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TESTING

EVERY teacher who gives tests should take one from time to time. The experience broadens narrow educational minds and squelches feelings of smug professional superiority.

Within the past year I have had my educational mind vastly broadened by multiple choice tests, classroom essay exams, a three-hour take-home essay test, two-hour classroom finals, and all-day computer-scored objective graduate tests. I have concluded that well-made tests and tetanus shots share a mutual claim: pain with purpose.

If we thought more about the purpose of tests, I believe we would be better test takers and test makers. I can think of three appropriate ways to view tests—and at least three inappropriate ones. First let's consider the improper approaches.

Tests should not be tricks. Students ought to be told why, when, and how they will be tested. If I spend two weeks of class time quizzing my students only on the vocabulary of Conrad Richter's *Light in the Forest* and then I test them instead on various shifts in point of view, I am guilty of trickery. My students should not have to guess what I expect. At least several days before the test, I tell them what type of questions (i.e. multiple choice, blanks, matching, ven diagram, essay) I will ask on the test and approximately how much value will be placed on each section. Then I suggest some possible questions of each type. In instances where objective tests are the most logical, a trial test serves as excellent preparation for the final. One very fine example of this method is used in Pam Luinenberg's *Pep in Grammar* (Christian Schools International 1978, recently discontinued). The author concludes each grammar unit with a self-test given in the same format as the final test and covering the same concepts. Only the wording changes. Students who take the self-test seriously are rarely surprised by the final test results.

Tests should not be terrifiers. All too often teachers and parents use tests as threats to students who have difficulty settling down to efficient study. The *big test grade* determines how much television time Jenny gets till the next history exam or how much allowance money Jerry must relinquish. Teachers call parents to say, "Your daughter failed the last test," when they should say, "How can I help your daughter?" Tests which far exceed a student's understanding will obviously terrify, but that should not happen when student and teacher have both prepared adequately.

Tests should not be trump cards. A single test should not override all other course-work in determining the student's success or failure. Such emphasis on one performance places undue strain on the student who crumbles under pressure. Students vary in their ability to handle the emotional tension of being tested. They also vary in the way they respond to various types of test questions. I recall one course I took in which all testing consisted of multiple choice questions. Several scholarly people in the course, with their greater scope of knowledge, tended to read so many implications into the questions that they scored far below several less prepared students who quickly answered on the basis of their limited knowledge. The teacher who relies exclusively on tests, especially one type of test, is unlikely to form an accurate evaluation of the students' comprehension and application of the course material.

By now you may have concluded that I am opposed to tests, but my students will quickly confirm that I *do* believe in them. I can usually think of better reasons to teach with tests than to dispense with them. Let's look at three positive ways to view tests.

Tests are terminals. They provide a sense of completion to a phase of study. I suppose in one sense we can say tests provide closure for the unit or course. I am not convinced, however, that the Christian ever really "finishes the course" on this side of heaven; I like the more temporary connotation of the terminal—a place

either to complete or to connect. At the point of testing, we can learn whether to go on or to go back. If the next part of the course builds on the previous portion, the test tells us that we have no valid ticket to go on ahead.

Tests are telescopes. They help us view material that is distant so we can put it in focus with that which is closer to us. Tests help us bring a body of course-work into scope. For example, early in the unit we may learn how one writer views the deplorable working conditions that accompanied the Industrial Revolution, but when we prepare for the test, we can bring that writer's perspective into focus against the whole body of writing of the period. Certainly, we can accomplish the same purpose in ways other than testing—but will we bother to do so? When do we better synthesize ideas from a course of study than when we know we will be held accountable?

Tests are thermometers. They measure both the students' level of learning and the teacher's level of teaching. When fifty percent of my students fail my test, or even one portion of my test, I need to discover why. I need first to check if I have tested what I *meant* to teach instead of what I *have* taught. I need to find out if I have clearly expressed the directions or if the student has correctly understood them. I need to find out if the student knows how to study or if his study conditions are conducive to learning. Effective tests show variations in learning patterns so I can determine where urgent care is needed and where steady growth is occurring.

Actually, every time I give a test I too am taking the test. I have committed myself to a work for which I am accountable before God—and if you are a Christian, so have you. Therefore, every test I make and give must be the fairest, most creative, most valid evaluation tool I can prepare. Every test I give must have at least as much purpose as pain. □

LVG

THE FACES OF EVALUATION

HARRO VAN BRUMMELEN

The Christian schools in British Columbia receive government funding for their schools—at present, about $950 per student per year. Such funding brings with it certain regulations. One new recent stipulation is that students in Christian schools accepting such funding must participate in grade 12 government examinations—examinations based on specific course outlines, specific textbooks, and, often, a philosophy inimical to that of Christian beliefs. As a result of this new regulation, B.C.'s Christian schools reassessed their whole evaluation program. Below is an abbreviated version of the first part of an extensive and widely-discussed paper on evaluation written by the education coordinator of the Society of Christian Schools in B.C., Dr. Harro Van Brummelen. The second part of the paper—not published here—discussed specific evaluation practices on the basis of the general principles given below. Copies of the complete paper may be obtained from the S.C.S.-B.C., 10638-132A Street, Surrey, B.C. V3T 3X7.

EVALUATION AS A SOCIETAL CONCERN

WHAT evaluation means to different people. Learning requires evaluation. As the word implies, evaluation is a process of *valuing,* of illuminating problems, issues, and significant program features. Evaluation is a judgment of worth or merit of what happens in the classroom.

Traditionally, evaluation has sought to determine how well students achieve the goals of a program. Many evaluators today go further, saying that evaluation must provide information for educational decision-making. True, the main purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve. As such, it has a prominent role in planning and developing school programs. But evaluation is never just description. The choice of *what* is evaluated and of *how* it is done already involves judgements about the qualities of a program, judgements that should be based on one's values.

Before one can evaluate anything, standards must exist or be determined. Such standards are ultimately based on the values embedded in our worldview: our view of the person, the meaning of life, the nature of reality. Different worldviews will lead to different processes, emphases, and judgements in evaluation. Therefore, the ultimate responsibility for evaluation should rest with the Christian school community, not with the government nor with external testing agencies.

Pluralism in society, in schools—and in evaluation. More than ever before, our society has a plurality of standards, a plurality of religious, social, and economic ideals. Such pluralism is reflected in the schools. It is also becoming recognized that belief systems and curricula are closely intertwined. What you believe about human nature and people's task in culture will eventually affect all aspects of curriculum—from the context in which mathematics is taught, to the content chosen in history, to the themes emphasized in aesthetics. What is taught and how it is taught reflect one's basic perspective.

Similarly, evaluation is rooted in a framework of values. The information gathered and the data generated are products of the beliefs and the interests held by those involved in evaluation. A program's worth is judged on the basis of its relevance and meaningfulness to the various participants. In short, evaluation encompasses a view of society. In North America, traditional evaluation reflects an American faith in pragmatism and progress through technology and technique.

North Americans do agree that children should have some basic competencies in reading, writing, arithmetic, social studies, and science, and that such basic competencies should be evaluated. However, beyond this, less and less agreement exists. For example, basic competence tests have been legitimately attacked for emphasizing some narrowly-defined skills, with teachers then stressing these at the expense of other, more important learning results. Creativity, for instance, is not fostered when great stock is put in convergent multiple choice tests that emphasize concepts and comprehension. Similarly, teaching and evaluating reading and writing skills is an undertaking that involves far more than decoding and encoding. Rather, it is an undertaking of moral and religious import, closely related not only to critical thinking but also to how we view the nature of the person and the meaning of life. Pluralism in the schools will be reflected in pluralistic approaches to evaluation; in general, evaluators in Christian schools will only be able to use small segments of public school evaluation programs as valid evaluation procedures for their own curricula.

The worlds of meaning created by evaluation. The way evaluation information is gathered, what information is gathered, and how it is presented creates a world of meaning for both the learner and for the school as community. The type of questions we use, the frequency and comprehensiveness and variety of procedures, the importance we place on various ways of evaluating—all these shape the perception of events, influence what we consider important in life, affect what students will learn in the future, and

touch the classroom atmosphere. Evaluation is a process that *creates* meaning; Christian schools must ensure that that meaning is in harmony with their basic purposes and aims.

EVALUATION AS A VALUING PROCESS

The myth of neutrality. Evaluation involves a *choice* among a range of value systems. North Americans have prized educational *efficiency*, i.e., they have valued learning activities that get a student from point A to point B quickly and inexpensively. Unfortunately, a quest for efficiency often shortcircuits the discussion about *what* goals we should be striving for. Efficiency becomes a goal in itself, and the resulting evaluation fragments the curriculum into oft-insignificant measurable achievements. We are expected to process the raw material (the learners) expeditiously to meet pre-determined norms. This, of course, is not the only way we can view or use evaluation. We can also value activities for nurturing the child as a subject, as an image-bearer of God in community. Then we would evaluate not only "basic skills" but also expressive outcomes, divergent thinking, the beauty and form of products, the way the child develops dispositions and tendencies and the ability to interact with others. Any particular question or procedure in evaluation embodies assertions that the subject matter evaluated is important and that the procedure used is valid.

Value assumptions and issues in evaluation. Professional evaluators are pressured to present their findings as "scientific, reliable" information. However, as a result they spend too much time on what is easily measurable, rather than on what is most meaningful. What we can easily measure is not necessarily what is most important in education. If more than half of the questions on a mathematics achievement test deal with greatest common factors and lowest common multiples, the evaluators consider fractions more important than decimals, and believe that an abstract approach is more important than relating mathematics to everyday applications. If norm- or criterion-referenced achievement tests are the main type of evaluation used, evaluation procedures as well as schooling are seen as technical tasks, based on a deterministic view of human beings. With such tests, the value assumptions often are obscured by the techniques themselves.

With other types of evaluations, the value assumptions are often more evident. When a recent British Columbia science assessment test held that agreement with the statement "scientific progress and progress of man go together" indicated a positive attitude towards science, the bias of the test was obvious; it was based on a positivist concept of progress at odds with biblical beliefs. Principals evaluating what is happening in a classroom usually attend to the whole context. Their evaluation and judgement is subjective. Resulting discussions can make clear their biases and can help both the evaluator and the teacher understand the situation better. What is clear is that any form of evaluation is both incomplete and subjective. Therefore, tests and evaluation procedures should follow the needs of the school rather than the school being led by the test requirements.

EVALUATION AS AN INTEGRAL ASPECT OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM

How the nature and scope of the curriculum influence the practices of evaluation. Generally, we evaluate a sample of what we consider most important in our curriculum. If we believe a knowledge of basic scientific facts to be significant, we will emphasize those in our testing. If we believe that the ability to carry out scientific inquiries is foremost, we will first of all evaluate the students' ability to carry out investigations. If we feel that thinking with scientific concepts is the main goal of science, we will evaluate how well students can draw inferences. If we hold that we must teach science as a human activity that has shaped (and sometimes mis-shaped) society, we will evaluate how well students understand the role of science in culture. If we believe that the study of science should mold students' attitudes, views, and ways of using science, we should evaluate the tendencies and dispositions that we have inculcated. Evaluation procedures should reflect the importance a school assigns to each of these emphases.

Further, the curriculum is not just a selection of types of content; the planned activities also involve choices about *how* learning should proceed. If we believe that expressive activities are important, or research and writing abilities, or laboratory skills, then our evaluation processes should include those activities. The nature and scope of our curriculum should direct the nature and scope of our evaluation procedures.

How the nature and scope of evaluation influence the curriculum. Evaluation cannot help but influence the curriculum. When the press complains about falling scores on standardized tests, educators will feel a need to revise the curriculum to include activities that will lead to higher scores, whether or not they consider the new activities important for the children *per se.* The use of tests not in harmony with a school's philosophy will gradually undermine that philosophy, for teachers do not want their students to "look bad" and will teach towards

the test. Of course, tests designed to evaluate what the school considers important provide valuable information about the curriculum's effectiveness. However, it should still be recognized that no test—and no score or letter grade—can capture the richness of the school's educational experience. Whatever tests and other evaluation practices are used by a school, their influence on the curriculum should be monitored closely to ensure, as far as possible, that both their scope and nature enhance the purposes of the school.

Various tasks of evaluation. The process of evaluation begins prior to any classroom learning, with schools and teachers making many judgements: Would this or that content create a desirable learning situation? Which textbook is most suitable? What are the needs of the group of students to be taught? Here evaluation is used to select program elements, to anticipate educational needs, to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses. While teaching and learning is going on, teachers constantly evaluate what is happening and modify the program accordingly. Many types of evaluation procedures should be used to determine to what extent the stated goals have been achieved—and which unintended outcomes have resulted. All this provides input for immediate or future revisions and improvements to the program; in that sense, the evaluation is *formative* in nature.

Besides such formative roles, evaluation is also used to determine whether or not a program should be continued, and whether or not a student has successfully completed a set of learning activities. In such cases we think of the evaluation as *summative* in nature: the evaluation tries to "sum up" what has been happening in the classroom. Of course, formative and summative roles often overlap; a test used to determine whether a student has been successful in a course is and should be used to improve future offerings of the course. What is crucial for our schools is that we have a balanced evaluation program based squarely on the basis and aims of our schools. That means developing and implementing our own program, rather than accepting ones inimical to our philosophy. Only then will our evaluation help our schools to become better, more Christian ones. □

"HOW AM I DOIN' IN HERE?"

LARRY M. LAKE

AT the end of an exhausting class period, a student assaults the teacher with the question, "How am I doin' in here?" The teacher, knowing that the next class will soon be screaming for attention, may hide the gradebook and say, "You're doing okay," or, reflecting sadly on a lost chance for a cup of coffee, he may say, "You'd better hurry; I won't write you a pass!" or "See me when I have *time*!" A much better response would be to find a way to fulfill the calling of a Christian teacher by aiding in a careful evaluation of the student's progress.

Certainly teacher and student need to meet their daily schedules, and it is a rare teacher who can successfully begin one class while still aiding members of the previous one. But the call for critique is too important to ignore. Evaluation is vitally important for both student and teacher. Planning and analyzing past actions are part of life; we should encourage our students to become critical evaluators of their own work. In fact, evaluation is so important that teachers should not wait for students to approach them for an updated estimate of their average grade but should instead set aside time to help each student evaluate work to date.

TEACHERS desiring to help their students set goals and evaluate their work should attend to three areas. First, the student needs periodically to assess progress (or failure) in class work, as reflected in grades and in the teacher's comments. I have my

students periodically fill out a sheet called "Self Evaluation of Student Skills." At least twice each year I allow time for students to discuss these with me. Students having special difficulty need more frequent feedback, perhaps supplemented by reports to parents. We must encourage our students to see that their grades are not random marks subject to the teacher's whim or prejudices. Certainly we cannot discuss every homework grade with every student, but we can encourage them to record the grades for themselves. I have had my students reserve one sheet in their notebooks for this purpose, listing date, assignment, the grade when the paper is returned, and perhaps a short comment about their own effort or a lesson they learned in the assignment. Several weeks before the end of the marking period I remind the students how to average grades, and I explain other factors which may determine the recorded grade. I sometimes encourage students to discuss their grades with me by making one or two days "reading or study" periods and allowing one student at a time to speak with me about grades. In rare years, I've even had a marking period's grades prepared early, so I can tell students exactly what I will put on the report card. The ensuing discussions often result in students making "new marking-period resolutions."

SECOND, in such areas as writing, where skills are cumulative and growth is easily observed, periodic consultations are often profitable. These sessions should not supplant the careful marking of papers. Good teachers teach even in the comments they place on returned papers. This helps individualize education and fit a course to each student's needs. But consultations are a useful further step. During my writing course I have consultations with each student. A few days before a conference period I have students turn in their folders containing writing done to that point. Before the conference, I glance over papers and some of my comments, and I fill out an evaluation sheet with comments on the writer's strengths and weaknesses, and my suggestions for improvement. In the conference we discuss at least one area and I give examples of points I've made. Five minutes is enough time for these remarks and discussion of ways the student would like to improve.

Of course, individualizing instruction by using conferences has been suggested for a long time. Like many "teach the student, not just the subject" schemes, its weakness is that no one is minding the store. I have several possible solutions. I eliminate the problem of my absence from the room by having the student speak to me at my desk. If I give an assignment that requires silent individual work, however, I still have a lack of privacy; everyone can hear my supposedly confidential conversation with a student. Sometimes I allow members of the class to talk quietly provided they seem to get their work done too. At other times I conduct a regular class but finish the formal work ten or fifteen minutes early, leaving time for several conferences and giving students the choice of doing their homework assignment then or at home. When I have the class in the library for work on research papers, I consult with several students then, with time between conferences for questions from the other students about the library assignment. Most students look forward to our conference time and often tell me more about their writing difficulties than I have noticed. They are eager to suggest many ways they can improve. Even the most apathetic students show better motivation after seeing a teacher's interest in improved work.

FINALLY, teachers improve their work by asking students to give constructive criticism of both course content and teaching technique. The more contact a teacher has with students, the better the evaluation can be made. Quite often, students' comments about their difficulties will suggest specific areas for improvements in a course. Students are also often generous with praise for a well-taught unit and may encourage a teacher to improve it even more. My own students have taught me much about myself and my courses. Many colleges require their students to write evaluations of courses and teachers at the ends of terms, and although this may not always be advisable in high school, an occasional evaluation of a course and its teacher can be valuable. I am especially careful to have students evaluate courses I am teaching for the first time.

Christ told of the importance of considering the costs of an enterprise and then counting our resources so we don't fail in the middle of our task. Evaluation of our past uses of our resources and of our potential to "make the most of our time because the days are evil" is surely vital to our students and ourselves. We can teach our students to evaluate their work by keeping records of their grades, seeking help in areas of need, and periodically consulting teachers who can guide them to more effective uses of their time and talents. We need to seek useful ways of making ourselves available to our students for such conferences. And, as in everything else we teach, we must practice evaluation ourselves. Careful evaluation and the courage to set and reach for goals can help us improve our courses and our lives as productive teachers.

Next time, a student requests a report on status in your class, ask yourself, "How am *I* doin' in here?" □

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GUIDELINES FROM THE BIBLE ON TESTING

RODNEY N. KIRBY

This article is part of a series which is being published in *The Westminster Educator*, a teacher newsletter of the Westminster Association of Christian Schools. This segment appeared in the December 1984 issue and is printed here with permission.

GENESIS 22 is a familiar passage, and it is often misunderstood. Verse one says that God *tested* (Hebrew *nasah*) Abraham. We may look at this passage to see how God tests men and learn how we are to test our students.

WHY TEST STUDENTS

The first thing we must consider is, "*Why* did God test Abraham?" The simple answer might be, "To know whether or not Abraham would place God above his own son." But what about God's omniscience? Didn't God already know what Abraham's heart was like? Did God learn something He didn't already know? If not, why did God put Abraham through this ordeal? Obviously, this was not the reason God tested Abraham.

James 2:21 gives us the reason for this test: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?" The purpose of this test was for God to justify Abraham. God sits as judge on all our works, declaring them righteous or unrighteous. God placed Abraham in this situation so that He could, judicially, declare him righteous or justified.

We may look at other times God tested men—particularly the nation of Israel. After the exodus from Egypt, God tested the Israelites several times—not to learn what they were really like, but to place His stamp of approval or disapproval on them as their Judge (Ex. 16:4; Deut. 8:2;13:3). God also tested the people other times, for the same reason (Judges 2:22; 3:1,4; II Chron. 32:31). God tested Pharaoh and the Egyptians—in this case, for the purpose of judicially condemning them (Deut. 4:34; 7:19; 29:3—cf. Ex. 4:21).

On the other hand, we are not to test God (Ex. 17:7; Deut. 6:16; Ps. 78:18-20). We are not judges over God. We are not in a position to justify or condemn God. Therefore, we may not put Him to a test, but we are to submit to His judgment.

With this understanding, then, we may turn to the question, "Why do we test our students?" First, we are not omniscient, as is God. We do not know what is in a student's heart or mind. Therefore, one purpose of our testing is different from God's—we test to find out what the student knows. We need to find out if the students are understanding the material we are presenting to them. So this aspect of testing is different from the way God tests us.

However, there is also a similarity to be noticed. As the teacher stands *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent), he is in a position of authority over the student. He judges the child's works to be good or bad.

Modern education denies this authority. By humanistically denying the authority of God as Judge, modern educators destroy the foundation for making the teacher a secondary judge over the student. "Who am *I* to say little Johnny's work is not good?" *Anything* is passed, as long as the child is trying. The problem is that the child then does not know how his work stacks up. Is it good, bad, mediocre, or what? There are psychological benefits to being declared "justified," whether by God or by our superiors. If we do not give objective grades—if we do not declare the student either "justified" or "condemned"—he is never going to improve. (Also note that grading on "effort" assumes the omniscience of the teacher. She must be able to see into the child's heart to know whether or not he is doing his best.)

HOW TO GIVE A FAIR TEST

Now, let's look at some other points from this passage. First, notice that God's test of Abraham was related to His prior preparation of Abraham. Since chapter 12, God had been promising Abraham offspring (12:2). Then, when all Abraham could see as heir was his servant Eliezer (15:2), God taught him that his heir would be one of his own offspring. Next, after Abraham had a child by Hagar, God taught him that he would have a son named Isaac by his wife Sarah. *This* child would be the child of the promise, none other (17:15-21). God then kept this promise in chapter 21. So God had slowly, patiently taught Abraham that *this* son, Isaac, was the child of promise.

Now, in chapter 22, God tests Abraham in regard to this very thing He had been teaching all along. Would Abraham obey God and slay his own son, the son through whom God would keep His promises? If Isaac were dead, God could not carry out His plan. God had been teaching Abraham all along that not just *any* child of his would do; it had to be Isaac. Now, God was telling him to kill Isaac. The test was related to what Abraham had been learning for years.

In the same way, our tests must cover concepts which have been worked on. Of course, no one will give a test on the War Between the States if all the class lectures have been on the Puritans. What are the implications? Often, one thing is emphasized in class and is ignored on a test. For example, the emphasis in class lectures in history may have been on facts—names, dates, and places. But when the test is passed out, the student is asked to write an essay analyzing the

period according to Scripture. He has not been asked to do this during the study; why should he be expected to do it on a test? If our goal is analysis, and we will be testing such analysis, then our course content must concentrate on analysis. If our lectures are mainly factual, then we should give factual tests. The test must be related to course content. (For more on this, see Robert F. Mager's excellent book, *Preparing Instructional Objectives,* Pitman Learning, 1975).

HOW TO BE FAIR IN TESTING

Now we must notice the difference between *testing* and *tempting*. God *tested* Abraham; He did not *tempt* him. God never tempts anyone (James 1:13). When Satan tempts a man, he is trying to get that man to sin, but God does not try to make men sin. He does not entice men to sin. No, God *tests* men; He places them in a situation in which He can either justify or condemn them. In the same way, we should not write a test in order purposely to fail some of our students. We should not think, "Let me make up a test which eighty percent will pass and twenty percent will fail. I'll make it hard enough so that my poorest students will fail, my very best students will get A's, and the rest will fall somewhere in between." No, we should instead compose a test which covers the content of the unit thoroughly. If all get A's, then they have all learned it well. If all fail, then nobody has learned. We should not try to predetermine the outcome, based on some form of "normal curve."

REWARDS FOR TESTS

Next, notice that Abraham was rewarded for passing the test (vs. 17-18). In the same way, we should reward students who do well on a test. Strictly speaking, we do not consider the grade itself a reward. It is merely a declaration as to how much material the student recalled. We may reward in many ways a slow student who works hard and pulls his grade up from a D to a C, but *not* by giving him an A. Grades are not rewards. Rewards are useful, especially in the lower grades. Posting A papers on the bulletin board is a great incentive for Kindergartners, for example. Older students should be rewarded in a different way. A Bible student who does exceptionally well could be rewarded by being asked to write a paper on the current Bible lesson for the school newspaper. However we test and evaluate, we must recognize and reward good students.

CONFIDENCE IN TAKING TESTS

Several verses in the chapter show that Abraham was confident of the outcome of his test. In verse 5, he tells his servants, "We will worship and *we* (not *I*) will return to you." In verse 8, he tells Isaac that "God *will* provide a lamb." We see here Abraham's faith, spoken of in Heb. 11:17-19. He knew that God *must* raise Isaac from the dead, and provide a substitute, in order to carry out His promises. In the same way, our students should be able to come to a test confident that we are not going to ask them something unexpected of them. They should know exactly what the test will cover and be confident of the outcome.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR TESTING

Finally, notice that God expected a specific behavior from Abraham, and told him what He expected (vs. 2). God did not say, "Abraham, I want you to do *something* to show your complete devotion to me." Abraham would then have been faced with a multitude of things he could have done (selling all he had, slaughtering the Canaanites, or offering up 5,000 bulls on an altar), some of which may have been acceptable, and some not. Abraham would not have known until *after* the fact whether he had done the right thing or not. No, God told him specifically what he was to do, and Abraham knew what was expected of him. He knew precisely what he needed to do to pass the test.

Unfortunately, we do not always test our students in this way. I can remember numerous occasions in college and in seminary when I took a test, or wrote a paper, in which I was not sure if I was giving adequate answers. On one test in particular I got a poor grade, even though all my answers were correct. Even after talking to the professor about it, I still, to this day, do not know what he wanted beyond what I had done. In other courses we were required to write several papers during the quarter. None of the students knew what was expected in his work until after he had gotten the first paper back, usually with a poor grade.

We must make clear to our students what we are looking for on a test. They must know how to study and prepare for the test, and this cannot be done if they don't know how to prepare for it. Are we looking for regurgitation of the class lectures? Do we expect evidence of critical thought, reflecting on the class lectures and outside reading? Are we looking for "the right words," or are we flexible in the wording of answers? The students must know this, in order to "justify" themselves on our tests.

God's tests differ from ours in purpose, but we can learn much from his methods of testing. May we model God's methods as we test the students he places in our classrooms.□

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CAN A SCHOOL COORDINATE ITS GRADING POLICY?

COMMITTEE ON GRADING POLICY

GRACE Christian School of Louisville, Mississippi, appointed a committee of seven members to evaluate their school's grading policy. They recommended the following policies:

PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE FOR GRADING

Evaluation is necessary. God constantly evaluates our work. Among people, superiors evaluate those under them. In the context of education, evaluation has several purposes: 1) it acts as an incentive to sinful man not to be lazy; 2) it is a measure of how much material has been mastered; 3) it is a measure of the effectiveness of the teacher in communicating the material. Grades serve this function—evaluation of the student's work.

What precisely is being evaluated? Primarily, but not exclusively, we are evaluating *achievement* in the *intellectual* or cognitive aspects of education. Thus, grades have a *limited*, but *real*, usefulness. Grades deal with the question "Of the material which the students are expected to know intellectually, how much does this student demonstrate that he knows?"

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1. *Achievement*—This deals with the amount of material the student has actually mastered. It is contrasted with *progress* (improvement), *effort* (diligence, achievement in relation to ability), and *ability* (natural capabilities of the student). These latter items may be a factor in grades, but only a minor factor. This is due to the difficulty in evaluating such matters, especially *effort* and *ability*.

2. *Intellectual* or *Cognitive* realm—This is not seen as the *only*, or even as the most *important*, factor in Christian education. The goal of biblical education is *discipleship*—that the students become faithful servants of Jesus Christ. This is certainly not equated with intellectual achievement. We recognize that a student may make brilliant intellectual gains and yet be far removed from true discipleship. Having said this, however, we must recognize that intellectual achievement is *one* essential part of discipleship. One must *know* the Master's will in order to *do* it. One cannot *live* effectively in accordance with things he does not understand.

3. *Demonstration* of knowledge—We recognize that students may know some things intellectually and, for one reason or another, be unable to *demonstrate* that knowledge in a satisfactory way (although one may question whether the student really *does* know material if he cannot demonstrate it). This is often a stage the student goes through when he is first achieving mastery of the material. He may have true, but indistinct or clouded, understanding of the material, and so be unable to pass a test. On the other hand, students may not truly understand the material, and yet be able to perform adequately on tests (e.g. "cramming"). However, since teachers do not know the student's mind, there must be some way for the student to demonstrate his knowledge, or lack of it. This is commonly done through *tests*. Therefore, we recognize that our grades are limited by this requirement for demonstration.

In summary, grades serve to communicate to the student and his parents the teacher's evaluation of his intellectual grasp of the material expected of him. Grades do *not* measure: 1) the student's worth as a person; 2) his standing before the Lord; 3) his progress in the Christian life; 4) his future potential for service in the Kingdom of God; 5) his effort, progress, or ability, except in a secondary way. Neither are grades to be seen as a form of competition between the students. Grades measure the student against the standard set by the teacher, not against other students.

In making this statement, we are not saying that grades are *necessary* for the purposes given. There may be other ways of evaluation besides grades. We *are* saying, however, that grades are *one* valid means of evaluation.

We also realize the need for full explanation of our view of grading to students and parents, who often place more significance on grades than is intended here.

CONSIDERATION OF HANDWRITING, SPELLING, AND GRAMMAR IN GRADING

Consideration was given to the problem of dealing with such things as handwriting, spelling, and grammar in subjects besides these (for example, science). Present practice is to deduct *some* points for such things, but not so much as to totally negate the grade. For example, an otherwise perfect paper may be pulled down, say, to a "B" for spelling errors, but not to an "F". This is based on a statement adopted by the Board on April 14, 1981: "A student's grade in a particular subject shall primarily reflect that student's knowledge in the particular subject."

There are several lines of thought we considered. First, all learning is unified. We cannot isolate learning into a certain number of airtight compartments. We may *concentrate* on a particular subject, but it cannot be isolated from other learning. To be specific: we cannot ignore spelling on a science paper, or handwriting on a spelling paper. Spelling is important *all* the time, not just in "spelling" class. This is also true for handwriting and grammar. This is the rationale behind the desire to deduct some points for such errors. Generally, children will be careless if there is no "threat" of a grade deduction.

However, a second consideration is this: our defense and usage of grades

is that grades reflect how much of the material in that subject the student actually knows. Deducting points for errors not related to that subject defeats the purpose. Example: a student may spell all his spelling words correctly but write sloppily, though legibly. If 5 points are deducted for poor writing, his final grade is 95—B+. Someone looking at this grade would assume that he spells well, not excellently, when he actually *is* superior in spelling but has *writing* problems.

Consideration was given to placing two (or more) grades on a paper—say, a science grade, a spelling grade, and a writing grade. Spelling errors would count against *spelling*, not against *science*. However, this was dismissed as being overly burdensome to the teacher.

Conclusion: The grade is to reflect *only* the student's knowledge in that subject. Grades are *not* to be lowered for other errors. Such errors *are* to be marked, however. The teacher is to take into account "daily work" in all subjects in determining report card grades. Thus, the handwriting grade, while it would primarily be based on "handwriting tests," would also reflect the student's handwriting in *all* subjects.

One note: This is *not* to eliminate deduction of points for spelling of terms essential to a subject. For example, in science, certain terms are important and should be spelled correctly. Misspellings of these terms may legitimately count against the *science* grade, since part of the knowledge of science is the ability to properly spell scientific terms.

GRADES IN BIBLE CLASS

The matter of grades in Bible class was considered. Again, there are two considerations. First, we do not want to encourage a purely "academic" knowledge of Scripture. We teach Bible so that *hearts* may be changed, not (merely) to increase knowledge. Grades and tests, however, can only deal with the intellect (see our defense of grades above). It is often the case that those things that are not tested are considered by the students to be of little importance. Also, we do not desire to give an "A" to an ungodly student, who happens to have an intellectual understanding of Scripture, and give poor grades to godly, but less bright, students. *Second*, there is, however, an intellectual aspect of Bible study. One *must* know God's Word in order to *obey* it. Intellectual understanding is *necessary*, even if it is not *sufficient*.

Conclusion: Grades should continue to be given in Bible. Teachers must be aware of the problems, as outlined above, and should make every effort in class to emphasize the "heart" aspect of Bible study.

REPORTING ON PROGRESS AND EFFORT

In light of our philosophy of grading—primarily as reflecting *achievement*—a need was seen for some effective way to communicate to parents the child's *progress* and *effort*. A child may work extremely hard, make genuine progress, and yet not progress enough to give him a passing grade (say, improving from a 30 average to a 60 average). Since our grades do not reflect this, how should we report this to the parents? Two possibilities were mentioned:

1. More frequent parent conferences. Last year, one was held. This year, there will be two (the second one to come in the spring). The possibility is open for more frequent conferences than this. The problem would be in the loss of time from school, since we close school to facilitate conferences. But this could be worked out.

2. Some form of regular, detailed progress reports. The teacher should regularly send reports to the parents concerning the child's progress. These should be specific enough that the parents would know areas needing attention. The problem is that this would involve more paperwork for the teacher. This is something to be worked out with the faculty—perhaps progress reports only for students who are receiving poor grades.

ELIMINATING COMPETITIVENESS IN GRADES

Grades tend to be competitive, even when we do not use them in such a way. One suggestion to alleviate this is to keep grades totally secret from the children. The children would receive their papers with corrections but with no grades. Grades would be sent home on a separate paper, in a sealed envelope (students and parents would be instructed that it should *remain* sealed until the child gets home). If necessary, additional comments to the parents could be included. While the child would learn his grade at home, it would not be while he is around other children. Report cards would also be sent home.

INSTRUCTION OF PARENTS

Parents (and students) should be taught clearly our views of grading—what grades mean and what they do not mean. This is already done during orientation night each year, but something more is needed—perhaps a short paper to be given to all parents each year.

CONSISTENCY IN GRADING

Concern was expressed about inconsistency in grading standards among the different members of the faculty. This is primarily the task of the headmaster and is being examined in more detail. More instruction and oversight is needed. □

Committee members: Rod Kirby, chairman; Judy Thomas, Mike Boyles, Carol McAdory, Tommy Shields, Donna Cunningham, Joyce Mollenbeck

FROM DISCIPLINE

DAVID HAGGITH

I hated English for twelve years. The only reason for studying English, I told myself, was to become an English teacher—rather a circular field of study. Today I am an English major with no intention of becoming an English teacher. My approach to the problems of today's education is not as one who has had years of educational theory and practice, but as one who has undergone a personal transformation.

Since 1975, when *Newsweek* published the article "Why Johnny Can't Write," a storm of anxiety has swept the country concerning the failure of today's educational system. The furor was aroused by SAT scores that had been consistently dropping for over a decade. In spite of all the educational theories that have been postulated since then, a look at today's scores as published by the U.S. Department of Education will reveal that in some areas the decline continues.

Many of today's high school seniors are functionally illiterate, or so the complaints go. They can recognize a word when they see it spelled, but they cannot come up with the correct spelling on their own. They understand correct grammar when they read it, but they cannot write it. They pause at commas and periods when they read, but they do not know where to put them when they write. In short, they are good observers but poor creators.

One explanation for this writing failure is that the teachers themselves cannot write. A *Time* magazine article titled "Help! Teacher Can't Teach!" (June 16, 1980) gave the following quotations from teachers: "I teaches English." "Put the following words in alfabetical order." "Scott is dropping his studies, he acts as if he don't care." Articles such as this have led to much recent concern over teacher incompetency.

No doubt some teachers have not mastered the skills they are supposed to teach. This problem isn't helped any by the American Federation of Teacher's opposition to competency testing of experienced teachers or the National Education Association's opposition to all such testing on the grounds that teacher competency cannot be measured by written tests. Although it is true some elements of being a good teacher cannot be shown on a written test, certainly the teacher's knowledge of basic English can be shown. It is a bit of a double standard that teachers have no qualms over using written tests for judging the competency of students, though they refuse to use them for judging their own competency.

The argument of teacher incompetency as the explanation of our educational problems is an easy band wagon to ride. In fact, it is too easy. Not only is it tempting to look for one simple key problem that will unlock all the larger problems of education, but it is also easier for society to find a scapegoat than to open its own guarded values for close inspection.

While parents have been playing pin the tail on the teacher, the teachers have been dodging parent attempts with the counter argument that too much is expected of them. They are burned out from having too many students per class. They are expected to be too many things all at once. As David Imig, Executive Director of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, stated, "The teacher today is expected to be mother, father, priest or rabbi, peacekeeper . . ." Besides all that, there are, of course, games to coach.

In spite of low teacher morale, of occasional teacher incompetency, and of inadequate teaching theories, I think the root of the problem is buried deeper. Our search for one simple solution has kept us from the most painful kind of probing—investigating our cultural values. It may be consequential that education began to decline during the cultural revolution of the sixties. Cultural revolutions—particularly the revolution of the sixties—tend to focus around universities. Coincidentally, so does education. One cannot form conclusions based on coincidences; however, the possibility of a relationship should be explored.

The late fifties and sixties brought a drastic change in our views about discipline. Such influential figures on the subject of discipline as Dr. Benjamin Spock and B.F. Skinner came to public attention. Suddenly parents and teachers alike were inundated with theories and counter-theories on disciplining children. Physical discipline was removed from both home and school for fear parents of the newer school of thought would ridicule them for child abuse. Teachers could even face prosecution for using physical discipline. The result was the opposite extreme, allowing children to do almost anything they wanted so as not to deprive them of the right to discover through exploration. Even harsh words were considered as damaging injections of guilt.

Changing attitudes toward physical discipline were only part of the scene. Attitudes toward self-discipline also changed. The three-day weekend became so important that holidays were shifted in order to make as many as possible. A new matter of significance crept into job contracts: "How many weeks of paid vacation do I get?" Although on an individual level people have always wanted to get away with as little as possible, suddenly it was becoming acceptable on a cultural level. The point here is not that paid vacations should be eliminated, but

TO DECADENCE

that all these things taken together are indicative of a social work ethic that tells people to do as little as they have to do.

A more visual change in attitudes toward self-discipline can be seen in the hippies of the sixties. The U.S. became a "do your own thing" nation. By the seventies, the attitude of "look out for number one" or "you deserve a break today, so get up and get away" became the mindset of the culture. Perhaps it all went a little too far.

WHAT I discovered through my own change in attitude toward English education centers on the matter of discipline. The main reason I always hated English was that I saw little practical value in it. To maintain a reasonable grade, I filled my short-term memory with all the answers I would need for a test, and when I was finished with the test, I jettisoned them all. This was reflected in my SAT scores, which showed I had very little aptitude for English. The one-hundred eighty degree turn came when I decided I wanted to become a writer because I enjoyed the creativity of writing. That meant I needed to know English, like it or not. Now that I had a reason for learning, I graduated from college cum laude with a degree in English—the exact opposite result of what my SAT scores had projected. It's a rephrase of an old expression: The horse won't drink if he isn't thirsty; and if he is thirsty, he'll find his own way to the water. In other words, I learned under the same ratio of incompetent to competent teachers and under many of the same educational theories that had failed me before. The difference was that with a reason to learn, I disciplined myself to the task.

But what is a teacher's recourse if a student isn't self-motivated? Some things are naturally unappealing. For me English was one of them. Most students do not want to become English teachers or writers, and few of them believe their English teacher's warning that they'll find English an important skill later in life. After all, what does knowing the difference between a definite article and an indefinite article have to do with being a fireman or a computer technician?

The English teachers of the old school didn't expect students to have the foresight to believe English would be valuable to them. Instead, they relied on enforced discipline. Those who were not self-disciplined would be physically disciplined. Because physical discipline was accepted by society, such measures were usually enough to motivate students. English was not as painful as a whack on the hand.

But today physical discipline is not accepted by society, and for one or two teachers to apply it would be detrimental. Students would know their right to rebel against such treatment.

In the absence of physical discipline, teachers have usually fallen back on other external motivators. Today even these are questioned. Competition is frequently viewed as immoral. The grading system is seen as undemocratic and perhaps psychologically damaging. And promotion based on merit is viewed as discriminatory.

WITH fewer tools of motivation at their disposal, teachers have tried changing the emphasis of their courses in order to boost their appeal. Many courses have become less writing-intensive. Multiple choice tests have become the standard of testing because they are easier for teachers to grade than are essays and because students strongly object to essay tests. Multiple choice, after all, only requires that students recognize the correct answer when it is placed before them. Essays require that they generate the right answer and formulate their own thoughts. A second problem with making classes less writing-intensive is that it reinforces the students' thinking that English skills are applicable only to English classes; therefore, why learn them?

Even some English courses have become less writing-intensive. A stronger emphasis has been placed on examining mass media, namely TV and periodical advertising. Although it is important we understand the media in order not to be duped by them, some media courses require only ob-

servation and recognition skills. Students learn far more if they are required to study and practice the ancient art of rhetoric using modern media as a contemporary example.

The Greeks said long ago that learning is painful. Athletes—familiar with the need for discipline—have an expression: no pain, no gain. Some educators have tried to take the pain out of learning in order to make it more appealing. The net result seems to have been less learning. Thinking, after all, is hard work. There is no way around it.

Moving away from the constant rehearsal of basic writing skills and the repeated drilling of spelling has been the English department's way of keeping in time with a culture that has a five-minute attention span. The results of this show in recent SAT scores: most people can still read, but they cannot write. Writing, after all, is output, requiring generation of ideas. Reading tends to be more of an input, or the stimulation of ideas. We cannot expect a culture that depends on TV, video games, and drugs for quick thrills to put a disciplined and concentrated effort into learning. Life is becoming more and more vicarious. If this trend continues, education will occur by osmosis or not at all. Maybe by that time, someone will have invented a computer that can feed knowledge directly into the brain.

IF we are not willing to work diligently for the benefits we desire, we do not deserve to have them. This is where private Christian schools can make a visible impact on our society. By demanding a level of commitment and discipline among teachers, students, and parents that is consistent with Christian principles, we can set ourselves apart from this trend. For teachers, this means being less concerned with protecting the individual teacher by avoiding competency testing and being more concerned with protecting the integrity of their profession by admonishing one another to the highest level of teaching excellence. For students, this means complying with a more highly disciplined approach to education or finding a more comfortable niche in secular schools. For parents, it means cooperating with and reinforcing the school's more strict discipline of study or enrolling their children elsewhere.

The decay we see in our educational system is a result of our society's values. We can make some noticeable improvements by removing incompetent teachers, adjusting the work load of teachers, and looking for ways of teaching a subject that are more effective; but until we re-establish a disciplined work ethic in our society, we are painting over old rust. We cannot recondition all of society, but we can work at restoring our own part of it. As Christians, we must. □

David Haggith is a free lance writer and a part-time youth minister at Northwest Baptist Church in Bellingham, Washington.

PROFILE

RUTH MACHIELE

ELAINE MILLER

LAST June, I stood in the principal's office at Rochester Christian School. To say that the desk was cluttered was to be gracious. File folders, report cards, student applications, handwritten lists, stray pens and pencils—the accumulation of thirteen years covered it. Ruth Machiele, the desk's owner, was packing it up. After thirteen years as principal at Rochester Christian School, Ruth was relinquishing that role and standing at a crossroads in her life. She said that, looking back, she could clearly see how God had directed her life and how, step by step, he had led her to Rochester Christian School.

School administration was not one of Ruth's goals as she studied special education and psychology at the University of Illinois in the early sixties. Originally a sociology major, Ruth had little idea what God had in store for her. Opting in her senior year to do her student teaching in the Children's Retreat at Pine Rest with learning disabled, emotionally impaired, and retarded children, she discovered that she enjoyed teaching. "At that point," she said, "all my plans for social work went down the drain." She continued to

A WOMAN WITH MANY ROLES

teach at the Retreat another three and a half years and earned her Master's Degree during the summers before leaving for Illinois and full-time graduate work towards her doctorate.

Several years later she once again found herself in school, this time as a school psychologist. Much of her work involved pioneering as she developed a school psychology program for the county schools outside of Champaign/Urbana. "It was fascinating," she admits. "Every school was different, but I helped teachers overcome their fears of psychology." Once again God opened doors and the year of internship led to a full-time job. A move to a job in Rochester, New York, however, lasted only one year. Still, Ruth felt confident that God would again give her direction.

Soon after her move Ruth began volunteering her services at Rochester Christian School (R.C.S.), but it was not until 1968 that she became the administrative assistant. In the meantime, she worked part-time as a psychologist in the Penfield school system and she served on several committees at R.C.S. It was during this time that the tuition aid committee started an inner-city tuition-aid program to assist black students from Christian families. The program, which now extends to lower income white families as well, makes it possible for Christian students of any race or color to attend the school. During this same time period, the school relocated from Jersey Street to Embury Drive, its present home. Ruth served on the committee which engendered the move. It is not surprising that the R.C.S. board chose Ruth Machiele to be its next principal in 1972; her commitment to Christian education was evident.

Ruth's previous experience in various schools served her well in her role as principal. As a former teacher, she understood the demands her teaching staff faced. On the other hand, her training as a psychologist gave her insight into children and their struggles. Behind much of her counsel lay a concern for the individual. She encouraged each teacher to teach from his or her strengths, recognizing that not everyone can or should teach in the same way. Moreover, she and her staff strove to adjust their school's curriculum to meet the needs of the individual students, whether remedial, average, or gifted. The end result? Nobody was a nobody. Each member of this school's community, which extends from the board to the parents, was looked upon as an image-bearer of God, an individual with a divine destiny. The Christian education which resulted, ideally, could not be just an academic exercise but instead became an all-encompassing program which touched all parts of the students' lives—physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. It was, in short, training for life in the kingdom of God.

Creating such a God-centered attitude and manner of teaching is not an easy task for any administrator, and Ruth Machiele too found the task awesome at times. Setting the spiritual tone for 200 students was not easy. Yet God's blessing was apparent at R.C.S., for few Christian institutions experience the Christ-centered support and sense of community that became standard at this school. R.C.S. misses Ruth Machiele, who has now left her position as principal and moved on to the community's newly-established high school. But the fruit of her effort will remain an ever-present testimony of her commitment to God and to Christian education. □

Elaine Miller teaches at Rochester Christian High School in Rochester, New York.

"THE CHICANO CONNECTION"

H.K. ZOEKLICHT

THE shrill, accusing voice echoed through the halls of Omni Christian. "Why no Chicano poems and stories in your American lit classes? Lots of Anglo stuff. Nothing by Mexican Americans. Everything by Hawthorne and Faulkner. Nothing by Salazar or Gonzalez. Aren't they American too? Isn't this supposed to be a course in American literature?"

The response from American literature teacher Ren Abbot was troubled, subdued, and halting. "But, uh, you see, Mrs. Morales, our anthology doesn't have any Chicano writers in it, and we . . ."

"But why doesn't it, Mr. Abbot? Why don't you buy another book, a better one? Fact is, I'll bet you can't even name one Chicano writer. That's the problem, isn't it? Go ahead. Name one. Just one. Right now. See? You can't." Her voice rose in a series of shrills as she pointed her well-manicured finger at the frustrated English teacher.

By this time the morning coffee drinkers in the faculty room of Omni Christian had stopped all conversation in order to overhear the captivating dialogue in the hall. Even Bible teacher John Vroom had stopped smacking his lips on a glazed doughnut so as not to miss a word. When, a few minutes later, the embarrassed and crestfallen Abbot entered the faculty room to salvage what was left of his coffee-break and his ego, he entered a very quiet room. He grinned sheepishly at his colleagues.

"Mama mia," he said, "don't ever argue with a Chicano mama. We have two Chicano kids in the whole school, but their mama thinks we should study Chicano literature. Who in the dickens does she think she is?" Ren's hand was shaking as he filled his styrofoam cup.

Librarian Sue Katje responded. "I don't know, Ren, but don't you think Mrs. Morales has a good point? Her kids are the only Mexican kids in the school and we sort of act as though Mexico doesn't exist."

"Well, Sue," put in Ginny Traansma, "how many books by Chicano writers do you have in our library?"

The librarian's face flushed, but she looked straight at Ginny. "If you want a particular kind of book in our library, you have to tell me. You can't expect me to read your minds, you know," she responded cattily.

John Vroom, who had renewed his assault on his glazed doughnut, now inserted a thoughtful remark. "Yes, I think that you in the English department and the library have a responsibility there to keep our shelves stocked with the literature of various cultures. We in the Bible department, thank goodness, don't have to worry about that." He paused and then added, "But all of us have some obligations along those lines. I, for example, have frequently reminded the hot lunch people that we should, in deference to the Morales, serve wet burritos, souvlaki, tacos—things like that. Helps them feel at home."

Ren Abbot, still smarting, came to his own defense. "We have more than we can adequately cover already in our American lit survey course, and we try to deal chiefly with the established and important American writers. Salazar and that other bird that she mentioned—who has ever heard of them? And besides, don't you think the Spanish course should include some of these things?"

Now Lucy Bright Den Denker entered the discussion. "Ren, the writers that Mrs. Morales mentioned are Americans. They write in English. And besides, Rick has had only a few courses in Spanish himself, and he's teaching Spanish only because no one else will do it. We don't have a really prepared Spanish teacher. Nope, that won't work. If Omni is going to teach Chicano literature, you and Rick and I are all going to have to do it. Chicano lit is American lit.

Now Abbot re-entered the conversation. "I guess I have to admit that Mrs. Morales has got a point. Not only do we not teach any Chicano literature at Omni, but I, for one, don't read it either. But nobody in the English Department at the college teaches it either. No one but Mrs. Morales seems to think that Salazar and Gonzalez and those hombres are important. I'll bet not one of you studied any Chicano literature when you were in college. And I guess I haven't studied any since then, either."

John Vroom raised a fat finger. "I read a story by Hemingway and there were bullfights in it. And tortillas." Abbot ignored the Bible teacher. "There's just too much literature to teach. But maybe we ought to take Mrs. Morales' problem a bit more seriously than we have."

Principal Bob Den Denker, who had been listening very intently to all this talk now entered the discussion. "I guess we should, Ren, but you're right about some of the problems. In the first place, the board has not stood behind our need to hire a really qualified, full-time Spanish teacher. It's the old budget problem. In the second place, with only two Spanish-American kids in the whole school, there hasn't been much pressure for our English teachers to include some Chicano writers in their American lit courses. And I'm not even sure now that we should change the curriculum that way. At least the writers have to be good enough."

Vroom added another choice opinion. "I'm not sure we should even let those Mexican kids into our school. One of those Morales kids is named Jesu, and that's blasphemy. The Bible

says there's only one name . . .''

A smile flickered across Den Denker's face as he interrupted. ''One thing you could do, Ren, is to ask Mrs. Morales and her husband to discuss this matter further with the English teachers. They would be pleased to be consulted, and maybe you could get them to see some of the problems from your point of view. And, who knows, maybe the English Department would learn something from the whole business.''

The bell signaling the beginning of third hour rang. While the other teachers began to move to their classrooms, Ren Abbot lingered in the faculty room, determined to claim at least a few minutes of silence in order to recover from his ordeal.□

GLORIFYING GOD IN THE BODY

DENNIS HIEBERT

IT has been apparent for some time now that the physical fitness boom of the late 1970's was not a passing fad. The trendiness of particular modes of exercise, nutritional chic, and stress management vogue remains, but an increased health-consciousness has become a part of the 1980's psyche. We have come to understand that, the marvels of modern medicine notwithstanding, we can no longer take our bodies for granted. More significantly, we have discovered that the qualitative nature of health offers us a positive well-being beyond the mere absence of disease.

Many Christians have joined the pursuit of physical vitality. This quest has produced a Christian magazine devoted to health, Christian films extolling the virtues of sweat, and a glut of Christian fitness manuals. There is the spectre of aerobic dance records topping the Christian music charts. Even those schooled in the athletic and body metaphors of the apostle Paul himself tend to blanch a little at brazen album titles such as *Firm Believer.*

What makes all this activity so curious is that it has been generated by so little theological impetus. One is hard pressed to find a convincing Christian apologetic for the pursuit of health and physical fitness. Even the best textbooks for physical education courses entrenched in Christian colleges are long on physiology and short on theology. Yet, proceeding in want of explicit biblical support would presumably be debilitating, if not fatal. Meanwhile, the historical lack of a systematic theology of the body has again placed any current Christian thought on the subject into the awkward appearance of belated religious embroidery, instead of latent scriptural fibre, of rationalization instead of causation.

Among the impediments to developing a Christian view of personal health and physical fitness are several scripture references which, at initial glance, seem to discourage any notion of positive valuation. The King James rendering of I Timothy 4:8, ''Bodily exercise profiteth little,'' is one. However, a contextual reading reveals that Paul is here accentuating the profitability of spiritual exercise, and—in passing—actually affirms the value of physical exercise. It does profit for a little while. That physical exercise palls in comparison to the pre-eminent and eternal value of spiritual exercise is in no way demeaning. So do all other concerns whose legitamacy we do not question or seek to dismiss, education and polity among others.

Similarly, Matthew 6:25 is clearly addressing the futility of being anxious about such necessities of life as food and clothing. ''Take no thought for the body'' does not imply that we should disregard physical health. ''We prefer to be absent from the body'' (II Corinthians 5:8) is not an expression of disgust with our physical beings, but a longing for our heavenly home.

THE most recent encumbrance borne by Christians concerned about health and physical fitness is the charge of selfism. It has become fashionable to expose narcissistic indulgences of the Me generation, and be-

cause fitness primarily benefits the individual, it is vulnerable to such inquisition.

It is true that selfism is idolatry. Yet Jesus' second great commandment, to love our neighbors as ourselves, assumes a healthy care and regard for the self (Matthew 22:39), as does Paul's instruction to husbands to love their wives as themselves (Ephesians 5:28). Indeed, spiritual growth and progressive sanctification is Spirit-prompted egoism, or proper concern for one's own well-being, whereas self-worship is pride-prompted egotism, or improper self-centeredness. Some may need to be reminded that the call to self-denial is not a call to self-abdication.

It is also true that the pursuit of physical fitness may, in certain instances, be an expression of self-worship, and that running, for example, can become cultic in its extremes. But to conclude that any fitness endeavor is, therefore, self-indulgence is to make a hasty generalization from that which is not central to the issue, and may in fact be quite atypical. Too often it is the somber and sedentary Christian who, with thinly-veiled relief, ventilates the vanity of physical fitness, and thereby judges the motives of his brother from a distance.

The greatest traditional constriction of the Christian's view of his body has been the lingering influence of metaphysical dualism. This was the Greek philosophy assimilated by the early church which separated the body and the soul, viewing the former as natural and profane, and the latter as supernatural and sacred. Regarding matter as inherently evil eventually led to the ascetic extreme of self-flagellation, until much of the pietistic framework of medieval theology was repudiated in the Reformation. Biblical anthropology sees man not as body and soul, but rather as an inspirited flesh and an enfleshed spirit. The body is not to be depreciated as some shameful appendage to the real man within.

This shift came about with recognition that Scripture attributes sin to the mind as much as to the flesh (Romans 1:28; Titus 1:15). And it is the flesh, or carnal moral nature usually denoted by the Greek term *sarx,* that wars against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17), not the body, or amoral physical being, which is usually denoted by *soma.* It was acknowledged that Paul denounces ascetic dualism rather directly in Colossians 2:23 when he writes, ". . .self-abasement and severe treatment of the body are of no value against fleshly indulgence." Furthermore, the ascetic lifestyle implied by dualistic thinking amounts to nothing better than works-righteousness. Thus, in a day when the opposite extreme is the rule, it is startling to see current traces of uneasiness or vague contempt for the body, as if we display our spirituality by neglecting the body.

THE weight of Scripture is in fact on the antithesis of dualism. Holism is not a platitude of modern humanistic invention, but a recurrent theme of Scripture. The Hebrew did not even have an adequate term for the physical body, *basar* being the nearest, because health was considered irreducible, not capable of fragmentation into mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual components. Health was fullness and well-being in every dimension, accruing from *shalom.*

The New Testament continues this pattern. The description of Jesus in Luke 2:52, which is similar to the description of Samuel in I Samuel 2:26, models holistic health: "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom (mental health) and stature (physical health), and in favor with God (spiritual health) and men (social health)." I Thessalonians 5:23 reaffirms the link between health and holiness: "Now may the God of Peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." John's challenge is to match spiritual vigor with holistic health—"I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers" (III John 2). So while Scripture does not argue or define health, it illustrates and models a holism that serves as the framework from which to construct a physical fitness lifestyle.

Contrarily, Christian apologists for physical fitness occasionally strain credibility in their eagerness to reduce essentially holistic statements to physical admonitions. Romans 12:1, properly understood, calls for the presentation of the whole person to God, not for a macabre sacrifice of unblemished bones and brawn.

While modern man has become enamored with the rediscovery of holistic therapeutic modalities, God has never dealt with anything less than the whole person. Biblical prescriptions have always been the best antidote to psychosomatic afflictions. Now comes scientific documentation that the effect of the mind on the body is also reversible, and psychiatry, for example, routinely employs somatopsychic treatments for conditions such as depression. The recent detection of endorphins, morphinelike euphoria-producing hormones released from the pituitary gland during vigorous and sustained exercise, is simply further evidence of the God-ordained interdependence of man's faculties.

Perhaps the framework of holism is as far as the biblical data will take us. Perhaps the whole counsel of God in

its totality is adequate grounds, and we are better off not contending for specific directives. Perhaps physical health concerns, like the aesthetic concerns of the arts, must settle for a certain scriptural ambivalence. Nevertheless, most Christian physical fitness polemics have succumbed to the compulsion of modern pietism and attempted to quote chapter and verse, even at the risk of interpretive integrity. What are some of the more persuasive biblical principles pertaining to the physical dimensions of health in particular?

THE starting point is usually with the recognition of the human body as one of God's highest creative acts. It is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14) and by creation order is to be maintained and celebrated as such. Literary eulogies alone are insufficient. Man is, in some form, God's image, and defacing His image through violence or simple neglect borders on sacrilege.

The most explicit teaching on physical health is the stern condemnation of gluttony (Proverbs 23:1-3). It is considered one of the seven deadly sins and is a characteristic of the wicked (Philippians 3:18-19). Paul described the Cretans as "lazy gluttons" and instructed Titus to "rebuke them sharply" (Titus 1:12-13). What is notable about gluttony, other than our inadequate understanding of the point at which we become gluttonous, and our failure to take it seriously, is that it is merely another vice to be avoided. It is limited to the negative and abusive, and its correction falls short of pursuing positive health.

The conventional motif for Christian physical fitness is that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19). This is, in effect, a second incarnation. The principle is again cited with great enthusiasm in condemning bodily abuses such as tobacco, alcohol, and non-medical drugs, but is seldom seen in its positive light. The result of viewing it as a warning instead of a call to action is that the Spirit too often resides in not vandalized but dilapidated quarters.

The stewardship principle is aligned with the temple principle. "You are not your own, for you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). We are responsible to make wise use of that which God has entrusted to us; time, money, the gospel, but also our bodies. While the text does not demand a broader application, could it be that glorifying God in our bodies, allowing the fullness of his majesty to radiate through our physical beings, suggests more than merely avoiding the sexual immorality that is the context of the injunction?

Personal discipline is another perspective on physical fitness. Paul disciplined himself so as to prevent his body and/or flesh nature from disqualifying him from his ministry (I Corinthians 9:27). Rather than taking an ascetic imperative from Paul's example, it would seem appropriate to extend the principle of physical discipline to the prevention of poor health. While realizing that health derives ultimately from God, we ought to be committed to ensuring that nothing within our control interferes with our obedience to God. Contrast this with Robert Murray McCheyne, the 19th century Scottish evangelist, who on his deathbed at an early age, lamented that God had given him a message to deliver and a horse on which to deliver it, but he had killed the horse and could not deliver the message. McCheyne would have been right in style with current Christian burn-out fashion.

Finally, there is the need for moderation in pursuit of physical fitness; more is not necessarily better. A somaticism which overemphasizes the physical to the degradation or exclusion of intellectual or spiritual values is as perverse as scholasticism or inordinate asceticism. It is in the very context of bodily concerns that Paul warns us that, though all things are lawful, we should be mastered by none (I Corinthians 6:12). To be obsessed with any physical appetite, be it food, drink, sleep, sex, drugs, or even physical exercise, is to succumb to the lust of the flesh (I John 2:16).

It would appear on balance, however, that it is possible to celebrate the body without indulging the flesh. The body certainly needs activity. Even the Puritans acknowledged and allowed for that. Man's creations deteriorate with use; God's creation deteriorates prematurely with lack of use. And Scripture, while perhaps stopping short of an unequivocal fitness mandate, nevertheless assumes it. "No one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it" (Ephesians 5:29 NIV). Do we take positive action? As Lewis Sperry Chafer concluded, "Sometimes it is not prayer and Bible study that we need to straighten out our lives, but exercise and proper diet." Not bad advice, even for a theologian. □

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WINNING IS THE ONLY THING

JAMES R. TIMMER

AMERICAN sports have been under attack by many commentators and spectators because of what they call the "Vince Lombardi Syndrome." The "Lombardi Syndrome" refers to the legendary coach's credo that "Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing." This credo has been quoted and misquoted very often in connection with American sports, and very seldom in a favorable connotation. I want to demonstrate that this is a feasible credo for an athletic program in a Christian school.

"Winning is the only thing" can be a viable credo when sport is placed in a proper perspective in a school system. Administrators, coaches, teachers, parents, and spectators all have to place in proper perspective the role of athletics.

The scope of this article is limited to sports as we know it in inter-school competition. If inter-school athletic programs begin in the fourth grade, then "Winning is the only thing" applies. I believe that an inter-school program should not begin until the eighth grade, if there is an adequate intramural program.

Today we have in operation two understandings of sport. They are intricately related, but they have very different results and implications for athletic programs. Each of these understandings (operatives) demonstrates the same basic problem: each elevates sport to a higher priority in American life than it should have.

THE first current sport operative is the Secular Sport Operative. Professional Sports and Major University Sports Programs are the models for this operative. Sport is viewed as an institution. It is an established part of our American culture; we cannot think of a society without it. After all, what is more pervasive than sport? Many millions of people watch it every weekend. We have a "Super Sunday" developed around a football game. The highest rate of job absenteeism in the city of Chicago occurred after the Cubs lost the final playoff game to the San Diego Padres in 1984.

If sport is viewed as an institution, it is assumed that sport has an innate value system. This value system finds its roots in American Puritan ideals and value structures. Our forefathers instilled in this country a virtuous value system, including such ideas as loyalty, honesty, courage, basic concepts of right and wrong, fair play, and honor when dealing with other people. These values historically were derived from a deep faith in God. Therefore, because of this historical influence, sport viewed as an institution automatically becomes an excellent institution and a fine teacher of good moral values. It is a value system every parent wants his or her child to accept, and sport is the medium to teach it. The problem with this kind of thinking is that people sincerely believe that sports participation will and can cause positive social change. Sport is believed to be an excellent training ground for positive adult behavior. Remember how often you have heard it said (particularly if you are losing): "Sports build character and integrity." Sport becomes a micro-democracy, because in order to attain your goal you have to compete within the rules, learn who is the authority, and get along with others, just as you do in life in general.

Although many of these results could occur, they do not necessarily happen from participation in sport. Professional athletes prove to us that participation in sport does not guarantee a learned value system. Athletes today will jump leagues and/or teams for a few more dollars. So much for loyalty. Drug users in sport are rampant; in fact, many of our sport heroes are convicted users and pushers. Sport participators are also cheaters, liars, rapists, and molesters.

When sport is viewed as an institution, we never perceive sport as being corrupt, but as a good institution with a few bad apples. Get rid of the bad apples and everything will be okay with sport. This view prevents change. People such as Howard Cosell keep telling us how important this or that game is, and we keep believing it.

We have to remember sports are a mirror of society, not society a mirror of sports. The Secular Sport Operative has influenced us in many ways, some so subtle we do not even realize them. First, notice how this operative has affected us. Even knowing the corruption that is going on in professional and major university sports, programs, and realizing the purposes of higher education, we have student athletes encouraged by Christian school coaches and by Christian parents to select a college or university based on the type of athletic program the school has, or by how much athletic scholarship money he or she can get. Another very subtle way the secular operative influences us is in our attitude toward the game. When the score of an athletic contest is lopsided, spectators often get up and leave be-

fore the game is over. Instead of watching students perform an activity they have worked on, spectators have the attitude that they have seen the kill; now it's over, so let's leave.

THE second operative that is prevalent today is the "Icing on the Cake" Operative. This is the current Christian operative and it also views sport as innately good. We have all heard the phrase, "If anyone can get through to this kid, the coach can." There are two factors at work in this operative.

The first factor in the "Icing on the Cake" Operative is the belief that athletics are an extension of the school physical education program. Therefore, sport not only assumes all the old ethical and moral qualities of the sports institution, but it also assumes all the fitness values such as cardiovascular endurance, strength, power, and agility, which are taught in physical education. I believe a person has to be fit to engage in sport and does not engage in sport to become fit. I have never heard an athlete say that he plays varsity sports to become fit; rather, he plays sports because they are fun. Athletics and physical education are two entirely different fields. They have different objectives and goals.

The Christian operative, then, starts with the secular operative value system and attaches it to a physical education program. Furthermore, it emphasizes a few biblical values such as unselfishness, humility, sharing, perseverance, and encouragement. These values are more Christian than the secular value system but are no more easily attainable just by participation in sports. One final thing is added to this—a prayer before and after each contest. Then we have a Christian athletic program. The basic problem still exists; we have made athletics far too important. It is fine to pray before and after each contest as long as it is done before every other event of the student's day. If this is not done in the athlete's day, the athletic contest, by implication, becomes the most important event for him or her.

Most Christian school athletic programs suffer from this kind of operative. The implication in our Christian schools of this kind of operative is that every student should, ideally, be an athlete or on an athletic team. Ultimately, what happens is that participation becomes the goal of the contest; everyone on the team must play. "What's good for some must be good for all."

The second factor which greatly influences the Christian operative is the Christian Professional Athlete. This is probably the most remarkable blend of religion and athletics. The athletic contest becomes everything from a worship service to a practice of competing for God. It is very hard to sort out, but it is important to understand that this factor also elevates sport to too great a level of importance.

The Christian professional athlete measures giving glory to God on a productivity scale. Although most professional athletes say that giving 100 percent effort (win a lot) brings glory to God, for them winning really allows them to bring more glory to God. Here are some examples of this thinking:

1. Winning brings popularity and popularity brings more opportunities to witness for God.
2. Winning also lends a degree of credibility to the athlete's testimony.
3. Winning becomes the symbol for the Christ-centered disciple (professional athlete).
   a. Jesus was the greatest athlete.
   b. Jesus was a "winner."

Many times in this setting, God is portrayed as a third party with a vested interest in the outcome of the contest. God gets the credit if you win and God is teaching you a lesson if you lose. God is interested in his covenant people, but surely not in the outcome of a game.

It should be clear that the current Christian Operative of today does what the Secular Operative does, that is, it elevates sport to such a high priority in our lives that participation by everyone becomes a goal and we forget what athletic contests were meant to be. Furthermore, we manipulate Christ for our personal use and satisfaction.

IN order for change to take place, we have to look at athletics in an entirely different way. We have to transform our thinking in order to transform our athletic programs. I suggest that although sport and athletic contests are surely part of reality, sport is not an institution; it is simply one of many human experiences. All human experiences can be educational provided they take place in structured environments under a qualified director. Even then, we cannot guarantee that the experiences will be all positive. One thing that is certain is that an

athletic team experience is not necessary for a good well-rounded education or for one's salvation. When viewed as an experience, it becomes one of many experiences and consequently becomes much less important. Sport is not innately good and might not even be a good experience for everyone. If athletics are not that important, then not everyone needs the experience. Not everyone in the sport has to be an athlete; in fact, not everyone is an athlete. If a person does not have a "feel" for sport as an experience, more likely than not, he will fail to enjoy or even understand the sport he is participating in. Practice will become work and boredom rather than fun and exhilaration.

An athlete is not simply a person who makes an inter-school team, but a person who "wants" to or would like to play many sports in the school program. An athlete is a person who can adapt rather easily from sport to sport, quickly learns new sports, and is not devastated by adversity—whether in player relationships or personal/team failures. Persons who have no desire to play or practice that sport, except on an inter-school team, are most likely non-athletes and should be discouraged as soon as possible in inter-school athletics. Statistical performance has nothing to do with whether or not a person is an athlete.

The joy and excitement that is generated by athletes in practice and in an athletic contest is ultimately the result of wanting to excel and therefore, to win. That's the goal. To succeed, every practice, every weight lifted, every coach's comment, every injury and all the pain, is worth it to win the contest. Winning is the only thing.

IF sport is simply a human experience, then the value of sport is essentially intrinsic and not measurable. As a human experience then, sport becomes an activity of life, and educational curriculum outcomes become irrelevant. Pedagogy is important only to teach the sport and not to use sport to develop some virtuous value. If a sports team is made up of wonderful Christian young people, they were wonderful Christian young people before they were selected for the team. If the team is made up of troublemakers, they were troublemakers before they were selected for the team and probably are troublemakers on the team.

By viewing sport as an experience, it is much easier to de-value the importance of sport in the Christian life. It is not a necessary experience for worship and it is not a necessary experience for everyone to have in order to bring glory to God. The question then is why winning is so important to the contest.

Because persons are given talents and abilities in athletics by God, they have the responsibility to develop those talents to the best of their ability. And because sport is a part of this culture, Christians must realize that God has given us sport and the athletic contest. The essential part of the athletic contest is to see which team (team sports) or which person (individual sports) performs the best on the contest date. As Christians, more than anyone else, we must be motivated to prepare to perform to the very best of our ability so that we can achieve what is essential in the athletic contest to win. It is in our preparation to win that we bring glory to God and to those whom we are playing against. Playing a contest for any other reason (self-esteem, participation by every team member) would not be doing justice to our opponent and, therefore, not to God. Remember, there are many other sport activities people do for recreation where the goal is to participate and not necessarily to win. But in an inter-school athletic contest the goal is to win. I think we show love to God when we realize that there are students who are gifted in sports skills, and we should do all within our means, in the proper perspective, to provide qualified coaches and proper facilities and equipment so that these students can be physically and mentally prepared for athletic competition.

Sport is not a necessary experience for worship and it is not a necessary experience for everyone to have in order to bring glory to God.

Christ also taught us to love our neighbor as ourselves. In an athletic contest our neighbor is our opponent. He or she is to be treated at all times with honor and respect due one of God's creatures. If our opponent makes us play hard and do our best to win, we must congratulate him or her for a great effort. If we are not victorious but have given our best and played our hardest to win, we have given glory to God and have had a great time.

HOW should an athletic program at a Christian high school differ from that of a public school? Overtly, I do not think you can see a real difference. The differences are more subtle. The Christian teacher or coach must create an environment, both in practice and in the contest, of caring and building. His conduct should be based on love and respect for his players and his opponents. This does not mean that a person cannot be intense or aggressive. It means he or she operates out of a personal love for God.

In our Christian schools, our athletic programs should also have a different motive than we usually see in a non-Christian setting. Team or school success, not individual or personal esteem, is our primary goal. This type of motivation does not allow a willy-nilly approach to athletics, but rather an aggressive striving for excellence and, therefore, for success. There should be a real desire to win the contest.

I believe that inter-school athletics are part of what God has given us. Therefore, our goals should be consistent with the essence of the athletic contest. Winning is the only thing. □

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"I AM A NEW READER. WHICH BIBLE CAN I READ?"

JOAN M. DUNGEY AND JAMES D. WORTHINGTON

CHOOSING a Bible translation or paraphrase that fits our individual needs can be a formidable task with the variety of versions available. As dearly loved and well-known as the Authorized Version is, we recognize its limitations with regard to the ease of reading. Children, new adult readers, and English as a Second Language students need to find appropriate Bible texts.

Readability of books (the ease with which we are able to understand a particular selection of text) involves several factors. Language level, of course, is most important (and we will talk more about that later), but perhaps just as important is the motivation to read that a reader brings with him or her to the reading task.

The overall appearance of the book will initially determine if a reader is attracted or not. The size and weight of the book, its cover appearance, the size of print, sub-divisions of text and boldfacing, color, and pictures will all add up to give a reader a "feel" for a particular book, even before reading it.

Not until a person actually begins to read will the structure of the language itself affect the reader. Enjoyment of reading is encouraged by a language style which is natural and free-flowing. Language is anticipatory. As we understand what we are reading, we will read faster and anticipate future words, as long as the text is written with natural language. Our reaction is, "This is easy to read." When we find a Bible text that has a language style and structure matching our own reading level and thinking style, we will read with understanding and enjoyment. The frustrating environment created when a reader stumbles over words will not occur when the text meets individual needs.

Past experiences of the reader affect the readability of a particular text. Situations new to the reader may be described in the text, making understanding difficult. Cultural and historical references may have no meaning. The common farming references used in the Bible relate to the culture of the Middle East. For any other culture, Bible study must include an understanding of the context of the examples and metaphors for complete understanding and cross-cultural transitions. Bible translators are particularly aware of this in selecting vocabulary. Specialized Bible vocabulary may not be familiar to new readers of the Bible, e.g. the word *propitiation.*

The language used by the author/translator affects a Bible's readability. Long words and sentences, complex grammatical structures, and sentences which are arranged in an unnatural word order make reading difficult ("Why trouble ye her" Mark 14:6 KJV). Pronoun referrants are particularly tricky or obscure in some Bible passages. ("He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." John 7:18 KJV). A greater distance between the noun and the verb of a sentence can make it more difficult to understand (Fry 1977). For example: "Certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre . . ." Luke 24:24 KJV. Variety of sentence structure also contributes to reading enjoyment; the simple sequence of subject-verb-object can become tedious if repeated too often.

READABILITY FORMULAS

The definite readability level of a text is very difficult to pinpoint. Many researchers have tried to develop successful formulas to determine a book's reading level, or "readability." Most readability formulas measure the length of the words and sentences of a particular text. Formulas are statistical: word and sentence length are concrete numbers that can be counted. For this study, a sentence was defined as ending with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark. Semi-colons and colons were not counted as sentence endings.

The statistics, however, cannot tell the whole story. Generally, longer sentences are more difficult to read; but it is the complexity of the sentences that makes them difficult. Yet some complex sentences are more natural and convey a relationship between ideas that two simple sentences cannot.

> "Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven . . ." Matt. 5:12 KJV.
>
> "Be glad and full of joy because your pay will be much in heaven." Matt. 5:12 New Life Testament
>
> "Be happy and glad. You have a great reward waiting for you in heaven." Matt. 5:12 New Testament: New Easy to Read Version.

Neither can the formulas measure word concept levels, abstract grammatical elements, or symbolic word levels. Notice for example: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." John 6:53 KJV. Even word length is not an accurate measure of readability since *familiar long* words are easier to read than *unfamiliar short* words. Compare 'grandchildren', 'remember', 'happiness', and 'happening' with 'abhor', 'debt', 'enmity', and 'gnat'.

Formulas can give us, however, a general "ball park" figure of a book's reading level. The readability level of a book is given in grade levels. A book with a sixth grade readability level means that until a person reads on a sixth grade level, he or she will experience frustration during reading. A person's actual grade or age makes no difference: a fourth grader may read on a sixth grade level; many adults read on a fifth grade level; English as a Second Language learners read on many levels, depending on their backgrounds.

Different types of reading materials are written at different levels. For example, a novel which is usually read quickly for enjoyment has a lower reading level than a technical manual or college textbook where detailed information must be expressed concisely. Our individual background experiences will determine how we read the different types of texts. We read books about familiar topics more rapidly than those which are unfamiliar. In fact, there may be materials which we cannot read at all, due to the lack of vocabulary background. Certain biblical words might affect persons from another culture in the same way, such as 'ark', 'covenant', 'antichrist', 'circumcise', or 'sacrifice'.

Vocabulary control presents a special problem for Bible translators. The vocabulary and grammatical choices are limited by the Bible context which is already present. A person translating the Bible into a lower reading level is not as free to use a strict, controlled vocabulary and syntax as is a storywriter. The integrity of the content must be maintained; the translation is driven by meaning, not by which words or word rules the beginning reader might have studied. A beginning reader can achieve success with a small vocabulary.

The present study examined nine versions of the New Testament and applied four readability formulas: Fry, Dale-Chall, Flesch, and SMOG. A computer program "Reading Level Analysis" (Bertamax, Inc., 1979) was used for the Dale-Chall, Flesch, and SMOG readabilities. The Fry was computed manually using a graph (Fry, 1969). Examining the same six passages across the New Testament allows comparison of translations. The passages were chosen as commonly used texts and familiar stories.

VARIANCES between formulas reflect differences in each formula's definition of readability. For example, Fry's definition of readability is 75% comprehension of the material read (Fry, 1969). McClaughlin's SMOG formulas defines readability as comprehending 100% of the material read (McClaughlin, 1969). Further, there are differences in the criteria used to define what are factors of readability: word length, sentence length, number of letters, number of syllables, or whether words are defined as familiar or unfamiliar in certain word lists. Different formulas have been developed for different grade level materials: Dale-Chall, fourth grade to college; SMOG, fourth grade and above; Flesch, fifth grade and above; Fry, grades 1 to 17. Despite these differences, statistical comparisons between formulas usually verify that they agree within a grade level (Fry, 1977).

Despite these problems of validity, readability formulas are still useful tools in assisting the match of readers with texts. There are no pat answers; yet an awareness of the readability problem will raise our levels of understanding of Bible reading. Each text must continually be examined in the light of vocabulary selection, the flow of words, and the background of each reader. □

FIGURE ONE

NEW TESTAMENT READABILITIES: BY PASSAGE

VERSION/ FORMULA	Matthew 1:18-20	Mark 14:66-70	Luke 2:18-22	John 1:14-18	John 3:16-20	Romans 3:21-25
NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE						
Dale-Chall	7.8	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.3	9.3
Flesch	7.9	6.8	7.0	7.0	7.1	14.7
SMOG	6.0	7.1	5.9	5.3	6.4	8.7
KING JAMES AUTHORIZED VERSION						
Dale-Chall	8.1	7.0	7.4	7.2	8.1	7.5
Flesch	9.2	6.6	7.3	6.8	9.3	7.5
SMOG	5.9	6.6	6.9	5.3	7.9	8.1
THE LIVING BIBLE						
Dale-Chall	8.1	7.0	8.3	7.9	6.9	7.0
Flesch	9.3	6.5	9.9	8.3	6.2	6.5
SMOG	6.7	6.3	6.6	6.7	5.9	5.4
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION						
Dale-Chall	7.8	7.1	7.6	6.8	7.4	7.8
Flesch	8.0	6.7	7.6	6.1	7.3	7.9
SMOG	5.3	7.1	5.9	4.6	5.7	9.0
THE BIBLE IN BASIC ENGLISH						
Dale-Chall	8.2	6.9	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.5
Flesch	9.7	6.3	6.6	6.7	6.9	7.5
SMOG	6.3	5.2	5.6	4.5	5.7	7.7
THE GOOD NEWS BIBLE						
Dale-Chall	7.6	7.2	7.3	6.6	7.3	6.7
Flesch	7.6	6.8	7.1	5.7	7.1	5.8
SMOG	6.2	6.6	6.6	4.5	5.6	6.3
THE SIMPLE ENGLISH BIBLE						
Dale-Chall	7.5	6.9	7.0	7.1	7.1	6.9
Flesch	7.5	6.4	6.5	6.7	6.6	6.2
SMOG	6.3	6.5	6.2	4.5	5.8	6.1
THE NEW TESTAMENT: A NEW EASY-TO-READ VERSION						
Dale-Chall	7.2	6.7	7.0	6.3	6.4	6.4
Flesch	6.9	5.9	6.4	5.1	5.3	5.4
SMOG	5.2	5.5	6.1	3.0	5.7	4.4
THE NEW LIFE BIBLE						
Dale-Chall	7.0	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.6	6.2
Flesch	6.4	5.8	5.4	5.7	5.7	5.0
SMOG	3.0	5.8	5.2	5.2	6.4	5.0

Figure One gives the results of nine New Testament versions. Results are reported in grade levels. For example, 8.6 requires a reading level of eighth grade sixth month; 6.3 would require a reading level of sixth grade third month.

FIGURE TWO

AVERAGE OF NEW TESTAMENT READABILITIES: READABILITY FORMULAS

	DALE-CHALL	FLESCH	SMOG	FRY
New American Standard Bible	7.7	8.4	6.6	8.5
King James Authorized Version	7.6	7.8	6.8	8.5
The Living Bible	7.5	7.8	6.3	7.1
New International Version	7.4	7.3	6.3	7.3
The Bible in Basic English	7.3	7.3	5.8	8.5
The Good News Bible	7.1	6.7	6.0	7.1
The Simple English Bible	7.1	6.7	5.9	6.7
The New Testament: A New Easy-To-Read Version	6.7	5.8	5.0	3.9
The New Life Bible	6.6	5.7	5.1	4.3

Because a book's readability may vary internally, readability formulas are usually averaged after finding counts from several passages. Figure Two gives the average readability levels by formulas per translation.

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LAURA NIEBOER

WINTER TREE STUDY

You may have done tree identification with your students in the fall by using the leaves as indicators. Winter offers a special challenge for tree identification. Have the students identify the various species of trees by observing the general shape of the tree—whether round, ovate, or lanceolate—and by observing the buds and the bark.

BOOK BREAK

Once a week, (or as often as you like), ring a bell or devise some signal that will alert everyone that it is "Book Break." This is 15 minutes of uninterrupted sustained silent reading where the students *and* teacher alike take a break to read.

CUSTOM MADE FLANNELGRAPH FIGURES

You can make custom flannelgraph figures for any story, illustration, or Bible verse without fuss and bother. Draw or trace needed objects onto a piece of Pellon interfacing. Pellon will adhere to a flannel-covered board.

Outline the figures with a black felt marker, and color with marking pens or crayons. If you use crayons, cover the completed figures with a paper towel and iron at medium heat setting to brighten the colors. Finally, cut out the figures. You will be delighted because the completed product is virtually non-tearable and will give you many years of service.

Contributed By Janice Hermansen

FOOD PACKAGES

As an activity to culminate a nutrition unit, make food packages for needy families. Divide your class into groups and have each group plan and assemble a *nutritious* package based on the four food groups. If you have access to a kitchen, any cooking involved can be done at school as well.

STORYTELLING WITH PROPS

Children love props and many stories lend themselves to being told with props. You can tell the stories with the props, or have the children pantomime the story as it is being read. Later, put these books and props in labeled bags or shoeboxes and use them in the drama center.

Here are some prop ideas:

"Little Red Riding Hood" (De Regniers): red-hooded cape, hood and claws for the wolf, pipe-cleaner glasses for grandma, basket, cardboard ax.

"Stone Soup" (Brown): large pot, stone, long-handled spoon, aprons for cooks, hats for soldiers and villagers, assorted vegetables. This is a particularly good story since each child can bring a vegetable and actually make the soup in class.

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar" (Carle): apple, leaf, pear, and everything else the caterpillar eats through; a scarf to pantomime the caterpillar emerging from the cocoon as a butterfly. (Perishables, of course, will not be stored.)

"Caps for Sale" (Slobodkina): caps—all colors, shapes, and sizes.

"And It Rained" (Raskin): teacups, a teapot, something to make the sound of thunder and rain.

STUDENT PREGNANCY POLICIES RESTORATION AND

STEFAN ULSTEIN

RESPONSE TO,
"If Student Janice Is Pregnant, Whose Responsibility Is She?"
by Ben Boxum, CEJ, Oct. - Nov. '85

"If student Janice is pregnant, whose responsibility is she?" asks Ben Boxum in his, Principal's Perspective column, October - November '85. That's a good question, but it needs some definition. Are we asking whose responsibility it is to punish, or to nurture?

Mr. Boxum points out that, "The potential for abortion during the pregnancy of a Chistian high school student is very real." That's especially true for the girl who feels that there will be no one there to care for her, should she divulge the fact that she is pregnant.

Mr. Boxum also points out that it is highly probable that the boy involved will be free to continue his education without paying any consequences. This is particularly true if the boy goes to another school. In addition, the boy—like most grown men—will pay little or no child support for his offspring. While the girl may carry the baby to term and perhaps keep it, most teenaged fathers will never even see the child. What we have is not a double standard, but a sliding standard; one that heaps extra punishment on the girl and little or none on the boy (or man) who is responsible.

A teenaged girl who carries her baby to term will face the embarrassment of walking around for nine months with a swollen belly. Her physical and emotional health will be put in jeopardy. If she decides to give the baby up for adoption she will face life wondering if she did the right thing. Eighteen years later, when her child becomes an adult, she may be confronted for the first time by a son or daughter who wants some answers.

Should she decide to keep the child, she will almost certainly cut her options in life down to one: that of a single mother. Educators know from experience that children of single mothers—particularly young mothers—have more trouble dealing with school, the law, and society in general than do children of intact families. The job of raising a child alone is far more difficult than when it is shared with a mate.

A majority of poor families in Canada and in the U.S. are headed by single mothers. Single mothers are less likely to get married, go to college, or find a steady, fulfilling, financially adequate job. Pregnant girls need extra love and help to prepare for such a future.

With this in mind, a re-evaluation of Mr. Boxum's suggested policy is in order.

"Attending a Christian school is a privilege. Student conduct that dishonors the school and the name of Christ may result in a withdrawal of this privilege by the school board," he states. He goes on to say that God forbids fornication and that if a pregnant student appears to attend school "with little or no reproof, it appears the school authorities are indifferent to this sin."

Teenage pregnancy carries for the girl enormous, inescapable consequences. Faced with the natural consequences, and then burdened with additional consequences imposed by a school board, many girls will opt for a secret abortion.

Very few girls deliberately get pregnant. In fact, girls who disapprove of premarital sex are more likely to get pregnant than promiscuous girls. A girl who plans to have sexual relations can easily obtain safe, cheap birth control. Many girls become pregnant because they succumbed in a weak moment, or were raped. Date rape, the rape of a girl or woman by a friend or acquaintance, is the most common form of rape, and because it leaves no opportunity for contraception, results in a disproportionate number of teenage pregnancies.

MUST STRESS COMPASSION, HEALING

Other situations that produce disproportionate numbers of pregnancies are girls who have a history of sexual abuse, girls from broken or dissolving families, and girls with particularly low self-esteem. Many of these girls have spent their entire lives as victims, and the way they are treated by Christians in authority can either make them feel restored or further victimized.

Therefore, a Christian school's policy for dealing with pregnancy should first focus on compassion and support, with the school's reputation among the least considerations. Few thinking people will be shocked to find that Christian kids make mistakes, but they will be disillusioned by a school that heaps added pain on a suffering child. Christ was clear on this point.

In fact, Christ was particularly forgiving in his dealings with women. The woman at the well was told to go and sin no more, as was the woman about to be stoned for adultery. Certainly this spirit of forgiveness should be our standard for dealing with pregnant children.

If a pregnant girl wishes to leave school, she should be helped to make the transition. However, if the school has been a support system for her, she should be allowed to stay until she is no longer able to squeeze into her desk. By staying in the body of Christ she can be ministered to on a daily basis by students and teachers who know and love her. Anyone who criticizes such a policy can be directed to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Again, this does not imply that fornication is right or acceptable. It does demonstrate emphatically that Christians are called to care for one another and not to simply shoot their own wounded.

A final thought: The United States has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the industrialized world, yet few teenagers really see any pregnant girls. By supporting a sister through the aftermath of her tragic mistake, teenagers can learn firsthand what is involved. They can partake in the healing process, acting as the hands and feet of their Savior, and they can give serious thought to the long-term effects of a momentary indiscretion. □

Stefan Ulstein is in the English and communications department at Bellevue Christian Junior and Senior High School in Bellevue, Washington.

Internal Tears

Joan Rae Mills

The first day of a new semester
a clean fresh start.
You chose today
to run away.
Your sister
pale, trembling
came and told me;
systematically I marked you absent
in my book.
You were "going to the woods for a few days"
your note said
(in the coldest month?)
No mother—but maternal
I began to worry.
Did you have food
a place to go
and will your feet keep warm
in cowboy boots?

You couldn't stand school anymore;
I thought we were reaching you at last.

It snowed tonight.
Don't let it cover up the way back.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOLING IN AMERICA
Editors: James Carper and Thomas Hunt
Religious Education Press, Birmingham, Alabama, 1984, 257 pp., $14.95 pb.
Reviewed by Gordon Oosterman, Principal, Middletown Christian School, Middletown, PA

A collection of essays about the most identifiable separate school systems in the United States, namely Roman Catholic, Lutheran, "Calvinist Day Schools," Seventh Day Adventist, Fundamentalist, and Jewish, the book readily impresses the reader with the similarity of concerns, problems, and accomplishments of these groups despite their differing traditions.

The chapter on Roman Catholic schools is well written and supplies enough statistics to give credence to accompanying observations and projections. The majority of the Lutheran schools are associated with the Missouri Synod and are predicated on Luther's "priesthood of all believers." An increasing percentage of non-Lutheran children in Lutheran schools is evidence of the continuing viability of these schools.

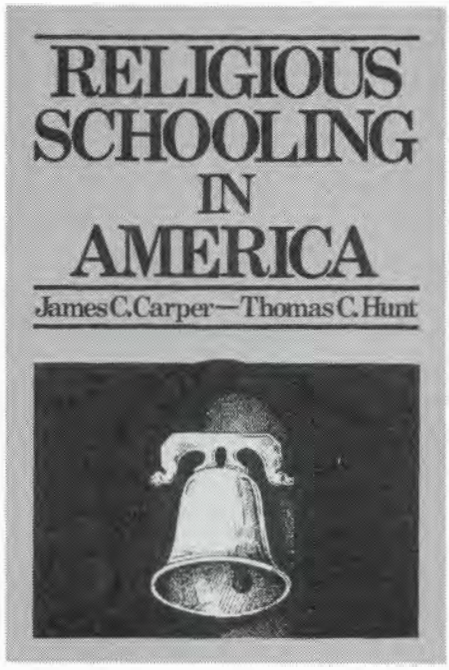
Primarily for those with no knowledge of CSI affiliated schools, Peter De Boer and Don Oppewal have written a chapter under the awkward title of "Calvinist Day Schools." The claims for the distinctives of these schools are exaggerated. I found the essay disappointing and wandering despite frequent references to the "locus." The writers include some axe-grinding against ecclesiastical creeds in educational documents and their antipathy toward curricula structured along the lines of traditional academic disciplines. They properly conclude that despite limitations "the movement promises to endure as one of the significant Protestant efforts to take a Christian vision of life and society seriously in the field of education."

The candidness of the Seventh Day Adventists in acknowledging their difficulties in implementing their vision of Christian education is refreshing. In keeping with their understanding of the teachings of Jesus they avoid highly competitive activities and as a point of consistency have avoided interscholastic athletic competition.

The chapter on the growth of fundamentalist Christian schools has too much of a mentality characterized by the-public-schools-are-getting-pretty-bad. Jewish schools indicate a different perspective. Their supporters ask if the public schools are good, what will become of their treasured Jewish traditions? The finest statement on the importance of curriculum integration comes from Rabbi Maimonides in his *Guide for the Perplexed.* In lamenting the separation of "general studies" from the Hebrew studies (the Protestant and Roman Catholic sacred/secular dichotomy is similar) he writes: "By this kind of educational process one either does violence to one's intellect by one's faith, or one violates one's faith by one's intellect."

Part II consists of three essays on general topics. Charles Kniber's defense of the virtues of public schools, or "common schools" as they were previously known, is a common sense yet unconvincing apologia of this school system. James Herndon in the following treatise discusses the merits and limitations of both tuition tax credits and educational vouchers.

The final chapter, "Bad Fences Make Bad Neighbors" by Donald Erikson, is the best in the book. In a series of vignettes he exposes the stupidity and counter-productiveness that can result when presumably well-intentioned state officials push the enforcement of state regulations to a ridiculous degree. Ohio demanded water fountains, each "with a stream of water coming out on a slant." Regarding nonpublic schools, Erikson says that the state has a legitimate interest in wanting an educated citizenry and therefore could be checking academic achievements, but should be reluctant to judge teacher credentials and time-tested or innovative methods used in these schools.

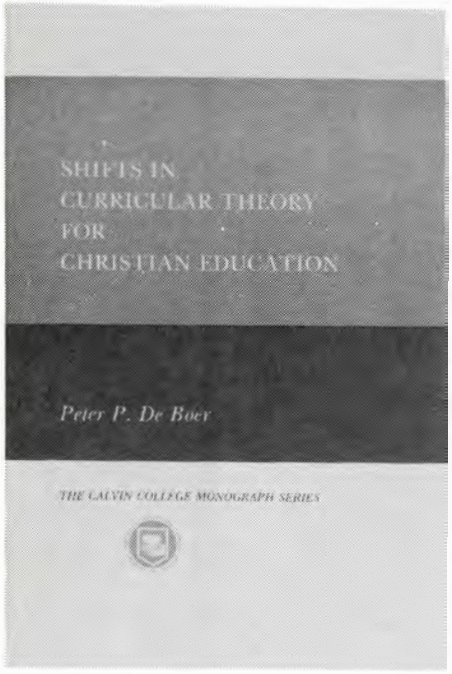


This is a worthwhile book. Selected chapters might profitably be used for faculty or board discussions. □

SHIFTS IN CURRICULAR THEORY FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Author: Peter P. DeBoer
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983, 42 pp., pb. $2.00.
Reviewed by Burt D. Braunius, Education Department, Reformed Bible College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Peter De Boer's monograph is a thoroughly researched, concise commentary on the historical emergence of three primary positions of Reformed Christian education: (1) Christian-traditionalist, (2) Christian-progressivist, and (3) Christian-revisionist.

About half of the monograph is given to the traditionalist and progres-



sivist headings. The Christian Traditionalism position was advocated by Jellema. "The curriculum must be truth-centered, which readily became identified with subject matter or disciplines" (p. 9). Christian Progressivism was proposed by Jaarsma. His emphasis was "on the unity of the person, the education of the whole man and the primacy of love . . . " (p. 16).

The Christian Revisionism section describes the perspectives of Wolterstorff, Beversluis, Van Brummelen, and Steensma. Wolterstorff and Beversluis are treated the most extensively.

Wolterstorff emphasizes a creative approach (reflecting an appreciation for Jaarsma), urging that the needs of learners be addressed, stressing the unity and wholeness of learners, encouraging life application, using discussion-related methods, and having a common faith commitment.

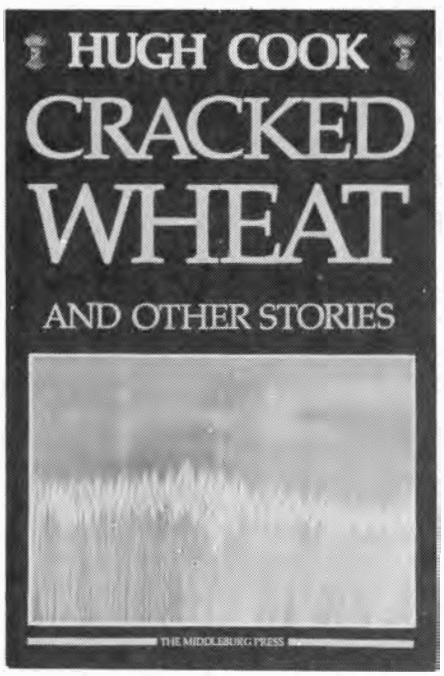
Beversluis brings together the traditionalism of Jellema under the heading of intellectual growth, the progressivism of Jaarsma with the title of moral growth, and the revisionism of Wolterstorff in relation to creative growth.

Van Brummelen, a representative Canadian contributor, pushes curriculum theory "back into the more limited rational-moral activity associated with Christian traditionalism." Steensma, like her father (Jaarsma), emphasizes knowledge as a matter of the heart seen in terms of a personal relationship to God that is to be manifest in loving action to others.

The monograph portrays interesting parallels between Christian traditionalism and the structure of the disciplines approaches, Christian progressivism and the activity/experience curriculum, and Christian revisionism and social reconstructionism or reconceptualism.

The monograph puts our past and present approaches to curriculum into a valuable historical perspective. We are indebted to Peter De Boer for his scholarly and comprehensive treatment of the material. Appreciation should be expressed to Donald Oppewal for his editorship of this and other monographs in the series.

Calvin College alumni will be helped to see their education in perspective from this work. Other Christian educators will come to a better understanding of Reformed approaches to education. Everyone who wishes to be exposed to the values with which Christian educators wrestle will benefit from this work. □



CRACKED WHEAT
Author: Hugh Cook
The Middleburg Press, Orange City, Iowa, Mosaic Press, Oakville, Ontario, 1984, 123 pp., Pb. $6.75, Lb. $12.95
Reviewed by Henry J. Baron, Professor of English, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI

In this collection, Hugh Cook adds his distinctive voice to those of James Schaap and Sietze Buning in commemorating the Dutch experience in North America. However, though a few of the stories focus on the immigrant experience, a strictly ethnic interest plays but a minor role in this volume. Cook obviously hopes to reach a wide reading audience through characters who include not only the stranger in a foreign land but also the estranged: from self, from others, from God. Most are in need of finding a true sense of significance. Most are memorable, sharply etched in language that is vivid and clear. And the themes of these stories point the reader again and again to Edward Taylor's "Meditation Eight" from which Cook derived the title for this book and in which God the Father responds with grace to the hopeless sinner: he takes

"The purest wheat in Heaven, His dear-dear Son
Grinds, and kneads up into this bread of life."

Highly recommended to all; some stories lend themselves well to classroom use. □