October-November 1986, Volume 26, Number 1

Christian Educators Journal

CEJ

Christian Education's

THE first time I saw a mountain I wanted to take it home with me to the Iowa cornfields to show my family. I couldn't, of course, so I gazed in holy awe, snapped instamatic Kodak photos, and made feeble attempts to capture its massive grandeur in my journal. When I got home, I hauled out the projector and raved about my mountain as family members patiently waited for the next slide. They could never really share my excitement until they experienced their own first mountain.

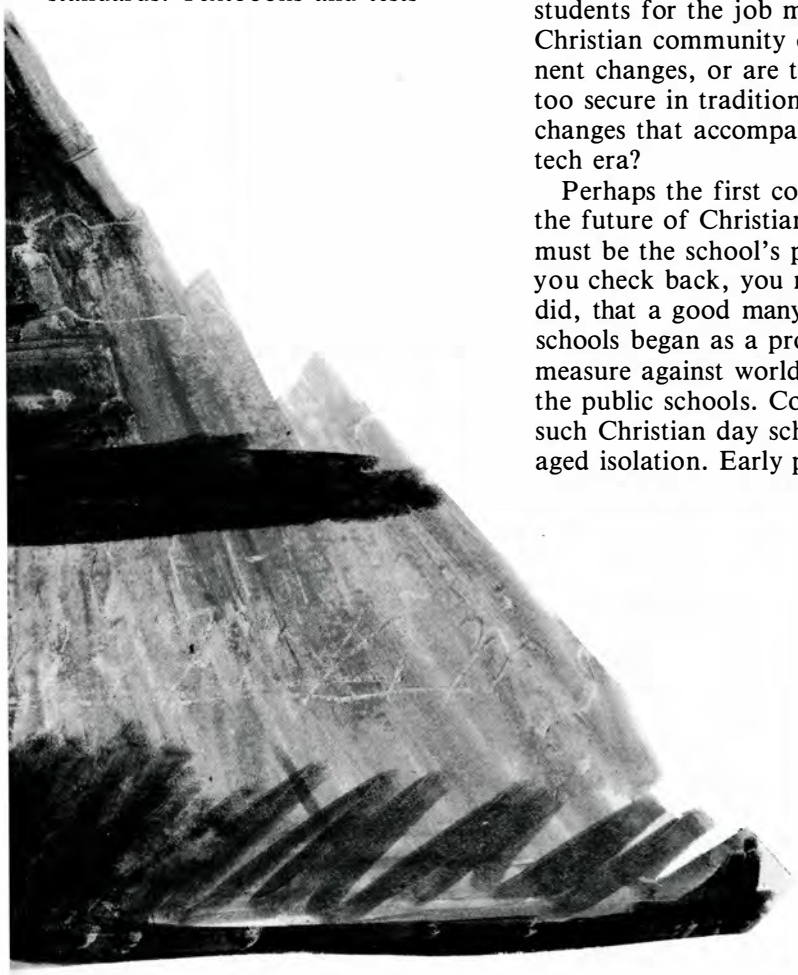
Last summer I returned to the Midwest to visit another kind of mountain—in the range of Christian education. Now again I find that words and pictures prove inadequate to express what I saw and felt as I stood among concerned, restless Christians grappling with issues that affect the future of Christian education. "Does the Christian school have a philosophy, a curriculum, a structure that best serves our students as we head toward the twenty-first century?" we asked ourselves as we prayed together, talked together, ate together, planned together, worked together.

Chief organizer Steven Vryhof (Illiana Christian High teacher in South Holland, Illinois) mentioned something in his initial correspondence that prompted me to participate. Vryhof quoted futurist Alvin Toffler, who noted last year "that an institution, when faced with future shock and the need to change, usually responds by making the ex-

Mammoth Mountain

isting system work harder. Case in point: schools. The much ballyhooed educational reforms consist of more homework, longer school days, back to the basics, and so on. . . ."

Toffler's criticism precisely matches the pattern of school reform evident in many public school systems, including the one in my own state. I believe California State Superintendent Bill Honig was sincere in June of 1984 when he set up committees to reform the state's curriculum standards in language arts, mathematics, science, history/social science, computer studies, fine arts, and foreign language. Indeed, the committees worked hard to develop challenging standards. Textbooks and tests gained special attention. Since then, teacher competency standards have stirred up a great deal of educational wrath whenever English teachers fail math requirements and writing competencies choke out promising agribusiness instructors. As for the students, they continue to drill, drill, drill so they can raise the scores that prove the success of the unwieldy system.



LEST we Christian school educators sit back smugly and suppose that we have superior solutions, I urge each of you to examine your own Christian school. For what purpose do you educate? Is the curriculum primarily structured to prepare students for the job market? Is the Christian community open to imminent changes, or are the constituents too secure in tradition to consider the changes that accompany our high-tech era?

Perhaps the first consideration for the future of Christian education must be the school's philosophy. If you check back, you may find, as I did, that a good many Christian schools began as a protectionist measure against worldly influences in the public schools. Consequently, such Christian day schools encouraged isolation. Early participants in the Christian private school movement originated during the era of manual labor, so school schedules revolved around the labor needs of the family farmer. Few people required advanced education for their labor needs, and few knew much about other parts of the world. Only those students who showed promise of becoming preachers and teachers went on to higher education; in fact, Christian colleges were often founded specifically to train ministers and teachers.

With the arrival of the industrial era, the population began migrating to the city. Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, Calvin College philosophy professor, indicated at the workshop that industrialization brought a change in the understanding of roles. Whereas previously people were born into assigned roles, industrialization caused roles to be highly differentiated. Consequently, people had to *choose* occupations rather than *inherit* them. Mobility and choice were probably responsible for the post World War II emphasis on career education and the paycheck.

That emphasis has continued to grow stronger, even in Christian schools. Since at least the 1970s, Christian schools have struggled to compete with public schools which offer extensive career education. Students and their parents who are career oriented figure that schools exist to prepare students for the job market. Twenty years ago when I asked a class of public school sixth graders just why they attended school, they quickly responded: "To get a good job and make lots of money." Being a teacher candidate at that time, I suspected only public school students would give such a man-centered answer, but I soon learned that my Christian school students gave the same response.

Another purpose I have heard

Christian school constituents give as the purpose of their school is just as secular: to develop higher quality education. I would appreciate that emphasis if by "higher quality" they meant "more God-glorifying." Unfortunately, the usual meaning is "scores superior to the local public school's."

The society of the Christian grade school which I attended in Oskaloosa, Iowa, presented the following statement of purpose when it was founded in 1954:

> The purpose of the society is to train children, in cooperation with parents, in such a way that they, as fellow-workers with God, can perform their duties in this world to the glory of God, to their own well-being, and to the welfare of others.

I suspect other Christian schools have equally impressive statements of purpose. Probably we ought to get them out and read them to our children and impress them upon our own hearts and upon our students' hearts so that we, like Deuteronomy 11's Israelites, never forget to live as members of God's covenant.

Perhaps the frenzy of high tech society will prompt us to re-evaluate Christian school practices to see if they really promote the principles we wrote into our now-yellowing constitutions. Already, critics are alerting public school administrators to societal changes that will affect public school curriculums. The April, 1986, pamphlet entitled "The Master Teacher" states that "twenty years ago, 85 percent of all jobs were product- or manufacturing-related and 15 percent were service-related. In the future, 85 percent of all jobs will be service-related." Consequently, some public schools are designing curriculums which will reflect a greater emphasis on service rather than production. In the past, Christian schools have resisted public school philosophies but adopted some of their practices—the result of imitation and competition. Certainly, we can learn from our public school friends, but we should not wait for their critics to shake us out of traditional practices that center on man rather than on God.

Certainly we need to make sure that our students possess the skills necessary to serve excellently, but perhaps we need to discard the traditions of tracking and of fragmenting the school day into seven or eight specific disciplines in order to integrate learning with living. Critic Theodore Sizer, in his book *Horace's Compromise* (1985), states that "a few areas, taught in large time blocks, greatly reduces both the scheduling problems and the frenetic quality of the school day" (134). Sizer suggests that schools reorganize into four large departments:

1. Inquiry and Expression
2. Mathematics and Science
3. Literature and the Arts
4. Philosophy and History

Sizer's reasons for a new structure differ somewhat from those of last summer's workshop participants, but his approach gave us as Christian educators the incentive to consider further curriculum and structure changes. Wolterstorff and others indicated that Christian educators need to break out of the walls of the school building in order to educate our students to serve as Kingdom workers.

WE need to look much more in detail at the ways we structure our Christian school curriculum, but we can't do justice to the whole mountain in one brief glimpse. Throughout this CEJ volume year, as we focus on the Christian student's image, cross-cultural education, textbooks and other teaching tools, and integration of the disciplines, let us think and write and talk and teach with a renewed awareness of our purpose as Kingdom workers in the service of our Lord. ■LVG

Educating for Responsible Discipleship

GLORIA STRONKS

WHEN I was a child I was taught, as many children are taught, that when we get to heaven we will all be perfect. I remember thinking, as many children think, that heaven must be a very boring place because if everyone is perfect, then everyone there must be the same.

I had a strange dream the other night—this one had its origin in an experience I had last summer. In May I was the instructor for a graduate course on a college campus in the eastern part of the United States. The students taking the course were young adults who were clearly trying to determine what it means to be responsible disciples of Jesus Christ in every area of life. We talked about individuals who had most influenced their thinking about discipleship. Among the people they mentioned were the names of two men who are no longer living.

In my dream I was with all of these people in a large rustic room which I have never seen before. The two men were with us and we were all sitting in a circle, singing together. There was an intense feeling of closeness and love as we were singing. The music was beautiful but it was not perfect. When someone hit a wrong note or when someone's voice broke there was a loving smile on the faces of several people. The flaws in the singing gave us a chance to love each other more and to feel even closer to each other.

In my dream I thought that maybe this is what it will be like to be together in the new earth. It is not that we will be perfectly the same, but rather that we will understand the value of the flaws in each other. When I look at the grain of the wood in our dining room table, it is the irregularity in the grain that makes that piece of furniture more interesting and more beautiful. Or when a potter makes a very large plate and a flaw is evident when the plate comes out of the kiln, it may be the flaw that makes the plate interesting and unusual. So too, with people.

I thought in my dream that in the new earth we might not all be the same after all. Maybe then we will finally understand the value of the differences between us. Perhaps then we will be able to have perfect relationships, not because there are no longer differences between us, but rather because we will finally have learned to value those differences.

ONE of the goals of educators involved in Christian education is that our students will value each other as individuals and will learn to understand their responsibility for each other. We would like it if our students would grow into adults who are concerned for the emotional and physical welfare of others. We want them to become adults who are actively involved in living lives of responsible discipleship.

These are wonderful goals, but how do people learn this responsibility? Our students hear their teachers and their ministers talk about showing concern for those in need and giving help in such situations. Recently I mentioned to a native of western Michigan how impressive it is to me to witness the volunteer work done by Christians for the poor of these communities. He smiled and said, "When you have lived here longer, you will likely realize that a great deal of work is being done by a comparatively small number of people." Why is it that some of our students reach maturity with a strong sense of their responsibility for the feelings and welfare of those around them while many others do not?

In the classes which I have taught in two Christian colleges, I have asked students whether they felt that the atmosphere among the students of the Christian high schools from which they had graduated had been a caring, nurturing one, with students taking responsibility for the feelings of other students. Time after time I have heard stories of truly irresponsible behavior, particularly concerning verbal abuse of unpopular students. I have been told that students who do not approve of such behavior do not try to stop it because of the effect it will have on their own popularity.

The students have assured me that none of these behaviors occurred when the teachers were present. I am not suggesting that teachers must always be present so that the students will always be nice to each other. I am suggesting, however, that the instruction which our students are receiving concerning responsible discipleship is not as effective as we would like it to be.

WHAT should instruction in responsible discipleship be like? First of all, such instruction must be in keeping with the developmental level of the student. In recent years we have learned a great deal concerning stages in intellectual development. There is also excellent information concerning faith development and moral development. A great deal has been written about character development. Instruction in responsible discipleship must make use of the research which is available to educators.

Instruction in responsible discipleship must also make use of research concerning *effective* instruction. We are all familiar with didactic instruction in which the teacher tells, demonstrates, describes, or explains ideas and concepts to the

In the new earth we might not all be the same after all. Maybe then we will finally understand the value of the differences between us.

students. Total-class discussion may be included in didactic instruction but the instruction is always teacher-directed with the students involved in a passive way. Evaluation in didactic instruction occurs by testing for information received.

Didactic instruction has its place if the purpose of instruction is to give out information. Didactic instruction has its place in educating for responsible discipleship, to the extent that students must be told what discipleship is. Didactic instruction by itself, however, does not lead to changed habits or changed lives. To ensure such changes we need to turn to a different kind of instruction—interactive instruction.

Interactive instruction takes place when the teacher arranges instructional strategies to ensure that active involvement in learning occurs. Activities are presented in sequence in order to develop a given concept, and to make certain that concept has been learned. These activities may include drawing diagrams, arranging hierarchical classifications, solving problems for which small-group discussion is needed in order to arrive at a conclusion, role-playing, constructing dioramas, or being actively involved in community services and then doing learning activities concerning that involvement.

In interactive instruction the students are always actively involved in the learning. Evaluation in this kind of learning is done by observation of the interaction, observation of individual or group presentations, or observation of applications of concepts to other situations.

Students can learn *about* responsible discipleship through didactic instruction—by being told how responsible disciples of Jesus Christ live, by watching films of people who live such lives, or by total-class discussion of how responsible disciples go about the process of making decisions in keeping with their beliefs.

However, in order for students to learn to *be* responsible disciples, interactive instruction must take place. This teaching must be arranged so that students are actively engaged in activities of discipleship while they are students. Some Christian middle schools and high school faculties have arranged that at one particular point in the curriculum every student will be required to spend one half-day each week in a helping situation, either with an elderly person in a rest home, or with children in day care centers, or with a mentally or physically handicapped individual. The point of this experience is that as the student helps that individual in whatever way is needed, he will, hopefully, develop an understanding and a concern for the welfare of others.

We may not excuse or explain away sinful actions on the part of our middle school and high school students by saying that such actions are normal in that particular stage of development. Rather, we must arrange instruction which will move students away from sinful attitudes and toward lives of service.

I have mentioned only one instructional strategy for teaching responsible discipleship. There are many others, and Christian teachers should be actively searching for such methods as well as developing their own practical programs. In order to help teachers develop such teaching aids, five members of the faculty at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan presented an interdisciplinary graduate mini-course to the teachers and administrators in one of the Christian Schools International (CSI) K-12 school systems. The course was titled *"Educating for Christian Responsibility."* The most delightful part of the course was listening to the teachers and administrators as they presented the instructional strategies which they had developed for this purpose. One participant said, "I am becoming aware that so very much of what we are already doing is excellent, but we haven't really understood why it is so good. I understand now how theory and practice inform each other." This course has been designed to be presented on school campuses. Any school system interested in more information about this course may contact Dr. Corrinne Kass, Dean of Academic Administration at Calvin College.

We have evidence from the past that simply hearing about the need for Christians to be thoughtful and caring of others does not ensure such action. Schooling is more than education for life. Schooling is life, itself. If education is meant to change lives and to develop responsible discipleship in students throughout their lives, then these students must be actively learning that discipleship while they are still in school. ■

Gloria Stronks is professor of education at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Way in Which They Go

JUDITH DE JONG

A comparison of the results of two christian educational systems

WHILE educators in various kinds of Christian school systems are unified in their dedication to "training up a child in the way that he should go," they are not necessarily in complete accord about the details of that way or the methods best suited to setting the child on that road. Where there is discussion of these differences of opinion, the discussion generally tends to be of a theoretical nature. Many treatises can be found which deal at length with the world-view and goals of different educational philosophies; and within each system there is further discussion of which methods are believed to be effective in achieving those goals. However, there is comparatively little research available which tests the effectiveness of different methods within Christian school systems or which measures whether the goals desired are being reached.

Recently, as part of a doctoral study, the author of this article engaged in an exploratory attempt to isolate some effects of Christian training. The study tried to gauge the impact of two different Christian educational philosophies by making some comparisons of high school students from schools belonging to the Calvinist day school tradition (Christian Schools International) with students from Catholic high schools located in the same geographic area. The study used measures of personality to form individual profiles and asked questions about the spiritual concerns and religious beliefs of the students. The two groups were then compared with each other on overall scores. Some intriguing differences were found.

Method

Three questionnaires where used. The Interpersonal Style Inventory (1984, Lorr and Youniss) was used to measure a number of personality dimensions. Some items from Strommen's LYR inventory (1963) were used to ascertain what sort of spiritual concerns motivated these students. A theological scale created by Hoge *et.al.* (1982) was used to measure commitment to church and creed, for the purpose of determining how such commitment was related to personality.

In studies of this nature, care must be taken to ensure that scores on the questionnaires reflect true differences between the groups studied. In order to do so, the sample taken must be chosen carefully to represent in a clearcut way each group studied. It also must be chosen to balance other factors which may affect the scores. For example, on the personality test, females tend to score higher than males on most of the measures; therefore, if one group was made up almost completely of females and the other of males, the former group could be expected to outscore the latter group just because of the gender differences.

In recognition of these considerations, the study attempted to control for several types of variation: regional influences, male-female differences, age differences, and environmental, cultural differences. In order to guard against regional peculiarities, two geographic sites were used, an urban center in Michigan and a rural area in Iowa. Approximately half of each group was from Iowa, the other half from Michigan. Each group was approximately evenly divided between males and females. Age was also restricted, by including only 11th and 12th graders.

Finding a sample of maximum cultural homogeneity was more of a problem. Since the home and the church are also major formative factors, several criteria were used to insure maximum uniformity of background for each group. While students filled out questionnaires anonymously, they were asked for their ethnic background and their church denomination. The majority of students in the participating CSI schools belonged to the Christian Reformed Church (whose members are the main source of support of the school system) and were of the Dutch background which predominates in that group. Therefore, only the questionnaires filled out by members of this group were included in this analysis. The Catholic schools, directly supported by the Roman Catholic Church, have a less ethnically restricted population base. In order to represent this cultural diversity, and yet remain comparable with the European origins of the CSI sample, two restrictions were placed on the Catholic sample. Membership in the Catholic Church and a European extraction were considered requirements for inclusion in the Catholic sample. 134 CSI students and 122 Catholic school students met the criteria for their groups and were included in the study.

Results

PERSONALITY. On the Interpersonal Style Inventory (ISI) the individual answers "true" or "false" to various statements describing personal preferences or how he or she typically acts or feels in a variety of different situations. The test gives scores (ranging from 1 to 20) on fourteen personality dimensions including: directivity (leadership), sociability, help-seeking, nurturance, trust, tolerance, sensitivity, conscientiousness, deliberation, independence, rule freedom, orderliness, persistance,

and relaxation (lack of anxiety). An additional score, a validity measure called defensiveness, evaluates how much the individual is distorting his or her self-report. This score is based on the number of common human frailties which the individual denies having and is used in research as a rough measuring stick to insure that both groups are being equally forthright in their answers.

At first glance, the results appeared to be quite straightforward. There were no significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups of students on 11 of the measures. Means were similar for the two groups on sociability, help-seeking, trust, tolerance, sensitivity, conscientiousness, deliberation, independence, rule freedom, orderliness, and relaxation (lack of anxiety). There were differences between the two groups on three of the personality dimensions. The students in the Catholic schools scored significantly higher than did the students from the Calvinist school on three dimensions: directivity, nurturance, and persistence. These results seemed, therefore, to indicate that the members of the Calvinist group tended more to being followers, were less caring toward others, and tended to give up more easily. However, this picture is complicated by the fact that a fourth difference was found between the two groups. This difference was on the validity measure. The Catholic group was significantly more defensive than the Calvinist group. When the students were asked to admit to having common human failings, the Calvinist group was much more willing to admit to having these faults than were the members of the Catholic group. This finding calls into question the validity of comparing the two sets of results on all the other measures, for it indicates that the Catholic group very likely also exaggerated their good points on the other questions, relative to the Calvinists. Because of this finding, it was impossible to determine whether the two groups were really equal on

Results On the Spiritual Concern Items

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS EXPRESSING CONCERN AND THE OVERALL RANK OF THE CONCERNS FOR EACH GROUP

ITEMS	CALVINIST		CATHOLIC	
	% Bothered	Rank	% Bothered	Rank
1. I wish I could find a deep faith in God.	56%	6	60%	1
2. I do not feel that I am close enough to Christ.*	71%	1	58%	3
3. I do not know if I will go to heaven when I die.*	31%	10	56%	4
4. I'm not sure I am saved through Jesus Christ.	23%	13	34%	11
5. I am afraid I am falling away from God.	41%	7	40%	9
6. I am afraid to witness for Christ.*	62%	4	27%	12
7. It's hard for me to give a reason for my faith and convictions.*	39%	8	26%	13
8. God seems so far away from me.	25%	12	34%	10
9. God doesn't seem to hear me when I pray.*	11%	16	22%	15
10. I'm not sure I can believe I am a Christian.	15%	15	18%	7
11. I pretend to be a Christian when at church.	20%	14	23%	14
12. I am not sure God loves me.*	7%	17	15%	18
13. I feel that I am not living up to my Christian convictions.	69%	2	59%	2
14. I tend to slip back in my Christian life.*	68%	3	51%	5
15. Sermons usually seem hard to follow.*	61%	5	48%	6
16. I wonder if the Christian faith is the only true one.	35%	9	42%	8
17. I am not sure I can believe some things I have been taught in church.*	29%	11	47%	7
18. I find it hard to believe the miracles referred to in the Bible.*	6%	18	19%	16
Number of Students**	125		117	

*Indicates difference is significant, $p < .05$, Chi square used in analysis.

**Missing data on some items. N (number of students) for Calvinists ranged from 123 to 125 on different items, N for Catholics ranged from 114 to 117.

Items used for this measure are from *Profiles of Church Youth* (M.P. Strommen, St. Louis: Concordia, 1963).

the first 11 measures, or if inflated responses of the Catholic group made it appear so. This finding also cast doubt on whether it was exaggeration or a real difference that resulted in the Catholic group scoring higher on directivity, nurturance, and persistence. It would seem likely that at least on nurturance and persistence, the Calvinist's greater awareness of faults could account for lower scores.

The question was next asked whether it was the Catholic group or the Calvinist group that was unusual. Examination of the defensiveness scores of public school students on the ISI seem to indicate that this Catholic group should not be charged with lack of honesty. A comparison shows that the Catholic student is at least as straightforward as the average public high school student (Catholic males were average and Catholic females were *more* straightforward than average); so it is, therefore, the Calvinist group which is unusual. Due to the inequality on the defensiveness measure, the only reliable conclusion that can be reached on these personality results is that the members of the Calvinist group are exceptionally honest in their self-report.

This result is thought-provoking. The finding that the Calvinist day school student apparently has less of a need to deny that he or she possesses common human frailties, can be used to address a long-standing theoretical debate. In this present study, the students had been guaranteed anonymity through a system that insured that they would be the only ones allowed access to their personal scores. Denial or admission of the less desirable aspects of their personalities was, therefore, a denial or admission only to themselves. The question is why or how these students came to have this unusually high rate of admission.

Several very different explanations could be made for these results. A critical characterization of the Calvinist which can be found in literature, psychology, and social-historical analysis paints the Calvinist as brooding over his sins and living in constant fear of damnation. These critics of Calvinism would interpret the present results as a sign of the unnatural preoccupation of the Calvinist with sin and damnation. However, the Calvinist admission could also be attributed to a healthy cause, a sense of security in the love and forgiveness of God which allows the individual to face the dark corners of him or herself. The former interpretation sees insecurity based on fear of damnation; the latter sees security based upon assurance. For indications as to which interpretation would be the more accurate, the next analysis looked at the results of the spiritual concerns questionnaire for signs of either fear of damnation or of spiritual assurance.

SPIRITUAL CONCERNS. This questionnaire was made up of 18 items dealing with spiritual concern. On each item the individual was asked to indicate the degree to which he or she worried or was bothered about an issue. He or she did this by choosing one of the following answers: "Not bothered, never have been," "Not bothered, used to be," "Bothers me somewhat," or "Bothers me a lot." For purposes of this analysis, the answers were split into two categories, one containing the "not bothered" options and the other made up of the currently "bothered somewhat," or "a lot." The table gives the actual items, shows the percentage of students from each type of school who indicated that they were "bothered" by it, and ranks the concerns for each group (from 1, for the issue generating the most concern, to 18 for the one of least concern).

The two groups had similar levels of concern on eight of the eighteen issues. Calvinists and Catholics were about equally concerned over finding a deeper faith, being saved, falling away, God seeming far away from them, whether or not they were really Christians, their Christianity being a pretense, not living up to their convictions, and having doubts about Christianity being the only true faith.

On the other ten issues, however, there was a significant difference between the levels of concern. The Calvinists tended to worry more than the Catholics about not being close enough to God, about witnessing, about giving reasons for faith and convictions, about backsliding, and about comprehending sermons (a surprising 5th ranked concern). Catholics, on the other hand, were more worried than the Calvinists over whether they were going to heaven, whether God heard their prayers, whether God loved them, and whether church teachings and biblical miracles could be believed. The "Calvinist" concerns can be grouped as generally having to do with one's personal inadequacies in carrying out the duties of Christian life. The issues causing more concern to the Catholics can be seen to be more existential uncertainties, worries about the reliability of God's favor or his Word.

Having looked at these concerns, the personality question can be reconsidered. The question was whether the Calvinist's admission of human frailty was associated with fear of damnation or with spiritual assurance. There was no sign that the Calvinist group was unusually preoccupied with fears of damnation. On the contrary, they appeared to be more assured than the comparison group of God's love for them, their place in heaven, and other existential matters. They appeared to be comparatively certain of grace and concerned with service.

RELATION OF PERSONALITY TO COMMITMENT. A scale of theological beliefs (Hoge *et. al.,* 1982) was used to obtain an indication of the individual's commitment to principles of church and creed. The measure of commitment to church principles consisted of a number of items dealing with how resistant the individual was to conceding that other churches and religions were equal with his or her church in possession of the Truth. Commitment to historic Christian creeds was

measured by level of assent to statements based upon the creeds.

Commitment was found to be related to personality on several dimensions. However the relationships were very different for the two groups. Among the Calvinists it was found that the individuals who were the most committed to church principles tended to be the more conscientious, deliberate, independent, and persistent members of the group. Those among the Calvinists who were more committed to the creedal statements tended to be the more nurturant and conscientious members of the group. However, among the Catholics, the more directive (leaders), more nurturant, more trusting, and more independent members of the group tended to be those *least* committed to their church.

One could speculate about what these figures predict for the future of the two churches. The results would suggest that the Catholic Church may stand in greater danger of losing certain types of youth: those who show leadership, those who are nurturant, those who are trusting, and those who are independent. In contrast, results from the Calvinist sample show that the Christian Reformed Church has a strong hold on certain types of youth: those most conscientious, deliberate, persistent, nurturant, and interestingly, those most independent.

Conclusion

The study showed that there were indeed some differences between the two groups of students. However, the study raised even more questions than it answered. In doing so, the research highlighted the need for further studies of Christian youth. One immediate and practical conclusion to be taken from the test results is that the Christian educator and the Christian counselor must exercise caution in using psychometric tests which rely on standards set by testing in different types of school systems. Results indicate that before a test is used in a Christian school system, a broad sample of students should be tested to see if there is a need to recalibrate the test standards to allow for the effect of factors such as the report bias found on this personality test. Results on the relationship between personality and commitment also show that the relationship between personality and attitudes and beliefs may be different for different populations. As the CSI system appears to have a population divergent in several ways, it should probably develop its own internal research program rather than depending uncritically on the findings of research in other schools.

The present results also call out for interpretation and action on the part of teachers and pastors involved in education. Educators of youth in the CSI system appear to have convinced their students that they are called to service and communion with God; however, these educators may need to show students practical ways to carry out this service and may need to aid them in deepening their spiritual lives. ■

Dr. Judith De Jong is Director of Research at the Center for Human Development in Washington, D.C.

On Childhood

KEVIN HREBIK

Like tiny trains on tiny rails
fast forward, never end
our brave example on life's trails,
on, childhood, on!

Ride your way playfully sated,
reckless face things unknown,
frivolous, frisky, elated,
on, childhood, on!

Shame us with naive purity,
tame us with giggling freedom,
grace us with non-sensibility,
on, childhood, on!

Untangle us with simple combs,
pour wisdom in imagined cups,
and be for us sweet and precious,
in our hearts, in our homes.

"In the Image of God"

H.K ZOEKLICHT

GINNY TRAANSMA, who had been on lunch hour patrol, rushed into the Asylum, headed straight for the table, and dumped a pile of smeared and rumpled papers on top of it. Then she stood and faced her colleagues, eyes flaming, voice quivering as she slowly said, "I just saw the image of God crushed out there, and I could weep that such a thing could happen in a Christian school!

There was a shocked silence at Ginny's outburst. Then Steve Vander Prikkel asked her gently as he helped her to a chair, "Why don't you tell us what happened, Gin." All looked at her expectantly; even John Vroom paused momentarily before chomping into his Ida Red.

Ginny struggled to control her emotions while fishing in her purse for a tissue. "Well," she started, "you all know Jim Klug, don't you?"

"You mean that pimple-faced, odd-ball femmie who's too smart for his own good?" queried Vroom, one cheek bulging with Ida.

"No," snapped Ginny, "I mean *Jim Klug,* a junior at Omni Christian High and one of the most gifted and brightest students made in the image of God we've been privileged to have here!"

"Yeah, I know who you mean," quickly soothed Lucy Bright Den Denker. "He's the shy fellow who usually walks around the halls and the ball field with a briefcase or an open book. He's in one of my classes and I've never had better stuff from a student."

That's the one," responded Ginny, more calmly now. "Well, Jim walked out there on the field where a bunch of guys were tossing a football around when a couple of them decided to have fun with Jim. They grabbed his satchel from him and started playing catch with it while Jim frantically ran from one to the other trying to retrieve it. Well, of course it didn't take long for books and papers to start flying all over the place. When I came on the scene, Jim was almost hysterical, chasing after note sheets blowing everywhere. He's in my choir, and when he saw me coming he panicked. He just grabbed his satchel the guys had dropped by now and ran toward New Haven Avenue as fast as he could. I gathered what papers I could. But tell me, how can I gather the pieces of that boy's shattered self-image and put them back in place?"

John Vroom was not munching when he reached out, awkwardly put his hand on Ginny's, and mumbled, "Sorry, Gin, I was wrong."

"Did you tell Bob?" asked Lucy, indignation still smoldering in her voice and wanting her principal-husband to set things right again.

No one spoke for a moment until Steve Vander Prikkel cleared his throat and started.

"I've never told this story to anyone, but I think I'll tell it now. When I was in fifth grade, an older girl was in the seat right behind me. She'd had to repeat a grade more than once. Ann was not pretty to look at. She had a wide protruding forehead with bulging eyes on either side. She hardly had a nose, just nostrils in the center of her face. And she had a cleft palate, so it was really difficult to understand her when she talked, which she seldom did. There's a fancy medical name for the condition she had, and I understand that today doctors can do a lot to correct it, but at that time nothing was done, especially if you were poor. Anyway, maybe Ann shouldn't have been in a regular school, but I guess her parents wanted to treat her as normally as possible.

"Well, one day a bunch of third graders in this small Christian school thought it would be fun to pretend that Ann was an ugly witch, so they would walk around her in a circle and at a given signal look at her, scream, 'A witch! A witch!' and in mock horror run in all directions, all the while screaming, 'There's a witch! There's a witch!' They did this repeatedly till Ann, sobbing uncontrollably, finally dashed like a wild animal to one end of the playground and started to pound her offensive forehead against the iron fence post again and again, into a bloody blob."

Steve's voice broke as he struggled to retain control. Then in a whisper he added, "Ann was my sister."

After a long moment, Steve looked around at his silent, shocked colleagues, the pain and anger of his eyes mirrored in theirs. "Why," he groaned, "why should this happen in a Christian school? What are we here for? What are we doing?"

The questions hung in the air of the Asylum, like a cloud of judgement over a fallen world.

Then Steve added, all feeling gone now, "Ann never went to school again." ■

The Importance

A father enters a preschool room to discover fifteen children engaged in various activities. Three boys are constructing a garage with three parking levels, and miniature cars are being parked on each level. The car most recently parked tips downward and the parking level is angling slightly to the right because some blocks are missing. In a far corner two children are reclining on large stuffed pillows "reading" to each other. At a large round table four seated children are surrounded with scraps of paper, glue, buttons, tape, scissors, hole puncher, bits of lace and ribbon, and a sample wallpaper catalog. Each child is either cutting, pasting, tearing, or tracing shapes. Some of these art articles have already been attached to a larger sheet of paper with glue or tape. In some instances the art shapes escape the bounds of the paper, but the children don't seem to mind. By the window one child turns a silver-shiny rock over and over, smells it, then puts it under the magnifying stool to peer even more closely. Another child shakes fish food into his hand before sprinkling it on the surface of the fish bowl. Three girls and one boy work quite happily in housekeeping "fixing breakfast." One puts the baby to bed for her nap while the others busy themselves with the eggs and coffee. The table is set, the "coffee" is poured, and everyone is asked if they want sugar or cream. Everyone sits down and the baby starts to cry.

At this point if I had a dollar for each time the parent turned to me and said, "Do they just play all day?" I would be independently wealthy.

Because I meet and interact with so many parents on the activities of young children, I continue to read and observe children in their play. Many authorities on the young child, among them Jean Piaget, Dr. James Dobson, and Dr. David Elkind, all believe that "play to a child is what work is to man" and that by playing, children are learning about work. Dr. Elkind is a proponent of the fact that play is nature's way of helping children deal with stress. It seems that by saying "nature's way" he believes play is a natural, genetic, legitimate course of action for young children. Several authors speak of "experience over load" for young children. Some parents push their child to read by two years; use computers by three years; swim as infants; achieve, achieve, achieve! Where is free time—the free time to play and discover through seeing, feeling, smelling, hearing, and/or tasting? And even when we allow free time, the great competitor is the television. I believe that play is an important ingredient in the young child's social, intellectual, and physical growth.

SOCIALLY, a child uses play to discover the world around him, people in it, and even himself. A teacher observes children at various ages interacting at play in at least three different stages. A two-year-old is able to play contently by himself; let another invade his space and a squabble is extremely likely to occur. His response will be "I want this toy, not one exactly like it but *this* toy." A three-year-old is capable of playing side by side with another three-year-old, but still he much prefers to play by himself. About the age of four, children are able to play cooperatively together. In a classroom of four-year-olds, watch children at any center. In most cases, before they begin to "work" they want to know who is interested in "working" with them. Often a teacher will hear one child say to another, "Do you want to play with the dominoes?" If the answer is "No" quite often the children will seek out a compromise—where they both will agree on playing together. In these instances children are learning social skills of asking for another's help and company, compromising (at times) when necessary, communicating on a level they each understand, and having to come to conclusions that what they each individually want to do is acceptable, even when no one else wants to participate with them.

Within each of the stages, preschoolers are learning a sense of sharing belongings as well as a part of themselves. Teachers need to be especially aware of the ways in which children communicate as they play. In the heat of whose turn it is to throw the ball or whose set of five blocks these are or whose Daddy is strongest, unkind words—"You're stupid!" or "I just won't play with you anymore!" are heard. The most devastating is, "I don't want to be your friend anymore!" Even in play as children learn about the cruelty of others, teachers are an integral part in protecting and teaching children the kind and acceptable way to work together. Parents and educators both agree that a child's self-worth makes him early the person he will later become. The importance of being accepted for whom and what he is as he plays with others and by himself is directly related and will make a difference in how he feels about himself.

In playing, children can experiment with the unfamiliar and not be threatened. Our four-year-olds class often fingerpaints with mixed instant pudding. In several instances children who would not use the conventional means of fingerpainting will fingerpaint with pudding. They first mix the pudding, and taste it, and then the natural next step is to use their fingers to spread it around on waxed

# of Play ROSE FRANCIS

paper, tasting as they spread the pudding. Hence, children are interacting with themselves and the world in which they are living.

Quite often parents and teachers too early place before children what are labeled as intellectual toys: plastic alphabet and number symbols, complicated shape fill-in designs, battery operated boxes that peep when the right answer is punched. Often these toys do not complement play but rather frustrate the child. How many parents comment that the boxes toys come in are the most prized possessions a child receives on Christmas morning. It seems this very fact should impress on parents that imaginative play is extremely important to young children. With old hats, shoes, big earrings, aprons, and (a favorite at our school) a half-slip, little girls can walk into the world of their mothers. Little boys can don ties and a vest and with a briefcase enter into the adult world without the pressure of being the parents. Children also easily reverse these roles. Quite often we hear the "parents" say to the disobedient child, "You'll have to sit in the time-out chair because you were not kind to your friends." A child can practice new vocabulary skills as well as basic living skills.

Intellectual growth is taking place as children fit blocks together to create a road or build a ramp. They explore fractions as two block wedges are fitted to form one complete block. The child pushes cars and trucks along the track, making the roaring sound of the car. A wooden person sits in the plastic car, driving. All the play is a symbol to the child of the real world.

One child tells me she is able to count to five because she can count her five fingers. When I ask her if she can count to ten, she holds up both hands and, using her ten fingers, counts to ten. Her reply: "Yes, I can count to ten." Intellectual growth is taking place as she uses symbols, her fingers, to count to ten.

Young bodies grow at a rapid pace; Dr. Dobson states that coordination begins in the middle of the body working itself outward. Therefore, the hand, fingers, and feet are the last extremities to mature. Eye-hand coordination sometimes seems late in coming; it can be difficult for a child to write his name, and no amount of pressure that a teacher or parent exerts will enable a preschooler to earlier master the skill. But toys such as stacking blocks or stringing beads or finger-painting encourage eye-hand coordination as fine motor muscles develop. Art activities such as cutting, pasting, and easel painting all contribute to eye-hand coordination. Large riding toys help a child use large muscles. Class story writing on a large tablet enables children to visualize letters forming words. One young boy who at five had no conception of what his name looked like, realized one day as we were writing together the "M" was in his name. Every time I wrote the letter "M" he said, "That's my name." I continued to say, "Yes, 'M' is a part of your name." Marty was realizing that letters go together to form his name. In these ways play is enabling preschoolers to mature at their own individual pace.

PLAY can be a complex learning process for young children that is fun and makes what is called school a happily anticipated experience. In playing creatively, children learn within the bounds of kindness and care with tools (toys) that are appropriate for their age and development level. To the parent who says "Is play all you do?" I strive to present a visual working program that does include play as the child's work. I encourage parents to visit the classroom in which their child will be a part. And as the children move from one area to another—blocks, housekeeping, art, science, games—I attempt to educate the parents as to the value of the play in which their child is engaged. Seeing their child at play, combined with explanations of how growth is taking place as their child plays, is a means of enlightening each parent as to the true value of play for each child's development socially, intellectually, and physically. ■

Play is an important ingredient in the young child's social, intellectual, and physical growth.

Rose Francis is director of the Nurture Center, a pre-school program of Chattanooga Christian Schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Nurturing Kids the Write Way

BRYCE FOPMA

"MY dog Billy is dead!" The final penciled words angled awkwardly across the page. The eighth grade boy's journal entry had been a full-page, single-sentence paragraph. And, as I reread the entry, for once I saw more than missing periods and creative endeavors at spelling; instead, I saw a six-foot fourteen-year-old, seemingly calloused to all emotion, express hurt and pain. Beneath the unblinking brown eyes, leather-tough skin, and boot-clicking gait, I now saw a boy's heart which beat to more than rock music.

After teaching junior high classes for several years, I have concluded that the challenge of educating lies not in communicating the splendors of parts of speech, the fine points of punctuation, or the proper alignment of letters in words; rather, the challenge lies in discovering the real person who sits behind that wobbly-legged desk inhaling chalk dust.

How does one really come to know that real person when twenty-nine other individuals verbally and behaviorally cry for attention? How does one transcend the miles of generation gap and penetrate walls of indifference or shyness? How does one discover both the small and big hurts, whether they be a lost English assignment or the death of a dog?

For some of those eighth graders who have graduated, they have left behind unanswered questions. I admit that I never *really* knew those young people; they remain mysteries and shadows of yesterday. I ask God's forgiveness for missed opportunities to listen, to understand, and to encourage.

But for others I have become in a small part aware of more than the student's cognitive abilities. Thanks to God's gift of the written word, students have revealed their multiple dimensions. With pen and paper, students have shared their joys and frustrations of children growing up in a class and a society which demand conformity and acceptance. Silent tongues have spoken eloquently and vocally via poetry and prose; I have read of the joys of a basketball player remembering a junior high victory, the dreams of a teenager considering mission work, and the bitterness of a farm child struggling with his family's financial plight.

Given numerous opportunities to write (both assigned and volunteer), students have shared essays, friendly letters, poetry, simple descriptive narratives, and journals. Besides honing writing skills, the pen-to-paper process has revealed to the students that the written word has great power, and with that word they can communicate their private worlds with the reader.

Regularly my eighth graders have written in their journals, notebooks in which the students can talk about their hobbies, family lives, dreams, and daily experiences. In those journals I have learned about Jon's love of fishing and Jenifer's loathing of physical education; I have learned about Steve's plans to be a trucker and Sara's agony over ever-changing friendships. I have read a bitter "I hate you" from a disgruntled student after I umped his intramural softball game. I have heard a student's pleading, "You should visit my church some time."

On the final day of school, an eighth grader handed me a poem which she had written. "It's dumb," she said with a wry smile as she thrust the paper on my desk. In the poem she beautifully expressed her hesitancy to grow up and to enter into the world of high school responsibilities. Throughout the school year, that same girl had spoken to me often in her journal. Right up to the final day of school, she had developed a confidence in her ability to write, and she knew I would respond positively to her words.

Yes, during the school year, I have splattered an ample amount of ink on spelling errors and mechanical slips, but I have made a sincere attempt to respond to each paper with words of encouragement and concern. As I have written, I have attempted to share a dimension of myself that perhaps the students never see as they daily stare at their fast-talking pedagogue.

At our eighth grade graduation, I received a card from a student who had rarely talked to me during the day but shared much of herself through her journal and poetry. In the card she had underlined: "To a teacher who really cared." I suspect several other graduates would not echo those sentiments, but regardless, those few words on that card provided reward enough for a school year filled with pages of memories. ■

Bryce Fopma teaches English at Edgerton Christian School in Edgerton, Minnesota.

"Just Mary and Me, But Teacher Makes Three!

ARDEN RUTH POST

MARY didn't have what it takes to be accepted by her teenage classmates. The teachers recognized this fact, and the students revelled in it. In a teenage world which glorified beauty, brains, and wealth, she struck out on all three counts. Grossly overweight, she presented an unkempt appearance with greasy hair and shabby, ill-matched clothing. Mary was also a slow learner. To most of the students in her school—and it was a Christian school—she was someone to be avoided or, from the more charitable of her schoolmates, pitied. For many students Mary was the object of ridicule.

On the school bus Mary sat alone looking out of the window day after day. When the bus became crowded, the remaining room next to her was the last bit of space to be filled. Most often, however, the bus was rather empty, and Mary presented an abject picture of loneliness and despair. "My parents sent me to the Christian school," she once told another student, "because kids made fun of me at the public school. It's hard for Mom and Dad to afford the tuition, but they thought I would be better off here. It doesn't seem to matter though. No one likes me—anywhere!" Mary's face mirrored the utter rejection she felt.

IT took one student—just one—who began to question Mary's situation, to ponder within her own heart how it would feel to be Mary, to contemplate the Christian principles she believed, and to search out what it meant to be a Christian in a real life situation. This one student was the direct opposite of Mary. She dressed well, was pretty, wore the latest teen hair styles, and had many friends. In fact, she had been chosen queen of her high school during the recent homecoming festivities. When she sat down on the bus, other students flocked around her. Yet day after day she noticed Mary and an ache began to form in her heart. She watched, she thought, she prayed, and she acted, not because it was the popular thing to do, but because it was the Christian thing to do. She felt that God told her she must act.

It happened on a bright, sunny day. The bus was quite empty and Mary sat alone by her customary window seat. This student purposefully walked down the aisle, said, "Hi, Mary," and sat down. Mary looked as if she were in shock. "Mind if I sit here?" asked the newcomer.

"N-no," was all Mary could manage to say. The rest of the bus noticed, too. There were surprised looks and a few whispered comments. Why would anyone want to sit by Mary? And, as the days rolled on and the scene was repeated, why would anyone continue to sit by her, talking quietly, day after day, while there were lots of fun-loving groups and popular people to join? And why did a friendship develop between them which transcended school hours?

THERE was an answer to these questions, a fairly simple answer at first glance. This student had made a commitment to serve Christ, and serving Christ meant serving others. ". . . whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (MT. 25:40) was the reason for Mary's friend's actions. Behind that commitment, however, was a learning and growing process which developed throughout several years of Christian schooling. The student's commitment was not directly a result of class learning, chapel messages, or daily school prayer and Bible reading. It resulted, instead, from a series of teachers who themselves had a Christian commitment and strived, as one of their primary educational objectives, to inspire a similar commitment in their students.

The first of these teachers read the book *Yes* by Ann Kiemel (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1978) to his class and provided a summer missionary opportunity for volunteers to practice the loving service described by Ann. The second teacher organized and directed class Bible studies and enthusiastically lived the Christian life. The third teacher mirrored the others in commitment and service and was, perhaps, the most influential because of a lasting relationship with the student who had befriended Mary. It is the third teacher who is described below, although her description may well fit many Christian teachers today. This teacher was both (1) model and (2) mentor to her students.

THE teacher who inspired a Christian commitment was a model Christian, living in today's world, not perfect by any means, but filled with the Spirit. She exemplified the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22) in her relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. She loved her students, all of them, the good and the bad, the quick learner and the slow one, the pleasant and the disagreeable, the attractive and the homely. She was a model of acceptance and appreciation for each student because she knew that each was created in God's image for his

own purpose. Who was she to favor one over the other? Each student was worthy of her love, attention, and care, just as Christ so generously shared his love and life with all who came to him. It was this teacher who, by her example, portrayed the Christian life as it should be lived, and who, by her loving concern for all, inspired others to love her and to imitate the example she set.

THE term *mentor* is often used somewhat synonomously with the word *teacher* to refer to one who instructs and imparts wisdom or through whom one learns. However, the definition given in Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* (1977) is "a trusted counselor or guide." The teacher described above was a Christian professional who saw her duty, her job description, as one of counselor and guide to young people, learning to live as Christians in today's world. She perceived, listened to, and empathized with teenage problems, and temptations, joys and sorrows, highs and lows, good news and bad. Students found her to be understanding of family problems, poverty, divorce and death even though she herself had not directly experienced them.

This teacher decided that her students needed a chance to help each other, that opening up in a supportive environment would alleviate hurt and invite help. And so she organized Bible studies which were held evenings in students' homes or before and after school in her classroom. And students came. Why? To hear a sermon? To receive another Bible lesson? No. They came to share, to experience a caring, supportive group, and to know the reality of the Christian message and the help available through trust in Christ.

The teacher as mentor cannot be separated from the teacher as model in actuality. What these students experienced in their Bible studies, the teacher as counselor and guide, was carried over into their relationships with fellow students. Many began to counsel and guide one another. Since the teacher loved them all, how could they not show the same love to their hurting classmates, popular or unpopular, rich or poor, good-looking or homely?

WHEN I began this article, I expected to have a list of biblical principles, scripture verses, and specific suggestions for how we, as Christian educators, can help the hurting student. Instead, my interview with the student involved in befriending Mary yielded the one factor that influenced her to help the hurting student: the Christian teacher who as model and mentor lived the Christian life and inspired others to follow in her footsteps. She responded, "It was not what I learned in school or discussed in class that made me want to love my neighbor. It was the example Miss Arns showed us in her own life and the loving concern she had for us."

It may surprise us, as educators, to read this true story and realize that in one instance, at least, the key to helping a hurting student was not found in professional preparation, knowledge of subject area, methods, or materials. The key was the teacher who reached out and inspired a student to do likewise.

As Christian teachers we can make a difference in our students' lives by the model we display and the guidance we give. Two vital questions remain: Are we willing? Are we trying? ■

Arden Ruth Post is assistant professor of education at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Moral
How Do We

Thinking:
Get Students There?

BONNIE SHELLNUT

PROBABLY every Bible teacher has read James 1:22, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." No doubt most teachers read the passage often to Bible students. A central goal of Christian educators seems to be to produce a student who not only believes biblical truths, but lives them out in daily, practical application. The big question then is this: *How do we get students there?*

The question of "how" is asked not only by Christian educators, but also by teachers such as Joseph Fletcher, Sidney Simon, and Lawrence Kohlberg, who have carved out academic careers teaching educators about morality education. Fletcher's books on situation ethics demonstrates the difficulty of making decisions based on "absolutes." Simon's book and lectures on values clarification emphasizes the need for a logical, consistent method in facing decisions. Kohlberg's theory of moral development attempts to describe the process through which people go in their acquisition of moral reasoning. These are but three of the methods of morals education used by public and parochial schools on the primary, secondary, and collegiate levels.

Few educators appear to be satisfied with the level of morality education in the schools. They are seeking any viable method to fill the moral vacuum. In *Psychology Today* an article in the February, 1979 issue noted:

> A Gallup poll in 1975 showed that 79 percent of the Americans queried were willing to turn over some of that responsibility for moral training to the schools. Hundreds of schools have thus experimented with some form of instruction in moral values. . .

The educator in a Christian school faces the same dilemma. What method of morality education works? Some advocate strict rules and strict enforcement; others encourage heavy dependence on Scripture memoriza-

tion; still others emphasize doctrinal Bible studies. The Christian education scene could certainly profit from some serious empirical studies on the success of various methods. Without such studies, however, we still rely on the methods derived from successful experiences.

In my years of teaching a course in ethics to Bible II students, I have had failures as well as successes. From observation and experience, I've learned that students usually don't like the formal, academic approach to ethics. Such an approach deals in definitions, theories, and abstract thinking about hypothetical questions. I've further learned that they don't want someone to ask questions, like Simon's values clarification approach suggests, without some guidance and challenge to find some solid answers. Students overwhelmingly concur that just discovering one's value system is not enough. Most of all, kids do not like being taught a list of rights and wrongs, but they do like being tested on such a list. Finding answers in such circumstances is easy. Kids, however, do not like the easy approach. One of my students called it the Sunday-School or pat-answer approach.

Someone might even ask if eleventh graders ever get their heads on straight enough to know what they like, or to ask any relevant questions about ethics. My experience has shown that most eleventh graders are ready for some meaty questions and answers about the meaning of life, man's responsibilities to God, and methods of discovering truth. When these questions are asked, students at first react in stunned silence. Many are used to questions such as, "What is original sin?" "Who takes away the curse of original sin?" "What does one have to do to be saved?" Years of Sunday School attendance can bring out the desired pat answers. Is that enough to get them into the actions of Christian thinking and living?

TEACHERS know about questions. Getting students to give the "right" answers is the method used for centuries to test their skills, knowledge, and ability to memorize. Somehow I think that Socrates and Jesus had more in mind when they used the question-and-answer method. Some questions Jesus asked were purely rhetorical. Such a question was, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The answer depends on the person's circumstances and response in action. But when Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" he was looking for a specific answer, one that a person can give only by personal experience.

Trying to design questions which challenge students' beliefs, help them discover their views and actions, and encourage them to evaluate those aspects in the light of God's Word is no easy task. Such questioning, however, is just the type needed to begin the important process of getting young Christians to bridge the gap between knowledge and action. One such questioning period I have conducted has gone something like this:

Teacher How many of you believe that the Ten Commandments are God's commands? (Ask for a show of hands—usually all.) Good. Do you also believe that they should be followed in all circumstances? (Most nod yes.) So you think that they are that good, right? (Most nod yes.) Take out a sheet of paper and write them down; they do not have to be in order. (Seldom do more than two or three of these "Christian" students know all—the average is for a student to know five or six of them.)

Teacher John, how many did you get? Read them.

John Can't I look them up? I know them, really!

Teacher Would you be able to look them up if you were at work, on a date, along the freeway?

John No, I dunno, maybe. Well, here goes . . . (He gives six.)

Teacher Okay, not bad. We'll get the list together. (Have others make contributions.) Maybe you should know all the Ten Commandments if you think they should be followed. Let's see. Let's look at this one. "Thou shalt not kill." What do you think that means, Terri?

Terri It means what it says. You shouldn't kill anybody.

Teacher Just people, then, not animals? We can kill animals?

Harry Yeah, for food.

Terri What about sport? I think that killing just for trophies is wrong.

Harry Come on, you probably think it's wrong to kill flies. You don't eat them.

Teacher Terri, you obviously dislike killing unless it has a good purpose. What about killing for self-defense, or maybe in a war? Is either of those excluded by that command "Thou shalt not kill?"

Terri Maybe it's okay to kill in self-defense, but I wouldn't fight in a war.

Joan A person has a right to protect himself, don't you agree (addresses me)?

Teacher What do you think Jesus meant when he said?

> Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also . . . (Read Matthew 5:28-45).

Joan I'm not sure. Maybe he was speaking about petty fights.

John My dad's a deacon, and he says if someone starts a fight with me, I'd better finish it.

Terri (To teacher) You don't expect someone just to stand and take a beating, do you? What would you do?

Teacher Well, I'm not completely sure if we should get into that right now. What we certainly want to do is to study the Bible to better understand what God means. Sometimes the principles are a little more difficult than just reciting the Ten Commandments. Do you know what a

principle is? It is a fundamental truth, an overriding ideal, upon which specific rules are based. The principle is the essential aspect of a law or teaching. For example, Jesus healed on the Sabbath. When he did so he was technically working; consequently, he seemed to be breaking the law of the Sabbath. Jesus told the Pharisees, however, that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Jesus concluded that it was a better principle to do good on the Sabbath even if he broke the technical law.

Heather How can a person know what the principle is in different situations?

Teacher Heather, would you read John 16:13? (Read aloud.) Can you apply that to this question?

Heather It says the Holy Spirit will guide us to truth. Does that mean he will help us find answers?

Teacher I believe so. Now, I as your teacher am also a learner. What the Bible says is always right and true, but what I claim that it says is subject to error. You and I both must be careful about what we claim. For instance, I might ask you what we discussed about certain passages and what conclusions we came to, but I won't ask you exactly what a passage means. I'll also ask you to give reasons and support for your answers, and you should ask the same of me.

John You mean that on tests there's not going to be one right answer? How will you grade us?

Teacher John, I'll evaluate your answers based on your use of reason and biblical support.

Teacher Here's a problem (designed by Harvard professor Lawrence Kohlberg) to test your moral reasoning:

> In Europe a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging 10 times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and considered breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

Analyze this problem, and justify your reaction and response. (Give three minutes.) Remember that the *why* is just as important as the action itself. Who would like to volunteer an answer? (Several give answers.)

John I'd steal the drug to save my wife. I think that the guy who had the drug was unfair to ask so much money. I figure that her life is more important than anything else.

Teacher You think that stealing would be okay in that circumstance? What about the Ten Commandments? You said that they should always be followed.

John You tricked me.

Teacher Maybe. What about it, John? Does the law "Thou shalt not steal" apply?

John It's an exception. A life is more important than property.

Teacher That is a very insightful statement, but the property is not yours. You know, a dilemma is a very tricky situation because the questioner fails to give you other possibilities. Besides stealing or not stealing, what could be done?

Alice Heinz could petition in court to have the drug administered to his wife.

Teacher A possibility. Anything else?

Joan He could go to the press and expose the guy. Maybe press pressure will make him sell the drug cheaper.

Teacher Not bad. That tactic is often used in the U.S.

Harry He could pray for God to do something about the situation.

Teacher Why, what good would that do?

Harry A lot of good. Man, what kind of Bible teacher are you? Jesus said that he would answer prayers.

Teacher Well, John, do you believe that God answers such prayers?

John Sure, I guess, but I would steal the drug just to make sure.

Terri Boy, this is hard. I guess we know that the Bible says that God does miracles. It seems like Paul even said that God would always give a way of escape. In a hard situation, though, it's easy to forget God's promises.

Teacher Good. Does anyone know what the Bible says about healing?

Harry I think in the book of James it says we are to pray for the sick, doesn't it?

Teacher Does it?

Harry Don't you know?

Teacher Don't you? Listen, you've got to know for yourself. Is there such a thing as divine intervention? Does God actually perform miracles? Can God give answers to people who pray to him? If you answer yes, then your actions should reflect that belief. James also wrote, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:17).

Heather It seems like you're trying to confuse us.

Teacher Does it? Heather, do you believe that God answers prayers?

Heather Yes.

Teacher When you face situations and dilemmas, do you always believe that?

Heather No. But I know that I should.

Teacher Neither do I, but I know that I had better depend more on God. Would you, Terri, read Proverbs 3:5 and 6. (Reads.) Now, that's a super promise, isn't it? It's more than a memory verse if it's applied. You see, ethics (or morality) is actually getting your mind focused on what you believe, then getting your actions to follow your belief. As a Christian, however, it is more than a conscious decision. Using good moral judgment is a matter of depending

on God. In fact, each person's whole ethical structure is wrapped up in something called a "world view." We'll talk about that tomorrow.

A questioning session like this one stimulates the mind and spirit. The whole course isn't structured around this approach, but the approach is central to the goals of the course. The major goal is to get kids to begin to practice their beliefs.

THE course also includes an in-depth study of world view. I lecture some on the definition that a world view is the sum total of a person's beliefs about God, Nature, Man, Truth, and Life. This lecture is followed by an essay assignment which covers numerous questions in the different categories. Students may use any source for help, but they must always include a scriptural view as well. Students are asked to answer such questions as: How does God make himself known to man? How can one know truth? Is there life after death? The students find this a challenge, and their answers provide the course with lively stimulating discussions.

A second part of the world-view study is to examine the reasoning given by others for actions. I ask them to look at seven prominent ones. We do this study after I ask if they think that every person has a system of ethics. Many are sure that murderers or robbers do not have any system of morality. People, no matter how bad, usually have some guidelines they try to follow consistently. In fact, these guidelines can be observed from their actions. The categories I use are ones I've found useful in describing ethical judgments. These categories are not tested for accuracy nor are they designed to be "truth." People may:

1. Follow the laws, rules, and policies of a business.
2. Follow culturally approved traditions of a group, family, or ethnic group.
3. Follow a personal sense of justice and integrity.
4. Follow a desire to have personal happiness, fulfillment, satisfaction.
5. Follow a sense of fairness.
6. Follow a sense of practicality, whatever works to obtain success.
7. Follow the understood guidelines of a holy book—Bible, Koran, etc.

These categories are not meant to be inclusive of the reasoning for all ethical judgment, but they are a starting point. We look at examples of reasoning from newspaper articles, T.V. shows, commercials, slogans, hypothetical examples, and personal observations. We then see if we can pinpoint the reasoning behind actions.

A further aspect of the study of ethics deals with interpretation of Scripture. Why do people have diverse views of morality when based on the same holy book—the Bible? Young people find this problem of morality very confusing. While they like individuality, they also like consistency. Students need to begin a serious study of hermeneutics. I introduce a subject such as the drinking of alcoholic beverages, the participation in a war, the practice of euthanasia, and then ask students to look up as many passages as can be found. The next step is to ask questions:

1. Who is speaking? To whom? Why? How?
2. What are the circumstances of the passage? The context and events?
3. What language (figurative, archaic, meaning in original) aspects should be noted?
4. What cultural considerations should be understood?
5. What other passages seem to shed light on this passage?
6. What appears to be the principle(s) involved?
7. What have respected theologians and commentators said about the passage?

When students go through the system, they usually arrive at some deeper insights than if they were simply to discuss the subject in class. Many times I will ask certain students to give their views on the controversial subject and insist that they justify their reasoning.

These sections are only a part of the course. Several hours are spent on studies of Jesus' comments on the law, Paul's interpretation of law and liberty, and the Holy Spirit's function in decision-making. Another section concerns itself with developing a Christian conscience.

Getting students into a pattern of internalized Christian thinking cannot be accomplished simply by the inclusion of a certain Bible curriculum; however, it seems that students do more internalizing when they do a lot of self-examination and serious thinking about Scripture. This course in ethics is one attempt to get them there. ■

Bonnie Shellnut is English department chairperson at Southfield Christian School in Southfield, Michigan.

Self-Esteem for Young Saints

EUGENE D. WESTRA

We are pleased to introduce the new editor of Thinking Thirteen, Eugene D. Westra, currently curriculum coordinator and consultant for Christian Schools International in District 6. Westra is also well-known for his work in the education department at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, for the past two years. His special expertise for this column comes from his fourteen years of teaching at Holland Christian Middle School in Michigan.

CELIA, thirteen, dark-eyed, a little taller than most girls in her class, came hesitantly into my office, both wanting and yet not wanting to talk to me. "My folks really gave it to me last night at supper," she began. "Mom said we are all very evil—I'm evil and I have a sinful nature, my body is bad, my thoughts are sick, my questions are wrong—"

"All that, eh?" I said gently.

"Yeah, I guess I'm nothing, a piece of dirt. I'm no good for anything or anyone, or for myself." She sank deeper into the padded black chair next to my desk. As Celia spoke, I noted sadly that she had picked up all the possible negative feelings that could be extracted from a family talk about our broken condition as sinful persons. Whatever was said by Mom and Dad about redemption and healing was missed.

I was deeply grieved for this lively thirteen-year-old, so tragically morose and despairing about herself. She willingly agreed to meet with a group of students to talk about self-value. The group meetings, based on a study of Psalm 8 and Romans 8, helped Celia and her friends to correct the distortion of abnegation in the ruin of graceless depravity.

Too many Christians believe self-esteem is based on our own rationality, which can create our own reality. Ayn Rand eloquently urges this rationalist view in *Atlas Shrugged*, as does Nathaniel Branden in *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*. Celia needs to know, instead, that our self-esteem is founded in the perfect Son of God, in Jesus Christ.

In all of our dialogue with teenagers and children of any age, we need the vocabulary of hope, love, and faith in Christ, who has the victory over the lack of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Throughout life, every person seeks to perceive and understand self, but this striving to clarify and interpret one's own person is a unique part of the process for the adolescent.

Charlotte Mason, the renowned pedagogue of Great Britain several generations ago, asserted that "every child is born a person." That is, each youth is born a unique person with latent wholeness. The Holy Scriptures reveal that the unwrapping or unfolding of the personality is the work of the Holy Spirit through the agency of the Christian community of parents, relatives, friends, and teachers. Teachers are called to sow into, cultivate, and feed children as the Holy Spirit empowers and enables the unfolding process toward the realization of wholeness in personality. Teachers who mediate the unfolding power of the Holy Spirit to children are crucially important. Recent research on self-esteem of persons in the evangelical community conducted by researchers at Taylor University concluded that mere knowledge of God's acceptance, forgiveness, and love did not develop self-esteem. However, when the acceptance, forgiveness, and love of God was mediated through interaction of God's ministering servants, self-esteem was measurably enhanced. It is clear that teachers and other helpers of children play a significant

role in the development of self-esteem. As Christ received children, valued them, touched them, and identified them as Kingdom persons, so teachers are called to demonstrate Christlike hospitality to enable young people to develop healthy self-esteem.

Particularly, the twelve to fourteen-year-olds are busy with the emergence of new feelings and new physical growth. The excitement of exploration, of trying on different personas, can be both bewildering and exhilarating. For those who experience teaching these young people, the emotional content of a school day encompasses the full range of feelings. Teachers who welcome the enrichment of both positive and negative emotion in the classroom accept and appreciate the normal God-ordained development of God's children as they work through their calling-stages.

Dr. Mary Petter Vander Goot emphasizes the need for enriched emotions in the classroom in her forthcoming book (*Educating for Responsible Emotion*, Baker Books). Vander Goot acknowledges that teachers eagerly welcome positive emotions from children, but some teachers stifle negative emotions as being invalid or unchristian. Students become repressed and guilt-ridden as a result. Teachers need to open up opportunities for constructive expression of the full range of youth emotion in classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds.

Mario, a twelve-year-old sixth grader, possessed an exceptional sensitivity toward the underdog—anyone who was the victim of injustice at school. He became angry but he was prohibited from showing or revealing his anger; his teacher summarily labeled all anger as unbecoming to a Christian young man. Mario felt guilty, wrong, naughty, and confused. His personhood was to some degree devalued by the narrow spectrum of emotion allowed by the teacher.

Teachers can enhance full personhood or deny it. A child's developing self-image is fragile, and teachers can substantially enhance the wholeness needed for young saints on pilgrimage. The Lord has created us to be his image-bearers—designed us to be the crown of his creation already as children. The questions we must ask ourselves as teachers are these: Will we affirm what God has done or will we neglect his wonderful work in children? Will we enhance the self-esteem of these "entrusted ones" or will we deny children their birthright—a wholesome self-esteem?

Celia's parents need us to help them open the Scriptures again to reform our way to viewing God's youthful servants. Mario needs teachers who can be holy receivers of the full range of human emotion in the classroom in order to realize the integrity needed for responsible discipleship. "Truly, God is good" (Psalm 73;1). This good God is making his servants new in Jesus Christ. Therein lies self-esteem for the Lord's young saints. ■

DOCKSIDERS are out. Pink basketball shoes with untied laces are in. Oxford shirts and blouses are passé. Camp shirts are popular. Someone ought to write a social history of American high school fashion. I would read it—at least parts of it. I might skip the section covering about twenty years ago, when I attended a suburban Chicago high school. The sight of madras shirts and the scent of English Leather still make me panic. I never knew exactly what to wear, how to groom my hair, and which phrases to utter. None of us did. Worst of all, adults seemed to have the uncanny ability to see right through us.

As any teacher knows, secondary education is far more than classes, lessons, textbooks, and exams. High schools are social greenhouses where transparent seedlings struggle for identities. I believe television is now a very important influence in the formation of secondary students' identities.

Consider the current popularity of videocassette recorders among young people. During my teenage years, we sneaked into the adult world by smoking cigarettes behind the garage. Today's teens gather around the tube to view R-rated films rented from the local video shop. In some parts of North America, R-rated videotapes are the major attraction at teenage parties.

The Christian community is far from immune to this problem. Several studies of viewing habits at Christian high schools have documented the VCR's effects on viewing standards. Twice as many Christian young people are likely to watch R-rated films in the "privacy" of their home than to view them in public at a movie theater. Producers have responded to the new market by

Identities and Images

QUENTIN J. SCHULTZE

financing dozens of morally condemnable stories about teenage sexuality.

Consider also the clothing popularized by television programs. "Miami Vice" has probably sold more cotton sport jackets than all of the advertisements in all of the media. Last spring's high school proms resembled Don Johnson look-alike contests.

Music Television (MTV) peddles more than records and rock stars. The cable channel promotes values, attitudes, and actions—all of the "necessary" ingredients in contemporary life styles. Stars such as Madonna and Bruce Springstein are the new pedagogues of puberty, teaching other rock celebrities how to mobilize the youth market.

Far more than before, the visual media are in the business of selling identities to young people. How shall Christian schools respond?

Christian educators ought to be at the forefront of the movement for visual literacy, because Christian youth must learn to "read" visual stories as critically as they do books and articles. Although traditional literacy is foundational, visual literacy is certainly as important for living the Christian life.

I find that most of my college students have never been introduced to the ways that television and film use images to communicate. Except for a rudimentary understanding of plot, they are visually illiterate. In the United States, eighty percent of them have never viewed drama on public broadcasting. Nearly all of them think that television news is simply a reflection of what is occurring in the world. They strongly like some films, but are unable to explain why they like them—or even what "like" means.

It is too much to ask Christian secondary schools to include visual literacy in their educational objectives? What other institutions should be responsible for changing young people from watchers to critical viewers?

I've frequently heard the major objections: there is no room in the curriculum; there are no qualified teachers; parents would be upset; curricular materials are unavailable. There is some truth to these objections, but each of them can be overcome.

A full-semester course in the visual media is unnecessary if videotapes and films are used for critical evaluation in a variety of courses throughout the curriculum. A historical docudrama could be evaluated in light of the actual historical evidence. A film version of a classic novel could be contrasted with the themes and characters found in the novel. A "Nova" or "Cosmos" program could be assessed by a physics or chemistry class.

My discussions with teachers suggest that most of them are adequately critical of the visual media to use videotapes and films effectively in the classroom. No school needs a full-time teacher of courses on visual literacy. All we really need in most schools is one instructor willing to prepare and launch a four to six-week course. Administrators and parents at first will be skeptical. In the end, they will be the major supporters of such a course.

Unpublished curricular materials are available from Christian Schools International ("Christians in a Media World") and several Canadian and U.S. teachers who have written their own. Drop me a note for more information.

Effective visual literacy courses involve parents in many of the student assignments. Most families rarely discuss or evaluate together what they watch. Viewing as a family, keeping a household television journal, and establishing program-selection standards can be valuable assignments.

BECAUSE of their stronger parental support and shared world view, the Christian schools have an excellent opportunity to develop creative and effective methods of teaching visual literacy. The visual media are simply too influential in the lives of young people to be ignored by the schools. After all, teenagers are transparent seedlings rooted partly in the fertile soil of the covenant and partly in the barren dirt of the fall. Our prayer is that their use of the media may nourish strong identities reflecting the grace of our triune God. ■

Quentin J. Schultze, editor of our new media column, is professor of communication arts and sciences at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. His upcoming book, **Television: Manna from Hollywood,** *a Zondervan publication, will be available early in 1987.*

Nelle A. Vander Ark Speaker, Author, Educator

H.J. BARON

Nelle Vander Ark is a woman of stature among us as Christian educators. Thousands have been her students, more thousands have heard her speak, and even more thousands have read her articles and books of meditations. After forty-five years of serving the kingdom through Christian education, Nelle retired this past May. Her range of experiences and service testifies to the peculiar gifts the Lord entrusted to her. Nelle Vander Ark, in those forty-five years, has taught all the subjects in grades 4-8, has taught not only English in junior and senior high but also Latin, algebra, geometry, biology, speech, typing, shorthand, Bible; has coached girls basketball and the junior high choir at Oakdale; has served C.S.I. as a Language Arts Curriculum Consultant; has taught a variety of college courses in English and education, both at Covenant and Calvin College; and for the last eleven years has taught English, education, and religion at R.B.C. This remarkable speaker, author, and educator submitted herself recently to an interview.

Q *How did it all begin?*

A It began when I learned to read before I started school. My mother helped me to learn the sounds of letters, and before long I was reading the Bible and had my own copy of the Hymnal. That created a problem when I started first grade, though. I wasn't given a book right away, and I couldn't see how I could learn anything without a book. After two frustrating weeks, the teacher put me in grade two. But that wasn't all good. In fact, I've believed ever since that skipping a grade is unwise. Pressure and peer reaction often make it a painful experience for the young child. But anyway, I did well enough in school and eventually discovered that I not only liked to learn but that I also liked to teach.

Q *Was teaching "in your blood" from the beginning?*

A Well, maybe it was, but I didn't know it. My childhood dreams included being a mother of ten children, owner of a softball team, and a Greyhound bus driver. When I started college, I took business subjects. Also, influenced no doubt by my father's library of theological books, I felt a strong pull toward theology. So, I didn't really intend to be a teacher. At first it was a job when I needed a job. Then after seven years of teaching, I had to make a critical decision whether or not to continue. After going through a deeply spiritual experience, I knew the Lord had his hand on my life. Then I knew that I was called of God to teach. But my theological bent has stayed with me all my life.

Q *Which is obvious through the books you've written on the Psalms and on Isaiah.*

A Yes; I have been privileged to have had the opportunity to teach Bible at many grade levels, to many adult study groups, and at RBC where I've taught Isaiah, the Psalms, and Introduction to Biblical Interpretation regularly. And that led to those two books you mentioned.

Q *Your Bible teaching has even gone beyond the North American boundaries, I believe.*

A Yes, mostly because many of my students come from all over the world, I've been invited to speak in various places. Some years ago I had the opportunity to work in a church in Thessalonica, teaching the Bible every night for two weeks. Though women are expected to maintain a rather low profile in Greece, I was also asked to visit neighboring villages to teach and "give a message."

I also spent six weeks in Japan a few years ago and instructed youth groups, minister groups, and seminarians.

Q *You've had the opportunity to teach such a variety of subjects in a variety of places. Are there some highlights you care to mention?*

A Oh, there are so many. I coached girls basketball at Oakdale. Our arch rival was Southwest Christian. Two years in a row we beat them for the city championship. Not all competition is bad; sometimes we play to win.

We started a newspaper at Oakdale. A high point for me was every time the paper came out with the best writing by students in grades 4-9.

Another high point early in my experience was to have one of my students score 100 in a regional algebra test, and I wasn't even a math teacher.

And I should mention my experience at Covenant College. I still stand amazed at the confidence Nick Barker, the present dean, had in me. From day one he let me know he felt I was qualified to teach whatever needed teaching. If there's any one person who established me well professionally, it's Nick Barker. I had five delightful years there.

And Honduras—I must mention that. I spent a week there in a Christian school, speaking to a student body not all of whom were Christians. It was a challenging and tremendously enriching time in my life and certainly one of the high points.

Q *You've also had numerous opportunities of speaking to fellow teachers at conferences and conventions. What's been your message?*

A I've reminded them, among other things, of what Alfred Whitehead said in *The Aims of Education:* that education ought to provide adventure, precision, and generalization. A lot of what we teach is in the area of precision. But you can be precise and dead. Adventure must remain a part of us. That's what I love to talk about with people: how do you experience the adventure in teaching, the adventure in learning? But also this: how do you help students recognize their gifts and help them become what they're able to become?

Q *When you think back over those forty-five years of teaching, can you identify a special "Nelle Vander Ark" approach to education?*

A I believe in personalized education. I think a teacher should show a genuine interest in the person. Through the years I've been able to know my students as people, though not as much as I'd like. But I've made a real effort, especially in my composition classes, to get to know my students very soon so that their interests and needs could guide me in my teaching. I should also say that the place of song has been very central in my life. In my commencement address at RBC in May I stressed that truth must have not only a structure but also a lilt. And I think that's been one of my aims in teaching: how do I make this subject, this lesson, this fact sing? It's clear from the Bible that the whole drama of revelation *sings.* We tend to be heavy on structure. But real learning must work its way into the student's being and effect real change. You need structure to do that—and facts. And then you need to give that truth a lilt to touch the heart of the learner.

Q *What advice would you give to a young teacher starting out now?*

A Make sure you have an anchor place. Know why you're teaching—because you need a job or as a response to a sense of calling? Be confident that the Lord equips those he calls. Give place to joy, the joy that comes from being faithful to the Lord's call. And don't get stuck in a rut. I never taught a course the same way twice. Another thing: cultivate the positive. Don't brood on the wrongs; make an effort to refuse to think negatively, for it's spiritually destructive. And very important: relate your Christian teaching to real life in the real world.

Q *I can't imagine Nelle Vander Ark merely resting on her laurels after official retirement. Have you made plans for the immediate future?*

A I'll be teaching half time at RBC, teaching literature and journalism. And of course I'll continue leading Bible study groups in area CRC and RCA churches. And I expect to do some occasional consulting work in church education; I did my tenure paper on that at Covenant College.

Q *Would you be ready to start over?*

A There's nothing that excites me more than teaching. That's still true. And there's nothing I'd rather do than encourage people to teach. Yes, I think I'm ready to start over. If I got a call from a foreign country asking me to help them get Christian education started, that would excite me. And I think I still have the stamina to do it too.

Q *I find it inspiring that after forty-five years in the classroom you're still far from "teacher burnout." It's clear that you've experienced much joy in your work.*

A I am tremendously grateful for the life God gave me, for the many ways in which I have been privileged to serve him. My gratitude includes those times of deep trials, for I found that after I had suffered a little I was better able to reach those who were suffering. For me, trials led to in-depth learning. And to much reading of the Psalms, which made me a much better teacher of the Psalms. But I've enjoyed my work immensely, and I hope I've helped others see how they can enjoy their work too. In God's name I've been a "gladly, madly-teacher," and that's the story of my life. ■

H.J. Baron is professor of English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Essay

Hidden
in the maze
of cursive scribblings,
deep
within the
leaden ramblings
of simplistic,
run-on
disjointed
boy thoughts,
the flesh
and bones
and heart of someone—
whole and special—
appeared,
cried out:
"Please understand me!"

Bryce Fopma

Teaching Christianly:

Recenty the Dordt College Studies Institute (a special research component of the College) has been working on the development and formulation of a Christian theory of teaching. The goal of this project is to develop and construct resource materials of practical use to Christian elementary and secondary teachers. Earlier this year, at the B.J. Haan Educational Conference held at Dordt College, Dr. John Van Dyk (who heads the project) presented several lectures on the work of the Studies Institute. This article, the first of a series of four, reviews some of the central themes of these lectures. Dr. Van Dyk is professor of philosophy and serves as the director of the recently established Dordt College Center for Educational Services.

WHAT, in your opinion, are the essential characteristics of effective Christian teaching? In a survey conducted last fall we put this question to some 250 teachers in northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota. The answers were very revealing. They disclosed that there appear to be as many opinions about Christian teaching as there are teachers. There turned out to be a surprising diversity in approach. What one teacher considers to be central and indispensable, for example, is often merely peripheral to another.

What accounts for such diversity? The midwestern air? I doubt it. I suspect that a national survey would deliver the same result. Does the diversity of opinion merely reflect the individuality of the teacher? Maybe. The response to a second question in the survey, however, revealed another more worrisome factor. We asked: What kind of assistance do you need if you are to be a more effective Christian teacher? Again a multitude of answers emerged. Yet a surprising number of teachers responded as follows: "I need help in understanding what it means to be a Christian teacher. I am so busy teaching that I have no time to reflect on what I am actually doing. To be honest, I don't think I really know what Christian teaching is!" This answer indicates that in all likelihood the diversity of opinion about the nature of teaching cannot simply be ascribed to fresh air or to individuality. Rather, such diversity suggests that many of our teachers have no clear idea, or at best only a fuzzy notion, of what teaching—let alone Christian teaching—actually is.

The frequent absence of a clear idea of what it means to be teaching Christianly reflects a peculiar situation in the Christian educational community. The fact is that among us Reformed people—supporters of Christian education for whom the Christian school is as natural as organ music in the worship service—instructional theory is a rather neglected topic. True, Christian educators have done much excellent work in areas other than instruction, such as philosophy of education, curriculum development, and learning theory. An organization such as Christian Schools International, for example, is known largely for its work with Christian textbooks and other curricular materials. Learning theory and educational psychology, too, have attracted and continue to attract much attention. The nature of teaching Christianly, however, has not yet been a subject of fruitful and sustained reflection. Indeed, things have changed little since the days of Dr. Jaarsma, the well-known education professor at Calvin College some thirty years ago. A major work of his is his book *Human Development, Learning and Teaching*. In spite of the promising title, only nine of the 300 pages are devoted to a consideration of the nature of teaching.

WHY such a dearth in an area that constitutes the very heart of Christian education? There are many reasons. I single out three. The first one is the tenacious assumption that Christian teachers in a Christian classroom automatically teach Christianly. In other words, take a Bible-believing teacher, put him with a roomful of covenant children, and presto! We have instant

What Is It?

JOHN VAN DYK

Christian education! This view, I dare say, is quite wrong. A Christian teacher, unfortunately, does not guarantee Christian teaching, any more than that a Christian biologist or philosopher guarantees Christian biology or philosophy. It is quite possible that as Christians saved by grace we remain nevertheless quite secular in certain areas and aspects of our life. Synthesis, that is, the unholy combination of Christian and non-Christian patterns of thought and action, cleaves to us all. And so, while it is true that Christian teaching presupposes a Christian teacher, the reverse is not always true. A teacher can be a dedicated Christian, one who sincerely loves the Lord, and yet his teaching activity can be governed by worldly educational philosophies.

A second reason for the scarcity of Christian instructional reflection is the widespread and common assumption, prevalent among many educators, that teaching is merely a function of learning. That is, presumably if we understand how children learn, we also automatically know how to teach them. Already over twenty years ago educators such as N.L. Gage pointed out that such reasoning is quite fallacious. Just as doctors need to know more than merely how the body works, so the teacher needs to know more than merely how a child learns. Knowing how children learn, important though that is, does not automatically decide the how, what, or why of teaching.

Finally, a third reason why instructional theory often gets short shrift may be the pervasive misconception that teaching is an art that can neither be learned nor understood, and therefore requires no examination or discussion. Teachers, it is believed, are born, not made, so there is no point to talking about teaching. This approach, in some ways suggested by Gilbert Highet nearly thirty-five years ago (*The Art of Teaching*), continues both to generate controversy and to attract a following.

What shall we say about this view? Is teaching an art? Yes, of course. But, in a sense, so is engineering and surgical practice and designing a geometry textbook. These, too, require artistry and creativity. Yet in these activities one can discern patterns and structure. Even such artistic activities as painting and composing have, as Gage pointed out more than twenty years ago in his reply to Highet, inherent order and lawfulness.

Teaching is an art, yes, but it is more than an art. Educators such as Eble, Kohl, and Tom have proposed that we see teaching not as an art but as a craft. Such a suggestion strikes me as helpful. The concept of craft combines both the universal structure of an activity and the personal dimensions that the individual practitioner brings to the activity. What is the craft of Christian teaching? In a following article we shall examine and attempt to answer this question. ■

John Van Dyk is professor of philosophy at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

IDEA BANK

LAURA NIEBOER

Slogan Contest

Get ready for the upcoming Children's Book Week in November by organizing a school-wide reading slogan contest. Have students create posters based on reading slogans they have come up with (i.e., "Wanted: Good Books" or " If You Want to Succeed—Read!"). Post these around school for all to enjoy and have the judges choose a winner. If you wish, organize categories according to age and name several winners. The prize? — A book, of course!

Spelling Mobile

A pleasant way for students to practice their spelling words is to have them make a spelling mobile.

Let the students create a construction paper shape for each word on their list, label it with the word, and hang it from a mobile.

An alternative is to keep an ongoing spelling mobile which is hung above the student's desk. Rather than create a shape for each word every week, the student could work only on those words which are most difficult for her, or perhaps on those words she spelled incorrectly on the test.

Predictable Books

Predictable books are books with a repetitive pattern. These may be patterns of words, phrases, sentences, rhymes, cultural sequences, or plots. The language flows naturally and the children can quickly begin to predict what the author is going to say and how he is going to say it.

These books can be terrific instructional resources for teachers of beginning or remedial readers. Predictable books can help to spur the acquisition of sight vocabulary, encourage the use of context clues when encountering unfamiliar words, and create more positive feelings about reading aloud.

Bibliography of Predictable Books

Baum, Arline, and Joseph Baum. *One Bright Monday Morning.* New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1962.

Becker, John. *Seven Little Rabbits.* New York, N.Y.: Scholastic, 1973.

Bonne, Rose, and Alan Mills. *I Know an Old Lady.* New York, N.Y.: Rand McNally, 1961.

Carle, Eric. *The Grouchy Ladybug.* New York, N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977.

Carle, Eric. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar.* Cleveland, Ohio: Collins World, 1969.

de Regniers, Beatrice Schenk. *Catch a Little Fox.* New York, N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1970.

de Regniers, Beatrice Schenk. *May I Bring a Friend?* New York, N.Y.: Atheneum, 1972.

Emberly, Barbara. *Drummer Hoff.* Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Galdone, Paul. *The Three Billy Goats Gruff.* New York, N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1973.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Over in the Meadow.* New York, N.Y.: Scholastic, 1971.

Kent, Jack, *The Fat Cat.* New York, N.Y.: Scholastic, 1971.

Lobel, Arnold. *A Treeful of Pigs.* New York, N.Y.: Greenwillow, 1979.

Martin, Bill, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear.* New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970.

Martin, Bill. *Fire! Fire! Said Mrs. McGuire.* New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.

Sendak, Maurice. *Chicken Soup with Rice.* Scholastic Press, 1962.

Wildsmith, Brian. *The Twelve Days of Christmas.* New York, N.Y.: Franklin Watts, 1972.

Food Packages

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

Reversals

Try this exercise with the child who reverses letters and/or words: Stand behind the child, both of you facing forward. Write a letter (or word) on the child's back, using your finger as a pencil and the youngster's back as the paper. The child can then write on the board or on the paper as the teacher writes on her back.

Autographs

An innovative way for students to practice their handwriting skills is to allow them to trade and collect autographs from their classmates. First, let them make an autograph book. Then encourage them to collect as many autographs as possible and to enter their own name in other's books as neatly as possible!

BOOK REVIEWS

DONALD OPPEWAL

Some teacher resource material or textbooks come and go. Some return to live in reprint or later editions. The following are those that have reappeared and warrant another look by Christian educators seeking help in thinking Christianly about what they do - Editor.

RECENT REPRINTS

STORY OF THE OLD WORLD
(2nd edition),
by John De Bie
TEACHERS GUIDE
by William Evenhouse
Christian Schools International, 1984
Text: $14.00, Guide $15.70 pb.

This classic world history text, first published 30 years ago, for junior high students has little change in the content, but has different cover design and improved readability of type and layout. The *Guide,* new to this edition, contains not only additional background material and objective items for testing for knowledge, but also numerous ideas for teaching students to relate the material to today's situations. An introductory chapter relates this area of social studies to other curriculum documents in the CSI publication list and helps the teacher see how world history can be used to achieve CSI goals.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THROUGH RELIGIOUS STUDIES
by Dennis Hoekstra
Calvin College Monograph Series, 1985
$1.25 pb.

This essay is a reprint of part of a monograph published originally in 1973 under the title of *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Religion and Biblical Studies.* Used by Christian Schools International for the guidance of writers of the Revelation-Response series. Still effective for teacher education and curriculum committee use. Available from Calvin College Bookstore.

UNDER GOD (fifth edition)
by William Hendricks
Christian Schools International
1984, Text, $13.19 pb.;
Teacher Guide $29.69 pb.

A popular junior high text for civics or government, the latest edition is slightly revised and updated, with recent photos and the latest information about legislation, policies, and elections. With this edition comes also a teacher guide which should help any teacher make more effective use of the student text. A hefty 273 pages, it contains objective test items on each chapter of the text, skills work sheets, role playing activities, and creative writing ideas, as well as objectives for major sections.

BOARD MEMBER'S HANDBOOK
(2nd edition)
by Philip Elve and Kenneth Swets
Christian Schools International, 1985
$8.75 pb.

An 87-page document, it describes the role of the school board in the governance of schools, operational policies, standing committee functions, and much more that represents the conventional wisdom of administrators in assisting the layman to be a responsible and efficient participant in school policy-making.

MICRO-MYTHS: EXPLORING THE LIMITS OF LEARNING WITH COMPUTERS
by Joe Nathan
Winston Press, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota
1985, 186 pp., $8.95, pb.
Reviewed by Paul Boonstra, Professor of Mathematics, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Seldom has a teaching tool emerged on the educational scene with as much fanfare as the microcomputer. Because of the impact of advertising, or because of successes reported in some areas of learning, or maybe just because of vague internal feelings that there has to be a better way, many myths about computers and education have grown up and continue to thrive. Nathan analyzes seven of these myths.

Joe Nathan is a teacher, administrator, contributing editor to a computer magazine, and, obviously, an author. He is well qualified to analyze computer/education statements. But his analysis is not based solely on his own observations. He quotes pertinent research and provides a complete bibliography of the research at the end of his work. However his book is not written as an academic treatise. Rather, it is written in a lively, free-flowing style, with many descriptions of real-life school situations.

When I read the list of myths, I expected Nathan to present arguments showing each to be totally false. Instead he carefully points out what is correct and what is not correct about each one. For example, consider myth 2: "there is such a thing as computer literacy, and every graduate of our schools needs to have it." First, Nathan presents various "definitions" of computer literacy by stating what is being done in various schools, giving arguments for each of the different approaches. Then, rather than settling the argu-

ment, he presents several assumptions that will guide those who must make decisions about "computer literacy" courses. Finally, he presents seven recommendations for the reader's consideration.

In his final chapter Nathan presents a summary of suggestions and recommended actions. His two-page checklist should be required reading for all individuals who are spending educational dollars on computers or computer software or who are making decisions about educational practices. ■

WE'VE ALL GOT SCARS: WHAT BOYS AND GIRLS LEARN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
by Raphaela Best.
Indiana University Press, 1983
Reviewed by Robert Bruinsma, The King's College, Edmonton, Alberta

A short while ago I watched the film *Not A Love Story,* a Canadian National Film Board documentary about the pornography industry in Canada. What that film made clear is that pornography is largely a matter of males depersonalizing women and wishing to exert power and control over them. Many women aid and abet this male desire to dominate and even degrade them. Hard core pornography is the extreme manifestation of the warping of sex roles in our society; assuming that a woman will always serve the coffee and that a man will always serve in a leadership capacity is a more common manifestation of the same pernicious attitude.

But what has all of this got to do with a book about elementary schooling? A lot. As Raphaela Best so lucidly documents from her intensive four-year study of peer interactions among six- to eight-year-olds, early schooling is where we learn much of what it supposedly means to be male and female in our society. Best discovers that, in addition to the stated "first curriculum" of the 3 R's, there are powerful, hidden curricula at work that socialize little girls to become second-class citizens psychologically, socially, and sexually, while little boys become victims of a macho tradition—both thus becoming incomplete people.

Lest one think that this book is simply a propaganda vehicle for a radical feminist sociological viewpoint, it is important to mention that Best is a middle-aged elementary reading specialist who began her study to attempt to discover why so many more boys than girls always ended up in her remedial reading classes. From years of observation she suspected that the reason for this common phenomenon lay more in peer group interactions among elementary school children than in any definable differences between boys and girls. She discovered, for example, that from first grade on, boys relied more on other boys than on their teacher while the converse was true for girls. While little boys soon learned to reject overt displays of affection from teacher as well as from one another, little girls had closer ties with their predominantly female teachers, and this was a primary factor in enabling them to learn to read more easily.

Best documents the social forces in the school which encourage boys to segregate themselves from girls by the second grade and which, before long, began to separate boys into *winners* and *losers* based on macho traits. This classification had a profound effect on the social life and academic performance of every boy in the third grade. Boys excluded from the "in group" were regarded as like girls and not real men. Best discovered that some of the most powerful forces in the elementary school are those that teach children the traditional role behaviors for their sex. She labels these forces the "second curriculum." This second curriculum makes clear that boys are the norm against which girls are to be measured and that girls and women exist primarily to provide supporting roles for men. Her detailed, explicit examples of the institutionalization of sex role stereotyping are based largely on transcripts of the children's own accounts. For anyone having spent some time in an elementary school culture, they have the ring of truth about them.

Best goes on to trace how the children in her school experiment with their own sexuality. This self-taught sex education, or "third curriculum," was ignored as much as possible by parents and teachers except by those who went to extremes to control it.

> The bottom line in the third curriculum was: do not have sexual relations with one another . . . . The children knew that something or other that men and women did was terribly secret. And they had a word for it, "fucking" (p. 121).

The part that adults played in the third curriculum was one of disturbed and troubled evasiveness and thus the children learned about sexual matters from other sources—primarily the media and each other. The sad result of obtaining this sex "education" from either the warped perspective of the popular media or the misinformation of peers was that these boys and girls learned almost nothing about how to relate to one another in a loving but non-exploitative way.

Are the issues raised by Best in this eminently readable book only germane to the secular, public school? Eleven years of teaching in both secular and Christian settings, from elementary through college level, convince me that we all bear scars from our own childhood that are not all that different from those chronicled by Raphaela Best in this fine but disturbing book. Reading it may help us to confront that scarring and may also challenge us to develop ways of inflicting fewer cuts and bruises on the boys and girls presently entrusted to our care. ■