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Promoting Stewardship

Christian Educators Journal

CEJ

Can a Kingdom

STAND WITH ME ON THE upper deck of the huge Norwegian ship in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where well-dressed passengers toss dimes into the murky waters below. From a makeshift dinghy small black bodies slip into the slimy bay and soon bob up again, eyes gleaming in black faces, coins gleaming in black fingers. Passengers are chided for bribing young lads from school with tempting money games, but who listens? It's cheap entertainment! Pleasure for the moment—that's the standard.

Our whole system—political, educational, social—says, "Let's live for the present. Let's take care of us, now." Consequently, we support the politician who promises immediate financial gratification for our pet project. We buy whatever pleases the nagging child today. We design a curriculum that caters to current interest in fat incomes. We wish we could also satisfy the needs of the future, but we find ourselves locked into a system that operates on the power of today's pocketbook.

What, then, can a Christian teacher do to make a difference in a child's perception of life? How can one individual encourage a biblical sense of work and the use of God's gifts in a community, even a Christian community, where money seems to rule?

Katie Haan, fifth grade teacher at Sioux Center Christian School in Iowa, is addressing this problem by designing a creative Christian study of work. She first directs students to the Heidelberg Catechism, the most widely used and warmly praised biblical catechism of the Reformation period. She asks the students to consider why Jesus is called "Christ" meaning "Anointed." They face the question "But why are you called a Christian?" and what it means to share in Christ's anointing, what it means to be prophets, priests, and kings who reign with Christ over creation. Then they look at the whole concept of being children of God who call Jesus "our Lord," as laid out in various scripture passages from which the Catechism writers wrote. Next, each student selects a type of work and researches the skills and training required, its typical working seasons and hours, employer expectations, benefits, and salary. Finally, as students report their findings, the class discusses how these types of work can fulfill the calling designated in Scripture and the Catechism for Christians to be prophets who confess Christ's name, priests "living a sacrifice of thanks," and kings who "reign with Christ over all creation for all eternity." But they also discuss what limitations in being faithful to God each kind of worker experiences.

Come in a Work-a-day World?

Katie's unit ties in with the Heidelberg Catechism writers' explanation of the eighth commandment, which directs "that I work faithfully so that I may share with those in need." There, too, the Scripture passages on which the writers based their text remind us that if we are to be faithful stewards in God's creation, our work must be done in service to God rather than in service to ourselves. Teachers are wise to instill this concept in children's minds at a formative time, before financial success glazes their view of work.

Many people convince themselves that they have no alternative but to abide by the world's work mode. Thus they continue to take jobs that require them to compromise biblical standards because they see no other way to provide the financial security they desire. Far too often a claim to faith in God's provision is less faith than a calculated measurement in a false security: financial padding against earthly poverty.

Numerous opportunities exist for Christian men and women to find jobs working for Christian organizations. Church headquarters can quickly direct willing workers to areas of need. According to Dick Staub, Executive Director of Intercristo, 40,000 job openings in Christian ministries are currently unfilled.*

One might well ask whether we who claim to be servants of the Lord in Christian education are realistically modeling the joy and contentment of serving and faithfully directing our students to carry on that commitment. Perhaps we grumble too loudly about being overworked and underpaid. Perhaps we show irresponsibility in our use of time, our use of supplies, our choice of clothes, our desire to have what our neighbors have. And if the claim is true, if we really do suffer from demeaning attitudes within the Christian community, perhaps we have not used effective channels to remedy that problem. (We plan to discuss that topic in the next issue of CEJ.)

. . . we can't teach stewardship in isolation from discipleship in its fullness.

If we truly experience joy and contentment in serving the Lord, those qualities must permeate our lives, at work and after work. We cannot expect to convey the joy of service by merely talking about it or by taking our students on an occasional outing to sing at the local nursing home. We have to radiate with joy on a full-time basis. We have to live as faithful stewards of the creation within the classroom as well as in unique teaching settings.

Professor John Van Dyk, director of the Center for Educational Services at Dordt College and contributor of last volume's series on "Teaching Christianly," cautions:

> First, we can't teach stewardship in isolation from discipleship in its fullness. Stewardship is creation-centered, and the redemptive, healing nature of our task as caretakers must be emphasized. Stewardship is not exclusively economic. Second, we must avoid the notion that we have to go out of the classroom to serve. Service must not be separated from the classroom curriculum. We have to design our classrooms so that we live stewardship. We must encourage cooperative learning, an emotional response to what we learn, and the commitment to care for the creation on the basis of what we learn.

Students must develop not only intellectual excellence, but also a committed response that carries knowledge into actual practice within and outside the classroom.

That is why Van Dyk is talking with Katie Haan and like-minded teachers, so he can coordinate their efforts to design new teaching strategies and make curricular materials available to committed Christian teachers. That is why CEJ encourages readers to listen to those who have already taken innovative steps in Christian teaching strategies and curriculum design. That is why seventy-five vitally interested people gathered in Chicago last summer to discuss the future of Christian education. That is why we cannot be satisfied to throw mere dimes to waiting children. LKK

*For more information on job openings in Christian organizations, call Intercristo's Christian Placement Network at 1-800-426-1342 (in Washington state, Hawaii, and Canada call 1-206-546-7330). Contact person is Christina Rylko, Intercristo, 19303 Fremont Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98133.

"A Penny

LIBRARIAN SUSAN KATJE clipped into the faculty room, drew a cup of coffee from the urn labeled "decaf," and turned to face the cluster of Omni teachers, who were taking their after-chapel tonic. "What is it with this Carpenter woman?" she complained. "I've just learned that I've got to cut periodical subscriptions by twenty-five percent next year. How on earth are we supposed to educate these kids that way?" Susan waved the note she had just received from the new principal, Dr. Esther Carpenter. She added wistfully, "Boy, I'm missing Bob a lot these days. I'd even settle for old Peter Rip."

"Simmer down, Suse," came from Rick Cole, English teacher. "Don't feel so persecuted. Everybody got one of those notes. If you read it carefully, you'll see that it talks about *proposed* cuts and that we'll be discussing the matter at Friday's meeting. I'm kind of upset too, though. Carpenter is suggesting that we make a pretty big cut in the budget for *Signals*. I'd never have agreed to be the sponsor for the school paper if I'd known this was coming. Looks like we'll have to print the thing on Northern tissue. Save a lot of money that way. Can you imagine going back to a mimeographed school newspaper?" He turned to Bill Silver, who had just entered the faculty room.

"Hey Bill! Good to see you back. That flu bug got you again, eh? You were out for most of the week, right?"

"Yup," grinned Silver, the biz-ed teacher. "I knew I shoulda got a shot. It's a bad flu strain this year." He paused for a moment and smiled again. "I hear my fifth-hour econ class yesterday voted me a recovery by a vote of 16 to 11. So here I am." He sipped hot coffee from his vintage unwashed mug. "But say," he added, "I kind of like the way Carpie is clamping down on waste around here. You know," he added, lowering his voice slightly, "Bob DenDenker was a good principal, but he was always sort of sloppy with the finances around here, if you know what I mean."

Science teacher Matt DeWit clearly did not like the direction in which Silver was taking things. He took off his glasses, as he usually did when he became agitated. "Bob DenDenker didn't like waste any more than you do, Bill," he said, "but Bob kept the priorities right. He didn't want to waste money, but neither did he want us to waste any time wading through a lot of red tape. You might say he used a kind of "rough budget" system. But now look at what I have to do if Esther Carpenter's idea becomes policy around here. I have to anticipate almost to the penny my budget for lab supplies next year, and I have to spend hours filling out forms in detail just to write up a budget." Matt sipped his coffee, shook his head, and added, "The implication seems to be that we have been wasting money before, and I don't like that and I don't believe it. The old system was informal, but efficient. I liked it. The administration trusted us. We trusted each other."

Now Ren Abbot was shaking his head. "You can't run a school that way anymore, Matt," he announced. "Those days are over. Times are changing. Bill here will tell you that we need modern business methods, 'cause education is a business like anything else. That's why we have computers, remember? Anyway," he added irrelevantly, "my basketball team sure isn't responsible for the money crunch—we turn a tidy profit for Omni every year."

Piqued, Steve VanderPrikkel entered the conversation. As the coach of nonprofit tennis, he was more than a little nettled at Ren's smugness. "The tennis team isn't responsible for any money crunch around here either, Ren," he shot back. "Nor do we stop at Renfro's for a $7.00 steak dinner at Omni's expense after every tennis match."

Coach "Rabbit," grinning only slightly, moved in for the kill. "That's because the tennis team doesn't earn bucks for the school. Maybe you

Saved"

H.K. ZOEKLICHT

should charge admission. Think you could get a paying crowd?

"Oh, please," wailed Ginny Traansma, "spare me any more of your sports talk; all you do is fight anyway. But is it true," she added, "that we have to have special permission now to use the photocopy machine?"

At this moment John Vroom chose to enter the conversation, having completed his routine of sucking the jelly from a roll in one practiced inhalation. He held the deflated confection in his left hand and, pope-like, raised his right. "Let's get back to the main matter," he intoned. "I'm much in favor of Dr. Carpenter's new approach to finances around here. A penny saved is a penny earned—as I think Proverbs tells us—and that's just as important here as it is at home. And all these handouts in class aren't necessary—what do we have textbooks for, anyway?" The Bible teacher then thrust the entire remnant of the jelly roll into his cavernous mouth.

Jenny Snip, the school secretary and front office advocate, now delivered her own perspective. "Ms. Carpenter considers any waste a waste of Kingdom money, and I agree. All of us have a responsibility to act more responsibly with our financial resources, that's all. So she's going to suggest some changes, more than she already has, in the way we spend money and keep records—nothing drastic, but . . . ."

"Like changes in what?" interrupted DeWit.

"Well," said Snip mysteriously, "you had all better learn to turn out the lights in your room when you're not using it, and I'd suggest that you all invest in some warm sweaters. She wants to have us all dress warmer so that we can lower the temperature in the building to 68 degrees. Says it's healthier that way anyway."

"Spare me," shivered Ginny.

"What else?" persisted DeWit.

"Uh, well, for example Carpenter is going to ration the number of sheets we may use each month for making handouts. She saw a lot of waste ones in the basket the other day. And, uh, I think she is going to ask you to do more mimeographing and less photocopying."

"Forward to the past," Rick Cole quipped with a groan.

"Go on," said DeWit, "tell us all there is."

Snip glanced warily toward the door. "Uh, there's going to be a, that is, you . . .well, the entire faculty is going to be asked to take part in one of those phone-type fund raising things that the board is proposing. Carpenter volunteered all of you for that. You know how that goes. Each teacher, and each board member too, of course, will be asked to call an assigned number of parents to try to get a pledge—you know how that goes."

"Crap! Count me out," objected a voice from the back. "I'm going to have the flu that night."

"Yeah, or a royal cold you caught teaching in a 68-degree classroom," moaned another.

"You won't catch me begging for my salary till hell freezes over," exploded a third.

"Hey, let's stay calm," counseled Matt DeWit. "These things will pass. They always do. They fade away. You watch."

"And there's one thing more," announced Jenny Snip.

"What's that?" asked DeWit.

"Well, I think Dr. Carpenter is going to ask us to spend less time drinking coffee. She figures that every unnecessary five minutes you teachers spend here in the faculty room, multiplied by the total number of teachers, can amount to hours a day of what she calls 'Kingdom Time' wasted."

This time there was a stunned silence. But then the door opened and in strode Dr. Esther Carpenter, long dark hair cascading over her smartly tailored mauve suit. She glanced at the clock as she marched to the coffee table where she drew a cup of hot water from the urn and expertly prepared a cup of herbal tea. She smiled warmly as she said, "What a glorious morning the Lord has given us today, hasn't he? I just love the winter sunshine!" **CEJ**

The Long Range Plan: a Roadmap

. . .assure the future of your educational ministry.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED whether a long range plan is appropriate for your school? If so, have you wondered what such a plan should contain?

Long range plans are appropriate for almost any private Christian school. A solid long range plan is a model of good stewardship, which helps parents, staff, and congregational leaders marshal their limited resources toward the most effective Christian education possible.

While the content and the goals embodied in your long range plan will be unique, your plan will almost certainly focus on eight crucial topics: school philosophy, curriculum, staffing, enrollment, student and family activities, fund development, physical plant, and finance.

Let's consider the questions you should ask about each.

Philosophy and Purpose. Any long range plan should open with a clear, concise statement of philosophy and purpose. Why, in a nutshell, does your school exist? How is it different from public schools—and other private Christian schools—in your area? What do you believe you can uniquely give your students?

Curriculum. Review your existing curriculum on a grade-by-grade basis. What is mandated by your state? By your supporting churches? What additions would you like to make to the curriculum in the next five years and what additional supplies, textbooks, and equipment will those additions require?

Staff. While this is a sensitive issue, it is important, even crucial. Nothing affects the tone of the school more than the day-to-day actions of the staff, so this issue should be carefully studied by planners.

Develop a profile of your existing staff—their backgrounds, educational experience, degrees. Survey your parent body about staff satisfaction if you wish. Do you want to slowly upgrade staff quality, either through the institution of stricter hiring standards or more intensive professional development requirements? Do you wish to add faculty specialists in certain academic areas? Are you satisfied with your existing student-to-teacher ratio, and if not, how can you improve it?

Enrollment. What is your enrollment history, grade by grade, for each of the last ten years? What percentage change has each grade experienced over that period? Do you notice any demographic trends among your students? A preponderance of male or female students? Certain ethnic groups? Why?

Do you find that you are enrolling increasing numbers of students not directly affiliated with your sponsoring churches and society? What attracts them to the school and how can you attract other students with these same ideals?

Study your student transfers for the last ten years. How many new students have enrolled? What are their reasons? How many students left each year? Why?

Carefully examine your community's population patterns. Is the number of school-age children on the upswing? The downswing? Is it stable? How much new housing construction is underway locally? What is the current median family income in your area? Is it rising? What do these statistics tell you about enrollment potential in the future? If you don't have your area's population statistics at your fingertips, check with your local municipal planning agency or the U.S. Census Bureau; you'll find extensive and valuable information there.

After studying your enrollment trends and the community's population, can you make some grade-by-grade enrollment estimates for each of the next five years? If these estimates are not accurate, develop some modest enrollment increase goals and marketing strategies to match.

Students, Family, and Religious Activities. While student and family activities may not directly bear on the school's core curriculum, they do have a profound effect on the growth of the students. They are a very special part of your long range plan.

Ask yourself what student and family activities should be in place five years down the road. How will those activities complement your general curriculum and Christian education practices? Will those activities enhance your abili-

to Your School's Future

RICHARD ENSMAN, JR.

ty to "market" the school to the wider community? How much will your student and family activities cost? How will they be financed? Through tuition assessments? User fees? Fund-raising projects?

Fund Development. How many of your school's alumni are in the workforce today? Do they contribute to the support of the school? Do you have other benefactors and, if not, can you develop a simple benefactor program? Do you have an annual fund appeal? If so, how can the results be improved?

Look at all your private contributions for the last five years. What is the size of your contributor list? The number of gifts each year? Your average contribution? Can you develop a year-by-year strategy to increase the number, size, and type of gifts?

How about your fund-raising events and activities for the last five years? Are they bringing in new revenue every year or just holding their own? How can these events be strengthened? Can you develop a five-year fund-raising plan,as well?

Your School Building. The maintenance and operation of your building may well comprise more than twenty-five percent of your annual budget. Care for the physical plant well, and it will serve you economically for many years to come.

Ponder the age of the building. Carefully evaluate the condition of classroom walls, ceilings, floors, roof, and windows. Evaluate, too, the building's mechanical systems, particularly noting plumbing, heating, and electrical systems. What is the building's energy consumption pattern? What operational or capital improvements will reduce consumption?

Finally, is the building's layout adequate for students and staff? What about the yard or playground? Is additional equipment required in the years ahead? Will you need additions or renovations? If so, how much will they cost and how will they be financed?

Finance. A crucial issue, this is usually addressed last in the long range planning process. Achievement of your goals and dreams will rest on a successful long range financial program, so spend much time on this topic.

Carefully analyze your revenue and expense statements for each of the last five years. Next, develop tentative budgets for each of the *next* five years—incorporating any staff, curricula, or building changes you anticipate during this period.

Will your initial revenue and expense budgets balance? Probably not. If they're not too far out of balance, go back and review your expenses. What might be cut without inflicting harm to the educational program? And could you be a bit more aggressive in your fund development goals? How? You may need to intensively review the entire plan several times before you bring each of your five future budgets into balance. If you find, after repeated attempts, that you can't match revenue and expense, perhaps it's time to call in a consultant to help.

Developing a long range plan is no easy task. You'll make an investment of tedious study, countless meetings, and sleepless nights. But the result will be well worth it: a detailed planning and operations guide for the future. More important, you'll know that you've helped assure the future of your educational ministry. **CEJ**

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Stewardship in the Science

GENESIS 1 REVEALS THAT God has given man dominion over the Earth. Man was created as God's caretaker of all creatures and is responsible for maintaining the relationship between living things and their environment. History has shown that sinful man has often misused his responsibility and ignored the relationships set forth in the creation order.

Students need to be made aware of their proper roles as caretakers. This article consists of two units and one simulation game which look at three specific environmental issues and challenge students to become better stewards of the most basic resources around them. Teachers can adapt these ideas to elementary or secondary students.

Paper Recycling

Basic Concept. Paper is an item produced from a renewable resource —trees. Ecological problems have occurred when human consumption patterns exceed creation's supply of natural resources. Many materials in nature can be recycled, and paper is no exception. In this unit, students explore their pattern of paper consumption and examine the aspects of paper recycling.

Objectives.

A. Students will evaluate their paper consumption habits.

B. Students will investigate the processes of paper production and paper recycling.

C. Students will articulate ways of reducing the amount of paper consumed while accomplishing their necessary daily tasks.

D. Students will challenge members of other classes to be good stewards of paper.

Activities.

- Record on a chart the number of different paper products used each day by the class. Items could include paper towels, milk cartons, notebook paper, computer paper, etc.
- Invite an official from a paper mill to give a presentation on how paper is made, and/or take the class on a tour of a paper mill.
- Draw pictures of the paper-making process. (Elementary)
- Draw a flow chart of the unit processes in paper production and describe the role of each unit. (Secondary)
- Identify the wastes produced by the paper-making process. Are any of them harmful to the environment?
- Take a hike through a forest to identify which trees are best suited for making paper.
- Have students write the U.S. Forest Service of their state's Department of Natural Resources to determine how many trees are required to produce one ton of paper.
- Determine the weight of the various paper products used during the day.
- Have the students name ways in which they can reduce the amount of paper used each day. Have them calculate the number of trees saved if they practiced these conservation techniques all year.
- Create a hallway display for other classes to view that summarizes the paper consumption patterns of the class and challenges other classes to be good stewards of paper.
- Create a presentation or play focused on paper production and practical conservation opportunities. Present this to other classes.
- Visit a paper recycling plant or go to a library to research the process of paper recycling.
- Have students classify paper products into types which are most easily recycled and least easily recycled.
- Design experiments to test the quality of recycled paper versus new paper. Tests can include strength, absorptive properties, durability, etc.
- Design a collage of papers best suited for recycling.

Water Quality in Our Town

Basic Concept. Water pollution is a very complex subject and is best learned by students as they examine water pollution in their own locality. This unit exposes students to the sources, types, and effects of pollutants known to exist in local water supplies.

Objectives.

A. Students will investigate the actions needed to obtain a high-quality public water supply.

B. Students will examine the substances which threaten water quality.

C. Students will suggest ways to reduce the number of household pollutants released into the environment.

D. Students will relate water quality to improving human health.

Activities.

- Make a relief map of all bodies of surface water within 50 miles of town.
- Hypothesize about the source of the town's water. (Note that many cities use underground aquifers as their main water supply.)
- Visit a water treatment plant in the city to learn about the city's water supply and the pollutants routinely removed.
- Missionaries to the Third World often encounter villages or cities with poor water treatment systems. Ask a visiting missionary to speak to the class about how this relates to the health of the inhabitants.
- View slides or a film of the country where the missionary has served.
- Interview a nurse or doctor about water-borne diseases. Write a report on this information.
- Brainstorm about water pollutants that may originate in the average household, for example, soaps, paints, cleaners, degreasers, or waste oil.
- Have each student survey his own neighborhood to determine how homeowners dispose of such items as oils,

Classroom

JIM AND LAURA NIEBOER

paints, and garden chemicals.

■ Report the results of the survey to the class by means of graphs and charts.

■ Collect containers of some products used frequently in the home. Examine the ingredients and do research in the school or local library to determine the effects of these ingredients on water quality.

■ List alternative methods of disposal. (Be wary of students whose alternatives solve one environmental problem but create another one, e.g., converting a water pollution problem into an air pollution problem.)

■ Design an eye-catching flyer that tells citizens how they can reduce their contributions to water pollution. Distribute these to the community.

■ Produce a video for a television public service announcement that communicates the need for safe drinking water and ways citizens can reduce their contributions to water pollution.

Land Use Simulation Game

Basic Concept. How should humans use natural land areas? This often can become a controversial issue involving a balance between economic gain and preservation of natural resources. While you study the wise use of land, use this simulation game, in which students make decisions about land use planning.

The Problem. The state of _____ owns a large tract of land, 3300 acres, in its natural state. The land includes a large lake. A panel from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been approached by five separate groups who have differing interests regarding the use of the land. The panel's responsibility is to make the final decision.

The Roles of Groups. (Allow students to determine names for each group.)

A) An environmental group
Goal: Preserve the site in its present state to serve as a living botany museum. Use it only for hiking and educational purposes.

B) A pork processing company
Goal: Build a plant near the lake and use the water resources of the area in its production of hams and pork chops.

C) A hunting and fishing association
Goal: Leave the area as it is and allow access to it only during the various hunting and fishing seasons.

D) A landowners association consisting of persons whose land borders the state land.
Goal: No clear-cut goals in mind. They are willing to listen to all other parties' proposals.

E) A resort and amusement company
Goal: Build a family-style amusement park on the land next to the lake. Build three motels near the amusement park.

F) The DNR panel
Goal: Follow the broad land-use guidelines developed by the state legislature.

G.) The Governor
This role should be played by the teacher. Stimulate discussion, provide "obstacles" for the groups, and keep the game moving.

Factors.

1. The environmental group has been working for 18 years to establish a wildlife preserve in the area. It would be the only preserve within 120 miles of the area. Currently, schoolchildren must travel more than two hours to the nearest wildlife preserve.
2. The pork company wants to locate here to reduce its costs of shipping livestock to the plant and shipping the meat products to wholesale distributors.
3. Economic decline in the area has increased unemployment. A few of the unemployed are landowners living next to the site.
4. Some landowners have experienced problems with hunters trespassing on their property. Other landowners enjoy hunting and fishing on the site.
5. The pork company will employ 400 workers and have an annual payroll of $11.6 million.
6. A local college has studied 120 acres of woodlands on the site and has identified several species of wild flowers that are considered endangered.

Rules and Conditions.

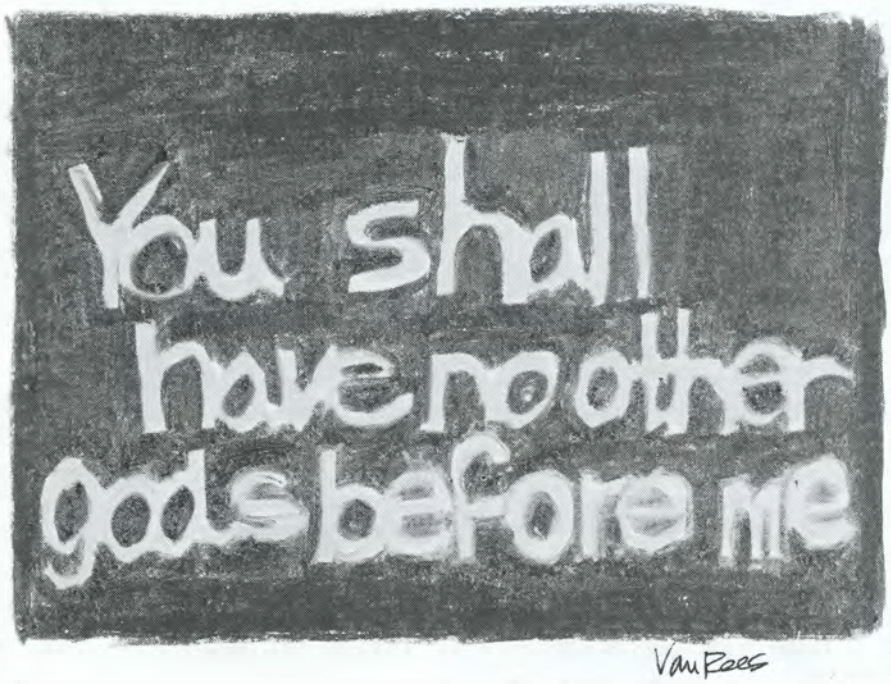
1. Students work within their various groups or on the panel.
2. Each group must prepare detailed maps of the area, showing the use of land and lake areas, and prepare a proposal to present to the DNR panel. Set a time limit on the length of the proposal.
3. The DNR panel must research the state's current land-use guidelines and regulations. The instructor should assist them in interpreting the guidelines, or bring in a person knowledgeable in this area to assist the students.
4. The DNR panel's decision must be endorsed by the governor.
5. Each group may lobby the governor in addition to presenting its arguments before the panel.

Discussion. Have the students discuss the priorities they set for land use. Are these priorities consistent with the biblical concept of stewardship? **CEJ**

For your own information, see the recommended resource list in the Book Review section on page 33.

Laura Nieboer corroborated with her husband Jim, who teaches at Pella Christian High School in Pella, Iowa.

Teaching the



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS are not repressive in any way; they are not merely a bunch of "thou shalt nots." Rather each commandment embodies particular universal values which lead to a more positive relationship with God and others. This explanation is treated in depth in a book by Carl Middleton and Robert P. Craig, *Teaching the Ten Commandments Today* (West Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-third Publications, 1977). The first commandment, then, is not merely a prohibition, but rather a recognition of the importance of God in one's life coupled with the necessity of not having any other type of God in our lives.

Anything that consumes our energies, talents, skills, and time is in danger of becoming our absolute or God. When we think that we can get to heaven or live the Christian life on our own power or merits, and we bargain, deal against or try to control God, then we are perhaps violating the basic value of the first commandment. This value includes the notion that God is a loving God, who is meant to be our first and topmost priority. If we say that we are too busy at the office and have no time for prayer or for being with our children, or if we are too busy to sit down and communicate with our spouses, we may wonder if we have not become idolatrous. The family is one area in which God can become alive to us. In fact, the family affords us the initial communication with God. We should not take this lightly. We must realize if we are truly sincere about living a life in union with God, having our own personal covenant with him, then no movement, no activity, no commitment, no interest or concern, as important and as essential as each may be, should be a substitute for God.

Many forms of idolatry are subtle. Cognitively, we can recognize such things as one's job or material possessions as merely relative in one's life—they need not form the basis of one's existence. But in the bustle of everyday life we may fail to recognize that they have become absolutes or top priororities; and thus in some sense they have taken the place of God.

We are called from the moment of Creation to be partners with God in the continuous drama of creation. This means that by the way we live, we either enhance or obstruct the drama of redemption. God is a loving God. We are called to respond to a loving person. This will necessitate a continuous dialogue with God through prayer, reflection, and the search for diverse ways God continually manifests himself to us. If we neglect these means, then we are not fulfilling the basic requirement of the first commandment, and therefore we may be guilty of idolatry.

How can students become sensitive to the values inherent in the first commandment? In the first place, they need to have some information regarding the development of the commandments in general and the first commandment in particular. During a discussion of the students' own personal values as they relate to God, the catechist can introduce various aspects of this historical/theological development—of course at the students' level of understanding. It is important for the students to know that the commandments went through a kind of development, and they ought to recognize that there is no one unitary, rigid meaning for any commandment. The commandments are not repressive in this way. Yet there is a principle inherent in each commandment; and this principle aids in developing one's Christian relationships.

Second, any positive exercise that helps clarify values can be used to help students understand the values inherent in the first commandment. Students can construct a values grid, where the students put their values in a continuum. Likewise, the teacher can have the students complete five "I like . . ." statements as the basis for a discussion of the students' priorities.

It goes without saying that the teacher, even if he or she disagrees with the student, should never condemn or

First Commandment

ROBERT P. CRAIG

ridicule a student for possessing a particular value. Of course not all values are acceptable. But the point is to clarify values and understand the nature of contemporary idolatry, putting personal concerns in the place of God. Like the wind, idolatry is all around us, and we need to recognize its various forms to add to the quality of our Christian life.

At the primary level one can try a number of ways to help children grapple with the value(s) of the first commandment. The teacher can tell the children the story of the Sinai event, stressing the aspects of worship and idolatry. The teacher can cite the good things Yahweh did for his people and note how they insulted him in return. Then the students can make the story their own, in a sense, by drawing or painting their versions of Moses encountering the people as they worshiped the golden calf.

After the children have some understanding of the commandment's basic value, the teacher can also ask them to offer suggestions on how they follow the guidance of the first commandment. The children can be led to a positive approach through initial suggestions (private prayers, grace before meals, Sunday activity, their recognition of God as creator of nature, animals, and all of life). This discussion could lead the students to an attitude of thanksgiving.

Last, the catechist could have the children offer suggestions on "idols" they feel might take God's place. It would be interesting to know why the children feel this way and how this insight relates in a practical way to their lives.

At the intermediate level the Christian educator could ask the students to develop their own lists of idolatrous acts and to discuss these lists. Then he might ask the students to create a positive list on how they are going to live out the value(s) of the first commandment.

Students could better understand the attitude behind idolatrous behaviors by role playing. For example, one could be so dedicated to work as to neglect the family, or a student can be so taken up with athletics or extracurricular activities that he or she is never home or never has time to pray. This idea could include role playing the Exodus event of the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses. Then the catechist could have the students apply these various insights to contemporary life.

At the secondary level the religious educator could present the following stimulating questions for discussion:

- In what ways could political parties be a form of idolatry?
- In what way are certain forms of student unrest (protest against defense buildup, reaction to nuclear power plants, considerations of agent orange being used in Viet Nam) a reaction against traditional or established idols?
- How can the concept of affirmative action, with its corresponding notion of equal opportunity, be idolatrous, as essential as this movement may be?
- Is it possible to work without idolizing money or status? Are there any contemporary examples in which this does not occur?
- How is white supremacy, or any type of racism, a form of idolatry?

Also, the catechist can ask the students to number in order from one to five the most prized aspects of their lives—money, music, sports, the family, God, church, or whatever else. The religious educator can place the students in small groups and have them discuss why they hold these priorities. The catechist must be careful not to endanger the students' right to privacy; they should not be forced in any way to discuss more than they desire to. Likewise, if a particular student appears to be revealing too much about his or her feelings so that the student may be harmed in the eyes of the other students, the catechist should redirect the flow of discussion.

Finally, the students could make collages from newspaper or magazine clippings. The students could be asked to put the number one in the center of the collage and then to finish the work with symbolic representations of what the first commandment means to them.

At the adult level the religious educator can likewise help in the understanding of this commandment. For instance, each adult could number in order six main life goals and discuss idolatry in relationship to these goals. The issue of priorities should be discussed.

The catechist could also divide the larger group of adults into smaller groups of no more than six members. Then each group member could suggest strategies by which the family can become more deeply aware of the nature of contemporary idolatry.

The above list of activities is, of course, not exhaustive. Likewise, the religious educator is not attempting to pry into students' lives. So much thought and guidance needs to be considered before the catechist gets students involved in any activity. The students' values and privacy need to be respected. Thus I am not trying to condemn the value of work, sports, extracurricular activities, or social programs. But some of the various aspects that constitute our daily existence need to be examined. If we are putting any aspect of our lives before God, no matter how worthy that activity is, we need to consider the appropriateness of our priorities. "Having no false gods" may mean that we have to question what we hold most dear in our lives. **CEJ**

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A Christian Land Ethic

AU SABLE FORUM MEMBERS

At the seventh annual Au Sable Forum held in Mancelona, Michigan, last August, an important move was made in the growing effort to link Christianity and Ecology. Nine U.S., European, and African experts on Christian stewardship met as a task force to develop a Christian Land Ethic.

This statement concludes that modern science, disruptive science-religion debates, and a materialistic growth economy have led Christendom away from its former closeness to the creation and the Creator. The churches' long-standing confession of God as Creator has often become so muted that it allows for its confessors to stand by or even assist in the dismantling of the Creator's works.

Au Sable Institute has been a center for discussion of Christian stewardship since 1980 and at its forums have hosted most of the major thinkers and practitioners of caring for the earth in the context of biblical teachings. In addition to conducting its annual forum, Au Sable Institute provides college courses for over seventy-five colleges throughout the United States and Canada, and provides support for groups with interests in Christianity and environment.

WITH THE ADVENT OF modern science, disruptive science-religion debates, and a materialistic growth economy, Christendom has been stepping back from its closeness to the creation and the Creator, shifting its attention toward the individual self and the personal Redeemer. The growing environmental awareness in modern society is bringing a realization to the church that its long-standing confession of God as Creator has often become so muted that it allows for its confessors to stand by or even assist in the dismantling of the Creator's works.

Christians are now recognizing how God's creation is being degraded and what the scriptures and a renewed spirituality teach us about God's care for the earth. Belief in God as Redeemer presupposes belief in God as Creator. All of this leads to a Christian worldview that includes caring for the earth. It is necessary for all people to be concerned about the land (God's created order) in which we live, which surrounds us, and which is entrusted to our care, and to speak out for the Creator's works.

Statements of faith and fact

- The earth is an orderly, interdependent system in which plants and animals live, adapted to their environment over thousands of years.
- The earth is characterized by diversity, richness, and a variety of plants, animals, and environs, all of which were declared by God as being good (Gen. 1:31).
- Humans are part of the earth but do not own it since it is a gift from God entrusted to their care (Gen. 1:26; 2:15; Psalm 24:1-2).
- The original innocence of the garden has long vanished; human lives and the land are marred by decay, selfishness, and strife.

Ethical statements

- Humans cannot assume that they have an absolute right to the land.
- The land, belonging to the created order, is finite and has a limited capacity for improvement and carrying burdens; therefore, just limits must be placed on expansion.
- In most places we cannot live on the land without modifying it so that it provides necessary shelter and nourishment. These necessary cultural interferences with the land should be weighed in several respects: Do the changes enhance or impair our general well-being? Do they unnecessarily inflict harm on the created order? How do they affect the well-being of future generations?
- Since our lifetime is shorter than that of the land and since successive generations are always depending on the preceding ones, the land should be kept in trust for future generations.
- All life, including our own, is sustained by the land. Therefore, human life cannot have an absolute priority at the expense of everything else.

Call to Prophetic Response

- Belonging to the new redeemed order, Christians are called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to shine forth as the light of the world and to become the salt of the earth. They are enabled to anticipate the hoped-for new creation in the present and to become prophetic witnesses in a fallen world.
- Knowing that God's kingdom includes heaven and earth, we value the whole of God's created order without predominant concern for its utility.
- As Christians, we have a prophetic task to remind the church and others that God intends that all people should enjoy the bounty of God's land; moreover, all creatures should be seen as having a rightful place in God's creation (Luke 1:51ff.; Matt. 12:6).
- Since humans have been entrusted with the care of creation, they will be held accountable for what they have done and left undone when the Master returns.
- As Christians, we hope for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- The creation, including humanity, waits eagerly for the fulfillment of the kingdom and freedom from brokenness, death, self-centeredness and egotism (Rom. 8:19).

Ultimately, all life belongs to God, who sustains us in and through the land. Consequently, the destiny of the land and humanity are inextricably

intertwined and must be recognized in thought and action. The creation is no commodity to be bought and sold, used and abused. It is a gift to be enjoyed and to be handled wisely. And wisdom itself is a gift of God.

Plea for Christian Stewardship

Christian stewardship, rooted in the Scriptures and informed by instruction gleaned from the cosmic order, flows from a communion with the Creator and a caring love for creation. Christian stewardship is doing the Creator's will in caring for the earth and striving to preserve and restore the integrity, stability, and beauty of the created order, responding to creation's eager expectation of redemption. Christian stewardship is so living on earth that the Creator and creation are respected, the creation is preserved, brokenness is repaired, and harmony is restored. Christian stewardship seeks for the Creator's kingdom—a kingdom devoid of human arrogance, ignorance, and greed. Christian stewardship is so living on earth that heaven will not be a shock to us. **CEJ**

Prepared as a Joint Statement by the Presenters of Papers at Au Sable Forum 1987: Susan Power Bratton (University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia), Herman E. Daly (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana), Calvin B. DeWitt (Au Sable Institute, Mancelona, Michigan), Ruth L. Hine (Bethel Horizons, Madison, Wisconsin), Karen A. Longman (Christian College Coalition, Washington, D.C.), Ghillean T. Prance (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York), Mutombo Mpanya (University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana), Hans Schwarz (University of Regensburg, Regensburg, West Germany), David Wise (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin).

Gift or Grasp

DELMAR VANDER ZEE

Praise God,
from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him,
all creatures here below . . . .
Bishop Thomas Ken

SO BEGINS THE FAMILIAR doxology. Stop to think of what it means. Praise him, *all creatures*, here below, i.e. on earth. Too often I am afraid that we are gathering our things and getting ready to leave church when this is sung, and the meaning escapes us. The doxology is a beautiful expression of the praise that is due the Creator, and it contains a confession of the fundamental role of all the creatures, including human creatures to praise their Maker.

In Christian education we hear such goals as to learn about God's world or God's creation. We claim that education must point the student to Christ in whom all things cohere. No doubt, it is written in many Christian schools' statements of purpose that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In addition to all this, we hear that today's world is so complex that our children need the best possible education in order to __—you fill in the blank; it could be in order to succeed, to make it, to get ahead, to make an impact, to be able to witness, to be disciples or servants. So on the one hand, we espouse certain theoretical ideas and perspectives while on the other hand, we hope that education will lead to some useful consequence.

We have heard much talk about improving education: teacher accountability, merit pay, computer literacy, standard scores, back to the basics, shared *praxis*, training for discipleship, and even serviceable insight. To educate (from Latin, *e + ducere*) means to bring out or lead forth, presumably to lead the student out of ignorance.

The issue before us is stewardship. Is stewardship in our educational perspective, and do we see it as a worthy consequence of education? Does stewardship in this context mean that we are careful about how much paper we use? How efficiently we run the buses? How saving our constituents are so they will give enough to support the Christian school? That children learn not to waste? I realize there are elements of meaning in each of these. But the issue of stewardship runs much deeper. I would like to present the basic contours of this deeper meaning, but only after a brief thought excursion.

The year is 1987. Perhaps at no time before has so much money been poured into education as now—especially in western or "developed" nations. At no time have more people had high school and college educations. At no time have we had more scientists. Knowledge of subatomic physics, molecular biology, and inter-galactic astronomy is expanding to an extent that no one person can begin to comprehend. This is the age of the specialist, of high-tech, of biochips and artificial intelligence, the age of information. Prosperity is measured in terms of gross national product. And while we are being megatrended, the future shockwave descends upon us.

The year is 1987, June 19. The last "dusky" seaside sparrow on planet Earth dies. It no longer has a place to live. And in 1987 there is continuing talk of a massive "hole" opening in the upper atmosphere over the glaciated continent of Antarctica—a hole where ozone is depleted. An occasional article appears in the popular press concerning the rapid loss of the tropical rain forest, the planet's richest biome—in which, by some estimates, only one half of the species have even been given names! In 1987, the agriculture crisis continues with government subsidies essentially propping up a non-sustainable agro-system which is bloated with over-extended loans made possible because of massive production rates fostered by the green revolution and cheap fossil fuel inputs. During the last 150 years, much of the prairie on

Why study ozone unless we link the problem to the thermostat on the wall and one's expected comfort level?

the North American continent has been broken, and in some places half of the top soil of these prairie lands is gone. Rates of chronic soil erosion now equal or exceed those of the Dust Bowl years. The spectre of decommissioning nuclear power plants and cleaning up first and second generation toxic waste dumps is so mind boggling that politicians, corporate executives, and common citizens prefer to keep their heads in the security of sand. The list could go on: acid rain, ground water pollution—you get the picture.

Now some questions. Which picture of 1987 do you prefer? The happy-talk picture of progress, or the not so happy-talk picture of some of the environmental realities that face us? Is one true and the other false? Are both false? Could both be true? If both are true, and our educational endeavor is at some kind of all time high, then how can such pending disaster even be possible within such an educated populace in the information age? If all things cohere in Christ, how can there be such global incoherence?

Whether or not stewardship has a place in education is not the question. We must recognize, first of all, that we humans already are stewards by created position in the world, and what follows then is that we are either good stewards or bad stewards, obedient or disobedient, faithful or unfaithful. Stewardship is meaningless if it is just tacked on to our other education, just more baggage on our dualistic journey. Second, perhaps it is not education we are describing, but rather training.

Education, too, has been fractured by specialization. We increasingly lose sight of the whole. Education increasingly aims at utility. One can make a case that education is aimed at training people and their minds to feed this huge materialistic machine called economic progress which Bob Goudzwaard calls an idol of our time (*Idols of Our Time*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984).

Let us try to look at education in the light of our stewardly position and these two different world pictures. What is fundamentally different about the two pictures presented in our thought excursion? The former focuses on man's achievement in the material world. There is only grasp; the Creation and its creatures are not seen as gift, but only as things to be grasped for their utility. The second picture shows the consequence on planet Earth from what goes on in picture one. The life support system suffers and the creatures become increasingly endangered unless they gain some economic value by virtue of their utility for man.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, not the fear of some idol of economic progress. Wisdom is not equal to information; this age lacks wisdom. The biblical concept of wisdom is deep and rich and intimate. It is not superficial, disconnected, utility-oriented knowledge. Biblical wisdom recognizes gift, not grasp; meekness, not pride; obedience, not arrogance.

But what do our students increasingly see and want in education? Careerism, getting a job. A frequent question asked by students during advising sessions is, "What good is that course going to do for me?", meaning "How will it help me to get a job—a good paying job?" It seems to me that education is aimed at *being*, training is aimed at *doing*. We should educate people to *be* something rather than merely train them to *do* something. There have to be both "being" and "doing," but the "doing" emphasis today seems to be out of context with whom we ought to *be*.

Where in education, then, is the place of stewardship? Everywhere. I believe it always should have been that way and especially now historically, considering our biblical calling and the state of the planet; all aspects of creation must deal consciously, overtly, purposefully with stewardship. In fact Christian education should be uniquely qualified by its identity with stewardship. If one pursues the biblical role of humans as image-bearers and what the meaning of being co-heirs with Christ might mean, one is compelled to see Christian education as essentially tied to stewardship. I believe education, including Christian education, has been side tracked. We have focused on man while giving lip service to the rest of creation. We have translated creation to mean culture and culture to mean human culture, and we have used Genesis 1:28 to justify our actions. Note, we have even referred to it as the "cultural mandate".

Some Christians have used Genesis 1:28 to justify mankind's dominion and exploitation, while more kingdom oriented Christians have used Genesis 1:28 to justify the study of and involvement in the unfolding of human culture. But in either position there has never been a place for the rest of the creatures, or the "otherkind" (a term to distinguish from "humankind").

What does Genesis 1:28 say? Read it. It is given as a blessing to humankind (the "Adam" or "earth" kind) to multiply and fill the earth and to have dominion over the creatures, the creatures whose created goodness is described in the preceeding verses. And one of those creatures is said to be in God's image. This is the context of the creation mandate. The Hebrew meaning of dominion is further elaborated in Genesis 2:15 where the calling is given for man to care and keep the garden and where we later learn of the naming of the creatures by Adam. The Hebrew word "keep" in Genesis 2:15 is *shamar*. The same word is used in Genesis 3:24 in reference to the angels guarding the garden, and also in Genesis 4:9 in the story of Cain and Abel. These references add to our understanding of the meaning of *shamar*. This keeping is not a plundering exploitation. Cain plundered Abel and then sarcastically asked God if he was to be his brother's keeper.

The biblical basis of stewardship and its roots in the creation can be further seen in the link between Adam and Christ. Christ is the second Adam. In Christ all things are redeemed and in Christ all things cohere. And we, the redeemed, are called co-heirs with Christ. If Christ was the supreme example of a humble servant and if we are co-heirs with Christ in whom all things cohere, then it seems to follow that Christians are to be servant cohers, that is, we are to be agents of healing and reconciliation. But be careful now, you have heard some of these same words and phrases before. Note the context here. The context is the creation. We are not talking about soul saving and human personal healing here, although this is part of the picture of a renewed order.

Now I hope you begin to see why earlier I said that stewardship fits everywhere in education. Look at history through the spectacles of a creation-based, image-bearing, servant co-heir view of who man ought to be, and teach literature that way. Have the students read Chief Seattle's speech* and let them reflect and think deeply on the significance of it. Teach Bible that way, and science.

To be sure, these concept goals have to be tailored to the grade level, but I believe there is no greater challenge and no matter of greater urgency facing education in general, at all levels—in Christian education in particular—than that of rediscovering, rethinking, and reimplementing what Christian stewardship implies. Those who go by the name of Christ should have as their redeemed nature to be God image-bearing stewards of the whole creation.

A familiar psalm says that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein." At the 1987 Au Sable Forum on A Christian Land Ethic, Herman Daley made this comment considering this psalm and man's role in the world: "Ethics aims at right action in the world. It requires two kinds of knowledge: 'What is right or good?' and 'How does the world work?'" We have to learn not only about righteousness, but also about how the world works. That means we must learn about ozone, water cycles, soil formation, biotic food chains, energy flow, population dynamics . . .which probably sound like college-level science to most readers of this article, but the basic concepts of how the world works are amenable to children as well as to adults. Children are especially in tune to the creatures and the created order around them, provided we do not corrupt them with our fears and ignorance, provided we do not stifle their enthusiasm and imagination.

Go back to the two thought excursion pictures. I argue that at least one reason such a discrepancy can exist is that our worldview is essentially fractured. We see humankind as dominant in the world and separate from the mundane. In fact, much of what we do is to isolate ourselves from the world; the creatures somehow have to fend for themselves. We have not developed a whole sense of community. We do not consider the otherkind as part of community, and to many bent on progress, the otherkind and their advocates are seen as impediments to human advancement. The biblical view knows of no such dualism. The whole Creation account places humankind squarely within the created order. We are a part of, not apart from, the creation. This is our place. Our task is to image God in caring for the creatures. Anything in our schools, homes, churches, and public policy realm that shifts our attention and action away from this fundamental role of humankind should be removed or reformed.

What do we do in education to begin to heal the brokenness evident in our world? Education somehow prepares one for life and life's tasks, but if living can result in such environmental disintegration, then it seems obvious that there is a serious mismatch between purpose and result.

People do not know anymore their connectedness to the real world. Why study ozone unless we link the problem to the thermostat on the wall and one's expected comfort level? One of the central tasks of today's education is to learn the connections of our living (consuming) to the real world. And if what is studied has no connection with the real world, should we not question its validity?

Furthermore, education that is aimed at understanding how the world works and at righteous action should be *structured* so as to integrate instead of fractionate. We need to foster community instead of individualism. And remember, community from a stewardship perspective includes creatures other than humans. The creatures are not merely wallpaper and props on the human stage of culture. The otherkind-creatures, along with humans, make up the life support system of the planet.

We are inseparably linked by created order and continued providence—that is one of the meanings of the Noah's ark story. *All* the creatures were saved, and God's covenant (Genesis 9) rests on "all living creatures . . .on the earth"—as long as sunlight is diffracted spectrally through raindrops. **CEJ**

For your information, see the recommended resource list in the Book Review section on page 33.

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*Chief Seattle's Speech. Sanders, Thomas E., and Walter Peek, ed., *Literature of the American Indian,* Glencoe Press, Encino, CA. 1973.

Do Schools Oppress

Today neo-Marxists are intent on changing society's thinking about education, particlularly through books and articles in widely-read educational journals.

NEO-MARXIST EDUATORS (or, as they call themselves, radicals, revisionists, or critical theorists) have strong commitments. Their version of Romans 12: 1—2 might well be: "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, pleasing to society's oppressed. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of today's capitalist society, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what the will is of the liberated New Man—his good, pleasing, and perfect will." Neo-Marxism has to be reckoned with precisely because of its deeply felt roots of faith.

But, you ask, are neo-Marxists that influential? Haven't the handful of radical "free" schools that operated in cities like Toronto a decade ago all but disappeared? And hasn't our society embraced conservatism, also in education? Does neo-Marxism need the attention of Christian educators?

True enough, few neo-Marxist schools exist today. Neo-Marxists blame their demise on the fact that most of us are so indoctrinated by the capitalist elite that we cannot appreciate the true freedom and democracy such schools promoted. Today, therefore, neo-Marxists are intent on changing society's *thinking* about education, particularly through books and articles in widely-read educational journals.

Moreover, neo-Marxist influence has gone beyond the writings of its proponents. A popular Canadian sociology of education textbook promotes, for instance, a "revisionist" re-interpretation of educational history, even though the authors are not neo-Marxist themselves. Quoting sources that in turn used highly selective data, the book takes the position that schools were begun and still exist to make pupils into pliant, obedient, non-thinking servants of society's oppressors (F.J. Mifflen and S.C. Mifflen, *The Sociology of Education: Canada and Beyond*, 1982). "Schooling is an instrument of domination and a site of struggle," says the introduction to another textbook (Terry Wotherspoon, *The Political Economy of Canadian Schooling*, 1987, 12). And private schools are to be opposed since their spread means that powerful interests will control schooling even more directly.

Many graduate education courses similarly discuss schooling in terms of exploitation, hegemony, liberation, and legitimation. One recent education newsletter suggested, tongue-in-cheek, how to use such words to "soon be sounding profound just like your favourite critical theorist"! The intent of the use of such words is a serious one, however: to have us see schools as institutions that the capitalist elite use to exploit us. If enough of us think within such a framework, neo-Marxists believe, radical changes will eventually come about in schools and society.

Two books published around 1971 have been especially influential in promoting these views:

Michael Young: Knowledge Is Power

First, Michael Young's *Knowledge and Control* (1971) claims that our schools are little more than a filtering system perpetuating power for the elite. They prepare workers for their predestined, underprivileged place in society. What is taught and how it is taught, according to Young, depend closely on society's "patterns of domination." The economic elite, bureaucrats in government, teachers' associations, and the media control the choice and dissemination of knowledge in the schools and, hence, the future of society. Therefore, Young concludes, we need to shake up our educational system, and through it, shake up society.

Young's thinking spread quickly. The theme of the 1975 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, *Schools in Search of Meaning*, for instance, was that schools serve "to legitimize the present social structure" and reconcile youngsters to accept their social posi-

or Set Free?

HARRO VAN BRUMMELEN

tions through competition, success, and failure in the classroom (11). Teachers are called to commit themselves to liberation from domination of oppressive interests and demand a curriculum "that reveals to students the nature of dominant socioeconomic structures in place of the one that indoctrinates them to be passive servants" (156). This book reflects the faith of Marx and Engels: education is omnipotent in that it can lead to the emergence of the "New Man."

Paulo Freire: Education as Praxis

The second, perhaps even more influential book is Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy for the Oppressed* (1970). Freire, a Brazilian educator in the "liberation theology" tradition, today does adult literacy work for the World Council of Churches. For Freire, the aim of education is to foster "critical consciousness" that helps people critically examine and change the oppressive structures of society. Freire's education projects emphasize the biblical view of the human person as a subject with a stewardly mandate: "Learning to read and write has meaning in that, by requiring men to reflect . . ., they discover that the world is also theirs, that their work is not the price they pay for being men but rather a way of loving—and of helping the world be a better place" (Freire, *Education: The Practice of Freedom*, 1973, 81). Freire's lessons in reading decoding almost immediately also teach, for instance, that the confrontation between wealth and poverty must lead to national emancipation. For Freire, skill and content must form an integral unity. Uncomfortable though Freire's Marxist leanings may be, we can appreciate his search for justice for the poor in the Third World. And I wish that as Christian educators we were as aware as Freire is of the potential influence of reading content and would choose and write materials accordingly!

Freire has caught a vision of the biblical conception of knowledge. Knowledge does not just consist of "facts" or "head knowledge." Rather, it requires commitment and action. We suffer, Freire says, from "narration sickness" and receptacle learning— a criticism to which Christian schools are not immune. Knowledge, Freire continues, must help human subjects transform the world around them through critical reflection and committed action. He calls this a "praxis" approach to education.

Knowledge does not just consist of "facts" or "head knowledge." Rather, it requires commitment and action.

Christians share Freire's view that education cannot be neutral. Our worldview always affects how we go about education. That is why Scripture is so clear that all teaching must proclaim the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord and tells us how we should walk in his ways. Freire, however, while advocating "praxis" and "liberation," never clearly describes what he means by such terms. Indeed, Freire's very vagueness may make his pedagogy seem attractive. It points to current problems that need to be addressed without defining too clearly what the alternatives would be.

Freire's ultimate hope is the unbiblical faith that people can create a world in which it will be easier to love. How does that come about? Problem-posing education will lead people to become critically conscious, throw off the yoke of their oppressors, and "transcend themselves." Here Freire does not grasp that the sinful nature of humans, also of the oppressed, will undermine his revolutionary ideals. He fails to see that redemption lies in faith in Christ rather than in the critical consciousness of man—valuable though the latter may sometimes be, especially in situations where real oppression occurs. Further, Freire does not say what life will be like after a revolution. He assumes that problems will resolve themselves once humans have become critically conscious. As is often the case for neo-Marxists, Freire's *analysis* of education is helpful for Christians, but his *answers* rest on a blind faith in the perfectibility of human nature.

In the next article, I will show how the thinking of Young and Freire has been echoed and extended in North America, especially during the present decade. **CEJ**

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An English Teacher's

. . .language is a special gift from God that elevates man above other animals, a part of being created "in his image". . .

I DID NOT HAVE THE BENEFIT of a Christian education. But after teaching four years at two Christian universities, I am an enthusiastic convert to the integration of faith and learning, the importance of a Christian perspective on one's discipline. I also know the difficulty in putting these principles to work in my classroom and my curricula, day after day. But even if we sometimes seem to spend more time in the Slough of Despond than on the Delectable Mountains, I know you will agree that the Pilgrim's Progress of Christian education is worth the lifelong endeavor.

First of all, the eternal significance of our daily work means that our pursuit of academic excellence is under the guidance and judgement of the divine Master. The world often says "them that can, do, and them that can't, teach." In fact, *we* know that the ability to teach is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, our commitment to teaching Christianly requires us to approach our individual *subjects* with respect, commitment, a self-discipline that strives to improve our knowledge and effectiveness in our field, and an enthusiasm that communicates the worth of our subjects to our students. And as Christian teachers we approach our *students* with a realistic patience, knowing their imperfections, and with a profound respect and concern for their dignity and worth as God's children. In an era when neither knowledge nor people are given the value that things—material possessions—are, our Christian perspective can have a powerful and revolutionary impact on our students' lives.

I have also learned what Christian education is *not*: it is *not* simple or simplistic. A prayer at the beginning and a Bible verse at the end of a lesson that is determined by secular norms does not constitute integration of faith and learning. Nor is it achieved by using a lesson simply as a pretext for launching into a sermon or a Scripture verse. I think "integration" means first, personally consecrating every moment in our classrooms to the Lord, and second, examining all of our lessons to see that they reflect our Christian vision of life and nurture a Christian mind in our students. I have found that, in English composition and literature classes at least, the struggle to follow that narrow path is demanding but, with his help, ultimately rewarding.

My sixteen-year-old son likes to maintain that English teachers only exist to create more English teachers who create more, ad infinitum. In my first-year composition classes I often meet the same kind of resistance. I, of course, explain the utilitarian value of my subject: it is important, personally and professionally, that students learn to communicate with precision and grace. But I also try to stress, throughout the course, the Christian view that language is a special gift from God that elevates man above other animals, a part of being created "in his image," and that we have a responsibility to use it correctly, clearly, honestly, and beautifully. In a society that reveals its distortion of values by its manipulation of language, Christians must demonstrate their clarity of thought, the clarity of God's truth, in clarity of expression.

Theologian Paul Tillich said that all literature is religious since it betrays a society's "ultimate concerns." Certainly, literature has been, throughout the ages, a mirror for mankind's creative, and sometimes destructive, powers. I don't preach sermons in my classroom, but I find it impossible to teach literature in its historical development, its themes, and even its techniques without reference to its theological orientation. I think the Christian teaching of literature should, without distorting the works, enable the students to understand our cultural devel-

"Pilgrim's Progress"

BARBARA H. PELL

. . .all literature is religious since it betrays a society's "ultimate concerns."

opment, appreciate the dynamics of literary works of art, and assess the values implicit in them.

In terms of the historical development of literature, many of the greatest works—from Chaucer to Tennyson—were products of Christian minds or Christian societies. As C.S. Lewis said about the study of Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

> We must therefore turn a deaf ear to [the secular critics] when [they] invite us "to study what there is of lasting originality in Milton's thought and especially to disentangle from theological rubbish the permanent and human interest." This is like asking us to study *Hamlet* after the "rubbish" of the revenge code has been removed, or centipedes when free of their irrelevant legs, or Gothic architecture without the pointed arches. Milton's thought, when purged of its theology, does not exist. Our plan must be very different—to plunge right into the "rubbish," to see the world as if we believed it, and then, while we still hold that position in our imagination, to see what sort of a poem results . . . .For the student of Milton my Christianity is an advantage. (C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* © London: Oxford University Press,

Even when scientific rationalism and existentialist philosophy undermine or deny Christian truths in more modern literature, it is a revelation to students that spiritual concerns are taken seriously. In serious literature, a religious world view is affirmed, or sought, or mourned, or denied, but it is seldom ignored as irrelevant, as is the case in our society generally. So when we study a Chekov play that shows the impossibility of horizontal human relationships when there is no vertical divine relationship, or *Waiting for Godot*, which poignantly demonstrates the meaninglessness of existentialism, or a Hemingway novel that proves the futility of man's actions without faith, or a Margaret Laurence short story that mourns the lack of belief in eternal life but cries out that "it really does matter" what one believes, we can enable our students to assess these themes in the light of a Christian perspective. Our goal is not to teach them smug self-righteousness, nor an uninformed dismissal of honest and creative portrayals of human suffering, but to enlarge their understanding of human frailty and God's grace.

Furthermore, we can teach them how, in literature, the only effective themes are those that are embodied in the literary techniques. And the choice of these techniques itself reveals a theological orientation. For example, in the modern novel, limited omniscience and stream of consciousness, which reflect the fragmentation, alienation and moral relativism of our society, have virtually replaced the traditional third person omniscient narrative voice, one that could speak for a society united in belief and morality. Metaphor, symbol and allegory all have a poverty of reference now in a secular world which denies the metaphysical dimension and has, as T.S. Eliot said, lost the words for religious experience.

These examples are the plot of my "Pilgrim's Progress," a developing Christian perspective on teaching English. I am very conscious that I have a long way to go before I arrive at the Celestial City, but I am encouraged by the example of the Hopeful that have gone before me. **CEJ**

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Teaching Beginning Literacy

IN THE LAST ISSUE I LAMENTED the heavy use of basals in Christian elementary school classrooms as reported in Christian Schools International's May 1987 issue of *Intercom*. I argued against the use of basals for three main reasons: 1) basals generally demean language and literature; 2) basals demean the role of the teacher and the child in the teaching/learning process; and 3) the cost of basals steals money away from more worthwhile curriculum expenditures. In this article I will sketch an alternative whole language approach to the use of basals. Since space limitation does not permit an extensive exposition of methodology, I have provided a brief annotated bibliography of helpful resources for those readers wishing to explore whole language principles and practices more fully.

What is "whole language" learning?

The term "whole language" has become a bit of a catch phrase of late, but it refers in general to approaches to literacy learning that eschew the teaching of skills in isolation from complete texts, where complete texts are minimally *meaningful* phrases and more usually whole sentences, poems, stories, and books. As well, all manner of functional print such as signs, logos, recipes, and instructions are grist for the whole language learning and teaching. Whole language approaches also conceive of learners as active meaning seekers rather than as passive data receptacles. This dual emphasis on meaning and on learners as active subjects should strike a responsive chord in Christian teachers who confess that creation is meaningful and that children are active subjects (rather than passive objects) of their King. A selection of quotes from a little book by Ken Goodman (see Resource Bibliography) will further clarify the concept of whole language learning:

- School literacy programs must build on existing learning and utilize intrinsic motivations. Literacy is an extension of natural whole language learning: it is functional, real, and relevant.
- Literacy develops from whole to part, from vague to precise, from gross to fine, from highly concrete and contextualized to more abstract, from familiar contexts to unfamiliar.
- Development of the ability to control the *form* of reading and writing follows, and is motivated by, the development of *functions* of reading and writing. [Italics mine—RWB]
- There is no hierarchy of sub-skills, and no necessary universal sequence.
- Literacy develops in response to personal/social needs.
- There is no one-to-one correspondence between teaching and learning. The teacher motivates, arranges the environment, monitors development, provides relevant and appropriate materials, and invites learners to participate in and plan literacy events and learning opportunities.
- Risk-taking is essential. Developing readers must be encouraged to predict and guess as they try to make sense of print. Developing writers must be encouraged to think about what they want to say, to explore genre, to invent spellings, and to experiment with punctuation. Learners need to appreciate that miscues, spelling inventions, and other imperfections are part of learning.
- The most important question a teacher can ask a reader or writer is, "Does that make sense?" Learners need to be encouraged to ask the same question of themselves as they read and write.
- Materials for instruction must be whole texts that are meaningful and relevant. From the first school experience, they must have all the characteristics of real, functional language. There is no need for special texts to teach reading or writing.
- Away with exercises that chop language into bits and pieces to be prac-

without a Basal Reading Series

ROBERT W. BRUINSMA

ticed in isolation from a whole text!
(Goodman 1986, 39-40)

Conversely, whole language approaches firmly reject such things as

- isolating skill sequences
- slicing up reading and writing into grade slices, each slice neatly following and dependent on prior ones
- simplifying texts by controlling their sentence structures and vocabulary or organizing them around phonic patterns
- equating reading and writing instruction with scores on tests of "subskills"
- isolating reading and writing instruction from its use in learning, or in actual reading and writing
- believing there are substantial numbers of learners who have difficulty learning to read or write for any physical or intellectual reason

(Goodman 1986, 34)

The whole language classroom

Physically, the whole language classroom is a place that signals the importance of language and literacy. A wide variety of print materials and literacy tools must abound. Since the book is still the primary source of printed language in our culture, the classroom must be filled with books. As I mentioned in my previous article, a large number of trade books can be purchased each year with the money that is saved by not buying basals and basal support materials. Classroom teachers should try to become familiar with children's literature—both classic and contemporary. Librarians, library associations, and knowledgeable parents in the community can be consulted to help build classroom libraries suitable to the age and interests of children at various levels of development. But whole language classrooms must also have other print resources available: magazines, newspapers, signs, labels, instruction manuals, games requiring reading, and the like. Literacy tools such as pens, pencils, crayons, felts, typewriters, word processors, ditto machines, erasers, rulers, stencils, paper, and glue must be readily available to children at all times. Learning centers are designed to involve children in reading and writing both for their own sake and also for the usual content organized in such disciplines as mathematics, science, social studies, and Bible. In short, the whole language classroom is one which invites children to talk, chant, sing, view, read, and write about the rich diversity of things and ideas in God's creation.

Whole language methodology

There is no such thing as *the* whole language teaching approach. Although firmly grounded in psycholinguistic and cognitive psychological theory, whole language teaching refers more to an attitude about language and children than to a set series of instructional sequences. I like to think of it as an informed methodological eclecticism that nicely lends itself to the three phases of unfolding, guiding, and enabling proposed by John Van Dyk as lying at the heart of Christian pedagogy. In conclusion, I quote selected (edited) sections of a guide by Marlene and Robert McCracken (see Resource Bibliography) to provide some sense of the kind of teaching that qualifies as whole language instruction.

> [T]eaching begins with experiences, experiences which the children bring to the classroom and those which the teacher provides. Experiences provoke thoughts; thoughts provoke a need to communicate; communication requires language. Communication is the giving and the getting of ideas. We give ideas primarily through talking and writing, and through art in all its forms—music, drama, dance, gesture, and body movement. We get ideas through our senses, primarily by hearing and looking, by listening and reading.
> (McCracken & McCracken 1979, 3)

There are five purposes of reading, writing, and language:

1. To immerse children in oral and written language
2. To have children use the language of literature as models for practicing
3. To require children to think
4. To have children understand intuitively the functions of language
5. To have children acquire ever-increasing skill in using language

(McCracken & McCracken 1979, 4)

There are five basic activities which occur every day and provide structure for the day:

1. *Recording*: Ideas are recorded mathematically, artistically, scientifically, or linguistically.
2. *Oral reading*: The teacher reads orally every day for twenty minutes or more.
3. *Sustained silent reading*: The children and teacher all read silently for a period of time.
4. *Chanting and singing*: These are ways of having children learn the sound of language so that they can work with visual forms and can write more freely.
5. *Themes*: Every day the teacher works seriously with an idea. She or he may sustain work on a single concept for several days or even weeks.

(McCracken & McCracken 1979, 4)

The McCrackens' suggest a sequence in which language skills are taught. It is a sequence that is repeated throughout all grades. Briefly the sequence is as follows:

1. *Oral Development of Ideas*: Almost every lesson begins with oral work to present and develop ideas. [It may] begin with a film, a record, or a field experience, but the important first step is the discussion that follows as the teacher teaches and the children

respond by expressing themselves orally . . . .During this oral period the teacher records many of the children's ideas on the chalk board, on cards, and on sentence strips. The teacher [also] reads to the children, and provides charts of poems, songs, and prose excerpts that the children chant to fill themselves with standard literary English . . . .It is from this chanting and listening that children begin to acquire oral command of standard English.

2. *Taking Dictation*: Towards the end of kindergarten or the beginning of grade one the teacher provokes the children to make a capsule statement . . . .The teacher writes *exactly* what the child says, taking no more than two sentences. The child reads it back immediately, and as a first step traces over the teacher's printing and, as a later step, copies directly underneath. Through dictation children learn the similarities and differences between their speech and print . . . .Dictation is a short-lived activity, covering two months or a little more. Children must be moved on to writing independently.
3. *Independent Writing*: [Much of the McCrackens' book is devoted to independent writing and only a hint of methodology can be given here.] Children need four things in order to write. They need ideas, words, and structure, and they need to know how to spell. Children need help with ideas . . . [This is why oral work is so important.] They need idea or word banks to help them remember the ideas developed in the oral work . . . .[Idea banks may be word lists and phrases on cards, or poems, song lyrics, chants, etc. on charts that hang in view within the room. A poem on a chart may also serve as a structure that gives children a form or scaffold upon which to hang their ideas.] Children must learn the basic alphabetic principles of spelling and they must be taught how to spell. Spelling is a skill, not a learning of lists of words. [Chapter IV in the McCrackens' book is devoted to teaching spelling in meaningful contexts.]
4. *Reading the Familiar*: Children read what they dictate. Children read what the teacher has recorded on the board or on word cards and sentence strips and charts. Children read the stories that the teacher has read to them—stories for which the concepts have been made familiar through oral discussions. Children read what they have written, and they read what classmates have written. When they have trouble, the teacher moves back to the oral or the written to develop ideas further, or to spelling to develop word identification skill.
5. *Reading the Unfamiliar*: [It is here that the classroom and school library collections become central.] Reading level is not determined by children's ability to pronounce words. It is the ideas [that children have mastered] that determine whether they can read a book, and, to a degree, whether [they] have in [their] brains the specific vocabulary of the content . . . .Inability to read [is most frequently caused by] not being able to bring enough ideas to the read ing. As children read in new areas, theyneed to return to the oral teaching of step one to develop ideas.

(McCracken & McCracken, 3-11)

This brief, selected summary of some of the pedagogical principles and practices of whole language teaching should provide some sense of what an integrated literacy program might look like in the primary grades. One of the predominant features of such a program is that the teacher and the children are in control of the learnings rather than a complex set of prescribed methods and materials as is the case when a basal series dictates the process. The reader should note that whole language instruction is *not* devoid of skills teaching; skills are just not taught in isolation or as ends in themselves. It may well be that both selections and exercises from basals may be useful in the course of developing a particular theme—the point is, basals, if used at all, should be servants rather than mastesr of the literacy teaching/learning process. **CEJ**

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A BRIEF, SELECTED, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF "WHOLE LANGUAGE" TEACHING/LEARNING RESOURCES

Barbe, Walter B. & Jerry L. Abbott *Personalized Reading Instruction.*
West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker Publishing Co., 1975. 216 pp.
Personalized reading is an individualized approach to reading instruction that can be implemented once children have attained a certain degree of reading proficiency. It is based on a child's guided self-selection of trade books and teacher monitoring of reading conferences with students. A good companion volume to this text is Don Holdaway's *Independence in Reading* (2nd ed.), Ashton Scholastic, 1980, which contains a good informal reading inventory up through about the grade eight level.

Cochrane, Orin et al. *Reading, Writing, and Caring.*
Whole Language Consultants Ltd., 1984. 216 pp.
This volume has been written by a group of Winnipeg, Manitoba, teachers. Based on the theoretical insights of such people as Ken and Yetta Goodman, Frank Smith, and Bill Martin Jr. and the experiences of the writers. It is a volume that classroom teachers will prize because it is sensitive to the day-to-day realities of classroom busyness and provides concrete and specific help with the integration of skills as well as evaluation procedures, classroom interaction, and home-school communication. Loaded with practical ideas and teaching aides. Available from Whole Language Consultants, 140 Malacana St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2G 2S9.

Cullinan, Bernice E. (ed). *Children's Literature in the Reading Program.*
Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1987. 171 pp.
Hot off the press. As Tomie dePaola says about his childhood reading experiences in the Foreward to this book: "If I knew that Dick and Jane andSpot and Puff couldn't hold a candle to Jack and the Beanstalk and Red Riding Hood and Pooh and Peter Rabbit, then many, many children *must* feel very much the same way, even though Dick and Jane have given way to Meg and Billy or any other string of 'current' names. There is no substitute for *real* books. They are rarely boring or sanitized or squeezed into a 'reading system' that children can smell a mile off. So logic says if we want *real* readerswe must give them *real* books; give our young people good literature, good art, and surprisingly, these young people may do the rest." What more can I say other than that this is a book full of practical ideas to help teachers use real literature in their classrooms. Annotated bibliographies of books suitable at different grade levels are included.

Goodman, Kenneth. *What's Whole in Whole Language?*
Scholastic-TAB Publications, 1986. 80 pp.
This little paperback is an excellent, readable introduction to the rationale and principles of whole language instruction written by a leading American psycholinguist who has been at the forefront of ushering in more holistic methods of literacy teaching. It is available from Scholastic-Tab Publications Ltd., 123 Newkirk Road, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada L4C 3G5.

Holdaway, Don. *The Foundations of Literacy.*
New York & Toronto: Ashton Scholastic, 1979. 232 pp.
This is one of the earlier books which explored the question of why it is that so many children who learn to speak with ease and joy face failure and frustration in learning to read and write. Holdaway comes to the conclusion that the problem is not with how children learn (or fail to learn), but in how we teach. This is a literate exposition of theory and practice which explicates much of the successful New Zealand early literacy programs based on the "shared book experiences" of young children and extended to a broadly-based whole language pedagogy.

Jewell, Margaret G. & Miles V. Zintz. *Learning to Read Naturally.*
Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1986. 276 pp.
One of the most interesting developments in literacy research is the attention that is being paid to so-called "natural" readers, i.e., children who learn to read on their own without any formal instruction. Such cases are not as rare as one might think, but it is clear that the home literacy environment plays a crucial role in the development of such "natural" readers. For Christians who have traditionally argued for the centrality of the parent-child relationship in nurture and education, this discovery of how influential the home is in predisposing a child to literacy should not come as a surprise. Jewell and Zintz have studied what is known about the home environments of "natural" readers and have written a text which takes these principles and expands them into the formal school context. This book is an excellent current follow-up to Holdaway's *Foundations* volume.

McCracken, Marlene & Robert McCracken. *Reading, Writing and Language: A Practical Guide for Primary Teachers.*
Peguis Publishers Ltd., 1979. 124 pp.
Here is a theoretically aware but very practical guide for implementing a whole language literacy program in the primary grades (K-3). The guide abounds in diagrams, classroom photos, and concrete, practical helps for the busy primary teacher. Available from the publishers at 462 Hargrave St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3A OX5 or A.N.W. Learning Aids, Box 277, Kimberly, B.C., Canada V1A 2Y6.

Stauffer, Russel G. *The Language Experience Approach to the Teaching of Reading* (2nd ed.)
New York: Harper & Row, 1980. 341 pp.
In many ways, current whole language approaches are an outgrowth and extension of the more familiar language experience approach. This textbook provides an excellent resource for teachers in the primary grades. I particularly like the chapters on building word banks and doing creative writing.

Thomas, Ves. *Teaching Spelling.*
Agincourt, Ont.: Gage Publishing Co., 1983.
Get rid of your developmental spelling series. This is the only spelling resource you'll really need. The spelling method is based on a "Pre-test, Study, and Post-test" design while the graded spelling lists have been constructed after examining thousands of writing samples of North American children to determine which words these children use most frequently in their writing. Diagnostic and remedial strategies are also provided. Available from the publisher at 164 Commander Boulevard, Agincourt, Ontario, Canada M1S 3C7.

Playing Around in Class:

■ It is an eighth-grade homeroom on the first day of school. You notice that last year's cliques are already forming exclusive huddles in different corners of the room. You also notice several new students frozen to their chairs, flipping through their blank spiral notebooks and anxiously looking at their slow-moving watches.

■ You and your cast have ten minutes before curtain on opening night. Students are devouring edible props, waving at the incoming audience, and redoing their wrinkles for the third time.

■ Except for one boisterous girl, your Bible Quiz Team of middle and high school students is silent on the bus ride to their first competition.

DO YOU NOTICE THE common elements in these three situations? Each one describes an initial experience, a tense atmosphere, and a disunified group.

Our usual response may be to ignore these signs or to give a pep talk. But for a refreshingly different approach, why not lead your students in a threatre game.

Theatre games are traditionally used in drama classes. Along with pantomime (described in our article, "Pantomime: Listening to Unspoken Language," October, 1987) these games help the student actor develop freedom of movement, spontaneity, and concentration. But their usefulness extends throughout the school curriculum.

Teachers in content-area classes can use theatre games to deepen group dynamics in the classroom, to provide warm-ups for oral presentations, or to serve as icebreakers for a new class. They are also constructive "fillers" for those extra ten minutes before the bell.

The games help participants develop teamwork, imagination, and sensitivity to surroundings. Most important, they can teach some excellent lessons about faith and the Christian life.

Experiment with the following games (a selective list of our students' favorites) in both your drama or content-area classes. Each game uses varying numbers of players and each has its own set of rules. Adapt them for your particular situation.

Clockworks: In "Clockworks" a student stands in the front of the class and makes a rhythmic movement that he will sustain for several minutes (marching, for instance, or swinging his arms). Once the rhythm has been established, another student joins him. The second student makes a movement connected to the first student's action, like clock gears working together. He may allow the first student's swinging arms to hit his hand, which in turn activates his leg to swing outward. One by one, more students join the game to create an enormous, ticking, moving clock.

Students learn that others depend on them and that it is important to be sensitive to others. They find that only by everyone doing his or her job can the clock function properly.

Mirrors: Students pick partners. With partners facing each other, one person initiates action and the other mirrors the leader's gestures and expressions. Students should move in unison. If there is a time gap between the two students' movements, the initiator is moving too quickly and should slow down. The partners should look each other in the eyes, taking in movements through their peripheral vision. They should not talk. Predictably, students become silly with "Mirrors." As they work, teachers should encourage self-conscious partners. Remind them that the goal is to act as one unit, not to race or to make the other partner laugh. It is best to start with only facial expressions and head movement, then to add shoulder, arm, and hand movements; later, torso and leg movements can be added. Partners should switch "initiator" and "mirror" roles after a few minutes.

How to Use Theatre Games in Your Classroom

LINDA MILBOURNE AND GINA BARRET SCHLESINGER

When your students have mastered mirrors, challenge them with "Double Vision"—an expert version of the game. This version requires that a set of partners mirror another set of partners in a simple activity. Middle school students enjoy reacting to a ballgame, enjoying a formal tea party, and washing windows.

Take a Hike: In this game students walk in a circle around the room. The students then vary their walking speed and overall physical expression according to conditions you, the teacher, call out. For example, you might call out such different settings as: "You are walking through a house of mirrors" or "You are walking through a dark, inner-city alley." You might suggest varying floor surfaces that would affect changes in the students' walk. Coach students with such suggestions as: "You are now walking through a vat of jello" or "You're walking across burning embers." Encourage students to show *where* they are walking, not only with their feet and legs, but also with torso, face, and arms.

Trust: This is a simple game requiring only a few objects to make up an obstacle course (desks set askew do nicely), and perhaps some scarves or handkerchiefs for blindfolds. Students are in pairs, with one partner seeing and the other blindfolded. It is then up to the seeing partner, using only his voice (no physical contact), to carefully guide the blinded one through the maze without bumping into the obstacles. Any pair which bumps into an obstacle because of the faulty instructions, poor listening, or lack of trust of the blindfolded person is disqualified. After everyone has completed the maze, the students switch places: the blind now see and the seeing now are blind.

"Trust" is an important exercise in learning to trust people and to be trustworthy. In addition, it can be used to clarify to students the importance of trusting in God to lead us through this maze which we call life. Unlike the student-guide, God can make no mistakes with his instructions. Like the blinded student, we are all sometimes fearful of obeying, or careless in listening. Try these theatre games. They will help your students interact as sensitive, spontaneous, and imaginative team members. Threatre games build skills essential to dramatic performance as well as to the Christian's performance in everyday life. **CEJ**

Linda Milbourne draws on her experience as a middle school drama and English teacher and as a drama coach at Delaware County Christian School in Pennsylvania. Gina Schlesinger formerly taught middle school and high school drama at Delaware County Christian School and holds a drama degree.

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Albright, Hardie. *Stage Direction in Transition.*
Encino, California: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.
Chapter Nine, "The Workshop," contains exercises to help in relaxation, concentration, and working as a group.

Crosscup, Richard. *Children and Dramatics.*
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.
Chapter Four, "Dramatic Fun and Games," includes team competition, guessing, and word games for young and intermediate aged children.

Hoetker, James. *Theatre Games: One Way into Drama.*
Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1975.
An excellent paperback which reviews theatre game theory and includes a small collection of orientation and improvisational games. Hoetker also provides a fine list of additional sources and references.

McSweeny, Maxine. *Creative Children's Theatre for Home, School, Church and Playground.*
New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1974.
Good imitative play ideas, adaptable to any age.

Moore, Sonia. *Training An Actor: The Stanislavski System in Class.*
New York: Penguin Books, 1979.
The last chapter describes exercises helpful for relaxation, warming up, and developing concentration and sense-memory.

Spolin, Viola. *Improvisation for the Theatre.*
Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963.
Perhaps the most comprehensive handbook on theatre games, written by a pioneer in the field.

Active

Schools should stand in awe of what has been so thoroughly accomplished without any professional help.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE been told that the education of children is the parents' responsibility before God? When a child is five years old, the parents get out the checkbook to pay the tuition for a good Christian school and hope their child will get this mysterious thing called an education. Often parents think that if they pay the tuition, help to raise funds, volunteer at school, or serve on a school board, they have fulfilled their role in the education of their child.

In this age of specialization it may seem logical that the education of children is something done only by educational specialists. Because educators often encourage this view, and the many demands on mothers' time may seem to justify it, parents may find it easy to accept this myth. Schools are often reluctant to admit that parents not only have the responsibility to see that the child is educated, but they are actually the primary educators.

The parents of a child entering kindergarten are happy if their child knows the ABC's and numbers. This is often seen as their main contribution to the learning process. With the school reinforcing this concept, the child is sent off to be educated.

The truth is that the parents have accomplished a very major part of the child's education by the time he or she starts school. That education has little to do with the ABC's or numbers.

Children who enter a regular kindergarten know how to speak a language. This is the basis for all of the child's future learning. It is a monumental educational accomplishment. It has been made possible because the child attempts to please those around him or her, because the child needs to communicate, and because there are rewards in doing so. It has been difficult (how many will go on to really master another language), but a normal child reaching kindergarten age can communicate, has mastered a basic vocabulary, and has even incorporated the grammar (good or bad) and perhaps the accent of those who do the teaching.

Instead of feeling frustrated with students who come to school having to unlearn certain errors, schools should stand in awe of what has been so thoroughly accomplished without any professional help. They should realize that home and family are really central to educational development.

Educators have attempted to deal with the pre-school learning period by

Partnership

JOAN E. McCARTHY

having children attend school at an even earlier age. These attempts have met with mixed success, and by the middle grades any advantages seem to be lost.

In my opinion, these attempts fail because schools fail to take into account the parent. They represent the previously mentioned attitude—it is the schools that educate best.

The key, perhaps, lies in another element the family teaches in addition to language—an attitude towards learning. If the parents are led to believe that only the school educates, they will step back and disassociate themselves from the project, only stepping in from time to time to make sure school tasks are finished or to help where the student may be falling behind.

This disassociation creates a problem. It subtly conveys the message that things learned in school are not important to the parent, or they are something that people cease to need or care about after they are out of school.

This message is especially harmful if the child is having trouble in school. Students faced with difficulty or failure stop and reassess their goals. Many times every day, consciously or unconsciously, they decide whether the struggle is worth the effort. They may decide to just tough it out until they are old enough to escape.

It is at this point that the role of the family can be enhanced. The family can provide the desire to learn other subjects in much the same way they encouraged the growth of language. Every student needs this desire; gifted students need it in order to develop their potential, and struggling students need it just to accomplish the basics.

One of the best ways to foster the desire to learn is to have the family regularly read aloud. This, more than anything else, shows the student the actual pleasure that learning can bring. It provides a time when the emphasis is on that pleasure rather than on the struggle of the learning process.

This suggestion is not, however, a defense of reading aloud. Oral reading needs no defense; it has been proven beneficial time and time again. Mine is a plea for the schools to recognize their partnership with the parents and to make use of it. The schools should pursue a plan which would actively encourage read-at-home programs as something distinct from class assignments. When new parents come to a kindergarten roundup or registration, they should have the importance of reading aloud at home explained to them as a part of their partnership with the school. It should be suggested that this includes even their pre-schoolers. They should be given a list of good books to read during the year.

This list should include a short summary of each book and suggestions of other books with similar themes, in case a certain subject catches a child's fancy. By using a list, the parent can tailor the reading program exactly to the child's own interests in a way that can never be done in the classroom. A very good example of such a list is contained in *The Read Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease.

Teachers should suggest such a list at parent conferences to emphasize its importance and to discover more about the interests of that student.

One thing that should be stressed is that the reading time is not instruction time. It should be a time of maximum pleasure. It should be a time of physical, mental, and spiritual closeness without any stress on learning. It should continue long after the child has learned to read. Parents should not see themselves as teaching reading but as conveying an attitude towards reading.

Parents may soon find family reading will open up many meaningful conversations with the child. It is a perfect way to find that "quality time" everyone talks about.

School personnel must recognize the educational power that the family holds. They should make a conscious attempt to promote it in a positive way, and one of the best ways to do this is by providing a list of good books and actively encouraging parents to read aloud at home. **CEJ**

Joan E. McCarthy is a former high school social studies teacher and a mother of three children. She is presently involved in writing juvenile fiction and lives in Sioux Center, Iowa.

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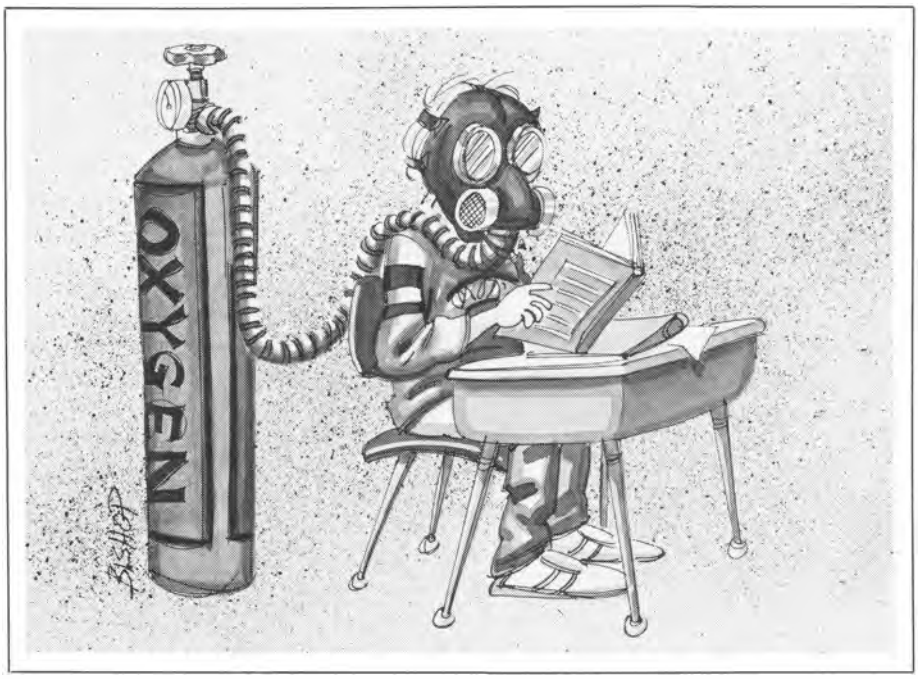
Are Your Classrooms Habitable?

MARTHA K. KAUFFMAN



"WHY DO MY CHILDREN always smell like school when they come home?" a mother asked me. She held a coat toward me as my teacher nose caught the stale odor of chalk dust, breath, and an overheated unventilated classroom.

How often in school do we talk about materials, discipline, student relationships, and other factors related to teaching, but neglect the physical atmosphere of our rooms? Stagnant air makes teachers and children listless and sleepy. Our Christian school rooms, gyms, and assembly rooms are no exceptions. Too often we house students in classrooms with inadequate space. Today a minimum state standard of classroom space for kindergarten and first grade is 30 square feet of floor space per child. We should have 30-35 cubic feet per minute of fresh air to inhale in a classroom.

As a college freshman I repeatedly became perturbed when my math professor welcomed the class with open windows in cold weather. We squeezed our arms to our chests and shivered. To us, he seemed to overdo an important principle, but his idea was sound: crowded classrooms need enough cubic feet of air space.

A teacher may not be entirely responsible for the atmosphere in a school classroom. Drafty windows tend to make some parts of the room too warm and others too cold. Thermostats and weather conditions make some rooms much warmer than others.

A classroom temperature that rises above 68 or 70 degrees may cause air to become dry. A room with less than 40 to 45 on the humidity scale may create nasal and throat problems for both students and teachers. Too much dampness may also be a hazard.

The physical conditions and barometric pressures are directly related to inter-class relationships and learning. When children who usually appear well-disciplined suddenly get noisy, it's time to take a quick glance across the hills. I compare the cloud formations with the barometer and often discover a rapid change in air pressure.

The acoustics, often beyond the control of the teacher, also influence the class. Movable partitions sometimes fuse singing, talking, and creative activities, so that individual classes cannot concentrate on their work. These conditions are not insurmountable.

Nor are all noises beyond the teacher's control. Are the chair tips scraping on concrete, tile, or wood? Is it possible to put rubber tips on chairs? In one classroom with 35 children, 350 legs moved each time they stood. For every pair of human legs four metal-tipped chair legs and four desk legs scraped the hollow-sounding wooden floor. Someone who saw the situation donated a rug. How different teaching was after that!

Rugs serve as a place for children to sit for story time. They also encourage the children to lower their voices or to walk more quietly. When rugs are used on tile or wooden surfaces, however, they must be non-skid ones.

Drapes or cloth-covered bulletin boards make for a quieter atmosphere. Flowers, plants, and science displays from nature can also cushion sounds and provide beauty. However, some persons tend to be allergic to strongly scented flowers. If you note sudden eye watering or sneezing, you will want to remove the offensive objects. Basement rooms too, sometimes collect mold that can cause serious allergies.

Many persons do not realize that dustless chalk is available and makes a big difference in keeping hands and room cleaner. However, using the side of dustless chalk destroys its hardness and therefore its cleanliness. We use the side of the chalk only for special occasions or for drawing and thereby keep the air cleaner. Some schools now use bakelite whiteboard and dry makers instead of dusty chalkboards.

Glare is often a problem that hinders learning. If the chalkboard shows glare, try adjusting the shades or rearranging the seating. Yellow chalk causes less glare than white chalk. Overhead projectors need to be

checked for glare and shimmering movements. The projector needs to be the proper height in relation to the teacher's head and student eye levels. Children who cannot hear or see well need to be placed nearer to the teacher or the work to be viewed.

Often natural light is insufficient for the classroom. One room that, to me, seemed well lit, needed lights all day, according to a state inspector's light meter. Do any children sit facing direct sunlight or have to stare into the sky? Venetian blinds when slightly turned will prevent glare. Are the tables, walls, and floor surfaces such that they will not reflect light to sensitive eyes?

Some studies indicate that fluorescent lights make children hyperactive. Dr. John Ott, a consultant to National Institute of Health in Washington, D.C., tested the lighting system in the Sarasota School System near his home in Florida. He introduced full-spectrum lights to replace regular fluorescent ones. Within thirty to forty-five days, hyperactive children were noticeably calmer. John Albright, a co-worker of Ott at Environmental Systems, Inc. in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, says that the older fluorescent fixtures give off radio frequencies as well as cathode radiation. Shielding both is vitally important because they can put the body off its chemical balance. Teachers, office workers, and others who work under full-spectrum lights report fewer headaches, nausea, and fatigue. As further research continues, Christian schools will want to recheck their lighting.

Teachers sometimes struggle with collapsible folding chairs that do not match the child's size for the tables they use. Towel holders, chalkboards, wall hangings, and bulletin boards are often too high for many children. Crowded coat racks cause wraps to fall on the floors and also invite problems in the case of lice epidemics.

Increasingly, we have Christian teachers who are not afraid to ask their administrators for better facilities. "I think I'll ask the school for appropriate size tables and chairs," says one nursery school teacher. When those responsible see the need, they act. In some schools parent-teacher groups hold sales to bring about classroom improvements.

When public schools, public offices, and our homes seem to be comfortable places, why should not our Christian schools provide habitable places for our children to be and to learn? **CEJ**

Martha K. Kauffman is a former teacher who is now a substitute teacher and freelance writer from Atglen, Pennsylvania.

A DREAMER'S SNOWFALL

A song is in the snowfall,
A bird of soft, white wings,
A little winter dreaming,
The world of children's things.

A hush is in the snowfall,
A carpet in the hills,
It seems as if time's stopping
And talking to windmills.

A God is in the forest,
The God of peaceful homes,
The shy deer stops to notice,
The trees are silver poems.

A beauty's in the snowfall,
A cinderella's shoe,
It's like a picture postcard,
A world that's bright and new!

MARION SCHOEBERLEIN

STEVE J. VAN DER WEELE

FAIRY TALES, FABLES, LEGENDS, AND MYTHS
by Bette Bosma
Teacher College Press, NewYork
1987, 116 pp., $7.95, pb
Reviewed by Professor Gary D. Schmidt
Calvin College
Grand Rapids. Michigan 49506

Reflecting on the enormous revival of interest in the retelling of folk literature for children, Bette Bosma contends in her *Fairy Tales, Fables, Legends, and Myths: Using Folk Literature in Your Classroom*, that folk literature represents a rich cultural legacy, a heritage which works towards meeting some of the deepest aesthetic needs of the child. Many of the tales, she observes, move along set patterns which establish the nature of the story. The tales represent multi-layered levels of meaning. They typically suggest that goodness and natural wit are the inevitable victors over evil. They suggest that people's actions rise directly from their characters. And they are part of our cultural consciousness.

Judged by the norms of practicality and usefulness for teachers, the book succeeds in every way. Professor Bosma divides the book into sections dealing with the teaching of the nature of story, the teaching of critical reading, the teaching of writing, and the development of creative, artistic activities, all of which use folk literature as their basis. Bosma includes fifty lesson plans, all designed to integrate the folk literature with a specific kind of learning activity. She suggests using a number of the Cinderella tales to discuss variant versions of a tale and how those variants reflect different cultures. Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant* works as a model for the writing of new folk literature. Verna Aardema's *Who's in Rabbit's House* furnishes an opportunity to create masks and to deal with their role in African and Native American folklore. All of these lessons have been class-tested. One chapter describes in detail her experience with a fifth/sixth grade class in Grand Rapids which worked with Native American folk literature. She takes us from the class's first stirrings of interest in the field to its creation of stories and totem poles from out of that diverse culture.

The book, then, is not an anthology but a guide to show elementary school teachers, first, how they can teach children to appreciate folk literature—nothing will work unless the children learn to enjoy the tales as stories—and, second, how they can use folk literature to enhance the child's ability to read and write, and to appreciate language and the arts. She notes that, in some ways, the teacher who uses folk literature has taken on the role of the oral story-teller, and the children listening to a reading of *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* are no different from the audience which would gather around a story-teller to hear a traditional tale. Thus, she continually comes back to the need to read aloud, to become part of the oral tradition from which these tales come.

To facilitate the task of procuring the stories themselves, Bosma includes a lengthy, annotated bibliography with suggestions regarding appropriate ages, the country or culture of origin, and uses to which the tale might be put in the classroom. The culture best represented in this listing is that of Native Americans—a feature to be explained, in part, because of a growing interest in this area of folklore. But it also comes about, obviously, because of Bosma's work in the Southwestern United States, where many of the ideas for the lesson plans were tested in classes. One wishes for some attention to the American tall tale, but, then, no one aside from Steven Kellogg and Steven Sanfield is currently working in this field, and no collection of these has appeared since the 1940s.

Any elementary school teacher already interested in folk literature will find enormous practical benefit in this volume. Any teacher not interested will be converted by the end of the first chapter. Professor Bosma's love of the literature and her sensitivity to its usefulness are contagious. It is a book for teachers by a teacher. It deserves to be read and used widely. **CEJ**

BIBLICAL SCHOOLS FOR COVENANT CHILDREN
by Gregory J. Maffett
Signal, Reformed Educational Publishing and Consultant Company,
Middleburg Heights, Ohio, 1987,
141 pp., $5.95
Reviewed by Lorna Van Gilst, CEJ Editor
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Sioux Center, Iowa 51250

The heart of Maffett's consideration of covenantal Christian education occurs in his third section, entitled "A biblical School—Theory and Practice." Here he presents his view that the classroom must be a base from which students, after appropriate preparation, go out into the community to learn and to minister.

To establish the theory for his practice, Maffett provides two sections on the biblical foundation of Christian education. These sections, though useful, read more like bibliographies in paragraph form. To prove the soundness of his theory, he provides an array of seventy roughly-laced direct quotations within forty pages, representing a considerable variety of views. He claims support, among others, from Cornelius Van Til, Jay Adams, Richard Niebuhr, A.A. Baker, Abraham Kuyper, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Geraldine Steensma, David Hocking, and Louis Berkhof.

His advocacy, in section three, of a three-stage ministries program, the most original part of his book, is based on his personal experience at Grace Christian School. After learning basic skills (Stage I) and participating in project experiences (Stage II), students apply the skills and content to real life ministries (Stage III). At this point the students are ready to buy groceries for senior citizens, write and send letters, help other students within the system,

and serve in works of inner city missions. Although grade levels are disregarded in the assignment of ministry tasks, each child has an individually planned curriculum, with safeguards designed to prevent either a sense of unhealthy pride or failure. Through this program students build connections between skills or facts and the real-life context of living out one's faith.

In Section Four Maffett issues a call to parents to honor their covenant faith commitment and to place their children in schools where "the Holy Spirit is uplifted to His rightful place as Master teacher for Christian students" (137).

Although I hold a strong respect for Maffet's theory and practice of ministry-learning, I have two major concerns about his book. First, the book contains numerous grammatical and mechanical errors which, whoever is at fault, tend to detract somewhat from the importance of his message that Christians ought to educate for service rather than for earthly success. Second, I think Maffett reads Scripture as a proofbook for Christian educational theory rather than as a book telling the story of God's faithfulness to his people. Thus, though he acknowledges the reality of common grace, he sounds critically judgmental toward parents who fail to endorse his views, and he appears unwilling to allow for any sharing of ideas from secular educators. **CEJ**

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE LIST

The following books are recommended by Del Vander Zee They deal with background and Christian perspective on stewardship of the creation.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land.*
Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977.

Gouldzwaard, Bob. *Idols of our Time.*
Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1984.

Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley. *A Worldly Spirituality.*
Harper & Row, New York, 1984.

Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley (ed.). *Tending the Garden—Essays on the Gospel and the Earth.*
Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987.

Hall, Douglas J. *Imaging God—Dominion as Stewardship.*
Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986.

*Schaeffer, Francis A. *Pollution and the Death of Man—The Christian View of Ecology.*
Tyndale House Publishing, Wheaton, Illinois, 1970.

Sine, Tom. *The Mustard Seed Conspiracy.*
Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1981.

Walsh, Brian J. and J. Richard Middleton. *The Transforming Vision—Shaping a Christian World View.*
Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1984.

*Wilkinson, Loren (ed.) *Earthkeeping—Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources.*
Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980.

*These two books are also recommended by Jim and Laura Nieboer.