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CEJ

A Matter of Style

YOU'D be more popular around here if you didn't give assignments," an eighth grader quipped.

I kindly thanked him before reminding him that I was not competing for popularity. I would rather have him see me as one member of a team serving the community.

Perhaps the junior high faculty of which I am a member illustrates the team concept. We are a small team, but we each contribute unique strengths to the whole effort of teaching the same eighty or ninety students. Not one of us can claim total success in reaching every student, but each of us relates well to some of those students. Our diversity appears to be advantageous for the student body.

In recent months I have had opportunity to observe several other school faculties, and in each instance I have come away marveling at the strength given to the school's total design by the varied personalities and teaching styles of its teachers.

On one occasion I was privileged to join nearly all the members of one faculty gathered informally in a hotel room and later in a modest waterfront restaurant during a teachers' convention. Perhaps the setting contributed to the camaraderie, but as this lively group interacted, I could note among them a healthy respect for one another's differences and gratitude for everyone present. They knew how to talk professionally as well as person-

ally with each other. They had the capacity not only to discuss serious issues but also to have fun together—in spite of their different styles.

On a more recent occasion, I visited the classes of four teachers in a small Christian grade school on the West Coast. I noted once more how distinctly each teacher's personality affected his or her teaching style, and yet how unified a purpose and what love for the task was evident in that school.

While it is true that every teacher in the system maintains an individual style, I believe certain qualities must be displayed in each classroom. I believe every teacher committed to God must teach both Christianly and creatively.

How does one teach Christianly? As a servant with a distinct awareness of the Creator, an awareness that causes wonder and enthusiasm for studying and learning and teaching. One who teaches Christianly is more concerned about her service to God than about her popularity with students, parents, and colleagues.

Of course, a Christian teacher must hope to satisfy the people with whom she works, but her goal may not be centered on how much recognition she can gain or how many national merit scholars she can produce.

AS image-bearers of the Creator, Christian teachers must also teach creatively. As I read current

newspapers and magazines, I grow more and more disturbed by our nation's recent emphasis on test scores. Certainly I am eager for reform in public education, but too many educational reformers assume that if they can get their scores to surpass the neighboring district's, they deserve to gloat a bit.

Unfortunately, some Christian educators fall into the same trap. Some Christian school advocates like to use the school's high test scores as promotional publicity. They figure that the school's intellectual emphasis is reason enough to attract new students. Believe me, I am highly supportive of high scholarship, but I never want to see academic standards become the primary purpose for promoting Christian education.

Actually, those whose students score high only in verbal or analytical tests have little reason to boast. Surely it is far easier to teach students to pass tests than to teach them to think and to respond to God's creation. But response must be the goal of the Christian teacher, and such a goal requires creativity.

Creative teaching requires acceptance of one's own unique style. It includes pouring one's personality into the work. It means providing a variety of approaches to the lessons, both inside and outside the classroom, so that both students and teacher enjoy a sense of wonder and enthusiasm. It means bringing order out of chaotic

as in the realm of literature and science and history and art and music and every other discipline.

Creative teaching provides more than mere intellectual knowledge. It promotes a response that points to the Creator. It shows not only the *what* and *when* and *where*, but also the *how* and the *why* and the *so what* in what we teach.

My way of teaching those ideas will be quite different from the way of my colleague next door. He and I have very different teaching styles, but we respect those differences with humility and gratitude, for we both want to serve God and we both want to teach well.

Several years ago my mother gave me a very special quilt which my great grandmother had carefully stitched together by hand when I was an infant. She arranged block prints, garnered from various aunts' piecés, into a repeating design interspersed with white blocks cut from my great aunt's nurse uniforms. The solid white backing was made from a great uncle's white shirts.

My faculty is, in some respects, like my great-grandmother's quilt. Each member has a unique, varied pattern which contributes to the total design. But to really provide warmth, all the parts must be bound together with a solid backing, the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

LVG

My School Is Stricken

Ruth E. Montgomery

A bit of this;
A little of that;
And, something else thrown in;
A pinch of fun;
A lot of chat;
A number of things delved in;

A picture to cut;
Some paste to smear;
A poem to be written;
A book to open;
A ship to steer . . .
And my school is stricken

With Social Studies.

(This poem was written September 11, 1940, when the instructions for teachers to teach geography, history, composition and oral expression as a combined subject to be called social studies caused great confusion and exhaustion in one-room rural schools. The poet and her husband are missionaries in Karachi, Pakistan, where they have a teaching ministry among uneducated Pakistani Christians.)

Classroom Questions

Angus M. Gunn

IN the average North American classroom, over half the teaching time is taken up with questions and related discussions. Unfortunately, most of the questions are of poor quality; that is to say, they do not demand more of the student than memorization. In the minority of classrooms where questions are intellectually challenging, you can tell a great deal about the calibre of both teachers and students. In fact, the ways in

which classroom questions are asked and answered are one of our best measures of educational quality.

At one time leading questions were considered the ideal type. They date from antiquity and were the kind frequently used by Socrates. Here are some examples from the famous dialogue with the slave boy in which Socrates sought to teach geometry. The essential characteristic of this form of teaching is that the answer is suggested by the form of the question:

Socrates: Tell me, boy, is not this a square of four feet?

Slave Boy: Yes.

Socrates: Now we can add another of the same size to it, can we not?

Slave Boy: Yes.

Socrates: And a third one here, again of the same size?

Slave Boy: Yes.

Socrates: And we can add yet another one can we not?

Slave Boy: Yes.

Socrates: So here we have four equal squares, have we not?

Slave Boy: Yes.

Socrates: And how many times the size of the first square is the total area of the four squares?

Slave Boy: Four times.

TODAY Socratic-type questions are not highly valued. They do not demand much depth of thought and they focus on what is in the teacher's mind rather than on the student's world of thought. At the same time a mode of questioning employed by another teacher from antiquity is receiving a great deal of acceptance. I refer to the teaching methods of Jesus. So great is the prestige accorded to his methods of teaching that a teacher might be tempted to think that the four gospels of the New Testament were written at the same time as contemporary educational journals.

Because Jesus is the Son of God, the Christian's focus of worship and faith, we tend to overlook the human qualities he displayed during his life on earth; however, both his friends

and critics recognized him as The Teacher, and over the centuries historians have acknowledged him as a great teacher.

Good questions are simple, brief, and clear like the following examples from the gospels:

Why do you have these thoughts?

Do you not understand this parable?

What is your name?

Who do people say I am?

They are also relevant to the purposes at hand. Thus, in assessing questions, we need to know the context, who is asking, who is answering, and how the questions are being answered.

While it is true that a teacher must frequently ask questions to test a student's grasp of a subject or to involve him in discussion, the questions of most value to a student are the ones he asks. If there is a difficulty in understanding something, it is hard for a student to concentrate on new material until the difficulty is cleared up.

Jesus' mode of questioning, as we would expect, was related to the difficulties in the lives of those he sought to teach. Again and again we read that his questions were responses to the ones posed by others. In Mark's gospel there are more than forty of his questions recorded, and over thirty of these are responses to the inquiries he received. In John's gospel, it is a similar story. This kind of situation is rare indeed, almost a one-to-one ratio of student to teacher questions. In most classrooms there is an average of twenty questions by the teacher for every one by a student.

The characteristics of Jesus' response-questioning are particularly interesting. Instead of answering directly he would often pose a thought-provoking question to make the

inquirer search more deeply for an answer to the problem. When a lawyer asked him, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?", Jesus replied with two additional questions: "What is written in the law? How do you read?" Probing questions like these raise the level of thought and create a good learning environment. In both Mark's and John's gospels we find that about half of the questions Jesus asked were of this probing type.

In those instances where people were trying to catch him by means of a trick question—a common experience of a good teacher—Jesus used an indirect approach so that those who wanted to trip him up were left wondering what they had been told. Here is one example from Matthew's gospel:

The Pharisees came to Jesus, saying, "Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, "Why are you tempting me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the poll-tax." And they brought him a denarius. And he said unto them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

For the Christian teacher there is a double advantage in modeling his questioning on this unique, high quality teacher. He knows his Bible and can readily use the examples he finds in the four gospels. Furthermore, because he is a Christian, he is already highly motivated to follow Jesus.

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*The questions
of most value
to a student
are the ones he asks.*



Butterflies

Marion Schoeberlein

They do not fly,
but dance
like love across the garden,
hoping to be poems
on roses,
dandelions,
turning cartwheels,
just to be noticed,
child-sweetness,
changing souls
of artists,
begging eyes
for blessings,
yellow pearls
of music
in the grass.

What's Your School's "S.Q."?

ALL of us are aware of the importance of "I.Q." or intelligence quotients. I'd like to inquire about "S.Q.," about what I choose to call "social quotient," or social sensitivity. Rather than start with a formal definition of the term, I'd like to proceed and trust that you'll catch my drift as we move along.

In the educational thought of several prominent Reformed Christians of just a generation ago, the social element, I think, was seriously neglected. For example, Lambert Flokstra (*Christian Education: Tradition or Conviction?*, Calvin College: 1958) wrote that "... Christian education aims primarily at the development of the individual as a person." Therefore, he reasoned, we should look not to the psychological or biological aspects of man, nor look to the sociological or technological sides of man, "but rather to man as connoted by his intellectual and spiritual qualities—the essential human by which man is defined in the Christian sense and which differentiates him from other creatures" (p.16).

In the same pamphlet Flokstra is critical of the "modern mind" (in this case you may read "progressive education") for its "undue concern for social adjustment and personality development" (p.19).

Henry Zylstra does something of the same in an essay entitled "Modern Philosophy of Education" (see *Testament of Vision*, Eerdmans 1958). Unlike Flokstra, Zylstra does have a word of praise for the "social" in education. But he is eager to warn that unless there is "interiority of the personal self, personal conscience, deep-seated independence" as a priority in education, there can be no true sense of society.

William Harry Jellema might have

worked out for us some of the social implications of Christian education if he had developed more fully the notion of *civitas* or kingdom (see "Calvinism and Higher Education" in *God-Centered Living*, Baker, 1951). He even associates the idea of *civitas* with the New England Puritan concept of theocracy,—that is, with the idea of a "city" or commonwealth or community of thought and people, and a godly, god-ordained way of thinking for the sake of godly living. Unfortunately he doesn't run with the idea. In consequence, we have been left with the undeveloped kernel of a potentially fruitful social concept.

LET me share with you the relevant thought of three prominent twentieth century educators for whom the "social" element in education is of great importance.

First, let us consider Jacques Maritain (see *Education at the Crossroads*, Yale, 1943). This Roman Catholic, Thomist, French philosopher and intellectual wanted (like Flokstra and Zylstra) the primary, essential emphasis in schools to fall on the individual, on the person, on the man as such, in terms of his or her freedom to know, to will, and to love. But unlike the others, Maritain also held that "it is obvious that man's education must be concerned with the social group and prepare him to play his part in it. Shaping man to lead a normal, useful and cooperative life in the community, or guiding the development of the human person in the social sphere, awakening and strengthening both his sense of freedom and his sense of obligation and responsibility, is an essential aim." And he chided all those who would neglect it: "Not only is it nonsense to oppose education for the person and education for the common-

wealth," he said, "but the latter supposes the former as a prerequisite, and in return the former is impossible without the latter, for one does not make a man except in the bosom of social ties where there is an awakening of civic understanding and civic virtues" (p.15).

Second, we look at John Dewey. In *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897), Dewey wrote that "the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life." Dewey believed that the teacher should realize the dignity of his calling: to be "a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth." In this way, he noted, "the teacher is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God." The art of teaching, for Dewey, was the "supreme art," which he described as the art of "giving shape to human powers and adapting them to social service."

Regarding the student who is to be shaped by the formative art of the teacher, Dewey, in the same work, noted that the "individual who is to be educated is a social individual and . . . society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left with only an abstraction; [on the other hand] if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left with only an inert and lifeless mass."

Further, Dewey in his *Creed*, conceived of education as a "regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness." To the degree that individual behavior was modified by such social consciousness, education would be "the fundamental method of social progress and reform."

In 1961, Philip Phenix of Columbia

University Teachers' College published a book entitled *Education and the Common Good*. In it he argues that the "most important product of education is a constructive, consistent, and compelling system of values around which personal and social life may be organized." He insists that the greatest present danger in America is a "loss of direction." He perceives a "malady of meaninglessness" besetting modern man and modern American education.

In this regard Phenix affirms that the principles of democracy, when "rightly understood," do provide an answer to modern man's predicament. Unfortunately, according to Phenix, we do not rightly understand democracy. Instead, the dominant conception of democracy today is what Phenix calls a "democracy of desire."

In a democracy of desire, according to Phenix, the greatest good is independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency. Social life is organized to insure maximum satisfaction for individual human interests and claims. The goal of such a democracy is to help people as far as possible get what they want. Man alone is the measure of all things. Each individual is expected to seek his own welfare. He is taught to cooperate with others but only to the extent that both he and others can achieve personal satisfaction. A democracy of desire accents acquisition, efficient production for large-scale consumption, getting things, and personal success at the expense of others.

In contrast to this existing democracy of desire, Phenix posits a "democracy of worth." He writes: "We need to be wise enough to know that people do largely live by acquisitive striving, and we should take account

of this fact in educational planning, but we should also know the more urgent truth that there is another more authentic human way—the way of loyalty, devotion, and love—in which the urge to get is transmuted into a contrary dedication, to give. The knowledge of this possibility and the acceptance of this goal [ought to] constitute the major premises for educational policy."

Notice, then, that all three of these educators have contributed something to a definition of "social quotient." Maritain speaks of the central importance of awakening the student to civil or political sensitivities and strengthening him with civic virtues. Dewey says that teachers are called to be social servants helping to define a proper social order and inducing in children right social growth. He defines education as a process of coming to share in a social consciousness. Phenix notes that wise educational policy must take into account the presence in America of a pervasively evil democracy of desire, and must work toward the development of a democracy of worth.

NOW surely we who are Christian educators can be instructed by and impressed with the social arguments of Maritain, Dewey, and Phenix. But if we are to be convinced, or better, convicted and moved to action, I think we would want to know that what we are to be and to do is the will of the Lord. What we are to be and to do in education must be biblically grounded. So also must our social concern, or social sensitivity.

I take for granted that you are aware of the social, cultural, cosmic meanings of "gospel." When Paul speaks in II Corinthians 5:17-21 about

our being "in Christ" and, that because of being "in Christ" all things for us become "new," Paul is not just talking about an individual, subjective, personal "good feeling" that overwhelms us at such a moment. Paul is not talking about some "Rocky-mountain high." For those in Christ, Paul is really suggesting that there is a new creation, or, a new look to life. But it's not just an appearance; it's real. When we are "in Christ" we see things differently—"all things"—because for us they really are different. Being in Christ means that we can also see evil much more clearly, and social injustice, and inequities of all sorts. And with that vision, Paul tells us we are to be ambassadors bent on reconciling, reconstructing, and restoring this out-of-joint world to something of the perfection in which it was first made, and thereby, by such activity, be "made the righteousness of God" in Christ. Gospel for us is not just: Christ died for your sins, or you are saved by the blood of the Lamb; but gospel for us also means that God was in Christ reconciling the world—that is, the cosmos, including its inhabitants, its rules, its laws, its institutions, systems of thought—"all things" unto Himself, through Christ working in us.

When you and I read John 3:16 about how God so loved the world, we don't just think about people, about some alcoholic, or prostitute, or thief. Beyond that, though including that, we think of the God who gave his Son so that we will join forces to root out alcoholism, prostitution, and the social conditions which help tempt people to break and enter our homes.

When you and I read Matthew 28:19-20—the Great Commission—we do not simply read a mandate to save souls, important as that is. In ad-

dition, we must read "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ."

"All things whatsoever" would surely include the command in Romans 6:13 to "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness [or justice] unto God." "All things" would surely include the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28, or the social imperatives laid down by the prophets. In that regard, let me merely summarize some of the most fundamental values that lie behind the concrete moral responses dictated by the Word of God as found in the Old Testament. For all those who acknowledge Jehovah to be the Lord there is (1) the affirmation of the goodness of life in this world; (2) the importance of life, of full, rich living for all members of society (and, therefore, a decisive stand against any oppression and exploitation which restricts human fulfillment); (3) the priority of good *relationships* (and, therefore, the importance of life in community, and the importance of *social ethics*); and (4) the preference for prudence and moderation (and, therefore, the ethic which seeks happiness and fulfillment not in excesses but in a deliberate, responsible lifestyle). (See Douglas A. Knight, "Old Testament Ethics," *Christian Century* 99 Jan. 20, 1982: 55-59.)

In light of these biblical teachings and others, many conservative Protestant evangelicals now show promising signs of being alive to social issues. A review of such journals as *Eternity*, *Vanguard*, *Sojourners*, *Faith at Work*, and the *Reformed Journal* will reinforce my point. These journals often address social issues such as racism, sexism, world hunger, prison reform, the aged, abortion, nuclear warfare,

the environment, energy, the poor and the oppressed. They are asking: what does the Lord require of us for correcting social injustices? What individual and social behaviors or lifestyles are needed to put faith more consistently into practice?

THAT same liveliness and sensitivity to social issues, social concerns, values, and lifestyle that one can find "out there" among Protestant evangelicals, including Reformed Christians, must, I now suggest, invade all of our schools. It must affect educational policy in a variety of ways. Allow me to illustrate.

In an instructive book entitled *Educating for Responsible Action*, (CSI, Eerdmans 1980) my colleague Nick Wolterstorff suggests that if we are going to move our Christian youth to action, at least two things have to happen. (1) We have to give the students *reasons* for acting transformationally, and (2) we have to surround them with adult (in this case "teacher") *modeling* of the kind of responsible action we expect. "Reasons" sounds to me like curriculum; "modeling" sounds to me like "pedagogy," or "instruction."

Let's take a look at pedagogy first, with an eye to "social quotient" or social sensitivities.

1. Fundamentally, we teachers must find ways to model to our students that we are rooted "in Christ." Out of that new life in Christ there must flow fairly obvious implications for a classroom pedagogy that has a Christian social sensitivity. We ought, I would think, to be able to model to our students by our personal interest, and perhaps even communal participation in issues such as abortion, or hunger, or racism, or sexism, the aged, the poor, defense, nuclear armaments,

the fractured family or whatever. If we serve on committees or commissions, we should let our students know what we are into, and why. If we don't so serve, maybe we should get involved. It is important, I think, for the teachers to serve as "role models" of Christian social concern.

2. We ought to model to our students that we view them not as degenerates, animals, dodos, or dunces, (or whatever your favorite expression may be). We ought rather to treat them as sinners sanctified in Christ, and keep on treating them that way until they indicate something other than that. They are not objects; they are subjects. And, in the sense of self-fulfilling prophecy, the sooner we can treat them as responsible "new creations" engaged with us in the *communal* task of renewing the creation, the better off we'll be.

3. We ought to organize our classrooms, whenever possible, into embryonic Christian communities where, in the fellowship of believers, there is giving and taking, sharing, cooperation, a sense of independence and interdependence. When students must do individual work, insist on it. And when they can work together, plan for it, often.

4. We ought to encourage competition—but only when it occurs between near equals in ability, and is intended to develop the unique gifts God has given to us. We ought always to discourage destructive competition which can only bring false pride to some and loss of dignity to others.

There are any number of other things one could do to show, in the classroom, that she or he has a Christian social sensitivity. I urge you to read and explore I Corinthians 12 for clues as to how to succeed in this great task.

But beyond pedagogy, beyond concern for the social climate of the Christian classroom, let's inquire together about curriculum, about what we teach and why we teach it. For if we need a transformed style of instruction, so also do we need a transformed curriculum.

Christian educators are being persuaded, as never before, that Christian education is for discipleship, for responding to the Word of God and the issues of life in a new way of living. We have been affirming that Christian education is not just for *knowing* the Truth but for *doing* the Truth, or *responding* to the Truth.

To that end Christian Schools International recently published a socially-oriented program entitled "Man in Society: A Study in Hope." The study is organized around such topics as the Self; Troth (that is, mankind as male/female, friendship, courtship, marriage, family, the aging years); the State; the Mass Media; Education and the Schools; Work and the Job. The materials are intended, in the words of the Preface, to help adolescents "face the issues of life and develop a Christian lifestyle in the light of biblical

principles as an alternative to secular lifestyles around us."

I trust you are using that curriculum. But good as it is, I'm afraid it may be saved only for the junior and senior years in high school and left largely to the domain of the social studies teachers. I think that Geraldine Steensma and Harro Van Brummelen have a superior curricular proposal (*Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View*, Signal, 1977, pp.27 ff.) for a core of biblical studies at both the elementary and secondary levels. Integrated in nature, these studies deal broadly with biblical directives for our physical environment, health and personal development, communication in society, life in the community, marriage and the family, the church, the aesthetic dimension of life, economic stewardship, and justice in society.

These studies, rightly ordered to grade levels, would engage not just the social studies teachers but every member of the teaching staff in a communal academic effort, where, for example, the science teacher, the music teacher, the math teacher and the history teacher (in the high schools) could all be called upon at times to

bring to bear their unique gifts and the insights of their own special preparation. And at the elementary level, I'd like to see teams of teachers encouraged by their boards and principals to get together for a week or two in the summer (preferably for additional pay!) where they could, together, build integrated units that could be shared within a school or between schools.

Rightly done, such Christian communal curriculum building would represent Christian general education at its very best. And the students, the products of the program, would likely be young Christian disciples who, whether they continue on to college or not, would have gained *reasons* for responsible citizenship in the Kingdom and be willing to join the Christian community in *doing* the Truth.

Now, in light of that kind of pedagogy and that kind of curriculum, I ask once again: what's your school's social quotient?

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Dandelion

Dorothea Kewley

The wise dandelion
does the joyous best it can
in a world of preferred plants.
Its sun as bright as any radiates,
Gray head made as symmetrical, moreover,
by nature's impartial geometer.

Beyond Haiku: Can Junior High Students Write Poetry?

TEACHERS who like poetry themselves try all sorts of things to get their students to enjoy poems too. One way that sometimes works is to encourage them to write some. A carefully structured form such as haiku (an unrhymed Japanese verse form of three lines containing five, seven, and five syllables respectively) is a good place to start; it gives students a clear form while allowing them to use their imaginations. Teachers in fifth and sixth grades often start with this form, and by the time students reach seventh grade, they have perhaps tried writing haiku a number of times. While the form probably has inexhaustible possibilities, junior high students need experiences with many additional forms.

As a student teacher I felt obligated to "teach" my classes to write poetry. I thought I would impress them with the alluring word combinations and pictures of Hopkins' "Spring." I thought, "Who wouldn't be able to write poems after reading about weeds in wheels growing long and lovely and lush?" They couldn't. Some students knew they couldn't before they started; others made feeble attempts. But I didn't teach any of them to write poetry, and I'm not sure I helped them enjoy it. I had simply showed my students classic poems and expected them to imitate them.

During my first year of teaching I solved this problem by ignoring it. I felt justified, for we were all busy learning junior high procedure. Besides, I had to teach grammar, literature, and other writing in only four fifty-minute periods per week!

At the end of my second year of teaching I was feeling more confident. My students were mastering most of the skills required by our curriculum and I decided to try poetry writing

Purpose:

again. This time I approached the task in a different way. I wasn't sure I could teach anyone how to write poetry, but I knew that I wanted my students to share my love for poetry.

I now teach a unit on writing poetry. I teach it for specific reasons. When children have to *be* poets they can appreciate any poem more. I believe poetry is the most individual form of expression in an English class, and a positive experience in writing poetry may promote more such poetic expression. For these reasons I do not grade my students' poetry. If they participate completely in the lessons, they pass the unit.

Students begin this unit by keeping a poet's journal. In it they keep all poems they participate in or write and any poem they enjoy. During the first few days they spend class time experiencing poetry. The atmosphere is lively as students read and share poems from many sources. They write down favorite poems in their journals. At the end of this time each student must have shared a poem with everyone in the class.

The next step is to make writing poetry as comfortable as possible. We start with name poems. A student takes each letter of his name and thinks of an adjective that begins with that letter. From these simple adjective poems the student is encouraged to expand to lines that begin with the letters of his name. Then we write a class poem on tag board that includes everyone's first adjective with his name.

Next we do a lesson on simile. Together we write a class poem finishing the line "Spring is like . . ." It is not Hopkins, but the students are practicing poetry. We break into small groups, and each group decides on a topic for a simile poem. Then each student writes five similes alone, and finally he shares his lines and incorporates the best ones into a group poem.

AT this point students can probably begin individual poems. They remember the first poetry

they ever encountered—nursery rhymes. At that time they all loved poems with alliteration and rhyme, and Peter-Peter Pumpkin Eater and Jack Sprat are familiar friends. In junior high, students still appreciate Silverstein's more contemporary *Light in the Attic* or Ten Harmsel's *Pink Lemonade*. We begin by imitating these children's rhymes. They don't have to make perfect sense—just sound funny. Students write poems about silly characters and creatures; later they share them with first and second graders.

All of these experiences have one purpose—to make the students feel comfortable writing poetry. Perhaps then they can imitate Frost with their own renditions of "Stopping . . ." by filling in new objects to the prepositions. They can also write poems from starter lines such as "I am waiting," or "I am hoping," or just "I am." Assignments include many possible directions and options. They allow students to choose topics that fit themselves. Students are also encouraged to share their poems with classmates for advice or reassurance.

The highlight of our unit is writing an ugly poem as taught in *The Process of Writing* by Allyn and Bacon. Students begin by writing about distasteful things—a line about how they feel when they are mad; a second about the foulest smell they can think of; another which describes a food they dislike. Eventually they find out that this is to be a poem about war, and they continue to write lines of description—eight in all—appropriate to that theme. They revise and read to each other and rewrite until they have really written a poem about war.

My unit doesn't claim to teach students how to write poetry, but it does allow them to participate in and react to poetry and tries to make that participation and reaction as satisfying as possible.

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HOW much do your students read and study beyond that which is required? The immediate response of many teachers is a resounding "none" with an attitude of 'how absurd to even ask.' Yet, ask anyone who advises and teaches first year college students, and they will surely agree that adequate study skills and reading comprehension are determining factors of success or failure in college. So often overlooked by the instructor and not detected on a standardized test is the psychological influence of motivation. Why don't more students read or study for their own enjoyment?

Quite a number of college students tell me they never had to study in high school. Many have not been motivated to do any more reading or studying beyond required assignments. In fact, there is alarming evidence that an increasing number of capable readers choose not to read unless it is absolutely necessary. Statistics indicate that in Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and Germany the percentage of citizens reading books is from two to three times greater than in the United States.

Are required assignments more motivating for improving reading and study skills than elective ones? The answer to this question was the object of an experimental study to determine whether or not the inclusion of specially prepared learning packets as part of the required work in a reading improvement course would result in significant gains in reading rate and comprehension. The assumption was that such learning packets would provide a means of individualizing course work and would be a major contributing factor in the improvement of reading proficiency.

Students enrolled in two sections of

the Key That Motivates Students to Read and Study

a course called "Improvement in Reading" were the subjects of this study. These students were not selected and assigned to a particular section. Rather, they chose to enroll in whichever section was offered at a time that would accommodate their schedules. The course was an elective one, classified under "General Studies" but prepared with first year college students in mind.

As an introduction to the course, the participating students toured our Reading and Study Skills Center which provides self-help for those wishing to improve their reading and study skills, whether enrolled in this course or not. The learning packets were housed in this center which was open during regular office hours. Directions were given on how to use the center, and each student was given an annotated list of the learning packets.

Each learning packet consisted of a cassette tape, a worksheet, and sometimes illustrative material. A total of twenty-one learning packets and twenty-five tapes accompanied a reading machine. Study carrels with tape play-back machines and earphones were available. During the tour of the center as well as during regular class sessions, I attempted by various means to motivate all students in both sections to make use of the learning packets.

The students of both sections of the course used the same textbook, and assignments were identical except that students in section two were *required* to complete nine learning packets of their choice over a nine-week period. Students of the other section were *not required* to do any learning packets even though the packets were highly recommended and students were urged to use them. Class presentations, exercises, and timed readings

were deliberately planned to be virtually the same for both sections. The first section was composed of fifteen students and the second section had thirteen students. Each section met for two fifty-minute periods of group instruction per week.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test, rate and comprehension portions, Form A, was administered at the beginning of the quarter as a pretest. The corresponding portion of Form B of the same instrument was administered at the conclusion of the quarter. The effectiveness of the required vs. elective procedures for improvement in reading rate and comprehension was determined by comparing the mean results of the two test scores of the two forms of this instrument.

Of the students of section one (who were not required to complete any learning packets), five chose not to do any, while one did sixteen, another ten, and the remaining from one to eight packets each. The mean raw score rate increase for this section was 232 with a gain of 35 in general comprehension scores according to the Nelson-Denny test. Timed readings in class showed a much greater gain in both of these areas of study skills.

Although the students in section two were required to complete nine learning packets, they had free choice in selecting them. I recommended that students choose those packets appropriate to their reading needs as evidenced by class exercises. The mean raw score increase for this section was 201 with 38 for the gain in comprehension according to the instrument used. Greater gain was shown in both rate and comprehension in the class exercises for this section as well.

Even though no significant differences were evident in the comparison of these two groups according to the

Nelson-Denny Test, several important variables and observations were noted. It was obvious that the motivation factor was not influential enough in either section. Some students in section two neglected to complete a learning packet each week. This resulted in some students doing several packets in the final two weeks of the quarter in order to fulfill the requirement, thus defeating the purpose of it, in spite of motivation attempts.

ATTITUDES toward reading and required work go all the way back to parents, previous teachers, and the early days of school. Motivation is many sided and cannot be accomplished by one or even a few teachers. Rather, students must see the need for improving their own reading and study skills. That need may simply be a grade point average for staying in school, but hopefully students will see beyond college and the value of establishing life-long reading habits.

Motivation is often encouraged by sharing. If we are around others who become excited about books they are reading, we become interested and want to know more. Such attitudes seem to become contagious and may apply to any age. Even small children enjoy sharing their reading. When our students want to share what they have read, our attitude in listening may encourage or discourage them. Sharing is giving as well as taking. When it comes to reading and learning, both parties must have a positive attitude if the results are encouraging. As a teacher, even sharing a bit of your recreational reading may stimulate your students to read more and realize that reading can be fun and relaxing as well as informative.

As this study indicates, rigid requirements for assignments may not accomplish that for which you had hoped. Even the manner in which you make an assignment can be an influential motivating factor. Try wording your assignments in ways that would arouse curiosity. The manner in which this is done depends much on your subject or what you expect to accomplish by the assigned reading. You might ask your students to read something to find out why this or that happened—what the results would have been if such and such had not happened; or use imagination to bring an old setting up to date. Every reading assignment should have a purpose, and sometimes you might even ask your students to state the purpose as they see it after having completed the reading. You might be surprised. Their perspective of the purpose could be quite different from what you had in mind.

Since comprehension is required for any reading assignment, try to stimulate your students by giving questions once in a while with the directions that they simply read to find the answers. However, an experienced teacher will word such questions in a way that reading the entire assignment will be required to answer them. These questions must be your own, not those of a textbook editor.

Consider other means of motivating learning than the traditional textbook and question methods. What about script writing, interviewing, role playing, the colloquium, reports, and even games for motivating learning? I have prepared tests in the form of cross-word puzzles; assignments could be done in much the same way. Keep your assignments varied.

Reading, comprehension, and learning can be enjoyable, stimulating, and extremely rewarding for you as a teacher as well as for your students. Become excited about reading and learning; share that attitude with your students. Your own reading enrichment is bound to be “caught” by your students!

And, by the way, how many books have you read lately that were not “required” for your teaching preparations?

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Competition

WE live in a competitive world. We strive to have as many luxuries as our neighbors; we compete furiously with our fellow-worker for a higher position; we watch competitive sports for hours, cheering on our favorite team. Our culture is also highly concerned with scholastic competition: competition between students or student groups, and the student with himself.

As a grade school student, I thrived on competition. I loved the spelling bees, math flash card games, and sentence diagramming contests. I always played to win, and often did. I remember my dislike of one contest, however. To add excitement to our Bible class, our teacher would sometimes call out verses from the Bible for us to locate. Whoever found the verse first could stand up and read it aloud. I loved reading aloud, and would page desperately through my Bible to find the verse first. I very seldom won, however, because of my classmate Tim. He knew exactly where to find a text and had the fastest fingers in the class. My eyes would be scanning the correct page looking for the verse number; my mouth would open, my lips would start to form the words “I found it!”—and Tim’s hand would shoot up in the air. Once again he would read the verse aloud while I wiggled impatiently, listening for mistakes in his pronunciation. My dislike for the game grew a little more each time we played it.

Both positive and negative aspects result from competition between students. Gilbert Highet, a professor at Columbia University, says, “Competition keeps a class from being merely a group of faceless nonentities, and gives it something of the diversity of life.” A very positive aspect is that competition brings out different tal-

ents in different students and allows those talents to develop. Competition helps us recognize that we are not all the same, but each is an individual. Competitive games showed me where I fit in the classroom; I was better than others at spelling bees and math flashcards, but not as good as Tim in finding Bible verses.

Another positive benefit from competition between students is that it helps make learning interesting and stimulating. Competitive games break the monotony of the classroom routine. They stimulate the students by causing them to concentrate their energies to achieve more than their opponents. In flash cards, for example, the students have to prepare themselves for rapid thinking and response.

Competition may also be seen as positive because it produces a lift in the winner’s morale and encourages him to continue working.

But reflecting on these competitive situations, we can see some negative aspects of this competition as well. One is its tendency to foster the idea that one studies to be ahead of others. I felt that I had to be better than my classmates and that I had to work hard to maintain this higher position. Rudolph Dreikurs, an Adlerian educator, said that “. . . strong competition is really a form of pushing others down, because we always want to be in a superior position.” It was hard for my Christian concern for others to survive and grow while I wanted so much to be the best.

Competition sometimes brings about negative emotional responses. Students who are always used to winning may give up when they encounter failure. Although competition tends to lift the winner’s morale, it may result in strong negative feelings in those

who don't win. This attitude may result in their quitting, but it also may promote cheating.

COMPETITION with one's self is a different form of scholastic competition. This type of competition practically prevents feelings of inferiority or superiority, since the student competes against past test scores and previous work. I remember second grade as a year of self-competition. In second grade reading we had a series of workbooks. Our requirement was to complete the first five. There were twenty-three workbooks in all, and I determined to finish every one. After acquainting myself with the format of the first few books, I was able to increase my speed and present my teacher with a book to be corrected about every week. She finally received the twenty-third book from an eager reader who then had no reading assignments for the last two months of school. This kind of competition helped me push myself ahead because I knew I could do more. I developed my talents at my own pace and felt positive about myself as I improved.

Slower students can also benefit from self-competition. They can work at their own pace without the threat of comparison. Sometimes, however, this competition doesn't provide enough incentive for growth. The teacher should watch out for the student who has difficulty motivating himself.

A third kind of scholastic challenge is competition between student groups. In contrast to the others, this kind promotes cooperation as well as competition. When the students are working together against another group, they work towards a

common goal and yet may use their individual talents. The good student has the responsibility to help the poorer student so that the whole team will benefit. In this way he can show Christian love while he sees how God gives different students different gifts.

At times, however, this competition can backfire. The better students who thrive on competition and winning often overhelp the poorer students. One year in grade school our teacher divided our class into groups. Each group was given equipment and was required to grow a plant. We were to divide the work so some would research the plant, some would care for it, and some would give daily reports on its progress. One student wanted to lead the entire procedure to make sure her group had the healthiest plant in the class. Instead of encouraging the poorer students, the better students gave them the easy and somewhat menial chores to keep them occupied. Such an attitude is a danger for which a teacher should watch. The teacher must also be careful not to foster the

idea that "the dummies" have to be equally divided among the teams. If the teacher is obvious about a child's lack of ability, the other students will begin to put him in a "dummy" category. Instead, the teacher should emphasize the strengths of the student by saying, for example, "John will be in group three because he will water the plant carefully."

The important thing to remember is, as Dreikurs says, that "... the child must realize that he has permanent value which is recognized by the teacher regardless of what he is doing or where he may fail." As a teacher, I realize now that my students are first of all God's children. My love for them must be based on that truth and not on their scholastic achievement. When a student is secure in that relationship, competition will not be threatening, but it will be profitable.

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In-Service in the Christian School —a Means to Meet a Mandate

Robert V. Scott

The Mandate For Staff Development

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it . . . ” II Tim. 3:14. The apostle Paul in speaking to Timothy, his disciple, reminds him to continue to grow in the knowledge of the truth, remembering the source of that knowledge. In II Tim. 2:15, he reminds his co-worker to “be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” From these admonitions of Paul to Timothy, some applicational principles can be pointed out in regard to the responsibility of Christian school administrators to recognize the professional growth *needs* of their staff. These principles include the need for teachers to:

1. Continue to learn and be committed to teaching the truth
2. Remember the source of that truth
3. Strive for excellence as “workmen” who present the truth to students
4. Study to accurately handle and apply God’s truth in their teaching
5. Recognize, above all, their accountability to God for how and what they teach

The “truth” referred to in these principles does not refer to the Scriptures alone, but to all the truth of God’s creation that is presented in the curriculum. Thus, teachers of math and science should be as concerned to present themselves “approved to God” as those who teach the Bible. Indeed, these principles contain a mandate—a charge to all who handle the truth to continue to study, learn, and grow. In the Christian school it is the administration which must take

the responsibility for seeing that these teachers continue to be trained in the truth.

The Need For In-Service

The responsibility to obey this mandate may in part be effectively carried out by the use of in-service in the Christian school. In regard to the application of biblical truth to the subject matter, commonly called *integration*, it seems that many Christian school teachers have little or no concept of how to accurately handle God's truth in this manner. They probably read their Bibles and may even teach Bible studies; but they may or may not know how God's truth relates to, and in fact *is*, the truth in their subjects such as math, science, or physical education. Many of these teachers may come from a background of education in public universities where there existed humanistic philosophy and methodology. As was the experience of this author, one understood the error in what was being taught but had no one to train him in the biblical way to handle the truth. When called to teach, sincere believers attempt to apply their faith as best they can to their subject matter. Some believe that they must strip away all "non-Christian" thoughts, ideas, or even words from their curriculum that do not sound too "Scriptural." Other Christian teachers simply open their classes with prayer, acknowledging a sovereign God whose truth they are unable to relate to what they teach. Thus, the whole idea of integration based as it is upon the premise that all truth is God's truth is neglected due to a lack of knowledge and understanding. These are often dedicated teachers who would desire to teach as Christian educators, but the ability to do so has not come as a simple by-product of salvation and public edu-

cation. It must be learned.

So how can administrators serve the needs of the faculty and staff who have the desire to grow? Assuming that the headmaster or principal himself has a Christian philosophy of education, he has some options.

1. He could encourage his entire staff to go for summer training in one of the Christian school education programs.
2. He could attempt to train them all himself in a series of summer meetings.
3. Though some may take advantage of the above mentioned opportunities, it seems that the best method to help the faculty meet the mandate is through in-service training.

Strategies for In-service In Christian Schools

In-service as it is defined by most educators simply involves a series of programs, activities, and evaluations to help the staff of the Christian school grow in the knowledge of God's truth and their response to that truth as Christian educators. As such it is a part of staff development, and is a responsibility of the administration. Where the concept of in-service has been found in schools, the following methods have normally been used:

1. *In-House*—The administrator carefully plans instruction by his staff for his faculty during school hours on campus.
2. *Workshop*—Outside experts and consultants are engaged to present topics during summer sessions, on weekends, or after school hours.
3. *Exchange*—Small groups of teachers are released and assigned to observe strategies used in other Christian schools.
4. *Conference*—The entire faculty or department heads are sent to

general or subject area conferences for Christian school educators.

5. *Certification or Advanced Degree*—This training may provide some of the goals of in-service, but is primarily instruction in credit courses by professionals in order to secure or maintain certification.

6. *Self-Directed*—In this method the administrator sees the teacher as capable of improving his own skills. He may provide books and other materials only.

According to the massive research that has been done in American education over the last ten years, the "In-house" method is considered to be the most effective. Of course combinations of several methods are possible, but it would seem that the "In-house" approach, provided there are some staff instructors, other than just the principal who have been trained in Christian education, is the best method, particularly for Christian schools with limited funds.

Criteria for Effective In-service

1. *Commitment*—The entire faculty and staff sees the importance of their development and growth through in-service as a mandate from the Lord.
2. *Goals*—Specific goals and objectives for in-service should be determined annually by the administrator with input from the faculty. Some suggested goals would involve growth in:
 - a. competence in the integration of biblical principles into instruction
 - b. ability to trace the particulars they teach to their origin in biblical premises
 - c. skills in teaching that reflect the Christian methodology of teaching for a response

d. knowledge of the areas of society where teachers may direct their students' learning and response to make an impact for Christ

e. awareness of recent discoveries in God's creation that relate to the curriculum

f. ability to diagnose, understand, and respond to the problems of students in society today

g. commitment to practice better stewardship of the time and resources allotted to them

h. skills in classroom discipline and management to produce an atmosphere that encourages creativity in students

3. *Time*—The administrator's commitment to the growth of his staff is seen in how much quality time he sets aside for in-service.

4. *Place*—The most effective in-service has been found to take place on-site during school hours or summer break.

5. *Topics*—The administrator must assess the needs of his faculty by observation and input to determine relevant topics. These are derived from the goals that are set yearly.

6. *Groups*—The division of the faculty in small groups, perhaps by department, usually is more productive in in-service training. More personal feedback and evaluation is possible.

7. *Instructors*—As was mentioned, the principal and other trained staff members can often provide better

instruction than outside consultants.

8. *Incentives*—With the tremendous work load of most Christian school teachers today, the administrator must supplement the intangible rewards with tangible ones.

A Matter of Priorities

From this point it becomes a matter of planning and executing. All administrators know that they need to encourage and support their staff. But do they realize their serious responsibility to help their teachers obey their biblical mandate to accurately handle the truth? Do other emphases such as academic excellence and extracurricular activities seem to be a greater priority for school time than the training of the staff? These are questions that headmasters and principals must answer if they desire to present themselves approved unto God. Of course, in-service is not the only method of training, but it could be used effectively in Christian schools. Like anything worthwhile, it involves a sacrifice of time to diagnose needs, allocate funds, evaluate goals, and implement a plan. Some ideas to get started have been given here. But like so many activities in the Christian life, in-service in the school involves hearing *and* doing.

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“**D**EVELOP appropriate techniques and you will be an effective teacher.” It seems to me that articles in educational journals and the content of workshops and courses relate this message quite frequently. Education is technology, teaching is largely technique, teachers are technicians, and educational leaders are technocrats. What, then, are students? Many educators in North America have put their faith in technology to guide schools out of the morass of problems with which they are confronted. Technocracy is a trap well worth avoiding because it distorts the practice of education and denies the personhood of each individual, teacher and students.

In a school environment, teacher and students are together involved in the learning process. Teaching involves people. It is a person-to-person process. Within the Christian school the person is one who images God, i.e., in personhood both student and teacher reflect God. The Bible tells us in several ways that each person is unique and special and that the uniqueness of each person enhances the total community. The gifts each person has received have been given so that each member of a community may be built up in love. Part of this love is evidenced in the respect a person has for others and for him or herself as a creature of the Lord who has received gifts to use in the service of God and of fellow human beings. A primary purpose of Christian education is helping children explore their gifts, develop their abilities to serve in community, and proclaim the authority of Christ everywhere.

An important aspect of imaging God is that each human being is free and responsible. A person is free to serve God in the best way he or she

Technique or People?

knows with the abilities God has provided. In fact, a person is responsible to God for the use of his or her unique gifts and the time God gives in a particular time or place. Freedom and responsibility are two sides of the same coin. A person can't be held responsible unless given the freedom to do so. Even in Christian schools, children have been held responsible for work or ideas beyond their ability to grasp or too easy for them. In either case, the child is unable to respond fully. The language arts program, for example, has been and is taught in a very lock-step way, often using basal readers and workbooks with standard exercises. Too often the entire class is forced to read a particular story and answer particular questions to learn or practice certain skills. Whether the story is appropriate or interesting for everyone in the class or group, if that were even possible, is a question not considered often enough. Is the skill that is being "developed" one that the child needs at this particular time or has he already mastered the skill before the lesson is taught? Is the way in which the skill is taught and reinforced the best way for this particular child? If not, how can we hold him responsible for his learning? Is the child free to explore the application of the skills he is learning in a context that is meaningful for him? Or must he follow the patterns set by others or fill in the tedious blanks?

What about the wonderful world of numbers and space? Are children given the freedom to explore the numerical side of creation, to make discoveries, to play with numbers? Is the imagination challenged by unique applications of number theories? Can children romance with numbers and explore applications in playful, uniquely personal ways or is precision

the only goal of our math programs? How many of us have cut loose from the use of our math texts to develop math labs where children can freely explore and in which they must responsibly develop precision?

How do we teach social studies? Do we realize that what turns some children on turns others off? Have we defined broadly enough the concepts to be taught to allow different children the opportunity to explore various aspects of these concepts? Have we allowed children the freedom to choose to explore what interests them in a topic under consideration and have we held them responsible to produce their best efforts? Or do we treat all children the same way by having all of them listen to the same lecture, view the same films, read the same pages in the textbook? Do we interact with groups and individuals about their discoveries?

WHATEVER techniques are employed, whatever rules are made, however instruction takes place, whatever seating arrangement is devised—these must all enhance the person-to-person character of the learning/teaching process. As members of a learning community, each child must receive the opportunity to experience the support of the community in the development of his or her special gifts. At the same time, each child must also learn to understand that it is his or her responsibility to help the community function effectively, to recognize and respect the needs and contributions of others. As Nicholas Wolterstorff so clearly points out in *Educating for Responsible Action*, it is modeling supported by explanations that is the most effective method of teaching about community and respect for the self.

As members of a learning community, each child must receive the opportunity to experience the support of the community in the development of his or her special gifts.

Accepting each child as God's image-bearer in community may not just be a theoretical theological construct but must be practiced.

A number of different activities can enhance the experience of the child as member of a community. An effective way of dealing with the feelings of children about themselves and situations confronting them, while at the same time helping children learn about how their actions influence others, is by use of the Magic Circle approach, (Human Development Training Institute, Inc., P.O. Box 1505, La Mesa, CA. 92041). A time for sharing discoveries children make as they explore God's world should be planned frequently. Ask children to share their findings with the class as they work at and through their projects. Provide opportunities for children to make prayer requests. Show them that you trust them by asking them to arrange the room or decorate the walls. Ask them to help you make their classroom a real workshop. Allow them the opportunity to learn from each other by working with each other. Show them that you, too, are a person with concerns, times of sadness and joy, that some things stump you and that you feel competent in others. Be a learner with your children and show excitement over new discoveries. Accept the child's contributions, express pleasure with a job well done, and correct gently but firmly. If you're having an off day, say so and ask for their cooperation in still making it a good day for you as a learning community together.

CHILDREN, up to their ears in exploring God's wonderful creation together and with the teachers, are certainly less likely to create classroom management problems than those faced with tedium or frustrated by exercises of dubious value. The teacher will be in the middle of an actively busy room stimulating here, advising there, questioning elsewhere, and occasionally applying the brakes to an overly exuberant student or groups of students. Difficulties between children will arise but will be settled between them with teacher as guide and advisor. There will be times of quiet as students are involved in individual activities or absorbed in a book or when the teacher is working with one or more students. During discussion times students are reminded of proper speaking and listening etiquette which includes not interrupting the speaker, paying attention to what is being said, and showing respect to the *speaker as a person*. Basic procedures will have been established early in the year as students and teacher worked together to establish an atmosphere of peace and respect in this particular class. The atmosphere may not be perfectly quiet but it will be personal. A break in the harmony is serious and must be dealt with so that healing may occur.

Sometimes a class, student, or group of students will come along that makes all this seem impossibly impractical. Students appear to be incorrigible and nothing works. Certainly at these times wider community involvement becomes essential. The ex-

pertise found in colleagues, parents, and community services must be employed, not only for the benefit of the student involved but for the entire class and school community. In some cases family counselling becomes essential. Hopefully, the counselor will recognize that the essence of counselling is the development of the person's feeling of self-worth and self-respect. Hopefully the school will provide the experiences that help reinforce this development. On rare occasions a student may have to be asked to leave this particular learning community for his own benefit and that of the others of the community. Such cutting out is always a very painful experience and is too much a reminder of the brokenness existing in our world and imperfect Christian community.

Even though the ideal is often far from being realized, our practice must be guided by our principles and our principles must be shared by God's Word. God calls us to work with his image-bearers. He has also allowed for the development of a technique to assist in this work. But the moment technique stands in the way of educating people, we must re-examine our practice.

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Living the Metaphors of the Bible

The two previous articles of this series addressed the ideas "Truth through Imagination and Metaphor" (Dec.) and "Seeing Metaphors of the Bible" (Feb.).

Is it possible for people to *live* a metaphor? In his new book, *God's Book for God's People*, John Stott gives a fine example of a living metaphor in his exposition of John 13, in which Jesus washes his disciples' feet. Stott says: "Jesus' actions were a deliberate parable of his mission. John seems clearly to have understood this, for he introduces the incident with these words: 'Jesus, knowing . . . that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper . . .' (vv. 3-4). That is, knowing these things, he dramatized them in action. Thus Jesus 'rose from supper,' as he had risen from heavenly throne. He 'laid aside his garments,' as he had laid aside his glory and emptied himself of it. He then 'girded himself with a towel' (the badge of servitude), as in the Incarnation he had taken the form of a servant. Next, he began 'to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel,' as he went to the cross to secure our cleansing from sin. After this he put his garments back on 'and resumed his place,' as he returned to his heavenly glory and sat down at the Father's right hand. By these actions he was dramatizing his whole earthly career. He was teaching them about himself, who he was, where he had come from, and where he was going."

But the word of God has been made flesh in other ways, at other times, in servants other than Christ. Remember how Ezekiel became a living metaphor? In the early chapters of his prophecy we are exposed to some almost incredible show-and-tell, as God demands that he lay his body on the line—a living prophecy against Israel and Judah. He was instructed to take a brick and build around it a model for the city under siege. Then God told him, "Lie on your left side, and I will lay the punishment of the house of Israel upon you. I assign to you three hundred and ninety days, equal to the years of their punishment . . . And when you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of Judah forty days, a day for a year . . . and I will put cords upon you so that you cannot turn from one side to another till you have completed the days of the siege . . . Then take a sword, sharp as a barber's razor. Pass it over your beard and head, then take balances and divide the hair. A third of it you shall burn in fire in the city after the siege, a third you shall take and strike with the sword round about the city, a third you shall scatter to the wind . . . Thus says the Lord God—*this is Jerusalem.*" *This is like that.*

Burden

Ezek. 3:3; 4:4-8; 5:1,2

How, in the body of the prophet, is enacted the Word of the Lord! Ezekiel lies bound, face forward to the besieged city, a day for a year—on his left side for the stubbornness of Israel, three hundred ninety days, forty days for rebel Judah on his right—bearing their burden, the Word a weight like a stone in his stomach.

So does God's metaphor approach his purpose: Word embodied, Breath from heaven given bone and blood, lying prone or walking heavily on dusty feet; dark vision turned to speech in a man's mouth.

Head and beard razed, hair weighed and divided in thirds for destruction: this is Jerusalem, burned, scattered, pillaged. So is the Word become flesh.

There were other prophets who were required to live out their message from God—Jeremiah, who was ordered to bury his linen shorts (as the *Good News Bible* puts it!) in a hole in the river bank, to show how Jerusalem would be soiled and ruined; Jeremiah with his broken clay jar, and his baskets of good and bad figs, and the ox yoke that he had to fashion from wood and wear around his neck as a symbol of the slavery of God's people. Then there was Hosea, who was told to deliberately marry a "wife of harlotry" whose marital infidelities spoke clearly of Israel and her wor-

ship of idols. Hosea wrote his prophecy out of the acute agony of personal grief, but his persistent love in reclaiming his promiscuous wife was a living metaphor of God's willingness to forgive Israel.

And then there was Jonah, who was reluctant to do *anything* God told him, but to whom, incredibly, Jesus compared himself, likening Jonah's three days in the fish's belly to his own three days of burial in the ground.

Rib Cage

Jonah, you and I were *both*
signs to unbelievers.

Learning the anatomy
of ships and sea animals the hard
way—
from the inside
out—you counted (bumping your
stubborn head)
the wooden beams and the great
curving bones
and left
your own heart unexplored.
And you were tough.
Twice, damp but undigested,
you were vomited. For you
it was the only
way out.

No, you wouldn't die.
Not even burial softened you
and, free of the dark sea prisons,
you were still
caged in yourself—trapped
in your own hard continuing rage
at me and Nineveh.

For three nights
and three days dark as night—
as dark as yours—
I charted the innards
of the earth. I too swam
in its skeleton, its raw underground.
A captive in the belly
of the world
(like the fish, prepared by God)

I felt the slow pulse at the monster's
heart, tapped its deep arteries,
wrestled its root sinews,
was bruised by the undersides of all
its cold bony stones.

Submerged,
I had to die, I had
to give in to it, I had to go
all the way down
before I could be freed
to live for you
and Nineveh.

Jonah's experience teaches us in living color how God's grace can bring something good out of the most unwilling service.

And Zechariah. God told *him*, "Act the part of the shepherd of a flock of sheep that are going to be butchered. This will illustrate the way my people have been bought and slain by wicked leaders." The story is complex, but fascinating. You may want to read it for yourself, in Zechariah 13. The prophet concludes the story—"Those who bought and sold sheep were watching me, and *they knew that the Lord was speaking through what I did.*" His witness was convincing. He lived his metaphor.

HAVE you found a metaphor for your own life? A vivid, four-color picture of what God is saying to you? Finding delight in imagery, enjoying it as a literary form, even learning more about God through the Bible's metaphors—all these will fall short of God's ultimate purpose for them if our daily lives and actions and reactions are not changed as a result of the insights they bring us. We must each learn to live out the Bible's metaphors. Particularly as teachers, our lives need to be informed by and integrated around a strong vital metaphor so that our words and our lives tell the same story.

My father, Northcote Deck, was a missionary surgeon in the Solomon Islands earlier in this century. Not only was he a skilled doctor, he expertly sailed the mission ship, a sixty-foot sloop, around the Solomon Island chain as he visited dozens of mission stations each year. For half a lifetime he preached, he baptized, he trained leaders in the national church, he

wrote books and articles, and he explored. (For his exploration of the island of Guadalcanal—he was the first white man to cross it—he was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.) He was a man who lived in God's presence.

Yet with all his qualifications and saintliness he was a clown! He found that if he hopped around on one foot and made faces at the wild, Stone Age islanders when he was first visiting a new tribe, they would go into fits of laughter and begin at once to feel relaxed and at ease with him! He refused to carry any weapon but love, even though his life was often in danger from the cannibals, who killed and ate some of his colleagues. What motivated him to live as such an effective representative for God? It was the idea, the biblical metaphor, of being an "ambassador for Christ" that bridged all the ethnic, cultural, racial, and spiritual gaps between this educated, cultured, Christian missionary and a primitive, alien, animistic, pagan people. Because he lived out his metaphor of "ambassador," thousands of islanders were drawn into the Kingdom of God.

Grace MacFarlane, the beautiful Jamaican concert pianist who has lived with us for several years, was invited to compete in a piano competition in Dallas. My husband was led to pray for her before she left, that she would be like "an angel of light" in a dark place. That image stayed with Grace and reminded her to be God's messenger, his angel of light. It informed and motivated her actions and words in the power-hungry, amoral world of musical performance. On that trip, people were challenged and changed by God's light beaming out of her.

CAN I tell you about one of my most valued biblical metaphors? It has captured my imagination again and again from different parts of the Bible. You won't be surprised—it's the metaphor of green and growth!

Recently, while we were in Israel, my husband Harold was occupied with board meetings in Jerusalem, so I joined a carload of friends driving down to Jericho and Masada. (I say "down" because we dropped fourteen hundred feet as we followed the winding road from the Mount of Olives to Dead Sea level.) It was hot—over 100 degrees at 10 a.m.—and Jericho gleamed at us like a green jewel from a setting of sterile sand and glare. Just inside the town limits, we stopped at a roadside booth displaying luscious loquats, figs, oranges, honey, and almonds. There was a striking contrast between the side of the street on our left which stretched, a dusty wilderness, bare and lifeless, all the way to the glittering Salt Sea, and the Jericho side of the street which was thick with palm trees, orange groves, fig trees, and luxuriant flowering vines. What made the difference? If we stood quiet and still, we could hear the gurgle of water running through the open, stone-lined irrigation ducts that criss-crossed the city in every direction. Water was the secret of the green. As we sucked on juicy, sweet loquats we new existentially why God used this image of refreshment again and again in the psalms and prophets as he described the blessings of his presence and the curse of his absence.

To illustrate—Jeremiah 17:5-8: "Thus says, the Lord: 'Cursed are they who trust in man and make flesh their arm, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They are like shrubs in

the desert, and shall not see any good come. They shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.' " But—the contrast—"Blessed are they who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They are like trees planted near water, that send out their roots by the stream and do not fear when heat comes, for their leaves remain green. They are not anxious in times of drought, for they continue to bear fruit."

His refreshing presence is with us today, in the person of his Spirit. Isaiah 44:3 gives the promise that is still being fulfilled: "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit on your descendants and my blessing on your offspring. They shall spring up like grass amid waters, like willows by flowing streams." And Isaiah 32:15: "The Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest."

I love the diversity of water sources and of trees in the description in Isaiah 41:18: "I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make a wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, that men may see and know that the hand of the Lord has created this"—a promise that God wants to bless a multiplicity of people in a multiplicity of ways. Like a teacher, with a diversity of students, he is saying, "You're an acacia, and you're a cypress and you're a pine. You don't have to look like everybody else and you may flourish in a different kind of environment than some of your brothers and sisters in Christ."

But you all need water at your roots.” It’s the water, often invisibly seeping up from underground, that makes possible the visible growth—the fresh green of the foliage, the fragrance and color of flowers, the rich sweetness of fruit.

In our weekly home Bible study group we sing lots of Scripture songs. One of our favorites is this song of David from Psalm 52: “Like a tree, like a tree, like a green olive tree in the house, in the house of the Lord, I will trust in the mercies of God forever, I will trust in the mercies of God.” One of those steadfast mercies from God is an abundant supply of living water.

But that song raises a question—what is a tree doing in the house of the Lord? I think this olive tree was growing in the court of God’s house—the temple—as trees grow today in the magnificent walled courtyard where the Mosque of Omar now stands, built on the site of the old temple. We can make that metaphor our own, as David did, and see ourselves like olive trees rooted, flourishing in God’s community, teaching others by our lives, full of Holy Spirit oil, and the sap of eternal life, raising our green heads and arms in continual praise to the God of all living things. Day and night, winter and summer, as he provides the water we give back the green of our praise to him, and produce fruit—what I have called elsewhere his nine sweet fruits listed in Galatians 5.

Psalm 92 gives us a further promise especially welcome to those of you who have been teaching for a lifetime—“You, my righteous child, will flourish like a palm tree, you will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, you will flourish in my courts: I, who am your God. You will still bear fruit in old age. You will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, ‘The Lord is upright.’” Here is a date palm tree, lifting its head along with the olive trees in the temple yard. A friend tells me that the older a date palm tree grows, the sweeter are the dates it produces. I want to grow greener and sweeter the longer I live; I know you do, too, but we must have the water of the Spirit, of the Word, or we’ll shrivel up.

One final metaphor from Isaiah 55. “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not, but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, *so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth*; says Jehovah; it shall not return to me empty (or unsuccessful), but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” What a promise for us today!

GOD’S Word has been given to water you. As Christians, let his metaphors refresh and fertilize your imagination; as thinkers, crea-

tors, let his meanings accomplish their purpose in your personal growth and understanding; as teachers and leaders, read creatively, appreciating God’s loving impulse in framing his truth in living pictures that you can see and remember and pass on to your students in story, in parable, in poetry, in creative insights from the world of nature.

Flannery O’Connor said that “Truth, Goodness and Beauty are abstractions, and abstractions lead to thinness and allegory, whereas in good fiction and drama (and life) you need to go *through the concrete situation* (which a metaphor provides) to some experience of mystery.”

Are truth, goodness, and beauty hard for you to come at, to grasp, to live out? As you read and share with your students the Bible and other creative writing such as poetry and drama, as you acquaint them with natural phenomena, ask the Lord to point out to you some concrete metaphors, pictures in your head, specifics through which you may channel and shape your desire to please and serve him. Such metaphors will be like God’s secret words to you, via your imagination, in moments of reflection and decision and action, or in a lifetime of creative obedience and communication.

Luci Shaw is a poet, an author, and senior editor of Harold Shaw Publishers in Wheaton, Illinois.

Joel Brouwer



After nine years of active service on the CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL board, Joel Brouwer resigned recently in order to devote more time to his responsibilities at Unity Christian High in Hudsonville, Michigan, where he has taught for the last ten years.

As CEJ board member and contributor, Joel made ideas come alive; his articles had the projective dimension. As teacher, Joel displays the cool and controlled knack of drawing out from his proteges the literary potential that was dormant; he makes patent what is latent.

We learn more of Joel's ideas from the following interview presented by Joel's former colleague, Sy Bierma.

Q *Where and when did you cut your pedagogic molars?*

A I began teaching in 1970 at Chicago Christian High School. It was a good place to begin because I knew a lot less than I thought I did, and I learned a great deal from some very patient colleagues—Gary Meyer, Kennetha Den Besten, and Bruce Hekman.

Q *What did you learn in those first few years?*

A Like a lot of college students, I was going to set the world on fire. I was going to be the type of English teacher I wished I'd had when I was in high school. What I quickly learned was that I faced 120 different students every day, and I had to adapt my methods and my expectations to my situation. Sometimes that was a painful experience.

Q *Had you always wanted to be a teacher?*

A No. But my mother and father were both teachers; college attendance was a draft deferment, and what else does one do with an English major from Calvin College?

Q *Do you regret it? Would you rather be doing something else?*

A I've often asked myself that, but I've never been able to come up with anything I'd rather do. I really feel now that I've been called by God to teach. I love it. That doesn't mean I'll do it forever, but after 14 years I'm feeling more and more like a "lifer." Each year has been better.

Q *How do you stay fresh? If you've taught for 14 years, you've done a lot of the same things over and over.*

A Actually, I haven't. Probably the best professional decision I made during those 14 years was to move from Chicago Christian to Unity Christian High in Hudsonville, and I'd move again if I didn't think I was already teaching in the best possible place. Change keeps me fresh. We have an English curriculum of nine-week courses at Unity, so we have the luxury of switching assignments. I accepted two new assignments last year, and another new assignment this year. I was asked last year by our principal to teach a debate class and coach the team, and I love it. I'm excited about it. It's exciting to teach something for the first time and discover it along with my students, so I change the content of my courses year by year. It's frustrating for students and boring for me when I know all the answers and they don't.

Q *What among all the facets of teaching English is the most rewarding to you personally, and why?*

A I know what you're getting at, and I'm going to evade the question, because I love just about all of it. I will say that I get no kick from teaching grammar; fortunately, my colleagues will teach that course. Whenever I teach a composition course I feel like I'm doing it for the first time. What I really love about teaching English in high school is that I get to explore so many different, engrossing things. When I'm teaching Shakespeare, I reread Anthony Burgess' biography of Shakespeare. When I'm teaching speech, I read all sorts of interesting things about communication that I can share with my class. I'm always a much more active poet when I'm teaching creative writing, and I love to read stuff about filmmaking, film history, and criticism when I'm teaching film. My frustration is that I'm not an expert on any of those things, and I'm not likely to become one either.

Q *Which do you consider more stimulating to the student: a secular poem with no particular designs on the reader, or a religious poem with its claws retracted (a la T. S. Eliot)? Which gives you greater opportunity to express your viewpoint?*

A I've always found it more natural to discuss a religious or Christian concept when the work of literature deals with specifically religious questions. Maybe it's just because my students are high school students, but they tend to be glibly dogmatic when confronted with secular ideas. They fold their arms, proclaim that Robert Herrick's emphasis on the sensual is wrong, and that's that. When a Christian artist struggles with those dogmas, though, the students and I must respond more thoughtfully. The most profound personal religious experience I've had while teaching a work of literature came a couple of years ago when I taught Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* for the first time. Greene wouldn't let us be complacent about our sanitized concept of God's grace. We struggled with what he was saying, and my faith was strengthened through the process. Of course, too much Christian literature is so superficial that no struggling will result. Then I'd rather have something secular, and first-rate, to react to. Devotional material should affirm. Literature should challenge.

Q *If you had a Pope's jurisdiction over the English curriculum, what would you stress for all students?*

A I think we teach the things we've been taught and the things we find easiest to teach, so we teach literature and grammar. I'm all for teaching literature. But we're woefully neglectful when it comes to teaching communication skills. I think students should do a lot of writing—not only in English classes, but in every class. Multiple choice tests are easy to grade, but it's no wonder that students who take nothing but multiple choice tests can't write. That's everyone's responsibility, not only the English department's. And as to spoken communication skills—how can students learn them when the teacher is the only one talking? Sometimes my students act as if I have no right to ask them to speak or write. Somewhere along the line they've been conditioned to think of themselves as passive consumers of education ("just write it on the board so I know what to write in my notes, will you?") instead of active participants.

Q *What do you judge to be your greatest accomplishment as a teacher?*

A Surviving. Really. I love what I'm doing, but almost everyone who reads this interview will understand that teachers work under a great deal of pressure, that students are more likely to let you know when they don't appreciate something than when they do. Precisely because most of us really care and really do want to do a first-rate job, we're likely to get frustrated and discouraged when we don't measure up to our own high standards. My principal, Jack Postma, amazed me a couple of years ago when he visited my classroom, then conferred with me afterwards. He kept saying positive things, and I kept preparing myself for the other half of the report—all the things that "need improvement"—because I *knew* they were there. After he said all the positive things, he quit. When I asked him about the negative, he said that all he saw was good teaching, and that's all he had seen in most other classrooms he'd been in. He also said that most teachers don't really realize how good they are, because we don't have much to compare with. We judge ourselves only against our own impossibly high standards. He made me see that we can help each other a lot by pointing out to each other the good we're doing.

Q *Other than reading and baseball, what are your personal interests and hobbies?*

A You've pre-empted the things I enjoy most! You know that I follow American League baseball obsessively and am addicted to the baseball writing of Roger Angell. I've dabbled in all sorts of diversions, such as collecting stamps and baseball cards, occasionally jogging, playing once-a-week golf and rag-tag church softball, umpiring girls' softball games, travelling (though not enough), walking, learning how to use my computer more efficiently, building my collection of classical and jazz records, and trying to use most of these as ways to keep contact with my wife and kids. I also operate a blueberry farm in the summer, and help my son with one that he operates.

Q *Should one's hobbies be an escape from or an extension of teaching English?*

A I can't ever escape from teaching English. I've never met a real English teacher who can.



Q *What satisfactions and frustrations have you experienced?*

A One private satisfaction is the privilege of teaching in the same high school that my son attends. It's been a great joy to be able to share my career with him, and to share his high school experience. It's also made me feel more paternal toward my students generally. I care when my students get excited about learning or when they make good decisions; I share their joy when they accomplish something; I hurt with them when they don't make the cut for a sports team or a play cast. Maybe a failing of mine is that I don't show those emotions enough, or comfortably enough, but they're there. I have plenty of frustrations too, with kids who are insensitive to each other or who don't care about learning, but my frustrations are really more with the institution, the teaching situation, than with the kids.

Q *What do you mean?*

A I get frustrated with the institutional nature of education. I'm frustrated with the fact that there seem to be more incentives to mediocrity than to excellence. Teachers should be under pressure to publish, to speak, to experiment, to think creatively about what we're doing and how best to do it. Instead, we're pressured to do what's safe—to conform. Even teachers who don't want to be mediocre have a hard time striving toward excellence. When no one challenges mediocrity, it's easy to slip into it and comfortable to stay there. We need to challenge and encourage each other, and we need to insist that we be as good as we possibly can be. Beyond that, excellence should be recognized and rewarded, not penalized. I've seen good teachers quit, either because everyone knew they were good and consequently asked them to do too much, or because their desire to excel was frustrated by the indifference of colleagues and the system generally.

Q *What kinds of incentives to excellence would you suggest?*

A Not money, though my suggestions would cost money. I think teachers will excel when they are given time to think, plan, and develop, and when they are

held accountable for what they do with that time. We need to provide for, then expect professional excellence. An eleven month contract would be a start, with teachers expected to restructure curricula in the summer months.

Q *What services have you contributed to education-related groups?*

A I've spoken at the Christian Educator's Association and National Council of Teachers of English conventions. I've written for *CEJ*, I've served as President of the Grand Valley Christian Educator's Association. I recently completed nine years of service on the board of *CEJ*, three as Chairman, and I worked on CSI's textbook evaluation project. I've also worked with nine student teachers from Calvin College in my ten years at Unity, and consider that to be one of my most important contributions to the profession.

Q *What do you see as your future in the Christian school scene?*

A I'm open to the Lord's leading. I've enjoyed the classroom too much over the last five or six years to think much about changing, but I've recently begun taking graduate courses in education that may lead to something different. I guess I'm still frustrated with the reality that when you're a classroom teacher, there's no career ladder to climb. I need to find ways to avoid ossifying.

Q *After fourteen years of teaching and observing our schools at point-blank range, have you formulated a thumbnail version of a Christian philosophy of education?*

A I wrote a fifteen-page paper for Nicholas Beversluis at Calvin on that topic, and now you want it on my thumbnail? Seriously, it's an absolutely crucial question. I'm convinced that our schools will survive only as long as they are qualitatively different from all others, because they are distinctively Christian. Our statement of purpose at Unity Christian High is that we exist to assist parents in "developing responsible Christian citizens." I can't think of a better mark of our uniqueness than that.

Sy Bierma formerly taught at Unity Christian High School in Hudsonville, Michigan.

"Winning Isn't Everything . . ."

ONE of the most difficult times in the life of a human being occurs when he or she participates in junior high athletics, especially the way the program operates at present. When we overlook physical, psychological, and emotional development for the sake of a winning season, we have adulterated the real purpose of athletics for junior high students.

The junior high athletic program must first of all emphasize development of interest and skill by participation. It must develop self-confidence and self-worth. It must allow a student to succeed at his level of ability. Membership on the team must be based on the students' level of interest and desire, not on ability.

How you play is much more important than whether you win. I believe more psychological damage is done when junior high students are cut from a team or are left on the bench than when the team has a losing season.

You have heard the saying, "Winning isn't everything, it's how you play the game." This statement has been said many times, but I don't think it has been practiced as many times as it has been said and heard. Just listen to the questions asked of coaches and players: "What is your record so far?" "Well, did you win last night?"

Adolescence is a very unpredictable

period in the life of a student. During this time there is a sharp increase in physical growth; this growth can do very strange things to a student's coordination, attitudes, and emotions. It is unreasonable for a coach to make judgements about the athletic future of a student when all these changes are happening. A coach should help a student struggle through this rough period rather than tell him he "doesn't have it" by cutting him from the team, prolonging the abuse of his self-worth by keeping him on the bench, or yelling at him from the sidelines for his mistakes.

The physical changes of an adolescent are difficult for him to deal with, but not nearly as difficult as the emotional and psychological changes. An adolescent is involved in a struggle between being a child and wanting to be an adult. There is virtually no aspect of his being that is not going through change. The "self" concept begins to crystallize during this period. The stresses and strains of development will affect the development of that "self." Events and people become major factors in determining how well an adolescent adjusts to the transition from childhood to adulthood. Like physical development, it must not be forced.

There has been a tendency in junior high athletics to force children into the "big league" pattern. Players are

dressed in full uniforms, play their games before a crowd of people, and drive to the mythical championship subjected to all the pressures that sometimes break a mature man. Coaches and parents who promote this "win-at-all-cost", "be-number-one" thinking do not realize that such an attitude is unrealistic and unethical for those on the junior high level. Such a mind-set may work at the college or professional level for mature, fully-developed athletes. But at the adolescent stage of development, potential athletes have not yet developed the emotional, psychological faculties to deal with the pressure of having to win at all costs. They begin to equate losing a game with personal failure.

Tournaments also promote the must-win attitude. Most junior high students cannot handle the "number one" position properly, nor the dejection of losing. During tournaments, coaches also tend to use the best players while the others rest on the bench. This breaks down team unity and spirit. I believe that we as Christian coaches must decide what the capabilities are of our junior high students. We must determine the Christian perspectives of athletics and the needs of the student, and develop our programs accordingly.

In the competitive sports, stress is increased because of the societal evaluation of an athlete's abilities. Com-

petitive stress originates from many places—from within, from the coach, peers, fans, parents, or even from the nature of the game. If the only criterion of success is winning, and the player or team doesn't win, immediate and sometimes prolonged feelings of dejection, failure, and inferiority result. The same thing can happen with team members who only warm the bench. The bench warmer suffers two losses: his team has lost, and he has lost because he came to play and didn't. These psychologically harmful patterns are especially true at the junior high level.

The interscholastic team sports must be open to *all* students to play. The objective should be to develop and train *all* interested students, not just the best. We don't train and develop only our best math, English, or music students; neither should we work only with our best athletes. It is impossible to predict, at the junior high level, a student's potential for continued development as an athlete.

Maybe we should change the scoring method for junior high athletic games from how many points are scored to how many successful passes were made, how many successful patterns were run, how many shots were blocked, or how many members of the team got to play.

Christian coaches must continue to emphasize development of interest, skills, and enjoyment of the game by each individual student, and then collectively by the team. Winning must be based on development and participation first of all, and then on the team members' abilities and how they play the game with their opponents.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education has written an excellent standard for junior high athletics which could serve also as a pat-

tern for the Christian Schools. It is called the "Bill of Rights for Young Athletes."

1. Right to participate in sports
2. Right to participate at a level commensurate with each child's maturity and ability
3. Right to have qualified adult leadership
4. Right to play as a child and not as an adult
5. Right of children to share in the leadership and decision-making of their sport participation
6. Right to participate in safe and healthy environments
7. Right to proper preparation for participation in sports
8. Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success
9. Right to be treated with dignity
10. Right to have fun in sports

Athletics at the junior high level is important. Athletics can help us in our task of preparing covenant children for a life of service in the Lord's Kingdom. The lessons and attitudes learned in team sports can serve adolescents well as they mature. However, junior high athletics must be based on biblical perspectives, must be in tune with realistic child development, and must be properly balanced with academics. The Lord gave us sports and games so that we might relax and enjoy life. We can also use these sports to help our children glorify God in all their physical activities.

What kind of score does your school's athletic program earn? What kind of leadership-ranking does your coaching staff receive?

Try the following checklist as a tool to evaluate your program.

Merl Alons is administrator at Sioux Center Christian School in Sioux Center, Iowa.

	mostly	some- times	seldom
1. In my program is the spirit, as well as the letter of the rule, emphasized?	—	—	—
2. Do I help build Christian character, not just bodies?	—	—	—
3. Do I encourage the athletes to think more highly of others than themselves?	—	—	—
4. Am I as enthusiastic about the classroom as I am about the locker room?	—	—	—
5. Do I approach winning not as the ultimate criteria of success, but as a by-product of success?	—	—	—
6. Do I forget that my student-athletes are students first?	—	—	—
7. Are my actions reflective of my words, in other words, do I "walk it as I talk it"?	—	—	—
8. Do I strive to have my presence appreciated, not tolerated?	—	—	—
9. Do I give the officials the respect and cooperation that they have diligently earned?	—	—	—
10. Do I teach the purpose behind the plan?	—	—	—
11. Do I use the game to reinforce Scriptural principles?	—	—	—
12. Do I keep my focus <i>on the child</i> in the game?	—	—	—
13. Are ethical behaviors and attitudes fostered as well as good performance?	—	—	—
14. Would I be proud to have my own children observe my behavior during any given practice?	—	—	—
15. Do I work at developing skills for all team members?	—	—	—
16. Do I "take out" my frustrations on the individual or team?	—	—	—
17. Do I exemplify Jesus Christ?	—	—	—
18. Do I apply the findings of professional research and opinions to the athletic program?	—	—	—
19. Do I treat my assistant coaches as fellow shepherds instead of sheep?	—	—	—
20. Do I explain the school's athletic philosophy annually to the society?	—	—	—
21. Are my practices "fillers" between games or applied preparation for the upcoming event?	—	—	—
22. Do I lay my coaching concerns before the Lord?	—	—	—
23. Do I receive personal satisfaction in what I am doing?	—	—	—
24. Do I remember that fun and enjoyment are vital elements of athletics for <i>all</i> persons involved?	—	—	—
25. Do I respect my fellow coaches as I wish to be respected?	—	—	—

Checklist Evaluation:

Allow 3 points for "mostly" responses

2 points for "sometimes"

1 point for "seldom"

65-75—Apply for membership in the Coaches' Hall of Fame

50-64—You're on the "A" squad

40-49—You're warming the bench

25-39—Are you sure you should be a coach?

(Most of the questions are taken from "EVALUATING YOURSELF AS A COACH" by Gary Wilson, in the December, 1977 issue of the PHYSICAL EDUCATOR.)

The Janus Principle

IT is the plague of our culture that all the arts imitate the sciences. Education is a relationship, not a laboratory, and as a relationship, is to be cultivated as an art. Educational theorists have built a tower of Babel, each theory built upon the rubble of the previous one. Every new paradigm is more gothic, more systematic, more scientific than the last.

A school is a manipulable microcosm of society. Therefore, its overseers are often tempted by the intoxicating idea of making a soft revolution. Idealism, which has crashed upon the rocks of an incorrigible world, raises its bruised body for an assault upon the school. As fathers have long been known to drive their sons to complete their own unfulfilled goals, so parents, teachers, churchmen tend to cast their last desperate hopes upon the school to affect the larger society according to their private design. This is an appropriate motivation for making a school—a motivation which fell into such obvious abuse in recent decades as to deputize its opposite: child-centered learning. The school is strictly neither a self-realization fellowship for children, nor an indoctrination center to train up a new fist for the old guard. The school exists both for students and for society; it is Janus-faced.

Who is the child? The child is not a future citizen; he is a present citizen, with both rights and obligations toward society. He is not a non-entity simply because he happens to be in the stage of growth. On the other side, he is not more innocent, simply because he has had less time on earth to sin. He is before all else, a human being; a fractured *imago dei* in search of integration. Fortunately, we adults have the same goal for him: integration. There should by all rights be no war

declared between generations, no power struggle, no adversary rhetoric. We differ not in kind from children, only in office. As humans, we are culture-builders. Those in mid-life act as the flywheel of society, providing structure and stability. So, we pass on a legacy to the young. This process works well as long as we remember that the young are not mere cannon fodder for our ideological wars. This article explores the art of holding together in tension the servant-spirit with the authority role.

In olden times and stories, one often finds a king, busy with the affairs of state, who assigns some erudite slave to tutor his sons and daughters. If we must have a paradigm, let it be this allegorical one: children, heirs of the king, and teachers, slaves of that same king with temporary authority over our wards.

IF as teachers we really believe that we hold our children in trust from God, this question arises: how far do we trust nature and God himself to teach the child and how far do we direct the process as “agents”?

In Roman mythology Janus was a two-faced god of doors, bridges, and beginnings. We are such gods to children, as they face both who they have been and who they must become. We build the doors they face; we help them cross bridges and make their beginnings. As culture-builders, we look back to history and forward to the future. If all our building is analogical to God’s design, we build well with him and help children to recover their *imago dei*. There is a certain amount of education built into nature by God; after all, that was his design for the architecture of human education. Accompanying this trust of nature, tempered, of course, by a biblical

understanding of the results of the Fall, is a belief that a certain amount of inductive learning is bound to take place, even with a delightful lack of industry on the part of the already overworked teacher, both through the design and process of nature and by God’s direct dealings spiritually with each child. Charlotte Mason, English educator, has called this cooperation of the teacher with these natural and supernatural processes a “masterful inactivity.”

The teacher, then, is a specialist, teaching that part of God’s curriculum which the child might not “naturally” seek out on his own. These might include such “core” subjects as the multiplication tables, which one would probably not memorize without external discipline, and also social responsibility. The child is Janus-faced in this respect also, in that he is both a personal and a social being. We may and must teach him social responsibility while remembering that he is not wholly ours, for he has a personal being and destiny before God, which may or may not conform to our expectations.

A small child has a natural delight in learning. A teenager has a more desperate and utilitarian desire to order his world for survival and to gain approval. If learning becomes something “they” do to me, rather than something I can do for myself, then all is lost. The classical definition of a slave is one whose actions reflect the ideas and wishes of another; one whose passivity is enforced and whose activity is directed. If we make carnal slaves of our students, they will never choose willingly to become the slaves of Christ; to discover the difference in the divine plan of servanthood.

in Education

A large part of our share in the image of God is our choice-making and creative activity. To love, think, and then do, is not the particular privilege of adults, but rather part of the necessary training of children. Passivity, if built into a child in school, may result in crippling forms of passivity later on.

Let our educational process, then, run a little ragged for the sake of teaching a pattern of freedom and right willfulness in a framework of social cooperation and covenant living. The rebellion of teenagers may have many causes outside the school, but we do not help by demanding cheerful application to tasks we ourselves would not stand for. What adult would cheerfully enter a classroom for six hours each day to listen to one person, perhaps not even a brilliant person, expound on all subjects, to write papers and exams, to feed back that one person's choice of data and opinions? Surely much teenage rebellion is born in plain sin, but much of it may simply be a stretching of the muscles of individual *imago dei*; the desire to think and plan and do according to his own design and the inspiration of God.

The teacher, then, must be a guide to the great writings of God and of humanity, not a puppet-master, cramming bits of predigested material down unwilling beaks. The point is that the teacher must always be seeking to apply the least amount of external persuasion needed to effect the learning, that the love of learning might not be squelched, that a lifelong habit of voluntary mental exploration might be nourished.

Our model of the student, then, is of a future saint and present beloved of God, being helped through his developmental stages. Our model of

the teacher is that of a wise and light-handed guide, a servant of both the child and the parents—the parents being the main models themselves. Our model is a supplemental resource person doing what parents have neither the time nor training to do, guiding the child through the great thoughts of the world and the Bible, letting him explore the encyclopedia of knowledge to find his affinities and discover inherent and revealed relationships. The teacher evaluates the student's work and serves as a liason in parent-child education. He does not substitute his stimulus-response curriculum for God's plan of self-revelation. The God who has numbered each hair on a child's head has also a plan to build a will and a wisdom, as well as a submissive heart, into his creation. We must know when to step back. Time is not made of blocks, nor is God's wisdom composed entirely of goal-formulated lesson plans.

Why have we spent so much time on motivation and relationships? Because if the thread of motivation is broken, education is a dead letter. All studying, testing, grading, and graduating is utter hypocrisy if the student has not learned skills which he intends to use on his own, and if he has not made all that information his by choice. If he has not said YES to the material, then it still belongs to the "system."

IF our handy Janus symbol might do double duty, let us apply it to curriculum. Since Cain slew Abel, two world-views have shared the same earth: one a vision of the City of God and one a vision of the City of Man; Athens and Jerusalem; humanism and Christianity. A Christian student must have double vision. He must understand the roots and branches of

both systems, though they may have grown intertwined over the years, growing up in the same field. In this respect, let me first make a distinction between early education and adolescent schooling. The former must be covenantal in nature, even protectionist. The world-view that a child learns first will be like his first language. If it is not thoroughly Christian, then Christianity may always be like a second language to him.

However, at the high school level, it is time to learn causistry, that he might defend his faith amidst sagacious Sodom, to be able to blast humanist presuppositions, to set his face like flint to the deceptions this world will offer, yet still to set his face as a child towards God; to balance his social obligations and his personal needs. The high school student, as a Christian, needs to develop binocular vision understanding the City of Man with one eye and seeing his heavenly Jerusalem with the other, and this without confusion. This idealism without romanticism, *engagement without synthesis*, the prophetic mind-set. He must at some level, have engaged himself with ideas both ancient and modern, understand what the basic philosophic questions of life are, what the respective answers of the Bible and man are, have practiced enough causistry to defend a position, and have communication skills enough to propound it. Hopefully, he would be able to either defend or refute the position of a Christian or a Marxist with equal skill, and to know why he is one or the other himself.

WHY, you ask, risk exposing him to alien ideas? Because we are about to enter an age unlike any that has come before. Therefore we may need a style of education un-

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