

**Christian
Educators
Journal**



CEJ

More Exciting Than Dick and Jane

**I would not, could not,
in the rain.
Not in the dark. Not on a train.
Not in a car. Not in a tree.
I do not like them, Sam,
you see.
Not in a house. Not in a box.
Not with a mouse. Not with
a fox.
I will not eat them here or there.
I do not like them anywhere!**

I think one of the happiest things I've done is getting rid of Dick and Jane," says Theodor Seuss Geisel, now approaching his 83rd birthday.

Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, wrote *The Cat in the Hat* in 1957 for an educational publishing house which limited him to a list of 250 prescribed words for first graders. According to a *U.S. News & World Report* article (April 1986), he concocted *Green Eggs and Ham* when a Random House publisher bet he could not write a book using only fifty words. Geisel resisted controlled lists from thereon, believing children can absorb numerous words if given sufficient time and adequate illustrations. "You don't teach by limiting, you teach by exciting," contends the beloved doctor.

Dr. Seuss has been able to stretch minds and excite imaginations the past thirty years because nobody says he has to submit to California curriculum committees or Texas textbook taboos. Textbook publishers, on the other hand, seem to be taking a lot of blows these days, from more critics besides Dr. Seuss. California's state Board of Education, America's largest buyer of textbooks, recently rejected current standards for fourteen publishers' math books; in 1985 the same group required publishers to revise science textbooks.

Add to such efforts the criticisms of parents. A group of Tennessee Christians challenged the Hawkins County Public Schools' exclusive use of the Holt, Rinehart, Winston K-8 reading series for mention of witchcraft and magic, lack of traditional female roles, common acceptance of religions such as Islam and Indian rituals, reference in fairy tales to the fortune teller, reference to the occult, and overemphasis on

the imagination. Their objections include such selections as *The Diary of Anne Frank* (because Anne suggests all religions are equal) and the opening chapter of C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

Alabama critics complain that state social studies textbooks fail to explain why the Pilgrims came to North America and to whom they gave thanks. Columnist James J. Kilpatrick writes in a Universal Press Syndicate article (April 1986) that "it wasn't the Supreme Court that expelled God from classrooms but the textbook publishers." He reports a U.S. Department of Education study done by Paul E. Vitz of New York University on ten sets of social studies textbooks. Vitz says, "The most striking thing about these texts is the total absence of any primary religious text about typical contemporary American religious life" (*Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks*, Servant Books: 1986, p. 15).

But publishers are afraid to mention anything that might offend anybody. Their argument goes this way: "If we mention God, some atheist will object. If we mention the Bible, someone will want to know why we don't give equal time to the Koran. Every time this happens, we lose sales" (p. 79).

The refreshing observation that

emerges from all this attention on textbooks is that concerned parents and teachers are displaying an unwillingness to allow textbook publishers to design the school's course of study. Still, many teachers do rely on the textbook. Christian Schools International's 1983 textbook guide introduction states that 85 percent of all teachers teach from textbooks and about 90 percent of teacher-learner time is spent using curriculum materials. Most of us understand that the first-year teacher and the small-school teaching principal are nearly forced to depend heavily on textbook publishers to help them organize their courses. But for the most part we teachers must take the responsibility to determine first *why* we teach and then *what* we teach.

I think we can assume, from the flurry of recent criticism, that the public school sector, at least in the United States, is vitally interested in teaching facts and skills that lead to career success. Since many Canadian textbooks are published by Canadian branches of the United States publishers, those books may well cause similar concern. For many people, Christian and non-Christian alike, success is measured in terms of money and happiness; therefore, they believe schools are successful when they equip students to attain basic skills, especially communication and mathematical skills. Such thinking has inspired New York millionaire Eugene Lang to guarantee payment of college tuition for every member of a sixth grade class in East Harlem's Public School 121 who will stay in school to meet his challenge. While it is commendable to keep young people in school, we must notice that public education's focus is career

training. If the public school system were not so large and unwieldy, and if it could efficiently carry out its goals, I suspect that many current Christian school constituents would send their children to the public school. The sad fact remains that many Christian school supporters want, first of all, an education that insures their children respectable careers. Teachers who fall into the same line of thinking will look for materials that fulfill career and skill goals, but they may not be teaching Christianly. They are probably "just teaching," as Dr. John Van Dyk points out elsewhere in this issue ("Teaching Christianly: What Is It? III").

WHAT, then, constitutes Christian curriculum? How carefully do we select the materials we use? Were we to supply our schools exclusively with books by Christian publishers, could we assume that we have a Christian curriculum? Can we teach Christianly from non-Christian textbooks?

CSI's textbook guide says, "Research indicates that while students generally use curriculum material over 90 percent of their classroom time, teachers on the average spend only about ten hours selecting a series." I suspect that most of us pay little attention to a textbook publisher's philosophy. Instead, I suspect we focus on the visual appeal and choice of information. But if a teacher places great emphasis in class on the authority of the textbook, the teacher and administrator must be extra cautious about checking the publisher's philosophy. Granted, Dr. Seuss has a valid argument when he says books should excite the reader. But a book that merely excites is no more valid in the

Christian school than one that merely includes Christian references without a Christian perspective. A Christian teacher must ask, "Can I teach Christianly by using this series? Does this textbook enable me to guide students daily toward discipleship in the Kingdom of God?"

Unfortunately, some Christian publishers fail to demonstrate either a Christian perspective or an excitement. Some assume all of life's questions can be answered factually—or they are not to be asked. Some give little opportunity for creative imagination. Some equate patriotism with godliness.

Can secular textbooks be used effectively by Christian teachers? I believe they can if the teacher is alert and willing to guide the students to understand a Christian perspective in contrast to the secular one. When my students study *The Diary of Anne Frank*, we hear Anne tell Peter that she wishes he had a religion, any religion, "just to believe in something." The line offers a perfect opportunity to prompt students to consider what importance religion has in our lives, whether it really matters. Such instances enable us to help our students grapple with ideas around them, ideas which they are bound to hear outside the classroom. The Christian teacher must then assume the responsibility to guide students in developing discernment.

Perhaps the textbook publishers are telling us something we don't really want to admit. Perhaps religion, especially Christianity, no longer plays a central role in our society as Vitz claims it does. He argues in his book that "a recent Gallup Poll shows that 95 percent of the American public reports a belief in God (a figure that has remained unchanged since 1944)" (p.

87), but belief in God is not the same as a Christian commitment. If we want to really teach Christianly, we can't rely just on inclusion in our textbooks of the Salem Witch Trials, the Great Awakening, Martin Luther King's Civil Rights movement, or the Born-Again movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Putting mothers back into the kitchen and dolls into the arms of little girls does not make a reading series necessarily more Christian than one with women in non-traditional roles.

If today's textbooks really are as bland and biased as the critics contend, then Christians ought to reverse the percentages of reliance on them. Such a decision requires teachers gifted in developing curriculum to compile and dispense materials that maintain a distinct Kingdom-centered perspective. Such materials can guide students to find their place to serve now already as stewards of the King. Christian curriculum centers and Christian colleges in both Canada and the United States are eager to go on with this great challenge.

Christian teachers, perhaps the greatest challenge for all of you individually is deciding how much to rely on textbooks. Teaching from textbooks provides a sense of security, especially if the text satisfies the criteria which you believe enables you to teach Christianly. But don't avoid the risks of finding alternatives to textbooks. Perhaps you will find, as my colleagues and I have found at the junior high level, that some of the most profoundly Christian lessons our students have learned can be taught inside the doors of the local Christian nursing home. That, too, is more exciting than Dick and Jane. ■

L V G

Modeling Discovery Learning

JOEL R. BROUWER

WHAT do you believe about the way children learn? What do you believe about why children should learn? Are the things that go on in your classroom consistent with those beliefs? When I confronted those questions recently in a graduate education course, I had to admit that I wasn't satisfied with my own answers. If I really believe that children learn best when they discover, why was I doing so much talking in my high school English classes? Did all those notes my students recorded in notebooks add up to discovery, or was I simply encouraging memorization? Perhaps more importantly, how was I motivating students to learn? In too many cases, it seemed, I was assuming that students were motivated, or I was relying on artificial motivators, like tests and grades. Because I was just beginning a new nine-week class in Modern American Literature, I decided to share some of these questions with the students in that class and try some experiments that would make my practices more consistent with my beliefs.

The first two days of class I set aside to talk with the students about the purposes and procedures of education. I began by asking them on a questionnaire:

1. What is your purpose in this class? What do you intend to accomplish?
2. How should seats be arranged in order for you to learn most effectively?
3. What classroom activities, teaching strategies, and assignments help you to learn most effectively (group work, reports, discussion, lecture, worksheets, tests, quizzes, other)?
4. What do you expect a teacher to do in class?

5. What would you like a teacher to do in class so that you can learn more effectively?

6. What do you think are your primary responsibilities in this class?

THE responses were quite predictable. I received statements of purpose that bore an eerie resemblance to platitudes I've been guilty of uttering in previous first-day lectures, for example: "To discover the roots of America by reading the story of American authors." Probably the most honest response was also the most disheartening: "I intend to accomplish what you want me to accomplish and hopefully pass the class." It was clear to me that this normal group of students, some bright, some very average, hadn't thought much about why they were in this class. If they had thought about it, they assumed that goals would be spelled out for them, so they needn't set any goals for themselves. These conclusions were reinforced by answers to questions about teacher and student responsibilities. They expected the teacher to "teach," "be interesting," "make things clear that we don't understand." Student responsibilities included "learn about authors and styles," "gain insight," "get a good background for college," and "be as interested as possible." On the whole, it looked as though they expected me to be rather active, and they expected to be rather passive. The assumption seemed to be that I knew a lot, and they should sit quietly and be "as interested as possible" while I told them about it. Ironically, they also indicated a strong preference for sitting in a circle and seemed to prefer discussion over all other types of

classroom activities.

On the second day we sat in a circle as I distributed a summary of their responses to the questionnaire, and we talked about how people learn. It was a novel experience for all of us. We had always assumed that teachers were to decide what happened in classrooms and students were to perform according to teacher expectations. We were all a bit tentative and uncomfortable about looking upon ourselves as partners in this enterprise, rather than boss and workers.

The theme that the students insisted upon most was that in order for them to learn, the class had to be interesting. The implication was that making it interesting was my responsibility. My main theme, on the other hand, was that they wouldn't learn much, if anything, if they didn't take responsibility for their own education. The crux of the discussion, then, was "Who is responsible for what?" It took another day's discussion to resolve that issue.

We decided that we needed to talk longer about what we were trying to accomplish. Were we here to learn facts about American literature, or would it be more beneficial to learn a process—the process of reading with discernment? Maybe the question was a set-up, but we all agreed quite readily that we could always look up the facts, so it was a waste of time to focus our efforts on them. We used as our guideline the saying: "Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime." We set out, then, to have all the students in the class learn how to be literary critics. In addition, I distributed a handout based on a research project by William Glasser. According to Glasser, we learn 10 percent of

what we read, 20 percent of what we hear, 30 percent of what we see, 50 percent of what we both see and hear, 70 percent of what is discussed with others, 80 percent of what we experience personally (an activity in real life), and 95 percent of what we teach someone else. So we chose discussion as our method, and set aside the last three weeks of the course for each student to have either a half a period or a whole period to function as teacher to the group.

THESE decisions had quite an impact on my role in the classroom. Students still tended to look at me as final arbiter of right and wrong, but I tried to minimize that behavior. Instead, I kept encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning, and to see me as an experience-designer and a resource person. To make it more likely that this would happen, I chose works for us to read that I hadn't taught before, so that I wouldn't come to them with preconceptions and pat answers.

We began by studying Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, which I hadn't read since college. Instead of giving an introductory lecture, I turned to responsibility over to a number of students who researched Hemingway and came to class with background information. I was the resource person, helping them find pictures and information, and filling in the gaps. When we began reading the book I provided discussion questions, but I avoided the temptation to reread any literary critics, or seek out any study guides. I wanted my experience to be as fresh as theirs, because we were learning the *process* of reading a book and making judgments about it, and that process begins with a certain amount of un-

certainty and confusion. So we struggled together to figure out what sorts of people Fredric Henry and Catherine Barkley were, why they behaved as they did, and what Hemingway was trying to say about morality of war and the nature of people.

As soon as students realized that I was often as "in the dark" as they were, they felt free to advance their own hypotheses. We could then test those hypotheses against the information in the novel. Again, I was a resource person, explaining how some approaches would be more satisfying than others, cautioning against paying too much attention to Hemingway's own life while reading the novel, pointing out how sometimes students were using psychological insights to understand the characters, and other times rendering moral

judgments about their behavior, but always encouraging them to think critically about what was happening in the book. The insights generated by the group were probably different from the ones I would have offered if I had lectured, but the discussions were excellent, the insights valid, and the conclusions well supported by the evidence. Most importantly, virtually everyone in the class talked every day. They were all involved, and learning. Though we sat in a circle and students were free to choose where they'd sit day by day, discipline problems were minimal.

I began preparing the class early for the experience of being teachers. They admitted from their own experience that they learned things best when they taught them,

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but most of them weren't eager to tackle the challenge in the classroom. Again, I encouraged them to take responsibility for their own learning and to use me as a resource person.

Their assignment was to choose a modern American poet to teach to the class. I clarified the assignment by giving them a suggested outline for their teaching experience, beginning with a short biography of the poet, then an explanation of one or two poems, then a student-led discussion of one or two more poems, followed by an evaluation of some sort. To help students choose a poet to work with, I wrote an annotated bibliography of 30 poets, including only those whose work I knew well enough to help students do their research and focus their thinking. I also helped many of them find films, records, and other material that would make their teaching experience more interesting for the rest of the class.

Most of the anxiety about the poetry teaching project came from the time allotted for it. Some students were assigned a half a period, some a whole period, and all thought they'd be finished in five minutes. I agreed that it would be a tremendous burden if they believed that they had to be experts, filling the entire class period with wisdom by themselves. If, though, they prepared to the point that they were competent, chose poems that would grab our attention, and designed questions and experiences that would involve us in discussions of the poets' meanings and images, the time would fly. Still anxious, they tried it. When the three weeks of student-led classes were finished, students who were allotted half a period felt cheated because they had so much more material than they could cover in 25 minutes. As each student taught, the others took notes (again, as resource person, I provided a note-taking guide), the material appeared on the final exam, and everyone did well.

The poetry-teaching experience was one of the most exhilarating of the course, both for me and for the students. Two specific occurrences let the student-teachers know they were doing well. First, a friend of a class member got permission from her English teacher to come to our class for her friend's presentation. She was so impressed that she asked for permission to do her own work independently while coming to our class for the entire three weeks. Secondly, I was sick one day and a substitute, a man who has substituted in our community for years, took over my classes. For this class I simply asked him to designate a couple of students to take notes for my benefit, and told him that in this class students taught themselves. Not only did things go without a hitch, but at the end of the class period the substitute told the class it was the most enjoyable experience he'd had in all his years of teaching.

WHY bother to report all this? Because I've been teaching for fifteen years, and I've fallen into some bad habits. Probably the worst is that I've allowed my classes to become more and more focused on me, and on what I know and what I'm interested in. In the process, I've created some dissonance between what I believe about education and what I do in my classroom. The experience I had with my Modern American Literature class reaffirms for me that my beliefs are valid, and when I have the courage and take the time to act on them, the results will be satisfying for my students and for me. Students should be seen as partners with teachers in the process of their education, not simply as passive agents that we as teachers act upon. Students should be challenged with the primary responsibility they have for their own education. Teachers should be resource people, encouragers, models, fellow seekers

Students should be challenged with the primary responsibility they have for their own education.

for truth—not repositories of knowledge that is endlessly poured out for students to record and regurgitate. Ideally, we as teachers should make ourselves unnecessary by the time we're finished with a student, because that student should be equipped to take full responsibility for his or her own learning. The best compliment I could receive was the comment that one particularly perceptive senior wrote on her evaluation of the Modern American Literature class: "You have *totally changed* my philosophy of education. I've thoroughly enjoyed this class." ■

Joel R. Brouwer teaches English at Unity Christian High School in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Scientist's Psalm

*Praise the Lord, created thing!
Let all space with praises ring!
Space itself, Hosanna sing
Unto God, Jehovah, King!*

I

*Particles in smallest cracks,
Known but by emulsion tracks:
Let all mesons praise Messiah!
Songs of praise mount ever higher!*

*Alpha, beta, gamma rays:
Join the chorus of His praise!
Be you ultimate or not,
All created, all begot.*

*Parity's been overthrown—
Something He had always known.
Antimatter, fragments odd,
Quantum jumps to praise our God.*

II

*Now from unexplored domains
Up to where the atom reigns;
Forged from state once hyperdense,
Praise your Maker, elements!*

*Atoms of increasing mass,
Nuclei from solar gas,
Orbital electrons twinning:
Praise the God who set you spinning!*

*Rare-earth metal, halogen,
Amorphous glass or crystalline,
Solid, liquid, vapor phase:
Join in everlasting praise!*

III

*Molecules from atoms made
According to the plans He laid:
Praise the God of Angstrom units!
God of Abraham—and Kunitz!*

*Carbon compounds by the score,
Hundreds, thousands, millions more;
Helical configuration
Structured into God's creation.*

*Proteins now and DNA,
Intertwining overlay;
Prototype of living cell:
Praise the God of Israel!*

IV

*Viruses and protozoa:
Praise the faithful God of Noah!
Coral on the ocean shelf:
Praise the God of life itself!*

*Mildew, mosses, redwood trees,
Birds in air and fish in seas,
Crawling cockroach, roaring lion:
Praise Jehovah, God of Zion!*

*Man and woman, new dimension—
Culture, science and invention;
You who can subdue the earth:
Praise the God who gave you birth!*

V

*Earth we live on, merely one
Planet of a minor sun:
Join this entire galaxy,
Showing forth His majesty!*

*Beyond our own galactic rim,
Billions more are praising Him.
Ten to some gigantic power
Times the height of Babel's tower.*

*Past the range of telescope:
God of Faith and Love and Hope.
Praise Him every tongue and race!
Even those in outer space!*

Selah

*However far space does extend
From beginning unto end,
Praise the God who does transcend!
Every knee before Him bend!*

*God of whom these words are penned:
Against Thee only have we sinned.
Almighty Author of creation:
Visit us with Thy salvation.*

WALTER HEARN

Teaching

TEACHING Christianly, we asserted in two previous articles, is no piece of cake. In fact, it is—to paraphrase James Dobson—one of the toughest jobs in the universe! Note that we are talking not simply about teaching, but about teaching *Christianly*. Simply teaching is one thing; it's quite another to teach Christianly.

What is the difference between simply teaching and teaching Christianly? In order to answer this critically important question we must review once again the essential character of teaching. Teaching, you will recall, consists of three intertwined components: guiding, unfolding, and enabling. In the previous articles we discussed the first two of these ingredients. To summarize: Christian teachers guide the students into the ways of the Lord as they unfold and open up not only the mysteries of God's creation, but also the distortions effected by sin and the implications of the cosmic redemption of Christ. Through such unfolding, we added, the students themselves are unfolded as well.

Guiding and unfolding, however, are not sufficient to describe the whole of effective Christian teaching. There is more. In this article we examine the third, and most difficult, task awaiting the teacher: the task of enabling.

Although the term might suggest it, enabling as a third instructional component does not first of all refer to the teaching of basic skills. The teaching of basic skills, along with content, belongs largely to the category of unfolding. Unfolding, in other words, comprises the teaching not only of material and insights to be studied and understood, but also of skills to be acquired and mastered. Enabling, on the other hand, must be in-

timately tied to the ultimate goal of Christian education, that is, to the goal of leading our children into discipleship. To see this relationship more clearly we must step back for a moment and consider the meaning of discipleship.

Being a disciple of Jesus in the complete sense of the word involves, of course, many factors, and thus is difficult to describe fully. The complexities notwithstanding, a basic pattern seems clear: in essence discipleship is loving service expressed in stewardship and reconciliation. Now these terms must not be understood in a narrow sense. Stewardship is not to be restricted to, for example, financial matters. Rather, stewardship means responsible caretaking, not just of our financial resources, but of ourselves as God's creatures and of everything that the Lord has made. And reconciliation must not be reduced to merely evangelistic or psychological activity. On the contrary, reconciliation is to be understood as healing and peacemaking, to be pursued wherever we find brokenness and disintegration, whether in our personal life, in family or marriage, in church or school, in our occupations and professions, or in the larger world of politics and economics, arts and the media.

ENABLING our youngsters to be such disciples is the ultimate goal of Christian education. And it is this kind of enabling that constitutes a third and indispensable component of teaching. Our teaching task is therefore not completed if we do not seek to enable. By the same token, learning is incomplete if little or no enabling has occurred. And no genuine enabling has occurred if our students, at their level,

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do not or cannot function as servants, stewards, and peacemakers, no matter how much we have unfolded and disclosed, no matter how much knowledge or how many skills we may have taught them.

Enabling, understood as a third teaching function to be closely tied to discipleship, obviously requires a good deal more exposition. I must limit myself to just a few comments. In the first place, observe that enabling is oriented to both the present and the future. Our teaching must not merely aim to enable the student to be a disciple at some time in the distant future, some time after he or she has graduated, but should equip the child to be a disciple right here and now, at his or her level. Secondly, understanding the enabling function in this sense may well require a new look at our curriculum. It seems clear that the greater part of our curriculum is geared to unfolding, particularly a disclosing kind of unfolding. But we need to ask: What kinds of educational, curricular experiences can we provide that will not only unfold, but also enable in the sense just described? Related to this point is the way we teachers view our classrooms. Do we see our task there as merely unfolds? Do we believe that our children need to be taught no more than a dose of factual information along with a goodly number of basic skills? Or do we see our students as agents of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18-19), and our classroom as a workshop in redemptive enabling?

Effective enabling, in the third place, calls for teamwork. It cannot be merely the task of the individual teacher, nor can it be left to the Bible department or the counseling staff. Redemptive enabling requires an integrated curriculum taught by teachers who are attuned to each

other and who reinforce one another, teachers who share a common vision, a communal sense of educational goals, and a united commitment.

ENABLING, along with guiding and unfolding, constitutes the heart of teaching. Teaching is guiding via unfolding towards enabling. This is, as it were, the formula that gives teaching its identifiable character. I tend to think that this formula points to the universal character of all teaching, Christian or secular. Secular teaching, too, guides, unfolds, and enables. Then what is the difference between Christian and secular teaching? The crucial difference is not that the one guides, unfolds, and enables, while the other does not. Rather, the difference lies in the answers to questions such as the following: Towards which destination is the teacher guiding the student? Merely towards self-reliance, social adjustment and solid citizenship? Or to a closer walk with God and neighbor? And what is the teacher unfolding? Merely a world of nature controlled by natural law? Or a creation revealing God's presence, power and love? And to what end is he enabling? To be successful participants in the American way of materialistic consumerism? Or to be agents of Christ's reconciliation?

It is important to see that in effective Christian teaching these three components are not sequential categories. That is, it is not so that a teacher first guides, then unfolds, and finally enables. Rather, the three components are intertwined. In effective Christian teaching they must always imply each other. The effective teacher guides all the time; and in all effective teaching

strategies such guiding interacts with unfolding and enabling. Thus in effective guiding and unfolding, enabling is implicitly present and emerges naturally.

Too often, I believe, we tend to separate the three. When we do so, effective Christian teaching degenerates into what at the beginning of this article we called "simply teaching." Often we restrict our guiding, for example, to external activities such as devotions and prayer, with no regard for carry-over into the larger curriculum. Or, to use another example, our unfolding is often reduced to merely teaching, in intellectualistic fashion, the facts to be learned or the skills to be acquired, with no regard for enabling. As a result, teachers frequently believe that they have succeeded when they have covered the textbook or taught our children to pass state administered basic skills tests. Such teaching, I submit, is not really Christian teaching. Such teaching occurs in public schools as well.

Genuinely Christian teaching, on the other hand, integrates guiding, unfolding, and enabling. Skillful and effective Christian teachers blend these three into one dynamic whole. They seek to guide, unfold, and enable from a perspective reflecting a clear vision of Christian educational goals. Their teaching aims at knowledgeable and responsible discipleship.

How can you and I become more adept at guiding, unfolding, and enabling? In a final article we shall explore this question further. ■

John Van Dyk is professor of philosophy and director of the Center for Educational Services at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

The War of the Worlds

TV and the Elementary Student

QUENTIN J. SCHULTZE

IF the stories of my professional colleagues and acquaintances represent 20th-century graduate education, every university must have its own Professor Kingsfield. I've known two—one as a teacher, the other as a colleague. Neither looked like John Houseman, who developed the character of Kingsfield for the highly acclaimed but short-lived television series about law school called "The Paper Chase." But in both cases my heart palpitated even at the thought of another confrontation with the indomitable spirits and irascible personalities of the two men.

Please don't tell my students, but there are days when I really feel like playing Kingsfield in the classroom. As a student I never liked the Kingsfield style—calling on students (by last name), forcing them to answer, making them see the errors in their thinking. But we learned, something I'm not so sure always happens among my own students. My Professor Kingsfield forced the Socratic method upon us until we learned to question ourselves. For that I am grateful. If only it could have been accomplished less painfully.

ALL of this is an introduction to a very simple but extremely important point drilled into my skull by a Kingsfield: television is not a tool; it's a medium. This significant fact should influence how we teach and whether or not we use the medium in the classroom, especially at the primary level.

The "tool theory" of television was popular among an influential group of educational theorists when I was in graduate school. They argued the virtues of placing television sets in every classroom, much like some curriculum specialists to-

day want to fill the schools with personal computers. In fact, the arguments are parallel: greater student interest and motivation, personalized instruction, increased time for teacher preparation and grading, and so forth. You know the litany. Television, they said, was simply a tool which could be adapted for any educational objective.

All of this is appealing except for the fact that television is not merely an educational tool. Like the written or printed word, it is a medium of communication which shapes, by its very nature, the end for which it is used; it is never neutral. It might produce far different outcomes than were ever intended. As McLuhan was frequently quoted (and misunderstood), the medium is the message.

Consider the case of primary education. One of the major goals of elementary instruction is to orient students to the world of books and instill in them a love for reading and writing. We hope not only that they will become functionally literate, but that they will grow to enjoy reading, to appreciate the clarity of thought and organization of ideas that are possible espe-

cially in the written word, and to value language itself. Primary education is their entry into this remarkable world of books, on which so much of their later education and life are dependent.

WHAT can television contribute to this goal? Very little, I believe. Television and the print media are processed differently in the mind and exercise different parts of the brain. In fact, by the time the typical student enters first grade she has already been introduced to the world of the tube, with its visual, sensual appeal. She has learned that watching television is effortless and visually stimulating, that it is fun, and that it is socially expected.

In the home she has probably found that reading is merely functional—something that one has to do to get along in the adult world. Few parents provide role models by reading regularly in the home (except for a newspaper). Most children display a natural interest in stories, but by the time they begin full-time schooling they are often more interested in televised narratives, especially cartoons, than in listening to tales read from books.

My point is not that television is inherently wicked or that books are superior in all respects; actually, some things can probably be communicated far more powerfully and effectively in film or videotape than through the printed world. Nor am I saying that television should have no role whatsoever in formal education; as I argued in the last column, visual literacy should be a major goal of secondary and college education. I am simply suggesting that the miracles of communicating sounds and images across space and storing them on and retrieving them from discs and tapes should not blind us to the educational limits of television in the elementary classroom.

If we wish our students eventually to become critical television viewers (or film viewers, or readers), it is essential that we first provide them with the ability to analyze, evaluate, organize, and express. In other words, the world of books must be mastered adequately for one to master critically another medium. For this reason I'm skeptical about more than occasional use of television in the elementary classroom. We might have the best of motives (e.g. teaching young people to watch and analyze a story), but there is little evidence that at the primary level any elementary school objectives can be met more efficiently or effectively with television.

If we wish to encourage in our covenant children a love for the visual world early in their schooling, television and film are not the media to use. It makes sense at the elementary level to introduce students to visual expression in art classes where the medium used (e.g. clay or crayon and paper) is not fixed in time, like the videotape, which keeps moving at its own pace and which may elicit responses but not provide an opportunity for student participation.

The ineffectiveness of "Sesame Street" is probably the best example I could use to support my case. After 10 years of broadcasts, a major research study found that the program was enormously ineffective at teaching pre-schoolers even such basic things as the recognition of letters and numbers. One can only guess as to what the children did "learn" from Big Bird and the gang; my guess is that they learned to watch television, not a difficult task to teach anyone.

Even at the college level I find that it's difficult to get students to view videotapes or films critically. This is not because there are no productions worth viewing, nor that they might not learn from such visual media. Their learning is hampered, first, by all of the sociological baggage about the "fun" of viewing they bring from their childhood, and second, by the dynamics of the medium itself, which seems not to call for a critical response. (This latter reason is probably why film has been used historically so effectively as a propaganda vehicle.) I am convinced that it is far more difficult to become a critical viewer than a critical reader, although admittedly in both cases a new language must be learned. Perhaps only a Kingsfield can deliver us from this educational dilemma. ■

Quentin J. Schultze is professor of communication arts and sciences at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Note: Dr. Schultze is planning a North American conference for Christian educators in communication-related fields, including mass media, theatre, speech, and film. The two or three day conference, co-sponsored by the Christian College Coalition and the host institution will bring together faculty for discussion of such things as integration of faith and learning, curriculum, and educational materials. If you would like to receive information about the conference, write to Dr. Schultze at the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Why Does Lisa Play

FIRST period English: Lisa catches a glimpse of fallen human nature and redemption in her study of *David Copperfield*. Second period Western Civilization: The canvas of history opens to reveal a just God in control of every event. Third period biology: The significance of the smallest organism in the vast living universe evokes praise to the Maker of this awesome creation. Fourth period band: How will Lisa experience a distinctive Christian education comparable to that which she is receiving from her school's excellent courses in English, history, and science?

Those who have not given the question much thought might reply with that popular rejoinder, "Lisa is playing her flute to God's honor and glory." Perhaps they would also say that her music education is made Christian by the inclusion of "sacred" music at every concert. Administrators and others concerned with the school's distinctive image often look to the band for positive publicity. "Because we have a band, Lisa will not miss out when she transfers to our Christian school. If only we could get uniforms and march at a parade. . . ." Public school band directors will tell you what is distinctive about the twenty-member band at the neighboring small Christian school. It is simply "poorer" than their own.

The Christian school band director (who often happens to be the choir director and general music instructor for grades K-12 as well) will probably respond to the question of distinctiveness with a heart-rending lament. He will cite major problems in the areas of rehearsal time, budget, missing parts due to the small number of students, conflicts with athletic schedules, personal lack of training to teach all of the instruments, and a host of other

problems beyond his control which limit the program's effectiveness.

Quick diagnoses and miracle cures will not heal all Christian school band maladies overnight. More distressingly, the removal of logistical problems alone will not insure integrated Christian education. In fact, the rapid achievement of quality may cloud the issue of Christian distinctiveness or even cause people to stop asking the question altogether.

Christ-centered philosophy is the hub of the wheel called Christian Education. It follows that each curricular spoke must have a congruent purpose. Without this unity the spoke will fail to fit into the hub and will not strengthen the wheel. In this age of entertainment, audience pleasing tunes, and Hollywood styled "contemporary Christian music," a Christian school music department needs to understand itself and must build a solid curriculum rationale which will thread easily into the school's philosophy. The wheel, the spoke, and the hub will all be strengthened.

As Cornelius Van Til has so effectively argued, people make decisions based on presuppositions. Following this line of reasoning, a band program which lacks a clearly articulated purpose will simply be buffeted on stormy musical seas by a host of presuppositions and misconceptions since "everyone seems to know something about music."

The following is a list of ideas, presuppositions if you will, that parents, administrators, teachers, and students often subscribe to. All seem, at times, to hold part of the truth. However, none of these could strengthen the entire curriculum by fitting into any self-respecting Christian school philosophy.

1. The band should play mainly sacred music since this music is more Christian.

2. Band builds character and is a team sport in which the non-athletic can engage.

3. Band allows students to have an entertaining break from their academic subjects.

4. Since parents are paying the bills, the band director should choose music that parents like to hear.

5. Since students are taking band as an elective, they should get immediate gratification from the music and the social aspect of band or *elect* to drop out.

6. Since more people go to games than to school concerts, much of the class time should be directed toward music for pep band.

7. Since band is not an academic subject, it should meet before and after school and be given less rehearsal time than normal classes.

8. The quality of the student's experience is completely determined by the rating of the final product. Therefore, contest and competition results should prescribe and evaluate all aspects of the program.

9. The quality of the student's experience is not determined at all by the artistic quality of the final product. Therefore it is fine for Lisa's band to simply try hard. ("Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.")

If these are inadequate premises on which to build a Christian school instrumental music program, what ideas would provide a distinctive foundation? Acknowledging the great variety possible, let us merely posit five essential features of a strong Christian school band curriculum rationale:

1. Music, along with the rest of the arts, finds its philosophical

Her Flute in Band?

HENRY DUITMAN

home in the aesthetic area of creaturely existence. This simply means that through music we can learn creational truths symbolically. Lovely adjectives cannot capture the essence of a flute tone that has gained the first hint of vibrato. The most advanced calculations cannot quantify the feeling of repose and rightness which clothes the final cadence of Grainger's "Irish Tune."

This area of allusive, intuitive, affective thought needs to hold a central position in the life of a Christian. A lifetime spent quantifying and analyzing at the expense of experiencing the goodness of creational truth conveyed symbolically is a lifetime that affronts the God who made right-brain hemispheres as well as left ones.

When Lisa learns to play her flute, she will learn concepts about breath support (cognitive domain), she will learn many fingering patterns and aural skills (psycho-motor domain), and she will experience special feelings when playing quality music (affective domain). While these learnings are the most difficult to measure, justification for the entire music curriculum and every part of it must come primarily because of these unique affective domain learnings which are possible in musical ensembles.

2. Band, choir, and orchestra grow out of the entire music program just as Algebra II grows out of the math curriculum. Extra skills need to be learned by each member in a musical ensemble and each student is consequently rewarded with greater aesthetic growth.

3. There is a body of significant literature for band which needs to be the heart of the curriculum. A quality musical selection, like any other significant art work, meets certain artistic standards and,

therefore, will be an outstanding vehicle for affective domain learning. The band which practices top 20 hits, marches, cute new made-for-easy-consumption school overtures, and sugary hymn arrangements to the complete exclusion of Handel, Holst, and Hindemith has no more business in the Christian school curriculum than does the English class studying Harlequin romances to the exclusion of Dickens.

4. The distinctive Christian school band will present excellent performances. These will be inescapable by-products of our obedient work as stewards in the fruitful grove of instrumental music. The emphasis here is not on excellence for its own sake. However, performances will be the best possible since God has promised to bless our faithful efforts.

5. Christ-directed goals in instrumental music cannot be reached without time, money, and specially-trained teachers. Our microwave age expects great things in an instant and as a result, serves itself depressingly mediocre artistic meals. The multitude of individual and ensemble skills which needs to be mastered before even one short musical selection can become artistically pleasing is phenomenal. Yet, in the small Christian school, band often is given minimal class time.

In my experience in teaching high school band, the reason a student wanted to drop out of band was nearly always because he had lost interest and wasn't practicing anymore. My question to him was, "Which came first?" Like the American who runs through the Louvre to get the most out of his hour there, the modern teenager seems to clutter his life with more and more activities so that

systematic home-practice is virtually impossible. Time must be redeemed.

Quality Christian direction of elementary and high school bands can only be done by teachers who have been vigorously trained for the task. Of a necessity, many small Christian schools have only one music director who wears several hats. For all band directors, but especially for these dedicated servants, continuing education in methods and techniques is vitally important.

SCHOOL boards, teachers, parents, and students must carefully weigh the great costs in time and money which are needed for the development of a successful instrumental music program. From a practical viewpoint, the small Christian school band program looks like a bad investment. However, if our Christian perspective is vital, we are attempting to educate our children in an eternal framework. In such a framework the beautiful offering outweighs the immediate and pragmatic response (Matthew 26:6-13).

In this eternal framework, a Christian school band program based on the preceding five principles is limitless in its creation-affirming possibilities. For this reason alone Lisa's fourth period band can be a worthy and lively part of the distinctive Christian school curriculum. ■

Henry Duitman directs the Dordt College Concert Band, the Chamber Orchestra, and the Sioux County Orchestra as well as teaching instrumental music education at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

HUCKLEBERRY FINN, Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*, and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*: what do these books all have in common? They all enjoy the dubious distinction of being the targets of parents who want them removed from schools in the United States. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Gone With the Wind*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, *Go Ask Alice*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* are on the list.

The charges leveled at them range from racism to explicit sex, graphic violence, objectional language, witchcraft, and subversive political philosophy. Some of the charges are credible; others, such as the allegation that Robin Hood is a Marxist revolutionary, are ridiculous. But all the examples are drawn from documented cases.

Censorship is a common problem in contemporary education. In some circles any attempt to control what is taught in a classroom raises the cry of "McCarthyism." Many others believe that some restrictions must be placed on what students are taught.

Each month the American Library Association publishes a newsletter detailing various attempts to remove books from schools and public libraries. Most of the conflicts occur in public schools. Such conflict is understandable since public schools are required to accommodate the sensibilities of parents who often share few philosophical ideals. Some of these censorship cases have even produced legal action against the schools.

Christian schools have not been immune to this problem. While the incidence may not be as great or as

CENSORSHIP

IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

ROBERT SCHOONE-JONGEN

publicized, the content of their courses and libraries have come under scrutiny. *Death of a Salesman* and *Go Ask Alice* were both removed from a Christian high school at the requests of parents.

The direct parental control of Christian schools can make them particularly vulnerable to such attacks. However, the common beliefs held by most of the schools' supporters can prevent many such problems from arising. When parents and teachers share common ideals, they can hold conflicts to a minimum.

WHY, then, have Christian schools at times been rocked by demands that a book be removed? The answer involves probing the minds of both parents and teachers. This is a dangerous business, but we can make some generalizations.

Probably the most common reason parents ask to have a book removed is because they are genuinely concerned for the welfare of their children. Some parents do not believe their children should be exposed to the evil parts of life. They

believe their children can be permanently harmed by exposure to such things. Such sentiments, though genuine, are often misdirected. But teachers must always be mindful of these concerns. Parents may see a problem that a teacher has completely missed in a book.

This concern is tied to basic philosophical differences about the nature of a Christian school. There are those who believe that the Christian school exists to protect children from worldly influences. To these people the school is a type of incubator with a purification system to filter out bad influences. In contrast there are those who believe the school must provide the students with an accurate portrayal of life, giving the students the ability to analyze the world from a Christian perspective. This view likens the school to an armory which provides the Christian with the weapons needed to fight the forces of evil. When these two views clash, as they often do, the lines are drawn between the group's desire to protect their children and the other's desire to instruct them about the warts of the world.

There are also parents whose

motives are not so noble. Every school is plagued with a group of people who must be classified as malcontents. They use various pretexts to lash out at the school. The cause of their vendetta is perhaps obscure, but these gadflies are a force to be reckoned with. The school's challenge is to delineate between the honest objection and the malcontent's latest gripe.

HOW can a Christian school deal with the problem of censorship? Top priority must be the hiring of highly qualified teachers. A Christian school teacher must possess academic credentials. But he must also have a mature faith that can shape the content of the school's courses. He must use materials suitable for the students. Simultaneously, he must be sensitive to the views of the Christian community. He then must do a juggling act to satisfy parents who hold differing views on the nature of the teacher's task. The teacher must be prepared to face questions from parents who feel their views are being undermined by the school. When this happens the teacher must determine whether retention of the "objectionable" material is a matter of principle or personal preference.

Conflicts between parents and schools are probably inevitable. When they occur both parties are obliged to do more than "win the argument." They must strive to maintain the unity of the Christian community. Both teacher and parent must respect the integrity of the other. They must respect each other as Christians by confining the discussions to channels of communication which reflect Jesus' teaching on how to handle disputes

among believers.

The parents should approach the teacher personally, as one Christian to another. Both should be eager to hear out the views of the other. Too often the emotions of an upset parent and a questioned teacher lead to confrontation. This should be avoided. If necessary, the administrator can act as an arbiter. He must ensure that the discussion is constructive. His position is delicate since the teacher expects to be "supported" and the parent expects "action."

If the issue cannot be resolved this way the next step will involve the board, education committee, or some other body. This procedure should be established in advance to avoid delay.

Whoever handles an appeal must be careful to weigh all the facts. Decisions on such matters should not be based on personalities but on what is good for the educational program of the school.

At times challenges must be overruled, even in the face of vigorous dissent. Controversy alone should not constitute grounds for the removal of a book. The manner in which the teacher uses the book must be considered. There will also be times when a book must be deemed unfit for use in a Christian school. Then it should be removed, or its use restricted. In either event the decision-makers must be guided by principle, not expediency.

ABOVE all, when the use of a book in a Christian school is called into question, everyone must recognize that there are mutual obligations among Christians. All must uphold their common faith. Neither the offended parent nor the teacher may lay claim to an exclusive understanding of the gospel.

We all operate under general guidelines set forth in the Bible. On some points these guidelines are very explicit. In other areas they are open to various interpretations. A Christian school which functions within a Reformed mindset has a mandate to prepare students to function in the contemporary world. This mandate includes helping students understand the warped parts of society, not just the beautiful ones. We must not hide from sin; we must overcome it.

Christian school students are more aware of the "world" than ever before—an awareness quite evident to many Christian school teachers and parents. Books, magazines, television, and the movies have brought many sights and sounds, both wonderful and deplorable, into full view. The condition is irreversible. Can the Christian school and Christian parents ignore the secular invasions and simply instruct students in a vacuum? Should the school only serve as insulation from the sinfulness so prevalent today? Or should the school help students interpret the modern world in the light of the Word of God?

These are fundamental questions. There are no hard and fast answers which can apply to every circumstance. Surely we must never allow our search for answers to end in a court room. That would diminish our uniqueness. We must answer the questions within the confines of our covenant community. But each parent, each educator, and each board member must answer them honestly and completely—as Christians.

Robert Schoone-Jongen teaches social studies at Southwest Minnesota Christian High School in Edgerton, Minnesota.

HELP

No matter how great the textbook selection or instructional techniques, a teacher cannot expect to completely alleviate pupil reading difficulties. These problems can be greatly relieved, however, through the use of alternative methods or supplementary materials.

Following is a list of several workable solutions. In addition to providing alternatives for students who have difficulty handling the text, many of the suggestions also permit individualization for all levels of students:

- Use other sources of print such as trade books, pamphlets, political platforms of candidates, magazines, brochures, advertisements, newspapers, cartoons, editorials, bus schedules, telephone directories, song books, and plays. Often, if the interest is high enough, students may be able to read at a slightly more difficult reading level than they can ordinarily manage.

- Permit students to read trade books on a topic of their choice from the unit of study. Ask the librarian to help you guide students to an appropriate reading level, or make use of a readability formula. After reading, the student should report back to the class or to a group with similar interests.

- Allow students to receive information through media other than print: filmstrips, overhead projections, motion pictures, field trips, projects, diagrams, video and audio tapes.

- To use audio tapes, set up a listening station where lessons have been recorded. If learning is to be primarily auditory, lessons in listening comprehension should be built into the student's program.

- Have texts read to students at home or during a study period by a parent or student volunteer.

- Rewrite the text material for the students.

- Have students rewrite the materials. The language experience approach can be adopted here by a group of students who have read about a common topic and wish to summarize the findings. The teacher records their thoughts on the chalkboard. At the end of the discussion the teacher and students organize the content into a logical order. Duplicates are then made and distributed to students. This method of reading information is beneficial to low-level reading students because the language is that of their peers, the content has been written on the board, and students have possibly been involved in the discussion.

- Use literature to introduce students to concepts. For example, in an intermediate grade social studies class, picture books developed around a theme which directly relates to basic social studies concepts (i.e. *Hark, I'm Your Brother* by Byrd Baylor on the theme of freedom,



Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears, Leo and Diane Dillon, Pictures copyright © 1975. Dial Press, New York.

or *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aardema which deals with justice). Because the stories capture the attention of the students, one can be reasonably sure that the students are attending to the important concepts. Also, the implied message challenges students to think through relationships and form concepts—an important skill in social studies.

- Use multilevel textbooks. These textbooks may not necessarily parallel each other, but multilevel texts can be workable if a teacher prepares a multilevel reference

list, assigns broad guiding questions and problems to be solved, and brings the group together often for discussion. One advantage to using several textbooks is that different author's interpretations invite comparisons.

Globe has published a series of 12 science texts, *Pathways in Science*, designed for junior and senior high students who are reading at a fifth or sixth grade level. Similar programs in social sciences are available from Scholastic, Steck-Vaughn, Follet and MacMillan; and from Globe and Scott Foresman in English.

■ When using multilevel texts or trade books you may wish to keep a list or file box from which students can choose various activities. This helps them see relationships in the knowledge they have gained. Students could choose from the following: make a classroom exhibit using posters, brochures, and art work; make a time line of important historic events; take an independent after-school or week-end excursion in connection with a unit being studied and keep a journal; make a dictionary of terms encountered in your reading; exchange letters with a student in a country that you have studied.

■ Give students a list of general assignments that would work for any topic. For instance: list ten people related to the topic and tell why they were important; describe three theories given; make a chart comparing two related sets of information; suggest a way to find an answer to some unsolved problem; invent a cartoon character as a symbol for something related to the topic. Ask students to choose two assignments in order to complete a given unit. Guide students to collect information for their assignments from books and other materials which are appropriate for their reading levels. When the students are finished they can turn in their written assignments or share their information in various ways.

I CAN'T READ MY TEXTBOOK

Student-Centered Activities Alternatives to Textbooks

JOAN M. DUNGEY

MY son entered the house angrily. "What is the *best* way to teach?" he asked, flinging down his books.

"What do you think?" I asked.

"Don't use books!"

I smiled.

But he looked at me, almost with tears. "I have to outline the chapter again in social studies," he said.

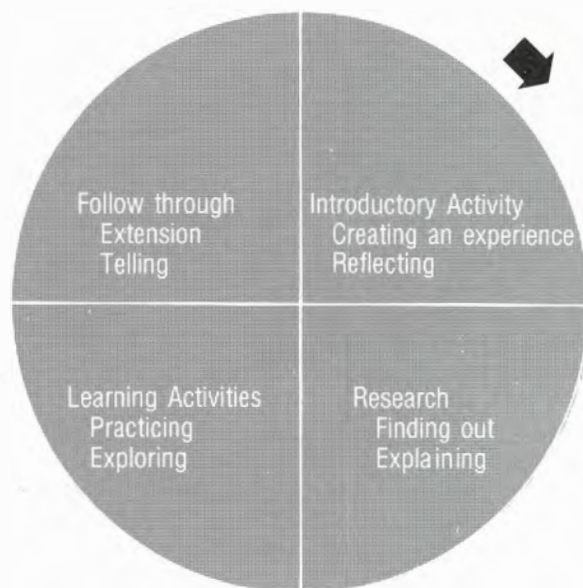
I sighed and thought:

When will teachers realize that the textbook is only a tool for teaching—a reference book—and not a reader? Across the country, countless hundreds of teachers make the assignment: "Read the chapter and answer the questions." By its very nature, a textbook has watered down information because it must contain all the facts of a subject for all students. Look at your class's text. Are your best students motivated and challenged by it? Do your slowest students understand it?

Student learning styles vary greatly and most students learn best with a hands-on approach, according to Gordon Lawrence's studies. Therefore, the text must be just one of many resources and methods used to teach the subject matter. Furthermore, children are not interested in answering the text's questions; they have their own questions about the subject matter—which texts do not answer! (Who fired the first shot at Lexington/Concord? Where did Cain's wife come from?)

Students' thinking and learning are dependent upon their past experiences as they interact with the subject matter, their world, and the new experiences we give them. When Mt. St. Helens erupted in 1980, some of us changed our curriculum sequences and studied volcanoes, using newspapers, magazines, and television programs as texts. Our teaching priorities can change as we recognize and respond to students' interest in the world.

Careful planning lets students experience learning in a variety of modes and allows "space" for those unanswered questions to be pondered, voiced, and researched. The following diagram illustrates a unit lesson plan which incorporates various learning styles.



First, a topic is introduced to students as a shared experience which serves as a springboard for interaction with the unit topic. That experience can be a field trip, discussion, music, film, poetry, or art experience. The introductory activity attempts not only to bridge the gap between the students' past experience and the subject matter, but it serves as a motivator for future exploration of the topic. Through reflection and discussion of this experience, questions arise for research.

Now the students learn facts about the topic. Here, the textbook is used, although students may find information from other sources: encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, library books, the almanac, pamphlets. Films and lectures come at this point.

The students then take the facts learned and put them together in some way, making a project or writing a report or story. Here, other skills enter into the learning in a natural, meaningful way (organization, neatness, art).

The fourth part of the lesson plan—follow through—allows for personal application and extension of the topic or project. Students share their learning with others and go one more step: they choose another ac-

tivity beyond the assigned learning. Children do have ideas and are interested in expanding their understanding about a subject if they are allowed to. Using a variety of methods and activities lets all students succeed at some point in the unit and encourages further work.

This lesson plan calls for using the textbook once, or not at all if students can find more primary sources. Other alternative activities are listed below:

■ **EXPERIENCING.** Without doubt, first-hand experience is the best teacher. An entire curriculum can be built around field trips, with pre- and post-activities. The next level of learning, if a field trip on a topic is not available, is a concrete representation of reality: objects which can be explored and touched, things which can be made and built. Although pictures are another level away from reality they can serve well to teach. Words, spoken and written, are most symbolic. Try to use as many concrete items and pictures as possible to supplement your text.

■ **TALKING.** Teachers usually do most of the talking in a classroom (lecturing or giving instructions); yet, few students learn best from a lecture. If you must lecture, be sure you use visuals and handouts that *involve* students.

Ideally, however, the students should be talking the most—becoming active, creative learners rather than passive listeners. Organized activities where children need to create the language used in context of the subject matter include speeches, puppet shows, role playing, dramas, debates, panel discussions, brainstorming, research and buzz groups.

■ **READING.** As mentioned above, the textbook is not a reader. Use trade books to motivate students to read while learning about subject content. One class learns American history with a series of children's historical fiction books from the library. Then the text is used as a reference book to which the students go eagerly after reading the novels. You can use literature which relates to the topic to integrate school disciplines. Use magazines and newspapers for more up-to-date and detailed facts. After reading the text material, which was scanty, a junior high visited the nearby university library to research science topics in journals.

Teach students to use the almanac, airline schedules, travel books, maps, menus, and telephone books. Have *National Geographics* available not only to read but to cut out pictures. Newspapers can be used for *all* subjects, not just current events. (See Notes 2 and 3.)

■ **WRITING.** Research reports are only one type of written assignment. Newspaper articles, letters, diaries, journals, poems, stories, riddles, interviews, biographical sketches, and scripts can also be incorporated as writing assignments. Binding and illustrating these writings integrates art skills and handwriting and creates a project to be shared proudly with friends and family.

■ **MAKING.** Activity-teaching uses the whole person as students make murals, paintings, drawings, clay sculptures, mobiles, dioramas, posters, time-lines, maps, or charts. An "open-ended" bulletin board can allow students to interact with the subject matter as they add to the bulletin board. (See example in insert.) Let students make their own props for plays and visuals for

Notes

1. See Gordon Lawrence's *People Types and Tiger Stripes: A Practical Guide to Learning Styles*. 2nd Ed. Gainesville: Center for Application of Psychological Types, Inc., 1979, 1982.
2. A game to learn how to use the almanac is *The Almaniac*. P.O. Box 53. LaCanada, CA 91011. Two contests a year.
3. For an excellent and inexpensive newspaper teaching resource, write International Reading Association, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19714-8139, for their Newspaper in Education materials. Also contact your local newspaper for NIE materials, workshops, and special school discounts. If your local newspaper does not have a program, contact American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, Box 17407, Dulles International Airport, Washington, D.C. 20041.
4. Curriculums that do not use textbooks, except as references:
 - a. *Success in Reading*, by Anne H. Adams, in 7 volumes, K-6. From the Goodyear Division of Scott, Foresman. 1900 East Lake Avenue. Glenview, IL 60025.
 - b. Alta Vista College Home School Curriculum, P.O. Box 222, Medina, WA 98039.
 - c. Activity resource books from the Little, Brown, and Company in Boston called The Brown Paper School. Titles in the series: *The I Hate Math Book*, *The Book of Think*, *I Am Not a Short Adult*, *Good for Me*, *This Book Is about Time*, *Math for Smarty Pants*, *The Night Sky Book*, *The Reasons for Seasons*, *Blood and Guts*, *Everybody's a Winner*, *My Backyard History Book*, *Make Mine Music!* and *Beastly Neighbors*.

their speeches. Ask that poems, stories, and reports be illustrated with charts, diagrams, pictures, and maps.

■ **LEARNING CENTERS.** An easy way to begin to use resources other than the textbook is to set up a learning center to which students can go before class or when regular work is done. For example, have a jigsaw puzzle of the United States on a side table. Next, design an activity using the newspaper. Soon, you will be finding more resources available as you search for alternatives to the textbook.

Joan M. Dungey is a parent volunteer in her son's school, where she designs bulletin boards. Her children have had first-hand experience with alternatives to textbook learning.

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the types, shapes, and altitudes of different clouds by drawing pictures of clouds, labeling them, and attaching them to the bulletin board in the proper place.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bulletin board, prepared as shown with title and altitude bar. Blue background suggested.

Pins, scissors, glue.

Colored pencils, pens.

Magazines, newspapers.

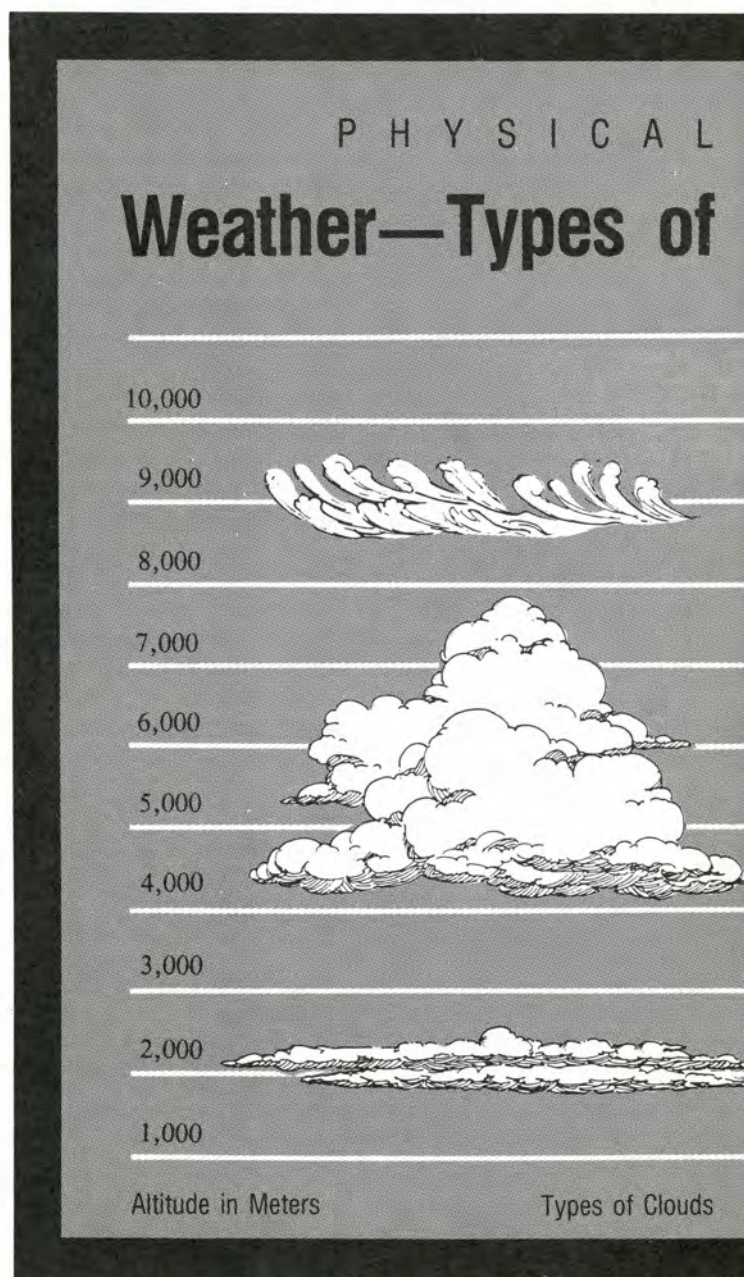
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using reference books, students will choose which cloud type they want to draw. They must find out its name, usual altitude, and characteristic shape.
2. Using drawing or construction paper, students will draw and color the cloud, or cut out cloud shapes.
3. Label each cloud.
4. Pin the clouds on the bulletin board at the appropriate altitude.
5. Students may also search magazines and newspapers for cloud types and attach them to the bulletin board.

Learning with Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards should be more than pretty pictures! They can extend student learning by graphically picturing subject matter topics. Students can also interact with bulletin boards as specific assignments relate to the bulletin board. Then, the board becomes a supplement to the text.

The following is an example of an interactive science bulletin board.



History in the Christian School

DEREK KNIKKERBAKKER

WE have been made aware recently that there are those in our numbers who take this position regarding the teaching of the discipline of history—that this subject is to be used as a springboard for discussion about certain contemporary situations. We are also of the understanding that such a usage of this discipline is encouraged by some of those who teach in colleges where potential teachers are trained. The key word seems to be “relevant.” By inference, it seems that those who would espouse such a mixing of the past and present have the idea that the discipline itself is irrelevant, unless it is used as just such a springboard. We may clarify the issue with the following examples.

We were recently party to a discussion where the teaching of “revolutions” was the topic to be bandied about. We were somewhat taken aback at the notion that students would not be interested in past revolutions unless there was some contemporary application of the material being studied. The revolution being studied was the one carried out in France from 1789 to 1795. What seemed to come out of the discussion was the notion that we could study the French Revolution, and then, presuming some commonality among revolutions of all ages, attempt to have students come to grips with the reality of revolution in the present century, especially as this reality has been manifest in the Americas just north and south of the Panama Canal. To make such a gigantic leap across the centuries—and suppose that students will, using their new-found knowledge of the French Revolution and their reading of the Holy Writ, be able to address the issue of a contemporary revolution—stretches the limits of this im-

agination. We must be clear here—the modern revolution is discussed in terms of the dynamics and background present in 18th century France. There was no indication that the modern-day rebellion was thoroughly researched (for then it would not be a history class anymore)—just discussed, presumably in terms of a moral dilemma.

We would suggest that such an approach to the study of history is less than the discipline deserves and that such an approach to grappling with contemporary issues will result in uninformed opinions on those issues. We cannot begin to formulate positions of substantive sort without having determined the background of a certain situation. Who would attempt to take a position on the issue of the French-English situation in Canada without being informed about the developments of the preceding two centuries? Who among us would presume to make a statement on the status of the American black without being aware of the history of the black in America? Henry Ford apparently stated that “History is bunk!” We would be guilty of making just such naive opinions if we did not understand the issues we comment upon. None of us would study the rebellion of the ten tribes of Israel against the new King Rehoboam, and then, on the basis of having learned the dynamics of this biblical revolution, make a judgment on the revolution in France.

The point is, each historical situation must be seen in its own time, and we ask for confusion if we attempt to apply the dynamics of one situation to another situation which is in no way related. We may, even ought to, assist our students in developing their prophetic responsibility, also as it relates to the

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political upheavals of our day, but those judgments must be made on the basis of having understood the background, the motivations, and the uniqueness of the present-day revolutions. Then, upon having achieved some understanding of the situation, we may "speak the word of the Lord" according to our lights.

A second factor to consider in our discussion on this approach to relevancy is the consistency—just how consistent would we be in terms of accepting the legitimacy of some revolutions and denying the legitimacy of others? Do we side with the starving masses of Paris or do we condemn the motivation of the Enlightenment-influenced leaders? At another time, do we feel a kinship with those revolting Netherlanders who attempted to effect a radical socio-political change from the Spanish, who, by the consensus of international affairs (ignore the anachronism), were the legitimate rulers of these lowlands during the 16th century? Whose side do we support in the study of the American revolution, the freedom fighters or the established authority? The question becomes one of determining whether we, in fact, can accept any revolution (of the socio-political type). If we can, we must be totally aware that since we have to blanket judgment of revolutions, each must be seen in its own historical context. Anything other than such historical, contextual appraisals carries the seeds of *hysterical*, not *historical* study.

It is our position that the study of events past, commonly named history, ought to be just that—the study of events past. We most heartily endorse the identification of the long historical lines as they may lead from one age to another, but it would be a mistake to attempt to formulate present day positions on contemporary issues on the basis of the study of an event of the past. Many Canadian young people learn

about the development of the relationship between the native peoples and the early Europeans, but none of them will be able to properly perceive the present conditions of the native peoples if they only learn about the explorers and the fur trade. The intervening two centuries must be considered as well.

In a Contemporary Studies course we would encourage a thorough study of the background of any of the issues or situations studied. We would do well to help students become *aware* of our predecessors, to help them understand that *we are only a part* of the history of God's redemption and *not the apex* of that history, and finally, to teach a method which will help them understand at least a part of what has gone before. If this method for researching historical events is learned, it will become a valuable tool for assisting these same young people to learn about those present-day situations which they rightly feel need so much of their attention. If this tool, that is, the seeking of knowledge which provides insight into events within a specific time frame, is properly learned and used, we will have done our students a great service and the study of history will be very relevant.

If the opening remarks, regarding the relevancy of the study of history, are still the foundation of those who teach the history, then both the style of this essay and the suggestions made therein will date me to the preceding century, but that too is good, since that is where I spend much of my time—in the past. ■

Derek Knikkerbakker, alias John Vanasselt, is principal of Woodland Christian High School at Breslau, Ontario, Canada.



PRINCIPAL Bob DenDenker watched the brown fluid flow from the urn into the ceramic coffee mug which his wife Lucy had given him for his last birthday, his forty-second. He was thinking about how his lines had fallen in pleasant places when he first took the job as a history teacher at Omni Christian High School, almost fresh out of college. And the last three years, now as the principal of the school, had given him satisfaction too, though, he reflected, it had not been without strain. This matter of athletics, of its almost inevitable encroachment on the academic schedule of the school, had been troubling. The students loved

"A Time for Everything"

H. K. ZOELICHT



RICH BISHOP

sports; the parents loved sports; the newspapers and the community loved sports; and Bob DenDenker loved sports too. But he knew that sports at Omni, no less than in most schools, had become too important, that a school could raise funds for a new gymnasium or football field a lot easier than for a new library or more adequate faculty salaries.

As he raised the steaming mug to his lips, he reflected on what had been happening in large universities, where coaches had more power than presidents had, and received larger salaries than history professors did, and where athletes had been given special academic and financial

privileges, often in clear violation of the conference regulations, just to improve the chances for a championship. "So much for that character building baloney," he thought. "It's become a business, and a dishonest business at that."

"But now, what about here at Omni?" he mused. "Just last year we cancelled classes so that the whole student body and faculty could go watch the basketball team lose the state championship. We wouldn't do that for any academic event. And we shorten classes to make room for pep rallies. We don't do that for a debate tournament or for a fine arts festival. People simply expect it for sports."

Bob DenDenker sighed. There should be a time for everything, he believed. But the right ordering of priorities sometimes took more wisdom and courage than he could find within himself.

The coffee tasted good to DenDenker. He was glad that they had shifted from Maxwell House to Folger's. It seemed mellower to him. Lucy had always insisted that Folger's was the best.

And now there had been this business about basketball player Larry Hughes. Coach Abbot desperately had wanted him to be ruled eligible for the Eagles. Hughes was a good kid and a superb athlete. He was bright too. The

tests all showed that, and you could tell it from just talking with him. But he wasn't studying. He just didn't do the work. And he was the only black student at Omni Christian, a problem Bob thought even more serious than the eligibility issue: how was Omni going to become a multiracial school? But in the meantime there had been this eligibility question regarding Omni's lone black student. It would have been simple to lower the requirements to the level of the rest of the conference. Well, DenDenker had gone to the Board with his recommendation; the Board had listened, discussed, and voted. But that had been nearly two months ago.

DenDenker's reverie ended as the bell rang. Teachers began to flow into the faculty room for the morning break. Bob DenDenker stepped away from the urn to make room for the teachers. John Vroom went directly to the table where the Wednesday goodies had been arranged. "Brownies?" he snorted. "Didn't we have brownies last week? Ginny, I wish you would bring cream puffs next week. They give you quick energy, you know." He took two brownies, poured a heap of powdered cream into his cup of coffee, and sat down on the vinyl sofa along the east wall, next to Ren Abbott, coach of the Omni Eagles.

"Well, Rabbit," he said through a mouthful of brownie, "how's that team gonna do this year; gonna make it to the finals again?"

The coach looked grim. "No, John, don't expect us to go to the finals this year. We might've, if DenDenker had talked the Board into making the right decision about grade point for eligibility." He raised his voice: "By the way, Bob, I never did find out just exactly what happened at the Board meeting that night. They flatly rejected your recommendation or what?"

The principal, who had been

listening to librarian Sue Katje complain about how difficult it was to keep the noise level down in the "learning center," turned towards the coach. "Well, Ren, I guess I thought you knew. I recommended that there be no change."

The coach stared at DenDenker, then slowly got up from the sofa and walked towards the door. There was pain in the principal's eye as he watched his teacher go.

The Bible teacher, John Vroom, had finally realized that something interesting had been going on. He stopped chewing long enough to ask: "Hey, Bob, what's happening? Ren seems upset; I think you have provoked him to wrath."

Now Matt DeWit, the science teacher who had given the low grade which had made the promising athlete ineligible, sensed the tension and did his best to protect the harried administrator from further badgering. "John," he said, "are you going to hear Dr. Howard lecture on geology over at Servant College Monday night? If you are, I'd like to go with you. That should be very interesting. He certainly hasn't got much patience with the seven-day creation idea, has he?"

It worked. Vroom's attention had been got. His mouth had been opened wide in anticipation of the last bite, but now he withdrew the brownie in order to reply. "That nincompoop liberal should never be allowed to speak in one of our colleges. Who is responsible for getting guys like Howard to speak, anyway? Somebody ought to do something!" He reinserted the morsel and chewed vigorously. DenDenker, fully appreciating DeWit's rescue, quietly made his way to the door. There he turned and faced his faculty.

"Remember that we have a faculty meeting right after school. I'll be picking up a video tape this afternoon on 'The Issues in Contemporary Secondary Education.' After watching it we'll discuss its application to Omni for about

twenty minutes, and follow up at our next meeting. I'll see you at 3:45."

Later, with classes over for the day, the teachers were relaxing with snacks and coffee while Steve VanderPrikkel was setting up the equipment for the video presentation. DenDenker had left at two o'clock to pick up the tape at St. Alfonso High, but he wasn't back yet.

DeWit glanced at the clock, noticed that it was getting on towards four, and got up to try his latest joke on the group. But before he had said a word, the door opened and a chalk-pale Jenny Snip took one step into the room. All eyes turned to Jenny. She took a deep breath and blurted, "Bob was in an accident. He is dead! He was driving on Garden. Somebody in a big car was speeding and hit him. They said he smelled like alcohol, the guy who hit him. Bob's dead!" ■

Christian Education in South Africa: A Change of Fortune?

JOHANNES L. VAN DER WALT

A PART from a number of private schools (mainly established by Roman-Catholic missionaries, Jews and various culture groups) the school system in South Africa is run by government and maintained with taxpayers' money. For the past four decades or so education in this country has been managed by a number of education departments, organized on the basis of either culture (for example, Indian and NdBele), colour (whites, coloureds, blacks), or political status (the national and independent states). Although the principles of division in the organization of education departments can be severely criticized, the attention is here drawn to another matter—the status of Christian education in South Africa.

The white Department of Education of the Republic of South Africa is the only one that has entrenched Christian education statutorily. An act (no. 39) was enacted by Parliament in 1967 stipulating that all public education for whites should be Christian, but that the convictions of all non-Christian whites in public schools should be respected. This means that non-Christian whites have to be excused from religious instruction classes and all forms of religious worship in schools. In practice they are indeed excused from these but not from the other periods, which is a tacit indication of the degree to which the curriculum in South African white public schools (excluding religious instruction) is still neutral, not really a Kingdom-centered curriculum. Act 39 of 1967 has also been the direct reason for the establishment of private schools by non-evangelical (non-Reformed) Christians and non-Christians (such

as Jews and Muslims).

A new constitutional dispensation was accepted in 1984. As a result, the existing government, consisting of mainly Afrikaans and English-speaking white Christians, went into a coalition with two other South African population groups—the “coloureds” and the Asians—to form South Africa's present government. The Asians as a group are nearly all non-Christian; the “coloureds” are divided among the various religious denominations, although a percentage of them are non-Christian. Again, one could criticize the new constitution for the fact that the black population has so far not been included in the constitutional reform in a substantial way, and for the fact that colour and not culture has been used as the basis for the new constitution. However, the attention has to remain focused on the status of Christian education in South Africa.

Under the new constitution every chamber of the tri-cameral Parliament manages its own department of education, which means that Act 39 of 1967 applies only to the education provided in public schools by the white chamber of Parliament and its department of education. Christian education is thus still statutorily entrenched for whites, but the other two chambers of Parliament still have to indicate the religion or life-view that will characterize or determine the public education they will be providing. Prior to 1984 one could say that the Republic of South Africa had a Christian government, and hopes could be entertained that Christian education would be promoted for

the whole population of South Africa. This previous government was, however, only representative of the whites in the country and it could hardly be expected of it to impose Christian education on all the other population groups. After 1984 the government of South Africa can, however, no longer be regarded as Christian, and aid for Christian public education can no longer be expected from the government as a whole. In the future, assistance can only come from one of the three parliamentary chambers, and then only for its own public schools.

WHETHER the constitutional developments after 1984 will mean a change of fortune for Christian education in South Africa still remains to be seen. In the period 1967-1984 Christian education for whites in South Africa experienced a kind of “hot-house” effect. Parents, teachers, and education authorities took for granted that the government would ensure Christian education in public schools, and this was not always the case. As has been stated earlier in this article, education in the non-religious-instruction periods in public schools can hardly be called “Kingdom-centered”; in fact, the instruction can be proved to be neutral, positivistic, naturalistic, and pragmatistic. This has been the prevailing condition in white public schools under the jurisdiction of the white chamber of Parliament before and since 1984.

Under the tri-cameral system of government it has also been made clear that parity will have to be reached in the standard and provi-

Readers of the Christian Educators Journal, Christian Home and School and all other Christian journals should not only take note of all these questions, but should pray with us that Christian education in South Africa survives the maelstrom in which it currently finds itself.

sion of education of whites, coloureds, Asians, and blacks. Mainly the blacks are still experiencing a vast backlog in standards and provision of education, and it is clear that, generally speaking, white education will have to bear the brunt in this process of ensuring parity. White schools are, in fact, already feeling the pinch since not all the facilities and amenities that have in the past been supplied by government are forthcoming any more, and parents are being expected to contribute more substantially towards the education of their children in public schools.

These new conditions have led to an awareness among especially white parents that the government as a whole cannot be regarded as Christian any more, and that, although the white chamber of Parliament is still predominantly Christian, the same amount of assistance for Christian education in white public schools cannot reasonably be expected. Parents have, therefore, organized themselves into country-wide associations to promote education. The Afrikaner organization has accepted as its main purpose the promotion of Christian education in public schools for whites. Government has also paved the way for parents to

become financially involved in the provision of Christian education by passing an act during August, 1986, enabling parents to establish private schools according to their own culture or religious convictions.

E DUCATION in South Africa finds itself in the white waters of political and socio-economical rapids, metaphorically speaking. Many questions remain unanswered. Will education in the future still be organized on the basis of colour as well as culture? What will the "coloured," Asian, and black houses of Parliament (assuming that blacks will be accommodated somewhere in the not too distant future) decide as to the religious character of public education in the schools each will be providing? Will Christian education be entrenched statutorily by any of them as a basis for educational provision? Will the white chamber of Parliament remain firm in its conviction that public education for whites must be Christian? What will be the "hot-house" effect on Christian education if it is statutorily entrenched by acts of chambers of Parliament? What will be the future of Christian education in South Africa should South Africans opt for a single Parliament on the basis of one man-one vote, especially in view of the present reluctance of the non-white population groups to openly accept Christianity as their religious stance?

Readers of the *Christian Educators Journal*, *Christian Home and School*, and all other Christian journals should not only take note of all these questions, but should pray with us that Christian education in South Africa survives the maelstrom in which it currently finds itself. All the forces to destroy it are already at work: Marxism and Communism in the form of ANC terrorists; paganization and secular humanism as imported from Western-Europe and North-America by means of television and publica-

tions; general indifference on the part of many Christians; blind confidence that God and the government will provide Christian education in public schools; and sanctions imposed on the country, forcing all South Africans to devote their attentions to materialistic and pragmatic affairs.

If Christian education in South Africa succumbs to these conditions it will come as no surprise. It is for this reason that all Christians in South Africa are called to take up arms against all forms of humanistic education, to create Christian private schools if at all feasible, and to be willing to make all the sacrifices it takes. ■

J. L. van der Walt is professor and head of the Department of Philosophy and History of Education, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom, Republic of South Africa.

More than Apartheid Must Go

THOMAS E. MC WHERTOR

"I can see no possibility that the problems of South Africa can be resolved in any way except for the conflicting forces to sit down to talk and to compromise." Not the words of a U.S. diplomat or church leader. Rather these are the opinions of Afrikaner legal expert Johan Van der Vyver expressed at a November 14 Capitol Hill forum.

Van der Vyver went on to say that "the mood for negotiation does not yet exist in South Africa. Perhaps because the events of the last years have led to such a polarization that dialogue has become impossible." He concluded, "The violence we have in South Africa will continue for some time."

Van der Vyver was the featured speaker at a forum entitled "What Should Displace Apartheid" sponsored by the Association for Public Justice. In his opening remarks, he stressed two points: The illegitimacy of apartheid itself and the inevitability of prolonged violence. Despite his Afrikaner heritage, Van der Vyver was sharply critical of apartheid as a system and the ruling government that has established and maintained it. "The violence of apartheid emanates from the fact that it is a system imposed by legal compulsion which lacks legitimacy." As a consequence, violence is the only means to enforce this illegitimate system and that, in turn, is the root cause of the counter-violence arising from those oppressed by it.

At the same time, Van der Vyver stressed the fruitlessness of violence on the part of the oppressed peoples in South Africa. Whether urban terrorism or violence of black-against-black in the townships, the violence advanced is a counter-productive though understandable result of generations of

frustration. He urged all parties to examine the futility of prolonged violence, counseling the black Africans to count the cost of mounting a violent attempt to overthrow Pretoria. "The sympathy of the world does not supply you with the means to conduct the kind of warfare needed to overthrow the illegitimate system of apartheid and the government of South Africa." He doubted that sympathetic governments would actually send troops to assist black Africans in such a violent takeover. Any minor revolutionary attempt is doomed to fail at the hands of the strong South African military.

Further, Van der Vyver was very skeptical about government assertions of its willingness to compromise. Little evidence exists to suggest that the government has any intention to share significant power with other groups. He warned of growing pressure from the right to actually take a harder apartheid stance. He urged the government to enter seriously into dialogue with leaders genuinely chosen by black community, rather than delivering concessions without actually relinquishing power at the same time. The present form of government, as well as apartheid, must go.

Van der Vyver is professor of law at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg. He is a leading legal and constitutional expert who has been in the forefront of promoting human rights in South Africa. He is an Advocate before the South African Supreme Court and has defended victims of apartheid there. He is the author of numerous books and articles, in Afrikaans and English, including "A Survey of Constitutional Development in South Africa," in the *Harvard Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Law Review* (1985). He was an organizer of the

first South African Conference on Human Rights in 1979, helped to found the organization "Lawyers for Human Rights," and initiated the *South African Journal on Human Rights*.

Van der Vyver's visit to Washington was sponsored by the Association for Public Justice (APJ), a Christian citizens organization which aims to build responsible, active citizenship and to influence public policies to reflect principles of public justice. APJ is concerned with a broad range of public policy concerns in both domestic and foreign affairs, focusing on the common public interest in contrast to special interests and interest-group politics. The forum was offered as a means to aid U.S. understanding of the political situation in South Africa and to encourage those South Africans who are trying to work out a new future for themselves.

Thomas E. McWhertor is an Association for Public Justice correspondent in Washington, D.C.

A Chat with the New Principal



Miss Carol De Jong has moved from Room A-2 at Chicago Christian High School, her long-time mathematics and computer room, to the principal's office. Although the move was a relatively short one, she has found it to be a profoundly challenging one. Those who know Carol well are confident in her leadership ability, and a visit to the main office quickly reveals changes she has already made. To understand what the changes have meant for Carol, we asked her to chat with us about her new job.

Q *What first interested you in applying for the job as principal of Chicago Christian High School?*

A It has not been a long term goal of mine to become a principal and when the idea was first suggested by some friends and colleagues, my reaction was not at all positive. But with some persistent prodding from those friends and after a lot of thought and prayer, I began to realize that if this was God's plan for me I was ready to accept the challenge.

Q *It has been said that a Christian school can be only as strong as the homes and the churches that support it. Is that a valid statement?*

A I prefer to see the church, home, and school as three members of a team; when one member is weak, the others must bear a greater share of the load. The ideal situation would be having all three equally strong and supportive of each other. Then each would be able to be most effective in its own way. But we have to recognize that some of our students come from homes that are troubled, and some do not have the rich church background that many others experience. This puts a greater responsibility on the school to provide the direction, the security, the love, as well as the education that the student needs. As a Christian community we must seek to strengthen all three—church, home, and school.

Q *Administrators are often "busyworked" to death. How do you plan to prevent busywork from obscuring your visions for CCHS?*

A I suppose that nearly every job has some things that must be done but may not be the most interesting. As a teacher I did not always enjoy correcting papers, but it was something that had to be done regularly. I have already found that in the position of principal there are many details which must be taken care of in order for the school to operate efficiently and smoothly. The important thing is to keep things in perspective so that detail is seen as detail and not the whole picture. I feel that it is a tremendous asset to be surrounded by capable people who can and do relieve me of much of the "busywork" that is involved in this position. I really appreciate the work of two talented and hardworking secretaries who have done so much to help me during these first few months on the job. The faculty is also very cooperative and capable. Not only do they do an excellent job of



GARY MEYER

teaching their own classes, but they also serve on committees and work on many other extra assignments. I hope to remain sensitive to their busy schedules and not to ask them to do more than they should. The faculty, and I include myself with them, needs to have time to step back from work and look at the whole picture. Conferences, in-service days, and professional faculty discussions are essential to keep us focused on the vision of the school as an instrument of bringing God's kingdom to its fullest expression.

Q *You have frequently used the image of the Potter and the clay (as used in the Bible) in conversation and in speeches. Why is that a significant image for you?*

A Although the image of the Potter and the clay has long been a meaningful one (I remember singing "Thou art the Potter, I am the clay" the Sunday I made public profession of my faith), it took on a new and very real meaning a few years ago when I began working with clay on the potter's wheel myself. The clay must be thoroughly prepared and ready to be molded in order for the potter to do his work. When the clay is ready and the potter is skilled, beautiful and useful vessels can be shaped. The variety is endless, and each pot has its own special quality. When we as Christians allow ourselves to be shaped and molded by God, he can do beautiful and wonderful things with us. When the clay is resistant, the pressure from the potter's hands causes frustration and pain; instead of useful and productive vessels the results are warped and fail to meet the exacting demands of the potter. When we have our lives centered on God and feel his hands of love surrounding us, then just a gentle nudge from him can mold us in productive and beautiful instruments for his service.

Q *How can a school make itself to be clay in the hands of the Potter?*

A A school can be clay in the hands of the Potter only if it is centered on God and his Word. When our goals and visions are in tune with God's will, then he will be able to mold and use us for his service. ■

Gary Meyer teaches English at Chicago Christian High School in Chicago, Illinois.



A Teacher Forever

HENRY J. BARON

MY eye happened to fall on one of my Chinese students, relaxing in her seat during the ten-minute break between afternoon lectures. She was a beauty with that creamy, almond-colored complexion and big, shiny eyes. It was a steamy summer afternoon in Chengdu, China, and my student in the Sichuan College of Education classroom stood up, lifted her dress, and sat down on her panties. This wholly unselfconscious gesture had startled me when first I saw it, for it seemed so out of keeping with the well-known Chinese modesty. But I had grown used to it, though I never understood how sitting on a sticky seat became more comfortable that way. What I saw next, I never grew used to: this charmingly dressed and beautiful young woman cleared her throat, bent over, and expectorated on the classroom floor, rubbed her feet over the spit-tle and casually resumed conversation with her nearest neighbor.

There were thirty of us American teachers on this Chinese campus, and all of us encountered many such paradoxes. For example, to Chinese students the teacher is a formidable authority figure, yet our students, who themselves were teachers of high school English, would often blithely ignore our instructions and commands; though they prize integrity as a virtue, yet no honor system would work in any test-taking situation; though they surely meant to pay me their highest compliment when they said I was strict and hard, yet they seemed to appreciate especially those times when the demands were low and the laughter flowed freely; though they could be quite status conscious and discriminatory among themselves, yet from us they demanded equal attention.

Yet, what I remember about my

Chinese students is not so much such inconsistencies, nor their tendency toward pretest panic and last-minute cramming that would both amuse and annoy us, nor their apparent imperviousness to specific explanations and instructions that often surprised and frustrated us; rather, what I remember most is that which in time engendered in me a lasting admiration, respect, and love for so many of them.

I came to admire many of my students for their earnestness. They would break off their afternoon sushi early to get the front seats in the lecture room for what they expected would be maximal learning. They would copy everything I would write on the board, especially the famous quotes of the day and the words of the songs we would teach them. And they would study diligently under such noisy and crowded conditions that effective study seemed all but impossible.

My students knew hardship and suffering. The Cultural Revolution had ended less than a decade ago. The older students talked of its turmoil and confusion, of its excesses and cruelty, of the painful personal toll it had exacted from them and their families. For most it had meant an end to their education, to their ambitions and dreams. After the revolution they had been assigned to teach, often far from family and friends. And there they were stuck, at twenty-five dollars a month or less, in a profession for which they had not been well-trained, which was not yet particularly highly regarded by their country, and from which they often failed to derive much personal satisfaction. Yet they were dedicated! They wanted to become better teachers of English and of students. And they still knew how to enjoy life. As often as time

would allow, they would take an evening stroll with each other or with us, or they would gather in a classroom to play games, to sing, to dance, to laugh. Highly musical, they would be apt to launch into a song or dance even during class breaks. And they reveled as children when we taught them such American grade school games as Blind Man's Bluff, Drop the Handkerchief, and Spin the Bottle. I came to respect them for their fortitude, their strength of character, and their love of life, despite its burdens.

But before we left in the last part of August, I came to love many of my students as well. As Christian teachers we were committed to model the kindness and love of Christ among ourselves and to our students. Apparently, few of them had ever been thus treated by their teachers. They were deeply touched and grateful. Their responsiveness overwhelmed us. They said they wanted to be such teachers too. And they let us into their lives, into their hearts, and shared with us their burdens and hopes. Out of their scarcity, they generously treated us to outings, parties, and beautiful presents. On our departure day many delayed their own trip home to stay with us as long as possible: they clung to us, they cried, they told us that we would be their teachers forever.

I pray that they're right. We still write to many of them. And because they now have a special place in our hearts, we surely hope to return and see them again some day.

I often think now of that inspiring Chinese saying: "Teacher for a day, a father (mother) forever." Is there a more important challenge? ■

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

STEVE J. VAN DER WEELE

**GOD'S CHOICE: THE TOTAL WORLD OF A
FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**
by Alan Peshkin.

Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 300 pages of text; Appendices A through L; Notes, 16 tables, references, index. 349 total pages. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Steve J. Van Der Weele,
Professor of English (Emeritus), Calvin
College.

In his book *God's Choice*, Alan Peshkin, Professor of Education at the University of Illinois, conveys in depth the results of an eighteen-month study of a private religious school typical of the "rising star" in American education—the Christian school movement. Bethany Baptist Academy—the name he and the administrators agreed on to avoid exact identification—a school somewhere in the Chicago area, was organized by the local Baptist church in response to the perceived paganism and humanism of the public schools, in which school and church leaders see no relish of salvation whatever.

Professor Peshkin's study achieves an intriguing blend of objectivity and passion. Despite warnings from the school administration that since, as an unbeliever, he lacked the "spiritual discernment" to make sense of what happens at Bethany, he reports accurately, fairly, and, in many ways, sympathetically, what he set out to discover—the relationship between religious doctrines and educational practice. The appendices—notes, results of questionnaires, references—undergird his careful but sprightly presentation. But when he comes to the last chapter, where he changes from the role of researcher to commentator, he expresses a deep uneasiness about the "sacralizing disposition" of BBA and the tendency of such schools to be an "intransigent element" in American society.

He finds Bethany Baptist a total institution—a twenty-four hour school, a community which, though not geographically isolated, is robustly dedicated to the single purpose: destroying the humanist kingdoms of this world so that the Kingdom of God may come. It is, in fact, an intrusive institution. It tries to control the total life of the students, so that their free time as well as their school time is carefully monitored by headmaster McGraw and his staff.

Discipline is rigidly enforced; it is supported by a system of demerits, the practice of student informers, and, ultimately, the use of the paddle. And though he ascertained that no student is able to function without some private world of his own, even the seven percent who offered substantial resistance to Bethany's ethos retained a grudging respect for the school's efforts.

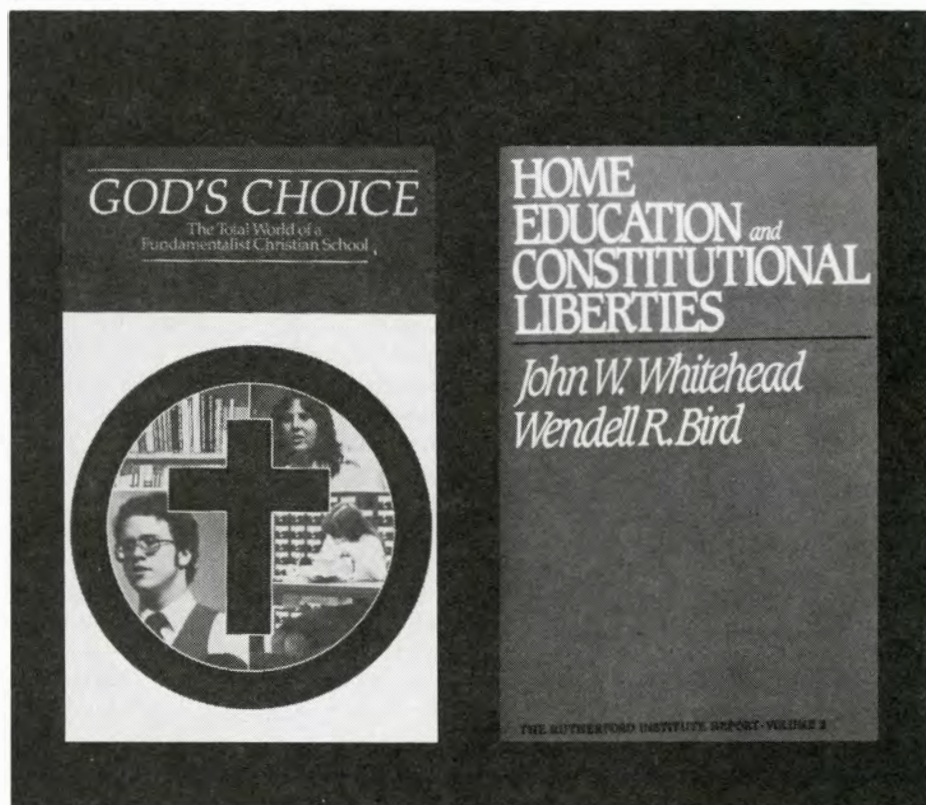
In class, the Bible, though not seen as a book of rules, represents, to the school staff, timeless Truth—propositional truth, unequivocal, unchanging truth. Inerrancy is upheld. The lines between truth and error, righteousness and evil, are, to the directors, clear and unambiguous. The school is, predictably, politically conservative.

For all the respect Professor Peshkin displays towards Bethany—a wistfulness, even, and some envy for the undeniable strength and marvellous order of this community, he nevertheless, finally asserts that "Total institutions are anathema to me." He regrets—and rightly so—the inflexibility, the undue indoctrination, the complacency, the arrogance, the self-righteousness, the strange kind of love directed at him during his studies—not love for him as a person but only as a potential convert. But one parts ways with him when

We are pleased to introduce our new book review editor, Steve J. Van Der Weele, who recently retired from teaching in the English department at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, after thirty-four years of service. He was professor of English language and literature and advisor to the journalism department. The following review/article and his broad scope of literary interests indicate his qualifications for his new responsibilities.

he rejects what his Jewishness should lead him to accept—an anthropology based on the condition of man as flawed and in desperate need of God's grace. He prefers the "transcendent imperative" of the First Amendment and pluralism as guiding educational principles. And I discern a hard edge in his fears that the movement may lead to a crusade—may, indeed, though he hopes the time will never come, require appropriate measures of control by the state. Surely we have here the case of a man saying to us, "Excuse me, but are my ribs hurting your elbow?"

You have, let us say, as a reader of this journal, been appointed to a task force mandated to advise Bethany Academy, in the wake of this insightful and provocative study. After commending all concerned for their sincerity, commitment, and passion for God's Kingdom, what would you advise by way of improvement? You would want to plead, I should think, for a more convivial attitude toward God's creation and a more flexible sense of what constitutes stewardship over that creation. You would inquire about the claims of the staff to know truth so absolutely rather than as Milton's virgin hacked and mangled and scattered in a thousand pieces, a catastrophe requiring Christians to work at restoring her original beauty. You would insist, too, that knowledge should not be as utilitarian as it is regarded in Bethany's classrooms, that there is a right sense in which truth and its quest constitutes an adventure of a high order, and that the student should follow that truth wherever it leads. You would concede that a school need not be "a garden in which a thousand flowers may bloom," but insist that truth is sometimes found in strange places, and that wherever it is found, it is God's truth. You would urge, too, a greater sense of obligation to earn one's way to wisdom instead of a disposition to codify it prematurely.



And you would advise the building of bridges rather than digging moats between the Christian and the world, so that God's people may work to transform the structures of society to insure truth, justice, righteousness, and equity.

After your presentation, you would go back, I predict, to your classroom or office much stimulated or to continue the glorious work of Christian education. But you would also, I think, be humbled and chastened, impressed anew by the difficulties of establishing a curriculum, a pedagogy, and an environment appropriate to equipping our students to be people of God, fit to do his work in the world. ■

HOME EDUCATION AND CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES

by John W. Whitehead and Wendell R. Bird

Rutherford Institute Reports, Series No. II
Crossway Books (Good News Imprint),
9825 W. Roosevelt Road,
Westchester, Illinois 60153
48 pp. \$5.95 paperback

Reviewed by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lee Thompson, Lansing, Michigan

As a response to the perceived malaise of American education, the Home School Movement has been introduced in various states. From all indications, it is here to stay. Home school parents are motivated by a number of reasons. They are often resourceful, and they have access to a wide variety of materials and methods of teaching. Where they have been most vulnerable so far is in meeting the laws of the land, especially the laws of the several states.

The Rutherford Institute, which has sponsored the report under review, was founded as a non-profit legal and educational organization

to inform the public of its constitutional rights on a variety of issues, education among them. Their first report was entitled *Freedom of Religious Expression in Public High Schools*.

Whitehead and Bird, authors of *Home Education*, are not themselves home schoolers, nor is their book an appeal to parents to start such schools. It is, rather, a careful legal analysis of what parents may and may not do if they contemplate teaching their own children. The laws are often complex; moreover, they vary from state to state. The book provides a helpful history of selected cases and analyzes legal precedents regarding home school issues. The book shows how parents may comply with their legal responsibilities without giving up their rights as parents to educate their children.

Two of the most valuable features of the book are the extensive bibliography and reference notes. These aids will efficiently guide prospective home parents through the legal thickets of these issues and will give them a good sense of past and current legal opinion on these matters. ■

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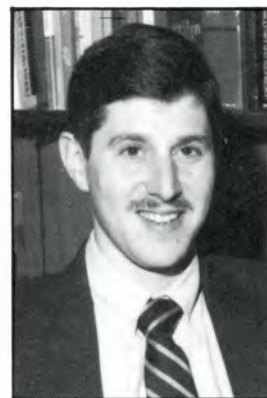
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