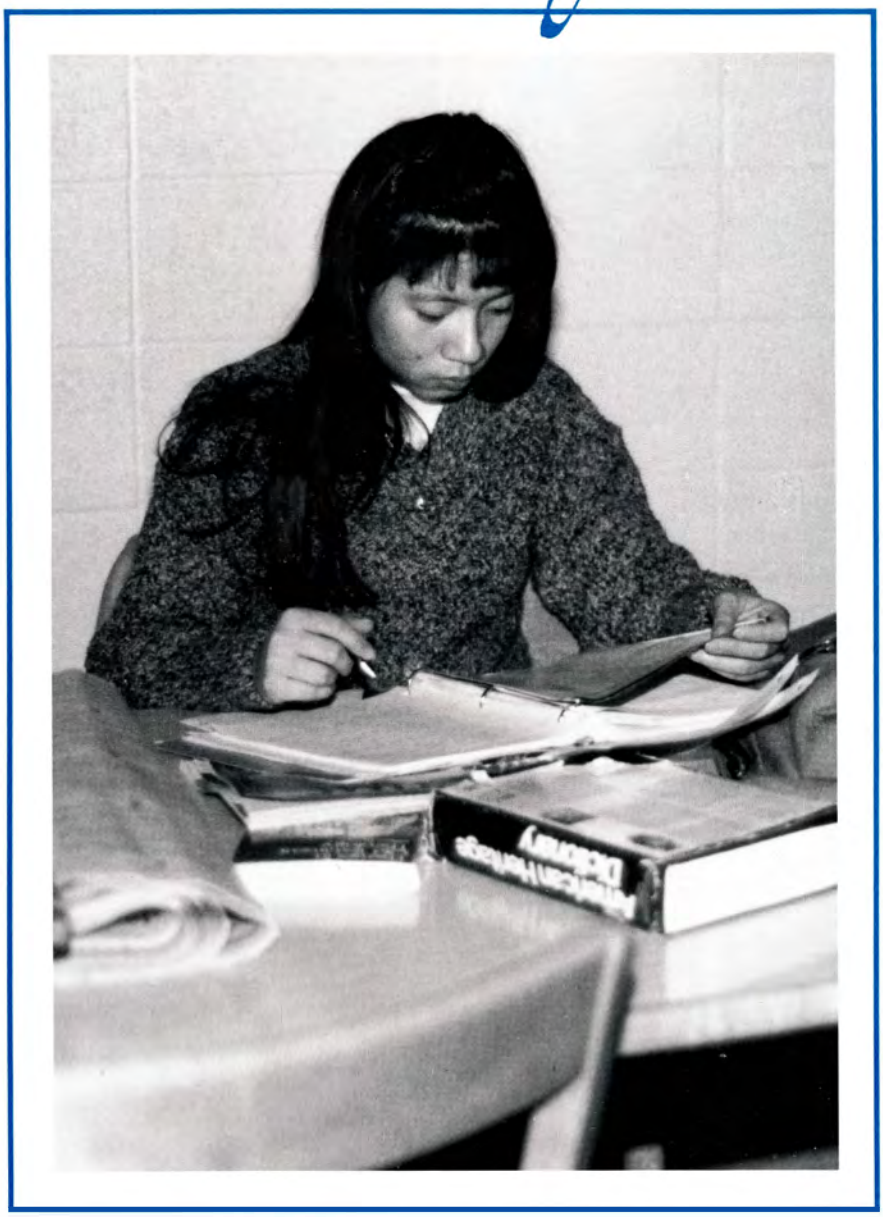
Christian Educators Journal

February/March 1990



Responsible Research

Teaching Plagiarism

Two published pastors recently admitted borrowing passages from other writers' books to write their own. One, who quoted almost verbatim, claimed he didn't know he was doing anything wrong.

The claim sounds familiar. Recently I met with each student in my writing classes to discuss the research they had done for a major paper. I found several examples of excellent students' research drafts copied almost verbatim from their resources. Although I had carefully reminded them in class that "borrowing" even an author's sentence structure is unacceptable, some of the most conscientious members of the class had done precisely that. They had simply inserted synonyms to replace a few of the authors' original terms and then claimed the sentences as their own.

I was not surprised; I have encountered this phenomenon every semester. Students do not see the fault or know it as plagiarism. Their response is nearly always the same: "Why can't we do that? That's how we've always done papers for class assignments."

Dishonesty, I believe, is the root of the problem. I am not talking now about those two preachers so much as about Christian school teachers who allow such practices to continue. We fool ourselves into thinking we have adequately taught our students when we have *told* them how to do research. Or we hand them a style book with documentation methods and even show them examples of how not to lift phrases. Even so, a spot check of notes against sources proves that well-meaning students continue to plagiarize. And teachers continue to reward them for unoriginality.

Traditionally we have forced the expressive language (James Britton's term) of first person out of formal papers and distanced students from their topics till they produce such cold language as "this researcher believes . . ." or "it is noted that. . . ." We overrate the final product and reward mechanically perfect papers with *A*'s even if the language is inflated and stuffy. The practice, I believe, fosters dishonesty.

I have seen papers of fifth graders, assigned so early to write on over-generalized topics (abortion, evolution, capital punishment), bound by the five-paragraph essay formula, complete with predictable conclusions gleaned from snatches of Scripture texts. Formulas may have a place, but only insofar as they guide, not bind, the creative originality of God's image in writers. Obviously, most fifth graders are too far removed from the issues to write anything but what they assume the teacher wants them to write.

Fifth graders can and should be nudged to think about abortion—and maybe evolution and capital punishment—but let them write in refreshing fifth-grade style, not encyclopedia language. Let them express the connections those issues have with their own lives and in their own words. Let eighth graders do so too, and high school juniors, and college freshmen—and their teachers.

Some people have developed the notion that stilted, distant language sounds intellectual. I suspect the opposite is true. Stilted language is a sham for wisdom. Stilted language reflects an insecurity to use precise language. Truly masterful writers write with integrity and conviction.

If we want our students to select and compose ideas authentically, then we must model and reinforce language that reflects conviction and integrity.

LVG

—by JOANNE WILSON

Want a Photographic Memory?

Did you ever experience an absence of film in your photographic memory? Perhaps you wanted a certain picture or article for a lesson. "Let's see now, where did I put it?" Frantically you shuffle through clippings and odd-sized pictures in a variety of drawers. Nine chances out of ten, you run across it after you have taught the lesson.

Clarence Benson, in *The Christian Teacher,* says the human mind does not remember half of what it sees or hears. What a waste of time and worthwhile material! Fortunately, there is hardly a problem without a solution. However, solutions involve actions. Your first action in producing film for that irresponsible memory is to take the word *film,* cross out the last letter, and replace it with an *e.*

A file is a place where material is arranged in order for future use. It is an improvement over a notebook because material can be taken out and returned easily. Tabs are in view for fast finding.

Study carefully the sample file illustration (see page 6). Notice that the left tabs are arranged alphabetically; the middle tabs are arranged alphabetically behind each left tab; the right hand tabs are arranged alphabetically behind each middle tab, except for the books of the Bible listed canonically. These could be alphabetized also. Notice that you can add any number of folders: flannelgraphs, promotion, correspondence, games, handcrafts, and others.

Determine subjects with which you want to begin. List these on paper. You can get ideas from the illustration.

At your favorite discount store purchase one-third cut, letter-size file folders and one package of unruled 3" x 5" cards. Office supply stores sell folders in boxes of one hundred with equal amounts of each tab division. School and church supply catalogs also generally list file folders.

Your next necessary item is a stiff cardboard box the width of a file folder. Later, you can purchase a two- or four-drawer file cabinet.

With the plan of your file arrangement, the folders, cards, and box at hand, you can start filing material for your memory.

Insert the material you want to keep into the large folders. List each tab title on a 3" x 5" card and write the title of the material followed by an *L* for large file. The small card file makes the large file function smoothly. Any article or picture should have at least two small cards with captions giving optional points of interest within the item. This file is also called a cross-reference file. This is the way it works:

Article: "The Greatest Bible of Them All" clipped from *Reader's Digest.* Underline the word *Bible* and print *L* (for large file) at the top of the article. Place the article in the Bible folder. On a card write *King James Version* in the upper right corner. Below this write the title of the article. Underline *Bible* in this entry and place an *L* at the right. On another card write *Translations* in the upper right corner and list the article as on the first card. Later when you want material on Bible translations, you will look up the card on translations; the material listed will be easily found.

The file of small cards can be used independently of the large file as well. To illustrate this let's pull the card "Animals" from the small file. The following is listed:

```
                                                    Animals

Animals in Action; Herbert S. Zim. 590 A.
Camel S
McClung, Robert S
"Condors Are Disappearing"  Animals L
Moose. Reader's Digest p. 118, Oct. '65
Encyclopedia of Bible Creatures; Christiensen & Jergensen
Tiger. Pix Animal L
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(continued on page 7)

What does this information tell me?

Item 1—This is book, author, library number. It can be found quickly when needed.

Item 2—This entry means look up "Camel" in the card file. Several cards are fastened together containing research on the camel.

Item 3—Look up "McClung" in card file. A list of this author's books on animals is given.

Item 4—Title of an article clipped from a magazine. It will be found in the animal folder in the large file.

Item 5—Article on moose located in *Reader's Digest* with page and date. This can be borrowed at the library.

Item 6—Title and author of a book advertised. It can be purchased or borrowed from the library.

Item 7—Picture of tiger in animal folder, large file.

HELPFUL HINTS

When out of left-tab folders, turn right-tab folders inside out.

When taking a folder or card from the file, pull up the folder back of it a little. You can then return the folder without searching.

Keep a few cards handy when reading a book or magazine. Many times you will run across something you want to "film" for your memory. If it is one or two sentences, write it on the card. If it is a page, record the book title with page number.

Addresses of your students are easily filed on small cards, along with birthday, hobby, family, favorite food, and so on.

Use cards for taking notes on lectures and sermons. File these by topic; cross-file by Bible verse and name of speaker.

Keep loose cards in a small box. Later purchase a small file drawer. Alphabetical guides are time-saving when the file exceeds one hundred cards.

When one folder gets too full, expand your file. Example: Make four folders (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) in place of the one folder "Gospels."

A well-arranged file is the closest most of us will come to a photographic memory. The results make the necessary work worthwhile.

Get busy on that file! **CEJ**

Joanne Wilson resides in McClure, Pennsylvania.

Gray-day Rain

Today when the rain began to fall,
It struck me,
Interrupted my paper-grading
With the melancholy repetition of my life,
Where I sit here
And they sit there
And we do our work
For God knows what.

How could the moment be special,
Be lightening, I wondered.

The rain tapped on, gray, relentless
Like the rhythm of a school day, a year, a life.

My momentary shock was one eyeball—
Blue and penetrating—
Watching me above a curled arm on a desk.
One student was shooting back an answer
through my entranced reverie—

You're someone
To look at, look to
Fill the post;
And that you must do
Because you can.

—by MARY DENGLER

—by JOAN M. DUNGEY

CREATIVE FREEDOM IMPROVES RESEARCH RESULTS

Whether I teach fourth grade, eighth grade, or high school, I teach the same thing: reading, writing, and research. Reading newspaper and magazine articles, books on classroom topics, and trade books develops reading skills; writing reports on curriculum requirements as well as creative paragraphs and stories builds writing proficiency; and using reference sources for information (the dictionary, thesaurus, almanac, *Readers' Guide*, and atlases) teaches life-long research skills.

Our approach to writing research reports is determined by our definition of teaching. Are we "to impart facts" or "to orchestrate learning"? Are students empty containers waiting to be filled by us, or are they created beings, made in the image of God, the Creator of imagination, and sharing with us in the learning experience?

I take the latter view. Students are persons with background experiences that can be shared and added to as we work through the curriculum together. I do not know everything; my students often ask questions I cannot answer (and, indeed, sometimes there are no answers to those questions). Together we search out the answers. The last time I said, "Maybe someone would like to write a report on that (black holes)," six hands went up. I began report-writing sooner that year than planned; the children were ready.

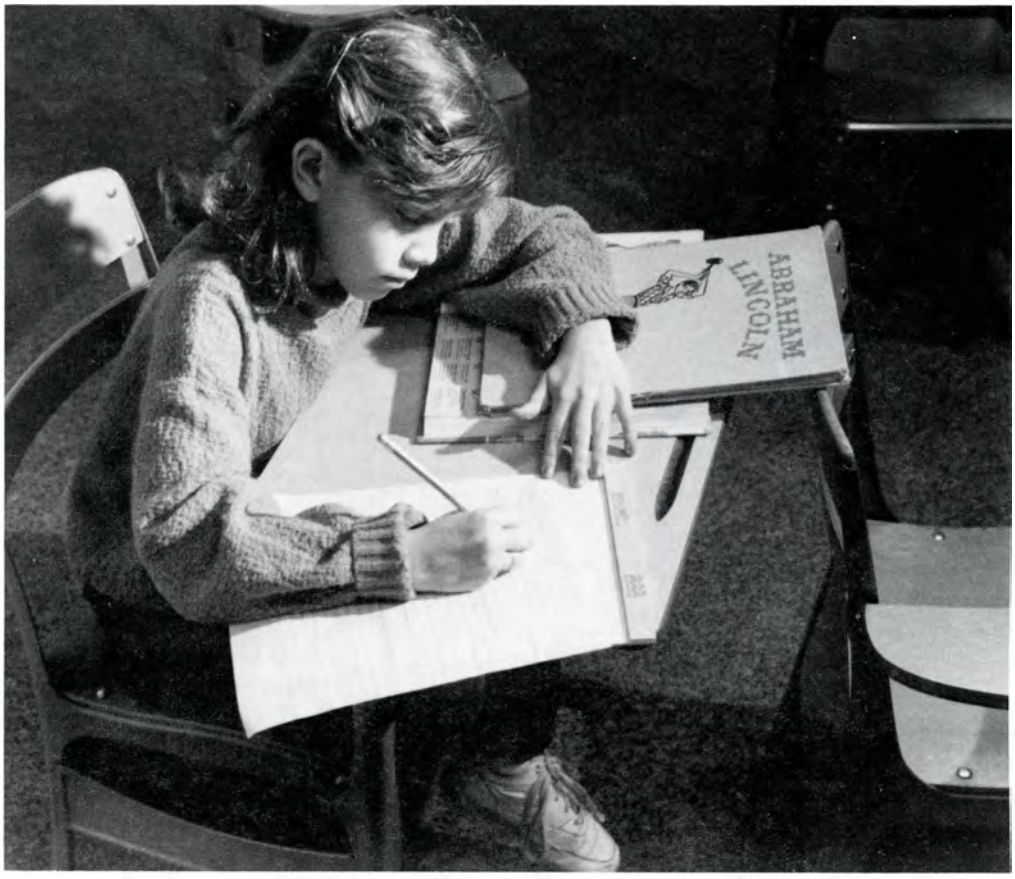
CHOICES

"Freedom bound" can mean that a child's freedom has been stifled; topics and requirements are so rigid that he or she feels no ownership in the product. But "freedom bound" can also mean a child's imagination has been allowed to explode and *go toward* freedom, with the product bound into a final creative format that the child has conceived.

By allowing children to choose their topic, their resources, and their formats, we allow them freedom.

By allowing children to choose their topic, their resources, and their formats, we allow them freedom. I may suggest topics for a subject area, but those are not limited. And why can't more than one student work on the same topic? How often a child's enthusiasm about a particular subject has been thwarted as the teacher says, "No, you can't do that; someone has already chosen it." Certainly there is enough information on a topic for more than one student to write about, and the sharing of information and resources only increases interest and knowledge.

As children begin thinking of their



topics, they ask questions, usually ones not answered in the textbook. They must go to more detailed sources and, in some cases, even original sources (e.g., historical tomes or up-to-date science journals). Sometimes they will not be able to find information. For example, there is not much information available for fourth graders on black holes; out of six students who began to study black holes, only one finished, and she was an advanced student. The others changed *on their own* to more suitable topics.

PLANNING FOR CHOICES

Structuring such a learning experience, in which students actively learn on their own individual levels without copying or freeloading, means developing guidelines. Although theoretically students could profitably research *any* topic, since in-depth research always leads to an understanding of how subjects ultimately interrelate, school and classroom restraints and the required scope and sequence mean that we need to select certain topics mandated for our grade level.

1. Plan the year's topics. Look at your curriculum guide and decide which topics would lend themselves well to research reports. You will need to take into account the level of your students and their abilities in deciding how many reports they will make and how long these can be. Leave yourself open to new ideas, for students may express interests sooner, or later, than you expect.

2. Plan to allow class time. Report writing should not be a homework project, for it is the *process* of writing and research that you are going to teach, and this will mean demonstration and guidance by you as students work. Furthermore, when the actual research occurs in the classroom, knowledge is shared. When students are excited about their findings, they naturally talk, and then the facts become common to all. Encourage your students to go to public libraries for books that they may take to school to use and share.

3. Gather reference materials. Fill your classroom with library books, magazines, atlases, almanacs, concordances, topical Bibles, and other reference books for student use. Assist children in finding suitable references in the school library, teaching them to use the Dewey Decimal System and the *Readers' Guide*. Encourage students to consider *all* aspects of a subject, to open their minds to the integration of the creation before narrowing down to specifics (Dungey 1987). Suggest interdisciplinary activities (see Steensma and Van Brummelen 1977).

4. Teach students how to take notes. Demonstrate how to take notes during a textbook assignment. Show how to abbreviate words and sentences; do not ask for complete sentences or formal outlines. Advanced high school chemistry students are affronted when I say not to use complete sentences, because of their past training in English classes. Yet, given the freedom to move *within* the topic, their output is exceptionally creative and complete.

Do require strict documentation of sources. I even frighten students with copyright laws to avoid plagiarism. Fourth graders can learn to put reference materials into their own words, and such a skill will help them throughout their school careers.

5. Show how to put notecards into a simple outline format. By sorting their notecards, students can jot down a simple, informal outline of single words or phrases. This outline should be flexible since, while writing, students may want to change or add material. Do not be too strict in requiring all notecards to be finished before writing begins and the outline to be formal and unchangeable. Professional writers continually add and change as they work.

6. Require several drafts. Students are to write paragraphs from the notecards, again paraphrasing; thus, two levels of writing away from the original sources help to ensure comprehension as well as originality. I have noticed that the more drafts I require, the better the reports get.

For each draft I write a "comment sheet," which is a listing of suggestions for change, including spelling, mechanical and grammar points, and content revisions. Since these are written individually, they can meet each student's needs: a student who writes well will have advanced comments while a beginning writer may still need help with capitalization. Since I do not mark on the papers directly, commenting does not take as much time as it may appear, and the burden of proofreading and correction falls on the student, where it should be. I grade on how well the composition is proofread and corrected. Peers can also successfully proofread and comment on writings.

7. Put the finished product in a creative form. The final format should be something a child can be proud of. Again, allow class time to make the book, poster, or model as well as to exchange books or projects. Such interaction builds self-confidence while students share the content material.

Students who are allowed to research topics of their choice, use reference books also of their choice, and put the report into a creative format not only receive the knowledge of the topic but also develop the self-satisfaction of knowing they have done a good job. To make this happen, give students the guidelines for good writing, and let them take the responsibility that such freedom calls for. **CEJ**

Joan Dungey teaches fourth grade at Hillel Academy in Dayton, Ohio.

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—by ELEANOR MILLS

FACT SHEETS

The Beginning of Paragraph Development

"How can my students write up the results of their research when they can't even write a paragraph?" Actually the social studies, science, or Bible class may provide a more natural setting to learn paragraph writing than the language arts class. There the students feel the need to communicate the findings of their research with others in the class, usually on a topic of their own choosing.

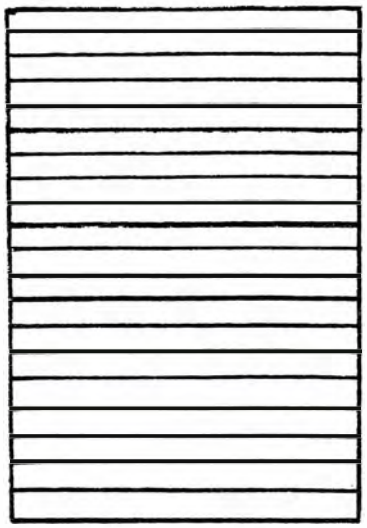
Research writing demands a knowledge of how paragraphs are constructed. As soon as students are ready to do research, they are developmentally able to use fact sheets. They just have to be able to read what they have written. A fact sheet is the child's version of the 3" x 5" card that an adult might use to take notes for a research paper. It is a sheet of 8" x 11" paper with lines drawn on it to provide spaces for recording facts. Children in primary grades may need to use the full width of the paper. For older students, the page should be divided in half. The spaces should be small enough to discourage recording whole sentences or more than one fact per space.

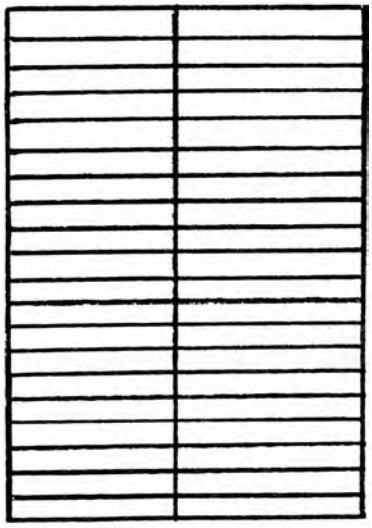
Students record facts they have obtained from reading, listening, interviewing, and observing. After a page or more of facts from various sources have been recorded, it is time to start building paragraphs. Students cut the fact sheet apart on the lines so that each fact can be handled separately. Which facts belong together? They sort and re-sort until they have achieved satisfactory categories for all of the facts.

They are now ready to develop each category into a paragraph. They read the four or five facts that belong in one category. Is there a fact that includes all the other facts? If so, it will be used in the topic sentence. If not, they need to design one. This fact belongs first or last in the paragraph. Students are reminded that the opening sentence signals to the reader what the passage will be about and sets the tone for the paragraph. The facts making up each category are glued, in correct order, onto a large sheet of paper, usually 11" x 17", so that the entire essay can be seen at a glance.

Now the actual paragraph writing begins. Students are encouraged to use variety in the sentences they write for each paragraph, while retaining unity of tense and of view. An introductory or concluding paragraph may need to be added.

A similar method for teaching paragraph writing as a whole-class activity is outlined in *Reading, Writing and Caring*, Cochrane et al., Whole Language Consultants Ltd., Winnipeg, 1984 (192-3). The authors state: "This procedure for learning to write a paragraph differs in some ways from the traditional procedure. It comes about as a result of having a lot of ideas that need organizing. The form of the parapraph is used to help convey the intended meaning." Since our students have been created with a variety of learning styles, it makes sense to include a "hands on" approach in organizing research for those who learn best by that method. **CEJ**





Eleanor Mills is resource specialist at Abbotsford Christian Schools in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

—by JEAN GUARINO

ANTIQUES

If your students view any event prior to the appearance of the Beatles as "ancient history" and, worse, fail to see the relevance of studying the past as a guide to understanding current events, it's time to start using your local historical society as an indispensable teaching aid.

Historical societies in most communities generally have more household artifacts, clothing, furniture, books, newspapers, and other relics of the past accumulated in storage than they could ever exhibit. And most would be delighted to share these treasures with local school children.

Most children are creatures of the present, both in the way they live their everyday lives and in their knowledge of the past. Many have no real idea that anyone ever lived differently, had a different culture, used different tools, or had different toys.

But by presenting them with a "treasure box" of artifacts from your local historical society that were used in your community from fifty to one hundred fifty years ago, you can challenge these false assumptions and get students to think about the way their grandparents and great-grandparents lived.

Perhaps you're fortunate enough to live in a community with a historical society that has already prepared a "traveling museum" for use in local classrooms. Last year, the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest, Illinois, culled several boxes of turn-of-the-century treasures from their attic storage space and sent Jan Dressel, one of their members and a former elementary school teacher, into private and public schools in these Chicago suburbs.

In the classroom, Jan—more commonly known as the "antique lady"—helps children understand the important aspects of an artifact. She encourages problem-solving techniques, rather than wild guesses, while they try to identify the object.

For example, when she presents a box with a sturdy wooden frame and sides and a door made of metal pierced like a pie-safe, she tells them: "Some important parts of this tool include the handle, which is made of metal with a wooden frame, and the door that opens. But what is really important is this metal case inside the box and what you put in it."

The children start thinking, and pretty soon the suggestions begin to fly. "We work backwards," says Jan. "We figure out why it's not a toaster or a birdfeeder or a lantern. When someone figures out that it's a heater, we discuss what sort of heater it might be."

The artifact turns out to be a portable carriage heater, in use between the 1860s and 1920s, both in open carriages and later in horseless carriages.

Jan says one of the reasons the children are so frequently stumped is that most of the items, such as a buttonhook or flat wooden butter ladles used to scoop butter out of churns, are no longer in use.

Most children even have trouble recognizing a wooden clothespin similar to the modern version, while a ruffle press, which looks a bit like a device for producing corrugated hamburgers, is totally beyond them. Housewives used to heat the press and insert flat pieces of material to create fluted ruffles. Now, of course, permanent press has eliminated the need for such a gadget.

BRING HISTORY TO LIFE

Historical societies in most communities generally have more household artifacts, clothing, furniture, books, newspapers, and other relics of the past accumulated in storage than they could ever exhibit. And most would be delighted to share these treasures with local school children.

Jean Guarino resides in Oak Park, Illinois.

Many of the gadgets Jan brings, such as a rug beater and scrub board, were used for a single task. By seeing a half dozen of them side by side, the children begin to understand the tremendous amount of work daily life entailed years ago and how fortunate they are to have convenient timesaving alternatives such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines.

A primitive scooter made from boards, a few pegs, and two hand carved wheels attest to the fact that at one time all toys were homemade. Instead of going to the nearest toy store for a birthday gift, fathers went out to the barn or tool shed and fashioned their own presents.

Jan feels that children benefit by exposure to this type of learning as well as their usual lessons. With the wisdom of long classroom experience, she adds, "It also appeals to them just because it's something different and a break in the usual classroom routine."

A "traveling museum" presentation need last no more than a half hour or forty-five minutes and is very effective in grades three through six. Jan has found that the older children have a little more sense of the past than the younger ones, though this presentation is effective within the entire elementary span. **CEJ**

—by MARK VAN ZANTEN

Where Have All the Heroes Gone?

Heroes and positive role models are vital to children, according to John Booy, administrator at the The Potter's House School. Yet, the clutter of modern-day media "heroes" (Hulk Hogan, Freddy Kreuger, Prince) vie for their attention and ardor. So, Booy came up with the idea of a month-long, school-wide unit on "Christian Heroes of the Faith." The staff, sensing the impact of such a unit, rallied behind the idea.

One of the goals of the staff was to challenge each student to consider striving to be a hero—a hero in God's eyes by being faithful to him in their Christian life. Another goal was to try to strike a balanced mix in the unit's content: historical figures, Bible characters, famous living role models, and "ordinary" people who are extraordinarily committed to serving each day in jobs that are not necessarily highly visible or glamorous.

Each teacher was given the freedom to choose specific heroes or heroines and to do an in-depth study of their lives. One class studied the life of Corrie tenBoom and her sister, Betsie, during WWII in the Netherlands. Another class studied the life of Mother Teresa and her compassionate ministry to lepers in Calcutta, India. The lives of Martin Luther, Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, Johanna Veenstra, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as well as modern heroes such as Joni Erickson-Tada, Tom Landry, and Dave Wilkerson, were examined, as were biblical heroes such as Joseph, David, Ruth, and Paul. In another class, each student read the biography of a famous Christian hero and then wrote up a report to present as a speech in front of the class.

Family Worship times for the month (half-hour periods three times a week during which the entire school body meets for Bible lessons, songs, and prayer) centered on heroes. Guest speakers included two mothers who volunteer at school as parent aides and who, through their examples and personal testimony, have shown God to be at work in their lives. The school secretary—who, despite very difficult life experiences, cheerfully works with children, staff, parents, and visitors—also shared her love for God during this time. And Booy, the administrator, told the students how a book he had read in third grade, a biography on the life and ministry of Johanna Veenstra, had made a lasting impression on the course of his own life and his commitment to Christ.

Another highlight was the second and third grade classes' production of the play *The Hiding Place*. For two performances their classroom was

Volunteer Dorothy Montaloo

Second and third graders acting in *The Hiding Place*

Volunteer Rosa Espindola

transformed into the tenBoom watch shop and home (the *Beje*) as more than one hundred ninety schoolmates and parents came to view the production. The children painted background sets and brought in authentic props from the WWII era.The play captured the indomitable spirit of Corrie and Betsie and their unflagging faith in God, even as they suffered in the most inhumane conditions. Their lives were proof that love can triumph over hate.

The play had a pronounced spiritual effect on the children in that room. They came to see the faithfulness and tenderness of God in a real and personal way. Parents were also affected by their children's study of Corrie and Betsie. The teachers were not immune from what was happening around them. They too experienced the excitement of examining closely these great heroes' lives and felt their spiritual lives being refreshed and renewed.

Throughout the month students and staff learned the difference between being important in the world's eyes and pleasing God. A common theme that did not go unnoticed by the children was the fact that many of these great heroes of faith accepted Christ when they were little and made a conscious decision to serve him then, even at their young age. The students also detected that these great people had an unwavering, single-minded faith in God and a servant's heart so that they were able to serve God in the most humbling of situations. Many of the children came to realize that by making a serious commitment to Christ now, they can already begin to make a difference for Christ in their families, their neighborhoods, and their world.

Mark Van Zanten teaches second and third grades at The Potter's House in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A verse that continually reminded us of God's interests and delights comes from I Samuel 16:7: "For the Lord sees not as man sees, for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." **CEJ**

—by STEFAN ULSTEIN

User-Friendly *Shakespeare*

A colleague who shares my love of Shakespeare's plays once complained that teaching them to high school students was like pulling teeth with no anesthetic. The payoff, he said—the students who grew to know and appreciate Shakespeare—was hardly worth the cost of enduring the complaints.

I can relate to his concern and to the moaning of his students. Shakespeare's writing never really came alive for me in high school. Scratchy old records played through a needle the size of a railroad spike, and filmstrips binged away as the teacher rolled back and forth trying to synchronize sound with blurred image on the screen. I thought William Shakespeare was a windy old geezer whose immortality rested on his ability to baffle and torture recalcitrant students.

The best way to learn Shakespeare is to see his plays performed.

The best way to learn Shakespeare is to see his plays performed. The Globe Theatre in London was the most dynamic and accessible performance medium of its day. Its gallery was filled with the high and the lowly, the princes and the paupers. Theater was to the Elizabethans as the movie is to modern North Americans. Anybody could go and enjoy it.

If the medium is at least *part* of the message, then it is important to expose kids to Shakespeare through the best possible medium. That probably means no videotaped versions of old black-and-white films, not for the first taste, anyway. Once students get a handle on Shakespeare's language and basic content, they'll be able to get past the limits of stage and screen and revel in the beauty of his poetry and the depth of his characters.

If the medium is at least *part* of the message, then it is important to expose kids to Shakespeare through the best possible medium.

I attended a press screening of a marvelous new British production of *Henry V* last fall. When I received notice of the screening I asked the distributor if I could take along a few students to determine the film's potential as a school-wide field trip subject. The answer was a resounding yes! My nine students, ranging from grades seven through twelve, loved it. The older students liked it more, but the seventh graders did well, too. They followed the plot, laughed at the jokes, and pondered the themes of loyalty and betrayal, guilt and innocence, triumph and defeat.

Kenneth Branagh, who has been touted as the next Olivier, raised ten million dollars to produce *Henry V* in England. The cast, which includes Derek Jacobi, Judi Dench, and Ian Holm, reads like a virtual *Who's Who* of British theater. Branagh wanted a film that would appeal to Shakespeare devotees as well as to "the folks who go to see *Crocodile Dundee*." To a large degree he has succeeded. But, unlike *Crocodile Dundee, Henry V* demands some background knowledge. A bit of familiarity with Shakespearian dialogue is helpful, too.

Henry V deals with such perplexing biblical themes as loyalty to the state versus conscience, the will of God as manifest in history, and the political consequences of church-state collusion, which makes it an excellent play for Christian school students. The overall look of the film is excellent, and the battle scenes are gripping. My students found the first part a bit slow,

A resolute Henry V, the King of England (center), leads England and his brothers, Gloucester and Bedford, into battle against France.

but that could have been prevented with some better preparation.

Having seen the film, which recently opened nationwide in the U.S., I will work with my colleagues to build a curriculum. My students told me what parts confused them and what parts they liked best. With that in mind I'll do plenty of prep work before taking the whole school to view it.

Preparation will consist of an explanation of the role of the chorus, the church-state issues, a map of England and France, and other foundational elements. We'll read selected passages, particularly from the play's beginning, so that the students start out understanding what's going on.

CEJ

Stefan Ulstein teaches at Bellevue Christian School in Bellevue, Washington.

If you would like a press kit and copies of our curriculum for Kenneth Branagh's Henry V, *just drop me a line and I'll mail them to you. Please enclose $2.00 to help pay for postage and photocopying. Stefan Ulstein, English chairperson, Bellevue Christian School, 1601 98 NE, Bellevue, WA 98004. Phone: 206-454-4028.*

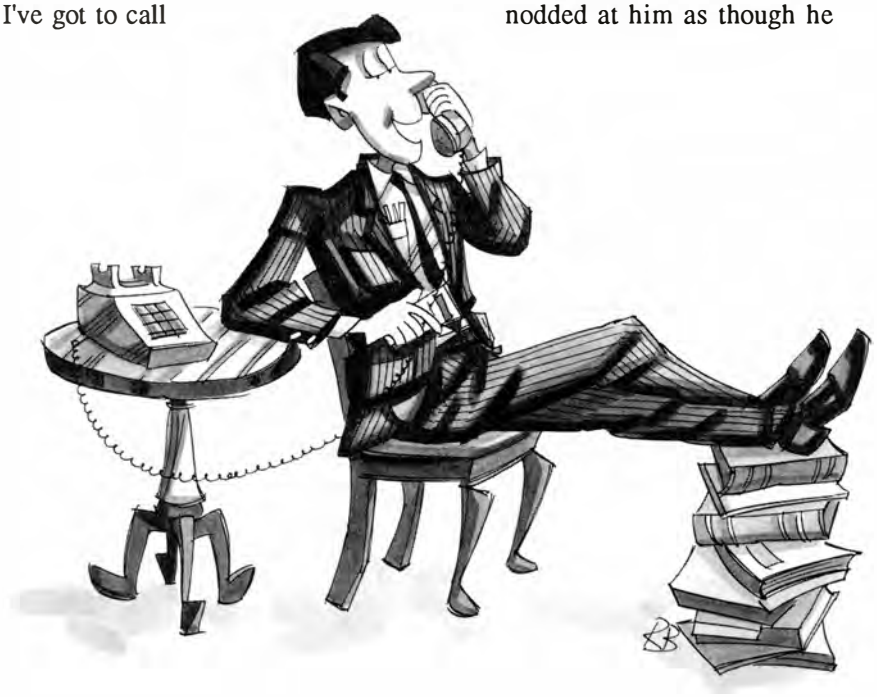
—by H. K. ZOEKLICHT

"STOCKS, BONDS,

Afternoon shadows lengthened in the Omni Christian High School faculty room as Friday waned into weekend. A fresh batch of coffee gurgled in the shiny aluminum pot. On the north side of the spacious room, comfortably relaxing on the overstuffed sofa, sat Lucy Den Denker and Ginny Traansma. They chatted amiably about plans for spring vacation.

As they talked they kept their eyes on the little drama unfolding on the far side of the room. There Bill Silver, fourteen-year veteran teacher of business and bookkeeping, was seated on the hard dining room chair near the telephone with his long legs crossed and his now cold cup of coffee untouched on the small table beside him. In his right hand Bill held his solar cell calculator, and in his left was the phone. He was engaged in a lengthy and earnest conversation.

Meanwhile, Steve Vander Prikkel, biology teacher at Omni, hovered near the phone, glancing alternately at Bill Silver and the wall clock with occasional quick reference to his own watch. His impatience was both audible and visible. He paced and grimaced and finally interrupted his colleague: "Bill, do you suppose you could get off the phone for just a minute? I've got to call the arboretum by three o'clock if I want to make a reservation for my field trip tomorrow." His irritation put an edge on his voice.



Bill Silver simply smiled at him and waved him off without even breaking the flow of his conversation. "Yes, Mrs. Wisniewski," he said smoothly and confidently, "I'd suggest you take fifty percent of your insurance money and invest it in our Multi-Fund Fixed Account. That would give you maximum safety of your principal and at the same time give you a guaranteed interest rate. Then with the other fifty percent I think we can be a little bolder in your situation. I have some good no-load stock funds that have averaged a fifteen-point-six percent gain over the last two years."

Vander Prikkel paced faster, noting anxiously that the clock read 3:05 p.m., and he thrust his watch in front of Silver's face and tapped it with his forefinger. But Silver simply nodded at him as though he sympathized with the situation but couldn't do much about it.

"I'd be happy to stop by next Tuesday," he said, "and I'll explain the options for you." He paused and added, "You know, Mrs. Wisniewski, I was so sorry to hear of your husband's passing. So unexpected. So unnecessary. So tragic. We must always be ready, huh? I'm really sorry, and I'll see you Tuesday afternoon at 3:30, as soon as I get out of school."

He bade his client goodbye, and without even looking up he began making some notes, saying pleasantly as he scribbled, "Phone's all yours, Steve, but make it brief, will you? I've a couple more calls to make." He was too late, however; the angry biology teacher had left the room.

Across the room Ginny leaned toward Lucy and said *sotto voce*, "Steve's steamed."

"I don't blame him," Lucy responded firmly. "That's been going on as long as I can remember. Bill monopolizes the faculty phone for his investment business, and there is nothing anyone can do about it. He's a pretty powerful guy around here, you know. Been here a long time. Got a lot of money."

"I know," said Ginny. "And the trouble is that half of the school board members buy investments from him. And so do lots of teachers. He's pretty good, I guess."

She sipped the fresh coffee and then looked up to see a newcomer in their space. Bill had finished his jotting and had sensed the clandestine comments.

"Did I hear my name taken in vain?" he smiled. "Could it be that I am somehow the subject of this conversation?" He looked from Ginny to Lucy and waited.

The embarrassed teachers

AND SCHOOL"

glanced uncomfortably at each other; then Lucy looked up at the towering Silver. "You did, and it could," she said a bit sheepishly.

"Well then," he said, "may I know what complimentary things you were saying about me?"

"You may," Lucy said archly. "And I'm sorry that they weren't complimentary, but I think they were truthful. We were talking about you, how you sometimes sort of monopolize the faculty phone for what is often your private business, uh, not related to school. That's what we were talking about." As Lucy talked, colleagues who had entered the faculty room for the end-of-day libation, soon sensing the edge on the conversation, had sidled closer.

"Now listen, Lucy," said a slightly flushed Silver, "what I do in my spare time is my business, nobody else's. Don't you agree?" He forced a smile, just a small, thin one.

Now Ginny Traansma, sensing the need to support her ally, looked up at Silver and pointed her forefinger at him. "Maybe that's the trouble, Bill. What you talk about all the time on the phone is business, and it isn't really your spare time. You're on that phone before school, at noon, after school, and, what's worse, right during school hours. You were on it just now during sixth hour."

She stared at him over her shivering coffee cup and added, "I think that was wrong of you to use the phone for your private business when Steve needed it for school business." She snapped her head for a clincher.

"Well, if Steve feels that way, let him say something to me."

"No," said the steamed music teacher, "it's my gripe too, and so I'm saying something to you. And I'll bet I speak for a lot of others, too."

"Wow!" came from a nettled Silver. "When you gals get your dander up, you really do a job on a guy, don't you?" He glanced uneasily at the group of listeners.

"Men get their dander up, too, Bill," joined Rick Cole. "And it's not just what you do when you tie up the phone like that for your business. It's partly what you don't do, if you know what I mean."

"I really don't know what you mean," shot back the aroused business teacher as he crumpled his disposable cup into a ball. "Why don't you tell me what you mean?" he challenged.

At this point Ren Abbott, football coach and physical education instructor, entered the conversation. "It's no secret what Rick means, Bill. I think a lot of us feel it, and probably we should have brought it up long ago. Rick means that sometimes you get so involved in selling investments that you just don't do your fair share of the work here, like lunchroom duty. Last Tuesday you were supposed to be in there and you weren't there—you were here, on that phone again. And you miss committee meetings and often don't do your share of committee work."

Lucy Den Denker rejoined the attack. "Just yesterday, Bill, you were bragging how you never grade any papers, how you give only tests that can be graded by students in class. You told us that, without blushing, right here in this room. I think we are talking about professionalism. We are supposed to be professional teachers. This is not just a job to squeeze between other jobs."

"Do I detect a note of jealousy in this room?" said Silver. "It's no secret that I have a good business, one which I've built up over the years, after a lot of hard work. And I'm proud of it. I help people. I help them when they're in trouble, like that woman I just talked to. Besides, my business experience helps me in my teaching, not to mention the fact that our salaries here at Omni aren't all that much, especially if we want to send our own kids to this high school."

"Ah, Bill," said Ren Abbott with a gentle smile and a wave of his hand, "we all know about low salaries and high tuitions. I wish I had some money to invest with you. I hear that you're good at it. But has it ever occurred to you that when board members see how you live and how much time you have for moonlighting, they may conclude that we don't need better salaries?

"We have no right to compromise our teaching effectiveness by carrying on private businesses that take us away from our teaching. We need time to prepare, to grade papers, to read books, to talk with each other. We can't carry on a private business right during school hours."

Lucy, now standing, looked directly at Bill Silver. She reached out and grasped him lightly on the biceps and said in softer tones, "Bill, you teased me yesterday because I spent a lot of time making new bulletin boards every month and finding things to make my room interesting and attractive. But don't you think that's part of our responsibility? It does take a lot of time to do what we have to do if we want to teach well. What have you got against that?" She smiled gently.

Bill Silver looked at Lucy and said simply, "I don't mind if you want to do all that. I was just teasing. But I don't go for that fancy stuff. I don't think it's necessary. I get my subject matter, which is business, into the minds of my students without any distractions, and I test them on it. I'm not an entertainer. I'm a teacher. When I began teaching fourteen years ago, we no-nonsense teachers had some respect."

As he spoke the phone rang. It was answered by Principal Liz Carpenter, who had just entered the faculty room to catch a ride with John Vroom. She listened to the caller and then said in a large voice, "Bill, it's for you. It's a Mrs. Wisniewski." As she waited for him, she looked puzzled and said, "Wisniewski? Do we have any Wisniewskis in this school?" **CEJ**

—by BARRY E. SHEALY

THE "TONGUES" OF MATHEMATICS

Any math teacher will recognize the problem of trying to make sense of "chicken-scratch" homework or test papers. Few have not tried to follow a student's line of reasoning with symbols, numbers, and figuring scattered haphazardly around the answer space. Another common encounter is the student who can work a problem on paper but cannot explain it. These and other problems often occur because we do not emphasize the communication of mathematics in our classes.

Communication and language skills are important to every area of knowledge. However, a compartmentalized curriculum often causes teachers to leave language instruction to the language arts department. My philosophy of education stresses that all knowledge is unified and that the integration of different subject matters is important. This area should be a natural point of integration. We help our students gain knowledge and learn how to use it. We should also help them communicate it.

A concerted effort should be made to develop the students' language skills in the context of mathematics. Students should know that mathematical symbols are a part of our language. The symbols represent words and sentences. Rules of grammar still apply. When a problem is solved, the solution must be communicated clearly and understandably to others. This skill is essential to those who will solve mathematical and scientific problems in the marketplace.

Certain expectations and objectives should be emphasized when problems are solved in writing. Legibility is indispensable in written communication. All thoughts and methods should be clearly and logically organized. A professor for whom I once worked required that mathematical sentences even be punctuated correctly. Of course, that stipulation only resulted in frustrating the students. Still, the student must understand that writing mathematics is communicating ideas to others. I like to ask students if their solution would make sense were someone else to read it aloud. Reading solutions aloud benefits the students' written and oral communication.

The student must understand that writing mathematics is communicating ideas to others.

A common practice for math exercises is board work. Simply writing on the board and then sitting down accomplishes little more toward improving the expression of math ideas, however, than pencil-and-paper work. When students are working problems on the board, try having them explain the solution to the class. When they are stumped by a problem, have them talk through the methods they are using. Ask the student why he or she chose that method. Encourage students to help each other. One skill my students seem to find difficult is describing what they are doing as they work on the board. Sending teams of two students to the board often takes away some of the anxiety.

Composition skills can be promoted in several ways. Have students explain the solution of a problem concisely and understandably in writing. Have them describe the general method of solving a type of problem. Some teachers have suggested requiring the students to keep journals relating their attitudes toward and understanding of the concepts taught. Enrichment activities could include biographical, historical, practical, or conceptual reports related to assignments. These opportunities may be used to develop the students' appreciation of mathematics. Also, students may develop verbal skills through presenting reports orally.

Another skill that needs to be developed in the math classroom is listening. Students should be able to respond to straightforward questions and problems given orally. Oral quizzes used wisely may also be effective means in this area.

As responsible Christian teachers, we are called to be examples. Our use of language needs to be a constant concern. Handouts should be legible with clear instructions. Tests should be unambiguous and well-organized.

As responsible Christian teachers, we are called to be examples. Our use of language needs to be a constant concern.

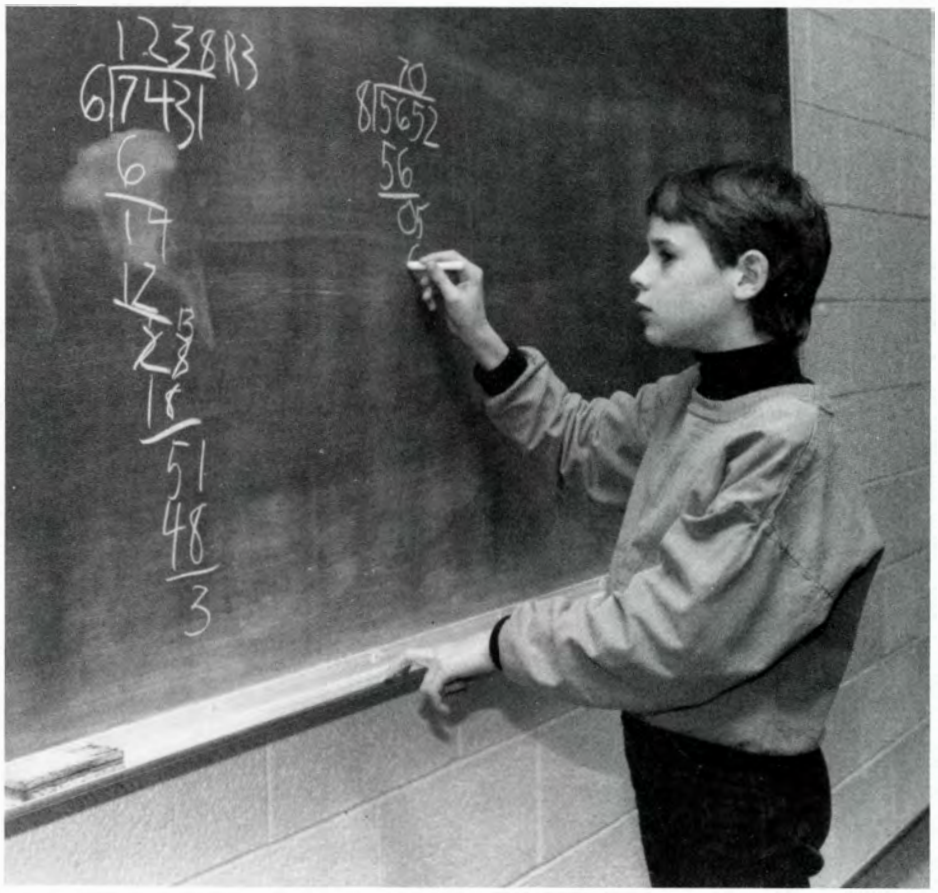
Think about what you will write on the board or overhead. Is it legible? Does it contain complete thoughts? Does it make sense? Are your notes too fragmented or disorganized to convey clear, useful information for a student trying to copy them for later study?

Someone once said that a math teacher is someone who says one thing, writes something else, and means something completely different. I hope that is only a joke. Let's be professional!

In business, engineering, and many other professions people must be able to explain mathematical problems to others. Their communication must be clear and concise. Thus, language skills need to be emphasized everywhere that mathematics is taught. As math teachers we must support language arts teachers by showing our students that these skills are important.

Although integration to many of us just means swelling the curriculum of an already full school year, it can be a useful tool, guiding every aspect of what we currently do. It can actually smooth rough spots—for teachers and students—on the paths linking learning to life. **CEJ**

Barry E. Shealy is at DeKalb Christian Academy in Atlanta, Georgia.



A Child Again

My hand clutched His,
And there I was—
A child again—
Innocent, pure, yielding,
Open trusting.

I squirmed because the layers of living
Had been suddenly peeled back,
I was exposed—vulnerable—
No ego playing tricks—
No preconceived Me—
Just Me—a small child again.

I waited.
He waited.
All the while He bathed me in the pureness
of His being,
Gently assuring me that it was all right
To relax—let go—and that I'd be safe.

I fought the child for awhile,
Uncomfortable in this newness.
I could sense the love and patience.
His total understanding bathed
me with a warm spiritual spray.
Slowly, I relaxed my hand in His,
Knowing it was all right
to be a child again!

—by LENORE TURKELTAUB

—by CAROL M. REGTS

ON GROWING UP

Jack Buursma, a burly, rambunctious eighth grader, tromped into the kitchen and slammed the door behind him. He ignored his mother standing at the counter tossing chicken in a savory mix until he had grabbed a soda, plopped into a chair, and stuffed two peanut butter cookies into his mouth. Managing to chew and talk at the same time, he blurted, "Mom, remember all that stuff I was talking to you about last summer?" About me wondering what's going on in my head?"

Uncertain of where this was leading, Mrs. Buursma nodded agreement and hoped she would know how to respond to whatever was coming this time. For some unknown reason, Jack had periodically been surprising her with insightful reflections on peer pressure, on how the changes in his body also seemed to change his feelings, on how his priorities kept shifting day to day. She counted her blessings that this son, who had never been introspective but who was the image of a macho athlete, felt safe enough to share such supposedly unmasculine thoughts with her. Late at night, when she pondered their strange conversations, she could not pinpoint anything special she had done to encourage their rapport.

Breathing a quick prayer for wisdom—it was becoming a habit—she wiped the chicken fat off of her fingers and drew a chair from the table.

"Well, today in school I learned why all this is happening to me," Jack sputtered through cookie crumbs.

Thinking he was headed for an explanation quoted from his science teacher, Mrs. Buursma hid a smile and waited for words such as *puberty*, *hormones*, and perhaps even *sex*. She waited in vain.

Jack once again managed to astonish his mother. "I think it's because I'm growing up . . . spiritually."

We parents and teachers of adolescents know the biological facts, and, through many tests of fire, we increasingly understand the emotional confusion. We see and worry about the social interaction—or lack of it. We read articles by popular psychologists to gain insight into these areas, looking for reasons or patterns behind the sometimes puzzling behavior and the unpredictable mood swings. Though it is important for us as well as our teenagers to be informed, we need to ask how informed we are about the spiritual growing pains that intermingle with all the other changes.

Jack, a relatively normal thirteen-year-old boy, astounds us with his wisdom, with his perceptiveness. He also challenges us to make the most of each opportunity so that we help teenagers like Jack recognize and define the spiritual growth of which they are increasingly capable. This does not mean teenagers will show dramatic changes in behavior or attitude or even moodiness. In fact, in the next breath, Jack was unconcernedly chattering about soccer practice and about the dippy girls in his class. Nonetheless, Jack has gained an additional measure of perspective he can use to evaluate and understand the often rocky experiences of his teenage years. Because of a brief remark in a class in his Christian school and because of an open forum in his Christian home, Jack has come to realize a supreme dimension in his life.

Jack took a moment to reflect. How often do we ourselves stop to examine our own lives for spiritual growing pains, let alone encourage our teens to do so? What a challenge it is to help them learn to say, "I think this is happening because I'm growing up . . . spiritually." **CEJ**

We are pleased to introduce Carol M. Regts as our new Thinking Thirteen editor. Formerly a junior high teacher at Lynden Christian Junior High in Lynden, Washington, Carol recently completed a master's degree at the University of New Hampshire. She now teaches language arts at Eastern Christian Middle School in Prospect Park, New Jersey.

—by AGNES C. FISHER

A Quiet Thanks to a Hollywood Character

I have just seen *Dead Poets Society* for the second time. It affected me much more this time than the first. In fact, I have not been able to get certain scenes and faces out of my mind. This brings me to wonder why, of course.

My friend, who accompanied me this last viewing, said, "Since you are an English teacher, this movie must really mean something to you." Perhaps that is the clue. I am an English teacher, and Mr. Keating is everything I could possibly hope to be. He loves his students, but more than that, he understands them and wants them to reach beyond themselves to their very highest potential and make a mark on the world while they are still in it. I do not wish to write a review of an excellent movie, but the movie does force me to explore my own motives and hopes for the classroom.

There was a time when I told my students that the phrase *carpe diem* was not exactly a Christian's proper philosophy because it also included the idea that one must "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Living for one's own enjoyment is not the Christian's goal, nor does it prove to be satisfactory for very long.

But now, "Seize the day" has taken on a whole new meaning. It can be applied not only to a worldly, selfish view but also to a very Christian view. That an actor such as Robin Williams could have shown me so, or that Hollywood could have fostered the awareness at all, is reason enough to fill even the greatest cynic with a new hope. It makes me want to emit my own "barbaric yawp" in a resounding yes! Yes, this is what teaching is all about—inspiring young people to be all that they can be. It is about sending them out as thinkers and questioners and creators and influencers. It is about helping them see themselves as God sees them, as his creatures with a special potential, each his own, to help win the victory of redemption in every sphere of life. Ah, God does use the world to glorify himself and even to bring forth a part of his message.

After more than twenty years of the classroom, I sometimes think that it is time for something else. I have even gone so far as to think that I might be suited to housekeeping in the full-time sense. But then I look at my classroom and compare it with my house. I smell the smell of chalk, polished floors, books, and probably some teenage body odor stuck permanently in the walls, and I know that this is where I want to be.

I struggle often with the *why* of the knowledge and have come up with varying answers. None of them are very good. They run something like "Teaching is a noble profession of sacrifice and service," but these are superficially profound and overused.

The simple answer is best, as usual, and it was said by the character John Keating: "I'm here because I like teaching." And that is it. It is a calling; it is a gift. But more important than anything else, a teacher likes teaching, or that person had better not do it.

Thanks, John Keating, for showing me the simple truth again. **CEJ**

Agnes C. Fisher serves as CEJ regional editor and teaches English at Eastern Christian High School in Paterson, New Jersey.

Carpe Diem

No Longer

"Get tough!" That's the advice many people have for teachers today. They argue that "soft" teachers have led to the predicament they're in. If teachers would just stop babying students, stop lowering standards, discontinue listening to excuses and calling them reasons—just cut it out (whatever we *are* doing) and get a little tougher (what we're *not* doing)—things would be peachy.

But teachers discover early that no one knows more about this "getting tough" issue than we do, and noting this frightening truth, we begin to scout around. We observe other teachers, mostly those for whom we have either a great deal of respect or none at all, assuming that at the very least we'll see exactly what to do or not to do. We experiment on our students rather timidly at first. If our attempt does not result in a fatality, the next time we try to be a little creative with our efforts. If it blows up in our faces, then we mark that one "Never again!" and pray desperately that no one saw what happened.

Time passes, and we become a little confident of our ability to be tough. We might even see a reputation begin to sprout, and it's the good kind. Kids say things like "You can't mess around in her class!" and brag when they've finally passed. Advice comes quickly to our lips. Soon other crises clamor for attention and fill our minds until, unexpectedly, our rose-colored glasses are snatched away, and we stare into the bare truth of what we have become and flinch at what stares back.

I am a tough teacher. Ask any of my students, especially the upper grade kids, and they'll tell you. I don't accept excuses, and when I say something about classroom demeanor and procedure, that is exactly what I mean.

—by NANCY WADE ZAPPULLA

JOHN WAYNE

And I like it that way. I enjoy the role that I have so carefully cultivated, and it is a source of real pride for me. Did you catch that last noun? The word was *pride,* and do you remember the quote about something going before a fall? It was pride, and it was mine that recently came crashing down.

I was aglow with all of that uncompromising authority and even smiled when the bell rang to rescue them. Truly, it was a moment of glory.

On that particular day I had been sarcastically explicit about what I expected regarding deadlines and quality of work to be turned in. No excuses of any kind would be accepted, unless there was blood involved. I gave a stirring speech, and the students were properly cowed. I was aglow with all of that uncompromising authority and even smiled when the bell rang to rescue them. Truly, it was a moment of glory.

Within a few seconds I literally ran into my principal at the classroom door. We extricated ourselves from the collision, and then he demolished me and my pride and my rose-colored spectacles.

"Mrs. Zappulla, I was just coming by to pick up that report—you know, the one that is due today?"

Amidst the tumult of the ensuing psychological crash, I heard myself ask for clemency and wondered why this moment was lasting so eternally long. He allowed me another day, and I stumbled away down the hall, hearing only the harsh words I had so recently hurled at my students.

That scene played itself over and over and over in my head for several days, and I couldn't dislodge it. I, who was so proud of being so strict, had been placed on the other side of the desk. All of my students' "excuses" suddenly seemed more plausible. I could visualize their faces in an endless parade as they told me why they needed more time, and I heard my smirky answers. Then, crowding into my view would be the picture of my encounter with my principal, and I'd see myself ask for an extension. It not only humbled me; it began haunting me. I'd see a particular child in the hall, remember his request, and relive my failure all over again. I had to do something, short of changing my career, to interrupt this cycle.

I would like to report that a miraculous intervention has caused me to abandon my quest for quintessential toughness. This, unfortunately, is not the case. What actually took place was no less a miracle, yet it bore no divine trappings—at least, none that you might immediately identify as supernatural.

Every time a student came to my desk or stopped me in the hall with a lengthy explanation regarding a derelict assignment, I began to see two images.

Now that I've thrown that macho mask away, I'm free to concentrate on being an authentic teacher.

Not only did I see that child's face, I also saw mine. Not only did I hear that child's voice, I could also hear mine. Most important, however, the only reply I would then hear would be that of my gracious principal, and then I would find myself extending that same grace of which I had partaken. Somewhere I had lost my ability to be so merciless.

Oh, my students still have assignments, and they still face deadlines. I have no difficulties speaking sternly to folks caught in some trespass, and I am occasionally angry. But that cloak of intolerance that I had been forced to shed had been, in truth, a heavy burden disguised as pleasure. It had occupied copious amounts of energy to maintain and perpetuate, and all the time I had thought it looked so good on me. But, like my friend the Emperor, I was the only one who thought so. No one else could admire my garment of inflexibility. All that could really be seen was that large measure of effort and time being spent on me. And now that I've thrown that macho mask away, I'm free to concentrate on being an authentic teacher rather than some sort of educational prize fighter.

"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." **CEJ**

Nancy Wade Zappulla teaches English and Bible at Atlantic Shores Christian School in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

—by EVELYN HOELDTKE

Put ZING into Memorization

Many people wish they had learned more Bible verses in their youth when it was easier and they had more time. To implant biblical concepts into eager minds is to begin growth that will produce lifetime fruit—fruit of a polished character, fruit of godly wisdom and discretion applied to decision making.

King David did not pray about producing fruit but of storing treasures. He told God, "Thy word I have treasured in my heart (mind), that I may not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11 NIV).

Sometimes, as a church school teacher, I have felt discouraged with results after I taught a Bible verse. Now I suspect that poor results were due to my *exposing* a verse only, not *teaching* it.

As teachers we may increase our students' learning while having fun. I now use four different modes of teaching to put zing into the learning process. Employing many methods allows freshness and variety. Besides, each child responds differently to each technique, according to giftedness and adaptability.

Teaching of Scripture texts requires at least four initial steps: Have a child read the passage from the Bible. Explain each unfamiliar word. Talk about the meaning of the verse. Urge students to tell how the verse's message is important to them.

Parents and teachers soon learn that the extra work pays off. Teaching God's Word successfully encourages a child to grow into a right-living adult. Planting the seed amounts to special privilege. **CEJ**

Evelyn Hoeldtke, who has taught in both public and Christian schools, has written plays, stories, and articles for publication. She resides in Hudson, Florida.

I. PICTURE MODE

"A picture is worth a thousand words," we have heard. Pictures and words give ideas. Symbols and original drawings convey meaning and give variety to the appearance. Paper symbols and words can be pinned to bulletin boards, or backed with pieces of flannel or adhering paper for a flannelboard.

Often *you* may be symbolized with a capital *U*. Capital *R* may stand for *are*. *Shall* may be a sea-shell picture. A bumblebee in flight adds color for *be*. The number *4* symbolizes *for*.

II. ACT-IT-OUT MODE

This mode works best when the verse contains action words such as *walk, listen, cast, pray, turn, discipline,* and *commit*.

Furthermore, action releases energy during a one-hour class period. Have children stand behind their chairs and repeat after you:

Proverbs 3:5–6 Hold up three fingers on one hand for chapter number. On other hand hold up five fingers; add one on first hand.

Trust in Hold hands in front with palms up.

the Lord Point to heaven.

with all Form circle with arms and hands.

your heart Lay hand on heart.

and lean Lean hands on top of shoulders.

not on your own understanding. Turn head from side to side.

In all your ways Form same arm circle for *all.*

acknowledge him Place hand on head.

and he will make your paths straight. Walk five steps straight away and back.

In the teaching of these verses keep in mind that to understand, to acknowledge, and to trust all go together. First, we trust. Then we begin to understand. Finally, we acknowledge what we believe.

III. CHANT MODE

This is a good way to teach the beatitudes and many psalms. Use tone repetition for several syllables or phrases according to meaning. Or change tone at the first punctuation mark.

By tones, set a mood to emphasize the passage's meaning. Divide a group into leading cantors and responding cantors. In Matthew 5:4–7 proceed with the sing-song tones after everyone repeats the reference:

Leaders: Blessed are those who mourn
Respondants: for they will be comforted.
Leaders: Blessed are the meek
Respondants: for they will inherit the earth.
Leaders: Blessed are those who hunger
Respondants: and thirst for righteousness,
Unison: for they will be filled.
(Then reverse lines for each group and repeat verses.)

IV. REWARD MODE

Show students the "carrot," a star or other sticker for single verses and a larger reward for a series. General procedure:

1. Assign the Bible verses for one month to be studied at home.
2. State the rules.
3. Give a star each week for verse memorized.
4. Allow child to place star on the attendance chart.
5. Give the larger reward on the last day of the month for the series repeated well.

CEJ ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHICAGO CONFERENCE

The "Chicago Conference," a grass-roots forum on Christian schooling, will again convene in June 1990 for the purpose of discussing and applying the *12 Affirmations* published by the Conference.

Place: Trinity Christian College,
Palos Heights, Illinois
Date: June 27, 28, 29
For more information, write to:
GLPSA
P.O. Box A-3220
Chicago, IL 60690-3220

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN WRITERS CONFERENCE

The Calvin College department of English announces a conference on "Contemporary Christian Writers in Community," April 19-21, 1990, on its campus.

The focus will be on creative writings of authors who, however nonsectarian their intentions and audiences, are identified as participating in or originating from a religious community.

Pre-registration: $35; on-site registration: $40; single session: $7.50. Contact Henry Baron, c/o The Department of English, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

—by GRACE WESTERHOF

VERN BOERMAN
A WHIRLWIND OF FAITH

"Predictable in his unpredictability" is a phrase that probably best describes Boerman's classroom style.

Vern Boerman is a whirlwind, impossible not to notice. It is not a self-seeking attention, however, but an excitement for the challenge of life and learning that accompanies Vern. Such is the observation of Roger Wiers, a fellow teacher at Illiana Christian High in Lansing, Illinois, where Vern has taught sequences of English and Bible for the past twenty-nine years.

A graduate of Holland (Michigan) Christian High School, Calvin College, and the University of Michigan with an M.A. in English, Vern married Nancy Vanderzyden of Cleveland, Ohio. Together they have nurtured six children, five of whom are active Christian educators, as are three sons-in-law.

Vern owes his career choice in part to the advice of a high school teacher who nudged him toward the teaching profession. His admiration for certain college professors fertilized his field of interest, and—to slightly construe the Bible's analogy—"God gave the increase."

In October 1953, Vern started his career at Illiana as an eight-week substitute. During the next few years he taught at Western Michigan Christian High in Muskegon, and then he taught for a year at North Muskegon High School. He returned to Illiana in the fall of 1960.

Some fond memories of his first decade on the Illiana faculty include an all-school enthusiasm over fine arts that resulted in highly successful productions of some Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

Still eager to discover open doors

All the while Vern laughs, talks, analyzes, chides, quizzes, and spends out-of-pocket money for coffee and doughnuts.

and give leadership in student service projects, Vern warmly recalls the early seventies when some of the projects were "quite massive and exciting all-school ventures" with high goals: goats and cows for Korea; a new bus for a special service in DesPlaines, Illinois; and two vehicles for the mission outreach in Cary, Mississippi.

A former *CEJ* board member, Vern used to type early issues of *CEJ* on his home typewriter and, with his wife's help, paste up the pages on his kitchen table before rushing them off to the printer.

"Predictable in his unpredictability" is a phrase that probably best describes Boerman's classroom style. Whether standing on the desk in his brown corduroy pants, tan sweater, and brown-striped tie or throwing a chair against the wall or insisting on his "share or shut" method of communication, he challenges his students to live the Christian lifestyle twenty-four hours a day. He abhors rude behavior, sleeping in class, gum snapping, smoking, and habitual absenteeism. And Vern practices what he preaches, standing up for the truth but demonstrating love and compassion for those who are still growing in the faith or who have differing opinions.

What does Vern do when he is not at school? His whirlwind pace does not slow down as he changes direction to serve several other sets of God's children.

He has been an elder at Peace Christian Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois, where he and Nancy are charter members. He spearheaded a citizens' group that successfully insisted that the classical music station WEFM in Chicago not change to a rock format. And for the last thirteen years Vern has shown movies each week to local Holland Home residents (senior citizens).

In the summer Vern heads a painting crew along with his head-shaking partner Jim Groen, and they have undertaken projects "where angels fear to tread," such as restoring the Lansing airport hangar, redecorating Illiana Christian High, and shaping up Village Woods, another senior citizen complex. All the while Vern laughs, talks, analyzes, chides, quizzes, and spends out-of-pocket money for coffee and doughnuts.

Adventurous but frugal enough to hunt out good deals, Vern and his wife have traveled to England, New Zealand, Japan, and Alaska to visit their children.

It is impossible to capture Vern Boerman on a page of this journal or to truly assess his impact on his present students and alumni. But no one who ever sat at his feet (sometimes literally) could have missed his aim in Christian education: to make students effective communicators and discerning consumers, and to help them discover the joy of Christian service. **CEJ**

Grace Westerhof teaches at Illiana Christian High School in Lansing, Illinois. She is a CEJ *board member.*

I've been a faculty member of several different schools and am confused about the role of the secretary. In some schools, he or she primarily serves the principal, in others the faculty and students as well. Sometimes confidential information is shared with the secretary, and other times withheld. Often no detailed job description is available. How do secretaries see their role?

(I've often marvelled at the composure and sense of humor maintained by the secretary as the office is jammed with students, faculty members, and principal all at once. Tactfully handling a mixture of clout, selfish demands, and necessary forms requires skill and patience.

For a greater appreciation of the secretary's role and a closer, more realistic approach to this topic, I've referred this question to MaryAnn Van Wyk who has served as secretary for the past ten years at the Denver Christian Schools.)

The school secretary's responsibilities are so diverse, much more so than those of the business-world office worker. The day is often filled with interruptions that have absolutely nothing to do with the traditional secretarial duties: typing, filing, answering telephones, and greeting visitors. A Christian school secretary must be friend, mother, mediator, receptionist, nurse, and advisor to students; typist, coordinator, and master organizer to the principal; message runner and source of information to parents; and support person to the teachers and volunteers.

In addition to getting messages to students about after-school appointments, applying hydrogen peroxide to the cool dude with an infection in the ear he just pierced, typing daily announcements, keeping up-to-date attendance records, coordinating home bulletins, and effectively diverting salespersons, the secretary must always have a smile and word of encouragement for staff and students alike.

The job is not easy, but it is rewarding and always exciting to work with young people in an educational setting with a staff that promotes Christian values.

Regarding confidentiality, it is difficult to stipulate how much information to share with the secretary because of differences in personality and maturity. But, assuming that the secretary is a caring individual with the "sense" to know what information should be kept confidential, she or he needs to be given the same information as is the teaching staff.

On occasion I have been embarrassed when, not having been told of a particular student situation (a divorce, death in the family, depression), I have treated a student in a manner that perhaps seemed insensitive: telling a student, for instance, that she must have her mother's written permission to attend a field trip, not *knowing* that her terminally ill mother physically was unable to write that note. Once when a student left class and asked me to find her best friend and bring her to the office, I put her off by asking her to wait until the class period was over, not realizing that the student had threatened suicide the night before. The principal had shared these delicate situations verbally with the faculty in a brief meeting prior to the beginning of school, but the secretarial staff was not included.

I don't believe that most Christian school administrators intentionally keep information from their secretaries—they just assume that we already know! Perhaps a five minute briefing each morning between the principal and secretary to review items of importance for the day and/or week would be helpful. Teachers also should feel free to share pertinent information. The secretary should recognize the need for confidentiality; however, teachers and administrators should stress the importance of this. Bluntly stated, if the secretary cannot keep confidence, she or he perhaps should look for employment elsewhere.

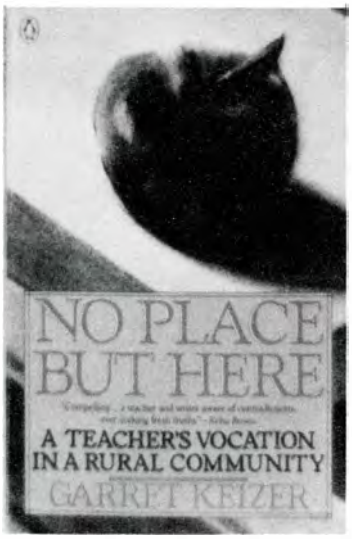
Working together, we can treat students and co-workers in a caring, Christ-like manner. ■

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.

—Edited by STEVE J. VANDERWEELE



No Place But Here: A Teacher's Vocation in a Rural Community

by Garret Keizer

New York: Viking Penguin, 1988,
164 pp., $6.95 pb.

Reviewed by David Schelhaas,
Dordt College, Sioux Center, IA 51250

No Place But Here is inspirational and hopeful at a time when almost all the news from the land of high school seems to be grim. Yet it is clear-eyed and honest, acknowledging the disheartening reality of bright young people claimed by drugs, pregnancy, despairing attitudes of inferiority, parental abuse, or neglect. It is an ideal book for a principal to give his or her staff to read for a faculty meeting discussion because, once started, it demands to be finished. And I can't think of a better book to hand a first-year teacher as he or she heads for the real world of the classroom.

In some ways, Keizer is like those other teacher-authors we read years ago, Kaufman, Kozol, and Herndon: an extraordinary teacher making us ordinary ones feel inferior. For even though he frequently and openly exhibits his failures, he is a gifted teacher. But the book overflows with wisdom, common sense, and compassion, and any teacher still halfway in love with teaching will find it mesmerizing. I say "any teacher" because, although Keizer is a high school English teacher in rural Vermont, most of what he says is relevant to all teachers of children, rural or urban, young or old.

Permeating every chapter is Keizer's compassion for young people:

> The students themselves are the supreme wonder of the world. Just to sit before or pace around a class taking an essay test, to see the pencils bitten and the feet shifted and the sleeves rolling up, to watch as the most self-conscious young men and women forget themselves and contort their faces into the silliest expressions—to watch that concentration and to guess at its curses and eurekas has to be one of the most wondrous experiences a person can know. . . . Often during a test I find myself repeating silently a verse from Habakkuk: "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him"—always adding for my own benefit, "Just remember, buddy, you ain't the Lord."

As one can see, Keizer does not allow himself to indulge in sentimentality very long. He is, after all, a teacher with a job to do. As a teacher he can be classified as a traditionalist. He teaches the classics—*The Odyssey, Macbeth, Antigone*—rather than relevant "teen" literature. ("I will not pretend that tripe is profound or that people lack sensibility because they are fifteen and live in the sticks.") He believes in giving students a working knowledge of grammar and usage. He demands absolute silence in his study hall.

Yet, while being a traditionalist, he is not traditional—an apparent discrepancy that illustrates one of the most obvious and significant truths of this book: The art of teaching is replete with contradiction and paradox. Keizer suggests, for example, that the two great commands for shaping the mind of the student are to teach discrimination and to instill wonder. A truly effective school, he says, should be both realistic and utopian. He demands discipline in the classroom, yet he encourages rebellion. And in a wonderful chapter entitled "A Lover's Quarrel" he examines the love/hate feelings he has for his profession.

This emphasis on paradox is what I think is especially important for beginning teachers to hear. Too often they want black-and-white answers. Did someone say not to smile the first semester of your first year of teaching? Good advice if it prevents you from trying to win the students' approval by being a soft touch. Bad advice, if it means your students see only an ogre and never a human being behind the podium. With story after story Keizer shows that few answers are right all the time.

Finally, the book is wonderfully well-written. Keizer is a teacher. But he is also a writer—a writer who constantly uses those most basic tools of the teacher: anecdote, allusion, and analogy. For example, in his chapter "Parents" he develops this analogy: Parents stand in relation to the classroom as fathers once stood in relation to the delivery room during childbirth. They wait outside, have little say in what's going on, and then pay the bill. In a chapter devoted to the analogy of the teacher as parson we find this passage:

> If my walk through the corridors of a school is hall "patrol," then I am a cop, the school is my beat, and my manner, however polite, is that of a man who packs a gun. But if instead I "make the rounds of the parish,"

both I and those I meet must adopt a different kind of demeanor. A parson does not say, "And just where do you think you're going, buster?"

Let me conclude with Keizer's comments on a variety of subjects. On the hypocrisy of college professors:

> It also irritates me when blockheads belittle an English teacher's preoccupation with correcting matters of form—the nitpicking that "makes kids hate writing" and fills them with pedestrian notions and existential dread and heaven knows what else. These are the same characters who'll sit in the faculty pub and laugh uproariously at the "hick-isms" of any one of my students who fails to master the usage handbook from cover to cover.

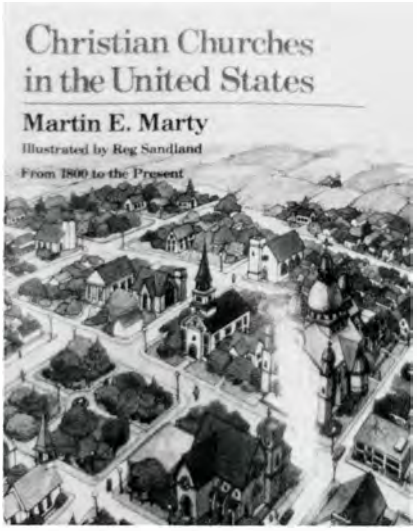
On teen-age pregnancy:

> Finally, I am saying that too many of my students get pregnant. I hate our sexual religion because my desk sits under the drain that takes the blood from its altars.

On courtesy:

> We need to tell our students, as I tell all of my freshmen on the first day of high school, that each of them is sacred and that they have just walked into a sacred space.
>
> This means that no one is mocked, no one is ignored, no one's right to learn or to work fruitfully and with dignity is violated or abridged.

It seems clear that even though he never uses the phrase, Keizer (also an Episcopal lay pastor) sees the child as an image bearer of God. I find that refreshing in this book about public education. I also appreciate the book's hopeful tone and the fact that Keizer sees the vocation of teaching as a high calling. That is something our whole society needs to be reminded of. But, especially, teachers. ■



Christian Churches in the United States

by Dr. Martin E. Marty
Illustrated by Reg Sandland

Harper and Row, 1987, 128 pp., $12.95. Hard cover.

Reviewed by Sam Greydanus, Professor Emeritus of History, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Christian Churches in the United States, subtitled "From 1800 to the Present," written by Martin E. Marty, Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Modern Christianity, the University of Chicago, is the twelfth and the last volume in a series titled "An Illustrated History of the Church." It is geared for young adults, as is the whole series, and serves as an excellent textbook or resource book for a course in church history.

To begin to understand the massive undertaking by the author of the 9" x 12" volume of 128 pages including the index, one has only to glance at the Table of Contents. In the first of the volume's twelve sections, Marty answers the question "Why so many churches and yet one?" He explains the main events of United States church history, defines the concept of separation of Church and State, and pictures the United States as a "City of Churches." The remaining sections, with such titles as "The Oldline Denominations," "The Oldline Dissenting Denominations," "Heirs of the Frontier," "Black Denominations," "Heirs of Continental Establishments," "Heirs of Continental Dissent," "Turn-of-the-Century Movements," contain chapters devoted to twenty-six different Christian groups, two chapters on Jews and Native Americans, and a number of chapters on such topics as revivalism, foreign missions, social action and reform, civil religion, private religion, and the future of American Christianity.

After reading the Table of Contents and contemplating how all the above can be accomplished in only 128 pages, the temptation is to approach such a volume as one would a college yearbook. The reader first locates his or her photograph, and if it is satisfactory, approves the rest of the yearbook automatically. Yielding to such temptation, especially since the reviewer is Christian Reformed, I turned to the chapter on "Dutch Reformed Christians." Much to my amazement and delight, on only three pages, half of which are devoted to photographs and illustrations, I found a succinct, lucid account of the historical development of both the Reformed Church of America and the Christian Reformed Church, the differences and similarities between the two denominations, and their present characteristics.

The rest of the volume is characterized by the same sympathetic and superb treatment of each of the other twenty-five Christian groups in similar length, chapters of two or three pages. This could have been accomplished only by a master historian such as Martin E. Marty, who

has a thorough grasp of the history of the Christian Church. A useful strategy is the author's attention to the person or vision who shaped or typified each of the groups. The chapters on general topics, such as foreign missions, church education, and private and civil religion, are equally good and challenging. The illustrations of Reg Sandland add to the excellence of the volume.

Every secondary school and church library must have this volume on the shelves for students to read and study. I highly recommend the purchase of the whole series.

Finally, for what it is worth, the volume reinforces the domination of the male species in the leadership of the Christian Church. The book treats only three women leaders: Ellen Gould White, Mary Baker Eddy, and Evangeline Booth. I do not envy the teacher of church history who has to explain this incongruity to a bright and thoughtful high school woman student. ■

Conscientious Objections: Stirring Up Trouble About Language, Technology, and Education

by Neil Postman

Knopf, New York, 1988, 208 pp., $17.95

Reviewed by Randall Heeres, English teacher, Northern Christian High School, McBain, MI 49657

Neil Postman is "stirring up trouble" again. We should be glad for that.

Continuing his assault on American culture with the insight, wit, and concern that his readers have come to expect, Postman has produced a collection of thoughtful and provocative essays, lectures, and speeches on his favorite themes: our cultural worship of technology, our mistaken notions about education in our society, and the abuse and manipulation of language.The entire book is worth reading, but educators will be especially interested in these essays that look carefully at the American educational system.

"Defensing the Indefensible" presents Postman's idea—evident in such earlier work of his as *Teaching as a Conserving Activity*—that education must be a "defense against culture" (23). To accomplish this goal, Postman proposes, education must provide our children with "the semantic sophistication that we associate with minds unburdened by prejudice and provinciality" (21). Students, he claims, need to learn about definitions, metaphor, tone, the art of questioning, and other features of discourse. Such knowledge will give students better understanding of the language of the various disciplines and also provide the ability for a person to see through language that conceals or misleads.

"The Educationist as Painkiller" contains a more provocative thesis: We should, as educators, not pretend to know how to make students more intelligent; rather, we should be "helping them avoid being stupid" (98). What he means, largely, is that we should teach students to avoid stupid behavior and talk—either/or thinking and mindless sloganeering, for example. Postman is against the many forms of "bumper-sticker philosophy" that appear in our culture today.

In both of these selections Postman has returned to familiar ground. His earlier writings, too, argue for education that focuses on the significant roles language plays in any culture. He is concerned about language of our electronic technologies and about how the electronic media are redefining and shaping our culture as we leave this century.

"The Disappearance of Childhood," an essay that summarizes Postman's views in his book by the same title, traces the concept of childhood throughout history and concludes, sadly, that childhood in North American culture is quickly disappearing. Although children need instruction in reading and writing, they need none in television viewing. Therefore, in the age of television, children can grasp the visual language of television before they can read or write. Moreover, the television audience is a mixture of adults and children, so that the adult world as portrayed on television has no secrets. Young children may now see and hear what was kept from them before. For this reason and others, Postman finds that television makes life trivial and fosters an attitude of "immediate gratification" (159).

The final essay is a pleasure, a wonderful finish to a fine book. Entitled "My Graduation Speech," it is by far better than most commencement addresses. Challenging, hopeful, and brief, it is an address all teachers should hear—and their students, too.

Read this book. Whatever reservations you may have, Postman's ideas will stimulate a careful, open-minded reader to re-evaluate personal views about technology, our educational goals, and our future as a culture. Moreover, you may experience what Postman calls "Columbusity" after Christopher Columbus: the discovery of something better than what was searched for. It is, after all, "Columbusity" that keeps many teachers in the profession and keeps a life-long learner busy. ■

READER RESPONSE

Dear Editor,

I considered H. K. Zoeklicht's "'Principle and Practice'" (29:2) to be completely lacking in matters of taste and decorum. The poorly constructed scenario peopled with stock characters was bad enough, but using for the villain the name of a personage well-known in Christian Reformed circles seemed to be a decision made without any sensitivity to a Christian ethic. Accusations made in bad taste do not justify more of them, and answering violence in print with more of the same does not allow for any reconciliation. I hope that the attitude expressed in this article proves to be the exception.

Chris Vander Ark
Grand Rapids, MI

To the Editor,

It was encouraging to see the article promoting "hands on" science ("Growing Together") in the latest *CEJ*. Working directly with God's creation is an effective way to teach. However, the photograph on page 17 caught my attention. While the students were checking the effects of car exhaust on plant growth, they were positioned nearby, inhaling the car exhaust. These fumes can be harmful to children. A primary focus when designing experiments must be the safety of the experimenters and the observers. Having the students observing this activity at a distance would promote the concept of safety in experiment design.

George Faber
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