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Editorial

Are We Educating For Service?

My kindergarten lunch bucket was a plain green metal box that held a thermos in the upper half and was shaped something like my grandfather's cattle barn. One morning recess at snack time, I was amazed to find a cellophane-wrapped Dolly Madison creme-filled cupcake, potato chips, and a Baby Ruth candybar instead of my usual dried beef sandwich wrapped in waxed paper and thermos of tomato soup. Three potato chips later I realized that I had taken the wrong lunch, so I sneaked it back onto the shelf because the other green "dinner bucket," as we called it, belonged to a second grade boy in our two-room country school. All day, though, I wished I could have eaten that other lunch. It looked so appealing to me.

Recently I was reminded of the green bucket incident as I peered briefly, not at a lunch, but at the products of the European school system—and I felt envious again. I observed in the Europeans a respect for scholarship that I wanted to capture and take home to America, but because I was merely a passport holder, I could retain only the longing.

A few brief visits to another continent by no means make the tourist an expert. However, time spent in another context does enable the traveler to make surface observations and to raise questions. It is important, I decided, to continue raising those questions upon returning to the homeland.

What is it, I wondered, that makes the European system seem more scholarly than its American counterpart? What philosophy motivates each system? How important is scholarship? Do North America's Christian schools bear the same characteristics as her public schools?

Although it is quite obvious that European and American education systems differ, just exactly how they differ is not clear cut. Every September as schools open, television networks and news magazines run special reports on the crumbling state of American education. Conversations with Europeans, both here and abroad, give Americans the impression that the Europeans' overall knowledge of world history and geography, foreign language, art, and music surpasses typical American standards. Europeans appear to educate under a different philosophy with a greater concern for pedagogy.

Pedagogy is not exactly a household word in the United States. I became more aware of its meaning several years ago when the professor of a summer class in which I was enrolled introduced the course by asking class members to suggest what we expected the course to include. "Pedagogy," a positive voice immediately replied. That answer struck me then as being somewhat undefined, but further discussion indicated that the speaker was referring to a sense of scholarship, to the art of leading students to think.

The European interpretation of pedagogy appears to mean the leading of students to knowledge through an extensive and intensive process of reading and thinking and testing of ideas within the classroom so that they are prepared, upon leaving school, to function in an adult society. Thus, while the American student is being chided for his declining reading scores, the European child is being introduced into his role as a productive member of the working society. At an early age, my European friends tell me, the child is directed, on the basis of competency testing, into either an academically oriented education or to a trade school. In the academic school few electives are available. In the trade school the student gets basic subjects with an emphasis on the selected trade. By the time the student is eighteen, he or she is ready either to go to work or to go on to the university. At that time more electives are available to the university student, but since study skills have already become ingrained, students are prepared to undertake challenging courses.

In the teenage years when American students are actively involved in extracurricular activities as well as their core and elective choices, Europeans are already focusing on professions. If European students wish to participate in athletics or music, they join clubs which are independent from the school system. Thus professional training is really separate from cultural, physical, and social training. Furthermore, each school has a more specific focus, either academic or trade, not needing to satisfy all interests within one system.

Removing extracurricular activities such as music and athletic events from the school enables those who are academically capable to delve more seriously into such subjects as history and languages. At the same time, fine arts enjoy a greater appreciation in Europe than in our continent.

At this point the reader may contend that American education has the same philosophy as European education: the preparation of the student for a productive job. While that idea may be true, it seems to me that in the American system job training begins later. Furthermore, the reason to prepare students for jobs is different.

Europe tends to determine quite early in what trade or profession the student will train. The student's abilities determine how he will best serve society. America, on the other hand, delays the choice of trade or profession and then gives the student more independence in that choice. Unless more carefully directed by parents, counselors, or conscience, the American student is influenced by his culture to seek a job which brings the highest income or the greatest social status.

When as a student teacher I taught

sixth grade in a public school, I asked the students why it was important for them to attend school. Without hesitation they replied, "To get a better job and make lots of money." More recently I questioned several American textbook representatives about the philosophy of their textbooks. The replies were essentially the same: to provide the student with the skills necessary to get a better job.

In the United States, at least in the public school system, the goal of getting an education is to get a "successful" job, one that makes money. Paradoxically, the American people tend to assume that the school must also develop the students' social and cultural skills.

What has caused Europe to develop the pedagogical emphasis and the United States to develop the spirit of financial and social competition? Furthermore, why do countries such as Canada and Australia tend to stand somewhere between the two philosophies?

Europe's emphasis on knowledge is, in many ways, understandable. The emphasis on foreign language study is logical because of the geographical proximity of European countries. Likewise, a historical awareness seems logical because of the European setting for the World Wars. National pride in the fame of classic artists and musicians may account for the European's greater appreciation and knowledge of fine arts. Perhaps the depressed state of their economy keeps Europeans more interested in knowledge than in possessions. In addition, the European depends greatly on other nations, so his perspective of the geography and history of other nations is broader. Finally, a long tradition influences the European system.

The American, on the other hand, tends to see his country as the center of the world, and when a person claims citizenship in such a nation, why should he be concerned about the history and geography of others?

Perhaps this attitude stems from our founding fathers' reasons for coming to this continent. North America has often been viewed as a land of opportunity, a place where people can attain what was not attainable in Europe. Consequently, immigrants from crowded lands have come to this continent, sometimes in poverty and striving to possess what their new neighbors possess, from driver's licenses to three-bath, air-conditioned homes in spacious settings. They have soon caught the spirit of economic and social competition, and their offspring perpetuate that spirit in school curriculums. One school tries to outdo the other in competency ratings, and athletes are so encouraged to beat opposing teams that they are asked to report to practice weeks before the academic school year begins. American's closets burst with so much clothing that they donate last year's outdated garments to Goodwill. (Many American tourists lug fashion-packed Samsonites overseas while their European tour guide appears in the same outfit three days in succession.)

What do the previous examples say about our education systems? Is Europe's knowledge superior to America's dream? Doesn't America do more than Europe to integrate education of the whole person? Can America keep her whole person emphasis and also raise her level of knowledge?

Some education specialists have concluded that America's education problems can be solved by revising school curriculums. One such group is the Paideia Group which, according to Herbert Kohl, *Learning* magazine special assignments editor, is proposing a twelve-year basic curriculum for all United States students. The group leaders advocate studying classics, offering only one basic track of study which is required for every student, and exposing students to a second language when they begin school. A number of private schools have already made similar academic demands on their students. Some of these, including a number of Christian schools, require extensive amounts of reading and written reporting.

We need excellence not merely for the sake of excellence, but for enabling us to give greater service.

I do not believe, however, that the American education system, either public or private, can be salvaged merely by adopting several typically European practices. I doubt that any educational system can be permanently strengthened as long as the philosophy it holds is self-seeking, that is, to gain economic or social success.

We who educate in Christian school systems ought to take a closer look at the quality of European education and the equality of educational opportunity offered in the American system. We too are afflicted by the results of erroneous philosophies, but we can do more than public school educators to try to appropriately combine quality and opportunity. We must be careful, however, that our emphasis not be on outdoing public schools. Sometimes we Christian school educators pride ourselves on our academic scores; we like to think that "by their test scores you shall know them," but that is self-glory. Rather we must model for our students a sense of appreciation for each of God's gifts. We need excellence not merely for the sake of excellence, but for enabling us to give greater service.

We need to read and analyze and explain in very plain words what we mean by a Christian philosophy so that our educational content and our teaching styles reflect the image of God as we attempt to develop and respond to each part of God's creation.

We shall attempt to do so in the next issue of CEJ as we look more specifically at how we can teach Christianly both in the personal lives we model and in our specific content areas. Hopefully we shall find that our Christian schools, like the dried beef sandwich of that kindergarten lunch, possess wholesome qualities that enable us to grow strong and serve well.

LVG

Learning to Listen — What Can the Social Studies Teacher Do?

by Roy De Boer

With this article Mr. De Boer begins a two-part discussion of the role of the social studies teacher in helping junior high students develop listening and speaking skills.

In recent years much attention has been focused on the necessity of teachers in the content areas to assume more of the responsibility to help students learn the reading and writing skills which are necessary for success in the classroom. While becoming promoters of effective reading and writing is an essential role for social studies teachers to assume, social studies classrooms should also become places in which students are encouraged to develop into more competent listeners.

The need to integrate the teaching of listening skills into all areas of the junior high curriculum, including social studies, can, perhaps, best be illustrated by considering two points made by Donald K. Landry in his essay "The Neglect of Listening." First, teachers must be aware that listening is not, like walking, a naturally acquired skill. Research, Landry points out, has shown that instruction in listening does improve a student's ability to listen. Teachers need to look at their students and realize that the possession of two ears does not eliminate the need for teaching listening in much the same way as the possession of two eyes has not put an end to the need for teaching students how to read.

Second, Landry suggests that "there are strong indications that students have learned not to listen by building up strong resistance to listening as a result of circumstances in our environment." (Donald K. Landry, "The Neglect of Listening," *Elementary English*, 46, May 1969). Junior high teachers need only observe their students in the presence of a radio or television to realize the truth of Landry's statement. Not only have radio and television turned many of our students into uncritical listeners, but those two instruments, filling the students' world with constant noise, have taught our students to become selective listeners who are capable of tuning in and out at will.

Although teachers in all the disciplines need to assume some of the responsibility for teaching students how to listen, social studies teachers need only consider the importance of listening in activities such as class discussion, small group work, and teacher presentation of subject matter to see that listening plays a significant role in the social studies classroom. The importance of that role leads to the conclusion that the responsibility for teaching students how to listen can not be delegated exclusively to any other discipline. If such is the case, social studies teachers in the junior high school should consider working with their students to improve three listening skills.

First, social studies teachers should work at helping their students improve their ability to comprehend or understand what is being said. Developing comprehension in listening, as in developing the same skill in reading, requires social studies teachers to do some listener preparation before students participate in listening activities. Listener preparation may require the preteaching of vocabulary. Students may need to be supplied background information so that the speaker's subject can be understood in the proper context. In addition, if students are to understand the organization of what is being said so that they can grasp the main point and see the supporting detail, teachers may find it helpful to supply outlines or other cueing devices which students can use as a guide to the material being presented.

Social studies teachers should also be aware that the problems of developing comprehension in listening are different from those involved in reading. When students listen, the pace of the material being presented is set by the speaker rather than the listener. In contrast to this, the pace in reading is set by the receiver, or reader, rather than the writer. When students are required to obtain information through the written word, they have the luxury of turning back to gather a missing bit of information or the privilege of pausing to discover the meaning of an unknown word. They can also stop reading to take notes without missing information, and they usually have the option to re-read. While all of these difficulties can be overcome through care and planning, social studies teachers may wish to consider that improving their students' ability to comprehend the material received through listening is more difficult than improving the same skill in reading.

A second listening skill which demands special attention in the social studies classroom is the development of critical but open-minded listening. It seems inconceivable and totally undesirable for social studies teachers to expect their students to accept all that they have heard as unquestionable truth. It seems equally undesirable for social studies students to accept only as truth those statements which confirm previously held ideas or beliefs.

In order to encourage critical, open-

minded listening, social studies teachers can construct lessons which develop their students' ability to recognize false logic. For example, teachers can construct lessons that show students how statistics can be used to support incorrect conclusions. Two additional ideas which help students become critical, open-minded thinkers are lessons that help students see how having too few facts leads to the fallacy of hasty generalizations, and lessons that use television commercials to allow students to see the fallacy of the appeal to authority.

The third listening skill that is important to develop in the junior high social studies classroom is the ability of students to integrate what they have heard into their own frame of reference. While one might argue that this is part of critical thinking because the listener is required to weigh evidence, there is a sense in which integration is a separate skill in that the listener is required to modify or alter previously held conceptions or ideas on the basis of new and valid evidence. Designing exercises for students to practice this skill is not necessarily difficult. Teachers who provide their students with opportunities to respond to what they have heard, through speaking or writing, afford those students the opportunity to use the skill and demonstrate that the process of integration has taken place.

Junior high social studies teachers who take the time to increase their students' ability to listen can make a significant contribution in preparing those students for continuing education. Indeed, all junior high teachers will do well to recognize that listening, like reading and writing, is a skill that must be taught if students are to be successful in the classroom. In today's world, where our children are being exposed to electronic media that make them increasingly poorer listeners, the time spent increasing listening skills can be a valuable and important experience.

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Next time
The Social Studies Classroom: A Place to Develop Effective Speech

Art Appreciation

Brenda S. Huizenga

An oddly quiet crowd
murmurs among themselves,
nodding in approval
over the maze of silver wires
weaving webs through the air.
He looks up at it,
shrugging his shoulders,
pulling up a tiny nose.
He shuffles his tennis shoes,
rambling off on his own,
imagining the polished wooden floors
as passageways to hidden treasures.
He walks quickly past
Van Gogh's collection,
glancing only slightly
at a famous Rembrandt,
and runs to a drinking fountain.
He fumbles through his pockets,
happily discovering a new package
of fresh, pink bubble gum.
Reading the comic thoughtfully,
he sighs contentedly,
and runs down a half flight of stairs,
sliding down a banister
when a guard's head is turned.
Then, suddenly,
his attention is captured.
At the bottom of the stairs,
a large window
reveals soft, dancing snowflakes,
waltzing down to earth
in a quiet courtyard.
He walks slowly to the window,
pressing two little hands
against the cold, moist glass.
The motionless copper statues
feel the chill of winter
as they passively accept
their covering of snow;
tiny trees helplessly submit
to the blanket of white,
receiving little protection
from the bare-limbed trees above.
Quietly, effortlessly,
its unseen Artist
captures the attention
of those hardest to reach,
His miracles never needing
an exhibition.

Developing Thinking Readers: A Christian School Teacher's Responsibility

by Bette Bosma

The Lord has given His children the gift of being able to think and to communicate those thoughts to one another. He has given Christian teachers the responsibility of cultivating the thinking abilities of the children entrusted to their care. In the realm of Bible instruction, social studies, and science the teacher is quite conscious of this responsibility. However, when it comes to the teaching of reading, thinking is often displaced by rote memorization of abstract symbols and the checking of literal answers on worksheets. In order to fulfill the obligation for developing thinking readers, the Christian teacher should be aware of the teacher's role in providing the kind of reading instruction which will help develop the child's potential ability.

David Russell describes four levels of reading: (1) word recognition, (2) a general impression of the paragraph, page, and passage, (3) reading for exact literal meaning, and (4) critical reading, or going beyond literal details to selection, interpretation and fresh understanding of the material. Reading at level four, the reader sifts, accepts and rejects, depending upon his experience and purposes. (Russell, *Dynamics of Reading*, 1970).

In his book, *Children's Thinking*, Russell states

> Children and adolescents may be sheep following blindly the ideas of the printed page and film or they may develop into thinking individuals critical of sources, definitions, assumptions, and techniques. (p. 301.)

Because critical reading is designated as a higher level skill, the elementary teacher tends to postpone such instruction, assuming that proficiency in the first levels is necessary before the higher level skill can be developed. However, this hierarchical designation is not necessarily a chronological one. The various levels of reading can be developing simultaneously within the cognitive abilities of the child's age. Observation and research indicate that children do become critical readers with instruction and guidance throughout the elementary grades. Thorndike (1917) came to that conclusion in his study of sixth graders, as did Gans (1940), Kottmeyer (1944), and Nartedilli (1956), all of whom studied children from grades four through six and determined that they were capable of being taught critical reading skills in addition to word recognition and literal meaning. In an extensive study, Charlotte Huck, Willavene Wolf, and Martha King (1967) investigated the teaching of critical reading skills to elementary children in grades one through six, with instructional materials involving both fiction and non-fiction reading. They concluded that children who had direct instruction in critical reading improved significantly in both critical and general reading ability, and that this instruction can begin at an early age.

Teaching critical thinking skills in reading does not necessitate a radical change in curriculum, but does require an awareness by the teacher of the importance of evoking children's responses and allowing a sharing of these responses which focus on reflective interpretations of the author's ideas. I wish to present two ideas which can make use of the teacher "read aloud" time for developing a reflective attitude by the listener. The first approach is a Directed Listening Thinking Activity to be used at all grade levels, and the second is a Describe, Compare, and Evaluate approach which is especially appropriate for primary children.

To become a critical reader, a child must be an active listener. Therefore, undivided attention must be given when the teacher is reading. This is not the time for finishing homework, coloring, or sharpening pencils. The listener should be directed toward anticipating how the author will unfold the story. If the book selected by the teacher to read to the class is of significant content, the listener can be asked to predict what will happen, and to give a reason for the prediction. In the process of listening to determine whether or not his/her prediction comes true, the child is led to realize that predictions cannot be verified until a certain amount of information is given. The teacher should stop reading at predetermined sections of the story and ask if the readers wish to "hold to" their predictions or, because of added information, now wish to change them. This attitude demonstrates to the listener that the teacher does not expect the response to be "right" or "wrong" but to be a growing understanding of another person's ideas.

For example, *The Pale Invaders* by G. R. Kestevan is a story of a group of people who develop a completely isolated community based on fear of being influenced and destroyed by other people. Only one person in each generation is allowed to learn to read, and the type of person chosen for this literate position influences the whole community. The book could be introduced with a "What if?" question, a type of question that stimulates prediction. The theme could be partially revealed: "What if a group of people want to

keep themselves from everyone else in the world? What could they do?" After eliciting some response to this, and recording that response (either on the board or on paper by a chosen recorder), the teacher tells the class, "This author wrote a story about such people. Let's read enough today to find out if he uses any of the ideas you have told us."

Allow time to discuss which ideas in the story were similar to those of the pupils. Then make new predictions based upon what has been read; record these, and when reading is resumed the next day, ask for verification of the new predictions based upon the section read. The listeners may find that they need more information before verifying or abandoning their predictions. Through this they are learning to suspend judgment until more information is available. There will be no need for the teacher to moralize. When freed to respond this way, children reveal ideas based upon their background training. Depending upon their age, this will be either a reiteration of family teachings or their own emerging view of life.

The concept level of *Pale Invaders* is appropriate for grades four through eight. Other suggested titles for this age: *Beyond the Dark River* by Monica Hughes, a leading Canadian author (an isolation theme similar to *Pale Invaders*); *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt (What if we lived forever?); *Let the Balloon Go* by Ivan Southall (How should a family treat a handicapped child? Predictions made as this story progresses will cause the reader to face his own attitudes more directly than through simply listening to the story.)

Many books are appropriate for using predicting with younger children. The predictions could begin by reflecting on the title or the first picture. A few suggested titles: *Staying Home Alone on a Rainy Day* by Chihiro Iwasaki, *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine* by Evaline Ness (What if Samanatha doesn't know the difference between real and make-believe?), *Annie and the Old One* by Miska Miles (What do you think Annie is going to do when she hears that Grandma will die soon?), and *The Accident* by Carol and Donald Carrick (What do you think the accident will be?). Be sure to stop for verification of prediction, and plan new predictions to be made at appropriate places throughout the story.

Attempts to elicit critical response from children often achieve replies on the reaction level based on likes and dislikes or quickly formed opinions. What is lacking here is careful consideration of the text. This can be taught at a very young age using the steps of describing, comparing and evaluating two or more books. However, if this has not been taught at a young age, a careful leading through these steps at any age can improve the quality of predictions and postreading discussions.

For the young child, the *describe* step begins with the pictures. For example, using Lynn Ward's *The Biggest Bear*, the child is asked to describe the bear as drawn by Ward. Then the focus turns to the text. What words did the author use to tell us about the bear? These words and phrases should be written on newsprint to show the child that they came from the book, and to be used for the later *compare* lessons. The same procedure would follow the reading of Michael Bond's *A Bear Called Paddington*. Comments from the children should be guided towards describing how Michael Bond's bear looks, and the words used to describe him.

The *compare* step includes another close look at both books which were read previously, and discussion is centered on how the descriptions are alike and how they are different. First the illustrations and then the text are compared, with both books on display. The list of phrases from the two books can be reread. Developmentally, it is important that the discussion proceeds from the likenesses to the differences.

The *evaluate* step follows the comparisons, and with young children each step will constitute a separate lesson. If the children have not been able to respond to finding likeness and differences, another comparison lesson using two other books should be taught before progressing to the *evaluate* step. The evaluating procedure will begin with a review of the comparisons. "We found . . . to be alike in *The Biggest Bear* and *A Bear Called Paddington*. We found . . . to be different." The questions that follow should lead the children to form opinions and be able to verify their answers with the knowledge gained from the description and comparison. For example, "Which bear would you like to play with? Why?" "Would you be afraid of either bear? Why?" The answer to the "why" question will determine whether or not the child is giving a totally subjective opinion or a judgment based on evidence gleaned from the book.

The example is given here at a beginning level to demonstrate that this can begin at an early age. It is easier to formulate open-ended questions at a somewhat higher level of thinking, using the same criteria. Note that the three steps zero in on one aspect of the story. Questions that lead to critical evaluation of plot or theme will be understood more readily by the child who has been led through these three steps to interpret characterization in the book. The same steps could be used for developing understanding of setting, mood, plot or theme.

Transfer of this ability to the pupil's own reading will not occur automatically. Teacher guidance will be needed in two ways: first, adroit questioning before reading to enable the readers to be active participants in thinking while they read; and secondly, open-ended questions after reading to help the reader respond. The after reading response should come from the reader's thinking through the text, not from preconceived teacher expectations. The questions should be directed toward what the author is saying and what point of view is taken by the author. The interaction of group discussion of response is needed for developing thinking rather than individual written responses. This type of instruction will help the children develop the realization that infallibility of the written word is an attribute of the Holy Bible only, and of no other printed word.

Image-bearers have been created with power to think. The Christian teacher cannot be content with teaching word recognition skills and checking literal comprehension. The use of techniques such as the Directed Listening Thinking Activity and the Describe, Compare, and Evaluate steps will enable teachers to guide pupils toward viewing reading as a thinking process.

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The Last of God's Singers

He wanted the dream to stay
alive,
He tried hard to save it.
When he walked he walked
old,
But it was still like wings
walking by.

He was a priest and a poem,
And the man I remember
Who unfolded miles in the
palm
Of my hand by teaching me
prayers.

Now he is outdated.
Nobody respects his profession
much anymore,
Only the old cloud catchers
of years ago who are still
religious.

But when I'm troubled I think
back
To his ideas which were
sound.
He was always as calm as
marble
When I sinned. He smiled his
singing smile
Just like a benediction.

He knew that life was like a
paper chase
To most of us, but he would
be beautiful
Singing of beauty to us, far
away from money,
money, money, money.....

Marion Schoeberlein

The

Somewhere in a folder of my old high school papers there's an essay I once wrote about Vietnam. Handwritten in fancy, sophomoric script, little bubble circles for dots above the i's and elegant tails adorning the g's, the essay speaks its mind regarding the admirable righteousness of U.S. military presence in a place that was, at the time, much less well-known than Selma, Alabama. When hawks are sanctified, doves become diabolical; half the essay warns whatever civics teacher assigned the paper, not to fall prey to the wiles of the leftist hippies who sought to bring this great country to its knees, those long-haired types whose platform was constructed on planks abhorrent to my own consensus Christian conscience.

That was 1964. Six years later I was among 100,000 Vietnam protestors who stood around the White House and made hay in the city of Washington D.C. In a small-town boyhood, I had never seen 100,000 people in one spot before, but the Kent State shootings had occurred that week, and people (most of them young) from as far away as Iowa had come to harangue anyone who would listen on the phony sanctity of American militarism in a strange country that had become, in six years, an even more abundant source of news than Jerusalem.

Some may measure such drastic change as verifiable growth of spirit, the track record of a mature Christian conscience coming of age. Others may well lament the pathetic tragedy of a bearded victim of time's unruliness—the descent of a mind from Christian values to commie vices. The judge is still out on Vietnam; some later generation will likely try to outline heroes and villians in the street wars of the late 60's. But the arguments themselves will live on long after the original participants are locked between the covers of some history text. Likely as not, some enterprising computer programmer will create a Vietnam simulation for junior high school students, if it hasn't already been done.

Perhaps we are hopeless victims of our times. Perhaps each of us carries the diseases of our particular social malaise; each of us sees with glasses specially ground by the events of our own age. Students today are career-minded; students yesterday were more rebellious. Awaiting a new label, we still call today's kids members of the me-generation.

Perhaps my own history is nothing more than a lesson in the uninspiring realities of a life determined by forces and events far out of my own control. Perhaps all of us are sheep, herded in a congregate mass and sent in directionless flight by the sound of nothing more dangerous than a car horn. Simply, we are pawns of the historical forces around us.

Nobody really enjoys the role of pawn. We don't like being told we really have no will of our own—that all our actions are merely expressions of dominating forces carrying us, willy-nilly, in sometimes good, sometimes bad directions.

We are, after all, participants, even when we think of ourselves as bystanders. Not having marched in Washington does not mean that each of us who

As participants in our own culture, we carry its story ourselves, and we use its lessons most wisely when we think in covenant terms about where we've been and what we've seen.

Testimony of History

by James C. Schaap

lived through that era didn't struggle with the arguments of the time. Being career-oriented doesn't mean one feels no appreciation for the great ideas of literature or the lessons of history.

My evolution from hawk to dove marks my life as typical of a consensus shift in the American war consciousness, a victim, perhaps, of what was happening around me. However, when that change occurred, I was thereby contributing to what Charles Reich romantically dubbed "the greening of America." In that way, my change was itself a creative act. Each of us participates in history individually.

When we fail to reflect on our own experience as Christian members of the society in which we live, we stop writing God's story of His image-bearers.

Armed with the capacity of memory, each of us, therefore, becomes, whether or not we want to admit it, a historian, and the longer we live the more clearly we understand our callings. Each time we sing "Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid," I am reminded of the Navy Hymn, the riderless horse in President John F. Kennedy's funeral procession, and the whole story of the assassination, three long days of national grief. Tie-dyed T-shirts spark memories of almost hallucinogenic pop lyrics. Raised black fists still spell out the danger of hot ghetto streets, and *Strike!* remains in my mind a university word, despite what I know about people like John L. Lewis.

As participants in our own culture, we carry its story ourselves, and we use its lessons most wisely when we think in covenant terms about where we've been and what we've seen. Time and time again, David alludes to history to ask for God's help: "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them" (Psalm 22). In Psalm 77 God's past help is recalled in alleviation of present distress: "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times." Psalm 78 is itself a textbook of covenantal history. The record of God's people stands for David as a catechism, bringing him closer to what he often knows but feels ashamedly doubtful to express himself.

I was born long after the 30's, but the word "depression" creates instant images in my mind, images created in me by my elders: my grandfather, the blacksmith, both arms up on the table, crying openly about lacking the money to buy the essentials for his young family; prairie grasshoppers so ravenous they devoured onion greens, then burrowed into the ground to chew up the bulbs themselves. God's history plays in technicolor when its lines focus with my own covenantal family— when I know the grandmother who picked her children's Sunday clothes off the bed and saw the silhouette left in the dirt that had seeped into the house from the dust clouds blackening the skies over the long plains.

My understanding of the depression is most acute when I know that my own covenantal grandparents took refuge from the drought with the words of Habakkuk 3: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Knowing that verse helps me feel those prayers and gives me understanding of their times, and, most importantly, a sense of God's work in our times. Like David, I am uplifted by such stories remembered.

When I know that Van Raalte lacked sufficient man-power to bury his dead that first winter in southern Michigan, I understand something about the strength and perserverence and commitment of God's people. When a strong man, a corporate executive, tells me of his two sons' horror in Vietnam, when he tells me how he sent them there with his firm belief in the cause, and when he admits, his eyes down on his open hands, that he was wrong, I know more about that time I remember so vividly myself.

When we fail to reflect on our own experience as Christian members of the society in which we live, we stop writing God's story of His image-bearers. When we fail to tell our children, and when our children fail to listen, we are sacrificing our own blessed heritage, but more importantly, we are neglecting the story of God's dominion over His people and His world. We are neglecting His convenant story, and, in the bargain, weakening the power of His promises.

If we romanticize too much, if we sweeten history into nostalgia, if we handily forget what we shouldn't, let the professional historians help us, guide us back to the facts.

But history will never be the source of inspiration it was to David if we fail to look back and remember, if we fail to see the hand of the God of our fathers in our own biographies. Then miserably we fail Him in a very covenantal way.

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Asylum

H.K. Zoeklicht

Jenny Snip, office secretary at Omni Christian High School, came clipping into the faculty room immediately after chapel, just as the faculty was gathering informally for its mid-morning break. Ahead of her she carried her prized McDonald coffee mug, a birthday present from the staff, like a trophy and headed directly for the coffee table. The smug look on her face suggested that she had more on her mind than refreshments on this crisp Thursday morning in November.

"Well," she said mysteriously as she moved among the teachers, "I wonder if your name is on the list, Steve," and she looked directly at the startled Steve Vander Prikkel.

"Huh? Say what?" said the biology teacher with exaggerated concern. "What list do I now honor with my presence?"

"I didn't say your name *was* on the list. I just *wondered* if it was," answered the secretary. "Don't tell me you don't know about the list," she added.

"I knew I was on Rip's believe-it-or-not list," responded Vander Prikkel, "but I don't know about any other list. Tell us."

Looking first over one shoulder and then the other, emphasizing the importance and secrecy of the news, Jenny Snip said, "Well, Steve, *if* you really want to hear, but I'm not sure that what I have to say is going to make this faculty happy. Here it is. Last night a group of parents brought a petition to the executive committee of the board. It's pretty heavy."

"Get it out, Jenny. What's it about?" demanded Bob Den Denker. "You've got us all worried."

"There is reason for worry," snapped Snip. "They want some heads to roll around here. And they've got a lot of signatures. I think I saw thirty or so signatures on that sheet."

A hush settled over the faculty as Snip's news was distributed throughout the room. John Vroom, Bible teacher, stopped chewing.

"Was *my* name written there?" he asked grimly.

Then others echoed questions. "Are you sure?" "Who signed that thing?" "What do they want anyway?" "Pretty sneaky, if you ask me." "I don't believe it." These and other comments and questions made the rounds of the Omni faculty room as the precious minutes of the break time ticked away.

The shrill voice of Ginny Traansma rose above the hubbub: "I'll bet it's Bob and Lucy they're after," and then she clapped her hand over her mouth as she noticed that Bob Den Denker was right next to her. The history teacher blushed but said nothing. John Vroom brightened at the suggestion, however, and nodded approvingly as he resumed sucking the jelly out his doughnut.

Then Bill Silver, assistant principal for the year, raised his hand rather imperiously for silence and declared, "I think we need some facts around here. I can confirm that there is such a petition, but I want to say too that I don't think Jenny should be talking out of the office this way." He paused before continuing. "A substantial number of parents have submitted a petition to the board, through the executive committee, asking that there be some kind of 'clean-up' on the faculty. Fact is, they have not only some of us, but also some board members and an administrator in their sights. The board will deal with the matter on Monday night."

"Why?" breathed several teachers, and "who?"

"Well," said the assistant principal, "I guess they want to get rid of people who they disagree with or dislike. They think some are too liberal in life style and some just don't work hard enough for the money, or aren't very effective. And they think that the school takes a wishy-washy attitude towards discipline, too."

Jenny Snip, much chagrined by Silver's rebuke, surreptitiously worked her way to the back of the crowd. The third-hour bell rang. But no one else moved.

"This all seems hard to believe," said the thoughtful Den Denker. "But I guess we all knew there was unrest out there, and maybe we didn't respond fairly and reasonably. The school does belong to the parents."

"That's right," confirmed John Vroom, whose right hand was buried in the brown paper bag which contained his noon lunch. "I've been telling you all along that as teachers here we have to refrain from any behavior which could offend the parents of these covenant children. That's the meaning of IN LOCAL PARENTHESIS. We should take that seriously. Now some of you may lose your jobs."

There was some tittering and a guffaw here and there from the otherwise tense faculty. Matt DeWit exclaimed, "Wow, that must have been a hot flash of inspiration you had there, John!"

But Bill Silver quickly cut off the comic relief.

"It is not just them, John. You too," said Bill Silver.

"Me!" shouted John Vroom. "What did *I* do?"

"This is not the place to go into it, John, and not the time either. But you think about it."

John Vroom's face turned ashen gray. He stopped chewing again. His left hand, poised to pop a potato chip into his pink mouth, froze in its position. Slowly he ground the potato chip to bits between his thumb and his pudgy forefinger. He tried to talk, but no sound came.

"Take it easy, John," soothed Den Denker, "just calm yourself and make sure you say nothing about this in class. In fact, we might all keep a bit mum about this. Remember, we don't know the details of this thing, the board hasn't acted yet, and I'm pretty sure that anyone who is listed on that petition will get his day in court. The whole thing may just blow over. Let's cool it and get on with our business."

"It didn't 'just blow over' at Forest Christian High when parents came with a petition there, did it?" responded Vander Prikkel ominously. "And at Heidelburg Christian either. How many principals and teachers have been axed just during the past three years?"

"Steve's right," responded Bill Silver. Then he added softly. "Better start preparing your case, Bob."

Momentarily stunned, Bob stared at Bill. No one said a word.

The final bell sounded. Bob Den Denker stood up, looked around at his colleagues, and wryly commented, "Ask not for whom the bell tolls. . ." Then he resolutely grabbed his briefcase and strode towards the door. Before exiting, he turned to the others, and, trying to get some conviction into his voice, he said, "Hey, let's not get into hysterics here. I think we'll be all right. Anyway, it's time to teach. Our covenant youth are waiting."

Ginny Traansma caught up with him in the hall. She grabbed his arm. "Bob, this is scary. How can you be so calm?"

"I'm not calm," came the answer. "But poor John is so frightened he can't even think of a fitting text for the situation. And yes, I am scared too. But we need time to think, to get some facts, and to deal deliberately with this. Besides, my students are waiting for me." He grinned at the tense music teacher.

She smiled back, relieved at his coolness in stress, and moving closer to him she whispered, "Bob, is Lucy pregnant?"

He put his hand over his face in mock horror and asked, "Do you suppose they found out?"

What Is a Genuine Educational Aim?

by Gregory Mellema

Educators who are asked to state their instructional aims or objectives are likely to respond with highly general statements which are sweeping in scope and expressive of lofty ideals. The following are typical of responses one might hear from a Christian educator:

(1) "My aim is that my students learn to become responsible members of the Christian community."
(2) "My aim is that my students become wise in all things as imitators of Christ."
(3) "My aim is that my students become equipped to build a culture in the name of Christ."
(4) "My aim is that my students learn that which is of Christ and turn away from that which is of Satan."

Responses offered by non-Christian educators can be observed in the extensive literature on the subject of aims in education. Some have argued that the aim of education is the Good Life, others that it is the development of the intellect, the discovery of one's authentic self, or a preparation for life. A wide variety of candidates has been proposed, but what most have in common is that they are highly general, broad in scope, or are stated in terms of lofty ideals. Often, in addition, they are expressed in a manner which is vague, imprecise, and consequently difficult to interpret.

Statements of aims such as these, however noble they may be, are capable of causing frustration for teachers in the classroom. A theorist who eloquently argues that all of one's teaching should be directed toward each child's discovery of his or her authentic self, for example, leaves one with little more than a prescription which has the appearance of deep significance. As far as putting ideals such as this into practice in the classroom, the average teacher is left in the dark. It is difficult to know how to translate them into concrete objectives.

How can this difficulty be dealt with? Some educational theorists, most notably R.S. Peters, attempt to solve the problem by declaring that for something to be an educational aim it must contain the specification of a precise objective. General statements describing lofty educational ideals fail to qualify as genuine statements of educational aims. One who asks educators to state their educational aims ought to accept no response which does not involve the specification of a precise objective. Thus, sample responses (1)-(4) fail to qualify as statements of educational aims. They are statements of pseudo-educational aims, for they fail to contain the specification of precise objectives.

Certain educational psychologists have pushed this idea still further by suggesting that educational aims must not only be specific, they must be measurable in terms of observable behavior. An educator must formulate and adopt aims or objectives only if there are definite behavioral criteria for knowing if and when the aim has been achieved. I might have as an aim that Dirk score at least in the 50th percentile on a specific standardized test which measures a certain competency, but I cannot have as an aim simply that Dirk become more competent in that area; the latter does not qualify as a genuine aim.

Clearly, sample responses (1)-(4) fail to qualify as statements of aims according to this criterion. There are, for example, no precise techniques for measuring the degree to which a student is maturing into a responsible member of the Christian community. A teacher ought to be concerned with genuine aims and direct his or her energies toward achieving them. Presumably, therefore, it is inappropriate on this criterion for a teacher to attempt to promote such states of affairs as students becoming responsible members of the Christian community. At best they become by-products of achieving legitimate aims.

We have observed that it is frequently difficult to know how to translate statements of educational aims into concrete objectives when these statements are highly general and describe lofty ideals. There are many educators who have arrived at the increasingly popular conclusion that the solution to this problem is precisely what Peters advocates, namely, that one ought to deny the status of educational aims to anything as general and imprecise as (1)-(4). Consequently, much emphasis is currently being placed by educators upon the importance of formulating aims which are specific and precise, and for which there are clear criteria for knowing when they have been achieved. Teachers are encouraged to formulate lesson plans in accord with

There are . . . no precise techniques for measuring the degree to which a student is maturing into a responsible member of the Christian community.

specially designed taxonomies whose scope consists of such aims.

It is easy to be charmed by the proposals of educational theorists such as Peters. And it is tempting to become intrigued by the claims of educational psychologists who champion the cause of empirical austerity, especially when the implication seems to be that educational inquiry is susceptible to the same type of rigor that is found in the natural sciences. If the success or failure of all educational aims were as simple a matter as measuring observable behavior, the guesswork and uncertainties of pedagogy would largely vanish, and the whole educational enterprise would appear to be put upon a much surer and more stable foundation. It would be purged once and for all of highly general statements of aims and the vagueness and imprecision which inevitably characterize them.

Is this a solution Christian educators ought to find attractive? Ought we to declare statements such as (1)-(4) as unfit for our adoption? Should we think of them as out of tune with the latest and most sophisticated conceptions of educational methodology? Perhaps we should pay lip service to them while we secretly regard them as irrelevant to our real day-to-day concerns in the classroom. Is this a reasonable position?

As Christian educators we must be prepared to answer these questions affirmatively only if we are willing to give up the idea that our teaching is to be guided by a vision the scope of which is too broad to be confined to the specification of precise objectives. Clearly good teaching cannot be without aims of the type Peters wishes to promote; on a given day a teacher might formulate certain limited aims regarding everything from geography workbook exercises to Bible memorization. And there are times when specific behavioral objectives might serve a worthwhile purpose. But to deny that there are any general aims to which these specific aims relate is to suggest that a teacher need not operate with any ideals toward whose realization these specific aims are designed to contribute. Teaching becomes simply a matter of formulating limited objectives and attempting to achieve them; in the process they become ends in themselves.

It would at this point be a simple matter to argue that the solution Peters advocates constitutes a reductionism which is fundamentally at odds with a properly Christian approach to formulating educational aims (and this, I think, is exactly what it amounts to). However, a more constructive manner of rejecting this approach, I believe, is to affirm the importance in teaching of both general and specific statements of aims. It is clearly impossible to operate a classroom in the absence of specific objectives which govern the ongoing flow of activities. But to teach in a manner which takes seriously the responsibilities which educators possess by virtue of their special function in God's Kingdom requires the conscious adoption of lofty ideals as exemplified in the likes of (1)-(4). To discharge these responsibilities requires the possession of a vision, based upon the Word of God, of what Christian education is all about. Apart from such a vision it is hard to see how education can be distinctively Christian.

. . . to teach in a manner which takes seriously the responsibilities which educators possess by virtue of their special function in God's Kingdom requires the conscious adoption of lofty ideals . . .

Such a vision, however, must function for an educator in such a way that it gives purpose to the specific aims regarding geography workbooks and Bible memorization. To picture the manner in which this might be accomplished, it is helpful to think of educational aims as arranged in a hierarchy. At the top level are found the highly general aims which embody an educator's lofty ideals. At the middle level are found aims which are less general and more closely related to concrete activities. And at the ground floor level there are great numbers of specific aims of the sort advocated by Peters.

Ideally, the aims of each level (except the topmost) are designed to promote the realization of various aims at the next higher level. In this way a person's ultimate educational aims do not stand detached from the rest of one's aims. They stand at the top of one's hierarchy of educational aims, and the aims beneath them contribute, some directly and some indirectly, to their realization. By virtue of the hierarchy they, in effect, become translated into the language of precise objectives. Thus, although they embody lofty ideals, they are connected to the aims pertaining to geography workbook exercises by middle level aims. One's educational aims are not chosen, therefore, in a loose and random fashion; they achieve an integration by virtue of their relationship to one another in the hierarchy.

This model is a somewhat idealized account of how an educator's aims stand in relation to one another, and if space permitted more could be said about it (I have discussed this model at much greater length in an article to appear in *The New Scholasticism*). But for present purposes the point is that to solve the difficulty posed by highly general statements of aims which seem far removed from practice, one need not resort to the reductionist approach of Peters. The ultimate aims one adopts can be integrated into a coherent framework of aims in such a way that they are not remote and isolated. In this way an educator's choice of aims on the ground level will be guided by a vision, and the upper level aims which embody this vision take on a clear meaning relative to an educator's day-to-day tasks.

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Flowch
or

This is the age of the chip, of subscripted variables, GOSUB, and 48K. For some English teachers—perhaps for too many—ready access to a computer is a dream; for others, the thought of facing that keyboard and terminal may bring on nightmares (terminal nightmares?). Computer literacy may not be just around the corner for you, but you can still use 1982's "Man of the Year" to advantage in your classrooms.

One night over dinner I was thinking how wonderful it would be to have a bright-eyed student leave a shiny, polished Apple II on my cluttered desk some morning. I was in the process, and still am, of learning programming, and I was too often frustrated by an inability to get time on our school's one computer. Whenever the computer was not available to me, I would spend some time developing primitive programs and writing flowcharts.

That night over dinner came a sparkling millisecond of inspiration. I thought of a way to bring the concept of a flowchart into the teaching of adjectives, adverbs, and connectives.

Throughout my teaching career, I have noticed that many students have difficulty identifying adjectives and adverbs and are further confused by prepositions and conjunctions. After all, adjectives and adverbs and prepositional phrases DESCRIBE: there is the rub for some students. In the sentence "I ran along the waterfront" these students will often claim that "along" is an adverb because it tells WHERE. Students may also have a problem seeing the different uses of double-duty words such as "fast".

I have talked myself dry and dusted my clothes with chalk and soaked my fingers in ditto fluid trying to clarify these and related problems. What finally struck me over dinner was that students did not know HOW to think about these parts of speech. Left on their own, they played a grammar hide-and-seek or grammar roulette: the discovery of adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, and conjunctions was a mystery only I and a few of their classmates could solve.

But, I thought, how about using the computer flowchart to teach the thought process here?

So I made a flowchart to discover these four word classes. The diagram had to be adjusted slightly as the class began using it, but after the initial experiment, 26 of the 29 students said the chart was very helpful and all 29 were encouraged when I said the next quiz would allow them to use the flowchart.

No one failed that quiz which consisted of 20 sentences using adjectives and adverbs which the class had to correctly identify. This is not conclusive evidence, I know; but I was very encouraged.

Over the next few days the students became more at ease with double-duty words, and a few who had considerable trouble earlier claimed they had a better idea HOW to arrive at the right answers and WHY the answers were correct.

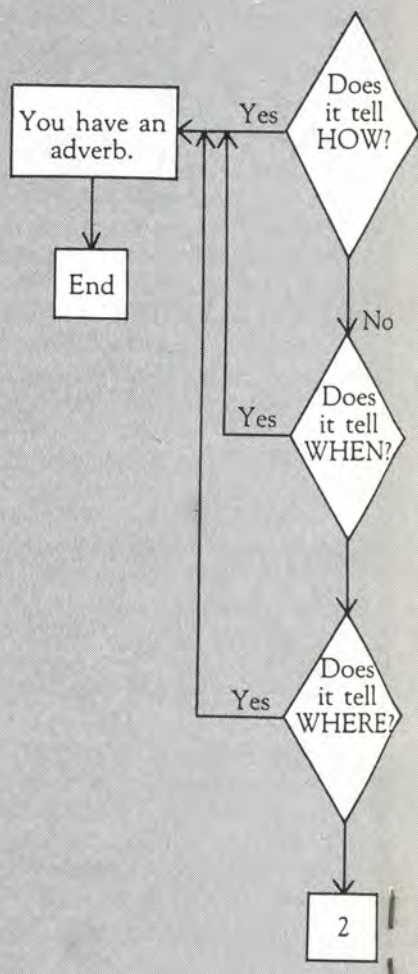
In fact, on later quizzes completed without the flowcharts, the class continued to perform well.

The flowchart could certainly be used to teach other elements of language as well. Creating one requires that you imagine yourself a computer "thinking".

To understand and to use the accompanying flowchart, you need to understand a few of the symbols:

◇ means a *decision* must be made.
□ means a statement is made based on the answer provided.
YES means "follow this arrow if your answer is YES".
NO means "follow this arrow if your answer is NO".
2 means "start over—you answered something incorrectly".

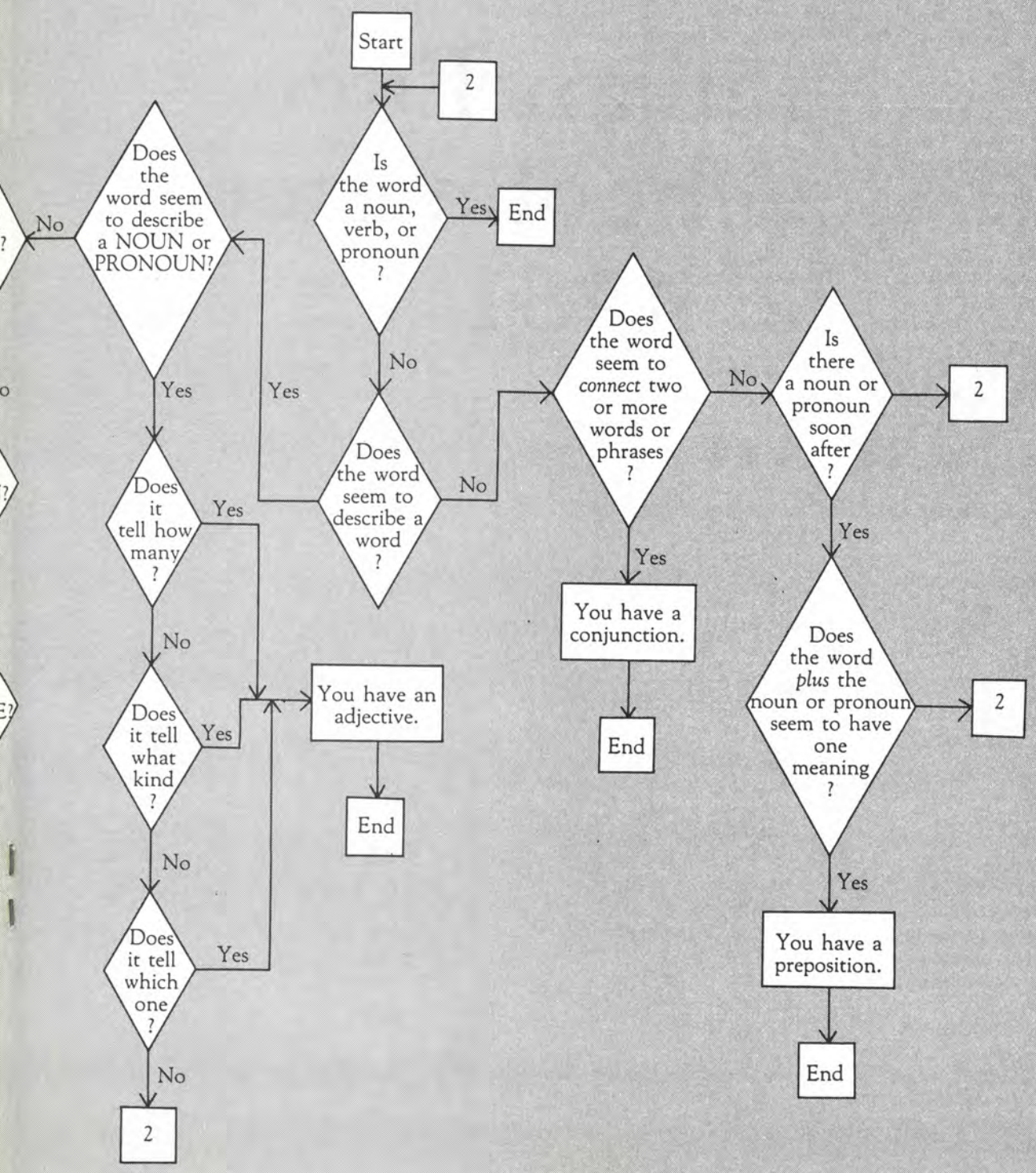
My students enjoyed being "computers." They had a better idea about HOW to think about grammar. Perhaps one of my new scholars of grammar will someday be "Computer of the Year."



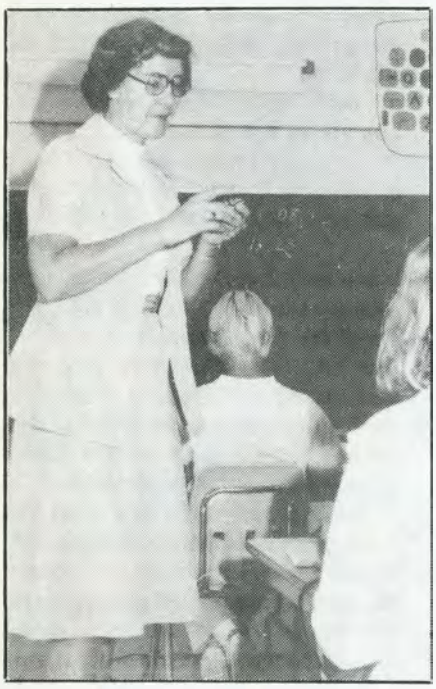
Randall Heeres teaches Language Arts at Northern Michigan Christian School in McBain, Michigan.

harts in the English Classroom
r Computerized Grammar
Without a Computer

by Randall J. Heeres



Lillian Eiten, Schoolmaster of 1981



"I'll give it my all... and that's my best," says Lillian Eiten, a thirty-three year veteran of Christian school teaching who has directed her seemingly boundless energy to encourage spiritual and academic growth in the lives of her many students.

"I have a lot of energy, I know, but sometimes it runs out, especially at the end of the week, on Fridays. Do you know how I relax? I go to church and play the organ," she quips. Having been sick only one school day in all her years of teaching, Eiten maintains a schedule that includes playing organ for Sunday church services, attending plays and concerts, reading, sewing, and experimenting with microwave cooking in addition to her teaching duties and responsibilities as class sponsor, graduation committee member, and school yearbook sponsor.

Eiten earned a tuition-free scholarship when she graduated from her Wellsburg, Iowa, high school and started her higher education at Central College in Pella, Iowa. During her second year, however, she left Central to care for the family after her mother's death. Completing college at Calvin in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Lil, as her friends know her, later earned a Master's degree from the University of Northern Iowa at Cedar Falls.

Currently teaching language arts at Contra Costa Christian High School in Walnut Creek, California, Eiten modestly displays a plaque and trophy representing her being selected as one of seventeen outstanding teachers awarded California's 1981 "Schoolmaster of the Year" honors.

The following interview with Lillian Eiten, conducted on an Interstate 80 trip from Iowa to California, not only shortened the miles through Nevada, but also provided clues as to how she has come to be recognized as an outstanding educator.

Q By way of background, what subjects did you teach and in what schools?

A In 1950 I started teaching at Denver Christian in fifth grade. Then I switched to high school English and Latin. Deciding never to teach high school again, I moved to Lansing (Illinois) Christian to teach a fifth-sixth combination class, but after one year I was back in high school English and Latin. In Valley Christian at Bellflower, California, and at

Eastern Christian in New Jersey I taught English and Latin. In the era of mini-courses, that included composition, speech, drama, American and English authors, English novels, science fiction, media, newspaper, journalism, term paper, short story, world literature, poetry, and remedial reading. At Contra Costa Christian I have had typing as well as the language arts.

Q What was the longest stint in any one school?

A I was at Eastern Christian for seventeen years.

Q Did you ever consider any other career besides teaching?

A Before I started teaching, I wanted to be a home economist for awhile. Our family had always been involved in Farm Bureau, and I started 4-H when I was fifteen. When I returned home from Central for three years, I served as a 4-H leader and took a demonstration team from my club to the Iowa State Fair where they won in state competition.

Q What do you consider to be the most enjoyable classes you have taught?

A World literature and also an advanced English literature course in which I had thirty-six students at once. We sat in a semi-circle three deep because the room was so crowded, but the class was very enjoyable. I also enjoy teaching writing because I get so much satisfaction from the results.

Q Did you ever find yourself teaching a course for which you had not been trained?

A Yes, at Denver Christian I consented to teach home economics because they had a beautiful home economics room that would have gone unused had I not taught the course. Then I leaned back on my 4-H and Farm Bureau background.

My first year and part of the second year at Contra Costa Christian I taught typing, until a Christian typing teacher could be found. At Eastern Christian I taught Latin but no English the first year, although I had been hired to teach English.

Q What do you consider to be the most enjoyable part of teaching?

A What I call the "Oh!-phenomenon." When you explain a concept and the kids don't get it, you try and try to make it clear. Suddenly a student grasps the idea and his eyes gleam. It isn't always audible, but you know he's saying, "Oh!"

Q Teaching has its difficult moments too. Would you mention what is most difficult for you?

A It is difficult to get to the point of a discussion by the end of a class period. I find myself eyeing the clock because I want to be sure the students have the correct understanding when the bell rings lest they go away for twenty-four hours with the wrong impression.

Until I taught typing, I might have said the greatest difficulty is having so many papers to check, but that experience showed me how gratifying it is to me to see the students' original creative work. In English there is a large paper load, but if you do your job well, I don't see how that can be avoided.

Q What is your opinion on having the students check papers in class?

A I have the students check objective answers in class, except when too many questions arise, because of the value of immediate feedback. I do have student groups working over first drafts, and then on the board I put a checklist of items to note, but these sessions are more discussions than evaluations. Beyond that point, very often I read a whole set of papers and then put them into piles—to get an initial impression. That way I get a feel for their work, keeping the students in mind. Kids don't have a sense of giving accurate feedback, but that's what teaching is all about. Besides, I want to comment on the papers. Oftentimes the best papers will have the most comments.

Q Do you always use letter grades on student papers?

A No, I often use a +, ✓, – system. For tests I never put letter grades on the student papers, only in my gradebook. The tests have a number for points taken off, including the essay. Then, after discussion, I write the grading scale on the board. I think this method helps the kids listen better when we go over the tests, without focusing first on the grade.

Q Do you have any hints on making good tests?

A I make the essay question first because I feel the essay enables the student to see the overall relationship of the material. Then I construct the rest of the questions, avoiding repetition of the essay.

Q Is the essay as necessary in other subjects as it is in literature?

A Very definitely. As Christians, the more relationships we can get the kids to see, the better they can understand the purpose of the world.

Q How can a teacher retain the incentive to teach?

A Avoid ruts. Reach out and try new methods—not because the old method is bad, but if you let something lie a year or two, it is fresh again. Try experimenting a bit, depending on the class you have. Let me give an example. One year I had my class make family profiles, including pictures, of their concept of the ideal family. The kids and parents loved it. The next year's class seemed unintrigued; perhaps the many boys in that class were not ready to "play house," so I adjusted that project.

If a project seems to be flopping, don't be afraid to change midstream. Work out the changes with the kids. Sometimes I misjudge their interests or abilities. Sometimes they have too much to do in another class at the same time, or the idea is repetitive of another class. Then change the course to adapt.

Another comment I have about avoiding ruts—I don't like to see teachers using yellowed notes. Also, teachers need to develop a flexibility to adapt to schedule changes. I always construct tests with a question I can eliminate if the time runs out.

Q What impressions do you remember from your first week of teaching?

A I thought teaching was so easy! I had a fifth grade in an ideal situation. I had my bulletin boards up and I soon knew the kids' names. I liked it. At that time I was short-goal oriented. When I had that goal accomplished, I felt good; I wasn't even aware of the weight of a whole year's goals.

After having been in public school as a student myself and as a student teacher, I wanted to teach in a Christian school because I was struggling to see what Christian teaching was all about. In Denver I asked myself, "How

do I make this a Christian classroom?"

Q What did you decide about that question?

A Although we had Bible class and devotions, my struggle was with the subjects. I could see Christianity in the humanities, but I wondered about math and the sciences. I disliked moralistic teaching though—like biblical math.

I still struggle with that question. I can see science being taught Christianly, but when I taught typing, with all those timed exercises, I wondered, "How does one make typing Christian? By typing Scripture?" I don't think so.

I think spelling class can be Christian because I tie it in with writing, whether the book does or not. In home economics, Christianity influences the study of finances and economic use of our goods and also the study of nutrition for healthy bodies. Sewing includes a pleasing presentation of the body made in God's image. That includes being practical, not gaudy and out of place, but attractive.

Q Since you began your career in Denver, how has teaching changed?

A Kids have changed. Our world has changed. Kids are exposed to more ideas. They are much more open. Kids used to sit and wait to be taught, but now they discuss very freely—they're more questioning. New disciplines have opened up. For example, in English we have multi-media, with radio and television in class.

We are also conscious of more ways to teach. Literature was always taught chronologically before, but now we can choose from the chronological, the genre, or the thematic approach.

Some changes are somewhat cyclic. For awhile, we had mini-courses. Now we hear about back-to-basics. In Christian schools we have tended to keep a more middle-of-the-road course, but we dress it up in various ways.

Q Do you have any special advice for new teachers?

A Don't throw things away! Keep test copies. Think of the long term use so you don't have to repeat work. When you lecture, get your notes on paper, and after class add reactions. Do the same with tests so you can make revisions. Keep in contact with parents. Forget about being liked. Remember, the long term goal is more important.

Q Since humor helps a teacher through many situations, would you share any humorous incidents from your teaching experiences?

A One year I had a student who signed the roll and all his papers with the name George Black, which I recorded in my grade book. Several weeks later when I brought up George's name in the faculty room, I discovered I had been had—no George Black was enrolled in our school.

Q What do you consider the best quality of a good administrator?

A A good administrator is one who knows when to step in to help and when to step out of a situation.

Q How can faculty members help one another?

A I believe it is important for faculty members to talk to one another. By discussing generally what is happening in various rooms, we can understand the other parts of our students' lives and also show an interest in the whole school program and the school's philosophy.

Discussion helps us to see various points of view. It enables us to suggest options to one another. It keeps us alert to difficulties of our students. We can benefit from each other's opinions, but we must be honest.

"Miss Lillian Eiten — a good choice," writes Aldrich Evenhouse about his former teacher from his Denver days. "Her interest in the individual and her understanding of personal weaknesses and failures never kept her from motivating us to do our best. 'How many spelling words do you know?' she would ask. 'Put that number on the top of your paper.' Which fifth grader wants to admit to a favorite teacher that he hadn't even tried to learn all of the assigned words?"

Evenhouse continues, "Thirteen years later as a beginning teacher I again had the opportunity to learn from Miss Eiten, and she had not lost her ability to call for the best. Her experience, knowledge, and position as department chairman were never used to intimidate a young, and sometimes foolish, teacher. Through example she motivated towards excellence, never asking for more than she was willing to give herself, and always doing more than her fair share of the work. While she could have been a hard taskmaster, she chose to be a concerned and compassionate colleague. The result was that she functioned as a leader while remaining a wise counselor and a trusted friend."

Her present principal, Dr. Barry Koops, highly regards Lil Eiten as a friend and colleague. He calls her a major asset to Contra Costa Christian. "Indeed," he says, "I believe she was a special gift from God to our new Christian high school."

We are convinced that her gift extends well beyond her school and out to the readers of *Christian Educators Journal* as well.

LVG

Discipline in the Christian Classroom

by John Franken

Both parent and teacher have a calling to a Biblical office that must be filled. Though both can be said to have their own norms, both are interrelated as well. Historically, in Old Testament times the parent was the teacher, but in due time as society grew more complex and diverse, the roles of parent and teacher became more distinct. Often teachers will blame the home if a classroom is not meeting his ideals.

I believe it is not entirely fair to blame the home for the problems a teacher faces at school. A teacher is responsible for the atmosphere and expectations that he sets in the classroom. An atmosphere that is firm but loving, and structured but meaningful, must be maintained, not only in the home but in the classroom as well. Teachers are to discipline their entrusted students in the fear of the Lord.

In his book *Nurturing Children in the Lord*, (p. 53) J. Fennema notes that

> It is clear that the biblical definition of discipline is synonymous with nurture. This discipline or nurture contains two primary emphases, that of instruction or education and that of chastening or correcting.

Fennema continues to elaborate that discipline is not isolated but is interrelated to instruction and counseling in an interdependent fashion.

In his paper, *The Humanization of Education*, (p. 5) S. De Waal states:

> . . . our educational task in guiding the growth of [the] human child includes dealing with all dimensions of human existence as mirrors of God: his intellect, his feelings, his social relations, his biotic structure.

Discipline, if it is to be understood and practiced in a biblical sense, must be a process whereby we are directing our students to become "children of the kingdom."

> But seek first His Kingdom, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:23

Note the following chart from *Parenting with Love and Limits*, (p. 75) by B. Narramore:

Distinctions Between Punishment and Discipline

	Punishment	Discipline
Purpose	To satisfy the demands of justice	To promote the growth and maturity
Focus	Sinful deeds and attitudes of the past	Christ-like deeds and attitudes in the future
Attitude	Anger	Love

The classroom contains two elements that have eternal significance: the teacher and the student. One cannot be isolated from the other and both are in interrelationship to each other. Before a teacher can establish the guidelines for the students he must understand what his role must be.

Be a positive example:

The Bible indicates that having the responsibility for leading others, that is being teachers, is not a task that can be taken lightly.

> But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea. Matthew 18:6 [NAS]

Teachers should be able, with the apostle Paul, to say to their students, "I exhort you, therefore, be imitators of me." (I Corinthians 4:16) Sinners though we be, we are to be models to our students and this is not of ourselves but through the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. *Teachers must be born again* and show their commitment to Christ. A teacher who is not or does not show commitment as a born again believer will not be able to demand that commitment from the students. The students should know that the teacher was an unregenerate who has now been regenerated (sanctified) through the blood of the Lamb. Open, heartfelt prayer should become a very important part of the classroom, not only for starting the day, but also whenever the need arises. The teacher, like the student, feels the tension of the "already and the not yet," but is assured that the new life in Christ is of eternal value. Teachers and student should be seen as "pressing on towards the goal."

2. *Teachers must strive to be consistent* in their temperament and actions, showing concern for the student not only when he has made a notable achievement but also when he suffers failures. The problem might be personal as well as academic. Teachers should be there consistently to actively *listen* to the student's needs.

Avoid acting or reacting out of personal anger. Human nature is not perfect and the powers of the flesh (old nature) will be activated more easily in some than in others. Strive for consistency of temperament. Dr. Dobson (*Focus on the Family*) states that anger will actually dampen the result of your corrective actions. If you find difficulty in having an even temperament that will be respected by the students, make it a matter of prayer. Students are expected to be prepared and in their class on time, and so should the teacher.

Sister Svoboda, quoted in the January 1980 *Christian Home and School*, points out that

> Teachers get irritated when students come to class unprepared. We take it to mean that our class—of which we are a vital part—means little or nothing to them. We are insulted. Shouldn't teachers always come prepared for the class? It is a way of saying to the students: You know something? This class—with you in it—is really important.

Enhance self esteem:

1. *Total acceptance:* The student should feel that the teacher accepts him for what he is, not for what he should be. A teacher should be able to separate the person from his actions. He should have an emphatic understanding for the student, that is, be able to understand the student's inner reactions.

2. *Class acceptance:* The students should feel accepted by their classmates. Create an atmosphere where the students are of help to each other and feel as if they are part of a community. Brighter students can work with slower ones. Slower students can be cheered on. Rejoice with the students as they make progress. Develop an atmosphere where the students will not only share the needs of others in prayer but their own needs as well. Make good use of group projects when applicable not only to provide variety but to develop class acceptance.

Set limits:

Set limits (rules) that are well defined and which the students know they must obey. The teacher must be consistent in enforcing them. The process of enforcing the rules might become wearying and tiresome, but if the teacher's expectations are not followed by consistent demand, the teacher may undermine himself. Students will need and want rules so they can live in peace and harmony and be secure. The behavior patterns that develop in the classroom cannot be blamed entirely on the home situation. The teacher must set standards for the room, standards that will become a way of life within the classroom. Make sure that the students are well acquainted with the general school rules and the classroom expectations (bathroom privilege, discussion procedure, work procedures, tardies, etc.). Don't burden your students with loads of rules, but make a few that they must obey.

The students must be given an opportunity to be responsible beings and to develop values that will become intrinsically founded, which will allow them to operate freely within the given limits as unique image bearers. When students fail to act responsibly within the given limits, corrective action will have to be taken. The corrective action should be firm but loving.

A teacher is responsible for the atmosphere and expectations that he sets in the classroom.

Correct out of love:

1. *Instruct:* A prerequisite to correction is that students must know what they have done wrong. They must have been instructed in the classroom rules and expectations.

2. *Show concern:* Correction should then be done showing genuine concern for the child's welfare, that is nurturing him for the future. A teacher must not let such nonverbal clues as impatience, anger, irritation, and frustration show. The message that must be communicated is that the correction is being for the student's welfare and is being done in love. This must be done in an atmosphere of patience and self control. John tells us:

> There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment and the one who fears is not perfected in love. (I John 4:18)

3. *Pray:* An essential part of correcting our students is praying. It should be the teacher's daily supplication to God that he will, through the power of the Spirit, be guided in the matter of nurturing those students who have been entrusted to his care. A student who becomes a special burden (or stumbling block) should become the object of special supplication. Fellow staff members and parents involved can be asked for advice and asked to include that student in their daily prayers. Prayer does not mean we will not experience difficulties in guiding our students, but it will become a major pillar in nuturing the students.

4. *Be firm, fair, and sensitive:* Correction should be firm, but it must also be fair and sensitive.

> Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart. Colossians 3:21

Our correction born out of love should not drive children to despair. Discuss what is going to be done, why it is going to be done, and how it is going to be implemented. The student's reaction will be a clue to the suitability and effectiveness of the method of correction used. Correction should be handled in such a way as to do no permanent damage to the child's positive self image. This may mean that what can be done to one cannot necessarily be done to another. It does not mean the teacher is to develop a classroom that is permissive. Permissiveness and fairness are not the same thing. In *The Antecedents of Self Esteem* (p. 261), S. Coopersmith explains that

> Higher levels of self esteem are associated with greater demands, firmer regulations, and parental decisiveness rather than with tension-free, permissive, and otherwise idealized environment.

Students must be held accountable for their action and correction in a process whereby they will become more aware of their responsibility and the fact that ultimately all obedience is directed to God.

5. *Exercise greater understanding:* Correction done in love will promote communication and understanding. Hebrews 12:11 reminds us that

> All discipline (means chastening, KJV) for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruits of righteousness.

Create an atmosphere of fellowship:

1. *Develop right attitudes:* Students should be encouraged to have the right attitudes toward each other. Their attitudes should not be determined by what

others think or what they would imagine others to think about them, but by their attitude to God. Since God has extended His love to them, the students should also extend that love to each other, regardless of the attitudes of others.

> Beloved let us love one another, for love is from God, and every one who loves is born of God and knows God. I John 4:7

2. *Listen:* Students must be encouraged to listen to each other. There must be fostered a willingness to try to understand their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, the better to love them and fulfill their needs. Students should be encouraged to listen carefully. They should be able to focus on the other person with their heart and mind, and not let self-centeredness become a stumbling block. Listening is not a time to make impressions on the one who needs attention, but a time to extend oneself to the other person.

3. *Watch vocabulary:* Students must uphold the oneness by what they say. Carelessly spoken words, words which are unkind, cruel, and hurting must be discouraged. Students must be encouraged to seal their lips when judgement is about to be issued.

> Someone has once said that it would be well if everything we were tempted to say about another person would not be said unless it could go through three gates. Over the first gate is written, IS IT TRUE? Over the second, IS IT KIND? and over the third, IS IT NECESSARY? (*The Christian Looks at Himself*, p. 135, A. Hoekema)

The kind of words that should become a part of the student's natural vocabulary are ones that upbuild and are uplifting: friendly words, words of encouragement, words of guidance, words of comfort.

4. *Function as a body:* Students can uphold the fellowship by what they do. The classroom has many different types of students, each with differing abilities and personalities. "Love your neighbor as yourself" refers not only to their attitudes to others, but also to their actions.

> For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. James 3:23-24

There are students who are lonely because they feel unwanted or have a low self esteem. Encourage students to make others feel an accepted part of the group. Opportunities to put love into action will always be there, and the sensitivity needed to detect the opportunities must continually be refined. The class should function as the body of Christ. Each part (student) should be made increasingly aware that he cannot be independent of another part without harming the fellowship in Christ. Paul, in I Corinthians 12:24-27, describes it beautifully when he says,

> God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

Make learning meaningful:

The classroom must have a purposeful atmosphere, so the students know that they as well as the teacher are to live all of life to the glory and honor of God.

> Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. I Corinthians 10:31

In *Shaping School Curriculum* H. Van Brummelen and G. Steensma state that in order for the life of the student to become purposeful, he must be confronted with true knowledge, a knowledge that leads the student to live obediently to the Lord. This is knowledge that will recognize that every human act flows out of one's faith commitment, and realizes that so-called neutral objectivity is a myth. Students must be shown how to respond obediently in everyday situations. Van Brummelen and Steensma also say that instruction must reveal to the student that the subject being dealt with is only one side of God's creation, only part of the whole, and, therefore, not meant to be seen in isolation. S. De Waal adds that

> It is the task of the teacher to provide learning tasks that help the learner discover essential relationships without getting bogged down in minor detail. . . . In the Holy Spirit, God is at work modifying all the action processes of the learner. Then insight is no longer a human achievement. (*A Scriptural Model of the Learner*, p. 33)

Such a task is demanding and requires that one constantly review what is being taught. A growing knowledge of God's Word and prayer are prerequisites to implementing an atmosphere in which meaningful learning can take place.

The task of a classroom teacher is an awesome responsibility that will be filled with difficulties, struggles, discouraging encounters, and failures. It is with this awareness that a teacher realizes that he can only sow the seed in and through his life and effort. In all of life, whatever the sphere of operation, we are humbly being driven to our knees confessing to our almighty and sovereign Lord that we are but humans who have been renewed in Jesus Christ, and asking that we continually be given the strength in our victorious struggle over the powers of the Evil One. The struggles and victory of the teacher are not in isolation, but belong in the context of God's covenant people seeking to live to His honor and glory.

The student should feel that the teacher accepts him for what he is, not for what he should be.

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Is There Merit in Merit System Rating?

by Ben Boxum

Like the weather, the topic of merit rating for teachers is something many talk about, but no one does anything about. Learned men, some vociferous ones, upon occasion proclaim that salary scales are unfair. The only fair way to compensate a teacher is upon the individual's merit, they say. Many listening in on these learned discussions nod assent, either because it is easier to agree and be inconspicuous, or because the idea is truly meritorious.

One basic question that always dampens the ardor of the merit system's advocates is, "How do you implement a fair merit system?"

According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, merit means:

> 1. Due reward or punishment, usually, reward deserved; 4. That which is counted to one as a cause or reason of deserving well; a praiseworthy quality, act, etc.

Keeping this definition in mind, the following questions arise. What is to be considered as "merit" and how is it to be evaluated? Mark C. Schinnerer, one time Superintendent of Schools, Cleveland, Ohio, in an article years ago in *The Nations' Schools, Cleveland, Ohio,* also raises this question. Mr. Schinnerer quotes H. H. Remmers of Purdue as follows:

> Teachers can be evaluated either on the basis of the change they bring about in pupils or on the basis of those aspects of themselves that are assumed to be related to their effectiveness in bringing about desirable changes in pupils.

Mr. Schinnerer thinks that this device is "worse than unreliable." He observes further that it is easier to spot the really poor teacher by pupil reaction than the good one. He says,

> Complete disorder in a classroom, for example, is a sign that learning is not going on, but complete quiet is not a reliable sign that learning is going on.

Other problems presented by Mr. Schinnerer concerning merit system rating include: the subjectivity of merit rating, including personality, academic accomplishments, and teaching methods; the suspicion with which teachers view merit system ratings; and the fact that the efficiency of merit ratings diminishes in proportion to the size of the school system. Much more research is needed in the field of teacher evaluation in order to pick out the really good teachers with a high degree of reliability. He concludes with this statement: "I am in favor of paying people what they are worth. I don't know how to do it but I'd like to learn. . ."

So that puts us back to the question first raised, "How do we implement a fair merit system?"

Another educator, Kenneth C. Coulter, of Greenwich, Conn., has a few provocative thoughts on this subject. Also writing in *The Nation's Schools*, he suggests that before introducing a merit scale, the number of merit teachers in a system at the time of installing such a scale must be determined. By combined efforts of a team of experts in education, supervisory officers, and teachers in a school or department, teachers would be ranked according to the composite results of the evaluating groups. Those coming out as merit teachers would receive immediate reward and would stimulate the less able teachers in the system. Also, new teachers would have some idea of how they could become merit teachers.

The one question he raises that seems extremely applicable to our own school system is this: "Is it a fact that this nation must turn to 'gimmicks' when dealing with teachers?"

Considering this question, isn't a merit system for Christian School teachers out of place?

As teachers, we claim to be in our profession first of all because God must be glorified in the training of the Covenant youth. That motive alone should inspire a Christian teacher to his best efforts.

Teachers must give an account, not to some merit board or system first of all, but to God, who will judge perfectly the motives of our teaching.

It is impossible to get away from a type of "merit" rating even now. Administrators particularly are duty bound to give to their boards as careful an evaluation as possible of the teachers in their system. This, by nature of their responsibilities, cannot be avoided. However, would it improve the situation to add the whole system of teachers evaluating fellow teachers, when in reality a teacher's responsibility is self-evaluation and improvement? Wouldn't this kind of judging create unrest among the faculty? Democracy in administration has some value no doubt, but diffused administration invariably produces chaos.

How many poor teachers are riding on the coattails of good teachers? Are teachers, and the profession itself, suffering because of the lack of an objective merit system of evaluation?

Perhaps the answer is, we can't tell because we have no merit system worked out to determine the answer to those questions.

Does anyone?

Ben Boxum, the new editor of *Principal's Perspective*, is the superintendent of Lynden Christian School in Lynden, Washington.

Idea Bank

GOAL: to promote pupil's knowledge of and familiarity with the geography of Bible lands.

MATERIALS: A piece of heavy cardboard, approximately 3' x 4', such as the side of a refrigerator box. Scissors or knife. Map of the Land of Palestine.

PROCEDURE: Draw an outline of the Map of Palestine on the cardboard and cut out the silhouette. You may wish to use an opaque projector or an overhead projector transparency to assist you in making the drawing. Make the map large enough so that it will fit nicely on your chalkboard when you draw around it.

Cut out a slot as wide as a piece of chalk for the Jordan River and make appropriate openings for the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Make circular holes to show the location of a few key cities.

Whenever you tell a Bible story or teach a Bible lesson in some other format, the cardboard template can quickly be put to use. Either you or a few of your pupils can hold the cardboard against the chalkboard, draw around it for an outline map, and mark the slots and holes for key points of reference.

The basic map can easily be extended to include Egypt and other adjoining lands.

Mark the place on the chalkboard map where the event in the Bible story occurred, whether it is Elijah at Mr. Carmel or Paul (Saul) on the road to Damascus.

Using map references regularly will do much for the geographic literacy of the pupils and will also add authenticity to the Bible event. Pointing out where it actually happened will do much to provide a quiet contrast between myths and legends and factual Bible history.

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What Sustains

Not like the meteor
which flashing bright
spreads wide its tail,
prances by,
then dims and dies;

But like the ember coal
which burns unaided,
warms, casts light,
could kindle flame.

Diane Karay

My Students Were My Enemies

by Betty Lou Bruton

"Cecil, you know that's not your table!" I spoke above the change-of-class din, and the bell for the fourth period family life class rang in another doomsday for me. I began to thrust yesterday's money management tests back to each student.

"Miz Bruton, why do we have to sit in assigned seats?" Cecil asked and knocked over a chair as he lumbered to his place. This was Cecil's daily ritual.

"Why did you take a point off for this answer?" complained Tina. "Do we have to do what's on the board? Why can't you give us one day off? I hate this class!"

A scuffle errupted. "Miz Bruton, make Rockie give me back my pen! He's been smoking marijuana again." Jeff laughed as he lunged for the pen.

"It's my pen!" Rockie shouted as he took a poke at Jeff. It was hard to believe they were eighteen years old.

"Miz Bruton, Edward is talking nasty again." I turned from Jeff and Rockie to give Linda and Edward a hard look.

"I ain't said nothing," Edward declared.

I raised my eyes in exasperation, and as I glanced at the huge graphic letters spelling "RESPECT" on the wall, I despaired. Teaching respect had been my number one goal at the beginning of the year. Ironically, instead of impressing the students with the desirability of this value, the oversized word reminded me every day of my failure.

The students' voices seemed slightly muffled, as if my head were under water. The drowning sensation had become familiar in the last few weeks. I struggled to stay afloat. Desperately I got them working on the day's assignment by shouting them down with threats to send them to the office. I rigidly stood guard, arms folded, unsmiling, anger and discouragement churning inside.

"In eighteen years of teaching," I thought, "this is the worst class I've ever had." As the young people worked, I tried for the hundredth time to analyze my situation. It was not the first year I had loud, mischievous, or hard-headed students who tried my patience. Discipline had never been my strong point, but classes were orderly enough for learning to take place. Natural noise from laboratory activities and group discussions never bothered me. I had prided myself in having a relaxed atmosphere in which students felt free to express their opinions and try out their own ideas. The principal in his annual evaluation had consistently given me a good score on "rapport with students."

"My other classes are going fairly well this year. Why am I having such a hard time with this class?" I wondered. I was unable to carry out game-type learning activities, because pupils wouldn't follow the rules and fought among themselves. In the food labs I found marbles in the disposal and empty cartons and crushed cans instead of the food I had purchased for the classes to prepare. Once I found a ground beef pattie stuck to the ceiling and raw chicken in the back of a cabinet. I couldn't catch anyone in any of these acts. The few, like Richard, who were well-behaved often gave me a disgusted, why-can't-you-do-something? look.

I tried. I was experienced. I read *The Master Teacher*, and I knew the proper things to do. Students knew what was expected of them, they were allowed to help plan, and the methods of instruc-

tion were varied. Supposedly I had laid the foundation for good classroom discipline, but it wasn't working.

My attempts at friendliness were rebuffed. The few instances I found to give praise were greeted with ridicule. There were too many troublemakers to separate, and the most interesting lessons failed to hold their attention.

"Cecil!" I yelled, "get back to your place!" I was startled by the vehemence of my tone. I had to admit I was talking too loudly and too much these days, becoming argumentative and critical. Believing my problem stemmed from being too easy, I had given up my relaxed ways and had resorted to an uncharacteristic strictness. I took points off for behavior and canceled field trips. The few times someone could be singled out for flagrant disrespect, I sent the culprit to the principal's office. To be perfectly prepared and to keep the youngsters busy, I spent more hours than ever planning their work. Perhaps I was driving them too hard. It was a struggle for power I didn't want, but I felt if I gave an inch, the class would be completely out of control. It was me against them.

Hurrying to finish before the bell, the students were beginning to complain again.

"Well, here it is, but I know you'll find something wrong with it." Tina was bright, but negative.

"Miz Bruton, make Jeff give me my pen."

"Miz Bruton, if Edward so much as lays a hand on me, I'll. . . ."

At last they were gone. I began to straighten my desk before lunch. My grade book, which had been on top at the beginning of the period, was gone.

"They've taken it," I said aloud. Frantically I searched trash cans and cabinet drawers. I was devastated. It was only a week before report cards went out. "They must really hate me," I thought.

I was embarrassed and anxious at the thought of reporting the loss. I had not discussed the extent of my discipline problem with Mr. O., my principal. After my husband Ed's comment, "Now you could stop some of that!", I seldom discussed it at home. If my husband felt I should be handling things better, certainly my principal would. I could hardly believe such behavior could go on myself. I could imagine Mr. O.'s impression of me as an aging teacher losing her ability to manage a classroom.

"Don't worry, it will turn up," Mr. O. said, making light of it, but I went home with a heavy heart.

My family was sympathetic. Ed said, "It's a dirty prank, but don't take it personally. You're not taking it personally, are you, Honey?"

"How else can I take it?" I was near tears.

"Come on, Sweetheart, they're just children. You've never let student shenanigans get to you like this before."

"You don't know what it's like to always have to wonder what those hateful brats will come up with next," I muttered. I refused to be comforted, and Ed looked puzzled and concerned at my attitude.

At Bible study that night, I had difficulty in concentrating. When it was my turn to read, I hastily found my place. "But I say to you who will listen to me: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. As for the man who hits you on one cheek, offer him the other one as well." (Luke 6:27-29 Phillips)

The study leader asked, "Who are your enemies?"

I usually skimmed over this teaching of Jesus, smug in the belief that I had no enemies. No one hated or abused me, so the passage didn't apply. Tonight, however, without thinking I answered aloud, "My students."

My friends laughed, thinking I was joking. I smiled quickly, relieved that no one had taken me seriously. I was suddenly appalled at what was happening to me. Did I really feel that children, to whose learning I had dedicated myself, were my enemies? Self-pity moved over to make room for guilt. I didn't hear the group's discussion, but I prayed for forgiveness for whatever was wrong with me.

"I've asked for help with this class almost every day this year," I complained to God, "but things get worse. Where's the Christian victory? Please, help me."

The adjourning prayer by the group leader broke into my personal pleading. "Help us to remember, Heavenly Father, that if we confess our sins, you are faithful to forgive them and cleanse us of all unrighteousness."

The next morning on the way to school I hoped that the promise in last night's closing prayer would come true for me. I prayed for each one of my troublemakers individually and hummed the old hymn, "Help me the wayward feet to stay/and guide them in the homeward way." Doubting I was fit to do that, I entered the school office. There in my faculty mail box was my grade book.

"I had Richard look around for it when he was sweeping floors after school," Mr. O. explained. "He found it in your broom closet." The relief was greater than the embarrassment.

On one of the teacher work days following the end of the semester, I attended a teacher workshop on stress. "How was it?" Mr. O. asked.

"Very entertaining and great therapy," I replied lightly. He seemed pleased. For me, the workshop had confirmed one thing: I had all the symptoms of approaching teacher burnout.

I was dubious the gimmicks suggested at the workshop would relieve my particular situation for this year. I had made too many mistakes, and the pattern of behavior between me and my pupils was set. "I'll try anything," I declared to myself. I still believed God could help.

The first workshop suggestion for stress was very appealing. I walked a mile every day, began an absorbing needlework project, and checked out a long novel from the library. Taking time for myself was good but seemed to have little effect on job tension. Sometimes it actually increased it. If I took time off before I had finished my school work, my mind was on what needed to be done. If I waited until I was prepared to my satisfaction, there was no time for the recreational pursuits.

The second suggestion—to accept the fact that a teacher can't reach every student—was hard. It certainly made sense that there would be less stress if you reduced your feeling of responsibility, but that old attitude of accountability was deeply ingrained. "All things are possible through Christ," I remembered. The phrase "through Christ" stuck, and I recalled Jesus' words, "Apart from me you can do nothing at all." (John 15:6) It was true. I was not totally responsible for my students. I shared the responsibility with parents, other educators, and God. Accepting this, I felt freer to follow the workshop's suggestion to give more of myself to those who appreciated my efforts—my husband, our aging parents, our friends and neighbors. They needed me as much as my students, if not more.

Suggestion number three was the bottom line. "If what irritates you can be changed, change it." It seemed there was nothing about my irritating students I could change. Changed behavior was what learning was supposed to be, and that's where the frustration lay. They continued to be loud, negative, lazy, and unruly. I could not control these traits, in spite of my best efforts.

In professional and devotional reading, I looked for answers. In Bible study, I continued to search for guidance in the life and teachings of Jesus. Did Jesus have perfect control over others or every situation? He grieved over Jerusalem more than I grieved over my wayward students. At the last he was at the mercy of the mob. He had authority but didn't exercise power. He did, however, have perfect control over Himself. It seemed to mean that the only thing in my situation I could be sure of changing was myself. Maybe with God's help, I could stop thinking of my students as my enemies.

I re-read the "turn the other cheek" passage. I tried to remember a commentary I had read several years ago on this passage. A person who strikes you expects you to be offended and to strike back. My students subconsciously did things to get me to react in a way they knew I disliked—and I obliged them. In trying to control them, I was not controlling myself. Turning the other cheek does not mean asking for punishment, but it does mean taking a risk—the risk that you will lose control. It means not taking responsibility for the aggressor's behavior, but making the other responsible for his own actions.

I was thankful for the recollection of bits and pieces of the long-ago explanation now that I needed it. Applying it in a practical way was another matter.

The first step was to act on my faith that God loved these students and He wanted to help me. Next was to try to be more easy-going. Ruefully I realized it wasn't much of a risk. What little control I had was not the kind I wanted.

I ignored borderline disrespect. I replaced the "RESPECT" sign with "LOVE". I refused to argue over seating arrangements, class assignments, or grades. I declined to explain anything when the sudents weren't listening. I planned simpler activities and gave students more time. I took pranks in stride. I was determined not to be offended by anything. It wasn't easy.

We resumed activities I had cut out because of discipline problems. We went by bus to the Supermarket for comparative shopping reports. They were noisy, and I was tense; but nothing terrible happened. We asked an automobile dealer to be a guest speaker. I relaxed, and they behaved.

About six weeks before school was out, while studying infant nutrition, I bravely borrowed a display of baby food from a local store. I placed a sample of formula preparation, cereal, and strained foods on each table along with written questions about nutritional information on the labels. It was a good lesson. The students were interested and completed the assignment satisfactorily. As I packed up the items to return to the store, I noticed the lid on the strained beef was loose. I inspected the other jars. All had been opened except for those on one table.

"Why are you always surprised when something like this happens?" I asked myself. "You should expect it by now. Why do you keep on trying these risky activities?" The old dismay was rearing its ugly head.

Suddenly it dawned on me that this time there was something I could do. My suspicions that the pranks were pretty widespread were correct; but because of the seating arrangement, I knew which students were responsible for which jars. At last I had something I could get a handle on. "Help me turn my cheek at just the right angle," I prayed.

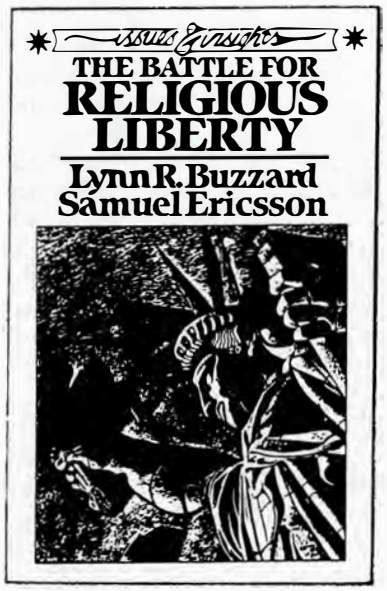
The next day I presented each group of students a bill for the opened baby food. I was brief and relaxed. "I knew I took a chance borrowing the food for you to use, but all I could lose was a few dollars. It was worth it for you to have an opportunity to examine and compare this information. If you wish, you can show responsibility for this by paying your bill."

Each group involved paid up without comment other than to collect the right change. The respect I had tried to instill from the beginning of the year showed in their facial expressions and tone of voice.

I knew it was not a decisive victory from an educator's viewpoint. This one small win would not insure smooth sailing from now on. I realized being a Christian was no guarantee against making mistakes. I could not have changed my bad habits without God's help. Perhaps the students would begin to change too. My old self-confidence as a teacher had been destroyed, but the new confidence in myself in God was ready to grow.

Betty Lou Bruton is a former teacher of home economics, family life, and child care services. She and her husband now operate a grape farm in North Carolina.

Book Reviews



THE BATTLE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

by Lynn R. Buzzard
and Samuel Erickson

David C. Cook Publishing Co.,
Elgin, Illinois, 1982
Paperback 284 pages
and appendices

Reviewed by
Jacob Oppewal, Attorney,
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Lane, Whitinsville, Mass. 01588

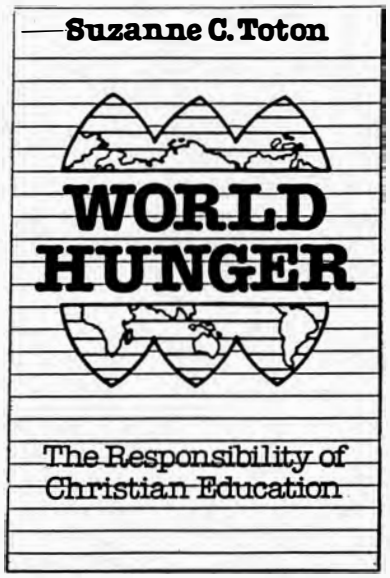
This book is a serious and successful effort at presenting a comprehensive summary of contemporary conflicts centering on religious liberty. It is a thought-provoking book both for the lay person and the professional and is written from a consciously Christian perspective. The case summaries in the appendices might even function as a shortcut to research for the professional handling the occasional case with first amendment implications.

More than a third of the book deals with education-related issues as they have found their way into the casebooks of the United States. The authors are positive and hopeful without becoming unrealistic on the prospects for victory in difficult cases.

It does not seem to occur to the authors that the government-run public education itself may be an anomaly in a country that by its constitution prohibits government from either encouraging or discouraging religion. The unstated supposition of the book, like that of the Courts themselves, seems to be that it is possible to educate a child without religiously orienting him. The failure to challenge that assumption may, however, be due in part to the authors' historical approach to the conflict rather than to an agreement with the assumption or an uncritical acceptance of it.

The authors encourage Christians to use the Courts and to play a part in influencing and developing the law under which we all will live. Traditional reluctant use of Courts gets little support.

This is a healthy and health-giving book on the subject of litigating for legitimate rights. It counsels us against shrinking from the task of insisting upon justice in our society and using our Courts to secure it.



WORLD HUNGER: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by Suzanne C. Toton

Orbis Books
Maryknoll, New York 10545
1982, 210 pp, $7.95 pb.

Reviewed by Uko Zylstra, Associate Professor of Biology, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Perhaps the single greatest problem in the world today is that of world hunger. World hunger points to the importance of food as a focus of interactions in the global society. The significance of such interactions cannot be ignored because food is a basic human need. Failure to address the food needs of people is often a sign of gross injustice in society. Indeed, world hunger threatens the stability of our society.

World hunger is not simply a pro-

blem in certain countries or regions of the world, often designated as the third world. The regions of the world are linked by a food system. It is therefore important that education serves to help people become aware of the complexities of the food system which supplies us with a basic daily need.

This book makes a valuable contribution to the educator on the problems involved in world hunger. In the first one-third of the book the author addresses the causes of the problem. She provides an excellent, brief analysis of four representative views. These views can be summarized in terms of their focus on the causes of world hunger.

1. Overpopulation is the cause of world hunger and thus we must seek to use every effort to control population. We should practice the principle of triage or life-boat ethics to help only those countries that have the potential for solving their food needs.
2. Overconsumption by affluent nations places a stress on world resources and the carrying capacity of the environment. The solution is to curb population growth and to reduce consumption by affluent nations.
3. Overpopulation comes about when a territory has insufficient resources to support its people. Thus, many affluent nations which depend on importing resources are as overpopulated as many poor nations.
4. World hunger is the result of unjust political and economic systems which exploit the poor and make it nearly impossible for the poor to provide for their basic food needs. The solution to world hunger is then to break the economic and political exploitative dependency of the rich upon the poor. The emphasis is placed on the need for structural change in the poor countries.

Although recognizing the importance of some of the above views, Toton's position is that "a fundamental change is needed not only in our political and economic systems but also in the values upon which those systems are based." She adds that "until nations and individuals give priority to meeting human needs over private materialistic gain, poverty and hunger will continue to plague our world." Toton gives a brief but insightful analysis of the economic and political structures which affect the relationships between the rich and poor.

In the second part of the book Toton discusses the responsibility of Christians concerning world hunger. The author provides a brief analysis of selected "nonreligious" and "religious" perspectives. Her analysis is more a summary of various positions than a critical analysis. I found her treatment of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in its various encyclicals and other papal statements very illuminating. I was impressed by the emphasis and tone of the statements which called the church to be attentive to the teachings of the scriptures concerning the social order.

The last section of the book concerns "educating for justice." The author emphasizes the role which education is having in maintaining the *status quo.* This is a critical problem since education has an important contribution in shaping our lives, our values, our perceptions of who we are, and our understanding of social order. Toton sees the responsibility of religious educators to be twofold: "to develop critical consciousness and to engage in action for justice."

The final chapters concern methods of educating for justice. I found this section to be weak. Toton basically advocates the methodology of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, and the educational principles of the Social Reconstructionist school. The author adopts these methodologies uncritically. In line with the rest of the book, I was expecting an articulation of a theory of education for justice which was based on a Christian theory of man and education. In spite of this weakness, the book is valuable both as a source of information and as an analysis of the problems surrounding world hunger.