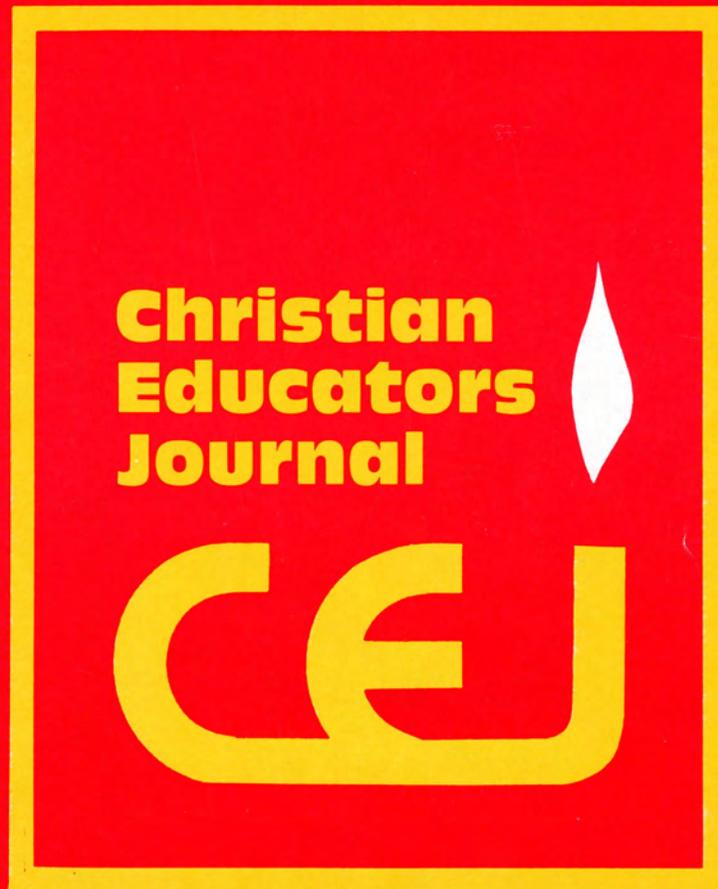


February-March 1986, Volume 25, Number 3



"I want to be a hired man on a farm," writes Phillip for his grade school teacher. During the summer young Phil has visited his uncle's farm, and there he has discovered his life's calling. He remembers last summer's magic—the giant combine eating whole fields of grain, the sweet taste of roasting ears of corn dripping with butter, the grasp of reins as the spirited mare canters down the dust-padded lane. Yes, Phil will become a hired man like muscular Ben on Uncle George's farm.

When Phil's paper comes home at the end of the week, his mother is appalled. "I had hoped he would set his goals higher than that," she confides to me. "Surely he can do better."

On Sunday night I join a group of church members gathered at Uncle George's home for Bible study. Our host steers the group through a list of ten questions prepared by some big-name theologian. Half of the questions, George concludes, are so difficult that only Matthew Henry can shed any light on them. A couple of questions stir up a bit of discussion. The rest are too speculative, and the hour is up anyway. Close with prayer and serve the second round of coffee. Fern brings in three new varieties of bars and bread. "You know," says George, "if those guys at seminary would just take the Bible for what it says they wouldn't have all these problems with women's roles and Genesis and the dance."

On Monday morning I walk a tight-rope into my classroom. There sits Phil's older sister, a prim Miss Muffet ("I wouldn't be caught dead in a K-Mart dress!"), while George's brawny offspring springs off the counter and into his seat. I wonder how on earth—or how in heaven's name—I shall bring both of these young people to reflect a life redeemed by Jesus Christ.

I am, by virtue of experience, somewhat aware of both Miss Muffet's and

George Junior's ways of life. Like George, my roots are rural—I have ridden that mare down the lane and walked barefoot in the mud and rejoiced with farmers when beef prices rose. But since then I have gone away to school and traveled a bit and learned to appreciate Beethoven symphonies and Spenser's *Faerie Queen*. I have learned to converse with "professionals" who write books and give seminars as well as with "Oakie" neighbor Roy who shows me how to prune peach trees and trap gophers. So what have I gained by sharing in both worlds? A perspective, I hope—a perspective that I can pass on to my students.

What has all of this to do with Christian school curriculum? Actually, it shapes my curriculum. I, perhaps more than parents of my students, have the mandate to integrate the two perspectives. I must design my classes to provide an important place for every student under my training. I must demonstrate a need for George's hands-on-the-task approach to explore God's natural realm while also helping him to appreciate the gifts of reading and reason and research. My curriculum must be personal enough to allow students with varied interests and strengths to grow more knowledgeable and more responsible about the language arts, my area of study. Both the doctor's daughter and the farmer's son need to know how to use media wisely and Christianly. Both need to learn the power of written and spoken language. Both need to develop an awareness of truth and accuracy. Both need to learn how a mouth that curses the creation can be transformed to one that praises the Creator.

How do I change attitudes? How do I help my students, and their parents, to accept differences in cultural roles? Why does the Christian school community sometimes still operate on a

KINGDOM-CENTERED CURRICULUM

city mouse-country mouse level of acceptance? Why the distance between "professionals" and "non-professionals"? Does our curriculum encourage students to grow up thinking one is superior to the other? Do we steer non-academic students into "dummy" classes? Do we pamper our scholarship hopefuls? Do we ourselves demonstrate equal respect for the farm laborer and the office manager?

Our calling to redeem the earth comes equally to all, but the specific ways in which we carry out our part differ. The theologian with the mandate to study archaeology or early manuscripts really *must* pursue those fine points of scriptural interpretation, for God's glory. The farmer with the mandate to cultivate the soil *must* carefully determine how to make the land productive, for God's glory. Meanwhile, the theologian must accept the farmer's role and the farmer must understand the theologian's, and both ought to rejoice in the variety of the Lord's gifts.

We who work with young people have a special responsibility to demonstrate that mutual acceptance in our school curriculums. Our specific courses must be designed to include a combination of both academic thought and practical application. Our discussions must blend discerning viewpoints, neither submitting to banality nor allowing attitudes of superiority. The student who wants to be "just a farmer" must feel our respect as keenly as the future attorney.

PERHAPS we try too hard, even in Christian schools, to prepare students for career success, a fairly futile venture anyway, considering the rapid development of new careers. Perhaps our curriculums suffer from the same weakness James Billington, Director of Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, attributes

to Western higher education. He says young people are "generally offered a smorgasboard curriculum that fails to convey any sense of their heritage." He goes on to accuse higher education of being "a consumer-oriented curriculum that refuses even to make judgments that Shakespeare is more worth reading than Sartre or that the Bible is more worth knowing than Nietzsche" (*U.S. News & World Report*, Oct. 1, 1984). Billington asks for education to "develop moral goodness in people and beauty in things."

California state superintendent of public instruction Bill Honig looks to educators to protect democracy and teach broad cultural ideas all the way through the curriculum. He states, "We need to emphasize a traditional education, built around English, history, literature, science, mathematics, and the arts. Such courses use core ideas and stories to open up vistas for students and help them feel connected to the past" (*U.S. News & World Report*, Nov. 18, 1985).

While Billington and Honig share our concern for correct purpose in the educational curriculum, they operate within the limits of secular society. Unfortunately, we Christian educators tend to operate within the same limits. We design our curriculums primarily to prepare students for the culture of the day and the jobs of the future.

IF we want Christian school students to remember the heritage of God's people and to grow together into a community of Christ believers, we must shape our grade school and high school curriculums to integrate today's students not specifically as future mechanics, future cosmetologists, future attorneys, future research scientists, but as current citizens eager to serve in the Kingdom of God. ■

Perhaps we try too hard, even in Christian schools, to prepare students for career success, a fairly futile venture anyway, considering the rapid development of new careers.

COMPELLING (BUT FRUITLESS) ARGUMENTS

HENRY KORT

I don't see why my son should be forced to sit through another history course if his goal is to be a mechanic. Why not include some of the industrial arts in our high school's curriculum?

CONSIDER a moment, for argument's sake, the recommendation of John Opel, the president of IBM. When asked to reflect on the influence of formal education in his life, he wrote: "I made up my mind to go into business, but I chose a liberal arts background . . . so that I could have a broader base to build a specialty." When then should the student specialize? "You'll get time to specialize in graduate school or while on the job." (*Time*, 10/21/85)

To expect the high school curriculum to include job- or vocation-training courses is to misunderstand the goal of our high school education. What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be a human being in this time on this planet? How does our definition of man compare with the definitions given by civilizations of the past? How does our conception of what a human being is and what her place in the universe is, affect our attitude toward the world of nature? These are questions with which the various disciplines of our curriculum help the student come to grips.

The goal of our liberal arts curriculum (including the social and natural sciences) is to help the student become a more mature, a more effective human being in the society in which she finds herself. Student Julie's vocational goal is to become a nurse. Our high school's curriculum is not directly interested in Julie as a future nurse, but in Julie as a being who will become more and more involved in the whole spectrum of social and cul-

tural responsibilities and challenges. And this involvement has a prerequisite: being shaped and disciplined by our cultural heritage. Her cultural heritage is the "base" on which she will later build. Her vocation too will be built on this "base," but it's the "base" with which our curriculum is concerned.

Student Johnny plans to be an electric welder when he graduates from high school. But the act of welding will take up only a fraction of his time each week. How knowledgeable will he be about the political and social needs of his community? Will he have at least some appreciation for the arts that he can share with his children and neighbors? Will he be able to evaluate the ever changing conditions of his society and make informed judgments on important issues?

Our liberal arts curriculum is not geared to only the "academically gifted" students. "There are no dummies in my class," said a teacher in one of my high school classes years ago. What he meant is that although some of his students were "slower" than others, all of them had the capacity to experience growth while meeting the demands of the curriculum's disciplines on their own levels. Our high school's goal is to help every student become more sensitive to what is good and what is evil, more sensitive to what is beautiful and what is tawdry and inhumane. Its goal is to increase the student's awareness of what is permanent in our culture and what is trivial and transient.

But my son doesn't need another course in biology. What he needs after graduation is a job.

Listen, if you will, for argument's sake, to the politician, Jesse Jackson: "{School} is not a ticket to a job, or a meal ticket. It's simply a place to learn values and priorities, to learn why we should live, and how we can live together." (*Time*, 10/21/85)

WHEN the high school student matures in the understanding of her place in society in this time and on this planet, she comes to a fuller appreciation of what it means to be an image-bearer of God—the God who made her a member of his family. What she is and what she can become is defined by who God is. And this "definition" puts demands on her life—not only ethical demands, but also cultural and social demands. What are my responsibilities culturally and socially? How were the problems of prejudice and exploitation handled in the past and how can I deal with them now? What is my responsibility with regard to my government's policies—both locally and nationally? How should I deal with the ecological and economic problems of our day? How can I deal responsibly with the culturally demeaning influences in my community? Our high school curriculum is committed to helping the student answer such questions for herself so that she can live responsibly in her complex society.

Well, these are compelling arguments, and I will have to agree with them, but I still want my son to take shop next year.

Consider a moment, for argument's sake, the recommendation of John Opel, the president of . . . ■

Henry Kort teaches sixth grade at Ripon Christian School in Ripon, California.

COMPELLING ALTERNATIVES

CASE VANDE REE

PELLA Christian High with an enrollment of 287 is in its second decade of providing courses in industrial arts. The program is going smoothly: students are happy with an elective of this nature, the board is especially pleased with this aspect of the curriculum, and parents are elated that their sons and daughters have access to this "hands-on" type of education.

In the early seventies, a strong feeling for an industrial arts program at Pella Christian became evident. After all, many of the students came from farms, where this type of knowledge would be beneficial. Many graduates who did not go on to college went back to the farm or were employed at one of the local manufacturing plants where skills in drafting, welding, and woodworking were in big demand.

So why not offer "shop" courses? The board proposed this curriculum innovation in 1973, and the society eagerly adopted the proposal. At a cost of \$136,506, a 4200 square foot addition was constructed in the summer of 1973. This facility consisted of a large woodworking area accommodating twenty working stations, a smaller metalworking area, a wood-storage area, and contiguous to the shop, a classroom which also serves as a finishing room. (Short-range plans call for the addition of a finishing area to avoid the hassle of moving drawing tables, etc. when projects need to be stained and varnished.)

While the addition was being constructed, the board sought the right teacher to initiate the program. They found that teacher in Racine, Wisconsin. Still on the job after eleven years, Mr. Norm Huisman is in charge of the one-man department. Huisman, a graduate of St. Cloud State (Minnesota) and a former Pella resident who hails from a long line of Pella wood craftsmen, had been teaching industrial arts in a Racine junior high for

ten years. He was ready to return to Pella and enthusiastically accepted the challenge to get the program off the ground.

With donations from the Ladies' Auxiliary and assistance from the Vermeer Foundation, Huisman had the best equipment, Rockwell, installed. He purchased "two of everything"—routers, radial arm saws, band saws, jig saws, drill presses, jointers. In the metal working area, he installed four welders, sheet metal benders, shearers, and other equipment. His shop is the envy of shop teachers for miles around. Over the years he has added to or replaced worn equipment from funds set aside by the board or from contributions by the Ladies' Auxiliary or Vermeer's.

Huisman's philosophy from the start has been that the shop experience should be a gratifying experience, one that is perhaps the highlight of the day for the student who is unable to excel in the classroom with its memorization, note-taking, problem-solving, and discussion. "Shop should be a hands-on experience where students are involved in drafting, planning, and creating. Through the shop experience students should come to realize that God equips us with the ability to use mind and hand; we are to glorify God in the industrial arts facility as well as in the math, English, or science classroom. As image-bearers of our Creator, we are to create," says Huisman.

As he draws himself up to his full 5'8", Huisman continues, "The Industrial Arts program at P.C.H.S. is attempting to accomplish what the Bible teaches—that each individual is given different talents and abilities. Those who are given unique talents to work with their hands are expected to use these talents to God's glory." College prep students who enroll in the shop courses find that skills learned in these courses prove beneficial in hob-

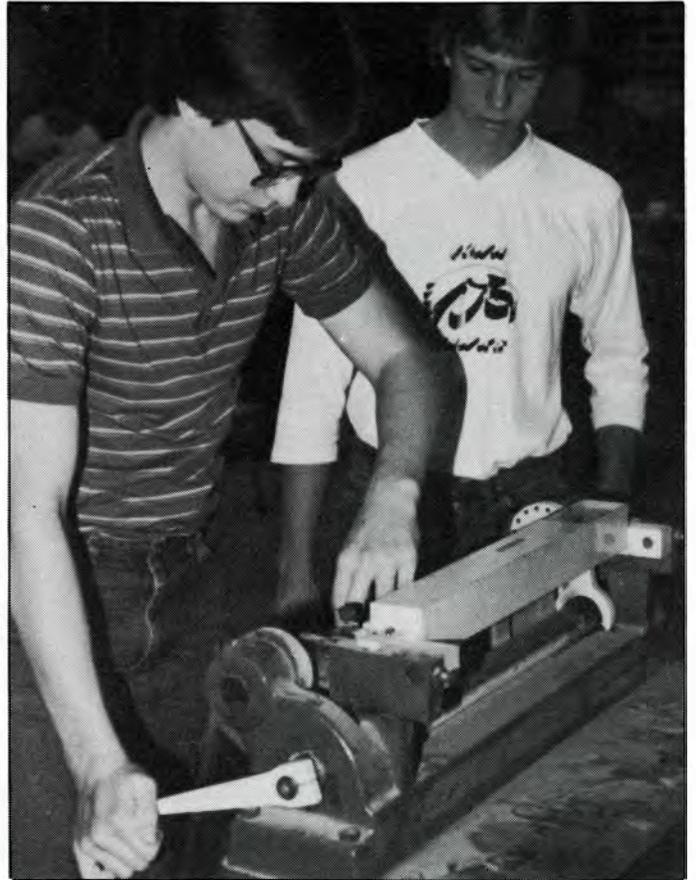
bies and avocations they pursue in their leisure time. More than a few graduates have returned to express their gratitude to Mr. Huisman and to Principal Paul De Jong for making these courses available to them.

Huisman, always sprinkled with a fine layer of sawdust despite the efficient blower system installed in 1980, teaches approximately one hundred students in the eight-period day. Upper classmen assist him. Most of his students are boys, but, except for the first semester junior course, he always has a few girls in his classes. Every freshman boy may take shop as an elective, thus gaining an exposure to the wonderful worlds of wood and metal.

Huisman attempts to discover student talent the first few weeks by having the freshmen complete various exercises and imitate different demonstrations he has provided. Drawing on the skills acquired, the students then construct a useful piece of furniture such as a magazine rack, plant stand, or pair of book ends that would delight the heart of any mother. In addition to lectures, demonstrations, and worksheets, Huisman uses a textbook and he tests over the material assigned.

Freshman "shop," officially known as Industrial Arts I, is devoted to mechanical drawing. Here students are encouraged to develop the ability to construct and read drawings as a means of communicating ideas. Huisman also attempts to instill desirable attitudes and practices toward work, health, and safety; he especially emphasizes the importance of self-discipline while engaged in project completion.

Students cannot await the arrival of the second semester. They flee their drawing boards and enter the world of all those mystifying machines. They are now free to work on a project from its inception to completion.



Project materials such as glue, lumber, sandpaper, stain, and varnish are covered by a twenty dollar student fee.

Since sophomores are permitted no elective course, the remainder of Huisman's day is devoted to juniors and seniors. Because first semester junior shop is metalworking, all of his junior students are male. The boys learn the skills associated with sheet metal work, welding, and soldering. According to Huisman, "This phase of the program fills a large need, as fathers don't have the time, talent, or equipment to teach their sons these skills."

Second semester juniors get into advanced wood-working, and they work on modest projects. This course at-

tracts some girls who are interested in developing their skills in this area.

During the senior year, students return to the drawing board. This time they complete the drawings for a house of their own choice. When they have completed their two-story, split-level, A-frame, or whatever, they have finally arrived. They now are free to work on their "very own" project—a large china cabinet, a gun case, a round kitchen table, a roll-top desk, a water-bed frame, a cedar chest, a grandfather clock. It is their creation from start to finish. Hundreds of dollars and dozens of hours are invested in this project. And the end result would make any teacher proud. As Huisman says, "What I enjoy most about being an industrial arts teacher

is seeing the pride in students when they complete a piece of furniture and realize it's something that they themselves have done with their own hands. That is really gratifying. Creating with wood and being with young people—that is what I enjoy most!"

When he isn't encouraging a hesitant freshman or suggesting modifications to a senior craftsman, Huisman is designing or building furniture for himself or one of his three children, frequently laying his hammer down to recount yet another fishing story to anyone within earshot. ■

Case Vande Ree is librarian and an English teacher at Pella Christian High School in Pella, Iowa.

**NOTICE
ALL FACULTY**

On Friday, March 15, all classes are cancelled to enable students and faculty to support our boys in the semi-finals of the state basketball tournament. Each faculty member may take a spouse or friend. Tickets and bus transportation are free.

Take a bag lunch. We will stop at Mac's on the return trip. Bus leaves the parking lot at 10:00 a.m.

**Bob Den Denker
Principal**

**"HUMPTY
DUMPTY?"**

JENNY Snip tacked the announcement on the Asylum bulletin board, smiled wickedly at the Omni Christian High School teachers who were enjoying an afternoon coffee break, and then walked quickly from the faculty room back to the safety of her office.

Matt De Wit, science teacher, glanced at the notice as he left the coffee urn, stopped to read it again, and then raised his voice. "Hey, good deal! Erma's gonna like this. I can take her out on a cheap date. Listen to this."

The small talk in the faculty room halted, and De Wit read the bulletin in his best oratorical fashion. Then came the responses—the first one from Bill Silver, business education teacher.

"Well, the price is right," he said. "That will give us a long weekend, and my wife will like it too. She's crazy about basketball."

John Vroom, Bible teacher at Omni, intoned from the coffee-stained sofa on which he had been snoozing, "Minnie probably can't get off from work at Penney's. Friday's a busy day, you know. But I think I can manage it." He paused and then added, "But why stop at MacDonald's? The Grotto is right off Highway 26, and they have good prime rib every Friday." His salivary glands began to flow at the thought, and he opened his brown lunch bag to search vainly for a leftover morsel.

A question came from Ginny Traansma. "Isn't this a new develop-

ment? Two years ago just the team got off from classes to go to the tournaments. Remember the flak we gave Rip about that? But now the whole school is cancelled, closed for the day. What's happening?"

"Well," grumbled Rick Cole, "I don't know what's happening, but whatever it is, I think I don't like it. But I'll accept the day off. I've got three sets of English themes to grade, and then I'll start painting the kitchen. I promised Muriel already last summer that I'd do that." He hesitated before adding, "I can't imagine Den Denker really letting this happen at Omni. It's just not like him."

"It is now," put in Silver. "Den Denker is a practical man. He's just making the transition from teacher to

administrator, with such things as public relations on his mind. He's doing what he has to do."

At that moment, biology teacher Steve Vander Prikkel entered the room and read the notice on the bulletin board. "Hey," he said with mild irritation, "I've got lab tests all set for Friday, and there won't be any time to reschedule them before mid-term. What's going on here, anyway?"

"Values Clarification is what's going on," put in Susan Katje. "The real values of the school are being clarified. Did you really think that your lab tests were as important as a semifinal tournament ball game? Get with it, boy. Wake up and smell the coffee." Katje picked up the new *Life* magazine she had been looking through and headed back to her library.

"This whole business doesn't smell good to me, either," said Tim Broekhoest, substitute teacher who was filling in for coach Ren Abbott's English classes. "Somehow it seems to

go against the things we always say we stand for in our schools—you know—academic excellence and all that. Games, athletics, physical stuff—we always say that those are important, but . . ."

Broekhoest was interrupted by John Vroom who was sternly waving a fat finger. "You've got a good point there," declared the Bible teacher. "You really have." Just last night at dinner I read Psalm 147, verse 10, I think it was. Do you know what it says there? It says that the Lord "taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man."

"Good," said Ginny. "Maybe the team can wear long pants."

The conversation halted momentarily as Principal Bob Den Denker entered the faculty room for his afternoon snack. His eyes glanced over the notice on the bulletin board, and he sensed immediately the reason for the unusual silence in the room. But the ominous stillness did not last long. Steve Vander Prikkel broke it.

"What is this business about classes being cancelled for a ball game, Bob?" came the incriminating question in Vander Prikkel's most challenging tones. "Is it all right with you if I just cancel the lab tests I have scheduled for that Friday?"

Den Denker was blushing a bit as he answered hesitantly. "Steve, please don't jump to any conclusions now. I know what you're thinking, and you know that I respect your judgment. But this is not as simple as it may seem."

"Seems simple enough to me, Bob. If the integrity of the school day is to be broken around here, I would hope that it would be by something other than a ball game."

The principal looked hurt as he responded, "I know where you're coming from on that, Steve, and you know that basically I agree with you, but there are sometimes circumstances which need to be considered, you

know, that, uh, don't meet the eye right away."

"Like what?" challenged the biology teacher. "Name one."

"Well, uh, say uh, take the whole question of public relations and community awareness. We need to work at that too. We don't live in a vacuum, you know. Public relations is an important factor in our getting students at Omni. You recognize that."

"Bob!" the agitated teacher shouted incredulously. "I can't believe I'm hearing you say that!" Vander Prikkel shook his head in disappointment.

"Now look, Steve," responded the frustrated principal. "I didn't make this decision alone, you know, and there are other factors to consider that maybe you aren't aware of."

"You're sounding more like Peter Rip every day, Bob. What are some of those other factors? Why should Omni cancel school for a ball game? Give me just one good reason?"

The principal was flushed now. He looked desperately at his Timex. "Look, Matt, I've got to run now. But I want to talk to you more about this later." Den Denker walked out into the hall and back to his office. His teachers watched him leave. ■

HERMAN FRANSEN

**TRADITIONAL
VIS A VIS
TECHNICAL CURRICULUM**

NOT EITHER OR

BUT

BOTH AND

REFLECTING on the title of this CEJ theme issue led me to the decision not to look at traditional and technical curriculum as counterparts or to consider them as opposites but rather as complementary to one another. It seems to me that a sound curriculum within a Christian school ought to have the best of both.

The Task of Christian Education

The ultimate purpose of Christian education is not foremost to prepare students for college or a vocation but for a life of faith and obedience to God and loving service to others. The purpose is to help each student work out a biblical view of life and created reality which honors the living God. At the same time it should afford students and teachers the opportunity to serve God and others using all their gifts in every area of life according to God's calling.

Students are to become members of a community of servants who minister to those around them—to have, in the words of N. Wolterstorff in, *Curriculum: By What Standard*, “the opportunity of giving, comforting, shedding, freeing, and proclaiming in seeking the welfare of their fellow men.”

Christian School Curriculum

The curriculum within a school is basically the result of decisions made as to what is or is not to be taught and stressed in the educational curricular content. The Christian school curriculum begins properly with God and is given design by the course of study. The basic facts and principles of child development set the stage for the design.

Traditionally, schools within the CSI family have favored strong emphasis on a liberal arts education. High among agreements of its proponents is the awareness that students should have an intelligent insight into

many areas of knowledge and into the interrelatedness of these areas. It embraces what might be called a common, necessary type of education. It involves skills in the use of language, a knowledge of the social structure, the development of correct thinking skills, an appreciation for the accomplishments of men and women in the arts and sciences, and an understanding of the highest values of life. There is also general agreement on basic personality attributes which each graduate should possess.

Traditional Beginnings

The history of the traditional study or liberal arts program in common schools goes back to the Reformation period, with Prussia and Scotland being early leaders.

On the whole, schools provided education for leadership and catered to the elite. The Reformation broadened the base and prepared the way for mass education.

Today mass education is a reality.

Since the introduction of compulsory schooling in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution—the role of the school has steadily expanded. At first the task of the school was to impart basic literacy and reinforce social controls through moral and religious instruction. Then it began to provide secondary education and widened academic and vocational options. Next it began offering vocational guidance health care services, and psychological counseling. Today it is being asked to provide courses and instruction in a wide variety of areas, many of them dealing with modern technology such as the use of computers. A formidable task to say the least. The mounting evidence of research is that in fact schools cannot, by their very nature as institutions of mass education, do all that is asked of them in areas of moral, social, and religious commitment.

Brian Hill in his book, *Faith at the Blackboard*, tracing the development of education since Bible times, says that early education existed without schooling. Children were nurtured in extended families and trained for work by apprenticeship on the job.

When universal schooling became common, the objectives of general education and Christian nurture were amalgamated and so we saw nurturing through schooling. In the 19th century many educators could not entertain such a close alliance with Christianity so they looked for nondenominational religious instruction to help them develop moral and social values in children. Consequently, there has been a trend to see schools as being

primarily responsible for enlightenment rather than commitment and to look to others for completing the task of nurturing. The responsibility for nurture is returned to the primary group such as the family or friendship circles. This development has led to the situation where education is complementary to nurture but not synonymous with it and where the person is educated to become socially productive and acceptable but not a religiously committed person. Thank God that this has not been the structure and practice within the Christian school movement.

Technological Changes Call for Reform

It wasn't until the 1930's that North American high schools began to add new courses to their liberal arts curriculum. Vocational courses such as bookkeeping and typing, home economics, wood shop, and automobile mechanics were added for students who were "not bookish." Rather than serving only the college-bound, the schools had to become an agency of social adjustment for all youth, guiding them into adulthood and preparing them to enter occupations suited to their needs as well as society's. This started a great debate as to what really should be the content of North American education.

Schools within the industrial regions as well as the agricultural heartland began to adjust their curriculum to the needs of their communities by placing added emphasis on vocational training for a large segment of their school's population. In addition to a basic offering of reading, writing, and arithmetic, courses involving hands-on and career related activities were introduced.

The great curriculum content debate continued to rage until the fall of 1957 when the Russians orbited Sputnik. Post Sputnik shock waves led to demands for greater efforts in Ameri-

can Schools. James B. Conant published a report in 1959 entitled, "The American High School Today." In this report he called for high schools to fulfill three tasks: to provide a good general education for all pupils; to offer the noncollege-bound students good elective nonacademic courses; and to provide the academically talented students with advanced courses in mathematics, science, and foreign language. A pedagogical revolution in the school was expected. This revolution was not to be, however. It was swept aside by the onrush of the racial revolution and the beginning of the war in Vietnam.

Informal education came into vogue in the 1960's. Patterned after the open concept in England, teachers became facilitators of the child's experiences rather than transmitters of knowledge. Students were given much choice as to course selection. As early as 1971 disillusionment grew among proponents and laymen and the movement dissipated. The failure of the open classroom and the steady decline of SAT scores created a demand for "back to basics" in the 1970's and early 1980's.

Although alternating waves of reforms and crusades have swept through the schools for nearly twenty years, in many ways the schools seem unchanged.

Skills and Understanding for Service

If our firm conviction is that we must attempt to meet the needs of all of God's children, then we must, where possible, make available a wide range of opportunities to develop their gifts in order to better serve God and others. A proper balance of curricular offerings will accomplish this objective.

Traditional general education does not aim at vocational competence but rather at developing the students' capacity for responsible living under

God in human society and in their natural environment. It cultivates the feelings, enlarges and exercises the imagination, disciplines the mind, trains the judgment, provides historical perspective, and sheds light on the nature of reality.

Among Christian schools the place of technological oriented curriculum offerings remains unsettled. Some CSI high schools have consciously excluded vocational and technological training for philosophical as well as financial reasons.

High school students must be given opportunity to be involved in some type of specialization which will enable them to devote themselves to the choosing of a vocation in the service of God. Ultimately each school will need to plan carefully the total scope of its offerings in the light of the resources available and the general objectives upon which it has previously decided. ■

Herman Fransen is superintendent of Bellevue Christian School at Bellevue, Washington.

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FUNDING, EXAMINATIONS, AND CURRICULUM

—A VIEW FROM ONTARIO

JOHN VRIEND

BY now Christian educators realize that funding from taxation revenue is a mixed blessing. While the talk used to focus on the justice of receiving a proper share of the tax revenue, now much of the discussion has changed focus to the possible dangers of such funding. The feeling is that some level of funding is a likely possibility but that there is a danger that the independence and integrity of Christian schools will be eroded by reduced commitment from supporters and by the strings attached to funding arrangements. The fear is that control will be increased as funding levels are increased.

The concern is expressed something like this, "At first, funding will seem like the attainment of our goals for justice. It will help expand buildings, introduce some needed programs, and raise teacher's salaries. But as the parents and supporters lower their level of financial involvement, so will the general involvement and vigilance decrease. Then what always happens with government money will also happen to the Christian schools. 'He who pays the piper calls the tune.' This is especially the case with government. With increased funding levels comes increased control. Control over program will come quickly. The government will insist that schools funded by taxation revenue must teach the Ontario curriculum. After control of curriculum, it may well be only a matter of time before that control extends to admission policies and even staffing. By this time the integrity of the Christian Schools will have been 'sold for a mess of pottage.' "

One area in which the schools in Alberta and British Columbia have already felt the pressure is that of the government examinations for high school graduates. These examinations

are, of course, not aimed particularly at the Christian schools but are part of the general movement to improve the standards in all of education. The concern has been that without some standardized testing common to all schools there is no reliable and equitable measure of the knowledge and ability of high-school graduates. Some—or perhaps many—of the high schools, it is felt, continue to give high grades even though the standard of achievement has dropped over time. Universities in particular have been calling for such a common measure of achievement.

These examinations posed a particularly difficult dilemma for Christian schools for a number of reasons. There always has been some feeling among Christian school supporters that such tests are a good idea to check on standards. We have considerable sympathy for the concern over relaxed standards and inflated grading. There has always been a hint of suspicion among conscientious educators that some who argue against examinations do so to hide sloppy achievement, especially on basic knowledge and skills. For this reason Christian school supporters tended to support participation. Such participation was part of a commitment to excellence.

But there is, of course, another side to departmental or government examinations. They are based on a particular course of study or curriculum. And those set by the provincial authorities in B.C., for example, are based on the B.C. curriculum. In a recent discussion with a secondary school teacher from one of the Christian high schools there, I noted that the curriculum in English and social studies has been changed recently. The concern is that the examinations have played a role in this change.

The B.C. Christian schools resisted writing the government examinations for this very reason. They argued that the exams were not appropriate for Christian School graduates because the curriculum in Christian schools is different—as indeed it should be—from that in public schools.

Also the B.C. schools felt that the government had changed the rules in the middle of the game, so to speak. Pupil testing was supposed to be the responsibility of the schools.

However, the schools decided to participate in the examinations for a number of reasons. Admission to public universities is tied to the writing of these examinations. Also, the level of government grants to the schools is related to the participation of the graduates in the examination program.

It must be said that the preparation of the examinations has been modified. Christian school teachers now participate in the preparation and marking of these tests. In this way it is hoped that the examinations will check on educational standards, and students' abilities and skills rather than try to control the curriculum.

In Alberta the Christian schools have also been faced with such common examinations, but some teachers from the Christian school have been able to participate in the setting and marking of examinations from the beginning. Here also it is hoped that Christian school teachers can help to see that examinations are not tied closely to a single curriculum but are fair to different curricula, thus reducing the pressure to conform to a single course of studies.

Christian educators in Ontario have watched the western developments with interest and some trepidation. On the one hand we worry that our

quest for financial justice will lead us into the same problem. There is the clear worry that government grants to the schools will be followed closely by measures that will erode our distinctiveness and integrity right where Reformed Christian education has cherished it—in the curriculum. One of the very areas that makes a Christian school true to its confession is its curriculum, the learning material on which the students will concentrate.

Nor is this a remote concern for Ontario educators. Already there is a pool of test questions, the Ontario Assessment and Instrument Pool, for which Ontario norms are being established and which could be quickly adapted to form the basis for Ontario examinations.

In considering this dilemma that Christian educators have faced and will face again, the situation of the Jews in Babylon comes to mind. Now the situation in Babylon at the time of Daniel was very different from ours, and the freedoms we have were not available to the Jews under Nebuchadnezzar. But some parallels present themselves. Daniel and his friends were also getting an education. They were to learn “language and literature of the Babylonians.” (Daniel 1:4) It seems that for Daniel and his friends the problem was not that they did not wish to study the language and literature of the Babylonians. The problem for them was the royal food and wine that would defile them because it was against the Law of Moses.

You remember Daniel’s response; he persuaded the officials to let Daniel and his friends keep their own food and to have the officials check them later to see if they remained healthy. We read, “At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food” (Daniel 1:15).

Let me emphasize that this story cannot set out a specific course of ac-

tion for us. This passage cannot serve as a “proof text” for a particular point of view. Perhaps, however, there are parallels that can suggest some options. Daniel and his friends did not really have much problem with the idea of a test of some sort. Just as we in the Christian schools want our graduates to be well educated, so the Jewish young men wanted to avoid “looking worse than the other young men your age” (Daniel 1:10). For the purpose of the analogy, let us say it was not the test they objected to but the secular curriculum of royal food and wine.

The suggestion is this: it is not the provincial exams, per se, that Christian educators should object to. But we wish to maintain—we must maintain—a responsible Christian curriculum. If Christian schools are to be worth their salt then their distinctiveness must not only be maintained but strengthened through, among other things, Christian learning materials. Examinations are not the problem. Our students can well take them to show that we are indeed committed to good standards of education. Our graduates will, on the whole, do well because of the quality of Christian education. If there should appear some specific areas in which our students don’t do as well because examinations are tied specifically to public school curriculum, this can be pointed out to the examiners. But we must not change our curriculum to suit examinations. Teaching for examinations is always putting the cart before the horse. If Christian education is quality education—and generally it is—then our graduates should not worry too much, either, about being admitted to secular universities. Hopefully most of them will, at least initially, go to Christian colleges. And those that must go to Canadian universities to pursue a specific program not offered by Christian colleges will be admitted

because universities will recognize the quality of Christian education and the dedication of our graduates.

A similar point can be made about the possibility of funding from taxation revenue. We need not change our minds about financial justice. We must, however, be all the more determined not to let the Ontario Ministry of Education determine our policies and curriculum. In Ontario we must admit that much of our program is now shaped by Ontario curriculum guides, Ministry of Education requirements, and the secular textbooks written for Ontario curriculum.

Years ago the main challenge for Christian school supporters was to muster the finances for Christian schools, to build buildings, to find teachers, and to develop a basic program. The challenge of today is changing. It will be to maintain our integrity in the face of temptation to conform to trends of our time. In facing that challenge, the key element is not examinations or even government grants as much as it is a commitment to develop distinctive quality Christian curriculum that gives substance to our confession. Too often, even without the pressure of provincial examinations or funding, we have done too little to develop a Christian curriculum that is recognizable enough to fight for.

As Christian educators we hope God will give us the grace and courage to stand firm if we are tempted to give up our birthright for a mess of pottage. One way in which we can cherish that birthright is by continued effort in developing curriculum that is an expression of our good confession. ■

John Vriend is principal of Beacon Christian High School in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

HARRY BOONSTRA

I could fulminate against the men of letters who have gone into ecstasies over "the Bible as Literature," the Bible as "the noblest monument of English prose." Those who talk of the Bible as a "monument of English prose" are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity. . . . The Bible has had a literary influence upon English literature not because it has been considered a literature, but because it has been considered as the report of the Word of God and the fact that men of letters now discuss it as "literature" probably indicates the end of its "literary influence."

T.S. Eliot
"Religion and Literature"

You can read (the Bible) as literature only by a tour de force. You are cutting the wood against the grain, using the tool for a purpose it was not intended to serve. It demands incessantly to be taken on its own terms: it will not continue to give literary delight very long except to those who go to it for something quite different.

C.S. Lewis
"The Literary Impact of
the Authorized Version"

STUDYING the Bible as literature calls up some disturbing questions for many evangelical Christians: Isn't that what old-time liberals were suggesting? Are we to read Isaiah the way we read Homer? Are we entering the booby-trapped territory of saga and myth? Isn't the Bible in a class by itself? Aren't we playing games with inspiration? The concerns expressed by Lewis and Eliot, two of this century's most literate Christians, are shared by many other Christians and deserve a response. There are many aspects to this issue; here I will limit myself to two matters: purpose and inspiration.

Paul tells Timothy that Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (I Tim. 3:16). We might wish to add other commonly held purposes, such as, inspiration, example, comfort, and knowledge about God's mighty acts. None of these purposes, however, suggest that we read Paul's epistles as models for letter writing, or "The Lord is my shepherd" as a lyric, or "David and Goliath" as a folk tale. And the intent of instruction and inspiration can, it seems, be achieved without attention to beauty or aesthetic principles. Such, in short, runs the argument of some who have misgivings about the "Bible as Literature" approach.

I have, of course, no quarrel with St. Paul's categories of what constitutes profitable Scripture use, nor with any of the other purposes mentioned. But I do not see how these militate against analyzing the Bible in literary terms. For example, even though one should read the story of Joseph

for *what* it says, why not also see *how* it communicates? Why not analyze the characters in Genesis in terms of motivation or personality in the same way as one does for a non-biblical narrative? Or, why not study and appreciate the fine economy of the story, which cuts out all wordiness, and then demonstrate why the story grips our attention? Or take a Psalm. Of course Psalm 23 is a moving expression of the Lord's faithfulness and the Psalmist's trust. But it also is a movingly beautiful poem. Even in translation one can appreciate the metaphors of streams, grass, and dark valley, and catch the quiet tone of rest.

Thus the study of parallelism, metaphor, balance, characterization, dialogue, conflict and other literary concepts need not detract in any way from the more central purposes of Scripture, such as instruction and comfort. Rather, the full impact of many biblical passages will be strengthened by us being aware of an intricate structure, or of the complexity of a character, or the richness of a metaphor.

Moreover, the literary reading ought to be seen as one approach to be used alongside of others. Again, we read the Bible for different reasons. At times we read the Bible for devotional purposes—to deepen our faith and trust, and to nurture our closeness to the Lord. At other times we read the Word for greater understanding of doctrinal truths or to get a better grasp of biblical history. Or we might search the Bible to find ways to deal with contemporary problems. These and other purposes may well require somewhat different readings, and the focus of analysis will shift. A reading which uses literary analysis can thus be seen as yet another way to read the Bible, by concentrating on the beauty of the language. But perhaps it's better to think of a literary approach as a way of *supporting* the other kinds of readings I suggested. Whether one reads for devotional, doctrinal, historical or "applicatory" purposes, an awareness of structure and language will aid all of these. Since the kind of study I am advocating relies on meticulous attention to the text itself, it will always yield greater insight, no matter what the goal of the reader.

Of course, in a given situation a Christian teacher may feel that the students are not sufficiently alert to the *uniqueness* of the Bible. She or he will then simply stress that the Bible is indeed in a class by itself; although it shares many dimensions with other literature, the Bible is not on a par with *The Odyssey* or *Moby Dick*. Even in a public school context a teacher could state that for her or him the Bible is more than a literary product, even though the students may not share that perspective.

ANOTHER question deals with the matter of inspiration. The whole doctrine of inspiration and infallibility is, of course, very much under debate, and I do not here

intend to join that battle. Let me just raise two points which are relevant for our discussion.

1. Is there any similarity between general artistic inspiration and the inspiration of biblical authors? I am going to dispose of that question largely by denying one part of it. The romantic notion of inspiration (of some supernatural "breathing into") which sets the artist apart from other mortal creatures, is no more than that—a romantic notion, which has no basis in the facts of artistic production. There are, I think, better ways of accounting for the special gifts and insights of the artist.

2. How does the theory of biblical inspiration fit with the practice of artistic production? When we consider "ordinary" artistic production, we assume a process of trial and error. The composer makes changes in his notes, the architect uses an eraser, the poet crosses out lines, the sculptor changes his mind as he hacks away at the marble. All artists revise, sometimes drastically, from the time of first inception to final production.

May we envision such a process for biblical literature? There certainly is no way of *proving* a process of rewriting and revising; we do not possess first and second drafts of Paul's letter to Timothy or of Psalm 84. But, short of such proof, let us ask: Is there anything in Scripture which would not allow us to make an assumption of the *development* of a biblical passage?

First, we ought to realize that the *composition* of Scripture differs from one passage to the other. Some passages are introduced with "The Word of the Lord came to me" (e.g. Jer. 44:1), and one may perhaps assume some sort of dictation concept of inspiration. Other passages presuppose research, such as the chapters of genealogy in I Chron. 1-9 and the opening verses of Luke.

If, then, such an ordinary activity as research may go into the production of Scripture, may we not assume that revision was also part of the composition? Such may well have been the case, especially with poetic passages. If a Psalm has parallelism, repetition, word play, metaphors, similes, and other artistic devices, I find it no strain on a Reformed concept of inspiration that the Psalmist worked hard at this poem, and that this crafting of the poem included revision. Louis Berkhof, certainly a staunch defender of a "high" view of Scripture, is at some pains to defend the notion that

different biblical authors have their own style (*Manual of Reformed Doctrine*, pp. 40-41) and that they are "real authors." And all real authors that I know revise their work. Since Reformed theology generally does not hold to a dictation theory of inspiration, but rather some mode of "organic" inspiration, it seems no strain on such a theory to incorporate a notion of revision of the text. "Organic" implies a recognition of a natural, common writing process, since writing normally involves editing and revision, one may expect such a process for the biblical text—as the writer tried to express himself in a beautiful, or effective, or memorable manner.

Should we not take Eliot's and Lewis' exhortations to heart? Yes. If the Bible is seen as no more than a literary treasure house, no more than a beautiful anthology of poems and narratives, then the heart has been taken out of the Scriptures. That's the kind of study that Eliot and Lewis rightly warn us against. And if our talk about the Bible as literature promotes such reduction, then it would be best to stop such talk.

But that's not what I have been proposing. When discussing the literature of the Bible, I want us to be open to its beauty, its richness, its power. If the biblical writers have literary gifts, then we should appreciate these gifts; if there is a skillful portrayal of God's people, and a gripping storytelling of God's dealing with his people, we should come under the spell of such storytelling; if there is careful design in Paul's letters, then we should study such design; if the Psalms are brimful with metaphors, then we should explore the importance of figurative language. Also—we confess the Lord to be a God of beauty and creativity, and, certainly, we might expect such beauty to be reflected in the Word. The grandeur of Isaiah's prophecies has probably never been matched, nor the rich canvass of colors, creatures, and movement of Revelation. We are, I think, neglectful of this creative attribute of God and his revelation, if we refuse to explore the artistic dimension of Scripture.

I would, then, recommend not a substitution of art for religion, but an open, receptive, appreciative eye and ear and spirit for the words which make up the Word. ■

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

The literature on "The Bible as Literature" is substantial—and growing at a rapid rate. A good place to start is Leland Ryken's *The Literature of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan 1974), a sensitive introduction to the literary dimension of the Bible by an evangelical Christian (although he slights the concept of metaphor in Scripture).

Another helpful source is the material generated by the Indiana University Institute on Teaching the Bible. These include: James Ackerman, *On Teaching the Bible as Literature* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1967); Kenneth Gros Louis, ed. *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1974, 1982); Thayer Warsaw, ed., *Bible-Related Curriculum Materials: A Bibliography*

(Nashville, Abingdon, 1976).

At a more theoretical level one can explore recent works such as Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York, Basic Books, 1981), or Northrop Frye's massive *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York, Harcourt, 1981) (which already has prompted more than forty reviews, both pro and con).

All these works have bibliographies for further reading, including both books and journal articles. Of course, many of these works do not share a reformed or evangelical view of Scripture; they are, nevertheless, helpful for research and teaching.

A LETTER TO JANNA

ROBERT W. BRUINSMA

A short while ago I received a letter from a friend, a former elementary school teacher, who is now serving as a member of the Education Committee of her small, local Christian Schools International elementary school. A teacher in the school, backed by a number of parents, wants to introduce a stronger phonics element into the school's reading and language arts program and is urging that the school adopt *The Writing Road to Reading* by Romalda B. Spalding¹ as the reading and language arts program. Janna wrote me to ask my opinion of this proposal which was accompanied by the rationale that "our curriculum should reflect the structured nature of God's creation."

Dear Janna:

I have a copy of Spalding's Writing Road to Reading and so I am at least theoretically familiar with the "method." As you well know, however, it is very difficult to adequately assess a program until you've tried to teach it yourself and, second, a given program may work great for one teacher and be a disaster for another. In any discussion about reading methods it's always important to bear in mind that all the research on this topic clearly indicates that it is primarily the teacher and not the method that makes the crucial difference in children's reading achievement. All of that by way of qualification for what follows.

To be brief: I don't think much of the "Spalding method" as a total reading-language arts program. You will notice, however that in an evaluation by Robert Aukerman, a respected expert in the field,² he thinks rather highly of the program mainly because there is research evidence that it "works." And that should be the only criterion, right? Wrong! Especially as Christian educators we ought to be just as concerned about why it works as that it works. It always saddens me that we can do such telling critiques of behaviorism as an unscriptural view of man and educational practice because it does violence to the Christian conception of the child as a responsible, creative being before God. Yet, we are often the first to embrace behavioristic (or pseudobehavioristic) teaching methods and call them Christian because they supposedly reflect "the structured nature of God's creation." And that's my major criticism of programs like Spalding's or any other that views an essentially holistic area such as the language arts as just so many sub-skills to be mastered. They are bits-and-pieces approaches to what should be a dynamic, integrated activity. We seem to forget that children come to school having learned an incredible amount without a great deal of formal instruction (oral language, for instance). When they come to school we suddenly suppose that they are incapable of learning anything that isn't broken down into hierarchical steps in the same way that we would design a training program in obedience for our dogs.

I don't mean by all this that there isn't a place in the curriculum for skills instruction and even for a considerable amount of training. It's just that I'd like to see teachers reflect a little more about the appropriateness of their methods in keeping with the essential character of their subjects (students) and their subject matter.

Now on to a more specific critique of the Spalding method per se. First of all, the claim is made again and again that this is a "total language arts approach." I suppose this claim is made because the program involves listening to the teacher pronounce the phonograms, seeing the phonograms written down, writing of the phonograms by the child, spelling of words from the Ayres' list, and reading. But it seems to me that the above is a little like saying that if you have some wheels and gears and bits of metal, you have a car. A language arts listening program should certainly involve more than listening to the pronunciation of seventy phonograms. Similarly, a writing component ought to be more than the writing of phonograms and some carefully limited list of high-frequency words. Now, it is well possible to use the Spalding program and, by addition and careful planning, have the teacher weave the entire spectrum of

the language arts through it, but I don't think the program can claim to do that as it stands.

Second, you'll note that the program was developed from Samuel Orton's work. Orton was a pioneer in reading remediation, although much of his research is now discredited. (You may have heard of the Orton-Gillingham program for remediation.) There is a sad tendency in educational programming to assume that if something works for students with specific learning difficulties it's bound to be just the thing for everybody. Since remedial programs are usually rigidly structured and sequenced in small incremental bits, this means that "normal" kids are given no credit for their own learning strategies and are often bored by the regimentation of the approach. Again, a good teacher can obviously enrich, vary, and modify such a program to make it more palatable, but you know, as I do, that many teachers go "by the book." In fact, the Spalding program is rather insistent and dogmatic about the teacher following a very rigid approach. For example, letter names are not to be taught to children and key words are to be avoided. Other programs, which seem to work just as well, stress the opposite. No one really knows precisely how children learn to read, and different children probably use different strategies, so that emphasis on the method is nonsense.

You'll note that Spalding suggests that children read aloud as much as possible. Depending on how this reading aloud is done it may or may not be a great recommendation. If it's done in the round-robin oral reading fashion so prevalent in many elementary classrooms, it certainly ought to be condemned.³ Oral reading by a child in front of peers should never be done without opportunity for rehearsal. The fact is, oral reading is a far more demanding task than is silent reading because the reader has to be able to read far ahead with the eyes in order to know what to do with the voice (intonation, stress). Beginning readers shouldn't be burdened with the most difficult form of reading, especially when, as is the case with Spalding, there is an overemphasis on the need for "accurate reading." There are lots of reading experts who suggest that "substituting their own words" in a story is a pretty natural thing for oral readers to do. The crucial factor is whether the substituted words make sense in the context. If they do, this is an indication the child is reading for meaning and not just for sound.

Well, Janna, I could go on in this vein for quite some time, but I think you get the drift of my feelings about programs like Spalding's which claim to have the corner on the "truth" about reading instruction. You mentioned that your son Jeremy's class is using the "Mr. Mugs" series. If I'm not mistaken, that is the Ginn Integrated Reading Series, also known as Starting Points in Language Arts.⁴ As basal reading programs go, that is, in my opinion, quite a good one. As you mentioned, this series places reading within the perspective of the language arts and does not treat it simply as a bundle of skills to be mastered. I think kids can get from the Ginn series the idea that language is part of life, that you can do exciting things if you achieve mastery of language, and that reading and writing are ultimately a means of sharing ideas with other people.

On the basis of what I've written here, I wouldn't rush out and try to convert Spalding users to some other method or program; I would try to make these users see that Spalding supplies only a very limited part of what a total language arts program should be. A good teacher will have to bring a great deal more to bear on the program if children are going to grow to understand that reading is concerned with both bringing meaning to and deriving meaning from print, not simply an exercise in sounding out symbols. I hope that schools which use Spalding and similar programs have an excellent primary library to augment the program.

With warm Christian greetings,



NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Spalding, Romalda B. *The Writing Road to Reading*, 2nd ed. New York: William Morrow and Company Inc., 1969.
2. For details of the evaluation referred to see Robert C. Aukerman's *Approaches to Beginning Reading*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971, pp. 244-254.
3. For a critique of round-robin oral reading and an annotated bibliography on appropriate uses of oral reading in the elementary classroom, see Robert Bruinsma "A Critique of 'Round Robin' Oral Reading in the Elementary Classroom" in *Reading-Canada-Lecture*, 1981, Vol. 1, No. 2, 78-81.
4. This basal series is published by Ginn of Canada (1976-79). My personal preference for a beginning reading-language arts program is to avoid basals altogether and to utilize a combination language experience/whole language approach which makes extensive use of trade books.

Robert Bruinsma is assistant professor of education at The King's College in Edmonton, Alberta.



LATIN AMERICA, created by students in the class *Art and Architecture of Latin America*.

THEME WEEK

NEAL DE YOUNG

DO you need something innovative in your curriculum? Would your entire staff like to get together to do some serious planning on a project? Would you enjoy an attempt at team teaching? Calvin Christian Junior High might have an idea for you: try a Theme Week.

What is Theme Week? For one week faculty and students concentrate all their efforts on a single subject area—in our case, Latin America. We chose the week between first and second semesters to give students a break from the regular schedule.

Why have Theme Week? Our staff decided on a Theme Week for several reasons: to explore an area of study in depth; to mix our students, seventh and eighth graders, into different groupings from their normal classes; to give the staff opportunity for total staff planning for a week of school; to allow teachers to team teach if they wished, and to tap into our community resources.

How does it work? Theme Week has to be a total staff commitment. It takes planning, hours of work, and complete cooperation among the faculty to make it successful. Our staff met almost weekly to keep ideas flowing, to make faculty assignments for sectionals, and to plan the assemblies.

Our particular plan worked like this: We used three basic periods a day, each instructional period being about one and a half hours long. The morning contained two periods and the afternoon one.

The faculty offered the following seven classes:

1. "Latin America Today," a student newspaper focusing on Latin America

2. U.N. Ambassador, a study of a country and its problems (Students could choose a country)

3. Hunger in Latin America

4. Art and Architecture of Latin America

5. Latin Americans in the United States

6. Latin American Festivals and Holidays

7. Latin American Travel Agency.

Students could sign up for three of the sectionals. Each section met four times during the week—some taught by two-teacher teams and some by individual teachers.

Three assemblies were scheduled for the week. Period I on Monday was the kick-off with a film on Latin America for background. The second, on Wednesday, Period II, was devoted to hunger and was followed by a hunger lunch to show what it is like to live on an almost starvation diet. Our final assembly, held on Friday, Period III, was a program and a display of projects that students had worked on during the week. Parents were invited to view this assembly.

Much of our success with Theme Week was due to community involvement. We tapped all the resources we could think of—Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Latin American Council of Grand Rapids, The Hispanic Center, public libraries, our high school library, and Kent Intermediate School's film library. We kept about fifteen films at school to help out if a speaker cancelled or if there was not enough material planned for a period.

Expenses incurred with our week-long program were covered from a student activity fund and from funding by our Mothers' Club.

Was it worth the effort? After our week was concluded, we tabulated student responses. To the question, "Do you feel you have more of an understanding of Latin America and its

people?" 67 responded "A lot," 95 said "Somewhat," and 11 "Not much." The question "What did you like most about the week?" brought responses such as, "I liked choosing classes," "I got to know seventh graders," "We were always creating something," and "Making a mural taught me a lot." To the question "What did you like least?" students responded: "Now we have to go back to regular classes," "We didn't have enough time," "The length of the classes got boring after five days," and "I think there should have been homework." For the fourth question, "Was it a worthwhile experience for you?" 103 students answered "Definitely," 63 said "Somewhat," and 7 said "Not really."

How did the staff feel about the week? One word says it—TIRED—but we were also happy that we had tried it. We have good feelings about our first Theme Week. Our students showed that they enjoyed it and appreciated all of our efforts. Parents also told us how pleased they were and showed their support by coming in large numbers to our final assembly.

Would we do it again? We began work early on Theme Week '85-'86, focusing on a period of time—the 1930's. ■

If you are interested in this project and wish further information, you may contact Neal De Young, Calvin Christian Junior High, 601 36th Street SW, Wyoming, MI 49509.

Neal De Young teaches math and developmental reading at Calvin Christian Junior High in Wyoming, Michigan.

A Love Song for Sophomores

Barb Yeazel

I'd like to write a love song,
To fling it far and wide,
To share with all who know me
All I keep inside.
Yet should I send it from me,
Diluted by the wind,
It would not say the same
When returned to me again.

How difficult to capture
The beauty seen in eyes,
The grace of cheekbone touched by curl,
Time's touch on faces as it flies,
The tenderness of first love,
The eagerness of hope,
Strong, straight shoulders under shirts,
Six-foot sixteen's easy lope.

To force emotion into phrase
Is not an easy task.
To rob from time his booty,
To put within a flask
Distilled the spirit of the days
Is to lessen love's emotion,
Is to limit all love's ways.

I cannot place circumference
Round the love that I have known.
(I could not tie a tether
To the years as they have flown.)
Still, I try to tell you now
How the laughter fills the hall,
How the tears would like to come,
And how June must follow fall.

LAURA NIEBOER

CELEBRATE YOUR COUNTRY'S BIRTHDAYS

In the United States February is a month for celebrating the birthdays of presidents. We have been remembering the February birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln for some time now, but Ronald Reagan was also born in the month of February. Here are some related activities you can use in a presidential learning center, in an activity box from which the students select activities for fun or for extra credit, or together in class:

- Make a class scrapbook of articles that the children bring in about President Reagan, George Bush, or Nancy Reagan.

- Compare the duties of the president of the United States during Lincoln's presidency and Reagan's presidency.

- Make and send President Reagan a birthday card (February 6).

- Have lots of available books for children to read and from which to obtain information. Then have them respond to the book by answering questions, dramatizing the book, or doing related art work.

- Collect shoe boxes and have the students make a peep box of one phase of Washington's or Lincoln's life.

- Role play some characters connected with the Civil War: a carpet-bagger, a Yankee general, President Lincoln, a slave, a share cropper.

- Write to Mount Vernon, Virginia, to obtain literature about Washington's home.

- Have maps of the United States available. Students can locate the states where these presidents were born; memorize the capitals of various states; put together map puzzles; draw a map of Illinois, put a star where Springfield is located, and write Abraham Lincoln beside it; draw a map of Virginia, put a star where Mount Vernon is located, and write George Washington beside it; locate Washington D.C. and calculate the distance between it and their home town.

- Make a tape about the history of the flag for children to listen to. Entitle it "Old Glory."

- Memorize the national anthem.

- Have a patriotic parade. The students can design and make costumes, banners, and flags. Some may like to dress up like one of the presidents. At the end of the route hold an assembly where students can sing patriotic songs they have learned, dramatize moments in history, and give speeches on information they have learned or on topics such as freedom.

(Adaptable for other countries by substituting own national leaders and events)

PROFILE

DOLORES LOGTERMAN

CINDY DE JONG



Dolores Logterman leads a colorful and exciting life in numerous roles. She's a travel aficionado and occasional travel guide, a summertime secretary, an artist, a singer and pianist, a gourmet cook, former president of the Southwest Christian Teachers Association, an administrative assistant, and—most importantly—she's a teacher. Dee has taught Spanish, music, and art at Delavan (WI) Christian, Denver (CO) Christian, and Valley Christian. She is now in her seventh year of teaching Spanish at Valley Christian High School in Cerritos, California, and is chairman of the growing foreign language department. The following interview took place over lunch one comfortable day last summer.

TEACHING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Q *When did your interest in foreign language begin?*

A I got interested when I was a little kid because we always had migrant workers, and I promised myself I'd learn what they were saying. I thought they were the most fascinating people I'd ever seen in my life—they were so exotic when they came to town in one big truck in April for the peppermint crops. On Saturday nights they'd have dances and wonderful music; looking back now, I know how primitive it was and how terribly they had to live. Yet my main playmates until school were those Mexican kids who always had one up on me because they could speak Spanish.

Then in high school my guidance counselor asked about my taking a foreign language, and that's when the light went on. I said, "Oh, of course, I always said I'd learn to speak their language, so I better do that now." I started studying Spanish in ninth grade. Also, my best friend and I got to study in Mexico for a school year. That was so exciting. We took all kinds of language and culture classes.

When I couldn't study foreign language at Dordt, I switched to Wisconsin State University. Then for five summers after I graduated, I attended the University of Madrid studying art, linguistics, and the history and culture of Spain.

Now I'm taking up French; I decided I want to be trilingual.

Q *Then you'll study summers in France, right?*

A I firmly believe that is the only way you're going to master a foreign language! It's just like teaching—it looks great on the blackboard, but when you start to *do* it, it's a whole other world.

Q *How did you get into a career of teaching?*

A I started out teaching in my hometown at Delavan Christian grade school. One of the school board members approached me at the county fair the day before school started, told me they had no third-and-fourth grade teacher, and asked if I thought I could do it. I thought about the money—I was a struggling college sophomore, you know—and figured, yeah, I could do it. So I taught third and fourth grade that year.

Q *Then did you go back to school after that?*

A No. I went to school at the same time: I taught fulltime and I carried a full load in college. I'd go to my first class at 7:30, go back to greet my students at the door at 9:00, then head back to the university in the after-

noon, doing my school and college work between classes. It paid my way through school.

My professor at the university wanted me to be a teacher. After graduation, I went to summer school to get my education credits, and he got me an internship at a school with a top-notch language department.

Q *Is that where you learned your teaching techniques?*

A Some of them. Robert Lafayette, the professor who had talked me into foreign language teaching, taught a methods class where I learned a lot. Much of what I do I learned from going to state and national conventions, because that's where you get to pick up ideas from teachers who actually are teaching every day, not just college professors who are talking about it.

Q *What are some of the techniques that have worked well for you?*

A Any way that I can get the kids actively involved in doing something. If I can get them physically involved, they retain more than if they're just reading or writing. I try to create as many situations as possible where they have to talk! So what if they're making mistakes; at least they're making an effort to communicate.

We do things like role-playing, television shows, commercials, and plays: original productions from start to finish, including the script, costuming, and set design. This is more fun and meaningful than memorizing textbook lines because the students have more input and it's still at their communication level.

Another project is called "I Saw Madrid and Never Left L.A." It's a whole unit to discover what in our culture has been borrowed from the Spanish culture. The students make a slide presentation, scrap book, and collection box of the bigger things that they have found on their "tour."

Q *I've often walked through your room to admire your bulletin boards. Do you look at them as a technique for learning too?*

A Oh yes! I notice that not only the students in my classes pay attention, but other students often stop by to look at them too. They like to look under the flaps or at the birthday calendars. It's a good learning tool and I always try to make them as cultural as possible.

I think that about the most important thing that we foreign language teachers can teach is cultural understanding. I firmly believe that part of the reason the U.S. has this love-hate position with the rest of the world is that we do so many things out of ignorance of other cultures. We think we're the best and have no desire to know about anyone else. So we need to create a cultural understanding and

acceptance that there are different ways of doing things. Also, everyone has basically the same kinds of concerns about family, work, and so on. Yet we need to appreciate the variety that there is culturally.

Q *Is that why you take your students to Spain?*

A That's one reason—to give them first-hand observation. I think any foreign language program is incomplete without offering the opportunity for those who can manage it to observe first-hand the foreign culture. A tour is not as good, of course, as living there. But if you take a tour, and you do not stay in American-style hotels, and you do not eat in American-style restaurants, and you do not spend all your time on a bus, then you can get a better view of the culture. When you've got kids who are used to a diet of hamburgers willing to try a squid sandwich, you know that you've widened their world and created a willingness to accept different cultures.

Q *In what ways has your own teaching changed over the years?*

A It always evolves because I'm the sort of person who can never do one thing the same way again. That's why I go to these conventions to find new things to do, and I'm always willing to give them a try too.

Another change is that I think now I am less apt to accept excuses and I'm demanding that the students be responsible on their own. When I was in college, during the touchy-feely generation, we learned that we didn't want to hurt these kids' psyches, we didn't want to bruise them for life. Of course, there is no place in the classroom for sarcasm or meanness on the part of the teacher, and students should be able to feel good about themselves. But now I say no a lot more easily. I have a list of forbidden questions, and once they know these, they don't bother to try asking about things like forgotten books or going to the restroom.

Q *What advice would you give to new teachers today?*

A If you're there to be loved and to be a buddy, you're in the wrong place. You should be looking for their respect, and with that seems to grow a natural caring for you. They don't need another friend; they've got plenty of peers. They need someone who has authority.

Students do have to know that you like them. If you're a teacher and you don't like kids—if you don't like teenagers and all their squirrely problems—you're in the wrong business. They've got to know you like them.

You should be consistent in whatever you do.

Always be prepared to the maximum. The way you start a class is important: you shouldn't have to fumble around for



ten minutes with your book or the overhead projector. You need to have clear objectives in your mind for what you want to accomplish and how you want to find out whether you've accomplished it.

Finally, it's necessary to be enthusiastic. If you have enthusiasm for your subject, the students will become more interested in it too.

Q *How do you maintain your energy in teaching?*



A I don't do the same thing every year. I've got a list going already of things to try next year: as soon as an idea pops into my mind, I have to write it down or I'll forget.

I like teaching foreign language so much because it becomes so much more than just teaching Spanish: I get to teach history and photography and cooking and art and music. I get to put all of these things together! I hope that when my students close their books after two years, they've learned more than the language. They've learned something about people.

Q *The administration has recently been reorganized at Valley so that there are now three administrative assistants to the principal. After one year of serving in this capacity, what do you think of it?*

A It's been a wonderful learning experience for me. I think it's great fun to see what other people are doing in the classroom. I've picked up ideas from other teachers, things that I've taken for granted doing all along and suddenly I see someone else doing something better. It's interesting to see too how various teachers relate to students.

We got more involved in the administrative decisions than in classroom observation, though. It soon became obvious that there was so much going on administratively that we weren't able to accomplish some of the other things we wanted to do.

Q *What do you want to do with your future?*

A Be a high school teacher!

Q *But weren't you looking at some other options about a year ago?*

A I was beginning to succumb to the pressure of others saying that with my abilities I could do something "more significant"—make money, go into business management. But in teaching, every year you've got a new beginning. Every year is a new challenge too because you deal with a new mix of personalities, and what might have worked for ten years doesn't with this group. You have to rethink what you do, and there aren't many jobs that offer you these chances.

Principal Jim Den Ouden said of Dee Logterman, "She's got the basics down pat. Each teacher has an idea of what the basics are, and each one's ideas are different and many are good. Dee probably comes closer than anyone else I know to knowing what those basics are."

He went on to describe a presentation she gave for a group of church school teachers in which she stressed these basics as found in the New Testament. My interview with Dee ended with her saying, "The principles of good teaching—strong preparation, speaking with authority and knowledge, gearing what you say toward your audience, loving those you teach—all of these can be seen in Christ. Everything that we talk about in a model teacher can be found in him." ■

Interviewer Cindy de Jong formerly taught English at Valley Christian High School in Cerritos, California. She is now living in Grand Rapids, caring for her infant daughter at home.

Jesus Christ answered the question of death for us. As St. Paul says, if the resurrection didn't occur, Christianity would be folly. Christ, who certainly feared death, which is indicated by his behavior in the garden before he was taken away to be tried, transcended death. His humanness, his fear and concern in the face of death should lead to a better appreciation of life in all its aspects. It's not just that I'm alive and should appreciate living, although that's important for any rational person. The point is that I share both Christ's humanness and his transcendence. I too fear death; but I know I will transcend it.

Thus the human dilemma in the face of death I share with Jesus. I transcend death because of Christ's resurrection—which means my resurrection in two senses. I am part of Christ's glory because I relate to him; so by his resurrection he has made me holy, which means "set apart" yet "being part." This seeming paradox suggests that by transcending death Christ redeemed much more than each individual believer. There is an important sense in which Christ redeemed all of nature, for by being part of nature I can participate in its redemption, even though I am "set apart" because through belief in Christ I am no longer the person I used to be. This is the second aspect of Christ's resurrection being "my resurrection."

For the Christian, death is not a finality, a conclusion or an absolute end. Life in Jesus continues and we are reunited with all those who are with the Father. But this still doesn't mean one longs for or looks forward to death. One still has "miles to go before I sleep," as Robert Frost wrote. In singing about death the popular singer Neil Diamond listed numerous individuals who made significant contributions to life and culture, yet they "wept when it was all done;

for being done too soon."

Perhaps no matter when life ends, it will always end "too soon," in a human sense. We build castles and dream dreams, and some of the time we even find happiness, although usually when we least expect it: when we are not looking for it, it happens, as if it were always around the corner.

Yet there is some validity in the term "happy death," from both a Christian and a psychological aspect. Kubler-Ross (Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, "What It Is Like To Be Dying." *The American Journal of Nursing*, (Jan. 1971) has demonstrated that some individuals are able to accept their impending death; they have come to grips with it in a psychological and spiritual manner. They have said their temporary farewells; they have put their lands in order. They may not exactly want to die, and they are certainly still afraid, but that's just the human condition which we share with the Lord. There is nothing wrong with being afraid of the unknown, the painful and the horrible. To admit this makes us one with each person who must also go through the experience of death.

There is surely a difference among the following: "He died," "I will die someday," and, "I die." The first two propositions are somewhat objective, maybe even impersonal. The last, "I die," is an admittance, a confrontation; more than a fact or a conjecture. Saying "I die," especially, "I die in the Lord," is the beginning of a choice, and that is choosing my attitude toward my own death. It is sad to think that even many Christians do not make peace with themselves or with God before the final moment. But this degree of reflection cannot be initiated, this positive attitude toward death cannot be developed, until one first says, "I die in the Lord."

Arnold Toynbee once remarked that now that sexuality could be dis-

CONCEPT OF DEATH

DR. ROBERT P. CRAIG

cussed at the dinner table, maybe someday we will even be able to discuss death. Old prejudices die hard. The author William Saroyan wrote on the eve of his death: "I realized that everyone had to die, but I always thought I was immortal. What am I going to do now?" Wouldn't it be unfortunate, to say the least, not to have confronted one's own death until one was about to die? An intellectual assent regarding one's death is merely a propositional form of knowledge: a "knowing that." Without the spiritual and emotional involvement in the question, one can "know that" and never confront the question. The person is more than intellect; and propositional knowledge devoid of commitment to Jesus, and a concerned and questioning attitude about life and death, is sterile. That is perhaps why Saroyan could "know he was going to die" without "knowing it."

What do the above reflections have to do with the Christian educator? Let me approach this initially by way of example. I began my teaching career in a Christian elementary school. I taught fifth grade. One day a little girl came into the room after recess with a dead bird. "Why did the bird have to die?" she asked. I didn't know what to say, so in self-defense, or because I thought that teachers must give students answers, I said, "Because he had a heart attack and fell out of the tree." She left disappointed because I did not answer her question. What I said could even have been true, but it wasn't what she was curious about. "Why" is not a factual "why" in her case.

What follows, then, will be a few suggestions which may aid the Christian educator in discussing the problem of death; yet these suggestions are geared toward high school and adult individuals. The first point is to relate Christ's promise of eternal life to the

student: that Christ transcended death as we, if we accept him, also will. This truth can be illustrated by having the students investigate various biblical passages concerning death. The scripture tells us constantly not to be anxious—neither about death nor about one's daily affairs. Of course we are still afraid, but a thorough investigation of the Bible's teachings on death can be a comfort and guide in the human reality of death.

Second, the Christian educator can help facilitate a meaningful awareness of death and the dying process through the use of the following types of exercises.

1. In a small discussion group the participants can reflect on the relationship between cultural attitudes and death. Cultural attitudes determine what one does to "put his/her house in order." Our society has very different expectations, for instance, than a community in medieval times or more recent Eskimo culture. How influential are cultural values both in preparing for and in experiencing death? Are these values always consistent with Christian ones? In what ways are they consistent? In what ways are they not? Research the types of arrangements regarding death that are expected and available in our society. Include psychological, financial, legal, and religious factors in one's research.

2. To explore society's attitude toward aging, collect samples (pictures or tape recordings) of advertisements portraying people over sixty-five years of age. Observe the materials carefully for indicators of the subject's degree of participation in society, physical condition, and advertised need. The individual might want to write a comparison with similar materials portraying younger adults. Speculate on how each subject would allocate his/her time on a daily basis, and what

Wouldn't it be unfortunate, to say the least, not to have confronted one's own death until one was about to die?

other people would be seen frequently. In what ways do these advertisements contradict the Gospel message? And how is the Christian to deal with such social expectations?

3. The following is from R. A. Moody, Jr., *Life After Life*. (Covington, Georgia: Mocking Bird Press, 1975).

I had a heart attack, and I found myself in a black void, and I knew I had left my physical body behind. I knew I was dying, and I thought, 'God, I did the best I knew how at the time I did it. Please help me.' Immediately, I was moved out of that blackness, through a pale grey, and I just went on, gliding and moving swiftly, and in front of me, in the distance, I could see a grey mist, and I was rushing toward it. It seemed that I just could not get to it fast enough to satisfy me, and as I got closer to it, I could see through it. Beyond the mist, I could see people, and their forms were just like they are on earth, and I could also see something which one could take to be buildings. The whole thing was permeated with the most gorgeous light, a living, golden yellow glow, a pale color, not like the harsh gold we know on earth.

The individuals can discuss certain questions:

a. What is your immediate reaction to the account of dying given

above? If you had heard the same account from a close friend would your reaction have been any different? If so, how?

b. Have you ever had a close brush with death? Describe the experience. What effect did it have on you at the time? Later?

c. Stop. Close your eyes. Imagine your heart has stopped on the operating table. What do you imagine happens next? How is the reality of Christ an essential aid here?

4. There is a growing movement in England and the United States to provide humane palliative care through home care or a specially designed "hospice" rather than an acute care facility. Hospice is a program which provides palliative and supportive care for terminally ill patients and their families either directly or on a consulting basis. Research the hospice movement. In what sense is this acceptable to the Christian? One can write to the original United States Hospice for more information at the following address: Hospice, 765 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut, 06511.

5. As expected death after a long illness becomes more frequent in this continent, family and friends are more likely to begin an anticipatory grief reaction before death occurs. Outline the benefits and dangers involved in beginning to mourn while the terminally ill patient is still alive. Contrast the kinds of role behavior that would be appropriate following sudden, unexpected death with those following a long terminal illness. How might the funeral rites be changed to reflect these differences in needs?

6. Discuss the relationship of the following scriptural passage to one's personal life. How does one's relationship to Jesus aid in the question of death?

You have been buried with Him (Christ), when you were baptized;

and by baptism too, you have been raised up with Him through your belief in the power of God who raised Him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12-13)

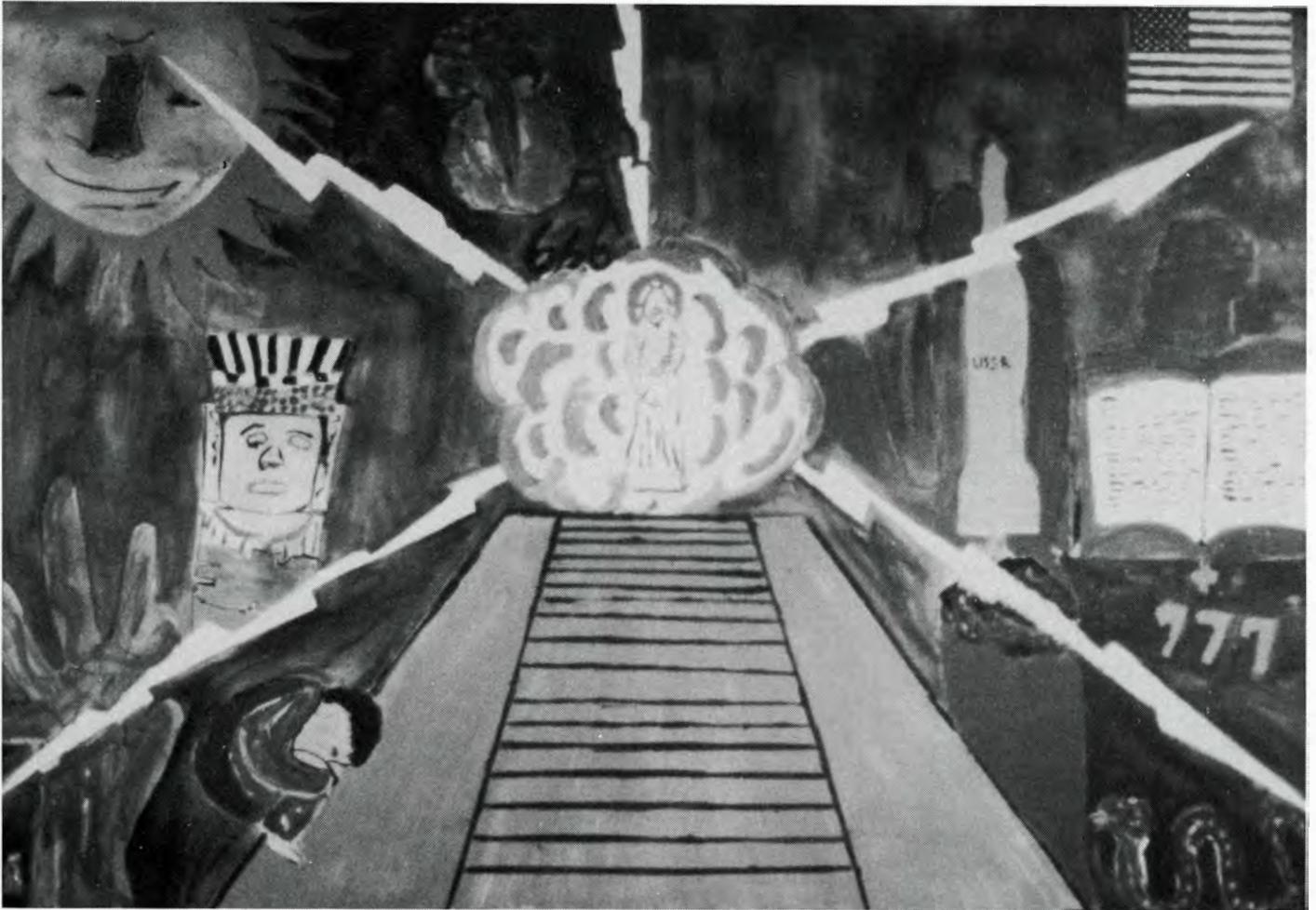
The above activities are not meant to be exhaustive; nor is the description of death developed in this essay. The purpose is simply to have Christian educators reflect on the issue of death from a variety of perspectives. The mission of Jesus is to bring life to all. St. John says, echoing Christ's words, "I tell you most solemnly, whoever listens to my words, and believes in the one who sent me, has eternal life" (John 5:24). The end time has already arrived in a sense, for Jesus is with us. Death is never final; in Christ we live forever. This does not mean that we should not fear the process of dying. The unknown is always frightening. The pain and anguish of sickness and death are difficult enough to reflect on even in our most lucid moments. Yet it is about this hope, this eternal prospect of life, that this essay has been written. The words of the poet capture the intent of the above reflections better than I can:

I do not see what skill,
with leaves in the cup, Mother
Shipton or

computer science will tell us
about the hardest of all things to
know:

What is to come?
(John Holloway, "To Haruspicate or Scry.") ■

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LATIN AMERICA, created by students in the class *Art and Architecture of Latin America*.

A Child Leads

Carolyn Brown Copeland

An infant nymph, she clings to me—
Imparts her load of Calvary;
I am *her* Way, *her* Truth, *her* Light;
I lead this baby through the night.

It scares me sometimes when I find
My words can change a growing mind—
A chance remark, not meant for youth,
Can tarnish—or destroy—*her* Truth.

It frightens me, and day by day,
I look to Him and hope and pray
A godly life, I'll lead—for two . . .
And then I wonder, "Who leads who?"

CALCULATORS have changed the way most of us do arithmetic. As adults we use calculators to help us balance our checkbooks, figure our income tax and do a variety of other tasks. Many teachers have discovered that calculators make grading much easier at report card time. Yet, according to a recent national survey, eighth grade math teachers don't allow their students the same access to calculators that they have.

Over the past four years the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS) was conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The results cover a wide range of information about math students and teachers in both 8th and 12th grade.

In responding to the question about calculator use, about two thirds of the teachers reported that their students never used calculators or were not allowed to use them in class. The most commonly reported use was in recreational activities. Only about 6% of the eighth grade classes were allowed to use calculators on tests. (McKnight, et al 22)

This information points out a trend in our classes. For the vast majority of eighth graders, instruction in mathematics is being taught with little or no regard for the startling technological changes that have taken place over the last fifteen years. The institution which should be preparing students for the future seems stuck in the past.

There are two ways in which the ready availability of calculators should affect our math curriculum. Not only should we examine where calculators might assist our students in learning the traditional curriculum but we must go further and take a new look at what we teach to eliminate unnecessary items and add new ones.

First of all, then, where can calculators assist our students in the process of learning math? A look at the typi-

IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

ROBERT J. KEELEY

cal eighth grade curriculum reveals that arithmetic—that is, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division—accounts for only a small portion of what is covered. Other topics like graphing, solving equations, geometry, proportions, percent, probability, statistics, and even some introductory trigonometry are given a fair amount of time in eighth grade. It seems reasonable that, once a student has demonstrated that he can do the four basic operations, he should be able to take advantage of the technology of calculators.

The biggest fear seems to be that, once we let students use a calculator, their brains will atrophy and they will forget how to do the work without one. This is probably because the calculator apparently does “all the thinking” for the student. These fears are only somewhat justified. While it is true that students who use a calculator for most multiplication or division will be reluctant to work without it, personal experience has shown that with long enough exposure to the calculator, these students learn to view it as a tool and not a panacea. It’s very important for these students to realize that a calculator is of limited use in some areas—fractions, for example.

The positive aspects of calculator use far outweigh the negative. First of all, the use of calculators can assist students in gaining a good number sense. Since long division or three digit multiplication are long and tiresome, students are reluctant to check their work to see if their answers are reasonable. Calculators give them the

opportunity to estimate and then get immediate feedback on their estimate. (See example lessons in Ockenga.)

The calculator also gives students an opportunity to concentrate on the point of a lesson without getting hung up on arithmetic. Finding the surface area of a cylinder is a good example of an understandable but complex formula. Eighth graders can learn a lot about using formulas, order of operations, and geometry from doing this, but without using a calculator the multiplications involved become such a chore that the point of the lesson is lost.

Once we become comfortable with our students using calculators in our classes we must face the next step, curricular revision. James Fey says that the implications of the microelectronic revolution extend far beyond the technology of teaching; they raise basic questions about the goals of mathematics education. He goes on to point out that we must rethink the role of pencil and paper algorithms and shift our emphasis to the “conceptual understanding and problem solving strategies students need to use calculators effectively” (Fey 3).

The advent of these tools has not only freed us from the drudgery of arithmetic, but has given us the responsibility of finding the proper balance between traditional skills and new technology and of discovering new ways of presenting mathematics to a generation in need of new skills. In her address to the 58th annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, then presi-

dent Shirley Hill said, “The position of the NCTM has always been very clear on this, and present recommendations are consistent with the published position. They state: ‘It is recognized that a significant portion of instruction in the early grades must be devoted to the direct acquisition of number concepts and skills without the use of calculators. However, when the burden of lengthy computations outweighs the educational contribution of the process, the calculator should be readily available’ ” (Hill 477).

It is no longer reasonable for us to hold on to our old ways of teaching math simply because of tradition. As Christian educators we should be especially aware of the need to constantly reassess our priorities and our traditions. If we are to teach our students to be effective envoys for Christ in the world around us they must be given the tools to do it. We must be willing to help our students prepare for a future in which the proper use of calculators is a skill they cannot afford to be without. ■

Robert Keeley teaches mathematics at Denver Christian Middle School and part-time at the University of Colorado. During the summer he taught precalculus to gifted and talented middle school students in the Denver Rocky Mountain talent search program.

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DONALD OPPEWAL

CHRISTIAN POLITICAL ACTION

Authors: Charles Strikwerda and James Penning
 Christian Schools International, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1984, 173 pp., \$4.95 pb.
 Reviewed by LeRoy Stegink, Professor of Education, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

Supporters of the Christian School movement have always recognized the importance of text books written from a Christian viewpoint. Since the text book is such a crucial factor in what is taught in the classroom, it is very important that the beliefs of the author agree with the philosophy of the school and the teacher.

Christian Schools International has for many years recognized the importance of Christian textbooks and has devoted much effort and money to the production of these resources. However, it is the impression of this reviewer that most of the effort has gone into the production of materials for the elementary and junior high classrooms, with little designed for the high school classroom.

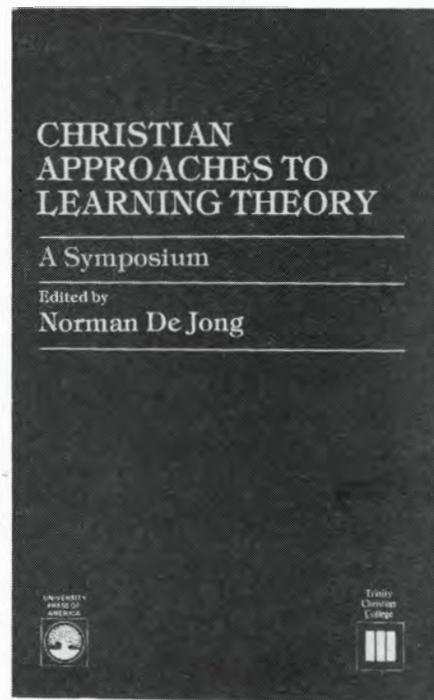
Christian Political Action is an excellent step in the right direction toward righting this imbalance. This short paperback, written by Charles Strikwerda and James Penning, is designed to supplement a "non-Christian" political science text, or it could even be used as the only resource available for the students. In the hands of a skilled Christian teacher, this book can form the basis for a careful examination of a Christian position on a number of vital political issues facing any society.

A strength of the book is the fact that the authors do not attempt to describe the definitive Christian attitude toward all facets of political life. The reader will find no "Christian position on soybean support prices." Instead, the authors attempt to describe general biblical positions on various political issues such as Government and Business, Government and Social



Welfare, and Government and the Environment after a short examination of the issues involved. In addition to citing relevant biblical passages, the authors also describe past Christian positions on these issues. In this fashion the reader is urged to formulate his own position on these crucial issues.

A minor fault of the book is that an attempt was made in editing it to simplify the language so that the book would have a lower readability score. Such editing is unfortunate as several sections of the book read like a simple elementary reader. This is a minor matter, however, and should not stop a teacher from using this very effective book.

**CHRISTIAN APPROACHES TO LEARNING THEORY: A SYMPOSIUM.**

Author: Norman DeJong, ed.
 University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1984, 218 pp., \$12.50 pb.
 Reviewed by Glenn Weaver, Psychology Department, Calvin College.

This is a collection of papers presented at the First Annual Conference on Christian Approaches to Learning Theory held at Trinity Christian College in 1983. As one might expect from a conference organized around a rather broad theme and presented by scholars from several disciplines—education, psychology, history, philosophy—the collection as a whole more effectively stimulates thought about the issues involved in developing Christian perspectives on learning than exchanges about well-defined issues. Diversity of this sort can make a reader question whether the presenters really had anything to say that others at the conference were motivated to consider or equipped to understand. In this case, however, most of the papers are of high enough quality,

ity, are written in common enough language, and embody enough overlapping questions to make the broad vision worthwhile.

The editor has organized the papers into those dealing with "Perspectives on Learning" and those considering "Prescriptions for Theory Building." However, a more useful organization for the educator might separate those papers which deal specifically with the experience of teaching and learning in educational settings and those which raise issues for more abstractly developed theories of learning. In the former category, Corrine Kass outlines a developmental stage theory of learning which envisions "living responsibly" as a goal of adequate development. Learning deviance is understood as failure to resolve critical stages of psychological development which lead toward this goal. Although her references to the views of stage-developmental theorists such as David Elkind and Herman Epstein do not develop a strong psychological argument for a stage model per se, the paper nicely relates this model to Christian concerns and offers practical suggestions for responsibly encouraging the development of the learning disabled.

Likewise, papers by Donald Oppewal, Peter DeBoer, and Marion Snapper all deal with ways in which a Christian understanding of learning as an interactive process between persons in covenantal relationship with God may affect classroom procedures and curriculum. They suggest clear relationships between biblical concepts and educational practice, provide illustrations of actual classroom experiences, and make helpful suggestions for teaching in a distinctively Christian manner. These chapters will likely be the most helpful for teachers who are concerned with translating their Christian faith more effectively into what they do in their profession.

The second grouping of papers takes up issues foundational to theoretical explanation of the learning process. Here the territory varies more widely. Gerald Bouma and Paul Moes argue that recent developments in cybernetics and cognitive psychology offer explanations compatible with Christian commitments and likely to further effective teaching practices. Maarten, Vrieze, and John Kok present Dooyeweerdian visions of different modes of knowing which inhere in God's creation and criticize contemporary theorists for distorting our understanding of learning by reducing it to a single dimension of meaning, e.g. the dimension of sensation and motor response.

Perhaps the most difficult papers in this category are those by James Martin and Bert Hodges. Both argue that psychological explanation, as presently conceived, cannot provide an adequate account of the learning process. The purpose of learning is to form competent judgment. But competent judgment involves the realization of tacitly experienced values which cannot be completely specified prior to the act of judgment itself. Hence no completely determinant, rule-governed account of the development of competent judgment can be given. Martin argues for reconceptualizing the unconscious as the source of the creative process outside of conscious control. Hodges argues that learning may be understood only with reference to the specific contexts in which the tacit knowledge of values is revealed and in which choices must be made.

These latter papers are of interest primarily to those willing to read them several times and to wrestle with rather highly abstract conceptualizations. Nevertheless, they probably lie closest to the volume's expressed concern with "Christian approaches to *learning theory*" and effectively point



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out significant limitations on most present attempts to deal with this task.

The book thus has something valuable to offer readers with practical concerns about Christian instruction as well as readers with concerns about Christian philosophy and psychology of learning. These concerns might have been brought a step closer together, and the chapters might have achieved greater focus as a whole, if selected conference responses and questions had been included with each paper. Perhaps such a format will be adopted in further publications if this apparently valuable conference becomes an annual event and the issues for beneficial discussions are progressively better defined.