look, however, suggests that the policy is only *superficially* advantageous to schools, because actually it serves neither teacher nor school interests as well as possible.

Closely associated with contracting, but not guided by policies established by CSI, is the practice of awarding salary increments for experience, or years of service (in addition to other factors). The *value* of experience transfers with a teacher, but the *monetary advantage* to the teacher often disappears because of the disallowance of this credit, in varying degrees, by the hiring school.

I.

The present CSI policy, adopted in 1969, states that "teachers in service shall not be offered contracts for the ensuing year prior to March 1" and "teachers in training or unemployed teachers will not be offered positions prior to April 1" (CSI *Board Member Handbook* (BMH), 512.1).

Practically speaking, this requires a presently-employed teacher to join the ranks of the unemployed before he can consider or be considered for employment in another school. He must sign his contract in March, prior to the time other schools may even begin to offer contracts to anyone other than in-service teachers.

There is no restriction on a school board collecting information on prospective appointees, carrying on correspondence, or conducting interviews prior to April 1 (BMH, 512, Interpretation 1). Ethically that's as far as a board can go because any kind of promise and/or acceptance of employment would be tantamount to an oral contract, which, according to CSI policy, is subject to "the same principles and provisions of a

written contract" (BMH, 512.5). How then can an employed teacher ethically and seriously seek other employment without declining his present contract?

With the prevailing teacher surplus, it takes a brave (or wealthy) teacher to risk possibly having no contract the next year. Status quo may not be ideal for him (or for the school, for that matter), but no job at all can be economic bankruptcy.

CSI recommends a salary schedule "which recognizes training *experience* (*italics added*), position, and family status . . . in fixing salaries" (BMH, 514).

Official policy recognizes *experience* as an important factor in fixing salary, but this same *experience* is confined to the school where it is gained because frequently it is not recognized in job-changing. A teacher with ten years' experience reflected in his total salary will not and often cannot easily accept a position which credits him with part of his experience only. A teacher then is forced to settle for a less-than-satisfactory contract-in-hand rather than the unknown of a contract with less-than-satisfactory experience credit or — no contract at all.

II.

The current contracting policies plus the loss in the experience-credit militate not only against the teacher but also, in less obvious ways, against the school:

- Longevity within a single school is not *necessarily* conducive to the progress and vitality of the school. Teachers can reach a level of maximum effectiveness after which, frequently, there is a diminishing return. Change is not inherently valuable; neither is longevity. Stability is desirable certainly, up to a point. Says the maxim: "A rolling stone gathers no moss." But what exactly is the value of moss?

- Teachers do burn out in a given situation. This in turn is reflected in lowered morale and deteriorating relationships, some noticed and some unnoticed or ignored, among teacher/staff/administrator/pupils. However, given a new setting and a new challenge, the teacher's exper-

tise and experience can add life to another school and the teacher's spirit and vitality be rekindled.

- Schools need stimulation and growth which can be created by more exchange of *experienced* teachers. Faculty turnover, however, is predominantly among the newer and youngest teachers (they have less to lose and more to gain), and too often the vigor, initiative, and innovativeness of the newer, younger teachers are scorned or ignored by teachers who have become part of the status quo, too comfortable, or a bit jaded, perhaps even cynical. This creates an imbalance, sometimes polarizing the established senior teachers against the energetic and less-experienced newer teachers.

- Keeping too many of the same teachers in one school for too many years contributes to a provincialism that is untenable for the Christian community. With a shrinking world and an exploding population teeming with problems, we Christians need to raise our consciousness of the world beyond the comfortable little church-school-family ghettos in which we are ensconced, often too little concerned with the cry and shriek of a suffering humanity. Encouraging experienced teachers to reestablish would be a small step in jarring status quo.

III.

Yes, school boards do have obligations to meet and problems to solve that teachers are not always aware of. But to solve the problems at the cost of monetary sacrifice and psychological well-being of the teachers on whom the board depends for the well-being of the entire school appears to be self-defeating. The qualifications of seasoned, experienced, *happy* teachers will more than offset the problems of the board.

To give both teachers and schools the opportunity to grow in vitality, broadened outlook, and utilization of tested ideas, would require some changes in the contracting and experience-credit policies of affected schools:

- Statements of intent should continue to be sought well in advance of contract time. This permits early advertising of possible openings, and since intention slips do not commit a teacher to a decision, he can freely and privately explore opportunities elsewhere.

- Contracts to *all* teachers should be issued on a *single* agreed-upon date. Thus a *presently* employed teacher could have at least equal opportunity with unemployed or new teachers without having to first decline a contract from his present school.

- A teacher should be given fifteen days to consider a new contract (a week less than ministers), and should be given a one-week extension if he has additional contracts to consider. The CSI policy states "Courtesy and ethics demand that only one contract be held at a time unless the parties granting the contracts are informed that more than two days are needed to make a decision" (BMH, 512.8). Two days? Two days? A decision to uproot, to move one's family, to consider new circumstances . . . two days? Ministers get three weeks generally; what makes a teacher's decision any less difficult?

- A teacher should be allowed to consider *privately* two or more contracts *simultaneously*. What is unethical about considering several options at once? There are more teachers than openings; school boards have many more options than teachers. Why should a person be restricted to consecutive, single opportunities? Why must he reveal his opportunities when a teacher's opportunity to job-hunt occurs only once a year?

- CSI should make an in-depth study of the maximum number of years to be counted for increments on the basis of how many years are required to reach maximum teaching efficiency. Once a teacher has reached the number of years needed to reach maximum teaching efficiency, the increments for that objective should cease. (Other criteria can still serve for salary adjustments and incentives.)

Because years of experience do contribute towards teaching efficiency, experience up to the maximum allowable should be transferable to any Christian school which is following CSI policies.

CONCLUSION

Changes in contracting and transfer of experience-credit would hopefully encourage the experienced, seasoned teachers to move on occasionally, and either the school he leaves or the recipient school, or even both, would benefit by the change.

For most teachers, even the best, there is a point of diminishing return. It is better for all concerned for one to leave a situation when there are still regrets about one's leaving than to tolerate a position or a person until that blessed day of retirement affords relief.

For betterment of both schools and teachers, we need more flexibility in contracting. Ethics and personal integrity require that we work where our talents are best used, and yes, where our needs are best filled, in order that we may more freely and fully serve our King. CEJ

TEACHER TRAINING IN OUR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES: IS IMPROVEMENT NECESSARY?

H. Van Brummelen

Twenty different schools. More than one hundred classrooms and teachers. Two and a half thousand students. That was the scope of my classroom visiting in British Columbia's Christian schools during 1977-78, with many classes being visited several times. I observed. I made notes. I gave advice and help. I saw certain patterns in our classrooms. I drew certain conclusions, many of them tentative, about students, about teachers, about schools, and, yes, about present teacher training programs.

Consider the following typical (but imaginary) classroom scenes in May, 1978. Both represent split-grade primary classrooms with first-year teachers.

Classroom A:

Half of the class is working on well-structured learning activities at stations on one side of the room. The other grade is sitting around the teacher on a carpet in the opposite corner, being taught a lesson in reading. When the reading lesson is finished, they are given specific instructions to write a story that ties in with the lesson. They go back to their desks and get to work. The teacher helps some of the students at the work stations for a few minutes, asks these students to finish what they're working on, and they group around the blackboard for some mathematics instruction. This instruction helps to clarify and extend the concepts that students have already explored in some of the work station activities. There is a relaxed, pleasant atmos-

phere even though the quality and quantity of student's work is expected to be high.

Classroom B:

All the students are sitting in rows facing the front. Half of the class is working on phonics workbooks, with several students being finished and reading a book they got from a shelf at the back of the room. The other half is finishing a reading lesson, with the teacher in front of that half of the room. Several of the "phonics" pupils are listening in because it's an interesting story. The teacher tries to speed things up because she's concerned that the "phonics group" is getting restless: the level of noise is slowly but steadily increasing. Quickly the reading group is told to get to work on some worksheets, and the teacher shifts attention to the other group. In the meantime, however, she can start teaching the "phonics group" mathematics, a formal lesson taught from the book.

These are not two radically different situations; I am not trying to paint black and white contrasting pictures. Teachers in both classrooms are dedicated and face some of the same joys and frustrations. Yet there are real differences between the two classrooms. In classroom A, the teacher has some expertise in meeting the needs of each group as well as the needs of the individual child; she has been taught how to structure learning situations that are flexible, that develop a student's potential without him necessarily being

cast into the same mold as his neighbor, and that takes into account the need for integrated learning. In classroom B, the teacher has not given much thought to the fundamental structure of the classroom during her teacher training, and even though she feels that her way of coping with the situation may not be the best one, she doesn't know how to go about making changes that will enable the needs of sub-groups in the class to be met without herself becoming flustered and frustrated.

What disturbs me is this: in my experience, the majority of classroom A teachers are public university graduates; the majority of classroom B teachers are Christian college graduates. To be sure, there are exceptions, many of them. Also, my sample may not be representative; our schools are relatively isolated and our staff changeover has been fairly high. Because of our distance from Christian colleges, we probably have a larger percentage of new teachers who graduate from public universities than many other states and provinces. Furthermore, with experienced teachers the differences between the two groups tend to fade. Yet I cannot escape the conclusion that there *are* some areas in which our Christian colleges can improve their teacher training programs.

Let me say at the outset that I wholeheartedly support our Christian colleges. Christian education is crucial to the development of our children — all the way from kindergarten to graduate school. I am thankful that prospective teachers have the opportunity to benefit from a Christian college education. What I say here is in the hope

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that the education departments of Christian colleges will be stimulated to do some self-analysis to determine whether improvements are possible. For that reason I asked the editor of this magazine to seek and publish replies in this issue. (See pgs. 8 and 9. Ed.) It is important that in this discussion our mutual concern is better prepared teachers for our Christian school classrooms.

With this background, I want to point to four areas of concern: perspective, pedagogy, planning, and practicums.

PERSPECTIVE

Prospective teachers need to be solidly grounded in a Reformed view of educational principles and practice. This requires several general and educational philosophy courses so that a student understands the basis and thrust of modern thought; it also requires a course delineating a Christian alternative philosophy of education based on Biblical norms. Such a course should try to come to grips with the implications of our Christian world-and-life view in the day-to-day operation of our schools. Graduates of Dordt College (Iowa) generally display a good grasp of the basis and aims of Christian education. However, I shudder when all that a graduate can say in an interview is that we must have Christian schools because they provide "a good moral atmosphere." What then has four years of Christian college education accomplished?

Christian colleges have an obligation to confront students with the framework of a "Christian mind" in Biblical perspective, a Christian view of the nature of reality and of knowledge, a Christian approach to epistemology, and the development of a Christian perspective on learning theory. More emphasis needs to be given to this.

Obviously, public university graduates usually have no background here at all. In this connection, I am thankful for the

programs of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Alta Vista College in Seattle, Washington, in offering summer courses designed to overcome this deficiency in public college graduates teaching in our Christian schools.

PEDAGOGY

Unfortunately our Christian community has not done much basic research on a Christian view of the child and child development and the implications this has for the classroom. The important work of the late Dr. J. Waterink in the Netherlands has not been extended. Yet we have a real obligation to develop a Christian view of the educational process and its implications for classroom methodology.

Have we sometimes confused **traditional** with **Christian**? Has our Christian answer been to criticize (legitimately!) some modern educational trends but at the same time to assume (naively!) that methods used forty years ago are proper today? Why do our Christian college graduates have so many problems in structuring classroom situations effectively in ways other than the traditional lecture/discussion model? Why do they seem to assume in their classrooms that the best way for a child to learn is for the teacher to impart "knowledge" at the front of the class? Why haven't they been given more training in how to stimulate a child's creativity? Why do they seem to assume that a textbook is to be used page by page, with little attention being paid to integration and motivation? Why are they not better prepared to cope with the emotional needs of the child, and often think about this seriously only *after* they have started teaching?

In one sense, teachers learn their "trade" through teaching. What "works" for one person does not necessarily "work" for another. Yet teachers need preparation in classroom techniques that are grounded in a Christian view of the child and of education. They must have

the tools at their disposal to handle the student in such a way that he is helped, in the classroom situation, to grow and mature in the Lord, to become a responsible disciple through his studies. And with almost 40% of the Christian Schools International (formerly National Union of Christian Schools) schools having fewer teachers than the number of grade levels taught, this must of necessity include specific and extensive training in grouping students within the classroom and working effectively with them under these circumstances.

PLANNING

Effective learning in the classroom depends to a large extent on effective planning. Our beginning teachers are, on the whole, exceptionally dedicated: many spend three or four hours every night on preparation and planning.

Yet again I have several concerns. Teachers know how to plan from day-to-day, within the confines of a well-laid-out program. But they falter when it comes to long-range planning and unit development. Yet such development is crucial if the aims of Christian education are to be met in the school.

... they [Christian teachers] should have been taught that each unit should in some way point the child to God's faithfulness in Christ and to the task the child has been given in God's creation.

Colleges should put more emphasis on training students to develop integrated classroom units. New teachers should be able to write objectives for a unit that tie in to a central theme; they should be able to search out learning activities that relate to the objectives so that the unit has a unified thrust; they should

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ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREPARATION: CALVIN COLLEGE

Peter P. DeBoer

In general, Harro Van Brummelen concludes that our Christian colleges ought to improve "some areas" of their teacher educational programs. He lifts up four areas of concern. I shall reply to each in his order, and limit my remarks, as he does, to elementary education.

I. PERSPECTIVE

Problem:

A perspectival deficiency.

Van B's Solution:

Students should take "several" general and educational philosophy courses plus a course "delineating a Christian alternative philosophy of education based on Biblical norms." A Christian philosophy of education, he writes, must address not only broad questions like the Christian view of reality and knowledge, the Christian view of how we know (epistemology) and how we learn (learning theory), but apply all this to the "day-by-day operation of our schools." The aim: to ground prospective teachers "solidly" in a Reformed view of educational principles and practices.

Reply:

At Calvin, the contextual requirements of the Core, the studies in the disciplines, and the professional education program requirements ought, in combination, to meet more than adequately Van B's concern.

In the liberal arts Core program, all future elementary teachers must take a general

philosophy course and an educational philosophy course. The educational philosophy course is so organized as to culminate in readings, discussion, and usually a lengthy paper delineating in rather concrete terms the application of a Christian philosophy of education which is alternate to both Essentialism (Perennialism, Traditionalism) and Experimentalism (Progressivism, Pragmatism, Humanism). Students also take at least two and often three courses in Religion and Theology which address some of the philosophical issues raised by Van B. Many Calvin students elect an Interim course entitled Christian Perspectives on Learning. They must take a course in Educational Psychology which, combined with a professional education course in Introduction to Teaching, seeks to apply educational principles. To guarantee such application, these students, normally during a semester of their third or junior year, must serve as an aide to a classroom teacher for at least sixty hours of experience. Further, elementary education students must take a Core course in speech (for the classroom teacher), one in music or art (or an orientation similar to speech), one in math, one in physical science, and the like. All of these courses, in part, provide perspectival support.

There is the perspectival emphasis involved in those disciplinary studies constituting the major program (such as English, history, music, etc.) or the group major program (as in language arts, fine arts, social studies, or science studies). Also, many elementary educational students elect

to add a course in Child or Developmental Psychology.

Finally, his professional studies, including courses in the teaching of reading, general methods (of teaching Bible, math, science, language arts, social studies) and the seminar which complements his semester of Directed Teaching, provide with varying emphases both Biblical perspectives and opportunities for application.

Consequently, if a Calvin graduate in teacher education lacks Christian perspective on the nature of reality and knowledge, on the aim of education, on the nature of the child, on Christian nurture, on maturation, and their application, I find it difficult to fault the program.

II. PEDAGOGY

Problem:

Mr. Van B here raises a number of questions, but his chief criticism (given his opening "split-grade" illustrations) seems to be that prospective elementary teachers do not know how to structure the classroom for learning, grounded in a Christian view of the child and his education.

Van B's Solution:

Future teachers should be taught how to create learning situations which are "flexible," which include "work station activities," which address individual deficiencies as well as common needs, where learning is integrated (multi-disciplinary) and where academic expectation is high in spite of the relaxed atmosphere. Students should also be taught why such a classroom reflects a Christian view of the child.

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ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREPARATION: DORDT COLLEGE

Mike Vanden Bosch

REPLY

Although the education department of Dordt College has not come up with an official response to Harro Van Brummelen's article on teacher training, I'd like to respond personally. He makes some perceptive observations about some beginning teachers. I'm glad he is concerned about how these teachers become the kind of teachers they do become, for this is a question with which not just colleges or principals but the entire Christian community must be concerned. But I must begin by observing that the two classroom scenes seem to reflect the reporter's bias.

For example, in Classroom B, pupils "listen in" to the teacher when they're supposed to be working on a phonics lesson. In Classroom A, the teacher is obviously talking to part of the class in one corner, but nothing is said about pupils listening in. I don't question the observation. But, if pupils concentrate in one class and do not concentrate in another, it may be due to many things other than the teacher's ability to organize the learning activities. Room acoustics, the teacher's voice, or just the relative interest of a story would all affect the pupils' ability to concentrate. None of these factors are mentioned in this composite classroom description, but any one of these items may be more significant than a teacher's ability to structure learning activities.

Furthermore, the other negative aspects of Classroom B could be more negative in the eye of the beholder than in fact. Does it prove anything about the quality of instruction if all students

are "sitting in rows facing the front"? I doubt it. But the description has negative connotations in the article, as the reader no doubt realizes.

I also notice that twice in the description of Classroom B, Van Brummelen mentions that students are working from worksheets or workbooks. I'm sure these words too are expected to generate negative feelings. In contrast, all we're told about Classroom A is that students are busy exploring concepts at "work station activities."

Of course, to say students are "exploring concepts" sounds better to most ears than to say that they are "working on worksheets." But, in fact, the workbook activity may be as essential to good instruction as the "work station activity." Worksheets are not, ipso facto, bad. They can serve a purpose in any classroom to test whether or not concepts are really understood or to reinforce learning only vaguely comprehended.

I make these initial observations because I have found that the line between good and bad teachers can seldom be drawn on the basis of external factors. My own children spent three years in classrooms that resembled Classroom A. The learning was individualized, each student advancing at his own pace. And because my children were advancing steadily, I approved of the structure of the learning activities. But one evening I attended a PTA meeting and heard one mother ask the teacher, "What happens if a pupil doesn't come to you with any finished work? What happens if he doodles at his work station?" The teacher explained that she would discover this in her weekly check on progress. "Well," replied the mother, "my son has not worked on math for four weeks, and he

won't work on math unless you make him."

Now this teacher's classroom resembled Classroom A, and I still think she was a good teacher. But frankly, I doubt whether, in a classroom like Classroom B, this less motivated student would have fallen four weeks behind without the teacher being aware of it. My point is that the progress of individual pupils is finally dependent on factors other than merely how the learning activities are structured.

I appreciate the writer's remarks about pedagogy, and in no way do I want to undercut his point that we cannot assume traditional methods of teaching are necessarily the best. But neither should we assume they are necessarily the worst for every teacher or for every concept. I suppose most material could be taught inductively, but I'm sure some material or concepts could much more efficiently be taught deductively — with the teacher "imparting" knowledge from the front of the classroom. The most unforgettable instruction I ever received came from a seventh grade teacher who "imparted" all sorts of information about the motives for, the causes for, and the effects of the colonization in New England. It would have taken months of fumbling and misdirection for us seventh graders to arrive at this knowledge — knowledge which no subsequent study of American history either in high school or college ever disproved. But organized as it was, I began to understand, not just some facts of history, but how God works through history. This Christian perspective of history on which an experienced teacher had worked and pondered could only have been arrived at by seventh graders, if at all, through

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Mike Vanden Bosch,
Department of Education,
Dordt College,
Sioux Center, Iowa



Pursuit of Excellence for the Christian Teacher

It is said that "One who desires to excel should endeavor it in those things that are in themselves most excellent."

In today's child-centered educational programs, the teacher as communicator of knowledge and as exemplar of truth has been relegated to a less dominant position as organizer and co-worker. In some ways that's good!

But, I believe the Scriptural injunction that instructors are responsible to train and educate children has sometimes been defied with the false conception that children and young people are miniature adults, capable of regulating their own affairs. As the child is granted the freedom to govern himself, the order and regularity needed in life are destroyed.

At a recent Teen Challenge meeting a former convict, turned-Christian, said, "Between ages 15 and 20 when I pushed society for the most freedom, I needed regulations and controls the most. But everyone was telling me, 'You're old enough or big enough to take care of yourself.' And my freedom turned to chaos!"

We, then, in our pursuit of excellence must teach so that the individual will be fitted, qualified and proficient in his living.

Christian schools have made some giant strides over recent years in the pursuit of excellence. We find that in the commendations of evaluation reports and in community reaction. We have done much refinement in terms of facilities, curricula, extra-curricular activities, and in the expertise and proficiency of our teachers.

George Groen, editor and author of this column, is Superintendent of the Ontario Christian Schools, Ontario, California.

I continue to praise God for the excellence that exists, but we haven't arrived. I believe it is time to strengthen our stakes and lengthen our cords in our pursuit of excellence.

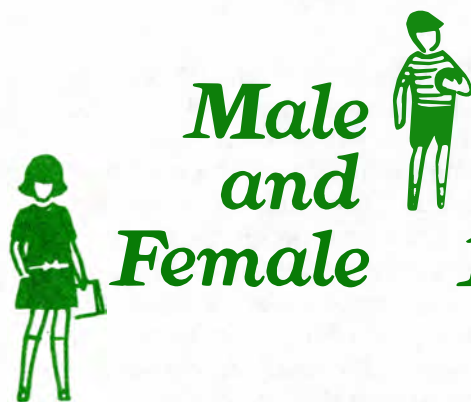
Written across the top of every classroom door should be this sign: "Holiness unto the Lord." That concept boggles the mind and would do much to remind us of the pursuit of excellence as we enter those doors. In reading Deuteronomy and Numbers in the Bible, I'm always deeply impressed with the excellence towards which everything was geared because people were conscious of the holiness of the God they served. We can expect no more excellence from our students than we ourselves are willing to practice.

AREAS FOR EXCELLENCE

Let us consider some areas where we can pursue such excellence. In no way do I mean to suggest that all of us have needs for sharpening in every area. Many teachers are strong in many areas, but all of us need to be reminded.

- **The area of planning, preparation and evaluation.** How excellent is it? How current are you? How different are your plans today from the plans you had for the same course 2-3 years ago? Is your attitude one of getting by or one of permitting students to get the most out of the time that you have them?
- **The area of classroom environment.** What does your classroom look like? Is it inviting? Is it a place which tells anyone who enters that real learning goes on there? Can anyone tell that it is distinctively Christian? Is it evident that quality time is spent there? Is atmosphere created for good learning?

continued on p. 26



Male and Female Distinguish We Them

Nancy Olthoff

Reading at bedtime is a favorite activity in our house. One evening my five year old daughter placed a library book in my hands as her choice. As I began to read about twins, a brother and a sister, I was intensely confronted by the stereotyped roles dictated for the boy and girl.

The girl was shown as weak, afraid, crying. She could only succeed with the support of her brother. It was the girl who was non-athletic and closed her eyes whenever a ball was pitched her way. It was the girl who became embarrassed. It was the girl of whom we were told like most girls she didn't know how to play ball; brother had to show her the way boys did it. It is always the girl who doesn't think, who makes foolish errors, who is ineffectual.

The boy, on the other hand, was portrayed as intelligent, capable, patient, mature. It was he whom the sister could ask for assistance. It was the boy who did not show emotion when he could not play in the most important game of the season. It was the boy who had to exercise responsibility, to judge fairly, to perform expertly.

At first I tried to avoid reading the biased statements, but my daughter interrupted because the story did not proceed clearly. I explained to her that I didn't actually want to read the book to her because it taught ideas about boys and girls that weren't true. Her solution was to read it anyway and we could joke about the silly comments and ask questions about the concepts. Together we learned a great deal about the biases in our male-female society and ways to deal with it.

My recent contact with Christian teachers reveals that most are aware of the phenomenon labeled *sexism*. Their reactions to discrimination by sex vary. Some see this as trivial and inconsequential. Some earmark it as a threat to the school because of changes mandated by govern-

mental Title IX guidelines. Others seek to investigate and attempt to learn how to improve their teaching of Christian children by finding what it is about themselves and the subject they teach which discriminates against girls and boys. It will be advantageous for us and our students to view this as a learning challenge. In this article we will examine our personal orientations, look at our environmental sources, and finally approach some suggestions to downplay sexual differences and heighten creational uniqueness.

PERSONAL ORIENTATION

It is important first to determine what are our own values, expectations, presuppositions, and behaviors with regard to the students in our classrooms. Fortunately, Christian teachers, in my experience, are already concerned about what is best for each child. This has helped already to eliminate some "male/female only" distinctions. We Christians are blessed in realizing that we are all human and in need of that salvation which is freely given. We can identify closely with Adam who named the animals and did not find any like himself. Then Eve came to him and he exuberantly exclaimed, "At last, bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23). He lauded her sameness, not her dissimilarity.

With whom do we associate these terms: strong, pretty, sophisticated, instigator, famous, sassy; or these occupations: carpenter, nurse, minister, clerk?

From such a basis we need, however, to look carefully at ourselves to determine if what we believe about the boys and girls in our classroom is in fact innately proscribed by their sexual natures, or if it is only that which is condoned by society. Consider how our actions speak to our students. Do we compliment the girls who wear dresses, yet never see a boy's new shirt? Do we discourage shop for girls and home economics for boys? Is a bright boy more encouraged in →

Nancy Olthoff, instructor, Nursing Home – Adult Education, Grand Rapids Community Education Program, and secretary of the Board of Oakdale Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

academic pursuits than a bright girl? Are class lines always segregated by boys and girls? Do we value boys who are sensitive to feelings? Whom do we reward more for creativity? Do we expect a female to play a flute and a male a trombone? With whom do we associate these terms: strong, pretty, sophisticated, instigator, famous, sassy; or these occupations: carpenter, nurse, minister, clerk?

Frequently we confuse our knowledge with our expectations. Thus, we know that our sexual being is definitive and, by and large, we have allowed that definition to become determinative. We have learned from observation and through reading sources such as Judith Bardwick's *Psychology of Women* that boys are more oriented toward things and girls toward people, girls appear more passive and boys more active, boys have a high need to achieve and girls to affiliate, while each attempts to identify with the sex specific group to which he or she belongs. We observe biological differences that enable women to bear and nurse children while only men can be fathers. We begin to expect distinctions because of these givens.

We have transferred this knowledge into "therefore theories" with respect to consequences. We rationalize that girls are more sensitive to others' feelings and therefore they react emotionally not objectively; boys are active and therefore they will excel in physical sports; or boys are brave and therefore they shouldn't be afraid. Increasingly data demonstrates that self-fulfilling prophesy is not a myth, but what we expect we frequently observe. We perceive that our expectations proceed logically from our assumptions; however, we need to know whether our notions are merely verifications of cultural conditioning or are integral for Christian orientation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SOURCES

It is difficult to be objective while most of our attitudes and expectations are strongly supported by our environments. A specific look at some of these buttresses is important.

... textbooks ... are major purveyors of values and expectations through the stories, biographies, pictures and information they present.

Within the classroom itself are reinforcers. The textbooks we use are major purveyors of values and expectations through the stories, biographies, pictures and information they present.

A recent survey of elementary reading books found that male main character stories dominated female main characters in a five-to-two ratio, while male biographies were in a six-to-one ratio over female biographies. The main themes of the stories revealed boys as clever, persevering, brave and maturing, while girls were presented as passive, domestic, incompetent, fearful, emotional and objects of humiliation (*Women on Words and Images, Dick and Jane as Victims*). A perusal of history books demonstrates that women are noticeably absent as contributors. For most texts a brief paragraph adequately includes all references with regard to women (Janice Law Trecker, "Women in U.S. History High School Textbooks." Published in *And Jill Came Tumbling After: Sexism in American Education*). Even in a neutral area such as math we discover sets illustrated by sex, boys viewed as doing, girls shown by their appearance, and biased comments as "She couldn't figure it out, so he helped her" or "Girls are no good in math" (Marsha Federbush, "The Sex Problems of School Math Books," in *And Jill Came Tumbling After: Sexism in American Education*).

Other classroom materials are also developed around sexual distinctions. The Alpha program, used in many kindergartens, has all consonants portrayed as male and characterizes the helping vowels as female. Movies, songs and games often instill notions limiting gender concepts.

External to the classroom are other societal reinforcers for our prejudices. One source appears on television in "Sesame Street" and cartoon features where few female characters are represented, and those present are usually in stereotyped roles: wicked witch, loyal nurse, provocative woman, and uninformed mother. The male characters are depicted as brave heroes, authoritative doctors, and perceptive geniuses. Males are limited by seldom being allowed to be warm, compassionate or doubtful. We can call to awareness "Emergency's" doctors and nurse, or "Speedracer's" rescuing adventures of feeble maidens, or the "Flintstones'" warped family life.

The no-less-commercial toy industry also capitalizes on male/female biases. A brief trip into a toy store will reveal that toys for boys generally are active, experientially orientated, cost more, and are chosen with greater care than girls' toys which are passive, simple, and solitary ("A Report on Children's Toys," *Ms. Magazine* reprint published in *And Jill Came Tumbling After*).

A further societal support for ongoing sexual distinctions is found in role models. Most elementary teachers are women, while most secondary teachers are men. Most persons in leadership

continued on p. 27



ASYLUM

H. K. Zoeklicht

THE WINNER

An oleaginous smile covering his face, Dr. Peter Rip, principal of Omni Christian High School, sidled into the faculty room at precisely 10 o'clock where the teachers were relaxing for an after-chapel coffee break. P.R. had his left hand clutched around the biceps of a muscular young man whom he somewhat nervously pulled into the easy-going atmosphere of Omni's favorite place for teachers, the asylum.

"Ladies and gentlemen," announced the principal in his most winning voice, "I would like to have you meet our visitor. May I have your attention for just a minute, please. Please? Thank you. I'd like to have you meet Mr. Ren Abbot. He, uh, is considering joining us here at Omni. He's going to have a chat with the board this evening. I want him all to myself for a while first, but maybe later on you will have a chance to visit with him a little too."

Peter Rip paused for a moment and smiled at his self-conscious victim, and then towed him toward the coffee urn. "Have a cup, Ren, and then we'll retire to my office and discuss some of the facets and ramifications of teaching at Omni Christian."

The newcomer grinned nervously through all of this as he accepted a styrofoam cup of coffee, then almost bumped into the lumbering form of John Vroom who laboriously shifted a chocolate torte from his right hand into his left so that he could extend the greasy but friendly hand of fellowship. Vroom said, "I guess the right hand isn't supposed to know what the left hand doeth, but I'm glad to meetcha anyway. Wow, that's a firm grip you got there. Uh, what was that name again?"

Satirical and sassy, H.K. Zoeklicht, a serious educator, speaks of situations in need of solutions.

"Abbot," answered Rip, "it's Ren Abbott. Ren is from Castello, North Dakota."

"Nice to meet you," said Abbot to the Bible teacher. Then the principal ushered the candidate out of the room.

At first there was silence; then the talk began.

"What job is he applying for anyway?" asked Steve VandenPrikkel.

"Mine, I guess," said Karl DenMeester. "As far as I know, I'm the only one leaving. He must be after the English job."

"You mean you haven't heard?" queried Sue Katje, the librarian, sharply. "Is Rip really going to hire an English teacher without consulting the rest of you?" She scratched her scalp with quick little strokes and then continued. "We might have known, though, right? Teaching is a job, not a profession; we just work here."

"I haven't heard a word," responded Lucy Bright, with some agitation. "Don't we even get a chance to interview him and give our opinion to the board?"

Bob DenDenker now broke his silence. "Well, let's not be too quick to jump to conclusions. Does anyone here know this Ren Abbot? Maybe he comes highly recommended. Let's not judge him before the facts are in."

At that moment the school secretary, Jenny Snip, entered the asylum, just in time to hear DenDenker's last remark. "If you're wondering about this new fellow," she said brightly, "I've just pulled his application file — what would you like to know?"

"Is he after my job, Jenny, or is he after Steve's coaching job? He looks more like a coach to me," added Karl in jest as he looked



over to VandenPrikkel, who squirmed uneasily in his chair.

"Well, maybe he is after both," answered Snip tartly. "I think Rip figures to have him teach English mostly, probably with some speech or Bible. And, of course, phys. ed."

DenDenker winced and then asked, "What is his college major?"

"If I remember right," answered Jenny, "he majored in phys. ed. and minored in English. I believe he won some letters and things in sports. Satisfied?"

John Vroom had stopped devouring his second chocolate torte (a special treat in his lunch since he had done the grocery buying for the week), had stopped chewing even, and now moved ominously close to Snip as he asked, "What are his qualifications for teaching Bible, may I ask?"

Snip backed away slightly before responding, "John, I'm sure he had a course or two in religious studies somewhere in his transcript. And I remember Rip commenting that his father is a minister — or was a minister, I'm not sure."

DenDenker took up his interrogation again. "Where has he taught? Where did he go to school? What kind of track record has he got?" The history teacher smiled at his own pun.

Snip missed the pun. "Nothing to get your dander up about," she snapped. "Mr. Abbot taught some commercial courses at Mountain Christian in Pennsylvania, and coached, of course. That was only for one semester. Then he did a lot of substitute teaching in the ghetto schools of Philadelphia. And he taught for almost a year in a Christian Academy in Squaw Hill, not too far from his hometown in North Dakota. And, oh yes, he's also been taking some courses towards an MA in physical education. Dr. Rip says he comes very well qualified, and we could certainly use him around here."

Bill Silver, Omni's athletic director, had quietly been sipping his coffee on the far side of the room. But now he raised his voice confidently. "Maybe I can fill you in a bit too," he said, "though I must say that Jenny has done quite well with the confidential files." He looked darkly at Jenny, and then continued. "I've known Ren for a long time; in fact I recommended that he apply here. You should know that Ren was an all-stater in high school basketball back there in Pennsylvania, and I played against him in college. He holds all the scoring records for Sanford College — that's a Christian

college down in Arkansas, you know. He's really got good hands. Best hands I've seen in basketball. Really good hands. Fine team player too. And that's important for everything, you know. Done a good job coaching too, what he's done of it. And I know he's interested in doing more of it. Could be a real asset to Omni; maybe could help you out a lot, eh Steve?"

VandenPrikkel reddened, for he had not had a good year. Now he felt nettled and was going to say something, but John Vroom had just swallowed the last of the tortes and now faced Bill Silver.

"I can attest to the fact that the fellow has good hands; at least they're big and they squeeze hard. But what about his heart? If he's going to teach Bible he's got to have a good heart, not good hands. May I remind you, Bill, of Psalm 147 which says that the Lord taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man, and I take that to include the hands too, but the Lord looketh upon the heart. Furthermore, out of the heart are . . ."

But Lucy Bright could hold still no longer. She exploded. "I can't believe it! I *can't* believe it! We are going to have a vacancy in English. The English department is not consulted. The athletic director recommends the candidate — a jock with only a minor in English, with no experience in teaching the courses he would have to teach here. And he's got *good hands*! It's hilarious! I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I just can't believe it."

"That's because you English teachers never get anything straight," retorted a ruffled Bill Silver. "I think it is a well-known fact that athletes and coaches have a lot going for them in the classroom. Have you ever heard of a coach with discipline problems?" He looked around for an answer, saw DenDenker wince, and continued quickly, a touch of defensiveness in his voice. "I think it's no accident that research would show that most principals were once either athletes or coaches. A lot of them taught English too. I get tired of this second-rate citizen thing that you always put athletes and coaches into. You better look at the statistics. And you better look at Ren Abbot's record. He can bring something to this school. He's a winner." [CEJ]

COMING . . .

SCHOOL-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

CEJ

APRIL-MAY

WHY CALVINISTS SHOULD STUDY FOREIGN LANGUAGES



(Second of two articles)

Bradley M. Class

Consider the following inaccurate statements taken from a survey of largely Christian Reformed students starting a Hispanic civilization course at Calvin College this past academic year (1977-78):

"Spaniards eat lots of corn, wear big hats and take long siestas."

"Spanish is the only important language of Latin America."

"Spain is in Europe, but it really belongs in Latin America."

"Spain is where people sit around 'till 3:00 A.M. drinking, eating frito corn chips and watching beautiful girls do the Mexican hat dance."

Or consider: the recent migration of middle-class English-speaking Canadians from Quebec who fear their children will have to learn French.

Or consider: the plans of Classis Eastern Canada to establish a French-speaking ministry in Quebec for the Christian Reformed Church. (*The Banner*, April 28, 1978.)

Or consider: When President Carter was in Venezuela this spring, he addressed the Venezuelan people, speaking in Spanish. Furthermore he exhibited diplomatic finesse by cracking a joke in Spanish in which he thanked their president for giving us an annual 10% discount on oil prices!

Or consider: A Christian Reformed world missionary, Carol Van Ess, has just published in Honduras a basic linguistics reader, comparing Spanish and Moskito language systems for pur-

poses of teaching the Moskito people of Eastern Nicaragua how to read Spanish.

Or consider: "With half the population of South America concentrated in Brazil, and considering the vast resources and potential of the

... Latin Americans and Canadians have found themselves wondering why the United States as a nation considers them inferior.

country, understanding the Portuguese language is clearly fundamental to anyone interested in South America and its future." (*D.J. Jones, Treasurer, Standard Oil of New Jersey.*)

continued on page 18.

OUR APOLOGY

Lest students, friends, and colleagues attribute the faulty French and Spanish (CEJ, Dec./Jan.) to the author of the article, we print Mr. Class' corrections below:

Editor:

Thank you for running my articles on Spanish and French. However, there were a few errors in the foreign language lines your artist inserted in the first article, and I would appreciate your correcting them at first convenience.

The errors: "Tengo un libro en Frances. change to francés. Oû est le chat? change to Ou. Ouvrez la porte, s'il vous plait. change to plaît. ¿Donde esta el gato? change to ¿Dónde está. Habre la puerta, por favor. change to abre. J'ai un livre d'Espanol. change to d'espagnol.

Bradley M. Class

Bradley M. Class,
Department of Spanish,
Calvin College,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Meditation

I. VISION

*A little man
with a small hand
and a weak voice
has a problem:
vision.
He can not see that
he is a little man
with a strong, big hand
and words that burn
into the ears of
a big king
whose hard-nosed defiance
of the Lord-God calls for
a confrontation.*

*Speak, little man!
You're great when
God's fingers
lift yours
and His thoughts
breathe through
your mouth.
Say that a society
that defies God
cannot go on forever
without judgment.*

*Elijah was a man with human
frailties like our own.*

— James 5:17

II. PROVISION

*You've had your say.
You ran from the drought
and from the claws of
hunger clutching at
every throat in the West.
Are you surprised
at God because
he keeps His word
spoken in your voice?
Do you wonder
what may happen
when the waters dry up
and food stays away?*

*Twice a day
a special air-lift
— a flock of ravens —
brings bread and meat
to your camp at the stream.
Isn't the Lord
your shepherd?*

III. HOSPITALITY

*You took the last meal
of an old widow
whose only fears
are starvation
and death
and you bring
death upon her house.
Look at your little self,
at your hands
listen to your own voice
little man of God.
They can bring death
can they bring life
to a widow's son?*

*The little man
with the big hand
carries the son upstairs
looks beyond his nose:
Lord-God, help!
God's thoughts
breathe life
into a dead son!*

from:
In A Strange Land, c. 1974.
Cor W. Barendrecht.
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Being Publications,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

ELIJAH

by Cor W. Barendrecht

IV. PRAYER FOR GOD'S HAND

*God's hand is in the rain
in the wind
and in the fire
on the mountain*

*You can defy Him
with nature-altars
with wood and blood
you can bring priests
and followers
shout at the top of
your lungs
inflict wounds upon
yourself,
but you can't make
rain or fire:
your god has
no reply
no voice.*

*The little man
lifts up his eyes
raises his arms
has a vision
and a voice:*

*Lord-God
Let it be known today
That You are God.*

V. REPLY

*When it rains
it really pours.
When you get your nose wet
against the window of heaven
you know that
the hand and the voice
of little man
are powerless
unless
they hold the hand
speak the thoughts
sense the power
of the living Lord.*

VI. A WHISPER AS CHALLENGE

*Little man
with your head in your hands
have you come down from
your mountain?*

*The little man
thinks so small
he wishes he were dead
buried in mother earth
Like a hurt animal
he hides in a bush
moves to a cave
crawls up against
the skirt of
God's mountain
tiredly waiting
for the Lord-God
to do something like
coming in a windstorm
or in an earthquake
or in a flaming fire.*

*But what are you doing here
little man?
Unplug your ears
listen to the sound
of a gentle whisper.*

*God speaks
in a whisper
to small ears:
Get out of your cave!*

VII. RESPONSE

*Elijah
comes out of his cave
he works and works
uses his hands
his nose
his voice
and his ears
listen closely
for a gentle whisper
to turn into a
mighty whirlwind.
At last the wind comes
to take him up to heaven.*

Let the reader decide which of the above statements or incidents best suggests the kinds of approaches we as Calvinists want to take towards the languages of our Western Hemisphere neighbors.

I

Primary in our attitudes toward French, Spanish and Portuguese speaking nations is the acceptance of their languages, cultures and lifestyles as being of supreme importance to us. We are all members of the Western Hemisphere, and while there are many differences in our origins, we have been destined to be neighbors. Hence, we have a moral, if not an outright Christian, responsibility to know and understand each other. Unfortunately, this relationship has largely been one way, a relationship wherein Latin Americans and Canadians have found themselves wondering why the United States as a nation considers them inferior.

We as Calvinists can no longer permit (at least, in our own circles) this general mentality of provincial Americanism (as it is popularly defined) to continue in the United States while our Northern and Southern brothers remind us that they too are Americans. It is imperative that we train our youth to respect and honor this view.

The attitudinal posture of the United States toward Canada and Latin America affects us in specific ways. On the religious front, evangelism and missionary work bear fruit directly in proportion to the linguistic, cultural and societal insight the workers have of their field or host country. The more holistic a view of society they have, the more impact they make for Christ. (This point obviously applies to Latin America and not to Canada in general since the latter's experience with religious history is totally different from the former's. However, it would be useful to keep the point in mind when dealing with French-speaking Canada.)

Since Christians are called to transform society in all its aspects, let us remember that evangelism is not our only responsibility; God calls political leaders, diplomats, businessmen, students, artists, and scholars to live for Christ using our talents in the rest of our hemisphere. He needs Christian leadership in lay people to establish deeper bonds of respect and cooperation between English-speaking people and our non-English speaking friends.

While the rationale for focusing on Franco-Ibero-American studies may be obvious for most readers, I will state my case in even more precise terms. Members of the Reformed Evangelical community in the United States are not well

aware of the seriousness of the Franco-English disputes in Quebec, an issue which has terribly factionalized Canadian politics and society. The fact of a separatist movement in that province stems largely from linguistic and cultural indifference and/or bias on the part of the English speaking sectors of Canada, not a few of whom are Reformed Christians.

South of the United States border, there exists a morass of socio-economic-political injustice, military dictatorships, political torture, rampant inflation rates and ever-widening gaps

... the United States is sitting on a time-bomb in Quebec and Latin America.

between the haves and the have-nots. There are conservatively 260 million Spanish-speaking Americans and 113 million Brazilians who speak Portuguese who are turning away from the leadership of the United States, because they have come to distrust this country and its motives. (A case in point is the manner in which the United States Senate handled the Panama Canal treaty debates in the first four months of 1978.)

The United States is sitting on a time-bomb in Quebec and Latin America. In a time when international relations with our neighbors are demanding the best people there are, the challenge to the Calvinist to transform society has seldom been greater. What are we going to do about it?

II

There is a particularly pressing need for Spanish language instruction, a trend fairly obvious to all. Spanish speakers (Mexican-Americans, Cubans and Puerto Ricans) now constitute a potent political minority in the United States, and they continue to grow. Chicago has over 2 million and Los Angeles over 3 million. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Hispanic community is growing at a *net growth* rate faster than the

... minority cultures ... are ... equally precious in our Lord's eyes.

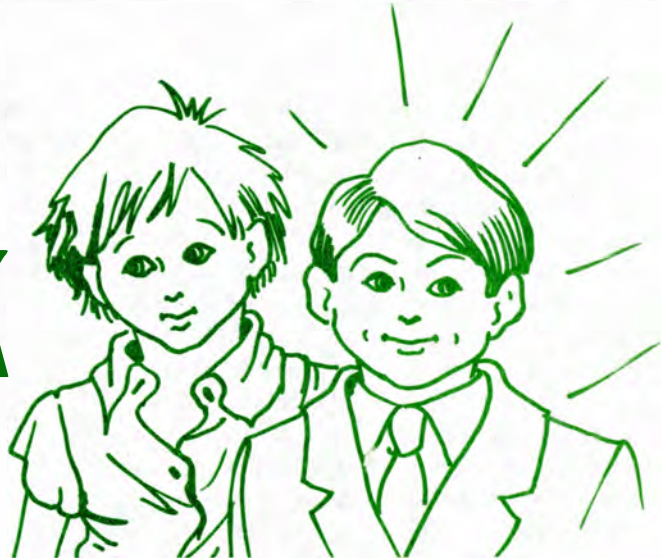
Black populace, and it is composed of different sectors representing distinct national background. Spanish is literally on our doorstep in Michigan as well as in the rest of the nation.

continued on page 31.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Norman De Jong

Last of three articles



Just in case you may have forgotten, Article I in this three-part series began with a memo from Philmor Squigly. Philmor, you recall, requested principals to deal with teachers in a manner similar to that in which teachers deal with children. The second installment called into question the widely accepted practice of remedial reading, alias compensatory education. That article cited various government reports linking poor academic achievement, not to mental ability, but to social class and poverty levels. For some of us, both may have been disturbing, and rather negative in effect.

We should never stop with negative, critical assessments of current practices. Neither should we resign ourselves to poor performance on the part of the students God has seen fit to entrust to our care. All of us, as Christians in the classroom, must be concerned, especially for the plight of the slow learner. We need to have not only hope, but also a strong confidence that the slow learners in our classroom can and should do better. To have that confidence, however, we need to find an approach or procedure that will prove more effective and more humane than the customary pull-out approach of remedial reading.

One such approach that I would strongly recommend to any school system is that entitled "Equal Opportunity in the Classroom." In a world where frauds, panaceas, and placebos abound, this program will withstand critical attacks and truly transform your school into a more exciting, more rewarding, and more Christian place to practice. I first encountered "Equal Opportunity in the Classroom" during the autumn of 1976 when I attended a three-day

workshop sponsored by the Los Angeles County Board of Education. Being inherently skeptical of any good coming from a Title IV funded, secularly conceived program, I approached the conference with a jaundiced eye, certain to find major philosophical or religious flaws. Day 1 passed with nothing but sweetness and enthusiasm. Merely the sugar coating on an otherwise bitter pill. But Day 2 was equally palatable. By Day 3 all skepticism had disappeared and was replaced by the joy of finding something that we Christians should have known long ago.

The major theme was both simple and profound: we frequently are, but should not be, respecters of persons. All God's children need to be treated with respect and dignity. Put in the sponsors' humanitarian terms, we ought to treat poor children from across the tracks with the same concern and love that we so naturally extend to the influential and affluent kids who have been college-bound since kindergarten.

The series of revelations about my classroom mentality and sub-conscious favoritism toward the elite made me wonder how many students I had casually and effectively turned to frustration and rejection over the years. In dozens of different ways I had been denigrating the slow students, treating them in differential and degrading fashion. Without ever becoming preachy, the instructors always couched the theme in the palatable maxim: you get from students whatever you expect from them. That maxim, you might guess, was borrowed directly from Rosenthal and Jacobson's *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. To catch some of the background of that theme, read especially pages 61-71 in *Pygmalion*.

Whether you teach a class of National Merit Finalists at M.I.T., a first grade in Sunnyside, or a junior high in Toronto, you will have some students who perform poorly. Academic achievement, after all, is always a comparative ➔

Norman De Jong, Superintendent,
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North Haledon, New Jersey.

performance. If you have ten or thirty students in your class, some can be identified as high achievers while others will be tabbed as low achievers. Whether those students score high or low in relation to state or national norms may be important, but not nearly so important as how they compare with other students in your classroom. Their performance in your room is the prime determiner of how you perceive them. How you perceive them will largely determine how you teach them from day to day. In colloquial language, that is where the rubber hits the road. Equal Opportunity focuses there, on the day to day practices where the teacher meets the student.

Journey with me for a few minutes through a few steps in the Equal Opportunity program. Start by identifying the five (5) poorest performers in your class or in any one of your subjects. Bite your euphemistic tongue lightly and label them as Perceived Low Achievers, PLA's for short. Once you have identified them, write down on a piece of paper all the characteristics and information items you can about them. Are they clean? grubby? neat? wealthy? poor? interested in books? What kind of job does father have? Does mother work? Are the parents college graduates? Are they members of a minority group?

Now do the same with the five highest achievers, but label them as PHA's. Once again, try to put down all that you know about these kids.

Stop. Before you read on, try the above exercise. Ten minutes of your time may be very revealing. (Your *CEJ* will be right where you left it.)

Was it easier to put down more information about the PHA's than the PLA's? Were the characteristics of the PHA's more positive and complimentary? For those of us who are typical teachers, the answer to both the foregoing questions is probably "yes." There will be exceptions, of course, so don't stumble over the neat, wealthy daughter of a college-educated business executive who gets all D's and F's in your class. That girl is truly an exception, as would be the grubby little guy whose parents live in a rented shack along the railroad tracks, but who gets all A's in reading.

Try a second exercise. Draw up a seating chart for your room and make a one-inch square for each occupied desk. Then ask a fellow teacher to come into your classroom and code your behavior for 30 to 40 minutes during any normal class period. For coding purposes, use a Q for questions, an R for responses, a T for

touching, and a C for compliments. Each time you ask a question, accept a response, touch a student (spanking, hitting, pinching, and poking don't count here), or offer a compliment, have your colleague put the appropriate letter in that student's square.

After the coding session, identify the five PLA's and the five PHA's on your seating chart. Which of the two groups got more Q's, R's, T's, and C's? Why?

“ . . . the typical teacher gives favored treatment to the high achiever.”

In their many publications, Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy consistently demonstrate that the typical teacher gives favored treatment to the high achiever. The bright student gets more opportunities to respond, longer time to answer questions, more clues, more expressions of praise and more of almost everything else that is good and ego-building. Even those who loudly proclaim their passion for the poor tend to perform in the same way. I did for years, even though I never recognized it and was reluctant to admit it.

All of us want to hear the right answers rather than the wrong ones. All of us get impatient if we have to wait a mere five seconds for a response. All of us prefer to touch the neat little boy and prefer to keep our distance from the grubby little ragamuffin whose nose needs wiping. We need the gratification of knowing that our explanation was understood. We have so many important things to do that waiting a mere five seconds for a slow student to unscrew his courage would be a waste of precious time. We are so convinced that the low achiever won't know the answer anyway, so we quickly pass him by and thereby avoid both him and us the inevitable embarrassment. Out of guilt or rationalized excuses we recommend him for the special remedial class tucked away in an otherwise unused room. His continued failure there only confirms our firmly entrenched expectations. Out of love, we say, we shunt them aside so as not to retard the more gifted.

Equal Opportunity is not a simple program to be mastered in one reading of a manual. It is, on the contrary, a semester-long experience built around fifteen different teaching practices, or interaction models, as the designers prefer to call them. Through seminars, reading assignments,

continued on p. 28



! READER RESPONSE

Readers are encouraged to respond positively or negatively to articles or ideas expressed in CEJ. Address your letters to the editor.

MKs Expose Provincialism

Editor:

I found the article "Folding in MKs" very interesting and helpful. I hope to be a better teacher to the MKs who now and then come into my classes.

I could wish for a fuller treatment of this matter, not only for the sake of the MKs but perhaps more for the sake of the benighted local students whose poverty of experience and provincialism are exposed in the short article. I have just returned from a few months in another country, and am once again saddened by the prolonged adolescence of some of my American students; a fuller exposition of this topic would be an eye-opener to them, and perhaps to their parents and teachers.

The *CEJ* is doing well, in my estimation. Thank you.

G. G. Harper,
Calvin College,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Competition Not Sinful

Editor:

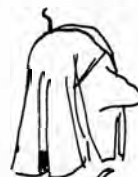
Prof. John Tiemstra of Calvin College is to be commended for his attempt to relate economics to the Christian faith, and he makes some good points in discussing stewardship, materialism, poverty and work. But in my judgment his section on competition misses the mark.

Let's hear him first: "Competition. The apostle teaches us to avoid enmity, strife, jealousy, factions, divisions, parties, and envy (Gal. 5:20-21). All of these things are characteristics of competitive situations, and so we might very well interpret Paul to say that we should avoid competitive situations where we can, since they lead

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be able to make the unit an integral part of the course and the rest of the curriculum. Above all, they should have been taught that each unit should in some way point the child to God's faithfulness in Christ and to the task the child has been given in God's creation.

Geraldine Steensma's and my book **Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View** was written partly to help college students who are searching to implement a Biblically directed framework for school curriculum. The ideas contained in the chapter on constructing and implementing integrated units in the classroom could be used by the colleges in training prospective teachers to develop such units and also to have students implement some of their own units during their practicum.

There is no excuse for new graduates not to know what Christian materials are available and would be suitable for use in their classrooms.

One final note: colleges should ensure that prospective teachers are acquainted with available Christian curriculum materials, especially those published by Christian Schools International and the Curriculum Development Centre in Toronto. There is no excuse for new graduates not to know what Christian materials are available and would be suitable for use in their classrooms. Also, they should have some experience with analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of such materials.

PRACTICUM

Almost ten years ago I wrote an article in *Christian Educators Journal* stating that our colleges should move in the direction of one-year internships for future teachers. That this idea was a sound one has been shown by the fact that most public universities

in my area now have such programs within their teacher training program. It used to be that "teachers and preachers" were the two vocations having very short practica.

... our practice teacher programs continue to be woefully short and inadequate.

For ministers that has changed: most of them now spend one year in a congregation before being called as a regular pastor. But our practice teacher programs continue to be woefully short and inadequate, even though some improvements have been made. While this article is not the place to discuss in detail how this could be worked out, one program that has been successful has teachers working half days, for

We are expecting too much from new teachers by making them responsible for a whole class, . . . after only nine weeks or so of practice teaching.

a full year, under the supervision of a master teacher. During this year the student teacher meets regularly with his college supervisor and also takes at least one education course each semester. We are expecting too much from new teachers by making them responsible for a whole class, often containing several grades, after only nine weeks or so of practice teaching.

CONCLUSION

I am gladdened every day by the commitment and dedication of our Christian college graduates. They are convinced that Christian education is a necessity for our covenant youth and they want to implement the most effective educational program possible. But their tools need to be sharpened before they start their work. CEJ

HE WHO WOULD BE GREAT AMONG YOU

by Luci Shaw

*You whose birth broke all the
social & biological rules —
son of the poor who accepted
the worship due a king —
child prodigy debating with
the Temple Th.D.s — you
were the kind who used
a new math
to multiply bread, fish, faith.
You practiced a
radical sociology:
rehabilitated con men &
call girls. You valued women
& other minority groups.
A G.P., you specialized in
heart transplants.
Creator, healer,
shepherd, innovator,
story-teller, weather-maker,
botanist, alchemist,
exorcist, iconoclast,
seeker, seer, motive-sifter,
you were always beyond,
above us. Ahead
of your time, & ours.*

*And we would like
to be like you. Bold
as Boanerges, we hear ourselves
demand: "Admit us
to your avant-garde.
Grant us degree
in all the liberal arts
of heaven."
Why our belligerence?
Why does this whiff of fame
and greatness smell so sweet?
Why must we compete
to be first? Have we forgotten
how you took, simply, cool water
and a towel for our feet?*

*Reprinted with permission
from THE SECRET TREES
by Luci Shaw, c. 1976,
Harold Shaw, Publisher,
Wheaton, Illinois.*

Reply:

Mr. Van B's classroom descriptors sound like the "informal classroom," "informal education," or the "open classroom" of the British Infant Schools with their non-graded, or family-style grouping of multi-age children.

In several respects Van B has no quarrel with the Education Department at Calvin:

1. Into our Demonstration Classroom, over the past five years of its existence, have come a number of Christian and public school teachers and their pupils. Our purpose, in part, is to model to our students a variety of teaching styles or classroom structures, including "informal education" with its work-stations or learning centers. On at least three occasions, for the duration of the school year or some part thereof, the teacher modeled classroom structures which **approached** Van B's example. The difference, in each case, was the absence of a "split-grade" or multi-age grouping, since the students were all first graders, third graders, and the like.

2. Calvin students are urged to visit teachers in western Michigan whose classrooms exemplify many of the characteristics which Van B lists.

3. Nearly all prospective teachers study, in their philosophy of education course, an essay ("A Case for Informal Education in Christian Schools," *Christian Educators Journal*, November, 1974, 24-30) which recommends, and seeks to justify on Biblical grounds, the classroom structure which Van B approves.

However, we may differ with Van B in these respects: We believe (1) that "Classroom A" or something like it is a way to Christianly structure the classroom for learning, may even be an ideal way to do so, but it is not the **only** way to do so; (2) that under certain circumstances related to the unusual needs of chil-

dren (hyperactivity, learning disabilities, the presence of the physically handicapped, and the like), "Classroom A" may be a positively bad structure in the hands of almost all but the most exceptional of teachers.

Beyond these abstractions, Van B must recognize some practical limitations. We cannot guarantee to even a sizeable minority of our elementary student teachers the experience of working in a classroom structure which approximates "Classroom A." There simply are not enough models of such structures in either public or nonpublic schools in this area to give to Directed Teaching this particular pattern. To overcome some of the difficulty, we have organized Interim (month of January) experiences in a split-grade or multi-graded classroom for a few student volunteers.

III. PLANNING

Problem:

Mr. Van B. claims that first-year teachers often "falter" regarding long-range planning and unit development.

Van B's Solution:

Christian colleges should teach not only unit-planning, but **integrated** unit-planning as found in *Shaping School curriculum: A Biblical View*, a book that he and Geraldine Steensma have written and edited.

Reply:

In the professional education courses at Calvin, attention is paid to both long-range planning and unit construction, including integrated units.

For example, in my course in Philosophy of Education, all students read an essay by Brad and Helen Breems which was published, originally, in *Van-guard*. The essay describes an integrated or multi-disciplinary unit, on a "space" theme, intended for grades 4 and 5. The unit was inspired by material from the *Joy in Learning* curriculum source-book.

In the same course the students are made aware of non-Christian (John Dewey and the progressives) as well as Christian (Cornelius Jaarsma) rationales for multi-disciplinary, thematic, or integrated approaches to curriculum planning.

In methods courses, particularly the one which introduces the student to curriculum and instruction in math, Bible, language arts, and the like, the advantages of integrated units are explored.

During the elementary student teacher's Directed Teaching internship, he must show to his college supervisors not only **actual evidence** of long-range planning, but must create and teach one unit during each of two seven-week experiences, and **each** unit "must provide evidence of integration of at least three curricular areas." (Quoted from Goal 9 in the Elementary Directed Teaching *Handbook*.)

Mr. Van B may be interested in knowing that *Shaping School Curriculum* is being used as a text in graduate level curriculum courses at Calvin.

IV. PRACTICUM

Problem:

Mr. Van B asserts that, in spite of improvements, "practice teacher programs" are still "woefully short and inadequate . . ."

Van B's Solution:

Van B recommends (and whether this is in **addition** to a Directed Teaching semester or **in place of** such, is not clear) that future teachers, for a full year, teach at least half of each day under the supervision of a master teacher. During each of two semesters, the novice-teacher would take at least one education course while meeting regularly with a college supervisor. He adds, "We are expecting too much from new teachers by making them responsible for a whole class, often containing several grades,



after only nine weeks or so of practice teaching."

Reply:

Calvin's teacher education program, especially for elementary teachers, seems to provide adequate practical experiences prior to initial, or provisional, certification.

First, we expect all students in elementary education to be able, at the time they apply for admission to the program, to document at least 25 hours of teaching or tutoring experience. In fact, most students come with a wealth of previous experiences in camp counseling, Summer Workshop in Missions S.W.I.M.-"ing," Sunday School teaching, and the like.

They must do some sixty hours of pre-internship aiding in their Introduction to Teaching course. In addition, their Reading course has a classroom "lab" component. If they take Music for the Classroom Teacher, such a course provides applicatory experience. So does art and physical education.

Directed Teaching calls for a full semester of 14 weeks out in the schools, divided into two seven-week segments to provide for grade-level diversity (e.g., grades 1 and 6, or 3 and 8), school diversity (public and nonpublic), or structural diversity (traditional and open). During this semester the students must do at least 90 hours of **actual** teaching. Most nearly double that amount.

Beyond that, however, the State of Michigan, whose certification code governs our program, demands that teachers provisionally certified (at baccalaureate graduation) must seek continuing certification. To achieve the Continuing Certificate any teacher must have accumulated at least 18 semester hours of credit beyond the bachelor's degree and have taught "successfully" for at least three years. There is, presently, an effort being made to revise the code in such a way that the first-year teacher, already employed in a school in Michigan, can get additional

help from at least a master teacher and, possibly, a college or university supervisor as well. So far such a revised regulation is in only the discussion stage. (A new Certification Code Commission has, by the Michigan State Board of Education, just been established.)

Short of wholesale changes in certification code requirements, however, schools, especially Christian schools, can attempt to deal with this deficiency. They could simply assign a master teacher (or principal) the task of overseeing the work of the first-year teacher, thereby easing entry into the profession.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we should note that Van Brummelen's announced purpose for writing his article was to stimulate "self-analysis" on the part of education departments "to determine whether improvements are possible." In reply, these several thoughts:

1. At Calvin, the education of teachers is the responsibility of the entire faculty, not just the Education Department. He should be assured that the Department and the Teacher Education Committee, which is representative of the College and the "principal agent . . . in the planning and coordination of the teacher education programs," are constantly engaging in self-analysis. His article has aided that process. Improvement is possible.

2. We can improve more than just the home-based program. Initial certification being provisional in nature, we stand ready to help teachers with their further professional growth. At Calvin we have the human resources to offer short-term in-service activities for teachers during the school year, or longer-term courses for graduate credit during the summer session. Calvin has recently sent faculty to Hamilton and Ottawa in Ontario. Why not to British Columbia? It is far less expensive for one

of us to go to you, than for many of you to come to us.

3. While we appreciate the scope of Van B's criticism, and the Christian spirit in which it is offered, we want to call attention, in the same spirit, to certain aspects of his essay.

Item: The essay has about it the aura of research. He has visited 20 schools with their 100 teachers working with 2500 students. But his criticism is directed at teacher training programs at Christian colleges, apparently none of which he has visited. Wouldn't his "data-base" have been improved with first-hand knowledge of the primary object of his criticism?

Item: Van B, on the basis of experience, claims that the "majority" of Classroom B teachers are from our Christian colleges. But "majority" is terribly vague. What number are we dealing with? Just how serious is the problem?

Item: Van B notes that, over time, the difference between the two groups (Christian college graduates vs. public university graduates) tends to fade. That being the case, we wonder what is the independent variable which best accounts for the initial difference? Is it the place where the teacher is educated, as Van B contends, or is it something else? There is research which suggests that the attitudes of the principal, or the perceptions by the new teacher of his attitudes, is as determinative of initial teaching style as is the college or university where the teacher was educated. What, we ask, really is the cause for the teacher's behavior?

Perhaps what we need is ongoing discussion. To that end, I trust that publishing his paper and the responses to it will alert the Calvin faculty, the faculties of our several Christian colleges, and the professionals in our schools to some significant issues in Christian teacher education. CEJ

many more months of study. For reasons of efficiency, then, if for none other, a teacher imparting knowledge has her place in a schoolroom.

That Christian college graduates were more inclined to “impart knowledge” should not be surprising. I suspect that the most important concepts they learned at their respective colleges were taught to them in that manner. The doctrines of the Heidelberg Catechism could be taught inductively, but more likely were taught with the teacher imparting knowledge and the pupil assimilating it, taking the teacher’s word as truth. Similarly, the Christian perspectives on subject matter may be efficiently be communicated simply by the teacher telling the students. True, the student thus relies on an authority figure. I’m sure some educational theorists would abhor such acceptance of any fact on the basis of someone else’s authority. But Christians, of course, have deeply ingrained in their psyches that statement of Christ to Thomas and the other apostles: “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed.” And though Christ was speaking specifically of faith, our view of God-instituted authority does encourage accepting the word of a teacher. And I still think it’s a healthy environment when pupils in the lower grades can live by the dictum that if teacher says so, it must be so. I shudder at the thought of millions of six-to-ten year old children learning under teachers who can only shrug and

say “I don’t know” to the basic questions of life.

Van Brummelen observes that graduates of Christian colleges are more inclined to “follow the textbook blindly.” I agree that to follow any textbook blindly is bad. But I also know that to depart from a textbook blindly has far more disastrous effects on the students. I too have been in hundreds of classrooms observing student teachers for the University of Iowa over a span of three years. Nothing was more disheartening than to confront a student teacher who was convinced that she had had a successful classroom just because she had gotten all the students involved in a discussion of their favorite pop songs. She had automatically decided the textbook was boring, and then proceeded to deal with whatever she felt the students would respond to. Meanwhile, objectives regarding content were disregarded.

My point is that, after all, the textbook *is* one expert’s idea of a profitable sequence of study. And it was no doubt selected after careful scrutiny by experienced teachers. So before a beginning teacher discards this expert’s sequence, she ought to state her educational objectives very precisely. I’m certain you realize this, but I stress this fact because haphazard sequence of learning activities has resulted in many students leaving school or coming to college with great gaps in their education. Some cannot distinguish between direct objects and predicate nominatives. The immediate effect of this inability

is that they write sentences with predicates that do not logically fit their subjects. So I would hope that beginning teachers have a little humility in the face of curriculum materials, rather than a cocky assumption that one learning objective or one learning sequence is as good as any other.

This brings me to my last point. Implicit in all of what Van Brummelen says is the fact that we need more time to prepare students for teaching. I agree. I’m sure “extensive training in grouping students within the classroom” would be valuable training for any prospective teacher. But this can only be done if an intern program such as he proposes is effected. We at Dordt College cannot insist such training be included in the student teaching experience, and any other effort to give a student such experience outside the actual classroom would be artificial. But I do agree that we should at least consider offering a fifth year of internship as an option to prospective teachers.

But whatever changes are made in teacher education programs, I would insist that colleges cannot steal time from content courses to give added instruction in how to manage a classroom. The freshmen we get today know less about such basics as writing, usage, and grammar than they did ten years ago, and one thing is certain: no beginning teacher will teach more about a subject than he himself knows.

The opportunity to respond to Van Brummelen’s article is appreciated. I hope the discussion can be mutually profitable. [CEJ]

SPEAKING OF BOOKS

The mind is the most wonderful instrument the human being has been given by an all-wise Creator with which to do his life’s work . . . There are two ways to educate the mind – two ways to sharpen that tool. One is by personal association with great minds, great men and women. The other is by reading what great minds have left on record in the form of books.

– John D. Snider

• **The area of modeling as a Christian teacher.** Do students see you demanding as much from yourself as you demand from them? Does your acceptance and respect for the dignity of your students meet high standards? Would you appreciate students treating you like you treat them? Cutting comments diminish self-worth in a hurry. "No-way am I going to take such garbage from that student," is a comment that should never come from a teacher's lips. Being in an authority position gives us no right to misuse that authority in the form of threats. Matthew 18 has plenty to say about that. What is the condition of your conversation about a student when you are in the faculty lounge or out with teachers? Would you say the same things to the student's parents or to his face? Do you guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride? Remember, they will know we are Christians by our love — in our pursuit of excellence through modeling.

• **The area of demands and expectancies for students.** What do students really miss if they are not in your class? Do you place a premium on being in the classroom when students are? Teacher aides cannot be surrogate teachers. You do not give them responsibilities which are rightfully yours! *You* are responsible for students assigned to you — in the classroom, in the home-room, and in school activities under your sponsorship. There are legal aspects to that as well as job responsibilities.

Parents have a right to ask what kind of education they are paying for when their child is seen downtown running errands, or when students say, "Oh we're not doing anything in that class anyway!" It is not a pursuit of excellence in any subject — be it history, math, P.E., or band — if students are not expected to be busy with the work of that class during that class-period.

A teacher must be prepared with alternate plans for dealing with students on every occasion when students are expected to be in class. Seeing numbers of people 'floating' on campus with no teacher seemingly responsible hardly indicates the pursuit of excellence. Classroom time can be guarded jealously. Students not there need to know they missed something.

• **The area of dress, general conversation, and use of personal time.** What are the guiding principles? Who controls what's being talked about? Is your Christian life-style one that young people can respect and emulate? Do kids feel good about the fact that you are their teacher?

Certainly this is not exhaustive of areas in which we should pursue excellence. However, maybe it has stimulated you enough specifically to make you an even more effective teacher. After all, that's our purpose in sharing such thoughts.

Students usually are not too phony about their perceptions of their teachers. Regardless of whether those perceptions are right or wrong, they are real. And, how the high schooler sees his teacher is generally how the parents see the teacher too.

We continue to strive towards the ideal. We must be aware of our shortcomings but confident of the power of God's spirit working in us as we pursue excellence for ourselves, our students and the community we serve. [CEJ]

Reader Response / continued

to so many unfortunate consequences" (CEJ, Oct.-Nov. 1978).

But Prof. Tiemstra misreads Paul, who is not hinting for a moment that competitive situations "lead to so many unfortunate consequences." Paul is speaking against what a man's sinful nature — not outward circumstances — leads to. Listen to Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV): "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy . . ." There is nothing inherent in competition that leads to these kinds of evil. Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage and the like stem from the sinful nature, not from competition. There can be intense yet desirable competition in chess, baseball, and a spelling bee, as well as in business. But there is nothing evil per se in the competition. It is out of the heart (not competition) that come "evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Mt. 15:19, NIV).

Edwin H. Palmer,
Executive Secretary,
New International Version, The Holy Bible. [CEJ]

positions in our communities, churches, and schools are men, while most secretaries and nurses are women. Thus society at large reinforces that while both are expected to succeed, their status levels will be significantly distinct. Even now role choices become mandated by ascription not achievement.

SUGGESTIONS

How can we cope with and counteract these cultural influences? Many suggest appointing committees to study the problems and begin with procedural systems changes. These are, however, only the smoke of the volcano while the issue is more attitudinal. We teachers must take two direct approaches, looking first at ourselves, as we did in the first paragraphs, and second, dealing with our present students.

Children should be challenged to analyze their unique gifts of God and how they will use them. They must discuss frankly what could happen if their talents are not supported by our society's definition of male and female appropriateness.

As teachers we are influential in the role concepts and self concepts of each of our students. Being open with our students regarding a weighted story theme that is discriminative against boys or girls can bring out interesting discussions. One kindergarten teacher was surprised by responses such as, "You can't do that, you're just a girl" and "Boys are better than girls," when discussing a story about career expectations. Children should be challenged to analyze their unique gifts of God and how they will use them. They must discuss frankly what could happen if their talents are not supported by our society's definition of male and female appropriateness.

In addition to discussion we can assist students by choosing materials carefully. Recently a junior high parent informed me about a vocational preference test given to her daughter. Many categories for occupations and college majors were suggested with the majority being identified for boys only and a minority for girls. Even if male and female students would achieve the same scores, a boy might be guided toward becoming a banker or lawyer, while a girl would be led toward bank teller or legal secretary. Thus we need to be sensitive to sexual connotations when choosing classroom materials.

Whenever we give examples to our students, we should include both males and females. Many times examples are presented only in terms of "he, his, him" rather than "she, hers and her." We can attempt to avoid comments that suggest stereotypes such as "Well, you know how women are," "Be strong, like a man," "Big boys don't cry," or "Only girls are silly." We can shy away from praising the child whose mother can assist in the classroom while another mother cannot because she is working. We can become aware of the substitute terms for chairman, policeman, fireman, such as chairperson, police officer, fire fighter. These rather minute changes will only occur if we *desire* to modify our attitudinal concepts and resulting verbal behavior.

A seed may be planted and begin its development. As it matures it is identified as a white pine. The tree receives much care in its growth, but it is kept in a small container and its roots are pruned carefully. The resulting tree is a dwarf; its growth has been stunted. Beautiful though it may be, its full potential can never be realized. So it is with persons. Being created male and female must be viewed as definitive not determinative.

As a parent, a teacher, and a school board member I have a vested interest in promoting a stronger emphasis on education which prompts children to be responsible with all God's gracious gifts regardless of their sex. I anticipate that Christian teachers will judge appropriateness by what is potential for each child's development, not by what society demands. We will then be positive role models for those we guide. CEJ

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“Equal opportunity needs to be practiced in every classroom, not because it works, but because it is right.”

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Every child . . . whether college-bound or vocationally trained, needs to feel accepted and loved.

Every child, whether rich or poor, black or white, college-bound or vocationally trained, needs to feel accepted and loved. Every child is a creature made by God and deserving of unbiased treatment at our hands. The poor, the unmotivated, the culturally disadvantaged, and all of those who seem not to care, all of them need our daily love and concern. It isn't easy to deal with them equally, to expect from them better things, and to give them the kind of ego-building treatment we so easily accord to the PHA's. It isn't easy to be a complete Christian in the classroom, but it is our mandate to try. CEJ

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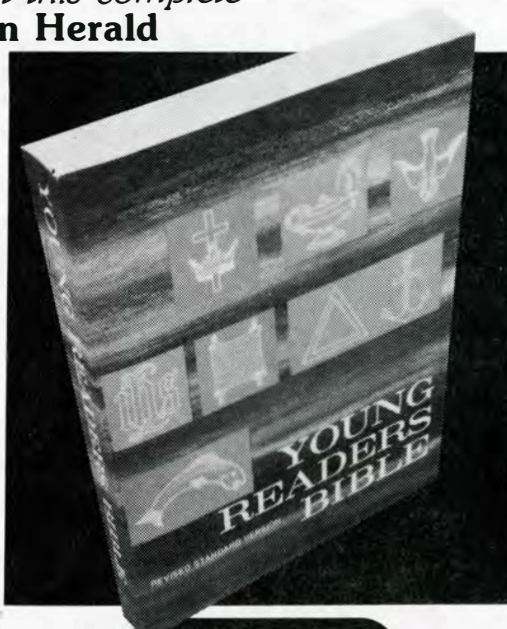
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Media Review

FREDERICK NOHL



The right visual always adds zip to telling a Bible story. So if you're teaching a small class of preschool or primary-grade children, be sure to investigate the PICT-O-RAMA KITS issued by Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118. Besides their intrinsic value, the kits provide attractive alternatives to familiar visuals such as flannelgraphs, filmstrips, and teaching pictures.

Three kits are currently available: "Noah's Ark," "Christmas Stable," and "Jesus and the Children." Each kit is priced at \$2.95 and contains full-color stand-up figures and appropriate backgrounds. The contents are sturdy enough to allow for repeated use, an important consideration especially if you invite children to use the figures to retell the stories.

Religious freedom is never a once-and-for-all accomplishment. Those who have it must always struggle to keep it. Even more, they must struggle to help others keep it. For only as others are free can I be free.

Frederick Nohl, editor of this column and long-time Christian educator, is a senior editor of NURSING78, the world's largest nursing journal, Horsham, PA.

How this has worked (and continues to work) itself out in United States history is crisply presented in ONE NATION UNDER GOD, a sound filmstrip package released by Family Films, 14622 Lanark St., Panorama City, CA 91402. Included are four 12-minute filmstrips:

Foundations of Religious Freedom
Events during America's early colonial period

Church and State: The Struggle Begins
Eighteenth-century events through the American Revolution

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Post-revolutionary events through the early 19th-century period of westward expansion

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Events from the Civil War to the present.



The package, which also includes two narration records or cassette tapes and four leaders guides, should prove workable with junior highs through adults. Whether used as a course in itself or to complement an existing course, the vivid color photography and candid narration is bound to stimulate discussion and help learners appreciate "religious freedom as a living tradition that depends as much on our vigilance today as it did on the sacrifices of those in the past."

The record version lists for \$38.70; the cassette tape version, \$42.30.

CEJ



MANIFEST DESTINY: THE MEXICAN WAR AND THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

Author: Ronald A. Wells
Christian Schools International
(formerly N.U.C.S.)
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976
33 pp., \$.95, Paperback

Reviewed by
Louis Y. Van Dyke
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa

Manifest Destiny is another publication in the Christian Perspectives on History Series, and with some changes is essentially, as Wells indicates by footnote, a reproduction of his earlier article published in *Christian Scholar's Review*. The author's purpose is to reexamine the Mexican War and the conquest of California in the light of Christian presuppositions. He contends that all historians write from some perspective, and his thesis is that a study of this period of American history from a Christian point of view will result in conclusions different from those who argue from a nationalistic bias.

Wells uses an historiographical approach to capture the essence of *Manifest Destiny* and the problems that it presents. He analyzes Justin Smith's work on the Mexican War and James K. Polk's and Allan Nevins' biography of John Charles Fremont, arguing that both historians proceed from a nationalistic stance and that they "paint the causes of the war in colors of self-justification." (p. 8)

To demonstrate how a Christian historian's approach differs, Wells uses as a touchstone the results of two polls taken by Arthur M. Schlesinger from among prominent American historians who were asked to rank American presidents in the order of their greatness. Although Schlesinger was vague as to what

constituted greatness, he suggested that "moral leadership" played a part. The polls rated Polk as a near-great president, but Wells disagrees with this assessment. If moral leadership is a standard of judgment, then, according to Wells, Polk's role in provoking war with Mexico should prevent him from being placed in such a category. The author concludes that the United States was more to blame for the outbreak of war than was Mexico.

A Christian viewpoint, Wells argues, is that God is a just God and that his standard of justice does not vary from generation to generation. An immoral or illegal act is always immoral or illegal. By that standard United States policy during the Mexican crisis, as epitomized by Polk and Fremont, treated the Mexicans unjustly, and no amount of flag-waving by historians can alter that fact. Polk wanted California for the United States, and his tactics placed the Mexicans between the rock of losing California and the hard place of war with the United States.

Manifest Destiny is concise, readable, and scholarly, but one comes away with the impression that Wells has much more to tell about the topic than is contained here. The problem with encapsulating a complex phenomenon within thirty-three pages is not with what is said, but with what is unsaid.

I agree with Wells' assertion that "the real debate between historians must necessarily be on the presuppositional level rather than the interpretive level." (p. 4) However, the presuppositions of Smith and Nevins, who are Wells' main protagonists in this case, do not clearly emerge. What social, cultural, and historical forces shaped their thinking and writing as contrasted with those of the Christian historian?

Finally, while Wells correctly calls attention to Irwin Unger's warning about the pitfalls of presentism, it is also well to heed George Marsden's admonition, "While judgments as to right or wrong concerning historical actions are proper, one must be careful to distinguish between such moral judgments in the sense of analysis and judgment in the sense of condemnation." (*Christian Scholar's Review*, 1973, 2:323-324.)

**THE COUNTRY OF THE RISEN KING:
An Anthology of Christian Poetry**

*Compiler: Merle Meeter
Baker Book House
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978
446 pp., \$12.95*

Reviewed by the editor

I am glad "our day too has its lyric spokesmen, godly prophets through the genres of literature, poets of the everyday and the eternal" and I am very glad Merle Meeter has compiled a collection of poems, poems written "for the glory of God, and for the encouragement and joy of all those who walk or desire to walk the True Way of Life . . ."

This collection ranges in time from contemporary poets in Part I to historic American and English poets, medieval poems, and Renaissance madrigals in Part II. Over 125 poets are included, ranging from names as well known as John Donne and George Herbert, earlier poets, to contemporary poets including James Weldon Johnson and Madeline L'Engle. Besides, the book includes poems of lesser known poets whose writings invite the readers' acquaintance. Short biographies of the poets and an index of titles and poets complete the book.

A glorious biography of the Risen King emerges from the pages of this collection. The Christian's journey — including his joys and sorrows, celebrations and mournings, backslidings and fun, his prayers and praises — is expressed in poetry.

The book in content and format provides a resource for speakers and writers, although a topical index would greatly increase its reference value. But it is more — to read the book, to taste it, to relish it, is to worship — not the poems or the poets but the Risen King.

**DICTIONARY HANDBOOK TO HYMNS
for the living church**

*Author: Donald P. Hustad
Hope Publishing Company,
Carol Stream, Illinois, 1978
364 pp., \$12.95*

Reviewed by the editor

Although this book was particularly written for "ministers and church musicians," its usefulness will extend far beyond the study and the music department of the church. Music teachers and music students will appreciate

its well-organized background material on 600 hymns, 500 tunes, and biographical information on over 600 authors and composers.

The history of Hope Publishing Company itself, included in this handbook, may be of very limited value to the casual user of the book, but many references in the brief sketch will provide sources for the student interested in further research in the history of gospel music in the United States.

Also included is a bibliography of general reference works, hymnal handbooks, general hymnology, folk and black music, gospel hymns and hymn tunes. An alphabetical index of both hymns and tunes completes the book.

As a general music reference book, this dictionary-handbook to hymns should be included in high school and college libraries. CEJ

*Many times the reading of a book has
made the fortune of the man — has
decided his way of life . . . 'Tis a tie
between men to have been delighted
with the same book.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Foreign Languages / continued

The upshot of all this is that we Reformed Christians must make some hard choices. I challenge Christian school administrators, teachers, and parents to accept the fact that Latin American and French studies must receive fresh attention and be put into the curricula (most likely at the expense of some other subject matter). I challenge Christian school boards to have the courage to act accordingly by instituting French and Spanish language in the elementary schools, by increasing those courses at the high school level, by teaching or incorporating Ibero-Franco-American history, civilization and geography into existing courses, and by encouraging Christian youth to believe that minority cultures are not inferior to the middle-class Christian world, but rather that they are different and also are considered equally precious in our Lord's eyes. The choice is up to us, now. CEJ

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