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IS
OUR
TALK
CHEAP ?

BY JOHN VAN DYK

"Talk is cheap," so the saying goes. Not always true, of course, judging by the exorbitant fees some public speakers can charge for their exhibitions of ignorance. Even so, for most of us, talking comes as easily as breathing. Especially we Reformed Christians in the Christian school movement excel in talk and thrive on its practice. We love to lecture and expound: in class, in the faculty lounge, at meetings, and at teachers' conventions. Many of us even talk in our sleep!

I do not mean to denigrate God's great gift of speech. Nor do I suggest that all of our talk is vacuous and useless. Of course not. I am concerned not so much about our conversations in general as about the kind of talk that should but often fails to make a difference in our educational practice. Specifically I have in mind the various sorts of Christian philosophical and theological theories, such as those which talk about schooling for the glory of God, about education in the light of the Bible, about students as image-bearers of God, and the like. Many of these educational philosophies and theories are beautifully crafted and persuasively articulated. Sometimes they even make sense! But too often they leave the realm of Christian educational practice virtually untouched. Too often they are just a lot of talk!

Do not misunderstand me. I am not opposed to theory or philosophy. I make my living by spending a good part of my time in theoretical reflection. No, it is not theory as such that I decry. My concern is with the fact that too frequently our theories do not translate into practice. Think, for example, of the many flowery mission statements and educational creeds to which we school teachers dutifully subscribe, but which do not really function in our classrooms. Think of the many conven-

tion speeches that moved us as we listened but were forgotten as soon as we opened our classroom doors the next day. Think of the many commendable products of Christian educational reflection we have available. The writings of, for example, C. Jaarsma, N. Wolterstorff, N. Beversluis, H. Van Brummelen, G. Steensma, and others—as well as my own CSI booklet "The Beginning of Wisdom"—come to mind. But what tangible effect do these documents have on classroom practice? Are they really functional, or do they just gather dust on the shelves in faculty rooms?

Christian theory and Christian practice, in other words, seldom meet. Note that I say *Christian* theory. For the fact is, of course, that all of our practice assumes a philosophical perspective of some kind or another. In our classrooms the assumed, unarticulated perspective more often than not is rooted in intellectualistic and pragmatic philosophies. So the point is not that our practice is unaffected by theory, but that too often it is not informed by the *Christian* perspective we all professedly endorse.

I have come to experience this reality more and more as I work with teachers in workshops and at conventions. It is not overly difficult to present a good educational theory to a group of teachers—a good theory about distinctive Christian teaching, for example. Many teachers have heard my presentations about teaching as guiding, unfolding, and enabling (see *CEJ* 1986-87). Not a bad theory, really. At least, it has potential. But as presented, this theory, too, has remained just that: a theory. Nice to talk about, to discuss, and to debate. At times it can even be an inspiring theory. The critical question confronting us, however, is this: does this theory (along with Christian educational philoso-

phies) make a difference in concrete classroom practice?

Much classroom observation in many parts of the country these past few years has convinced me that, with rare exception, the average Christian school teacher lives in a world composed of two circles. One circle contains the right talk about Christian educational philosophy. It contains all the right answers prospective teachers give to interviewing principals. It contains the fundamental themes of a Christian educational perspective. The other circle consists of the teacher's encounter with classroom reality: the lesson plans and the grading, the daily routine of dealing with the kids and of teaching the material, the recurring bouts with fatigue and frustration. Most teachers find it difficult, if not impossible, to get these two circles to coincide, or even to intersect in some way. For many teachers these two circles hardly touch each other at all. They represent two separate, unrelated worlds.

In recent years a heavy emphasis on curriculum construction has tried to bridge the gap between Christian philosophical theory and daily classroom practice. Projects in curriculum writing, sponsored by CSI and its districts, for example, have flourished. Much of the work produced has been excellent, and it needs to be applauded and continued. Yet such curricular work has not closed the gap between Christian theory and practice. For one thing, a good curriculum is quickly out of date. Much curriculum writing, moreover, seems to be teacher-specific: what is helpful to one teacher is disdained as useless triviality by another. I have also noticed that good curricular material, even when accompanied by a profusion of suggested activities, does not guarantee good Christian instruction. On the contrary, with the help of certain ill-advised pedagogical

strategies, teachers can quickly render a well-designed curriculum totally ineffective.

If our theories and philosophies are to lead to practice, and if distinctive Christian teaching is to become a reality, then a Christian perspective and a well-written curriculum are not enough. There are at least two other requirements to be met if indeed the Christian school is to see effective Christian teaching.

The first of these has to do with the teacher as a Christian person. If a teacher's heart is committed only to a lukewarm Christianity, the kind of Christianity that is satisfied with weekly Sunday church attendance and a smattering of morality, then a sound Christian philosophy or beautiful curricular writings are not likely to affect his or her teaching practice. If the teacher's heart is blind to the economic, social, and scientific idolatry of our North American way of life, or succumbs to the idea that academic excellence and a successful career constitute the greatest educational good to be pursued, then no amount of Christian philosophy or curriculum will affect the classroom. Then Christian theory and practice cannot meet.

A philosophy or theology of Christian education can be translated into classroom practice only if the teacher is keenly aware of God's presence everywhere in the creation, is deeply disturbed about the ravages of sin, and is willing to walk and lead in the ways of biblical wisdom. Only such teachers will be able to engage in a classroom practice that enables our children to function as loving and living disciples. Only such teachers can practice authentic Christian education.

A heart attuned to discipleship is the first and indispensable—but not the only—requirement if Christian theory is to affect classroom practice. We must meet a second requirement as well: we will have to pay much closer, more critical, and much more sustained attention to the classroom practice itself. We will have to give up the idea that as long as we get our theories straight, good classroom practice will automatically follow.

It is presently my conviction

that in Christian educational circles we have yet to come to grips with classroom practice. True, in our teacher education programs we study a lot of educational psychology and classroom methodology. But apart from the question of whether these studies are biblically primed, most of them, as I see it, do not address the classroom situations as we actually find them in our Christian schools today. Consequently, the vast majority of practicing teachers give their college-level teacher-preparation programs very low grades.

The need of the hour is a combination of reflection about and experimentation with genuinely Christian instructional practice. We need to get into the classroom and ask: What is presently happening here? What, specifically, *ought* to be happening here? How is the classroom organized? What instructional strategies are employed? What assumptions underlie such organization and instruction, and what alternatives can we design?

Such practice-oriented reflection means, first of all, that we unmask the aggressively competitive and individualistic character that marks so many of our classrooms. It means that we work on designing classrooms that not only allow the students to acquire all the necessary insights and skills, but that reflect the unity, mutual encouragement, and mutual responsibility of the body of Christ, classrooms that function as redemptive workshops in enabling our children to become active disciples of the Lord. It means that we design practical teaching strategies that allow each child to unfold his or her talents, rather than lead to a mass-produced products graded on a scale from A to F. Such practice-oriented reflection will boldly attack the boredom stalking so many of our present classrooms and will seek to replace it with an atmosphere of joy in Christian learning.

Is this possible? I think so. I am convinced that we must aggressively explore, for example, cooperative learning and *shared praxis* techniques, some of which have been shown to be very effective and may well lend themselves to

the teaching of discipleship skills. We need to take recent learning style research very seriously and ask ourselves what all this might mean for Christian education. About these and other developments we need to ask the hard questions, as we energetically harness and develop insights, investigate new, biblically primed directions in the classroom organization and management, and pursue creative approaches to restructuring the teaching and learning environment of a school.

Can Christian philosophy and teaching practice meet? Yes, I think so. Recently I returned from Australia, where I observed a few Christian schools that, as far as I can see, have caught a glimpse of what a Christian school can be and are well on the way toward integrating theory and practice. Although they are surely not devoid of problems, these (academically excellent) schools are creating, in practical ways, the conditions that induce the children to take ownership of their learning, to support and encourage each other, to practice responsibility for each other in and out of the classroom, and to live the Christian life of discipleship. These schools are directed by committed Christians who have decided that if a theory does not make a difference in practice, the theory is defective. They have decided to take practice very seriously.

Do we want a Christian perspective to intersect with our daily classroom practice? Of course we do. For you and I, as Christian educators, believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that talking without doing is ultimately not in keeping with God's will. Confronting you and me, then, is the task of developing a genuinely Christian educational practice, a practice fully consonant with and reflective of a sound Christian theoretical and philosophical understanding. Let's get at it. CEJ

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

Christian School Leadership:

How Can Theory and

Newly-appointed Principal Carter had no previous experience as principal. Based on his evolving conception of a Christian school as a learning community that would help children be and become responsible disciples of Jesus Christ, however, he had a vision for the Covenant Christian School.

Even before his appointment, Mr. Carter shared this vision with the board and with his future teachers. He immediately involved them in developing and prioritizing goals for the school. He asked them to consider over the summer how they could implement some of the most urgent ones. During a week of staff seminars before the start of school, he involved all teachers in fleshing out the vision and planning its implementation. He encouraged them to commit themselves to the school's new direction.

What did Mr. Carter's vision include? First, he believed, learning in a Christian school should knit students and teachers into a vibrant, mutually supportive community. Children should experience and exercise Christian love in and through their learning. Mr. Carter himself showed much interest in and support for learning leading to meaningful student response (and less dependence on worksheets), as well as in personalized and cooperative approaches.

The staff introduced, for instance, an annual science fair (in which every student received a ribbon). Mr. Carter encouraged and gave special recognition to such activities as school-wide political elections conducted by the grade 5

students; students writing and producing a play, "Arab meets Jew"; and first graders reading their work to grades 6 and 7. Mr. Carter fostered a sense of excitement about learning while engendering pride in the school's program.

Second, Mr. Carter wanted Covenant Christian to use pedagogy reflecting a biblical view of the person. Since the staff wanted to revamp the language arts program, he made this subject area his first concern. The teachers reached a consensus that a modified "whole language" approach would best allow children with different learning styles and abilities to develop their God-given talents. During the next summer, most teachers took a "whole language" course at a neighboring college. Mr. Carter continued to stimulate its implementation. He noted with satisfaction that library book circulation quadrupled while photocopying costs declined. Better yet, the children's enthusiasm, skills, and insight in reading and writing improved significantly.

Further, Covenant Christian was to be a *community* school with parents sharing ownership in the school's program and activities. He asked his teachers to send home regular individual classroom newsletters. He helped them write meaningful report card comments and added short personal notes to many of them. He took time to maintain good liaison with parents and to receive input from them.

Finally, Mr. Carter believed that the curriculum should be integrally Christian. His staff used its written statement of curriculum goals to determine which ones they

should address each year. He also encouraged teachers to use resource units available from the regional association of Christian schools.

Principals who wish their schools' practice and theory to remain interfaced keep a close pulse on learning. They go into classrooms frequently, even if only for short intervals, and inspire teachers to work toward implementing their school's vision.

Practice Mesh?

BY HARRO VAN BRUMMELEN

The principal had the goodwill of most teachers: they felt that the school had stagnated in the past, and they were ready for leadership that would renew their vigor. At the same time, Mr. Carter faced obstacles. Some teachers mistrusted the new outside "rookie." Others had misgivings about the new "professionalism" which, they felt, inhibited their own way of doing things. Also, Mr. Carter could not tackle all needs at once. He realized that effective change is steady but incremental, and the need for deepening Christian perspective in various content areas took a back seat during the first two years. Mr. Carter, however, never wavered in his direction, even though several teachers, who felt they no longer fit, left at the end of his first year.

Mr. Carter and his school displayed many factors needed for an effective interface between theory and practice. His school, one of three in a three-year research project on curriculum change in Christian schools, verified and in some ways extended public school research on effective educational change.

First, a clear, consistent, philosophically-grounded rationale must guide change. Principals need to develop the contours of such a framework with their school communities and then actively foster support for it among board, parents, teachers, and students.

Second, change needs impetus from a catalyst. At Covenant, Principal Carter quickly and deliberately became the primary change initiator. He used staff meetings to discuss needed program changes.

He conferred with individuals and groups of teachers, asking probing questions. He closely monitored what was happening in the school. He set direction, helped clarify goals, and constantly encouraged his teachers. Since the school was a fairly large one, he also identified potential secondary change facilitators and gradually gave them special responsibilities.

Principals who wish their schools' practice and theory to remain interfaced keep a close pulse on learning. They go into classrooms frequently, even if only for short intervals, and inspire teachers to work toward implementing their school's vision. Effective principals are, first of all, *educational* leaders, and only secondarily administrators.

Theory and practice will mesh in a school only when a competent facilitator of change is present and able to operate effectively. In one school in this project, the education committee chair was the main facilitator of change, with the principal playing a supportive but secondary role. The education committee chair, a hard-working former teacher, coordinated the efforts of committee and staff members in systematically reviewing all programs, resources, and teaching approaches. She also helped teachers implement board-approved programs. The school made great strides forward, but only until an influential board member felt that what was being done did not reflect the original vision of the school's founders. The upshot of the resulting controversy was that both the education chair and the principal left the school.

Two conclusions can be drawn here. First, the principal is not necessarily the main agent of change, but, if not, the primary catalyst (e.g., the assistant principal) needs the support of key members of the school community, including the principal, education committee, and board. Also, schools must establish a written statement of vision and renew it from time to time. It is not enough just to adopt a statement of goals; each school community needs to hammer out a statement itself, with classroom implications. Such a process, whether initiated by the board, the principal, or the staff, is important if future obstacles are to be avoided.

Teachers, finally, have been justly called the final gatekeepers of what happens in the classroom. Teachers of schools with much successful "vision-based" implementation are clear about the purpose, nature, and practical benefits of proposed change. They are actively involved in the decision making. They are convinced that proposed changes will benefit the students and will make their teaching more rewarding even if not always easier. Commitment to change is a strong contributing factor to successful implementation. And when teachers function as respected team members, their implementation in turn can reflect and refine the vision of what a Christian school can and should be.

CEJ

Harro Van Brummelen is chair of the education division of Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia.

As Christians and individuals, young people must learn that the way they accomplish a task is at least as significant as the final product.

Cooperative Group Learning in Practice

BY CATHY VANDERHEIDE

Among the promising practices that have developed in educational circles in the past decade is cooperative group learning. Skeptics wonder whether the interactive learning approach is a fad rather than a legitimate teaching/learning strategy.

In response, one can make an analogy to an automobile excursion. The passenger relaxes and enjoys the scenery, or perhaps even nods off. If that passenger were asked to retrace the route, he or she would probably experience great difficulty. The driver, on the other hand, must be constantly alert to what is happening and could likely make the trip again without getting lost. This driver might even be able to explain the route to someone else. In much the same way, a student's learning in school can be enhanced through active involvement with the curriculum and the process. A student can benefit immensely from opportunities to be in the driver's seat as long as the

teacher carefully plots the route and limits the number of detours. Such an interactive approach helps effectuate distinctively Christian teaching, as described by Dr. Van Dyk in terms of "guiding, unfolding, and enabling."

Group learning requires at least as much planning and preparation on the part of the instructor as does the more traditional teacher-centered approach. For groups to function successfully, the goal(s) of the learning activity must be clearly defined and communicated; random exploration and discovery activities promote frustration and encourage off-task behavior. The teacher solicits and considers student input when defining tasks; however, in the final analysis the teacher determines which activities best implement the curriculum.

A sequential, structured approach to any particular activity seems to be the most successful. A step-by-step blackboard outline is often helpful since gaining the





attention of the entire class in order to give further instructions is both time-consuming and disruptive. A good outline provides the class with an overview of the task to be completed and allows groups to work at varying speeds. An outline should include a time frame for completion of each step in the process; activities without specific time limits tend to promote poor time-management as well as excessive socialization. The teacher is, of course, always at liberty to adjust the time line, depending on the circumstances.

Particularly initially, students will require time to learn to work together cohesively. As Christian teachers, we have a definite responsibility to help our students overcome the competitiveness to which they have become accustomed. In order to orient students toward assisting and supporting each other, it is advisable to begin with game-like group activities in order to learn the requisite cooperative skills before proceeding to the

more demanding content-based assignments.

Heterogeneous groups of four that include boys and girls of differing abilities and backgrounds seem to operate most efficiently. It also seems effective to change the composition of the groups frequently, no less often than at the beginning of each new unit.

To encourage equal participation on the part of each student, it is advisable to assign a particular role to each group member. For example, in a group of four, one student could be the moderator, another the monitor, the third the recorder, and the fourth the reporter. The moderator maintains order and allows each member equal opportunity to address the issue, particularly encouraging shyer individuals to participate. The monitor ensures that the group stays on task and respects the time parameters. The recorder is responsible for a coherent written version of the group's discussions. The reporter shares the group's findings with the class and must be able to verbalize the thought process that led the group to specific conclusions. Other members of the group may assist the reporter in answering questions.

The teacher must circulate to ensure that each group member is carrying out his or her responsibility and that the groups are progressing satisfactorily. (A teacher behind the desk working on something else undermines the importance of the learning activity.) Since some students seem to have been conditioned to seek teacher approval, the teacher must insist on answering only group questions. This can be difficult for both the teacher and the students; a teacher seems naturally programmed to answer questions and offer explanations. Group questions should be encouraged if clarification of an assignment or of given information is required. It is crucial, however, for students to struggle with problems, to listen to each other's opinions, to discuss ideas, and to do research in order to reach a consensus answer.

Any group assignment should include accountability, either in the form of a written report submitted to the teacher, an oral report to the

class, or any of a number of creative forms of presentation. Each task must also receive feedback such as a grade, a written evaluation by the teacher and/or peers, a class discussion, or a debriefing period. In most instances, it is standard for the teacher to conduct a wrap up of any given activity in order to elaborate on themes that have surfaced or to add supplementary detail.

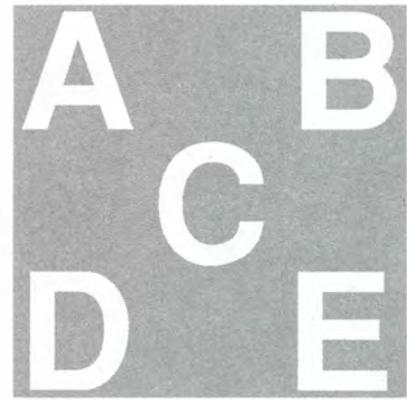
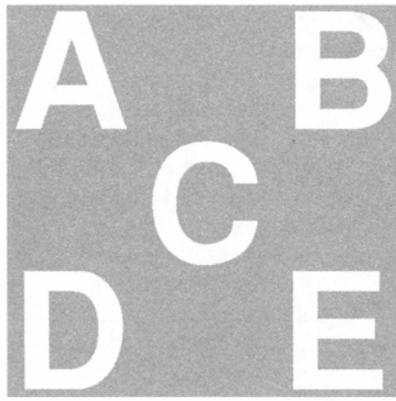
Students should also be required to evaluate their own performance within the group as well as that of the group as a whole. Checklists and evaluation forms are available commercially, or they can be devised by the teacher. Students need to be taught the pedagogical reasons for working in groups and must learn to evaluate their own functioning. As Christians and individuals, young people must learn that the way they accomplish a task is at least as significant as the final product.

Effective achievement of cooperative group learning techniques within the classroom requires experience and patience on the part of the teacher. At first, a teacher will probably want to limit experimentation with group learning, for it takes time to develop the necessary preparation, observation, and analysis skills. The support of colleagues with whom to discuss successes and failures is an indispensable asset.

Good teaching requires the use of a variety of methodologies, and cooperative group learning is just one of the strategies that can be used to promote distinctively Christian education. To return to the analogy of an automobile excursion, many interesting points along the way might be missed if the same person is always behind the wheel. This holds true for the students and the teacher. Thus, a judicious balance of group-learning activities and more traditional teacher-directed instruction is encouraged.

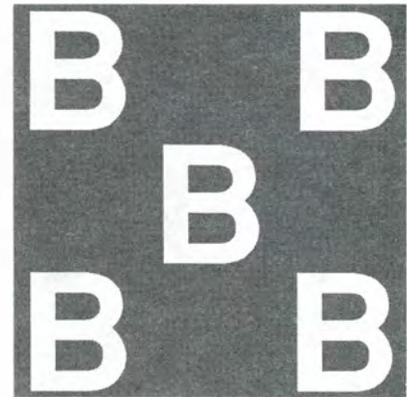
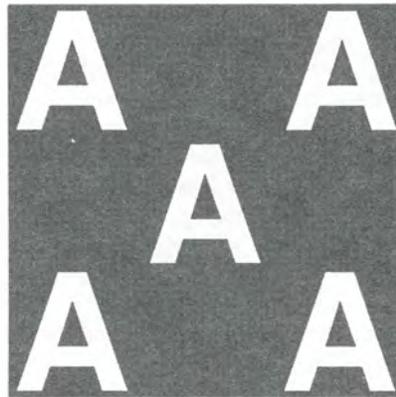
CEJ

Cathy VanderHeide is a resource teacher at Toronto District Christian High School in Woodbridge, Ontario.



Cooperating to Learn

BY AGNES STRUIK



Because our present education system places a premium on individual success, on acquisition of knowledge and individualism at the expense of a more cooperative method, I am encouraged by the recent emphasis in cooperative education. It is an interactive kind of education that encourages living and working together.

Organizing the classroom into small groups is not a new idea, but often it has been used as strategy for variety or a reward for good behavior. I do not believe this kind of teaching and learning should be relegated to a frill. It must become an integral part of our pedagogy because of its implication for building a community in the classroom.

Romans 12 calls us to be in community with one another, to uphold and support one another and to share our gifts with one another. Cooperative learning brings us closer to that ideal than

many of our present teaching methodologies. It promotes communication among students. As Michael Marland states in *Language Across the Curriculum*: "The way of making ideas truly one's own, is to be able to think them through, and the best way to do this for most people is to talk them through. This talking is not merely a way of conveying ideas to others; it is a way by which we explore ideas, clarify them, and make them our own" (Hirneemann Educational Books 129). Cooperative learning also provides opportunities for wrestling with conflicts. It allows students to gain a deeper understanding of each other and develops a sense of cohesiveness and community that arises when the efforts of each student are required for the success of all.

An effective group strategy I have used in classrooms is called the Jigsaw Classroom, a method developed by Eliot Aronson. As

the name indicates, different groups in the classroom receive different parts of the puzzle. Not until students have shared and interacted with one another can the puzzle become a whole picture. Inherent in Jigsaw is the fact that students will have to share with and teach each other to gain a complete understanding of the total project or material being studied.

A very simplistic sample of Jigsaw follows. Canadians likely have a clearer understanding of American history than Americans of Canadian history. Because the majority of CEJ readership is American, I have chosen a topic from American history.

1 The teacher organizes the class into heterogeneous home groups. (Refer to figure A)

The students are introduced to the topic to be studied, e.g., the Civil War. The teacher may give the students a number of reading assignments: novels, articles,

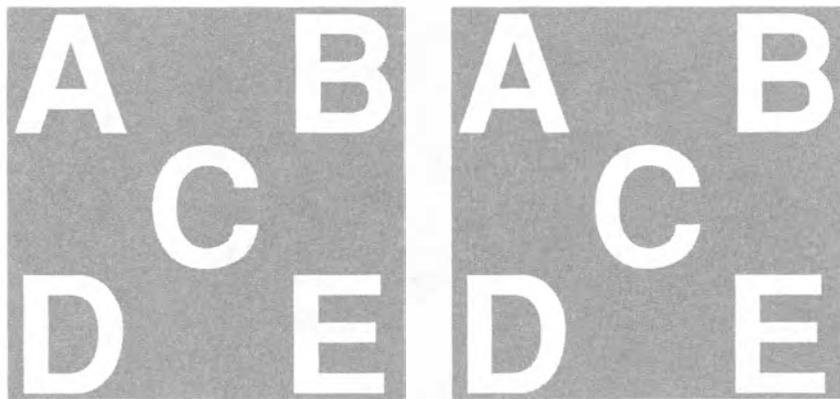


FIGURE A

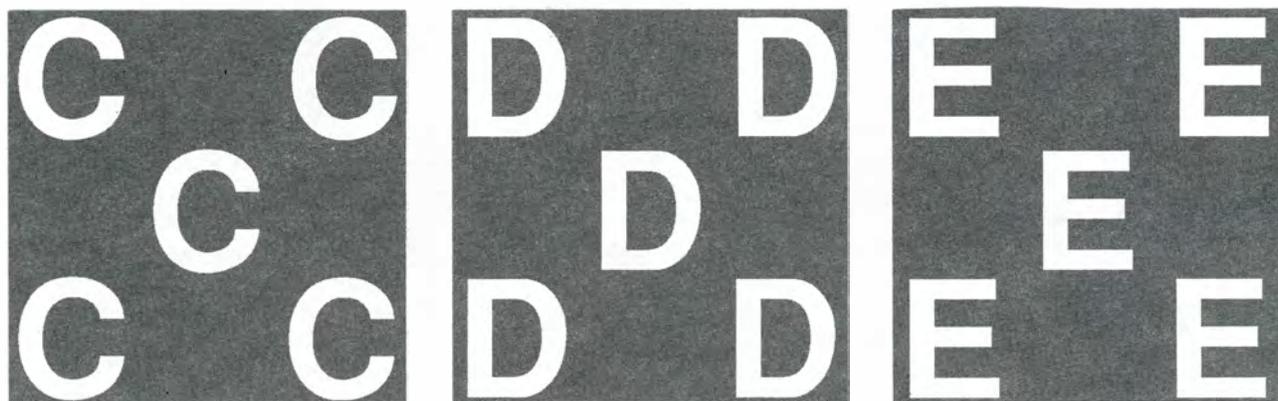


FIGURE B

maps, textbook material.

2 The students are reorganized into expert or exploration groups. (Refer to figure B)

Each group is assigned a topic pertaining to the Civil War, e.g., a) family life during the Civil War; b) battles and war maneuvers; c) slavery, etc. Each member of the group receives a worksheet to guide him or her in the research.

The members of the group learn as much as they can about their topic, knowing that eventually they will have to return to the home groups and teach them what they have learned.

3 Students return to their home groups and take turns teaching their topics to each other. The information is recorded and compiled into a unified whole.

4 The teacher can provide a new worksheet posing a broad question; e.g., "From the background research your group compiled, what was the impact of the

Civil War on the economy of the southern states? Use the following suggestions as guidelines. . . ."

The home group works together to give a response.

5 The teacher may give a quiz or an individual assignment to test the students' knowledge, or the groups may work together on a presentation for the whole class.

I have seen the Jigsaw work successfully in English, social studies, literature, and environmental studies classrooms, bringing a depth and richness to the learning experience. I want to caution you to study cooperative learning and the ways it can work in your classrooms before you attempt it. Teachers can't force students to cooperate, but they can foster an atmosphere where cooperation is much more prevalent than in many of our classrooms today.

Research has shown that cooperative education enhances interpersonal development, leads to a

more positive attitude toward school, and results in higher academic achievement. It has also led to better cross-cultural relationships. Even more important, it allows young people to experience the body of believers by upholding and supporting one another, by sharing one's gifts, and by joining hands in experiencing the love expressed in I Corinthians 13. When our students, through their academic tasks, experience and express love to one another, then those around us will be able to say, "We know they are Christians by their love." CEJ

Agnes Struik is an educational consultant in Toronto, Ontario.



Success Stories

BY LORNA VAN GILST

Michael Jackson has replaced Bill Cosby as the world's highest paid entertainer—so says the major headline of yesterday's newspaper. Today the main news story tells me that my state's college-bound students have edged out those in a neighboring state to score highest on the dominant college admissions test.

So what?

The problem with both of these headlines is that they seem to matter. They seem to reflect the major themes of contemporary society: you must be smart or you must be successful.

These themes wield great power in terms of education, both in the secular and in the private school systems. When I was a student teacher training in a sixth grade public school classroom, I discovered that my students believed school was necessary so they could "grow up and get a good job and make lots of money." I could impress the master teacher, I soon learned, if I challenged the students to get good grades. The

students were taught that good grades and good paychecks go hand in hand.

I had serious reservation about the urgency to "make lots of money," but I supposed that the pressure to get a good job was a reasonable goal. After all, I noticed the same emphasis in Christian school circles.

In the past twenty years people wiser than I have clarified for me that within any school, public or Christian, preparation for success on the job is a dangerous emphasis. From a strictly economic point of view, a strong career-oriented focus in a school curriculum is impractical, considering that many of the jobs our present students will undertake have yet to be invented. Furthermore, most of these people will change careers at least once within their lifetime, if present trends continue. Therefore, we are foolish to focus the curriculum on career education.

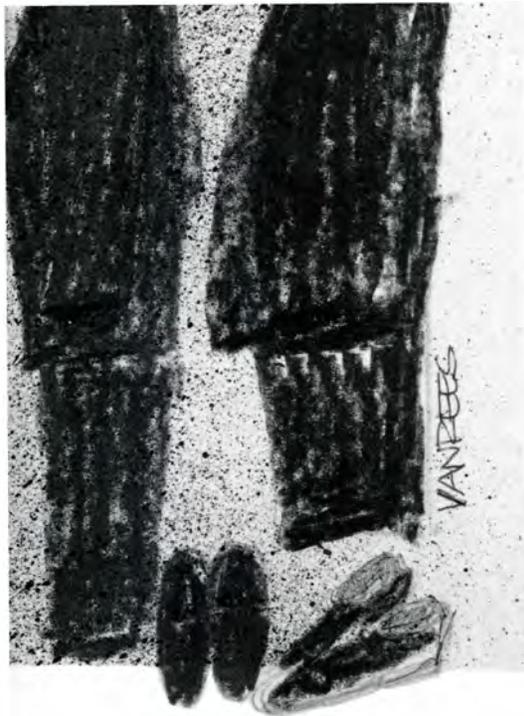
The spiritual standpoint gives even greater warning to Christians, for career concern so easily overpowers the call to forsake self and accept the call for service. While God uses our strengths and career desires to help us know how we may serve in his Kingdom, we so often assume that the choice is entirely our own.

We adults ask our students, "What do you want to do with your life?"—as if they are selecting a coat off the rack and we have just

the merchandise to satisfy them. We talk about our school's ability to prepare students for this job or that one. We talk about meeting the future and we stress Christian excellence. And then, of course, we mention commitment to Christ.

Our Christian school statements of purpose express commitment to the Kingdom of God, but we often design our curricula to glorify human success—in the secular sense. Our publicity highlights the bright and the beautiful people we have trained: company executives, published authors, politicians, attorneys. Such a practice seems to say to our graduates in the Christian community: "You are more important to us if you can make an earthly name for yourself, and when that happens, please let us know so we can have a corner of the credit." We exploit their public achievements as if the school has given them worth that exceeds that of thousands of quietly faithful graduates serving God on the foreign mission field, in the local cornfield, in the nursery, or wherever God calls them to build the body of Christ. We glorify dollars and degrees as if they signify success.

It would be convenient to place the blame for this emphasis on school finance committees and recruiters, but very likely most of us participate to some extent in the subtle promotion of human-centered achievement. In a recent



BETH VAN REES

conversation with a couple of prospective college freshmen, I impulsively asked, "In what area do you plan to major?"

"Business," one replied. "I thought about teaching math, but I think there will be more job opportunities in business."

I glibly assured him that the school he had chosen has a strong business program. Then I added weakly, "But don't go to college just for a job."

"Oh, no," he replied as he headed on his way, but I knew I had missed an opportunity to suggest that Christian training involves us first of all in Kingdom service.

Certainly, our work is of great significance in helping us identify our place to serve, but our usual pattern is first to satisfy our own desires and then to ask how the Lord will use us once we have determined how far away we will agree to go or how many comforts we can forgo. However, Paul's words in Ephesians 4:12 remind us "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. . ." (NIV). Nicholas Wolterstorff directs this mandate specifically to higher education in "The Mission of the Christian College at the End of the Twentieth Century" when he says the Christian college is an arm of the body of Christ which "exists to equip members of the people of God for their life as members of that people—a people which exists

not for its own sake but for the sake of all humanity and thereby to the glory of God" (*Faculty Dialogue*, Winter-Spring 1988, 44). He suggests that the nineteenth century founders of Christian colleges sought to harmonize Christian faith and scholarship in order to safeguard their students from cultural evils.

After World War II the emphasis shifted from isolation to interaction with culture to see how science and art enrich our lives. Now as we enter the twenty-first century, says Wolterstorff, "the Christian college cannot neglect the suffering of humanity. . . .It cannot burrow into culture while neglecting society" (44). He unites the task of the Christian college with the mission of the church, and he characterizes such a college as one that encourages internationalization, new ways of packaging learning (perhaps with programs concerning poverty, ecology, peace and war, and others), and new strategies for bridging theory and practice.

Wolterstorff's vision presents significant implication for all personnel in Christian elementary and secondary schools as well as for Christian colleges. Instead of talking to young people about what they want to be when they grow up, we must help them think of themselves as current, active members of the Kingdom of God. They are called right at this moment to live as servants who care for other members of the Kingdom.

Thus we are freed from the temptation to glorify students who earn remarkable scores and earthly success. We are freed from the sense of futility we experience when a promising—or not so promising—student of ours dies before establishing a career. Thus, our calling to teach Christianly becomes as purposeful for the second grader who dies in a car accident as for the student who becomes president of her company or professor at Yale.

We who teach must really live as model servants of the King if we want our students to understand the joy of servanthood. That implies a constant awareness of the Spirit operating within us as we teach. It means that we humbly ask God to use us in his service every time we

step into the classroom. When we live in the service of the King, then our students will be affected—and perhaps infected—by the spirit of humility that characterizes a servant. Then we will have classes that make a difference in the lives of the students who go out our doors.

Administrators and school board members have a particularly difficult role in changing the emphasis of promotional campaigns to attract students to Christian schools. Such campaigns traditionally connect enrollment with financial solvency, and the acceptance of a student seems to depend more on "Will he pay?" than "Will he pray?" We use the argument that first we must attract students on the basis of educational excellence, and once they become part of the school, we'll change their perspective.

Such an argument, I believe, sounds highly logical. Sometimes it even works. But may we use it? Doesn't faith play a greater part than finances in the future of our Christian schools? Is it naive to say that if a school is really committed to Christian service, its members will attract others by their love and their lives? If that biblical progression promise is true—as it should be—then recruitment can become encouragement and service rather than competitive arm-twisting.

In several Christian schools where parents and administrators have stepped out in faith to establish Christian alternatives to career-focused education, enrollments have swelled after an initial period of community resistance. Furthermore, students have maintained excellent scores in standard testing and even improved their scores, according to one administrator. But more important, the students want to be there and they want to serve in the Kingdom.

Such stories don't make the headlines. But they tell the real meaning of success—the kind that far exceeds college testing scores or Michael Jackson's salary. CEJ

Lorna Van Gilst is editor of CEJ and a member of the English Department at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Papers and Pedagogy

BY ALYCE OOSTERHUIS

My course outlines and assignments inevitably include the expectation that students will write a paper. Assigning research or position papers makes good pedagogical sense; it encourages students to master aspects of the course that can only be touched upon during the teaching. It exposes students to a breadth or depth of information that goes beyond the textbooks. It enables students to cultivate greater interest in specific topics. It gives them the necessary practice in developing clear, logical and cohesive arguments. It confronts them with the gaps in their research and thought. It promotes discipline and organization in research and study habits. It provides a possible forum for class presentations. It allows for student and professor collaboration on topics of mutual interest.

Unfortunately, the writing of papers infrequently extends beyond the university or college confines. For the majority of our graduates, the art of writing papers or conducting research atrophies when schooling is considered "complete." Writing clearly and logically appears essentially to be an academic exercise with little relevance for the world in which one works or practices a profession. Although there are those who lament that many of their students never mastered the art and have therefore not lost any skills, I

would like to argue that the art of writing papers is not fully cultivated and is made irrelevant because we have encouraged students to write primarily for an audience of one—the professor. In limiting the audience we limit the relevance and defeat the potential for contained subject-matter interest beyond course completion.

Writing for an audience of one encourages students to write for grade attainment rather than intense interest. Because the professor is often the sole critic and final authority in judging the paper's merits, student endeavors to inflate the reference list and/or plagiarize are unwittingly promoted. Genuine collaboration or dialogue is discouraged when the volumes of graded papers are returned to the class weeks after the assignments were due. Students who are less than keen on the subject tend to do the minimum required to pass the course. The writing of papers is placed on par with the "cramming for exams." Student responsibility and accountability for learning does not extend beyond the completion of the specific course requirements.

If we could expand the audience of one to become an audience of many, I believe that we would promote greater interest, accountability, relevance, and skill in writing papers. Expanding the audience demands that we find ways to

involve others than ourselves in the tasks of responding and evaluating. In a small college setting or in courses where seminar groupings are frequent, the following suggestions may be easier to implement than in large lecture-format classes.

1 The frequent hue and cry about student illiteracy and sloppy work might become less if students could be coerced into proofreading their papers. Elementary school students proofread their classmates' work. Before any of us submit papers for publication we ask for editors and/or proofreaders. Demanding that students write drafts of papers to be edited by peers in the class would, at the least, encourage greater care in writing and simultaneously increase the reading audience. Corrected drafts would have to be submitted with the final paper.

2 Class presentations of papers could be made more interesting if peer critics were assigned to debate tenets of the paper during the presentation. Designated peers would have copies of the paper prior to the class presentation time. This method has been very successful in the seminar classes in which it is part of the course requirement.

3 Students often lack models for our expectations of their papers. In-house or in-faculty "publications" of the best papers

written in a previous year would not only provide students with required models, it would also provide an incentive for having one's paper selected for possible "publication" after the course.

4 The topics selected for papers are frequently of interest to the student only, or the professor only, or to neither. In many disciplines the selected topics could be made more relevant to the world beyond the university. Graduate students in the natural or exact sciences generally conduct research and write papers for specific grant-providing agencies. Although undergraduate students cannot be considered as necessarily equivalent to graduate students, surely topics exist in the social science or humanities areas that could be researched by undergraduates to suggest directions for eventual graduate relevance!

5 Textbook readings could be augmented with journal assignments. Rather than demanding that students buy two or three comprehensive texts, instructors could select a journal that pertains to their discipline and is at a reading level commensurate with that of most of their undergraduates. Allowances would have to be made by journal distributors for limited memberships of three months for students.

6 Students are seldom aware of the fact that their professors are writing and researching papers that are independent of their teaching duties. Sharing drafts of such papers with the class provides a model of relevance and importance for research and papers.

These suggestions do not provide an exhaustive list. In keeping with my desire for collaboration, peer consultation, mutual accountability, and shared responsibility, I am open to others' suggestions for increasing the relevance of paper writing and restoring its importance as a lifelong craft. CEJ

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

The Children

BY EUNICE SHELLENBERGER

She came to me, a small pathetic tot—

**shabby, unkempt and poor. She flinched to see
the scornful glances of the favored lot**

**and, lifting pain-filled eyes said, "I don't like me."
(Lord, grant me love to ease the pain of this small one—
to teach her joy in life, in self, in work well done.)**

"I won't do it!" he boldly shouted out;

**"You can't make me!" His proud uneasy eyes
surveyed the room, daring all to doubt**

**his power, his will, his brave defiant cries.
(Oh, make me gentle, Lord, to view his troubled world, to heed
and know this childish plea for strength, to meet his need.)**

A frank, but anxious hope shined in his eyes

**but for a moment—then was quickly gone;
for failure lived with him. His aims to rise
are doomed by innate lack and social wrong.**

**(For this one, Lord, grant me a double share of grace
to bring achievement's glow to his starved face.)**

**She tossed her head with conscious, knowing air,
and fretful, paced her quick, deft mind ahead—
alert to learning, yet unlearned, yet there—
eager to search and find—to know and lead.**

**(Give me the vision, Lord, to guide her thrust beyond,
yet link her to her peers with understanding's bond.)**

Group Learning in the Social Studies Classroom

BY WILLIAM E. PEARSON

According to many of the successful speakers on the educational circuit and much of the latest research in Western education today, one of the most important characteristics of a well-managed classroom is a high level of student involvement with work. We also accept that students learn 10 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they hear and see, 50 percent of what they demonstrate, model, and see being done, and 90 percent of what they tell while doing. The learning principle here is "time on task," that is, the more time that students spend at work, the greater will be the quantity and quality of learning, especially if the work is teacher-directed.

Linking the learning principle with the characteristic of a well-managed classroom already mentioned has been of great value to me in what I call "Group Learning in the Social Studies Classroom." I give it that particular title because I am a social studies teacher. However, the simple techniques can be adapted, I believe, to fit any course or classroom.

Let us suppose that a high school United States history class of twenty students has this instructional objective of the day: Evaluate the Effects of the Marshall Court on American Government. The class should be divided into four groups of five students. The students should then be directed to research the following question within their individual groups: How did the Marshall Court affect: a) state powers; b) the status of the Supreme Court; c) congressional powers; d) the Constitution?

To assist the groups in answering this question, a handout, prepared in advance by the teacher, should be provided for each student. The handout should have

listed on it four or five of the Marshall Supreme Court's landmark cases, such as "Marbury vs. Madison," the "Dartmouth College Case," "McCulloch vs. Maryland," "Gibbons vs. Ogden," etc. Beside each case should be a blank where the student may place the following information: date, the issue in the case, the Court's decision in the case, and the significance of the Court's decision. The important thing here is that the handout not be a simple listing of data, but that it be a worksheet to aid the student in his or her answering of the assigned question. This worksheet is to be completed in class by each student using the text and resource materials available in the classroom.

The guidelines for this activity are as follows:

- 1 The teacher is present to direct this project, not to spoon-feed information.
- 2 Therefore, all secondary questions related to the assigned question must be answered within the group, using the resources at the group's disposal.
- 3 If the group cannot answer a question or solve a problem, then as a group the students should formulate a question and ask the teacher.
- 4 The teacher should then direct the group to the answer or solution.
- 5 The group should appoint a spokesperson.
- 6 Although the spokesperson will be responsible for presenting the group's findings to the class, each member of the group must take a verbal part in the presentation.

After sufficient time has elapsed for each group to answer the assigned question (believe it or not, this exercise can be effectively accomplished during one or two class sessions), individual groups should be asked to present their findings on one area of the question. For example, the teacher might say, "Group I, please explain to the class the effect of the Marshall Court on state powers, Group II, the Constitution.

Each group is then responsible for telling what it has done as well as for gleaned information from other student groups, information which they too have researched. After each presentation, a brief period of discussion may follow so additions or corrections may be made to what has been presented.

This project has, indeed, included a very high level of active participation. All students have been involved in the instructional objective. To once again reinforce what has been learned in class, a homework assignment may be: "Write a one- to three-page essay on the following: 'How has the Marshall Court affected modern government?' Refer to at least two decisions to support your viewpoint."

By the end of the exercise, each student in class, through a teacher-directed activity, has completed a valid instructional objective. Research has been accomplished, and each student has evaluated his or her findings, has told what he or she has done, and has, therefore, realized a high level of learning. You, the teacher, have more than earned your "keep." CEJ

William E. Pearson is social studies department chair at Faith Academy of Manila in the Philippines.

The Personal Teacher. . . or. . . The Dropped Bible

BY A.J. SCHUT

Recently I learned of the death of my junior high Bible teacher. Although it's been eighteen years since I sat under his instruction, I immediately thought of the dropped Bible.

Mr. Morsink burst through the door one day with his Bible clutched in his hand. He came to an abrupt halt in front of the classroom, facing us with legs apart, deliberately commanding attention as only he could do. Then he slowly raised the arm that held his beloved worn Bible and let the Bible drop the five feet to the floor. After its resounding thud, the classroom became deathly silent, in fact, reverently silent. In the one-second free fall of the Bible, Mr. Morsink had created the atmosphere necessary for the discussion he had planned. That day we learned that the Word of God itself is holy, not the cover and pages.

Vivid demonstrations such as these weren't the only object lessons in this class. We learned our share of facts, and we memorized countless passages. However, as in all learning, time has erased the major portion of my knowledge. Oh, sure, certain passages come back to me vaguely when I read them again, and the shape of Solomon's temple reappears in my mind as I read II Chronicles. But indelibly etched into my memory are the anecdotes and the stories Mr. Morsink was so skilled at sharing as we discussed the Bible and Christian living.

I'll never forget the story Mr.

Morsink told when we were studying the third commandment. During those summers, he worked at a golf course and had ample opportunity to witness to fellow workers. When one of his co-workers continually took Christ's name in vain, Mr. Morsink approached the man and let him know that his language was offensive and asked him to refrain from using that type of language. What was the co-worker's solution? The following day "Jesus Christ" had been replaced by "Cheese and Crackers." That was the day we learned that many derivative "swear words" were equally offensive and we came away with a new respect for God's holy name. To this day, I cannot snack on cheese and crackers without being reminded of Mr. Morsink's story.

It's often stated that the primary purpose of Christian education is to prepare students for a life of service to our God and Savior. This goal can be attained in two ways: through a distinctive Christian curriculum that instructs students about God's creation and plan for his universe, and via the Christian teacher who transforms this knowledge into an expression of discipleship.

The key, then, lies with the Christian teacher who serves as bridge between curriculum and students. The most successful educators I know are the ones who are the most proficient in *personalizing* this curriculum. We saw Mr. Morsink not only as a Bible teach-

er, but also as a human being, living out his life as an example of service.

The use of examples and storytelling can be the most effective way to enhance learning. How often we've remembered a sermon as a result of the vivid illustration the minister used rather than the admonition to listen. Is it any wonder that Christ himself so often chose stories as a means to get his point across?

Mr. Morsink was himself a master storyteller. There were times in which we students would mischievously plot together before class as to how we would "side-track" Mr. Morsink into telling some story about his life. Little did we know that we were merely playing into his hands.

So Mr. John Morsink, this tribute is for you. Through your wonderfully human stories, you succeeded in opening up the Scriptures so that we could be of better service to the Lord, whom you have already joined.

Oh, yes, one more story. You told us once that as a child, you became extremely ill. To those around you, it seemed a miracle that you pulled through. The doctor had told your mother that God must have had big plans for you, the way that you were spared. He did, Mr. Morsink. . .he did! CEJ

A.J. Schut teaches language arts at the junior high level at Pella Christian Grade School in Pella, Iowa.

Refrigerator Art

BY NATALIE BOONSTRA

During the great Depression, art filled a great need. Times were tough. People had very little. Art enriched their bleak environments.

Making do with what was at hand or with one's inner resources had always been poor people's custom. If people could not go to the big cities and visit museums and art galleries or take in concerts at the great opera houses or concert stages, so what? They'd make their own!

Existing in the same time frame with this economic reality was a philosophic reality. The German Idealists had been saying for some time that what was in the museums was something from the past, out of date. Why look at what others did? What is valid for me is what I do, and my work is just as good or as valid as that stuff in museums.

Then along came Mr. John Dewey, an art teacher from Chicago. He said that schools shouldn't be so restrictive in their teaching methods. Students should go outside of the classroom or bring the outside into the classroom and experience life directly. Academic subjects should be taught in the context of real life. So, out of the classroom they went and into the construction site to dig clay, make real bricks, and learn by experience.

In the midst of all of this, the invention of photography sent shock waves through the art world. Nobody needed artists to record physical phenomenon or honor or record important events or persons. A photograph was quicker, more accurate, and sometimes even better looking.

What would artists do? How would they make a living? "Well, if we are not needed to paint what can be seen, we can paint what can't be seen," thought the artists. So we had Modern Art with its mental and emotional "interiors"—the inner mind, the inner event.

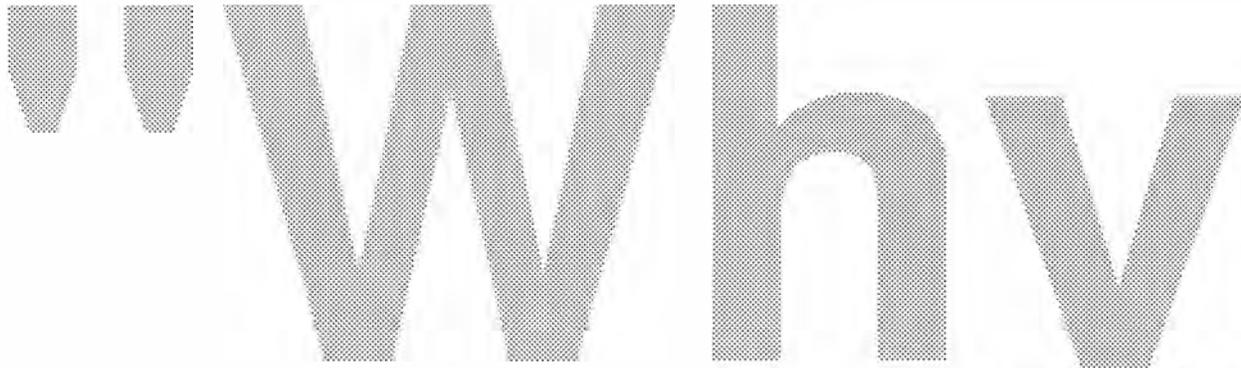
How exciting! And how for-

unate for students. Gone was evaluation, for who could judge the inner state of man? "Everyone can do art," they decided. So every little school child did, and brought his art home to Mama who oohed and aahed over it and said that it probably could be neater. But up it went on the refrigerator next to the A's in spelling and arithmetic. It did not take the little student too long to figure out that it didn't make much difference how art was done. It all went up on the refrigerator with only the best in the other subject areas. What was once needed for enrichment now had become license to clutter!

Clutter! Today's environment teems with demands on our time, attention, and emotions. If there is one thing modern busy people do not need in their lives, it is clutter! We need art to point to what is valuable, authentic, and aesthetic so that we can eliminate the clutter and concentrate on the valid—the worthwhile. Can art do that? When it contributes to the goals of general Christian education, yes! That is one of the purposes of general Christian education: to point us to what is authentic, valuable, and aesthetic, what Scripture calls "the true, the good, and the beautiful." Not every experience is as worthwhile as any other. Some may be downright mistakes. Some may be just practice, or trial and error on the way to something better. Some may even be just play. Therefore, let's not be afraid to evaluate.

When we teach something that we are going to evaluate, we had better take a long view of the process. We will find that art does have a body of knowledge that can be taught sequentially, that it contributes to the goals of general education, that it can be evaluated, and that it does offer something unique to the curriculum. That uniqueness is more than an experience. **CEJ**

Natalie Boonstra taught art at Chicago Christian High School in Palos Heights, Ill. for 21 years.



Are You Teaching Anyway?"

BY DANIEL R. VANDER ARK

John Bunyan's allegory about seeking the Kingdom of God, traveling to the Celestial City, may still be apropos. The current citizens are all looking forward to the New Jerusalem, but some of us travelers have faced the temptation of boarding a train to the City, enjoying ourselves as the train passes by the rabble who become a blur rather than sharply focussed people with real needs. There's work to be done; Christ calls us to serve in his Kingdom here as he builds it.

On this journey, teachers, too, face the Slough of Despond; that is still a quicksand for the unwary. Today Bunyan might add a Rut of Complacency to his list of potholes and hurdles the Christian faces, particularly Christian teachers. We teachers (and parents and children) may fall into this deep track that leads off into the nether world of darkness. If Robert Bellah in *Habits of the Heart* is right, this track of ruttedness, of complacency, ends up dividing into separate, self-centered smaller and smaller tracks of individual self-seeking, naval contemplating, so serious that few see another's need.

Vanity Fair still beckons as well and not just to our students. The amusement park is mainly electronic now, still attracting hoards of our young people and

children, off with the pied piper to the sea of deafness and jaded to the cries of others' needs. In *The Closing of the American Mind*, Bloom claims that our children will get over their "exclusive passion" for rock music, but "after its prolonged use. . .they find they are deaf" (81).

This pervasive influence of the media into our homes has secularized much of our lives. VCRs and television have put selfishness and conspicuous consumption in front of us so consistently that expecting our children not to see it is impossible. One critic has called our dominant culture the "flash, cash, and trash" society. Emerson 150 years ago warned that "things are in the saddle and ride mankind." Which of your eighth grade students cannot tell you the top stars in movies and music? My daughter worked as a nanny in New York this past summer. She sat two children, ages five and nine. The children's father makes a million a year on Wall Street. Both the kids are already in therapy. The nine-year-old does little but watch television and see videos. With the rule for him that he may select only PG and PG-13 movies, my daughter spent more than an hour in a video store looking for something he would like. He couldn't find one that he hadn't seen before. Are the kids in

smaller, so-called "more Christian" areas significantly different? Neil Postman, in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, clearly illustrates the kind of problem good teachers face in this general culture:

Meanwhile television forges ahead, making no concessions to its great technological predecessor, creating new conceptions of knowledge and how it is acquired. One is entirely justified in saying that the major educational enterprise now being undertaken in the United States is not happening in its classrooms but in front of the television set.

The television style of learning is, by its nature, hostile to what has been called book-learning or its handmaiden, school-learning. As a television show, "Sesame Street" does not encourage children to love school or anything about school. It encourages them to love television. (144)

In the middle of this self-centered and mesmerizing culture, how can teachers teach children to seek God's Kingdom first, to sacrifice self in order to follow the living God? What kind of vision of this Kingdom should we hold up

for our students so that they will follow Jesus? I offer these four ways of helping our children to walk that path.

Teach Students to Discern

Paul says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2 NIV). Paul prays for the Philippians that they will "abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure until the day of Christ. . ." (Phil. 1:9-10). And to the Ephesians, Paul explains the reason for this need to *discern*, to sort out the holy from the unholy, the good from the cheap, the truth from the lie: "Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. . ." (Eph. 4:14). What our dominant culture does to us is to dull our minds, to set them adrift, to make not deciding anything a virtue. For example, we hear the word "affair" gradually replace "adultery" as the word to characterize the act of intercourse outside the vows of marriage. Our children need to have their dulled and jaded consciences sharpened by parents and Christian school teachers. Our children will not develop the mind of Christ by osmosis.

To teach children to be discerning calls for certain teaching methods: training in questioning, in examining, in discussing issues that often now slip to the back burner of our classroom practices because lecturing is easy and students in this culture will sit still for it. To teach discernment calls for helping students look at the world through the "spectacles of Scripture," to compare this way of seeing with other world-views (pairs of glasses) that children may be using without even knowing they are doing it.

In our school, we are trying to teach this biblical way of seeing through a class called Christian

Living. In the course, the teacher compares hedonism (pleasure is god), godless humanism (man can solve everything), and Christianity. Then students view all kinds of life issues through these different ways of seeing life: leisure, vocation, death, dating, marriage, self, God, children, money, the earth, races, various age groups, and more. Ours is an attempt to give students the means by which they can discern. If you had to choose *one* skill as being absolutely essential for students graduating from your Christian school, would it be discernment? For me, it is.

Teach Students to Integrate

Paul says that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." In Christ, "all things hold together" (Col. 1:17; 2:3). In a society in which things are coming apart for students and in schools where subject matter comes to students' minds piecemeal, teachers must help students *integrate* knowledge. In *Who Educates Your Child?* D. Bruce Lockerbie claims that "The Christian school is called into being to do for children what neither the Christian home nor church can do, alone or together." In distinction from the Christian school's primary function of integrating knowledge, he says,

The Christian home *incubates* a child's character, providing those moral and spiritual conditions favorable to the child's healthy development as a believer. The church *inculcates* a knowledge of the creeds and doctrines. . . . But the Christian school *integrates* every element of human knowledge and experience into a view of life that can be whole and wholly Christian. (129)

We need to teach more directly to help students see that the whole earth is the Lord's, that Christ unites all knowledge, that God's providing care has always been here and can be seen here and there and everywhere together. Lockerbie says, "Only in the setting of a school, with its daily continuation of classes and its possibil-

ity for long-range study can a child become aware of the wholeness of seemingly disconnected things" (129). We need to design more units and courses that help students see trends and movements. Was the Civil War the watershed of American culture? What *does* caretaking God's world mean with the resources we have? What did the immigration experience do to and for people?

We have tried in our school, over the past eighteen years, to improve a course that helps students examine American culture through literature, art, history, music, and religion. Students study their personal histories, their community's history, and their national history in the course. They examine the differences among these three histories as well as the continuities. Essential to all of education is the connection of broad history to a child's personal history. To make this connection well, teachers must use stories, biographies, the dreams and acts of people to help students know deeply, not just analytically, what is true and what is not. What this deep integration of knowledge does for students is to provide them with a solid way of knowing that will help them handle all the vicissitudes of life and culture they will likely see long after they leave our formal instruction.

If we are to teach our children to integrate knowledge, to help them see that the earth is the Lord's, we will have to inspire them to *wonder*. The wisdom writer of Proverbs says: There are three things too wonderful for me, four that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship at sea, and the way of a man with a woman (Prov. 30:18-19). In our scientific analysis, we can explain all of this: aerodynamics of flight, peristalsis of a snake's skin, diesel engines rather than wind, and treating love as if it were a chemical reaction. Good Christian teachers model wonder; they hold up for children their own amazement at what God has made or does. They teach awe by modeling it. That, too, is a way to teach Christian integration of knowledge.

Teach Students to Serve

We teach within communities; that's almost a nasty word. In a culture where serving ourselves is promoted, Christ's direction to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow him must penetrate layers of accumulated self-seeking. And we can't serve the needs of someone else until we *see* the need. Good teachers help students see the needs and lead children in serving. Our community is getting bigger. Which would our children say is more important, the greater need: a man breaking a leg in a car crash in our local community or 2,000 people dying in one fell swoop in chemical warfare in Iraq? Which culture do your students know best: the lives of the rich and famous or the lives of the dispossessed and left out? For students to learn that God calls them to serve this community, they must take some practicum in serving, literal labs of service into the community and the community into the school. Is there a mother on welfare who would be willing to talk to your students? Is there a handicapped adult who could show your students his or her real needs? Can you set up for your students a tutoring program in which one student sacrifices twenty minutes of play time once a week to tutor a classmate who "simply can't get" math or English or history? And what is it like at your city mission? Who goes there? Why do they go there?

Sometimes we can help students see that knowledge and issues have a real face by working a current community problem back to its causes and its human pain. In our town the city fathers passed an ordinance to make landlords improve their buildings so that poor people would not have to live in run-down and dangerous buildings. The landlords went to work and improved the buildings, but that cost money. When they had the buildings all repaired, they charged higher rents to get their money back. The poor could no longer afford their rental units and had to leave. Now there is a shortage of really inexpensive homes. What will the poor do? What should the city do? The heart of

the example is that students cannot really serve unless they learn what the real needs are. Christian teachers need to help students *learn* how to serve.

Teach Students to Follow

All our talk, all our teaching about discernment, integration, and serving is hollow and meaningless unless we walk our talk, unless we ourselves *practice* discernment, integration, and service. I am amazed at the number of times Paul called his listeners to imitate him. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, with whom he had been for only a brief time, explaining the gospel, he learns that they had followed him. He says, "You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. and so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia" (I Thess. 1:6-7). Paul is thrilled to hear that his modeling Jesus Christ has led the Thessalonians to follow him and for the Achaians to follow the Thessalonians. The secret is that Paul followed Jesus Christ; that's what Jesus told his disciples to do: "Follow me." *In Educating for Responsible Action*, N. Woltersdorf says that "the children tended to practice as the model practiced and preach as the model preached" (57). Our children will say what we say in perfect pitch but only *practice* what we ourselves practice.

What will this modeling include? Good teachers model scholarship. It won't do to simply say history is worthwhile unless students see us *doing* history. We need to model physical fitness and good health; we need to do science, do writing, do Bible study. Modeling includes having a clear *empathy* for how students learn. For example, what if every teacher in our schools faced each lesson, even though he or she has taught it for the twentieth time, *as if* facing it for the first time, just as students do? In a *Reformed Journal* piece a decade ago, Dr. Marion Snapper reflected on his great teachers; he decided that what they had in common was an ability to lead students

patiently through their way of thinking. Modeling will also include *response abilities*; Christian teachers lead children to choose, to respond well by showing students their own response abilities. As we respond, our children develop the ability to respond Christianly.

As Paul followed Jesus, we teachers follow the same Lord, a walk so self-sacrificing that children see how we spend the Lord's money, what we value by what we talk about, what we are willing to give up in order to meet the needs of those who suffer the most. We are guides along the way to the Celestial City. As we sing and act and play and paint, our children learn that the arts are celebrative and God-praising or are chores. Which of us will take our calling so filled with faith that we will dare say to students: "Follow me as I follow Christ Jesus?"

In the old days, good generals led the troops into battle; they did not stay back at headquarters in a tent while the servants faced the enemy. Good teachers lead the children. I'm grateful that's what my parents did, and their parents, and their parents before them. They took seriously the psalmist's challenge, "One generation shall laud your works to another" (Psalm 145:4). They "lauded" the Lord in practice; so did my Christian teachers. They inspired me to follow them as they followed Jesus. Christian teachers handle that heritage with a long view; they are filled with awe that God has chosen them to communicate that heritage to a new generation of followers, who, in turn, will laud the Lord's works to their children.

It really is a grand trip; someday soon all the pilgrims will be gathered into the New Jerusalem. Meanwhile we lead children by following.

CEJ

Daniel R. Vander Ark, principal of Holland Christian Senior High School in Holland, Michigan, presented these ideas in a speech at CSII/ACSA convention at Redeemer College in Ontario last August.



Pain Relief for Play Directors

BY LINDA MILBOURNE AND GINA BARRET SCHLESINGER

The first in
a two-part
article on
play direc-
tion in the
Christian
school

You have blurred vision, nausea, sweaty palms and a dry mouth. All this because you have just said "yes" to directing your school play. Your head believes dramatic experience is essential to your students' Christian liberal arts education, but your stomach is already plagued with stage fright.

Goal Setting

First, what are your goals in directing this play (aside from survival)? If you want your junior highers to perform as professionals, you will be disappointed. Set realistic goals for your students and yourself. Here are some examples of students goals:

- Students will communicate biblical values through performances.

- Students will sell a determined number of tickets.
- Students will demonstrate a "team player" attitude in cast and crew work.

The following are samples of directors' goals:

- Director will delegate responsibilities for each dimension of play production to students, parents, and teachers.
- Director will promote relationship between the school and community by publicizing the play in local papers and stores.

Setting specific goals allows you and the cast to evaluate your success after the play.

Choosing a Play

Your second, and perhaps most important step, is choosing a play. Plays produced by Christian schools should be first, glorifying to God, and second, artistically excellent.

This first criteria may be met through either a secular or Christian script. A play may not be explicitly religious yet represent Christian morals, promote a Christian world view, or make a statement that underlines a biblical principle.

Ask your principal to peruse the script you are considering. He or she will notice passages that might offend the larger school community and may suggest omissions or reject the entire play, but changes are better made at this early point than during rehearsals, after time and money have been spent.

However, you may choose a play that has an explicitly Christian message. Yet, while Christian plays are easy to find, artistically excellent Christian plays are not. Plays that glorify God are often written by amateurs, and their merit is not tested by the stringent artistic standards of the secular theatre. Therefore, a play that would fail in an unbiased theatre audience because of poor artistry may be accepted by those with a Christian bias simply because of its Christian message. The secular community looks with derision on many inferior Christian plays, regarding them as "bathrobe drama."

Therefore, it is important for Christian schools to meet the second criteria, that of artistic excellence, when looking for plays. If we hope to reach the non-Christian audience and build enthusiastic support among our Christian audience, it is vital that both the message and the medium are of high quality.

Here are some additional questions, more of a practical than theoretical nature, to ask of the play before making your final choice:

- Does its cast size and gender composition correspond to my pool of available students?
- Can I visualize appropriate staging for this play?

- Can we afford to pay any royalties involved? Pay attention to the royalty demands listed in the play catalogues. Performing a play without paying required royalty fees is stealing. Mimeographing copyrighted scripts is also stealing. Royalty fees can be as low as \$5 and as high as several hundred dollars. Investigate the many excellent non-royalty plays available, such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*. A quick call to the publishing company can answer your royalty questions.
- Are we equipped to handle the technical demands of the play?

Business Items

The third step you must take is to get down to business. Although this detail-work may be a distasteful discipline, it will later allow you more time for the creative aspects of the play. The following are business priorities:

- 1 Add the performance dates to the school calendar.
- 2 Make up the rehearsal schedule, including crew meetings and deadlines. Negotiate this schedule with faculty members who share your practice space. Then make sure your principal approves the schedule and keeps a copy. (A sample rehearsal schedule for the play *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is available upon request from the CEJ editor. Six weeks were allotted to prepare for this two-act, middle school production.)
- 3 Order scripts and mail the royalty check to the play's publishing company.
- 4 You might select a fellow faculty member to assist you in directing. Definitely recruit an older, experienced student to watch the script during rehearsals, run errands, and serve as understudy in an emergency.
- 5 Design a contract that students will sign when they decide to accept cast membership. Make clear your expectations and consequences for not following through on commitments. Consequences might be a lower grade, a series of

warnings, or dismissal from the cast. Parents should read this contract, sign it, and clear rehearsals and performances with events on their family calendar, so they will know how to support you and their child.

6 Cast the characters. Choose one or a combination of the following methods in casting your play:

- Observe the students' emotional range and inventiveness during improvisations. Create situations similar to key scenes in the play. After presenting the scenarios to the students, watch how they act them out. For example, in the play *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Lucy discovers a land called Narnia but is unable to convince her sister and brothers of its existence. Without drawing attention to this problem within the play, divide your class into groups of four or five students each. Ask them to create a three-minute skit that matches the title "Persuading Others to Believe the Unbelievable." Give students just five minutes to prepare.

Although your students' skits don't deal directly with the scene in the play, you will still be able to observe a few of your students emerge as believing and faithful characters. This improvisation process is fun for students and allows you to observe them grappling with problems critical to the play's plot. If you have students you are considering for certain roles, plug them into the parallel roles in your scenario and see how they do.

This method is relaxing to the students because it is in game form, and they are free from the tension that comes with reading for a part. It can be used exclusively, or as a relaxing warm-up for the other forms of tryouts.

- Another method is to gather your group of interested stu-

dents and read through the play. You, the director, should read the script orally, with little expression, while the students read silently. During the first read-through students meet the play's characters and begin to comprehend the play's conflicts and its dramatic and comic qualities.

Throughout your bland reading, students are free to think about how they would interpret various lines, rather than mimicking your interpretation.

Then have students write on a 3x5 card their wish list of the top three characters they would like to portray.

At this point you can proceed with improvisations, or go straight to a formal try out with students reading for key scenes. Allow them to read for their desired parts, as well as any parts you might envision them playing.

- Another method is to give the students a brief synopsis of the play and a short description of the characters. Have them fill out their wish lists and proceed with improvisations and/or formal tryouts from there.

Give yourself at least a day to think through your decisions and to discuss the cast list with your assistant director before posting the list.

7 Set up work crews for publicity, tickets, sets, props, makeup design, and technical concerns. Assign a student leader for each crew, along with a parent or teacher to advise.

You are now well on your way toward producing a successful play. You have learned how to set practical goals, choose a play, and take care of the nuts and bolts business items. In the next issue of CEJ, you will launch into perhaps the most creative part of play production: directing the play. **CEJ**

Linda Milbourne and Gina Barrett Schlesinger are experienced teachers who have coached drama at Delaware County Christian School in Pennsylvania.

SUGGESTED PLAYS FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Christian

Christ in the Concrete City (Philip Turner)
The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (Don Quinn—from C.S. Lewis' book)
A Man Called Peter (Catherine Marshall)
Murder in the Cathedral (T.S.Eliot)
The Robe (Lloyd C. Douglas)

Secular

Arsenic and Old Lace (Joseph Kesselring)
The Brute (Anton Chekhov)
The Celebration (Anton Chekhov)
Cheaper by the Dozen (Frank Gilbreth and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey)
The Crucible (Arthur Miller)
The Dear Departed (Stanley Houghton)
The Diary of Anne Frank (Francis Goodrich and Albert Hackett)
The Imaginary Invalid (Jean-Baptiste Moliere)
A Little Princess (Jane Walker Rogers—from Francis Hodgson Burnett's *Sara Crewe*)
A Man for All Seasons (Robert Bolt)
The Man in the Bowler Hat (A.A. Milne)
A Marriage Proposal (Anton Chekhov)
The Miracle Worker (William Gibson)
The Romancers (Edmond Rostand)
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs of the Black Forest (June Walker Rogers—from the Grimm story)
Twelve Angry Men/Women (Sherman L. Sergel—from the T.V. show by Reginald Rose)

Play Publishing Companies

Baker's Plays
100 Chauncy St.
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 482-1280
(largest collection of religious plays)

Contemporary Drama Service
Box 7710-Z5
Colorado Springs, CO 80933
(303) 594-4422

The Dramatic Publishing Company
4150 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60641
(312) 545-2062
(many quality plays for young people)

Eldridge Publishing Company
P.O. Drawer 216
Franklin, OH 45005
(513) 746-6531
(they have a special church catalogue)

I.E. Clark, Inc.
Saint John's Rd.
Schulenburg, TX 78956-0246
(409) 743-3232

Music Theatre International
MTI Enterprises, Inc.
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
(212) 975-6841
(Broadway musicals, such as *Fiddler on the Roof*)

Performance Publishing Company
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100 Chauncy St.
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 482-1280
(specializes in plays and musicals for young people)

Pioneer Drama Service
2171 S. Colorado Blvd.
Box 22555
Denver, CO 80222
(303) 759-4297

Plays Magazine
120 Boylston
Boston, MA 02116

Samuel French Inc.
25 W. 45th St.
New York, NY 10036
(212) 382-0800
(largest play publishing house)



RICH BISHOP

"Quoth Phoebe Snow about to go
 Upon a trip to Buffalo,
 'My gown stays white
 From morn to night
 Upon the road of anthracite.'"



Bob Schoone-Jongen: on the Lackawanna Story

BY BRYCE FOPMA

Bob Schoone-Jongen recites the jingle with which he grew up, a jingle that rode the rails of the Lackawanna Line's advertising campaign in the early 1950s. Today Bob lives a thousand miles down the line from Paterson, N.J., where as a youngster he watched the Hoboken to Buffalo train carry its load of anthracite. Bob now lives in Edgerton, Minnesota, and builds model trains as a hobby while his chief job and love is teaching history and government at Southwest Christian High. "Schoon," as he is known to his students, graduated from Calvin College in 1971 with a major in history and later received his masters degree from the University of Kentucky.

In 1975 when he rode into Edgerton, Bob donned his educator's gown and engineered a personal campaign to make his courses relevant and dynamic. "I want to help kids understand that they are part and product of history and society. Things they're involved in

are important; people one hundred years down the road will study them, looking for what motivated them."

As a Christian educator, Bob has a vision for the future that is tied to the past, both of which he and his students examine in the light of God's Word. Bob stresses, "I want to help develop a social conscience. Christian morality applies to society as well as individuals. I want to get my students to think more and analyze what's going on around them."

Getting the students to think more and to set aside their "live for today" mentality are difficult assignments for any teacher. Bob Schoone-Jongen reaches into his own past for stories and strategies that stimulate teenage minds to relive and critically evaluate the world of the present and the past. More than trains rumble through Bob's memory; he recalls being intrigued by government and politics already as a child: "I remember as a kindergartner watching the

McCarthy hearings and listening to the Democratic Convention of 1956—"The Great State of Alabama votes for Estes Kefauver. . . ." Bob pronounces the decision with all the fervor of a delegate on the convention floor. Then he adds, "And I remember going to the voting booth with my dad and watching his legs beneath the curtain."

Perhaps Bob did not fully understand the burning issues of the 1950s, but his parents' concern about politics and world events sparked young Bob's interest. As a student at North Fourth Street Christian School in Paterson, Bob received his early education. "I had this fifth grade teacher, Clinton Clark, who would tell stories about his grandfather fighting alongside Stonewall Jackson in the Civil War. Mr. Clark's grandfather had his legs sawed off in the war." Bob enjoyed those "grandfather stories," replete with the gruesome details. Today "Schoon" shares the incidents with his U.S. history



elling Line

classes at Southwest. Students respond well to anecdotes, Bob says. History becomes more than a collection of cold, distant facts.

Besides Mr. Clark, Bob fondly remembers the late Dr. Earl Strikwerda, a professor at Calvin College. "He had the most impact on me, helping me to see history as anecdote. During one interim period, he would come into the classroom, lay down his cigar on the chalk tray, and proceed to tell stories of the Depression." Bob does not smoke a cigar, but his classroom presentations often hang heavy with relevant stories drawn from the past. A baseball buff, Bob can bat around tales about the beginning of the Big Leagues and how the Civil War, economic conditions, and the railroads contributed to the expansion of the professional teams. "I'm not a slave to notes," Bob says, tossing out the date when he saw his first baseball game at the Polo Grounds. "If kids want to go another direction, I can do it, and if one story doesn't fly, I

can dump it and try another."

One of those stories just might be about Calvin Coolidge, a former president whom Bob has studied and has grown to admire: "Coolidge was a kindred spirit—eccentric."

Adding a splash of local color to his stories, Bob has extensively read historical accounts of Southwest Minnesota. He has done research at the State Historical Society and perused old newspapers and church consistory minutes, gleaning more material for his local history collage. Students of today, Bob says, have forgotten their roots. They have forgotten the immigrants who built the farmsteads, meat markets, churches, and Christian schools in communities like Leota, Chandler, and Edgerton. Bob tries to resurrect a bit of history and to breathe life and relevance into the students' rich past.

"Kids don't remember the immigrants anymore; they don't remember what those ancestors

went through." Bob shares the immigrants' trials during World War I: "The immigrants were not treated kindly by the local people. Houses were painted yellow. The postmaster was visited by the sheriff for being subversive; and the editor of a local newspaper and the Christian school administrator had a heated verbal exchange." Bob emphasizes that history is not something that lies chronologically and logistically miles from his classroom. Rather, the wars and the Depression and the political scene reach across oceans, mountains, and Minnesota prairies.

Besides tuning his students' hearts and minds to the past, Bob keeps them abreast of today's news. Thanks to his personal shortwave radio, Bob listens to the British Broadcasting Company and Radio Moscow. Every morning at 7:00 he awakens to the BBC and later shares the news with his class. Bob says, "The BBC does international news we don't do. Americans tend to think a non-American slant on what's going on is irrelevant. The BBC doesn't give hockey and baseball scores; instead, the news service tells about the fights between the Sikhs and Hindus in India or the conflict between the minority Tamil Tigers and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka." Thus, Bob finds his shortwave radio providing long-range benefits for his students.

When not absorbing the latest news from London or Moscow, Bob directs an ear to the domestic world: his wife, Beth (conveniently, the public librarian), and young sons Terry and Brendan, who listen to delegates on television calling out names like Dole and Dukakis. And for his sons, Bob is building a love for God, for history, and for model trains. For Bob Schoone-Jongen, the rails of history, laid down by the Father of Time, run through cities and villages like Paterson and Buffalo and Edgerton. Terry, Brendan, and "Schoon's" students are on that line. **CEJ**

Bryce Fopma teaches junior high English at Edgerton Christian Elementary in Edgerton, Minnesota.

Donkeys and Elephants in Class

BY H.K. ZOEKLICHT



Already the afternoon sun was casting long shadows through the North window of the faculty room of Omni Christian High School. It was three-thirty on a Thursday afternoon in early December and a covey of weary teachers gathered to relax for a few precious moments and to revive their spirits with the thick residue of the day's ration of Maxwell House. Among them was young Jack Ezel, fledgling teacher of United States history and government.

He looked dubiously at the sludgy, brown brew that stained his white styrofoam cup, sipped it, grimaced, and then sprawled backwards on the worn vinyl sofa dominating the south side of the faculty room. Turning to veteran business teacher Bill Silver, who held down the other end of the sofa, Ezel inquired in a low voice, "Hey Bill, what's going on with Vander Prikkel? He seems worried and touchy today."

"Well," chuckled Silver, "Steve has reason to be touchy. Last Friday—we got our paychecks, you know—he did as he always does on payday. He went to the Black Cat for a whiskey sour, and someone, he thinks it was Mrs. Reefer, saw him coming out of there and complained to a board member; and it was mentioned at the board meeting Tuesday night. That's what he's grim about."

"What's to be grim about?" inquired Ezel airily. "No problem with that, is there?" And then he changed his tone. "You know, Bill, I'm kind of puzzled about what

goes on here at Omni. Seems like the fundamentalists are sort of taking over. Know what I mean?" He paused and then added, "I'm starting to get the dickens myself, you know."

"And what's that all about?" inquired the business teacher, with a rising inflection.

"About my way of teaching government," said the new alumnus of Servant College. He lowered his voice again, "Yesterday Ms. Carpenter gave me what-for because I've got those kids involved in the political campaign, which I happen to think is a good way to teach government." He added, "I guess there's some heat being put on Carpenter for what I have been doing in class, but I'm not going to pay any attention to it." Ezel shrugged his shoulders.

Bill Silver now became very interested. "That's not how I hear it, Jack," he said. "I hear that you pushed your enthusiasm for Dukakis pretty hard in class, and that you weren't very tolerant of another point of view—you know—Bush and the Republicans. One of the kids in your class, Petey Duistermars, told me that when you referred to Bush you call him 'Poor Georgie.' If that's so, I think you were making a mistake."

"But, Bill," protested the confident Ezel with a wave of his hand, "as a political scientist I'm entitled to have an informed opinion, aren't I? Why should I be wimpy about an election when I'm convinced of something, when I've thought this matter through very

carefully and know what I'm talking about? Let every teacher express his opinion. Isn't that fair?"

John Vroom, Bible teacher, in approaching the refreshment table to salvage the remnants of the day's goodies, had moved within earshot of the dialogue. With his fat, stubby forefinger he was conveying the drippings from the raspberry jelly doughnuts from the tray to his mouth. He moved into the conversation.

"Yes, Ezel, what is all this business about your classes? Beth Harkema, she's my niece, you know, told me that you handed out Dukakis pins and stuff right there in your class, and that you told the kids that Christians should vote Democratic and that you said Bush was a wimp." He licked his forefinger. Then he added, "Besides, it seems to me that generally speaking the Republican position on important issues is more Christian anyway."

Jack Ezel rose swiftly from the sofa to face the Bible teacher. "Not so, John! Not so at all! I can't understand anybody saying that ever." His voice rose several decibels. "The whole thrust of the Bible is toward justice and mercy, toward helping the sick and the widows and the poor and so on, and you can't deny that the Democratic Party is much, much more concerned about those things than the Republicans ever are." Ezel was shouting now. He glared at Vroom.

John Vroom was equal to the



RICH BISHOP

occasion. Such combat frightened him not a bit. He raised his hand as if to ward off some blows and quoted Scripture: "If any would not work, neither should he eat! That's in verse 10 of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, if you care to look it up," he said. "What do you Democrats do with that?" And then he pressed his attack. "Now Jack, you're pretty young yet, but for as long as I can remember, it is always the Democratic Party that wants to solve social problems by taking money away from people who work hard and giving it to those who won't, and it shows its great compassion by making abortion not only legal but free." He took a breath and added, "And if you want to get economic justice for Christian schools, you'd better find another party. Mercy and justice! Ha!" And Vroom dismissed the Democrats with a wave of his sticky hand.

Now Bill Silver regained his place in the conversation. "Hold it, you two," he said, placing his hand between the shouters. "We weren't talking about which party's policies are Christian policies. We were talking about what approach we need to take in the classroom, especially when there are such strong feelings about politics. You know, how partisan may we be? I work hard not to let my students know. . . ."

"That's what's wrong," broke in Ezel. "You act as though your faith commitment has nothing to do with the way you vote. And that's exactly wrong. You think

teachers at Omni should be passive and neutral in the classroom all the time? I think we should be committed and active. Dr. Summers at Servant was always talking about how we are supposed to be the hands of Christ in the world."

John Vroom, who had been staring at the ceiling during Ezel's outburst, regained the floor by suddenly waving his pudgy forefinger in his opponent's face and declaring, "Exactly! I agree! *Ora et labora*," he said with emphasis on the *et*. "But," and here he thrust his face close to Ezel's, "in this Christian school you should be active in supporting policies that Christians can support, not statism and abortion and unjust war and. . . ."

"Unjust war!" shouted the agitated Ezel. "Holy smokes, what do you call it when a nation of two hundred million invades a little country like Grenada? And what about Reagan's sneaking support to the Contras against the legitimate government of Nicaragua?"

"Here we go again," grinned Bill Silver. "Why can't you guys quit arguing about your private little wars and help us decide just how political we may be in our classrooms? Just what is wrong with handing out Dukakis buttons in class, or Bush buttons? How about giving the students one of each?"

Now Lucy Den Denker, widow of the late history teacher and principal Bob Den Denker, ventured a thought. "Bob used to struggle with this whole question a lot, and with how to get kids to think for themselves. I remember his saying that he thought it was wiser for us to help our students understand the various political issues as well as possible, and then to raise questions about how Christians ought to respond to them. Abortion, for example. Bob always said that, even though he himself believed that abortion on demand was morally wrong, he could see that some of the pro-choice arguments were based on a desire to be compassionate and kind because. . . ."

"Abortion is always wrong," interrupted John Vroom.

"Abortion is usually wrong," shot back Jack Ezel, "and a woman

ought to make the decision herself. It's her body."

"She doesn't have the right to take the life of a baby for her personal convenience," announced Vroom.

"A fetus is not a baby," declared Ezel.

"Will you guys please get off it," wailed Bill Silver. "Here we are again, way off the subject. Do you let your classes get away with such monkey business?"

Lucy Den Denker tried again. "What I meant to say was that Bob thought we had a duty, especially in government classes, to make sure that students understood the principles and practices of all the parties, and that we should do that fairly, objectively." She nodded her blonde head affirmatively as she talked. "But outside of school," she continued, "he thought it was a fine thing for a teacher to be politically active, you know, involved."

Now high-heeled, blue-suited principal Esther Carpenter, who had quietly joined the kletzing teachers in the faculty room, nodded in agreement. "That's what I think too, Lucy. It is not good teaching to inculcate a one-party line. We don't have a right to be highly partisan here at Omni, especially when our students are what you might call a . . . a captive audience. We've got to be even-handed. But I think it is good to explore an issue together and. . . ."

"Choose ye this day whom ye shall serve," intoned John Vroom militantly. "I'm tired of all the pussyfooting we do even when we know what is right and what is wrong."

"All right," said the principal firmly. "You tell me, John, what I am to say when an angry parent who is a Democrat comes to my office and tells me that he doesn't pay his child's tuition in order to have his child brainwashed by a Republican? Tell me?"

"Tell him," said the Bible teacher, with just a trace of a smile on his lips, "that his child is not being brainwashed. He is being educated."

Bill Silver jumped up and strode firmly toward the door.

"Time to get out of here," he announced.

CEJ

Teacher Image Questionnaire

How effective are the teacher image questionnaires since they are just student perceptions, and, with adolescents particularly, these feelings can change rapidly and be swayed easily?

The teacher image questionnaires can be very effective. Even though the adolescent feelings or opinions may fluctuate, the overall student perceptions will most likely trigger a fairly accurate, spontaneous response. Usually too, two or three classes will corroborate similar strengths and weaknesses. Rarely are all students "out to get" a teacher; and if that were true, the teacher needs greater input than the questionnaire can provide.

Personally, I find interesting comparisons from years past. I remember a time when I did not take these surveys seriously. I flip-pantly invented excuses for the weaknesses pinpointed: the same weaknesses persisted for several years. I was immersed in an apathetic attitude that had permeated almost the entire staff. When I finally did learn to value the student opinions and worked on the areas of concern, surprisingly I found improvement occurring in all categories.

As teachers, we shouldn't underestimate our students' input. Looking at our image in the mirror or even on a video-recorded tape will not give us the feelings and insights that the image questionnaire does. What we think about our attitudes and teaching methods isn't enough; what the students think about them, even if they're inaccurate, is essential. Their perceptions can be a hindrance to learning. If we're aware of them, we can make changes; and in that respect, the questionnaire becomes a tool for effective teaching.

Perhaps administration often sees the survey as an evaluation only, and then we as teachers tend to become defensive and concerned more about the results for the file in the office than for the

students in the classroom. Administrators need to monitor the outcome with encouragement and suggestions, not only to us as individual teachers, but also to the entire staff noting common strengths and weaknesses unique to our school systems.

Individually and collectively as Christian educators, we must recognize the image questionnaires as a means for potential professional growth.

Course Controversy

A course that I was requested to teach this year, has caused some controversy in several of our Christian schools. I've been well trained and am excited about the program but fear I might run into the same difficulty with parents. How can I prevent this?

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Because you were requested to teach this course, I assume support from administration and colleagues exists. Time allotment and student expectations are important issues with the entire staff. With their backing and your knowledge and confidence of the program, I recommend the immediate scheduling of a parent seminar. In light of the controversy elsewhere I would understand your hesitation to do so, but parents need to be informed of the content of the course. Most fears are allayed on both sides if adequate information is given and questions are answered and/or discussed. I advise familiarizing yourself with the current objections in order to be forearmed and contacting Christian educators successfully involved in the program. Parents also need to observe and appreciate your Christian perspective permeating the course materials and your willingness to continue open communication.

Regardless of the program, we should expect parents to show interest and concern about new

ideas and methods. Their children's education is the best investment they will ever make, and they want to protect it. So our job sometimes is to educate the parents and assure them we also want the best for their sons and daughters. I personally find that involvement with parents adds trust, shared commitment, and unified effort to the success of any program. We are in this business together.

You are encouraged to send questions on any topic related to the Christian teacher's role and response, regardless of grade level. The editor will solicit responses from additional sources when appropriate. Address questions to:

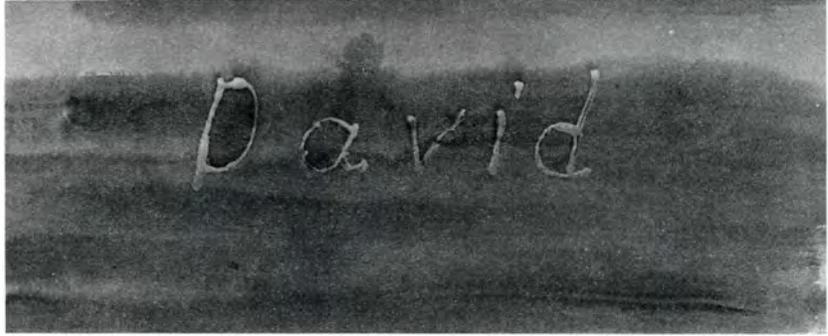
**Marlene Dorhout
CEJ Query Editor
2135 S. Pearl
Denver, CO 80210**

Confidentiality is assured.

BY MARLENE DORHOUT

Bible names bring pictures to mind. David and sheep, Daniel and the lions, Noah and the ark are a few examples. Names are very important to all of us, especially our own.

The name David is not only the name of a famous Bible king, but it is a common name today as well. It can also be the name of a Bible art and memory exercise. David said, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."



Materials:
 large manila paper
 pencils
 glue
 water cups
 water
 watercolors
 large brushes

Directions:

With a pencil, have the children print the name David or their own names on a piece of manila paper measuring 12" X 18". The letters should be large and placed in the center of the paper. Let them use a piece of scrap paper for practice. Then trace over the name with a fine but steady flow of glue.

Let the glue dry. Next, have them wash in shades of watercolor over the entire piece of paper. Always begin at the top with broad strokes and work toward the bottom. The glued letters will not absorb the paint and can still be read.

Teach the Twenty-third Psalm with this art project. It can help the children hide God's Word in their hearts.

Bible Names and Toothpick Art

BY JEAN RASMUSSEN

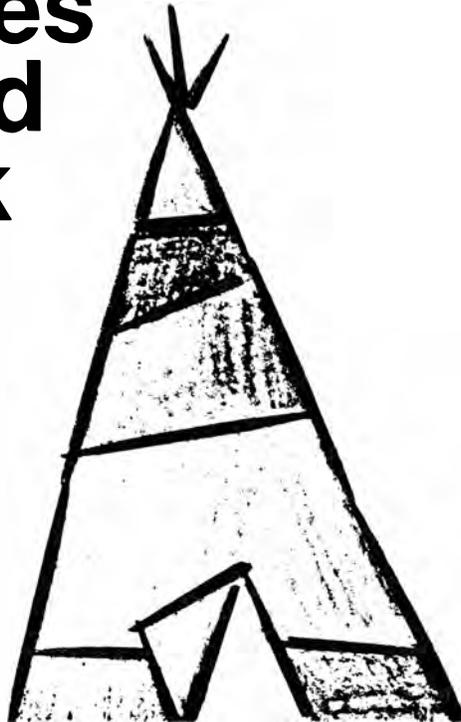
"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," Ephesians 5:20.

This verse reminds us of several holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. It can also bring to mind toothpick art, with harvest products for Thanksgiving, Christmas symbols, or a donkey for Palm Sunday just before Easter. Try these holiday art projects.

Materials:
 a pencil
 crayons
 construction paper
 colored toothpicks
 glue

Directions:

Two sheets of paper are needed: an 8" x 11" sheet of white paper will be used for the picture



should be done before the toothpicks are glued to the white paper.

The children can hang up their toothpick art and learn Ephesians 5:20 so it becomes a part of "Giving thanks always . . ." to the Lord. CEJ

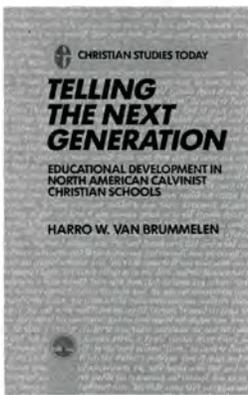
Jean Rasmussen resides in Wenonah, New Jersey.

and a 9" x 12" sheet of colored paper is needed for the background.

Start with a dozen colored toothpicks; break some for smaller sizes. Lay them out, as shown, to form the desired picture. If you need to, you can draw the figure on the white paper for very young children and then lay the toothpicks on top of the lines.

Any coloring of the figures





**TELLING THE NEXT GENERATION:
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN
NORTH AMERICAN CALVINIST
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**
by Harro Van Brummelen

Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1986.

Reviewed by George Harris
Professor of Classics, Calvin College,
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

In his book *Telling the Next Generation*, Harro Van Brummelen sets forth the results of many years of teaching, administration, study, and reflection, most of them spent in the Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia. The book, in substance a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, explores in detail the Calvinist Christian school movement in North America, together with its two nineteenth-century Dutch antecedents—Reveil (Awakening) and the Afscheiding (Secession). Van Brummelen views the history of Calvinist day schools as essentially a story of the conflict between two largely opposing educational visions.

What are these visions? At one pole is the isolationist vision, stemming from the Afscheiding, which sees Christ as opposed to culture; the goal of Christian education becomes the protection of covenant children from the surrounding society with its godless moral, social, and economic values. At the other pole is the "transformational" view, stemming from the Reveil in embryonic form. In this view, which regards Christ as the transformer of culture, the goal of Christian education becomes the shaping of covenant children to be active agents in that transformation according to Christian norms.

The debate was transplanted to North America via the successive waves of Dutch Calvinists who settled in Canada and the United States. Van Brummelen contends that many supporters of Christian education, school boards, and even educators frequently failed to catch the larger vision of Christian education. They all too often ignored fundamental questions of philosophy and direction and contented themselves with a Christian veneer to a basically secular educational program. He is no doubt accurate in documenting cases where social pressures rather than carefully reasoned educational principles structured the venture of Christian education. Van Brummelen serves the educational community well here, as he makes readily accessible an integrated account of such pedagogically unreflective communities.

That said, one feels compelled to raise certain questions about both the content and tone of some of the author's criticisms. It is troubling that Van Brummelen's critique of contributions to the debate about Christian educational philosophy is sometimes expressed in a tone bordering on arrogance and couched in language that descends to pejorative sloganizing. A few cases in point may be useful.

A good place to begin is the author's addictive use of the term *conservative* as a pejorative label. Is any good purpose served by prejudicially labelling as *conservative* almost anyone who raises questions about proposed changes or putative reforms that the author regards with favor? And let us grant that earlier advocates of Calvinistic education—Henry Zylstra and William H. Jellema receive prominent mention—may have been one-sided in their views of the proper content of education and unduly skeptical of new approaches and methodologies. Is it not, however, facile and reductionistic to dismiss their contributions as mere exercises in rationalism? There can hardly be a student who has passed through our colleges this generation who has not benefited in significant ways from the pedagogical reflections of these distinguished educators.

Consider, too, Van Brummelen's evaluation of N.H. Beversluis's monograph *Toward a Theology of Education*. Beversluis contends, the reader may recall, that it is possible to combine desirable emphases from several approaches to education into a program that gives adequate attention to the moral and creative, as well as intellectual, dimensions—a position at the very least not self-evidently mistaken. And his position surely deserves more than dismissal without argument as an exercise in "eclecticism." In fact, one may employ an *ad hominem* argument against the author, who is not wholly free from eclecticism himself. For he seeks to combine progressive education (which he criticizes very little, while harshly denouncing its critics in the Reformed community) with Calvinistic theology and the "transformationalist" view of the Christian cultural task—a concept borrowed from H. R. Niebuhr. One suspects that John Dewey might have been amused at the suggestion that his instrumentalist philosophy is readily compatible with a Christian anthropology.

The position of H.R. Niebuhr, which, as T. Plantinga has argued in a recent article, is in danger of becoming a new orthodoxy among us, requires special attention. Niebuhr's concept of "Christ-transforming culture" emanates from a theologian who could be called Reformed only by a very strained use of language. His theology, moreover, is laden with universalistic and triumphalistic overtones. Yet, this transformationalism, equated with the Kingdom vision of Abraham Kuyper's thought at numerous points, emerges as the key concept in Van Brummelen's book.

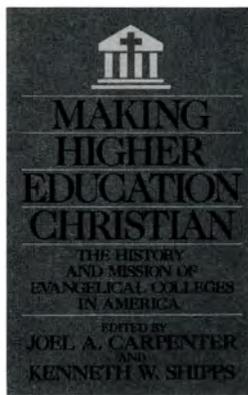
In contrast, the author seems remarkably uncritical in his warm commendations of the putative neo-Calvinism of N. Wolterstorff and A. De Graaff, especially for their advocacy of the "wholly different" idea that Christian schools must help the supporting community to be a "revolutionary vanguard, ushering in a new order," a state of affairs in which children become "witnesses and servants of a Christian vision of life in opposi-

tion to a Western culture," a mindset largely enslaved—so he contends—to the idea of economic progress. The question may well be asked whether Western culture, as the book suggests, is so corrupted and so devoid of marks of Christian influence that the only position open to the reflective Christian is total opposition.

In fairness to the author, it must be said that in the final chapter the transformationalist vision is stated with much greater modesty. Here Van Brummelen urges Kuyperian Calvinists to the task of "contribution" to modern culture as Christians, of "analyzing" modern social structures and phenomena, and "influencing" them on the basis of Christian norms. Here he states, too, with uncharacteristic mildness, that "new directions" must be introduced in such a way that "the supporting community understands them and is willing to walk along the path, rocky though it may be at times." When the social task of the Christian community is thus stated, and when Christian educators are urged zealously to equip their students to perform it, no serious Calvinist can do other than concur.

In summary, this book is a valuable, although not unflawed, contribution to the task of defining the goals and purposes of the Christian institutions that are so crucial to the case of Christ's Kingdom on earth. If it spurs continuing vigorous engagement in defining that task, it will have served a highly useful purpose.

BY STEVE J. VANDERWEELE



MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION CHRISTIAN: THE HISTORY AND MISSION OF EVANGELICAL COLLEGES IN AMERICA

by Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shippo, eds.

Christian University Press, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987, 304 pp., \$16.95, pb.

Reviewed by Rex M. Rogers
Associate Professor of Political Science,
Cedarville College, Cedarville, Ohio
45314.

Evangelical colleges in America are virtually invisible to the general public and the scholarly community. And what is perhaps more deflating, evangelical colleges are often unknown to evangelical Christians whose geography or theology place them outside of a given institution's traditional constituency. This book is a step toward redressing the undesirably low profile of evangelical colleges.

Despite the well-publicized cultural resurgence of evangelicalism, Christian higher education remains a largely unstudied enterprise. The editors have, therefore, compiled nineteen essays, most of which were first presented at a conference entitled "The Task of Evangelical Higher Education" and sponsored by the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois. A wide range of topics and perspectives is covered in one volume, providing the reader with a clear portrait of evangelical higher education.

This text is dedicated to the evangelical academy—the community of educators serving movements of Protestant orthodoxy and revivalism—as well as those in nonevangelical institutions. Nonevangelical readers will also find this work useful, and since its

primary focus is historical, this book may function as a fine introduction to evangelical higher education.

Three of the articles deserve to be highlighted. Leland Ryken's piece detailing reformation and puritan ideals of education is an excellent expression of the purpose of Christian education and is especially noteworthy for its articulation of the value and intellectual base of the liberal arts. Thomas Askew's essay traces stages of institutional development from an insular, church-focused beginning through corporate definition and consolidation and, finally, professionalization. Askew's thoughts synthesize a lifetime of study and exposure to Christian higher education with an evident understanding of organizational theory and sociological principles like bureaucratization. Those ministering in or interested in Bible colleges will find Virginia Lieson Brereton's chapter enjoyable and informative. Her piece salutes the institutional heritage many evangelical liberal arts colleges share.

One of the many virtues of this text is that it is honest. The weaknesses and mistakes of Christian higher education are so labeled and not euphemistically referred to as "concerns." This "warts and all" approach is refreshing and constructive. Another strength is the scholarly stature of many of the contributors: Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, Mark A. Noll, William C. Ringenberg, Timothy L. Smith, and Nicholas Wolterstorff are among them.

One weakness of the essays is their curious omission of any developed discussion of fundamentalist-oriented colleges. It is true that not all evangelicals are fundamentalists; nevertheless, fundamentalists are evangelicals whether or not they always admit it and, therefore, would seem to qualify for review in a text addressing evangelical higher education.

Even more perplexing is the penchant of several writers to make oblique references to fundamentalist colleges using terms like "exclusivistic" and "strident." Undoubtedly, fundamentalism as a movement at times suffers from these tendencies. But it is inexcus-

able for scholars to perpetuate tired old jingoisms better left to the popular press. Untested generalizations fail to recognize a number of significant sociological developments within fundamentalism.

Although some of the old ecclesiastical war horses and some younger misguided speakers still employ needlessly bellicose rhetoric, many others have long since learned important lessons of civility and tolerance, particularly among some of the colleges.

Editors Carpenter and Shipps have made a worthy contribution to evangelical college self-reflection and comparative analysis. Their text, together with William C. Ringenberg's 1984 book, *The Christian College*, represent the best recent thinking on Christian higher education. Both books were published under the same auspices, and one hopes this is a signal for similar studies yet to come. If so, Christian higher education is the beneficiary and cannot help improving upon an already laudable tradition.

Did you know?

The Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, offers a correspondence course in education theory entitled "Christian Schools: Their Bases, Goals, and Practices."

The materials include a 400-page anthology of important essays dealing with a Christian philosophy of education—a stellar achievement in itself. Dr. Harro Van Brummelen, the guiding spirit of the course, has prepared a syllabus to organize and illuminate the essays. Several pamphlets round out the supply of materials. The course is valuable not only for a newcomer to Christian pedagogical theory but also for anyone wishing to hone his Reformed sensitivities to Christian education.

For more information, write to Institute for Christian Studies, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 1R4.

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