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**Christian
Educators
Journal**



CEJ

Gifted Students Teach Them Service,

I thought I was smart—until I started kindergarten. Sitting in the “lower room” at Unsicker Memorial School, I learned that third graders are incredibly smarter than mere kindergarten babies. I learned that I should steer clear of “upper room” bullies. I learned that it is not smart to tattle on big boys who push crybabies into slushy puddles during January thaw.

But I learned something else that year: I learned that “A” was better than “B”, and “B” was more desirable than “C”, and “F” was unthinkable. This rating system determined who was “smart” and who was “dumb,” a very important system at school—which mattered not a whit once we slipped into Harry’s bus for the homeward joke-and-riddle ride.

Harry didn’t know who was brilliant and who was not. But he did know all our names, and he knew how many bushels per acre our fathers’ corn fields yielded. The school was, in a sense, the community center where everybody’s character strengths and flaws were known and accepted, at least enough to support one another through weddings, births, illnesses, and funerals.

Since Harry’s day, consolidation and better transportation have practically eliminated small community schools. Self-contained classrooms far exceed the number of combination classes. Along with specialization has come an emphasis on individualization. Today’s teachers are challenged to meet every student’s needs to a far greater extent than was humanly possible in the eight-grade, one- or two-room schoolhouse.

The teachers of that era would have found it impossible and impractical to set up specific programs for the mentally gifted. But now that Johnny’s scores—and the economy—have improved, spe-

cial programs for the gifted seem to be growing.

ANY school considering a program for gifted students must consider who are the gifted, what types of programs exist for them, and how gifted students can best be served.

Giftedness is sometimes defined as the interaction among three clusters of traits: above average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity (Renzulli, et al, *The Revolving Door Identification Model*). But this definition contains several relative terms. What level of ability is considered “above average”? How high are “high levels”? While this definition remains rather imprecise, it does imply that the gifted are those who not only consume but also produce knowledge. A superb memorizer of copied notes is not necessarily gifted. A truly gifted student can select main ideas, show relationships between ideas, and respond to ideas by applying them to new encounters.

In the strict sense, only two or perhaps three of the 986 students I have taught at the junior high level would really qualify as gifted. Yet I have been told by several transfer students, “I was a gifted student in my old school.” I have found these students to be creative and cooperative, but they are not brilliant. In fact, one “gifted” student who transferred into my eighth grade class could not tell a noun from a verb; he had spent his English class time doing unsupervised library “research.” After being tutored in our school, he developed mature study skills and did fine “B” work, but never did he display true giftedness.

Naturally, parents often detect outstanding traits in their own children, but how do we determine real giftedness? Some traits of gifted children do appear

Not Separation

early, but more pronounced differences occur as students reach the second grade. Nevertheless, teachers and parents should be alert to children who, at an early age, demonstrate a high verbal ability including a large vocabulary and use of full sentences. Gifted children are exceptionally curious (beyond the typical "Why?" stage). They can memorize a large quantity of information, concentrate for long periods of time, and sometimes learn to read before entering school. They tend to excel in athletic, musical, dramatic, and artistic activities. Interestingly, gifted children seem to be well-liked by their peers as well as by their teachers, although they do dominate activities and appear critical of their own and others' mistakes.

The recent flurry to set up programs for gifted students is reason enough for us to consider the various approaches and their effects.

The most prevalent program removes gifted students from the classroom several times a week for enrichment activities. A similar plan pulls students out of class for replacement study; these students may have a special class of their own or they may be sent to a class offered in a higher grade. A third alternative is a course or an entire school set up specifically for exceptionally capable students. The least expensive, most time efficient, and most common approach is mainstreaming—the attempt to provide for gifted students within the regular classroom.

Probably each of these approaches has merits and faults, but mainstreaming seems, for several reasons, to be the most appropriate for covenantal Christian schools.

The covenantal Christian school classroom ought to model a community, a community of potential believers as well as a community of potential citizens. Such a community needs all of its members with all of their individual gifts.

The members need to develop an early and realistic understanding of differences within the community. Teachers must demonstrate acceptance of students' different gifts so that students value the gifts of every student in the class. However, when teachers express verbally that members of the class, with their individual gifts, compose one unit—or body, as we read in I Corinthians 12:12—then it seems illogical to send select members of that unit out on a regular basis to receive special instruction. Of course, just as students with severely limited abilities need special instruction, so too a small percentage (2% according to Gifted Coordinator and Teacher Lois Giordano of Fresno, CA, 3-5% in national studies) of the gifted need special schooling.

TEACHERS need to explain in many different ways that the quantity of individual strengths has no bearing on the quantity of God's love for each of us. Certainly Christian teachers already teach this basic principle, but the concept of community lived out in the classroom itself is a most impressive example. Gifted children tend to realize quickly the difference between right and wrong, but they also pass judgement on people and events, so it is important to help them realize that God's response is based on his love rather than on our personal qualities.

Perhaps the strongest argument of all for mainstreaming is the mandate "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . ." (Ephesians 4:12, NIV). Gifted students must learn through experience that the reason God has given them additional gifts is that they may build up the body.

How can gifted children build the body? By providing incentive and encouragement, by sparking class and small group discussions, by helping others work through difficult assignments, by bearing other students' burdens with them, by sharing the joy when a struggling classmate experiences success. I have often seen the spirit of Christian service operate between students at opposite ends of the academic spectrum, and it is indeed beautiful to witness such body building.

Certainly, students who possess exceptional gifts do need special consideration. I believe that can be provided in the regular classroom. Today's teachers have available many units, projects, and textbooks with individualized or multi-tracked assignments. Group work taps the qualities of students with effective leadership, a common strength within gifted students. Contracts enable students and teachers to work out suitable assignments that adequately challenge the gifted. Gifted students should be expected to write more organized, more creative, more complex, more thoroughly edited answers and compositions (a strong argument against exclusively objective tests and assignments). And now technology has blessed us with computers and software that can challenge the gifted without removing them from the classroom community.

Schools have changed a great deal since my kindergarten days in the "lower room." In fact, Unsicker Memorial School is gone now. Only silent cockleburs stand like sentinels to guard the memories. Harry's gone too—but his memory lives on in the minds of all the kids who rode his bus, for every one—"dumb" or "smart"—was an important part of the community he served.

LVG

Advanced Work in English for the Gifted

HISTORICALLY, education in the United States has catered to the golden mean—the average student. Federal Public Law 94-142, known as the Mainstreaming Act, now requires that students be educated in the least restrictive environment possible. Its intent is to safeguard the educational rights of all special students, those above average in intelligence as well as those with physical, mental, or other handicaps.

Some educators may argue that students who are above average in intelligence—the gifted—need no special provisions, since they are clearly capable of learning in a normal classroom setting. But Christian educators must help their students see that all of life is service to God, and that in everything they do they must give of their best to the Master. Christian schools must train gifted children to expect and to achieve the best work of which they are capable. The regular curriculum will not provide that lesson for many gifted students.

Some educational experts have also recognized the need for individualized instruction for gifted students. Samuel R. Laycock (*Gifted Children*, 1957) says, “Good teaching is being done when every child—gifted, average, or dull—is given reasonable opportunity to develop in accordance with his own unique abilities and needs. This may not mean treating every child alike, for the teacher has the right to expect from every child according to his ability, and she has the duty to give to each according to his need. This means not the same

chance for each child, but an equal chance.”

THREE different approaches have been developed for teaching gifted students, according to Steven V. Owen, H. Parker Blount, and Henry Moscow (*Educational Psychology: An Introduction*, 1978). These are grouping, acceleration, and enrichment. Grouping and acceleration separate gifted students from their friends and classmates by assigning them to special classes or by having them take advanced courses or skipping grades. Enrichment, which means making special provisions for the intellectually gifted in the regular classroom, best fulfills the intent of the Mainstreaming Act because it meets the needs of gifted students in the regular classroom—the least restrictive environment possible.

In every subject and on every grade level the giftedness of the students should be matched or bettered by the creativity of the teacher, who must develop instructional strategies for stimulating gifted students to reach their potential. Advanced work in English is especially important for the academically talented for several reasons, according to Arno Jewett, who served as Language Arts Specialist for the United States Office of Education:

1. In a world split by ideological conflict, in a nation bursting with an affluence of material goods, and in communities beset by a plethora of mass producers, there is need for intelligent persons who can use language to relieve tensions, to elevate cultural appreciation, and to convey truth.

2. Since many academically talented students will find themselves

in positions of responsibility when they are adults, the English teacher anticipates their language needs in public speaking, discussion, research, professional writing, and other areas requiring communication skills of an advanced nature.

3. To communicate clearly to highly-educated audiences, the academically talented must employ an extensive active vocabulary and understand the nuances of words and phrases in various patterns and contexts.

4. Through the study of language, academically talented pupils learn to sense life deeply.

Setting up an English resource center is one means to individualize English instruction for gifted students and their classmates. Students can work at their own rates, using materials suitable to their ability and background levels. Programmed instruction in grammar, spelling, reading, and writing enables gifted students to master concepts or skills without having to wait for the rest of the class to catch up.

English teachers can meet the special needs of gifted students in a conventional classroom setting by using enrichment techniques to teach grammar, literature and reading, and writing.

TEACHERS can help gifted students with grammar by giving pretests before every unit. Students who answer the questions correctly probably know the material so well that a repeat

would prove more frustrating than beneficial. Teachers can assign these students to prepare an outside project such as memorizing poetry or preparing a skit or play, depending on how many students test out of the unit. These students need come to class only to take the unit test.

Students who test out of the unit can also tutor classmates by helping them with worksheets and other assignments. This way the tutors are able to review the material without sitting through class presentations. The benefits of tutoring for both the tutor and the tutored can be immense, according to Owen, et al. (When I was in kindergarten, tutoring classmates made me interested in being an educator.)

NORMA E. Cutts and Nicholas Moseley (*Teaching the Bright and Gifted*, 1957) say that in all subjects, but particularly in literature and reading, "A bright student's deficiencies may escape detection, even by himself. The bright student who is a poor reader may pay careful attention in class and pick up so much knowledge that it is hard to believe he is not studying his textbooks efficiently." Teachers must be on the alert for gifted students who are poor readers. Having students read aloud in class is one way to check whether gifted students are reading at the level they should be.

Teachers can encourage gifted students in reading by setting up a Sustained Silent Reading program (SSR) in which students read whatever they desire, subject to teacher approval. The program seeks to stimulate interest in reading and to give practice in reading, since it is easy to assign reading but difficult to ensure that assignments are completed.

During SSR, teachers should encourage gifted students to read the classics or modern literary heavyweights

rather than the popular paperbacks their friends may be reading. Louis Fliegler (*Curriculum Planning for the Gifted*, 1961), says, "Despite their wide reading, gifted children often need guidance in finding books to satisfy personal needs. In a world of television and comic books, they sometimes require encouragement, incentive, and direction to form a desirable and individually appropriate reading pattern." By steering gifted children towards suitable challenging literature, teachers can help shape their literary tastes.

Another way to stimulate the gifted in reading and literature is by having them study an author or work of literature independently and presenting their papers or projects to the class. J.N. Hook (*The Teaching of High School English*, 1972) notes that besides the educational benefits for both the gifted students and their classmates, by completing an individual study a gifted student gains "... pride in his own accomplishment and ... status in the eyes of his fellow students." Gifted students need the reassurance that their classmates appreciate their accomplishments.

Thomas H. Estes and Joseph L. Vaughan, Jr., (*Reading and Learning in the Content Classroom*, 1978) advise teachers to assign literature to gifted students based on ability, since "reading materials can and should be assessed for difficulty and appropriateness." The class can benefit from what these students read if they present a report or panel discussion of the literature. The reports or discussions may entice other students to read the more challenging assignment.

Hook says schools can help gifted students achieve their potential in literature

by offering an upgraded program for superior students as at Schenley High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. High-ability students in grades 10-12 take a three-year sequence of thematic units. A student can enter at the beginning of any sequence, and progress is marked not by changing grade levels but by reading more difficult selections, by understanding subtler points of content and style, and by demonstrating increased mastery of speaking and writing skills. The program includes three units each on language and literary types, one on literature and the fine arts, and thirteen on universal themes in literature.

UNFORTUNATELY, many gifted students do not see the correlation between good writing and correct English. Benjamin Fine (*Stretching Their Minds*, 1964) laments that "Superior children sometimes consider themselves superior to such humdrum limitations on carefree creativity as spelling and syntax," and consider both a waste of time. He suggests playing the homonym game to demonstrate the importance of correct spelling. Students think of misunderstandings that could occur when words with different meanings sound the same. Perhaps the classic example is the famous "Who's on first" radio routine, which a teacher could record and play in class. Also, students can write plays or skits that show the power of punctuation, perhaps the varying implications of a response when it is "Oh?", "Oh.", or "Oh!" to help them fulfill Jewett's goal of understanding "the nuances of words and phrases in various patterns and contexts."

Teachers should encourage gifted writers to contribute their talents to the school newspaper, yearbook or fine arts magazine as well as invite them to sub-

mit their writings to contests in teen-oriented magazines such as *American Girl* and *Boys Life*, both of which solicit reader entries. The possibility of publication can be a strong incentive for a writer (I know!).

If gifted students complain that writing assignments don't challenge them, or if teachers sense that assignments may be too easy for them, assign these students to write for a specific audience. Instead of writing a general paper on the benefits of jogging, a student could direct his or her arguments towards teenagers who dislike exercising. Also, teachers might ask gifted writers to slant an article towards the specific bias of a certain magazine. Religious magazines such as *Guidepost* or *Insight* would probably prefer a story demonstrating Christian insight or a Christian world-and-life view, while *American Girl* or *Boys Life* would not make that requirement.

Gifted students must be challenged in every subject, but Cutts and Moseley pinpoint language as the determiner of a gifted student's success: "Regular progress in the fundamentals of English is especially important to the bright pupil. His success in living up to his ability may very well depend on the way he speaks and writes. If he does not habitually speak and write correctly, he will feel inferior, he will be inferior, when he associates with able people who have set high standards for themselves."

Christian educators must ensure that the gifted children in their classes are developing all of their God-given academic talents rather than coasting through an unchallenging school curriculum.

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Words from the Coach

Bryce Fopma

Tom,
I regret
that in my arena
there are no cheering crowds,
no high fives,
no next-day sports page accolades;
there are no giant banners to coax you on,
no glassed trophy case,
no pep bands blaring the school song;

But,

Tom,

yes, I do see you,
shoulders slumped, head bowed
in the back of my classroom;
yes, I do notice your not-so-nimble fingers
clutching a pencil while
dribbling poetic words across the page,
rhythmically driving home your inmost thoughts;
yes, I hear you speaking in your own quiet way
with such style, such grace,
stirring up more emotion
than could be mustered by
any slam dunk.

And,

Tom,

as you sit in the bleachers
tomorrow night—
sit tall—
because in my scorebook,
You're Number 1!

Your English teacher

Educating the Gifted

AS a Christian educator, are you interested in providing for your students who are gifted? Being a conscientious teacher, you are probably saying "yes." But what do you really know about the gifted (other than being so yourself)? What are your beliefs about the importance of special programs for the gifted, and how would you identify those who would be in such programs? Given the following list of abilities, which ones would you choose as being related to giftedness:

high intelligence
high achievement
creative thinking
leadership ability
musical ability
athletic ability

If you have chosen all of these, you would be in agreement with a widely-used definition prepared for the U.S. Congress by Sidney P. Marland when he was chief of the now-defunct Office for the Gifted and Talented:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons, who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas: (a) general intellectual ability, (b) specific academic aptitude, (c) creative or productive thinking, (d) leadership ability, (e) visual and performing arts, (f) psychomotor ability.

This definition, however, does not tell us how to identify giftedness. Operationally, what is meant by each of the areas? For example, what is leadership ability? Can it be trained? How do we

differentiate between "visual and performing arts" and "psychomotor ability"? Does "visual and performing arts" include ballet dancers and "psychomotor ability," basketball stars?

It is important that educators, along with parents and church school personnel, struggle with the need for planning some ways of identifying and instructing gifted children so that they may not waste their talents. Just because children are bright does not mean that they are able to be successful in life without nurturing and instruction. Gifted children may not understand their own mental capabilities and may actually be frustrated in school, which often leads to emotional problems and disruptive behavior. Their behavior then leads to disciplinary measures, and finally (in the worst case), to their failing courses, dropping out of school, and possibly even breaking the law.

THE home, the school, and the church must combine to work out the best plan for educating the gifted and talented. Some guidelines for such planning are the following:

1. *A clear statement of philosophy and purpose is needed.* A Christian philosophy of child-rearing must begin with a view of the child as an image-bearer of God. However, because of sin we are all on a pilgrimage through this life. As children begin this pilgrimage, they require guidance from those who are responsible for them. In general, or philosophical terms, this means that caring adults must understand children—all children, with all their idiosyncracies. The understanding of giftedness is as important as the understanding of normalcy, or the understanding of handicapping conditions.

It is *not* correct to think of gifted children as having the thinking capabilities of an older person. The mental age concept is a fallacy. A mental age which is obtained on an intelligence test is merely a mathematical concept which

relates to how persons of a given chronological age respond to items on a particular test *on average*. Other variables are important as well: chronological life span, inherited characteristics of temperament as well as intelligence, physical characteristics as well as mental, environmental conditions as well as genetic.

A statement of philosophy must include an institutional stance toward what is to be considered giftedness. Is giftedness something to be feared? Is it something to be respected? Must it be treated with permissiveness? With pressure for advanced achievement? Obviously, we should respect, but not fear mental prowess and creative ability. We may, I believe, say to children who do well in school, "My, you are smart!"

American public education has engaged alternately in its commitment to excellence in education and its belief in equality in education. One expert in the education of the gifted, Tannenbaum, stated it this way:

Fostering excellence means recognizing the right of gifted children to realize their potential, but it also suggests something uncomfortably close to encouraging elitism if the ablest are privy to educational experiences that are denied all other children. On the other hand, promoting egalitarianism will guarantee increased attention to children from lower-status environments who are failing at school. As we concentrate more exclusively on raising the performance levels of these minorities, however, there is danger of discriminating against the minority of gifted students by denying their right to be challenged adequately on grounds that they are advantaged. Perhaps because we cannot live exclusively with excellence or egalitarianism for any length of time and tend to counterpose rather than reconcile them, we seem fated to drift from one to the other indefinitely.

As Christian educators, do we have the system of beliefs that we could use to put both egalitarianism and teaching the gifted in practice at the same time? Couldn't we take the lead and show how it is possible to meet the needs of all children in our Christian schools, or must we follow what is happening in the public domain?

2. *The gifted must be taught with understanding.* Having decided that mentally superior and creative individuals are to be identified, we must agree to challenge and encourage them to use their gifts for the good of others. There is no room then for allowing them to "grow like Topsy." Any coalition of adults responsible to children-rearing must understand what is required of the children whom they wish to call gifted: namely, hard work, dedication, competitiveness, and ability to learn rapidly.

A talent development study was done by Dr. Benjamin S. Bloom (1982) of the University of Chicago, in which 25 accomplished individuals from six fields (concert pianists, sculptors, research mathematicians, research neurologists, Olympic swimmers, and tennis players) were studied. A striking find was that family, selected teachers, and sometimes the peer group played an active role in teaching and supporting the talented individual at each of the major stages in his or her development. Three characteristics prevailed: (1) unusual willingness to put in a great deal of time and effort to achieve at a high level, (2) great competitiveness with other peers in the talent field (determination to do their best at all costs), and (3) ability to rapidly learn new techniques, ideas, or processes in the talent field.

Bloom and his fellow researchers suggested that while one might assume that attributing special characteristics would be the cause of initial instruction and support, they found that these children received encouragement and instruction in a talent area *first*, and were only later

identified as having the unusual qualities noted by the parents or teachers. Bloom concluded that only a few of these performers were regarded as child prodigies up to age 10 or 12. In almost no instance could their attainment have been predicted from any or all of the gifts these individuals had in the early years. Thus, it was concluded that "the talent-development process and the commitment of these individuals to their respective talent areas, supported by parents and teachers, appear to be the primary determinants of great talent development."

There is a complex relationship between development and instruction that is suggested in the above finding. We have a widely-held belief that we must wait for signs of developmental readiness before we instruct children in tasks appropriate for a given age. A Russian developmentalist, Vygotsky, way back in the 1920's conducted experiments with children and noted that instruction often must precede development. Urie Bronfenbrenner reviewed all the child development literature during the International Year of the Child and suggested that the first proposition in child rearing is that an adult who knows something that a child does not know shall teach that something to the child. This indicates that learning is from the outside before it can be from the inside.

One of the most important points I wish to make is that when a child is labeled gifted, it means that the person carries a burden of responsibility for the particular gifts he or she has genetically received or environmentally developed. I use the word "burden" purposefully because I wish to underscore the need for appropriate nurturing (instruction) so that gifted individuals may be able to bear the burden as they develop to maturity.

3. *The school should have several program options available for the gifted.* After listing these, I will discuss just

those which I consider the most viable:

special schools or
school-within-a-school
learning centers
grade skipping
telescoped programs
subject matter acceleration
advanced placement
enriched classes
individualized study
tutor, mentors, and internship programs
within class individualization

Obviously, the best place to start is with some assessment, both by standardized and nonstandardized tests, of the skills, knowledge, and learning needs of the children who have been identified as gifted. *Acceleration* by way of early school admission and subject matter acceleration seem to be the most advantageous according to research, but this might be because this has been easier to research than enrichment within the regular classroom. Grade skipping is another type of acceleration which for the extremely gifted is sometimes desirable. In my opinion, at any time during the year when it appears that a child might profit from the more advanced curriculum in the next grade, such an option should be available. Of course, other factors must be taken into consideration, such as the pressure of making new friends; but it actually might be less traumatic and more beneficial than we think. At least, it might be worth trying in certain cases.

Telescoped programs make it possible to cover all the content but still do three year's worth of work in two, or four year's work in three. A school could have homogeneous classes for the gifted at elementary or middle school level and have the advantages of grade skipping without the social problems. At the high school level, a student could be counseled toward completing high school in three years by reducing elec-

tives, skipping grade levels in some subjects, and taking college or summer courses.

Self-initiated learning projects are not usually too productive unless these are carefully planned and monitored by teachers or tutors. Any one-to-one teaching situation is expensive, but might be worth it in some cases. However, a *mentor or internship* program would be useful in communities where resources can be garnered. A mentor, unlike a teacher or tutor, does not necessarily need to have an organized agenda for instruction. A gifted child is given time to meet with an adult in the area of mutual interest. An internship program, where gifted children actually work for mentors (e.g., a congressional office, a hospital, a business firm) can enable the gifted child to gain valuable experience and learn at the same time.

A systemwide program which would be worth studying has been in place in Cleveland, Ohio, since shortly after World War I. The Division of Major Work Classes in Cleveland has prospered because of support from the community as a whole. A description of that program can be found in the *Seventy-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, in an article by Thom (1979).

I have not attempted a complete description of all the possible options which might be used by Christian schools. Under the next guideline, I will project what might be useful for Christian schools generally as they plan for the gifted in our midst.

4. *Christian Schools International and Christian colleges, such as Calvin and Dordt, should provide consultative and technical assistance upon request to Christian schools.* While it would be ideal for Christian schools to have qualified teachers in the education of the gifted, it is unlikely that there would be enough of a pool upon which to draw.

Therefore, professional assistance could be given by trained personnel at CSI and the colleges by way of in-service workshops, teacher institutes, reading lists, and aid in planning program options for individual schools. One present-day movement is toward improving the teaching of thinking skills, a topic which could be discussed in teachers' meetings

and would help all children, including the gifted.

Dr. Corrine Kass has been named Dean for Academic Administration at Calvin College.

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Christian Physical Educators Hold Conference

On March 9-10, 1984, some 30 physical educators met at Trinity Western College in Langley, B.C. to discuss and question different concerns and ideas for the Christian physical educator and coach. This was the first time such a conference was organized in the area, with some participants travelling over 600km to come. Those in attendance were enlightened and encouraged by the speakers and by each other. Plans are already underway for another such conference next spring.

The sessions consisted of a panel discussion on "The Physical Educator in the Class Situation" and the following speeches:

John Byl: "Thinking Christianly in Physical Education and Athletics."

Murray Hall: "The Coach in the Public School System."

Wally Unger: "Whose Agenda Do We Follow?"

Gary Naylor: "Where to From Here?"

Printed copies of these sessions are being prepared and will be available at a cost of \$7.50 (postage and handling included). Tapes of the above speeches will be available at a cost of \$5.00 per speech (postage and handling included). If you are interested in either of the above or would like information concerning next year's conference please contact:

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A SPARK for the Gifted



Fourth graders practice a presentation on hot air ballooning.

A small group of teachers lingered over a cup of after-school coffee. The conversation turned to the recent suicide of a young Christian woman, and one teacher made the remark, "She was another one of those who is just too smart for her own good." The remark was well-meant but displayed a gross misconception.

Intellectual gifts—gifts of knowledge—are God-given and are not determined by the recipient. All gifts, Scripture teaches, are given to be used to praise and honor God and to benefit the body of Christ. How can we possibly say that someone is "too smart for his own good"? We are saying that we either have not accepted his gift or that we question its value within the body of believers. Serious consideration of the needs of the intellectually gifted child is long overdue in the Christian educational community.

There are children in our Christian schools today who suffer because of their "gifts." These children experience misunderstanding, develop a haughty or inferior attitude, and daily face the hopelessness of not being challenged. They are children who possess the gift of evaluative thinking, but they find little opportunity to use this gift within the firm and loving boundaries of Christian education.

WHAT are the educational needs of the gifted child? Initially, he desperately needs to be challenged at his own cognitive level. He needs to know that someone understands what his level of development is and is willing to accept, lead, and assist him in returning his talent to the Lord. A gifted child often feels that he does not belong because, being keenly perceptive, he realizes at an early age that he is "different." He will begin to hide his talents as early as second grade in order that he may "blend in." Undera-

chievement is a common and serious problem among gifted children.

Intellectually gifted children have a variety of characteristics. They prefer complexity and are willing to take risks. Many are deeply sensitive emotionally. They are concerned about cause-effect relationships, and can be annoyingly independent. They are children with a more mature sense of truth and justice and have keen insights into processes and problems of living and dying. They are adept at making analogies and applying them to real-life situations.

WHAT provisions can be made for the intellectually gifted—the children who are educationally “above and beyond”? We must be careful that we do not equate educational growth with conformity to a manner of teaching. The social and emotional needs of these children are as great as the intellectual needs. Educators who understand these needs must counsel these children prayerfully, assure them that their gifts are needed in the body of Christ, and teach them of their responsibility to use their gifts properly.

Pella Christian Grade School at Pella, Iowa, has done a serious and lengthy study on the needs of gifted children. The school had previously developed a complete resource program for the learning disabled and felt it was time to broaden its Christian philosophical spectrum to include the unique potential of each student. A study committee was appointed to determine the school community’s definition of giftedness and assess the need within the school population.

The school adopted this definition of the gifted children of the school: “Gifted and talented children are those who by virtue of God-given outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These children require

differentiated educational programs and/or school services beyond those normally provided within the school program.” The definition is explained as follows: “The Christian educational community needs to recognize this God-given potential and encourage and allow it to develop to its fullest for the nurture of Christ’s Kingdom, the enhancement of knowledge of man’s responsibility to Creation, and the individual student’s awareness of his privilege and responsibility as a unique image-bearer of Christ.”

Results of the study showed that the staff of the school felt that the needs of the gifted children could best be met by including on staff a person who would work with these children outside the classroom and would serve as a resource for classroom suggestions and assistance. The staff then chose the name SPARK (Special Projects to Advance Research and Knowledge) for the program. As the SPARK handbook states, “the name SPARK has significance not only for its acronym, but for the concept it portrays. The God-given



A SPARK participant presents his display on fossils to his third grade class.

spark of talent that the educationally and academically talented child possesses needs loving Christian nurturing in order that it may give warmth and light to others. A spark has great potential, but only if properly utilized."

Children are identified on the basis of results of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Cognitive Abilities Tests, by teacher and parent nomination, and by a student interview conducted by the SPARK coordinator.

Children who qualify for the program leave their classroom a maximum of two hours per week to meet in the SPARK room. Here they are given opportunities to think creatively, and to pursue independent interests by developing an organized research project. Research and critical-thinking skills are taught and practiced. Students develop the ability to look for original solutions to problems reflecting higher levels of thinking. Leadership skill development is a part of the program.

Since Pella Christian Grade School believes, as Christian Schools International states, that "the central purpose of education in the Christian school is to accomplish the unique development of each child as a member of the Christian community *in order to meaningfully serve God and fellow persons*," teachers place emphasis on sharing the outcome of personal independent study and research. Interesting

and in-depth information returns to the classroom in a variety of forms. A third grader, for example, collected questions about cancer from his classmates, researched the subject, developed a class presentation, and created an electronic question/answer board for students to use following his talk so that he might determine if they had learned what he had set out to teach. A fifth grader developed a complete Quiz Show game, "That's It", and conducted it with fellow fifth graders and with the Mothers Club. The winning mother was awarded a bouquet of cut flowers.

The SPARK program began in the 1982-1983 school year with grades 3-5. Grades 2 and 6 were added in the 1983-1984 school year. This school year grades 1 and 7 were also added.

The program is evaluated annually by teachers, parents, and students. Flexibility and development according to need are keys to success of the program. An experienced, perceptive staff, committed to excellence in Christian education, has been instrumental in the growth and maturing of SPARK programming.

Educational programming for the gifted does not necessarily denote a gifted program per se. Christian classroom teachers have a compassionate, caring attitude basic to

working with gifted children. However, one researcher notes that teachers recognize only 50% of the gifted. With teacher training in characteristics and needs of these students, accuracy of recognition jumps to 85%. Much needs to be done to make all Christian educators aware of the needs of the gifted. Christian institutions which are training teachers need to be developing or refining teacher-training courses to include awareness of the needs of gifted children and constructive ways to provide for these needs within the classroom as well as in special planning outside the classroom.

Educational programming for the gifted children needs to be the result of constant evaluation of our present curricular structure. We must carefully define our educational goals and purposefully move forward in reaching each of our students with an appropriate challenge to assure healthy educational growth in all its dimensions. The essence of proper stewardship which is central to all of Christian education demands that we help our children to use their talents constructively to build the body of Christ.

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Finding and Developing Gifted Minds

PLATO felt survival of Greek democracy hinged on the selection and education of gifted individuals for leadership. In recent years, concerned educators recognized the urgency of training the superior minds of our nation. However, in a national survey, only seventeen states reported having laws which provide for special programs or classrooms for the gifted. In both public and Christian education, the task of serving the needs of gifted children in the regular classroom falls to the teacher.

AS Christian educators, we believe according to Ephesians 4:7, that "Christ has given each of us special abilities . . ." (Living Bible), that each person has a gift. Since gifts and special abilities lie in many areas of life, such as art, music, athletics, intellectual pursuits, leadership, and communication—a problem arises in establishing a criteria for giftedness. Some definitions include outstanding ability in any field of endeavor; other definitions focus on intellectual superiority, creativity, and imagination. Due to widespread acceptance of intelligence tests, the I.Q. score is often used in defining and identifying the gifted individual. The United States Department of Education states that ten percent of the school population falls into a gifted category. If our nation recognizes only ten percent of the students as gifted, the task for a teacher of twenty individuals in a classroom is in discerning the strengths of the remaining ninety percent, and finding ways to develop those strengths.

Although the accepted basis for recognition of a gifted child is the standardized I.Q. scores, enlightened teachers realize that giftedness is expressed in different ways. Many people limit their ideas of gifts and talents to activities involving the arts, such as drawing, act-

ing, or playing a musical instrument. Others expect a gifted child to excel in mathematics or science. Outstanding gifts range from an ability to understand the feelings of others to special skills in using one's hands. When the Apostle Paul described the gifts given by God, he listed the ability to teach, to serve as an administrator, and to lovingly care for the physical needs of others. According to J.M. Dunlap (referred to in *Education of Exceptional Children and Youth*, 1967), fourteen positive characteristics of a gifted child are likely to surface in a congenial setting:

1. Learns rapidly and easily
2. Retains what he learns without much drill
3. Shows much curiosity, as indicated by the kinds, depth, scope, and frequency of his questions
4. Has a rich vocabulary marked by originality of thought and expression
5. Enjoys reading, usually at a mature level
6. Shows interest in words and ideas, as demonstrated by his frequent use of dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other sources
7. Reasons things out, thinks clearly and precisely, and is quick to comprehend
8. Has the ability to generalize, to see relationships, and to make logical associations
9. Examines, tabulates, classifies, collects, and keeps records
10. Is interested at an early age in the nature of man and his universe
11. Knows and appreciates many things of which other children are unaware
12. Seeks older companions among children and enjoys adults
13. Possesses a good sense of humor and is cheerful
14. Has a strong desire to excel

Dunlap also says that such negative characteristics as restlessness, carelessness with handwriting, impatience with subjects requiring rote learning and drill, indifference toward uninteresting classwork, and a critical attitude toward himself and others often characterizes the gifted child.

The ideal identification of the gifted child is accomplished by a variety of procedures, including teacher referral, school achievement, and group and individual intelligence measures.

GIFTED individuals have often had very stimulating early childhood experiences. In spite of that, the path to success for the gifted is not always a smooth one.

In the classroom, a child, who analyzes situations, follows directions, and expresses himself well, is chosen for errands and tasks of responsibility. In the home, parents, unthinkingly, compare one child's accomplishments with another. Jealousy often flares between a gifted child and his peers and siblings.

Some gifted children think in abstract form while fellow classmates remain in the concrete stage. The response of the gifted to eventual results causes peers to think of them as different, sometimes even weird. Some gifted people, knowing how they will be perceived, act with caution or even isolate themselves from the situation.

Teachers, as well as parents, often overlook a gifted child. In a classroom or a home, one or two children with demanding needs take the largest portion of time and energy. The sentiment, "Johnny is bright—he'll make it on his own," forms an excuse for not searching for that special talent and leaves the child to develop skills on his own. Sometimes a gifted child is labeled a trouble-maker because his non-conformity or his maturity in assessing ideas and situations lead him to a non-

traditional way of solving problems or completing projects.

On the other hand, high and unrealistic expectations of parents and teachers sometimes push a student towards under-achievement. A five-year-old may read on a fourth grade level and converse easily with adults, but his fine motor skills may be inadequate for success in the workbook program associated with his reading level. The wise teacher reflects that a child's ability to comprehend four years above his age level does not mean that he can physically and emotionally perform above his peers. It is important to understand the early experiences of outstanding adults when determining their functioning levels. Characteristics of the under-achiever are lack of confidence, inability to persevere, lack of integration of goals, and presence of inferiority feelings.

Well-meaning parents and adults cause a child embarrassment by showing him off with performances and recitations. A child with an innate gift, such as perfect musical pitch, functions as naturally with his ability as the average child who unknowingly discerns differences in color. Ideally, the gifted child is encouraged to use his ability rather than treat it as an exception.

PROVERBS 1:7 says that "reverence of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." When Christian teachers observe through God's eyes, every child is a potential learner. Within each individual, God placed seeds for specific gifts. Some gifts flower in early childhood and become second nature to a person. Other abilities lie under the surface of personality and emotion, waiting to be discovered and developed. A wise person once said, "What you don't use, you lose." Even innate abilities must be cultivated to reap their fullest potential. The Chinese express the development of gifts in a proverb:

I hear, and I forget.

I see, and I remember.

I do, and I understand.

Currently, educators embrace a trend toward enrichment of the curriculum rather than acceleration to meet the needs of gifted children. Expansion of units of study, in-depth research on topics, and "hands-on" projects keep the curious minds active and alert.

For example, in the primary grades, one can encourage a child to experiment with forms of water. Provide small plastic containers to fill and freeze. Mark the liquid water level, and observe the level of the frozen water. Fill some bottles to the top, and observe that the ice pushes off the cap. Relate experience to water freezing in home water pipes and causing them to burst.

Most gifted children are reading before entering kindergarten. Extend their ability by reading aloud to arouse interest in different kinds of literature. Make available a variety of books for them to use during free time. A listening center, equipped with earphones and story tapes on various comprehension levels provides further development. Encourage visits to the school library. In a small school, check out appropriate books from larger libraries,

and make them accessible to the students.

Youngsters from homes with positive learning experiences and a strong vocabulary have an advantage in developing their gifts. In the classroom, regular field trips expose children to places and ideas beyond their limited realm. Include expansion of the senses in excursions. For example, question students: What did you see? How did it smell? What sounds were there?

Many children have no incentive to think or explore their minds. Stimulate imaginations with fantasy ideas. Ask children to relate an absurd story and end each one with "That couldn't happen!" Let them know that indulgence in fantasy is refreshing when balanced with reality. Ask students how they think a cloud would taste; what if dogs had wings? or what if trees could talk?

Provide experiences in art, creative writing, music, and drama to stimulate and draw out a child's gifts. Create an excitement for learning and experimenting with the wonders of God's world.

The superior child, with few exceptions, becomes the able adult, who takes his place in society and maintains interest in several areas of life. The special gifts, recognized and nurtured by caring teachers today, will lead our country to the fulfillment of great goals tomorrow.

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Truth through Imagination and Metaphor

Metaphor

Luci Shaw

SEVERAL months ago I heard Stuart Briscoe use a striking illustration in a conference address. He told of a young man who felt intimidated by the idea of reading the Old Testament. To his mind it seemed like a huge, old, dark, decrepit, dusty house that he was fearful to enter, until someone showed him that it was shot through with the rays of joy that were like sunbeams shining through its leaded window panes.

That picture has stayed with me. Morning by morning at home I read my Bible sitting next to an east window. On the sill stands a collection of antique, cut glass bottle stoppers, and at dawn in winter as the sun rises and shines through those multiple small prisms, the room is transformed with rainbow fragments glancing all over the walls and ceiling, filling the room not only with light but with iridescent color. In the old house of Stuart's story I can visualize the beveled edges of those leaded glass windows turning clear sunlight into rainbows.

Words are like those window prisms and the rooms of the Bible are lit up, not just with joy but with the magic of metaphors, imagery, story, pictures in color projected on floors, walls, ceilings through windows built into the old house by the master architect.

If words are the prism, your imagination is the eye that recognizes *in metaphor*, the colors of the spectrum of experience, and their relationship to the source of light—the truth from God.

"Aha," I hear you say. "Now she's getting at something worthwhile. Enough of magic and shimmering sunbeams in haunted houses. We want to hear about *truth*!"

Score one for you. Truth is what *I want* to tell about. But how do we come at it? It sounds so ultimate, so solemn. It demands such serious purpose on our part, such life-long commitment—and still it baffles us. After all, the great thinkers—philosophers, scientists, theologians, metaphysicians—have been grappling with the concept of truth ever since humans have had minds, and it has proven eternally elusive, defying capture, or definition, or domestication.

Although its shape escapes us, we

sense, however, that truth has to do with the ways things *really are*, the actuality beyond mere fact, the core, the root of things, the rock bottom. But notice how, even to *approach* a definition of truth, we are forced to use metaphors such as core, root, rock, bottom. Because of its disconcerting abstraction, its hugeness and inscrutability, we must find symbols that bring truth closer, tie it down, make it seem more manageable, more tangible, more concrete.

CONSIDER now two statements which reflect two different ways of understanding truth:

1. Carl Henry, the respected evangelical theologian, has stated that "only propositions have the quality of truth . . . The only significant view of revelation is rational-verbal . . . Truth is only propositional." And in teaching any subject, this may seem like the simplest approach: the outlining of propositions and principles.

2. William Stafford, a well-recognized American poet, expresses reality from a different angle.

"So, the world happens twice—/
once what we see it as,/second, it
legends itself/deep, the way it is."

On the first view, truth is presented as an abstraction which we try to tie down with analysis, reason, logic, and verbal symbols (words) that are themselves abstract. (Words and propositions are meaningless unless they refer to something beyond themselves. They are *about* something else. And the bridges built by abstract propositions between our minds and ultimate reality don't quite make it across the river.)

The second, metaphorical view, presents us with the world at two levels, both experiential rather than abstract. First its superficial appearance—"What we see it as," and then "deep, the way it is." The key word at work in this second, more profound perception

is "legend," used here as a verb, which points the other route to truth—through myth, story, imagery, metaphor.

These two flight-patterns to the airport of reality—the propositional and the metaphorical approaches—may seem incompatible. Do you feel yourself already taking sides? Are you thinking, "I'd rather my pilot were a theologian than a poet any day!" Or are you the kind who is excited because you know that poetry and parables will give you a more scenic aerial excursion than any set of propositions, no matter how "true"? The objective versus the subjective, cognition versus intuition, linear thinking versus the leap of faith and imagination—the two approaches even seem to be represented by different personality types: there are those of you who stand back, coolly analyzing, and then organizing information to conform to the patterns you recognize in matter and thought; and there are those of you who feel deeply, getting emotionally involved, acting impulsively, expressing yourselves on the basis of gut feelings or intuition. Modern brainwave detectors have located the human brain—the intuitive/sensitive right brain and the rational/analytical left brain; we all seem to be dominated by one or the other.

In an increasingly technological society that sees science and technology as the solution to all problems, it seems that the power is swinging into the hands of the "left-brains." I'm saved from pessimism by people like my son, John, a fourth-year medical student who was a chemistry major in college, who knows how to install plumbing and who also sings, plays guitar, writes poetry, takes photographs, and draws sensitively. He will need that balance if he is to become a doctor who can help people to wholeness. The sciences are already well represented in contemporary culture; but we need more teachers who

are poets, artists, musicians, intuitive thinkers who will call us all to recognize, develop, and properly exercise the imagination.

YOU notice that I qualified that last statement—"properly." How do we properly exercise the imagination? Many Christians look at the whole idea of imagination with suspicion and fear. It is too subjective, they feel; it leads us into emotionally-based decisions and attitudes. Poets and artists are pretty unstable, anyway—let's face it; all that counter-culture business, and free love, and liberation theology, and radical politics, and living in those unhealthy garret studios or communes with no steady job to bring in the money—romantic, quaint, but irresponsible! How much safer it seems to trust our lives to establishment expectations and follow tried-and-true formulas and espouse middle-class values and the security of rules and regulations. Imagination? Metaphor? Art? It's dangerous. Some would even say, it's of the devil!

In support of that view, which large segments of the church have espoused for centuries, verses like Genesis 6:5 come to mind: "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every *imagination* of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." And David's question in Psalm 2 is—"Why do the heathen rage and the people *imagine* vain things?" How can God *encourage imagination*?

To be sure, as with all God's good gifts, imagination may be perverted, may be turned by the devil to the kind of rebellious, destructive, idolatrous plotting against God that these verses describe. The ancient Israelites were forbidden the use of "graven images" of even the most beautiful objects, for fear of diverting the attention and worship and loyalty of the people away from God. Yet the Lord God continued

to speak to and exercise his people's imaginatons in other and startling ways. Contrary to prevailing attitudes, thinking with the imagination, with metaphors, is one thoroughly biblical way for us to peer at and recognize and comprehend God's truth.

NOW for a few definitions: As teachers of literature well know, *imagination* is a word that names our human ability to form and bring into focus mental pictures, or images, of things which may not be, at a given moment, observable by our physical senses. It involves not only the *memory* of real people and events and past scenes, but the ability to create, or fantasize, or *invent* that which never before has had reality; in other words, to originate new realities, at least in our minds. This approaches the kind of imagination employed by God in the creation of the universe. It's the ultimate in "possibility thinking"!

The word *image* from which imagination is derived, has about two inches' worth of definitions in Webster, but basically it means a reflection or "an imitation of reality" (*imitari* is its Latin root) and it is a distant cousin of the word *symbol*, which means "the same as." *Metaphor* adds the idea of the transfer of meaning from one object over to another, linking the two by analogy.

Metaphor says "*This is like that*" and a metaphorical image shows a likeness to a reality, but also an unlikeness—it is similar, but it is not identical. For example, in the metaphor "the ship plows the sea" we understand the likeness between a ship dividing water and throwing it up into a wake as it moves along, and a plow pushing through the soil and turning it over in a wake-like furrow. But the ship and the plow are made differently and move through different media even though one may be a striking metaphor of the other. Meta-

phorical language and the metaphorical way of thinking lie at the heart of poetry and of all creative writing. *They* help us in teaching, too!

Metaphor and imagination go together. "They go steady!" as we used to say. They have an on-going relationship, as modern jargon puts it, linked as intimately as lovers. How would we ever grasp the meaning and power of a metaphor without imagination? And how would the human imagination flourish without metaphors and images to feed on?

Thomas Howard in *Chance or the Dance* says this: "It is in the nature of things to appear in images—royalty in lions and kings, strength in bulls and heroes, industriousness in ants and beavers . . . terror in oceans and thunder." He goes on, "The correspondences among things transfigures those things into images of one another so that '*this suggests that.*'"

ONE of the symptoms of our age is its tunnel vision, by which we fragment the universe. Life is so extraordinarily complex! How can we handle more than a few facets of existence at a time? Our inability to do so means that we are confined to doing our own narrow little thing! The politicians are absorbed with lobbying and debate and the perils of vote fraud and campaign contributions and popularity polls. The musicians live in their own world of rehearsals and instruments and arrangements and contacts and bookings and tonalities and practice, practice, practice. Doctors fight to keep up with the newest developments in diagnosis or drug therapy or surgical procedures under the crushing pressures of rounds and office hours. And so it goes—farmers, mechanics, missionaries, teachers, merchants, pastors, scholars. Not even a Buckminster Fuller or an Isaac Asimov or a C.P. Snow can keep up with it or pull it all

together.

It is my wild hope that perhaps creative Christians, by means of their "baptized imaginations", may be able to help integrate the universe by widening and sharpening their focus, by seeing the whole picture as if through God's eyes, by observing man and the environment and saying, "Yes, I see. This is like that. There is meaning in it." You see I'm not an either/or person. I dream that the artist and the analyst, right brain and left brain, the poet and the pragmatist, and true Renaissance men and women can collaborate, joining reason with imagination.

An example of this possibility shows up in the life of Dorothy Sayers. In James Brabazon's biography of her he discusses her friendship with Charles Williams, and comments, "At the heart of all the contrasts between them was one fundamental difference: that where Dorothy expounded the laws of the spiritual world like an exceptionally brilliant law student, Williams seemed actually to inhabit that world, and to understand in his blood and bones the truths of which the laws were merely man-made formulations." In a letter, Dorothy said of Williams, "he was . . . a practicing mystic; from that point of view I am a complete moron, being almost wholly without intuitions of any kind. I can only apprehend intellectually what the mystics grasp directly . . . I can only enter into Charles's type of mind to some extent, by imagination, and look through its windows, as it were, into places where I cannot myself walk." And so she learned from him, and so we learn from each other. One of the motivating impulses and the joys of writing poetry is to let others in on the imaginative world I myself am glimpsing from time to time.

Jesus reminds us of the importance of having "eyes to see" and "ears to hear." His general revelation—the created universe around us with its

The

built-in reflections of his character—is there for our observation. If we listen, we can hear “the heavens telling God’s glory and the firmament proclaiming it—day unto day pouring forth speech and night unto night declaring knowledge.” If we see, with both our outer and our inner eyes, we will affirm what Paul claimed in Romans 1: “Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature, his eternal power and deity, have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.” (What a marvelous paradox: the invisible—clearly perceived!)

WHILE this kind of vision may be present to a degree in many humans, it is a gift that must be developed if we are to be truly insightful people. (*In-sight*—that inner seeing of imagination!) If we are to interpret and communicate life experience correctly, it is vital that we as teachers cultivate an imagination in ourselves and our students, that sees through, *beyond*, the flat window glass of dailiness, with its dust and finger prints and uneven reflections, to the three-dimensional landscape on the outside, with its movement and light and shadow, its color and contour and texture, its nearness and distance, its changes of weather and season. We must see *through* surface experience and phenomena to their true reality and significance. George Herbert wrote:

A man may look on glass
on it may stay his eye,
or, if he pleaseth, through it pass
and then the heaven espy.

Here’s an exercise in imagination. When I say the word “winter” what do you see in your mind? If you had been with me during the infamous winter of ’78 you would see, by means of memory, the weight of the windblown snow on the roofs, the clogged streets, the sidewalks narrow as tunnels. What I re-

member best is the huge, bread-shaped loaf of snow that rose on our back porch. But imagination does more than recall. Rightly exercised, it gives us clues to the meaning of such an experience. What does winter signify to you?

Under the snowing
the leaves lie still.
Brown animals sleep
through the storm, unknowing,
behind the bank
and the frozen hill.
And just as deep
in the coated stream
the slow fish grope
through their own dark,
stagnant dream.
Who on earth would hope
for a new beginning
when the crusted snow
and the ice start thinning?
Who would ever know
that the night could stir
with warmth and wakening
coming, creeping
for sodden root and fin and fur
and other things lonely
and cold and sleeping?

The clues in this simple nature poem all point to a deeper reality: all of deadened creation is waiting for redemption, for the Creator’s wakening touch, for heart spring, for revival, in its ultimate sense. And here meaning has been derived from a natural phenomenon or image, because imagination jumps the gap from the surface reality of winter and cold to the meanings that lie beyond it, at another intuitively-felt level.

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**to be continued in the February -
March issue**

THE narrator for this production should stand to one side of the stage area. The choir (after the first scene in which they appear as carolers) should stand at the side opposite the narrator or in the choir loft.

Each scene should be pantomimed at center stage (unless otherwise directed); then the actors leave as the attention of the audience focuses on the projected words of each song. A spotlight might be used to direct audience attention to the proper action.

(Either slides or overhead transparencies can be prepared to display the lyrics for each carol. These should be projected at the places indicated while the choir sings them. If possible, use children, teens and adults in the choir.) Narrator: Can you imagine the Christmas season without the joyous music of carols? In our churches, our homes, shopping malls—everywhere—their joyous strains enhance the delights of Christmastide.

Christianity is a singing religion, and the Advent season provides the background for joyous carols in all of Christendom.

But it was not always so. In the Middle Ages congregational singing was not permitted in divine worship. Only trained choirs could render the music for church services. And much of that music was monotonous plain songs and chants.

Denied permission to lift their voices in praise inside their stately cathedrals, some Christians took to the streets where they could sing, without restrictions, simple and easily learned tunes. (The choir, costumed as carolers, should enter from the back of the sanctuary and take their places on the stage.) The festive Yuletide season provided the carolers special reason for jubilant celebration.

Christmas Carols

Stories Behind the Lines

Their songs came to be known as carols, derived from the word *carola* which originally referred to the ones who accompanied the merry-makers on the flute or other musical instrument. Later the word came to apply to the song, rather than the performers. Webster now defines carol as "a ballad of praise, devotion, and thanks to God for the gift of His Son."

Martin Luther, the great reformer, introduced congregational singing in religious services. And he wanted his hymns to be joyful, jubilant, and full of assurance. He also loved little children. Although some hymnologists insist that the authorship of "Away in a Manger" is unknown, others ascribe it to Luther, even calling it "Luther's Cradle Hymn." It seems likely that the carol, lisped by little children since the early 16th century, was written by this great religious leader.

(Project the words to "Away in a Manger" as the choir sings it. The spotlight should be on the choir. If you have small children in the choir, let them sing the first stanza. The whole choir will sing the second.)

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His
sweet head;
The stars in the sky looked down where
He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
"Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to
stay
Close by me forever and love me, I
pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender
care
And fit us for heaven to dwell with Thee
there."

(The lights dim on the choir and features the narrator once again.)

Isaac Watts, son of a dissenting English clergyman, was raised on the Scrip-

tures. Many of his hymns are based on them, especially on the Psalms. His first hymn, written when he was 18 years old, was a protest against the cheap doggerel that had come into use in the services of public worship in the early 18th century.

When he complained to his father of the trashy verses commonly used, the angered deacon dared him to write better ones. Isaac at once responded that he had done just that and read his new hymn to the surprised father:

"Behold the glories of the Lamb,
amidst His Father's throne;
Prepare new honors for His name,
and songs as yet unsung."

Pleased with his son's paraphrase of Revelation 5:6-10, the surprised father used it the following Sunday, teaching it to his congregation.

Eventually Isaac followed his father's footsteps and trained for the ministry. After a few years he was forced to resign his pulpit because of poor health. He then gave his time entirely to composing hymns, giving the world some 600.

(The character of Watts enters the stage and seats himself at a small writing table with a chair. As the spotlight focuses on him, he pretends to be writing and thinking. The narrator continues.)

In 1719 religion in England was at low ebb. The revivals of the Wesleys were yet to permeate and purge English society. Through eyes of faith, Watts paraphrased Psalm 98 (the prophetic proclamation of the joys and blessings of Messiah's reign) in the present tense. Listen to the vibrant message of confident triumph.

(Project the words to "Joy to the World" at this point and shift the spotlight to the choir as they sing.)

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come;

Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing."
"He rules the world with truth and
grace,
and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love."

(Watt quietly leaves the scene, and the spotlight shifts back to the narrator.)

Christmas Eve 1818 had come to the tiny village of Oberndorf, near Salzburg. The little town lay snuggled in deep snows of the Austrian Alps. There in the little village, organist Franz Gruber brought sad news to Father Joseph Mohr, parish priest of the Church of St. Nicholas: The pipe organ had broken down, apparently beyond repair, at least for any use in the near future.

Father Mohr thought that the midnight mass, just a few hours away, would be ruined without it. Why, it just would not be Christmas without the joyous pealing of the great organ!

But other duties occupied his mind. There was work at hand, even on Christmas Eve. That afternoon he must call on parishioners scattered in the snow-blanketed Alpine area. While on his rounds he was summoned to the humble home of a woodcutter to bless a newborn child.

Trudging back through the drifting snow the kind priest reflected on that first Christmas Eve when the Baby Jesus was born some 1800 years earlier. He too was born in humble surroundings, the humblest. Words of a song began to form in his creative mind.

(Spotlight the table. A guitar should be placed inconspicuously behind the table. A costumed Mohr rushes in, sits at the table and begins writing. As the narrative progresses, the characters of Mohr and Gruber should act out the story.)

Hurrying to his room, he hastily penned those words and then rushed to the organist with a request that he write the musical accompaniment for them. Then, not to be defeated by the incompetence of the organ, Father Mohr took a guitar and handed it to Franz Gruber.

Now Gruber was an accomplished organist and choirmaster, not a guitarist, and he rebelled at Father Mohr's simple solution. But he finally relented. He found the words could be easily set to music.

(Mohr and Gruber exit, taking with them the props. The spotlight shifts back to the narrator.)

That night the two of them sang to a surprised, but pleased congregation the carol that has since become the best loved carol in the world.

(Project the words to "Silent Night" at this time. The spotlight moves to the choir, or if you wish, two men might sing the song with guitar accompaniment for authenticity.)

"Silent night! Holy night!

All is calm, all is bright;
Round yon virgin mother and child,
holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace."

(Longfellow in costume should enter from the left and pace. Throughout this scene the spotlight should remain on him. He should pause occasionally to put his head in his hands, or some other gesture of despair.)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, beloved New England poet, listened to the merry peals of the Christmas bells in 1863 and found that their intended message seemed a mockery of the despair and emptiness of his grieving heart. Only a few months had passed since his son had been numbered among the slain in the bloody Battle of Gettysburg. The War Between the States still raged fiercely as the Christmas season progressed.

Expressing the inner conflict of his

tormented soul, the saddened, distraught parent resorted to his prolific pen:

(He should sit and pretend to write as the choir sings "I Heard the Bells." On the final verse he should sit straighter and write more purposefully.)

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men.
'And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth,' I said,
'For hate is strong and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men.' "

And then, filtering through the dark shadows of grief, there shone a bright gleam of assurance and ultimate victory. Faith took command of the pen of the mourning poet:

"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:

God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

(As the choir finished the final verse, Longfellow should exit, taking the props off stage with him. The spotlight shifts back to the narrator.)

It was December 1865 that the Rev. Phillips Brooks, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia, experienced the fulfillment of a longtime dream: a trip to the Holy Land. There, on Christmas Eve, he traveled by horseback the dusty 5 miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. From the moonlit hills of Palestine, he looked down on the slumbering little village of Bethlehem, charmed by its quiet beauty and simplicity. He would never forget the wonder of that night, the inspiration of those precious hours.

(A simple Nativity scene should be set up center stage with a manger, Baby, Mary, and Joseph. The lights should not be trained on this scene until the choir begins singing.)

Three years later as he prepared his Advent messages, he relived those precious hours spent in the Holy Land.

And though thousands of miles removed from the scene, with "Palestine still singing in his soul," and with great inspiration, the pastor-poet wrote the beautiful lines of "O Little Town of Bethlehem." His organist Louis Redner composed the music for them, and the carol was first sung on December 27, 1868.

(Project the words to "O Little Town of Bethlehem" at this time. The spotlight should focus on the Nativity scene.)

"O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight."

As we enter another Christmas season marred by so many areas of conflict and tension, human misery and need, spiritual darkness and moral bankruptcy, let's all sing together the words penned so long ago by Phillips Brooks: *(The narrator should motion for the entire congregation to rise and sing.)*

"O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great, glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel."

(The choir should repeat the last verse as they leave the stage, exiting as they entered.)

Note: Slides which illustrate each narrative description might be substituted for the words to each of the songs if desired. The pantomimed action could include more characters and detail depending on the size of the group presenting the production and availability of costuming. This would be especially true in the Nativity scene.

Wilda Rice resides in Lake Worth, Florida.

Right and Wrong

PARDON me for talking about other people's kids, but this story you've got to hear. Two kids are talking about profound things like God and heaven above. The older one—let's call him Jeremy—is a kindergartner; he's the authority.

The younger one cocks his head. "When you die, do you get to be an angel?" he asks.

Jeremy wrinkles his nose. "Don't know," he says. "But in heaven you get everything you want—except guns."

Jeremy's claims tell us something about his parents. It's clear that they dislike seeing guns in Jeremy's hands—pop guns, cap guns, cork guns, even those fat rubber ones you squeeze little puff balls out of, the kind of bullets that even at close range feel like a kiss against your cheek. Mom and Dad, likely as not, keep guns away from Jeremy. "Guns don't make nice toys," they tell him, their eyebrows dipped menacingly.

But most parents know that some wars can't be won. Swipe a toy gun from a little boy and he'll use his pointer finger or pick up a tree branch that magically becomes a rifle. Jeremy's parents have tried to make guns horrid and sinful instruments of death, but even a kid owns his own imagination.

Jeremy's vision of heaven illustrates his own fascination with the contraband arms his parents despise. Everything you want is there in heaven, he says—except guns. Guns, he thinks, are beyond the reach of God's grace, even if they aren't beyond the range of his own desire. Like 'em or not, guns are wrong.

The lines Jeremy has drawn between good and evil are clear, clearer than our own distinctions sometimes. To reformed Christians who view this world as somehow "redeemable," Jeremy's doctrine may be heretical—kindergartner heresy, we might call it. Some reformed Christians would say that guns themselves are not sinful. What we

need, they might claim, is to redeem guns. Of course, Jeremy wouldn't understand that. Many of us don't.

But Jeremy's sentiment reminds us of one difficult job we face as parents and teachers: the task of discriminating between what is right and what is wrong, between carom boards and video games, between Rook and five-card stud, between bingo and big-time betting, between TV movies and R-rated films—in short, between what's okay for our kids (and even ourselves), and what isn't. What's worse, it's a job that not so many years ago—when all movies were wrong—was easier, maybe, than it is today.

AT the very beginning of the year, a freshman student I know—we'll call her Jill—attended a movie shown on the campus of the college where I teach, a college that calls itself a Christian college. The movie followed the lives of a group of married couples whose mutual friendship was interrupted when one of the husbands deserted his wife for a young lover. As movies go today, this one was rather "tame" really—some questionable lines and scenes, but no exploitation or deliberate manipulation, and very few jiggles.

She came to my office later. "I'm really surprised that they showed that movie here," she said. "I just didn't expect it." Quite frankly, Jill was disappointed. She might have said, "I thought this was a Christian college." That's what she meant.

Oddly enough, she had seen the movie before, in a regular theater—the kind her grandparents wouldn't have attended, even though the movies of their age were much less offensive. Apparently, seeing the movie in a theater was okay; seeing it on the campus of a Christian college implied, in her mind, a kind of institutional acceptance of everything on the screen—even the crude jokes about sex.

The lines she had drawn to define what was of Christ and what was of the Devil were erased, at least temporarily, by seeing the film on our campus. She was confused. Munching her popcorn in a theater somewhere, she might have seen the film as entertainment. Seated in the college chapel, she thought the film suddenly evil, too much a part of the sinful world she thought she would be sheltered from at a college that called itself Christian. She expected, I suppose, Walt Disney and nothing more.

At five years old, Jeremy has his values down pat: in heaven you get everything you want, except guns. Guns are naughty—that much he knows. Jill thought she had her values down too, until she saw a film she judged as sinfully beyond the limits of what a Christian college should show—regardless of whether or not she had seen it before.

Had we—administration, film council, teachers—erred in making her question her own sense of right and wrong? Did the college itself see its mandate as the destruction of the values with which Jill and others like her had come to school?

PARDON me for telling one more story, but somehow I think it fits. Not long ago I accompanied some students to a lecture by a famous author. I knew her only by her fiction, and I admired her for her compassion, for her ability to admit us intimately into the characters that stepped out of her pages, characters most readers grew to love.

She chose not to use the podium, sitting instead on the stage at the front. "I'm either 72 or 73," she said, her thick silver hair pulled back from her forehead, her eyes, bright and intense, like her voice. For more than an hour she answered questions from two hundred people in a lecture hall, quietly, sincerely, emotionally. She was everything I would have wanted her to be; she was lovely in her regard for the young people she was addressing, pas-

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sionate in commitment to writing, proud and strong in her convictions. I've seen enough writers who swagger like Hemingway; this one, I thought, would have made a grand grandmother.

One of our students asked her about her religious views. "I've never been asked that question before," she said, and for a moment she looked almost uneasy. But then she explained how her Russian immigrant parents had sworn off faith in God after a lifetime of religious bigotry in the country they had left to come to America. This woman, so sweet and compassionate, so loving and grandmotherly, told us, openly and sincerely, that she was an avowed atheist.

I think my students were shocked; I know I was. The woman was an atheist,

a radical feminist, even something of a socialist—and yet, despite all the ugliness we ordinarily associate with those tags, she glowed with a radiant love and concern for her fellow man. She broke through the distinctions we had set in our minds, distinctions maintaining that only Christians could love deeply and that atheists have no regard for anyone but themselves.

Then something strange happened. The moment her speech was concluded, she left the stage, walked directly to the student who had asked the question, then hugged and kissed her. And there I stood, thinking that my students would never be quite the same.

ALL of this is terribly dangerous, of course. Some of us would say that Jill the moviegoer was right about that film—there is no place for movies like that on a Christian college campus. Some of us might say that atheism, socialism, and radical feminism aren't worth a trip out of the student parking lot, especially when those ideas are made flesh in a warm and loving human being who happens also to be a famous author, who can, simply by her success, make an impression on aspiring student writers. Some might say keep our kids inside, keep them away from seduction, hide them in a campus fort, then line the walls with snipers and fill the wide moat with ravenous beasts who know their catechism. Keep them away from things. Make them think that you'll get everything you want in heaven, except movies, atheists, and guns.

But the agony of being a teacher and a parent is in riding the two sides of a paradox which Christ never explained in sufficient clarity to answer all of our problems: we must be in the world but not of the world. And in following that advice, we need to consider two sometimes contradictory imperatives.

Our children must see the world in which they have been given life; they

will know it soon enough. But we must draw lines which separate the city of God from the city of man, lines which delineate, in our own feeble way, the sanctified life of the Christian.

At once, we must push and protect, help our students to ask the great questions and feel the great answers, to see all of God's world without losing the ability to recognize sin.

If we are at all sincere about a Reformed view of Christ and culture, we can't renege on our pledge to redeem institutions which are sin-infected. But if we are at all sincere about being Christians, we must continually remind ourselves that the world is divided into two, not always easily distinguishable, camps.

SOMEDAY a man may come along and take Jeremy hunting. Maybe they will walk through field grass grown brittle and dry in autumn winds, and maybe they'll shoot a rabbit for a stew. On that day Jeremy may forget what he had always thought about guns, that they were beyond the reach of God's grace, that they were one piece of this world absolutely beyond redemption. Jeremy may grow into a hunter. Stranger things have happened.

But no matter how old he is, Jeremy needs that old childish sense of guns—that sense that tells him some parts of this world are to be avoided by those people who call themselves children of God's family.

We all need that sense of guns to guide us along the paths of righteousness, because we are not of this world—even though we have been placed squarely within it.

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Contemporary History in the Curriculum

TO argue a case for contemporary history almost seems a contradiction in terms. The very word "history" conveys the notion of time, of development, of change, of perspective. One might ask: how can the historian isolate the deeper currents from the surface movement of the age of which he or she is a part? Can one capture the texture and underlying structure of contemporary society? Can such an effort rise above the journalistic reporting of events? Despite such legitimate questions, however, several considerations nudged me into the teaching of a course in contemporary global history.

One such consideration was the questions and experience of my students. Periodically, after I had ended my course in German history with the study of World War II, students had asked how Germany had changed from the society of Hitler and the devastation of the war to the divided Germany with its prosperous western sector of today. On other occasions, students interested in political or social action wanted to know about the origins of the Mid-east crisis, the problems of the developing countries, the character of revolutionary movements, and the like. No existing course in our curriculum bridged the gap in any systematic way from World War II to the world my students know by personal experience and by television and the newspapers.

At the same time, I began to realize increasingly the existence of a generation gap between my students and myself. My life spanned the period since World War II. Even though my knowledge was rather undisciplined, at least I knew in general the happenings and patterns of the contemporary world. Today's college freshman cannot remember from personal experience very

many public events before 1970, and even the early seventies are vague and imprecise. Furthermore, the character of their world is so different from the one in which I grew up. They do not know a world without television, without mechanical earth satellites, without plastics, without jet airplanes or interstate highways, or even without ice cream in the refrigerator. They can watch violent revolution on direct transmission television and explicit sex in public theaters. They can look at the moon on a romantic June evening and mentally visualize our aerospace junk yard up there. Computers are as much a part of their lives as a slide rule was of mine.

If I were to add my father's experience to this comparison, the contrast would be even more startling. As a child, he knew no automobiles, indoor plumbing, electricity, airplanes or other trappings of our technological age. The changes in his lifetime at eighty-six are simply astonishing. The first effects of the industrial age were just filtering down to common experience in his early childhood and have occurred with greater and greater acceleration ever since.

I draw these contrasts not to decry technology or wring my hands over rapid change, but to point to the need for a disciplined and systematic attempt to teach our students the origin and character of the world in which they have to live and serve as culture-forming children of God.

THERE is yet another and even more important dimension to the case for contemporary history. Twentieth century change is not only quantitative and technological in character, but

qualitative and structural as well. Science has rapidly given us more and better tools, but, in addition, industrialization and the accompanying expansion of the West has brought about basic structural change in the world. The twentieth century world is globally interdependent in a unique sense. In recognition of that fact, especially since the publication of William H. McNeill's *The Rise of the West*, world history texts have begun to offer a global perspective of the world from earliest times. I believe that to be a healthy development. A global view of history prior to the nineteenth century, however, remains something of an option. In the major regions of the globe, people lived out their histories in "relative" independence. Valid regional and national histories were possible. In the twentieth century a global perspective is no longer an option. Without it our teaching distorts and misleads. I am not suggesting that national histories or American surveys are out, but that without a global focus included somewhere, the student will not adequately understand the world in which he lives.

A consideration of the thesis of Geoffrey Barraclough's *An Introduction to Contemporary History* will help to illustrate my point. Published already in 1964, the book presents an argument about both the nature of history and the changed structure of the world since Kennedy. Without attempting to give the world of today a definitive label other than "contemporary", Barraclough maintains that decisive structural changes have occurred in the world since the late nineteenth century:

One of the distinctive facts about contemporary history is that it is world history and that the forces

shaping it cannot be understood unless we are prepared to adopt world-wide perspectives; and this means not merely supplementing our conventional view of the recent past by adding a few chapters on extra-European affairs, but re-examining and revising the whole structure of assumptions and beliefs on which that view is based (p.10).

Continuity in human affairs is a characteristic assumption of most historians. On that basis, one would naturally approach contemporary history as simply the latter end of modern history. Believing that history is more often a matter of "spots and jumps," that discontinuity is a more basic characteristic of human history than continuity, Barraclough argues that the twentieth century was just such a time of rapid and major structural change. It was a turning point in world history. The world of the nineteenth century was the age of nation states and European world dominance; in the twentieth century we have arrived at a "global system of international politics" in which the new super-powers of the United States and Russia dominate events.

I am not concerned in this essay either to modify or correct Barraclough's picture. Obviously his emphasis on discontinuity at the expense of continuity is a philosophical position open to considerable discussion and debate. One does not have to accept or reject his contention, however, to admit validity in his construction of contemporary history.

The major part of his study sketches the shape the contemporary world has assumed. The change from the modern world to contemporary society is particularly associated with "the industrial and social revolution in the later years of the nineteenth century and the 'new imperialism' which was so closely asso-

ciated with it" (p.25). Between Bismarck's retirement as chancellor and Kennedy's election to the United States' presidency, the old world of European dominance ended and the new global pattern of international politics began. The chief dynamics in the change were industrialism, the associated revolutionary changes in life, and the push of imperialism which made these changes global in scope. The European rivalries that ushered in the conflicts between 1914 and 1945 hastened the birth of the new age. Historians, generally preoccupied with the dying of the old order, failed to perceive the emergence of the new.

Barraclough is not dogmatic about the precise shape of the new age, but he does see major structural changes, among which are the following: the declining position of Europe and the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as super-powers; the world-wide division between the communist and non-communist worlds, in which continual ideological adjustments occur; the growing division between the industrialized and the underdeveloped countries; the resurgence of Asia and Africa; the readjustment of relations between white and colored people; the thermo-nuclear revolution; the breakdown of the liberal democratic tradition under the impact of mass politics; the breakdown of traditional values in art and literature and the search for new ones.

Without doubt historians will have problems with this or that aspect of Barraclough's picture. For example, if one includes the United States and Russia in a broad concept of Europe, then it is still the Age of Europe, the West over the rest, as it were. Furthermore, the massive, synthetic work of Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Modern World System* (volumes one and two), in tracing the development of a world economic system, suggests more continuity than

Barraclough sees in a primarily political perspective. Nevertheless, however one may embroider the pattern, it seems to me incontrovertible that the world today is globally interdependent in a sense that was not true a century ago. Even Wallerstein, who stresses a four-century development of the modern world economy, lays great emphasis on the age of imperialism as the most decisive, final stage in the development. Such economic interdependence became graphically clear to the ordinary citizen of the United States in the petroleum shortages and price hikes of the 1970s. That economic interdependence, in turn, is pushing nation states toward regional groupings of one form or another; OPEC, EEC and the Pan-African Congress all illustrate the trend.

In short, though I have no interest in defending any particular aspect of Barraclough's thesis, I believe that in the main, his argument holds—that some of us ought to be busy refining the picture and going beyond our limited national and regional perspectives to include exposing our students to the global perspective so critical for our age.

MY use of Barraclough's study should not be taken as advice to abandon the traditional studies of western culture or American history. Such studies are necessary to give our students the understanding of their own cultures needed by humans for identity. Already, many high school curricula include only snippets of social issues and have lost the integration and perspective of good history. What I am saying is that western history should lead into a bona fide global perspective as the twentieth century is brought into focus.

Furthermore, the study of contemporary history does not mean the abandonment of a sense of development.

Barracrough himself, though arguing the case for the emergence of a new epoch, does not ignore the need for an understanding of genesis and unfolding. Even as he emphasizes change he warns us against thinking in terms of a clear-cut break with the past. The characteristics of the newly-emerged global age need to be seen at their point of origin, and their development into structural prominence needs to be understood.

If, then, we are rapidly becoming one world, groping uncertainly toward the necessary political, economic, and social structures needed to carry that growing interdependence, it must be studied and taught in our schools for the simple reason that the truth of history is the goal. There are, in addition, certain valuable by-products of a global view that are central to Christian values. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nationalism and racism, in combination with industrial and military power, wreaked unbelievable savagery on human society. A greater and more humane understanding of other peoples in the light of our increasing ties with them in an interdependent world may help us prevent future agonies. National histories implicitly invite judgments about those who are not "us" and usually the judgments are negative, even though they may not be taught that way. Both self-preservation and a benevolent humanity point to the need for greater understanding and mutual help in settling the explosive global problems of hunger and violence.

ANOTHER benefit gained from a global view is a better understanding of one's own experience. Revolutions, civil wars, depressions, and famines are understood in a new light as part of the human condition rather than as the special agonies of one people. A certain degree of humility ought to be engendered as one has the oppor-

tunity to admire the art, literature, music, architecture, and other achievements of different peoples. A different understanding of one's life and culture comes with seeing the nation or tribe as a part of a larger story. The peaks and valleys of a group's experience are reduced in scope in relation to the whole. The task of global history is intimidating. What sensitive teacher dares claim more than initiation into his own more limited field? To attempt global history requires an audacity that most of us would hesitate to admit. And yet, if the globe really did become one in the twentieth century, we face a reality that we dare not ignore. We may not train our students as if the United States or the West were the whole. If the task seems large, so too are the stakes. Ignorance is too dangerous in the world of today. Van Laue expresses the dilemma well and I opt for his choice:

How, they [specialists] ask, can one mind, with its limited time and energy, hope to master the galaxy of fact which, by present standards of erudition, goes into his subject? While lauding the audacity of intention they repudiate every detail. Yet their own work, for all its exactitude, simply does not interest the troubled questioners that stand nearer the center of contemporary life. It is further evidence of a world grown over our heads that we are made to choose between proof that is irrelevant and relevance that has no proof. If this book leans toward the latter, it is because truth and life favor the bold. There is no more creative act of the human will than to search for the vital center of awareness appropriate to the age. (*The Global City*, p. xi).

THOUGH the choice is limited, there are more resources that deal

Some of us ought to be busy refining the picture and going beyond our limited national and regional perspectives to include exposing our students to the global perspective so critical for our age.

with contemporary, global history than one would expect. The following list is only a sampling to illustrate what is already available; in addition, there are many good area studies, but they need integration into a global perspective. I make no attempt to evaluate those listed. Some are chiefly for teachers, others for students.

A. High School Textbooks.

Parmer, Finkelstein, & Stephen. *People and Progress: A Global History*. Laidlaw Brothers, a Division of Doubleday & Co., 1978. Contains one unit on the rise of civilizations, then alternates between "traditional Asia" and "modern Asia", etc., and ends with one chapter on "The World, Today and Tomorrow".

Stavrianos, Andrews, et al. *A Global History*. Allyn & Bacon, 1979. Contains a four chapter background to the modern world,

PROFILE

Gary Dewey

then three chapters, mostly on Europe. The last section deals topically with the Soviet Union, Latin America, China, India, Africa, and the Middle East in chapters on Basic Facts, Politics, Economics, and Culture.

B. Periodicals.

Comparative Studies in Society and History
Contemporary Review
Current History
International Affairs
International Perspectives
World Marxist Review
World Politics
The World Today

C. For Teachers (In addition to those mentioned in the text.)

G. Barraclough, *Turning Points in World History*. Thames & Hudson, 1977.

L. S. Stavrianos. *The World Since 1500: A Global History*. 2nd ed. Prentice-Hall, 1971.

L. S. Stavrianos. *Readings in World History*. Allyn & Bacon, 1965.

Walbank, Taylor, et al. *Civilization Past & Present*. 8th ed. Vol. II. Scott, Foresman, 1981.

The Headline Series, published by the Foreign Policy Assn. Over 250 titles, such as the following:

Science, Technology and Development; The Politics of Modernization.

China's Four Modernizations and the United States.

World Hunger.

The Persian Gulf After Iran's Revolution.

Europe and the Superpower Balance.

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HE makes science interesting, really interesting!" That's the evaluation of one seventh-grader in Gary Dewey's science class at Holland Christian Middle School. Because the school is new this year, Dewey hasn't had time to fill his room with all the growing things that will soon be there. For a generation of students now, Gary Dewey's award as Michigan Conservation Educator of the Year in 1980 is a deserving one. Occasionally scowling (which means concentration), always energetic, taking time to talk with students both in school and on trips into the wilderness, Dewey uses a variety of teaching approaches to help children literally touch God's world and wonder.

Having received a Christian education at Moline Christian School and Grand Rapids South Christian High School, he attended Michigan State University with plans to be a landscaper; in the middle of that training, God led him to want to teach. He has taught for four years at Calvin Christian School in South Holland, Illinois; there he also taught a course at Trinity Christian College to students who planned to be science teachers. For the past ten years, he has taught seventh-graders at Holland Christian Middle School.

I recently interviewed Dewey, a man whose unique teaching style challenged my three children who were his students.

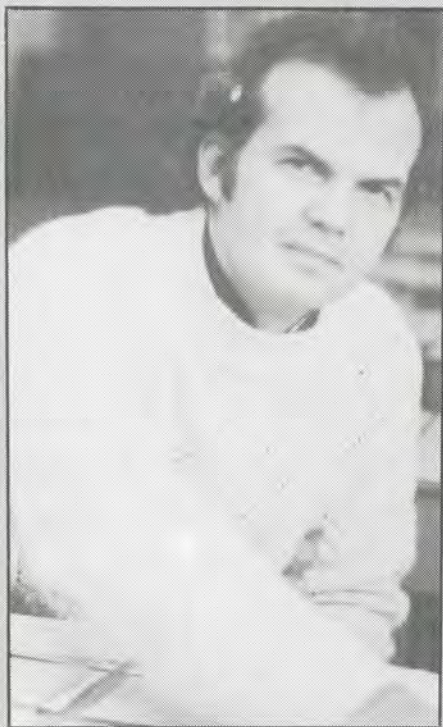
Q. What specific subjects do you currently teach?

A. I presently teach science at the seventh grade level to 130 students. I also teach small engine repair and woodworking minicourses to about 40 students each year. The topics I cover in science are astronomy (star observation outdoors, the use of a planetarium, and computer simulation); geology of Michigan; Hendricks' *God's Temples*; the physics of toys, the bathtub, and sport; snowflakes; mammals; birds; and fresh water life.

Q. You seem to have made a life-long commitment to science teaching; what influences have led you to this?

A. I love living in God's world and I want to experience as much of it in as many ways as I can. I am committed to sharing God's world with anyone I see. This attitude I received from my parents, I think. I was naturally inquisitive, but I received great encouragement to explore. My parents constantly made us search for solutions. We loved nature, and we hiked and camped often together. I was taught to appreciate even the simplest things in creation. My father loved inventiveness, and my mother loved words. I was given all sorts of chances to explore; our chicken coop was my chemistry lab.

Q. I know that experimenting is a crucial ingredient in your teaching method; will you describe an experiment that you think is helpful in developing Christian attitudes toward science?



A. I want to teach my students curiosity and questioning. It would be tremendously easy to question one's faith too. The experiments and research we do must point to God as the originator, developer, and constant recreator. One of my favorite examples of God's power and of being able to teach a Christian response is the observation of insect metamorphosis. One can easily draw the analogy between this and the Christian life. Another of my favorites is the study of birds and how they fly. We closely examine bird bones and feathers to see what allows them to fly. When we study birds, they are migrating; many are injured or hungry, and we care for them as God cares for us. I want my students to constantly stand in awe of small things in creation.

Q. I know that you have spent time during summers working on a garbage truck and building a house, but for the past ten years you have not had time for that; how have you spent your recent summers?

A. Since 1974 I have taken groups of students every summer on wilderness camping trips. I used to go out all summer; now I restrict it to five or six weeks so that I can spend more time with my family. The camps really are survival camps. We build various kinds of shelters and sleep in them. (We have slept in snow caves in the winter.) We learn what types of plants are edible and use those in our meals. We also learn how to catch fish and animals, only with what God has given us. We go on a canoe trip and hike. Other activities include rock hounding, orienteering, and finding animal tracks and signs.

I also take a group up to Isle Royale for eight days every year. We do a lot of backpacking and fishing. The wolf is the only Michigan mammal that has eluded me, and I will continue this trip until I can achieve my goal of seeing every Michigan mammal in the wild. I even saw a mountain lion this year which was only the second sighting in the eastern Upper Peninsula.

Q. Of what benefit are these summer trips to you and the students?

A. They allow me to see students in an entirely different way; the students also see me in a unique way. However, the primary benefit is not one that is easy to achieve in the classroom. When one is in the wilderness, all fears and weaknesses are exposed. Students and leaders form a marriage-like situation where they help each other deal with those fears and weaknesses. Another lesson we learn is that we can always do more than we think we can. I help students see what they think their limits are and then help them to feel good about themselves because they have exceeded these expectations.

Q. Which people have been an inspiration to you in your teaching?

A. As I was growing up, my fourth-grade teacher, Miss Bangma, taught me to explore and to excel. In high school, Mr. Sid Smit was always kind and understanding, rarely unhappy. I will never forget our first biology assignment. We did an

ecosystem study of an area by the high school. He sparked my interest in real scientific study. In high school English, Dr. Harry Boonstra was extremely thorough; he had a keen eye for detail and looked for novel ways of doing things. Henry Baron taught me to always search for what was behind symbols. Rev. William Kok encouraged me to know what I believe and why I believe it; then he would say, "Now live it."

Now that I am teaching, it is more difficult to be specific. The people I have worked with here at Holland Christian Middle School have all been an inspiration in a way. I know that I can depend on God and on them to prop me up when I need it and to put me down when I take myself too seriously. My principal, Mr. Ken Kuipers, has inspired me to achieve professional excellence. Some principals are administrators but not motivators. He really works at having us appreciate each other.

Q. What gives you the most satisfaction in teaching?

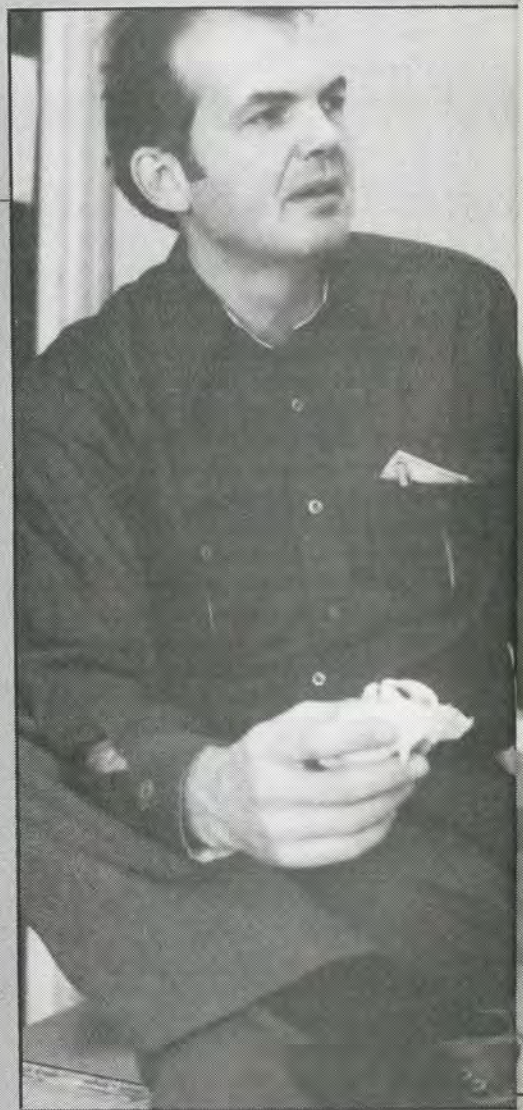
A. Anyone who teaches knows that the rewards are not always immediate. It is gratifying to see students of my first teaching years and hear them say they have chosen a certain profession because of something said or done in class. I had a student who stopped by last week and said he was going to Cornell to study ornithology in four years and that the spark for that was ignited in my class. A more short term pleasure is the joy, trust, and vitality that kids bring to life. I also remember one particular student who had gone through a lot of emotional problems with his family. I will never forget on one of those summer trips the time that the two of us were sitting along the Muskegon River up near McBain. It was a beautiful sunset, and we were watching the river move along. That boy opened up about the power of God in his life.

Q. What has been frustrating to you in your teaching?

A. My greatest frustration is that our Christian schools are often ten-year parrots of public education. We should be leaders in education and life style so that others will look to us for direction. Another frustration is the ease with which people criticize but seldom offer any positive alternative. I despise negativism, but I love open critique that brings positive change. It also bothers me when students *thoughtlessly* conform; we teachers do it too. We have to stimulate each other to be open to differences among students and teachers.

Q. Have your emphases in teaching changed along the way? Have students changed?

A. Not really. In my teaching I have kept a strong nature orientation, tried to be creative, kept a questioning, exploring curiosity. Still I am thorough, I think. Students as a group have changed little. Perhaps they do not take studying as seriously as kids used to. I think kids are a bit more egocentric and selfish, maybe needing more motivation to do their best.





Q. How do you motivate kids to learn?

A. Not every one is motivated the same way, but I remember someone telling me that you had to get their attention first and then you could lead them to the point, normally I begin the class with something unique or intriguing that will lead students to think, to question. I started this year's classes by showing a film of a volcano and asking students to figure out what might cause that. I also enjoy language, so I sometimes use scientific obfuscations to have kids go from the unknown to the known. I love teaching kids who want to learn. I'd rather have a horse that's running fifty miles an hour and try to slow it down than to take a whip to get the horse going at all. That's why middle school kids excite me; most of them really want to learn.

Q. It sounds as if you have little time for anything except teaching; what interests you beside?

A. I enjoy scientific bird watching and rock collecting. I collect political memorabilia; my avocation, really, is reading political history, specifically Revolutionary War history. I like to swim, hike, and cross country ski.

Q. What advice would you give to new teachers?

A. You have to be excited, first of all. And you must be willing to try new ideas. Some will fall flat, but you have to be willing to dare, to explore, to lean on other more experienced teachers. You also have to be willing to spend time alone in prayer and Bible reading to be an effective Christian teacher.

Q. What about the future for science teachers, for all teachers?

A. I have seen recently that public educators cannot get away from the moral side of science. Now abortion, robots replacing people, genetic engineering, and organ transplants call for moral judgments. We Christian teachers have to help students find the biblical way among these issues. But all of these changes make me want to say: let's not sit around and talk about how it used to be. Let's look at the present and to the future, lean on God, and do what must be done for him. We can't be afraid of that; let's go.

With that, Gary Dewey left to teach again, back to a brand new building with tiled floors and cleaning solvent smells. But his room will become a miniature nature center until the sun warms again; then he will bring another class of seventh graders into the wild, of bugs and birds and mammals, to teach, to inspire wonder, and to direct praise to nature's Maker and Provider.

Daniel Vander Ark is principal of Holland Christian High School, Holland, Mi.

"The Dance"

ALL right, you guys," boomed Steve VanderPrikkel's voice around the Asylum or faculty lounge, "Let's take a few minutes to do this thing together."

The "thing" he was referring to was a memo from Principal Bob DenDenker asking the staff to make a list of what they regarded as "the most vexing problems and issues at Omni Christian High." Future staff meetings would then focus on the items listed.

"What d'you say I function as your humble scribe," added Steve, as he resolutely strode to the little chalk board behind John Vroom's favorite perch, "and you dictate to me your grievances and gripes." Unfortunately, Steve failed to watch his step and stomped squarely on Vroom's brown bag at the same time that John's pudgy hand was reaching down to extract his first jelly-filled donut.

"So sorry," apologized Steve as John snatched the smashed lunch from under his foot.

"Stupid fool," hissed John, now glumly inspecting the inedible remains of his favorite pastry treat.

"Now watch it, John," called out Matt DeWit, "you know what the Bible says about calling your brother a fool."

"No, Matt," rejoined a repentant Steve, "John's right. I think this is clearly a case of fools rushing into dangerous territory."

"Here, John, have an apple," offered Ginny Traansma sympathetically; then she added, "It's better for you than that pastry anyway." But John, inconsolable, only glared at her.

Meanwhile, Steve had found a chalk stub and was poised to write. "Let me start our list," he said as he wrote "Careless destruction of lunches." Then he turned expectantly to hear

more from the floor.

It was Friday noon break, and the group of teachers in the faculty room felt playfully feisty. Contributions started to come from all directions: "A decent dress code," "A no-punk hair code," "A no-smooching or clutching *amor* code," "BO," "Surreptitious behavior in cars during lunch break," "Extra-curricular load and credits," "Homework demands," "Student jobs," "Swearing," "Potheads," "Booze parties," "Conduct at ballgames," "Broken homes," "Personal counseling," "Sex education," "Social misfits," "Academic failures."

After a momentary lull, Matt DeWit added, "How about something about too much homogeneity—like we're all pretty much of the same class of people, the same color, the same religious denomination. It seems to me that's a little too elitist, maybe."

"Call it prejudice, why don't we," responded Steve as he wrote it down.

"I agree with that," joined in Rick Cole. "And another thing, maybe related, that should concern us too, is the rampant materialism that for the most part we neither confront nor counter as a Christian educational institution." Everyone had turned more thoughtful now and was looking at Rick when Bob DenDenker stepped into the Asylum.

John Vroom, still nurturing resentment over his recent gastronomic loss and now somehow imputing the blame to the smiling DenDenker, offered the next contribution, his voice strident with indignation: "Untoward interference with the staff's personal time."

Vroom had hardly finished when it happened. It seemed as if an unseen wave of a music wand had given the downbeat and unloosed a cacophonous blasting of sound that rattled the Asy-

lum door. Momentarily stunned, the Omni teachers stared at each other. Then DenDenker rushed out, followed by his curious staff. What they heard and saw in Omni Christian's halls was a scene that for years after would be a topic of conversation, elaboration, and exaggeration. Right now it was enough to set them all agape and agog, and at least some of them aghast. Dozens of students were carrying huge stereo music boxes with the volumes all the way up, and playing a variety of rock tapes, though the sounds of Michael Jackson seemed to come from everywhere. Most of the other students were gyrating through the halls, some risking limb and reputation through breakdancing, others mostly jerking and twisting to their own individual beat. But all were whooping it up with abandon.

John Vroom, one of the aghast group, turned away wholly disgusted now and, muttering something about "the days of Noah," slammed the Asylum door behind him.

As if that had been the agreed-upon signal, all noise and motion ceased as suddenly and dramatically as it had started. And from the now silent throngs emerged a delegation of four students who approached the non-plussed teachers in front of the faculty lounge. The leader, student-body president John Martin, addressed Principal DenDenker: "Sir, we request permission to present a petition to the faculty."

DenDenker led the group, followed by the staff, into the Asylum, where John Vroom was busy licking the finger that had just scraped the last streak of gooey sweetness from his trampled bag.

Most of the teachers took their seats while John Martin addressed them, a slight tremor betraying his nervousness:

Shepherd's Call

"We, as representatives of the student council and on behalf of the student body, respectfully request your consideration of school-sponsored and supervised dances. We present the following reasons." At this, the student president fumbled in his back pocket and pulled out a piece of paper. Unfolding it, he read:

1. Many students find dancing an enjoyable and wholesome activity.
2. Nearly 65% of Omni students attend dances more than twice a month.
3. There's a need for a more appropriate place and for Christian direction and supervision of the music and the dances.
4. Without such direction and supervision the whole experience is often too chaotic and worldly, a point which our demonstration out there was intended to make.
5. The Christian school and its staff can best provide the needed leadership as it does in so many other extra-curricular activities.
6. And, finally, a quote from a famous German philosopher who put it even more strongly: "Dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from the curriculum of all noble education: dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and ... with the pen."

Young Martin refolded the paper while adding, "We hope that you will give this petition your thoughtful attention and, may I add, your favorable response."

John Vroom's snort was only partially covered by the ringing of the bell. As the student delegation was thanked and ushered out, Steve made his way to the chalkboard once more, tiptoeing carefully around Vroom's chair this time, and wrote in big letters across the list already crowding the board: "THE DANCE."

Little fleecy, cuddly lamb
The bell necklaced about you is
haunting in its melancholy refrain.
Your bleating song touches my heart
with its plaintive sounds.
What is it that you sing of?
Is it your needs?
Is it your resignation to be
just a follower?

I understand so well.
We're alike, you and I.
You see, I too have unmet needs
which gnash and gnaw within.
I wish I could shout them out,
even if only to myself.
I too am tired of following, but
whom can I lead? Where can
I go?

Little lamb, lay your head down
in my lap and let us just be.
I'll stroke your back; pet your curls;
hug you, and talk to you
soothingly and reassuringly.
I'll tell you about God and shepherds,
about meadowlands and mountains.
I'll tell you about longings and life,
about disappointments and death.
I'll tell you about walking and flying,
about freedom and bondage.
I'll tell you about the wise men
throughout history and the destroyers
in every generation.
I'll tell you about justice and injustice,
about love and hate.

Little lamb, are you straining to hear
some distant voice?
Is a shepherd summoning you?
We both know that you must go now.
Your loving licks dampen my face
and dry my salty tears.
Goodbye little lamb, little friend,
you listen well.

I too hear my shepherd calling.
I will answer him as I go forth
refreshed.
I will greet him in pure trust and
implicit faith.
We are all lambs led by our Shepherd.

Lenore Turkeltaub

Mary Frisbee Johnson, **VISUAL WORKOUTS: A COLLECTION OF ART-MAKING PROBLEMS**. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 1983, 145pp., \$12.95

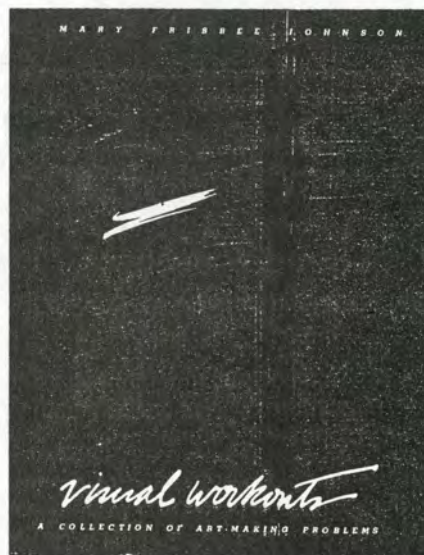
Reviewed by Helen Bonzelaar, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Do you ever look for ways to stimulate your art students to think about how twentieth century everyday life can be related to their art? Are you searching for art problems to encourage students to discover an expressive use of color and develop their thinking visually? Try this author's "Literary Source" suggestion. Its problem reads, "Do a painting that uses a written description of a place as source material. Of interest is not only depicting the physical elements, but in the mood or ambiance or *feel* of that place as well. Try to find a writer whose work excites you." About color, the author says, "Let the description suggest color, let the mood or feeling of the written piece suggest intensity and value of the colors." Related artists include Georgia O'Keeffe, Edward Hopper, and Richard Estes. Maybe it's your own imagination that needs jarring through seeing how contemporary artists respond to the technological age. If so, this book is an adrenalin stimulus!

Some lessons emphasize expression and others encourage the employment of design principals, such as the problem, "Make a bas-relief sculpture from found-objects repetition." Photographs of students' solutions to the problem, a list of related artists (such as Joseph Cornell, Louise Nevelson and Sol LeWitt), and the reference to another book illustrate resources for art lessons.

"Camouflage" is a lesson asking students to paint a three-dimensional object so that it is camouflaged against a background of found pattern or texture. Humorous relationship of the object to the background pattern stirs students to raise questions about color mixing.

The collection of motivations—visual and verbal—finds its sources in a vari-



ety of art educators' descriptions of projects their students have done and lists of related artists. Color and black and white photographs of students' projects create quick images of what is possible for high school and college people.

Problems are simply stated in a single sentence for each project, after which follows verbal inspiration in plain English. Rich references to artists' works and concerns provide fascinating things to think about.

Your most playful side is bound to come forward if you sample this rich collection. Are you ready to dare the mental expansion?

Sheri Haan, ed. al., **SPELLING SPECTRUM** (Gr. 1-6). Christian Schools International, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1983, \$7.50 (Student) \$8.00 (Teacher Edition), pb.

Reviewed by Gerty Heinen, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Can spelling be fun? The authors of the newly revised Spelling Spectrum Se-



ries believed that it could be, so they set out to produce a spelling series which would be just that. Did they succeed? Yes! Is the series, therefore, perfect and foolproof? No. Is it a series that all teachers, inexperienced as well as experienced, will find teachable? Yes. Is it a Christian series? Yes.

Spelling Spectrum consists of Teacher Editions for grades one through six, and student books for grades two through six. The Teacher Editions contain the introductory and background information for each grade level, plus detailed lesson plans for each of the 36 lessons. The corresponding student book pages (except for grade one) are reproduced with each lesson plan and these also contain the answers for the activities.

The materials for the first grade students are in the teacher edition since many of the activities consist of orally presented exercises that can easily be prepared without requiring a separate book. The student books for grades two



through six have soft, but durable, covers. Each contains information, word lists, and activities for 36 weekly lessons. Every ninth lesson is a review lesson. These books can be used as consumable (write in) or nonconsumable books.

The writers state that "through study and analysis of word parts, word meanings, and word histories, students will learn not only correct spelling but also responsible language use." They also state that "the most important result of Spelling Spectra is that you lead students to *care* about how words are put together, about spelling as a courtesy to the reader, about how and why spellings change, about spelling correctly so that God's name is praised. To teach care in communication is an act of service to God and his children." So what do the lessons in Spelling Spectrum have that will achieve those results better than another series will?

For one thing, Spelling Spectrum provides a wide variety of meaningful

spelling activities, many of which will immediately appeal to the students because of their catchy titles, such as Contraction Action or Hink Pinks (riddles with rhyming action), and because of the humor inherent in many of them. In addition to the more conventional activities, there are riddles, puzzles, and games. Some may question whether those are there simply to amuse the students. They are not; the series claims to contain no exercises which function simply as time fillers or busy work. If a teacher wants a series in which students can work independently on lengthy exercises, then this is not the series to use.

While there are no glossy, eye-catching photographs or paintings, the art work, consisting mainly of simple drawings with limited color, is appealing and amusing and it highlights the activities.

Emphasized throughout is Word History. The students get insight into why some word spellings are so difficult or inconsistent, and why in different locales people use different words for the same thing, a study which will lessen student frustration in trying to master English spelling.

A weekly schedule of five sessions is given. After a pre-test to determine which words need to be studied, the sessions should be taken up with a choice of the activities within the lesson (determined by a student's ability level) and short periods of daily word study. The series presents three basic methods for learning to spell words and the students should use the methods that work best for them. The sessions are concluded with a final mastery test. Misspelled words should be carried on the next lesson. Spelling Spectrum is flexible in how a teacher can use it, but the authors feel that the suggestions within this paragraph should not be altered and that the sections on Word History and Word Wisdom (which places spelling within

the Christian perspective) should not be discarded.

To what kind of teacher does Spelling Spectrum appeal? First of all, it requires a teacher who has the same students for the greater part of each day so that daily class time can be scheduled. Then it requires a teacher willing to do the following:

- to see the value of studying word and language history
- to not demand a strong phonics approach to spelling
- to let go of the belief that repeated re-writing of words will lead to spelling mastery
- to lead students into correcting their own spelling tests
- to devise a workable system whereby students carry misspelled words from one lesson to the next, and then to devise an efficient method whereby students can subsequently be tested on those words again
- to not just teach the list of words and then assign all activities to all students to do independently
- to guide in the choosing of activities that will best help the individual students in their mastery of a lesson's concepts

This is a spelling series for any school that places spelling within the whole of God's creation and attempts to create an awareness of how delightful and meaningful is God's gift of language.

Rockne McCarthy, *AMERICAN CIVIL RELIGION*. Christian Schools International, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1983, 41 pp., \$2.80, pb.
George Marsden, *THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*. Christian Schools International, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1983, 35 pp., \$2.80, pb.
Reviewed by Leon VanRees, Muskegon, Michigan.

The *Christian Perspective on History* series published by Christian Schools International is a valuable resource for

Christian educators in both public and Christian high schools. Romans 12 calls for Christians to avoid conforming to the pattern of this world. When Christians use history they must ask some questions that are different from those being asked by non-Christians. Not many textbooks that present a Christian perspective are available for the secondary level, and those for general distribution omit many subjects that are relevant for Christians. This series provides resource material on relevant issues that call for a Christian viewpoint.

Carl Becker once said that Mr. Everyman is his own historian. But he's not very careful about doing history accurately. He makes meaning out of experience confronted accidentally. Since there is no direct accounting for the meaning that is made, it is likely that an imaginary, perhaps highly mythological memory of what actually happened is constructed. This is especially significant in understanding the religious traditions of a nation. So the historian must carefully attempt to make meaning out of the memory of the past. McCarthy and Marsden fulfill this calling admirably. They challenge many conventional assumptions held by Christians and non-Christians about the nature of religious influence in American society. It is imperative that high school students be exposed to these ideas.

Many Americans believe that the legal order in the United States recognizes the pluralistic nature of the society. McCarthy shows how a civil religion with a faith in individualism has shaped a legal order that has never been pluralistic.

Most Americans think that the Constitution has effectively prevented the establishment of religion. They do not realize that a civil religion has been formed that discriminates against individuals, groups, and institutions as effectively as any state established religion did in the Old World.

Many Americans believe that early American tradition gave freedom to religion. They fail to see how Enlightenment thought actually narrowed the scope of religious freedom by limiting the expression of religion to theological and ecclesiastical matters. The expression of religion was liberalized, but only if confined to the private sphere of life. Some Christians even promote a religion that is antithetical to their own interests by failing to see, as Marsden does, that Christian and Enlightenment thought may have been unequally yoked to provide the impetus for the American Revolution.

Some Americans put great faith in the political ideas of the American Revolution. They believe that the people of the world can be converted with these ideas. They fail to realize that the religious motive may really have supplied the energy to sustain the Revolution. They fail to see, as McCarthy does, that misplaced religious energy may have given the United States a "Militaristic Messianic Mission" that replaced the idea of Providence with Manifest Destiny, and continues to find expression with the intensity of any crusade in history.

Many Americans, under the influence of the Enlightenment, believe that sectarian conflict can be eliminated by relegating religion to private life. Then they are perplexed by controversy about prayer and Bible reading in school, nativity scenes, and the new church related schools that are cropping up. Americans who think they have been freed from religious dogma might be surprised by McCarthy's claim that belief in the sovereignty of the people is based on faith assumptions equal to those supporting belief in the sovereignty of God. Some Christian Americans, catechized by the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution, fail to realize that faith in Individualism is rooted in John Locke, and not in the

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Holy Scriptures.

Some Americans believe that U.S. citizenship means that they have the right to believe what they want to believe. McCarthy points out that the American definition of citizenship requires membership in a community with loyalty to shared ideas. Immigrants must lose cultural and group identity or be faced with excommunication by a majoritarian electoral system that fails to give meaningful choice, or be proselytized by public schools called to redeem society through the propagation of republican values.

These two recent CSI publications fulfill the purpose of the series in an excellent manner. They present ideas that Christian students must deal with, and ideas that non-Christians should know in order to understand Christians, but will not find in most textbooks. These are scholarly papers and are not designed to be read by high school students. But they contain many ideas that a creative teacher can use to stimulate thought and learning. The interpretations are not fixed and dogmatic. Some ideas are open for debate, some call for further exploration, and some call for testing.