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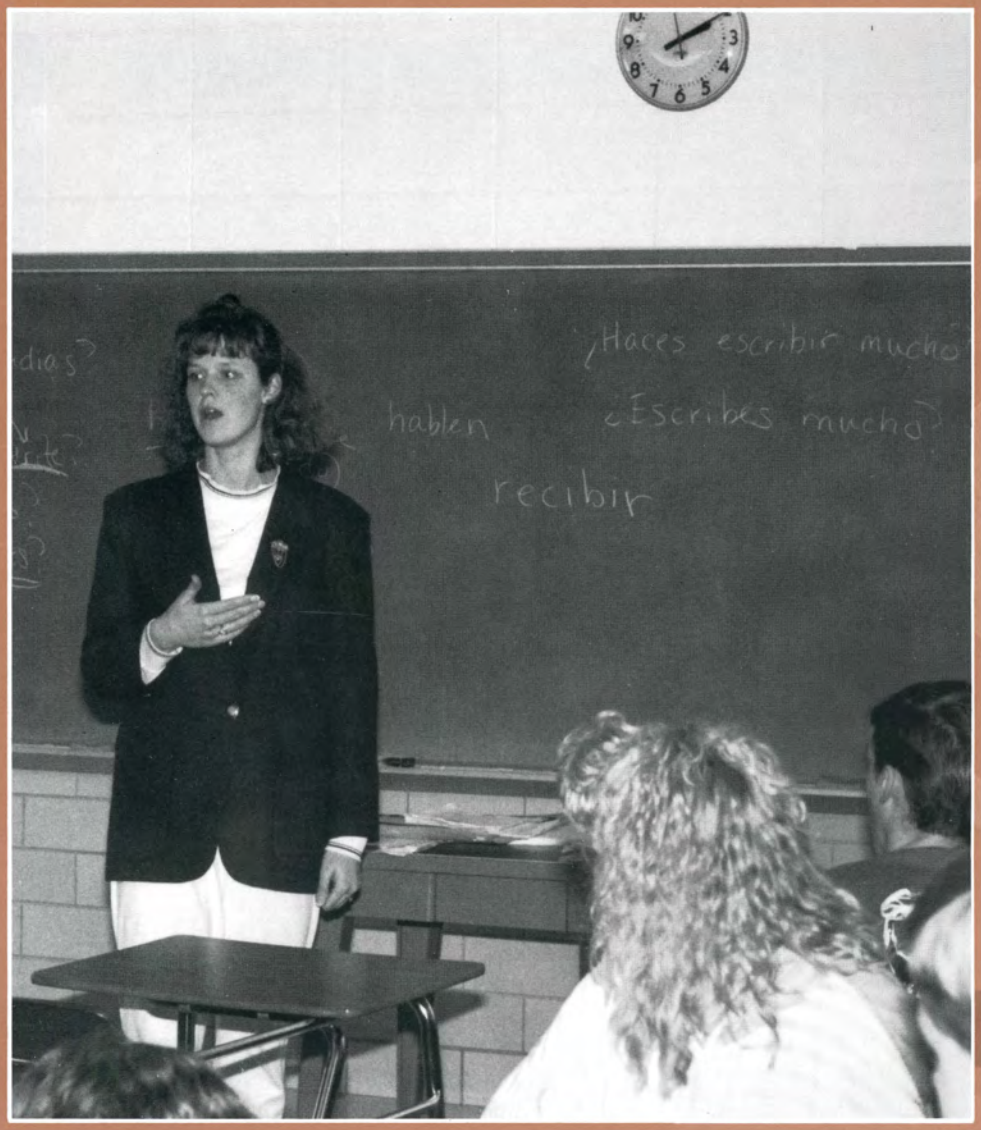

Foreign Language in a Global Age

Lorna Van Gilst

EDITORIAL

Foreign Language Study– More Than Conversation

"Learn Foreign Languages . . . Incredibly Fast!" Those words caught my eye as I paged through my news magazine. The ad promised me fluency in Spanish conversation within thirty days!

I was ready to call the toll-free number, but the nearly $300 for the thirty magic tapes sent me to the fine print: "accelerated learning," "perfect combination of music and words," "both hemispheres of the brain," "speed and retention," "learn language as stresslessly as a child." Maybe I could pick up Dutch and Russian too while I was at it, once I found the time and money. If this program works so well, I wondered, why should students spend three years in grade school, high school, or college studying a foreign language?

Borrowing some language tapes and talking with others who had used similar programs, I realized these programs have potential value, provided the student is motivated enough to supplement them with other experiences. Fast-track language learning programs operate under the assumption that the student is motivated by social or business contacts. The basis for these relationships is verbal communication, the need to talk with others.

If conversation is the sole purpose of our school language programs, then we ought to look closely at the language learning ads in the news magazines. Maybe we need to consider their methods.

Before we look at method, though, we need to look at motivation. Is conversing in other languages adequate purpose for foreign language study in our schools? Are we simply preparing young people to compete for markets and relationships? Are we using language to make a name for ourselves? How much do we care about developing a deeper respect for other people, other cultures? How does language affect our respect for other cultures in the whole realm of creation?

At one time the whole world had one language. But God used confusion of language to scatter humans and thwart their desire to dominate his creation. Dispersion is the theme of Genesis 11. The account reads, at least in English, almost as if God played a cruel but necessary trick on egotistical humans to restrain their self-interests.

Today there is great urgency for people to come together in policies of trade and business. Thus, we have this world-wide urgency to communicate, to teach and learn each other's languages. Some people predict that English will become a universal language. We send thousands of teachers to Russia, Ukraine, China, and Japan to help non-native speakers polish their English. We go to great lengths to accomplish a tiny fraction of the pre-Babel unity of speech.

The Holy Spirit initiated a sense of unity too in the miracle of Pentecost. The God-fearing Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem heard the apostles speak in their native languages. Incredibly fast, in no time at all, the apostles picked up those various languages. But notice, those Christians already had a common understanding of Aramaic and of Greek. They could already converse. No doubt, the point of Pentecost was not communication, but sharing their unity—unity in "declaring the wonders of God." The converging of Pentecost contrasts directly with the dispersal of Babel. "Declare the wonders of God" contrasts directly with "making a name for ourselves."

These contrasting miracles of language hold implications for us as we examine our schools' foreign language programs. If our goal is merely to compete, to make a name for ourselves, then we may as well turn to programs that enable us to use the new language for our immediate ends. If, however, we want to understand people, not just say words, we need to go beyond mere conversation. We need to develop a respect for the culture, to listen, to read and write the language as well as speak it.

Language programs based on service to God should help our students declare the wonders of God among people of all nations. Those programs will require more than thirty days and $300. They will require a putting off of the self, an immersion into another culture, a willingness to go beyond mere words.

Our foreign language courses must call students to build community, to join with members of the new covenant throughout the world in service to God.

Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language

A Personal Experience

José Villalobos

When I was a child in Venezuela, my grandmother always encouraged me to learn English and French. She had lived for many years in Curazao, one of the islands in the Caribbean Sea, learning to speak these two languages. The idea of being able to understand my grandmother every time she addressed my father in English was exciting to me. My father replied in Spanish and that made me wonder why he rarely used English when talking to her at home. I had the concept that if someone speaks to you in a specific language you should respond to that person using the same language.

When I started my first year in high school, I was amazed at the ease with which I understood English sentences spoken by my English teacher. I then realized that the English I heard at home from my grandmother had benefited me greatly. I had the opportunity to do some traveling to Curazao and the United States. Again, I was surprised by the fact that I could keep a conversation going with native English speakers without any difficulty. I had some problems understanding some words and popular expressions, but on the whole I could make myself understood. While abroad, I learned words, phrases, and sentences in real situations. In other words, this learning was in the context of social interaction.

However, my language learning at school was totally removed from a social context. Basically we, the students, had to listen to, repeat, practice, and then expand the specific structures presented by the teacher.

The teachers relied on the traditional idea that learning occurs only as a direct result of repetitive practice. We learned basic vocabulary, practiced reading and writing, and then went to the development of listening and speaking skills. The explicit teaching of grammar and the transformation exercises did not appear to transfer to tidiness out of the classroom. It was teacher directed with no student input and relatively little meaningful interaction between teachers and students.

Soon after I finished high school, I was offered a job as an English teacher in a high school. Today a teacher is required to earn an academic degree first, but teachers were badly needed in my country at that time, so I accepted the job. This experience really confirmed my desire to become a professional English teacher—one who could cherish the students, know them, understand their individualities as learners, recognize their learning preferences and their difficulties, and see their language learning progress on a time scale greater than simply that of a class, a week, or a year.

I taught English as a foreign language to Spanish speakers in secondary school level for five years. During this time, I learned that teaching a foreign language was more than knowing the rules of the language and how the language system works. I also had to transmit to others what I wanted them to know. Now I look back and I think that I had some frustration at the beginning of my teaching because I lacked experience, and furthermore, I had to contend with physical and organizational problems such as tropical heat, overcrowding of classrooms, lack of books in the school library, and lack of appropriate teaching equipment such as visual aids. But a major constraint was the basic textbook. This textbook, which I had to follow rigidly, was divided into lessons all of which had the same pattern: short dialogues followed by a great number of substitution and transformation drills. It also contained statements of abstract grammar rules, lists of vocabulary, and sentences for translation. Many of my fellow instructors were also dissatisfied with these materials because we felt that what the students were learning could not be applied later outside the classroom setting.

While I was teaching in high school I decided to get my bachelor's degree in Modern Languages (English and French) and Education at the University of Zulia, Maracaibo, Venezuela. Here, I was astonished at how quickly I grasped the French language. At the beginning I thought I would have problems in switching from English to French (and vice versa). This happened from time to time, but I quickly trained my brain to switch off one language and switch on the other one. There were moments when words, phrases, and even complete sentences were all mixed up in the two languages, but with time I gained more control over this problem. I finally concluded that I had a natural capacity to learn foreign languages. In this sense, Stern talks about a very important element in the learning of a foreign language. He claims that some foreign language learners appear to have "a gift for languages" that others lack. Most important in learning a foreign language, however, are *intrinsic*

motivation and *extrinsic motivation.* Macnamara refers to the former as the desire to learn the foreign language to communicate with, or find out about, members of the foreign language culture, and to the latter as the desire to learn the language both for academic purposes and to become somewhat integrated with the culture and people of that language community. I think I possessed both types of motivation.

The language and teacher training I had at the University of Zulia was really a valuable experience. The teaching materials promoted classroom interaction and language use. The teachers prepared many task-based communication activities and brought authentic materials to the classroom. We, the students, constantly interacted with the teachers, and this helped to create and develop an ideal atmosphere for classroom learning.

I always searched everywhere for opportunities to practice my English—tourist spots, movies, shopping centers. One of my aunts, who knew my eager desire to speak English, invited me to her church, which had services in both English and Spanish. I seized that opportunity. After my first visit I kept attending that church, since I saw the great chance to practice English with native speakers. I was not a Christian: my main motivation to go to church was strictly to improve my English. But God's purpose for my life was different. It was in this church with two congregations, one in English and one in Spanish, that I received Jesus as my personal Savior. Today I believe that God used my studies and my desire to improve my English to call me to become part of his family. For me, God's calling also meant teaching English at the university level, so I went to England to study for a master's degree in Linguistics for English Language Teaching.

At first, I thought I was going to have culture shock, but I soon discovered I was rapidly adapting to the new culture. I believe that foreign language learning is often foreign culture learning, especially if the language learning is taking place in the country where the language is spoken. Crawford-Lange and Lange claim that language teachers should integrate the teaching of language and the teaching of culture, the latter being so important that it needs to be included in the curricular program. If students cannot have the experience of living in the culture, teachers must do as much as they can to bring that culture to the classroom.

In my studies and in my recent work I have encountered many theories of language teaching. I consider none of the theories definitive; all of them are subject to modification or replacement by another theory. My viewpoint on language teaching has changed over time. When I started teaching in high school, the focus was primarily on the language being taught and not on communicative activities.

Having gained a deeper perspective in teaching a foreign language, I now consider a sociolinguistic theory together with a communicative approach to language teaching of valuable use. I believe language teaching relies on the social use of language as the key to understanding and imparting communication skills. The communicative approach, which developed from this orientation, puts more emphasis on the use of language in social interaction where it becomes a tool for communication (Crawford-Lange and Lange). Activities like games, role plays, simulations, and problem-solving activities foster meaningful interaction among the students in the classroom that they can use in life situations.

Unfortunately, many have adopted the position that communication is all that matters and that control on the structures is unimportant and will be a natural outcome of communication. This may easily happen in an environment where the target language is spoken outside the classroom, but the same does not occur in countries where the target language is heard and spoken only inside the classroom.

On the whole, I have found considerable satisfaction using the sociolinguistic-communicative approach in teaching English as a foreign language with my university students in Venezuela. I take into account the students' particular communicative needs, and I use teaching materials and different media to develop their competence through a variety of activities and tasks.

I take not only the students' communicative needs, but also their spiritual needs into account every time I design an English course. I try to serve all my students, not only as language learners, but also as people created in God's image. Certainly, they come to the university with the hope of earning a degree. Nevertheless, I see the role God has granted me as the opportunity to praise God and present him to the people around me, using either Spanish, my native language, or English as a foreign language.

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Language Learning in Elementary School

Edna C. Greenway

Students who learn a second language before the age of eight are likely to speak the language without an accent. The age of ten is a very crucial time in the development of a child's attitudes toward other nations and culture groups.

New technology allows us to communicate with people from most nations as quickly as it takes to dial a phone number. Fax machines and e-mail speed messages from sender to receiver faster than the postal service's overnight express.

In spite of all the technology available, there remains the human factor. Person-to-person contact is still a very important aspect in communication between people of different cultures, and language and culture studies help make this communication possible.

When Christians learn new languages and explore new cultures, they begin to have "windows on the world." They have a chance to become world Christians. Elementary school is not too early for children to be introduced to a second language and the culture of the people who speak that language. In order to develop into effective global Christians, children should be introduced to other cultures as soon as possible.

Why study foreign language in the elementary school?

The first reason why elementary school is the best place to begin language study is that it takes a person several years to become proficient in another language. So why not get a head start and begin as early as possible? Curtain and Pesola suggest that it takes four to six years of second language study to understand well and become fluent in speech. With more time and practice, children acquire greater fluency and effectiveness in communication.

The second reason is that every skill and outcome important to society is introduced through the elementary school curriculum. Reading, math, social studies, science, music, art, and more recently computers are all considered important. Only when languages become a vital part of the elementary curriculum will foreign language educators be assured that their importance is taken seriously.

The third reason has to do with the age of the young student. Students who learn a second language before the age of eight are likely to speak the language without an accent. Moreover, research has shown that the age of ten is a very crucial time in the development of a child's attitudes toward other nations and culture groups. This is the age when false stereotypes of other peoples may be formed.

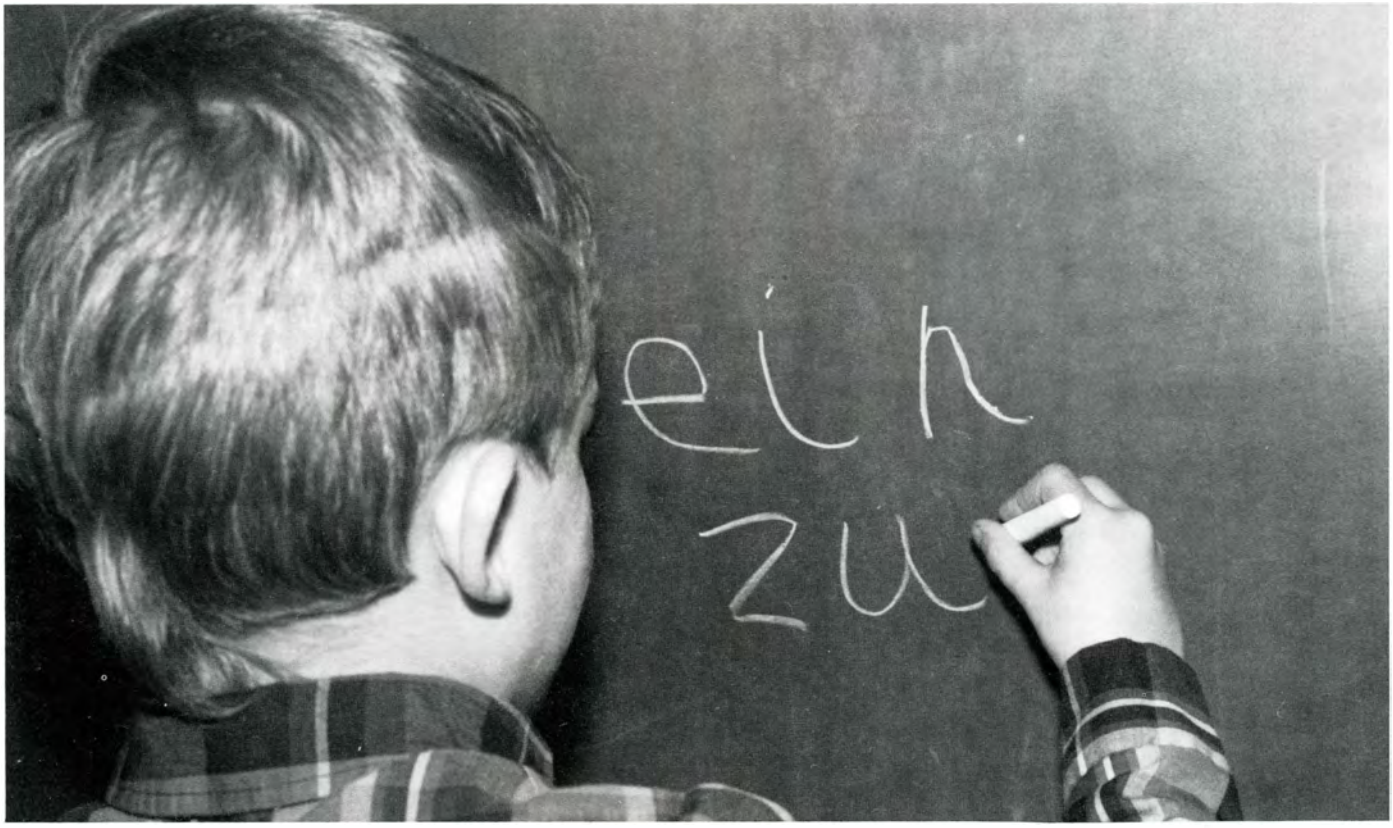
The Christian foreign language teacher has the marvelous opportunity of showing children how God views the peoples of the world. A kingdom perspective is formed when a child becomes aware of what it means to be part of the global community. Language and culture studies are the best ways to introduce a child to these concepts.

What kinds of programs are available?

A wide variety of elementary foreign language programs are available. One of the easiest programs to introduce into a school curriculum is a program called FLEX. FLEX stands for Foreign Language Exploratory or Experience. The basic goal of FLEX is to create enthusiasm for language and culture study. The objective of FLEX is not fluency in language communication but motivation for future language study. About five percent of school time is spent on FLEX activities.

Many Christian school teachers are already introducing the FLEX curriculum in their classrooms. For example, Ada Christian School in Ada, Michigan, has developed a before-school FLEX program.

A program that requires a more serious study of language and culture is Continuous FLES. FLES stands for Foreign Language in the Elementary



School. The objectives of FLES include acquiring proficiency in listening and speaking, acquiring an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures, and acquiring some proficiency in reading and writing.

Time spent learning in a Continuous FLES program is about fifteen percent of classroom time. To optimize a continuous FLES program, a school will employ a foreign language teacher to teach grades K-6. West Side Christian School in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is in its second year of a Continuous FLES program for grades K-8.

A third option is a Content-enriched FLES, which has as its primary objective the mastery of the curriculum in the foreign language. Math, science, social studies, and language arts are taught in both English and the foreign language. Such a program employs classroom teachers who cover the curriculum in English and foreign language teachers who teach the same subject matter in French, German, or Spanish.

The goal of Content-enriched FLES is that students acquire proficiency in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the second language. Culture understanding and appreciation are important goals of the program. Learning language and the study of other curricula in the foreign language takes up fifteen to fifty percent of class time.

Where do we go from here?

School districts and parent organizations should take more seriously the importance of language learning in the elementary curriculum. They should choose the type of language instruction that best meets the needs and characteristics of the school community.

National organizations, colleges, and universities are ready and willing to assist schools in developing such plans. As an example, Calvin College is planning a graduate workshop during July 1994 for elementary teachers who want to begin foreign language programs in their schools. A Language Camp for children of ages 7-12 will be used as a practicum for the teachers.

Christians should have a special interest in language and culture learning programs. Such programs help students understand and appreciate people and languages of the global community. Imagine a future world composed of people who studied languages and cultures from early grades. In such a world, Christians would enjoy almost unlimited opportunities to advance the kingdom of Christ.

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Foreign Language in a Global Age

Dolores Logterman

The year I started teaching Spanish, a friend gave me a button that said, "Show your neighbors you really love them. Learn their language." In the small, white, and English-speaking Wisconsin town where I began my education, that button had little meaning to me. Today, however, in a world shrunk dramatically by technological advances, that button speaks a profound truth.

The days of 29-cents-a-gallon gasoline are gone, as are the days when we in the United States could sit back in our linguistic isolation, waiting for the rest of the world to learn English, and American English at that. If the United States is going to compete economically in this global village, and if we as Christians are truly going to serve our newly-acquired neighbors, then we need to do a better job of speaking the world's languages.

Stone and Rubenfeld say that in an international economy where trade barriers are rapidly crumbling, it is becoming increasingly evident that our companies need managers and workers who are not only trained in global economics, but who also can communicate with their peers in other countries, functioning in and understanding the cultural context in which their business deals are made. However, most North American multinational organizations in this global age find that their employees have no such skills.

In such a dismal landscape, the state of Utah stands as a glowing example of what can be done when priority is placed on foreign language and cross-cultural education. According to S. B. Donnelly, thanks to the Mormon church's missionary training program, Utah has a culturally savvy, multilingual population, who together speak 90 percent of the world's written languages. The state has used this local talent pool to attract companies with international markets, such as Delta Airlines and American Express, as well as to build homegrown firms into international business ventures. Such skills are also attracting foreign companies like Taiwan's computer firm Compaq Manufacturing, who want to locate in the United States but who also are looking for areas where people will be sensitive to their customs and culture. One has only to look at Utah's booming economy to see the advantages of having such foreign language skills at a time when there often seem to be too few jobs to go around. Combine that with the European Community's stated goal that "by the year 2000 all 16-year-old students will speak two languages other than their own" (Hopkins, 148), and it is clear that we in the other forty-nine states have a lot of catching up to do.

But even more than the fact that the United States needs people who can make us competitive in the international market place, the church needs Christ-modeling servants in our communities who can meet people where they are. In a sin-sick, needy world with a growing city-centered population and all the problems that creates, it is no longer enough for our churches to be insulated, homogeneous pods in our communities. We need to be able to reach out to those we work with and serve at our jobs; we need to be able to chat over the picket fence with our neighbors and invite them into our lives and into our churches; we need to be able to communicate and connect with those around us if we are to be truly able to witness to the power of God's grace in our lives.

We need to start the process at the elementary level, where young children are like language sponges, and carry it through the secondary level.

In our community, several of our local churches have found themselves in a changing community where they are now surrounded by Spanish-speaking neighbors hungry for God's word and a church home. Mothers are showing up at coffee break ministries, and children by the dozens are joining

the boys and girls clubs. The only problem is that these eager new members do not speak much English, and there is no one in the church who speaks enough Spanish to be of much help. Smiles, gestures, and notes hurriedly translated by the Christian school Spanish teachers only go so far. The church needs members to minister to this growing population, and they cannot be found in adequate numbers. In a country where, according to the 1980 census, " 23.1 million persons over the age of five spoke a language other than English at home, where the recent influx of Asian, Haitian, and Hispanic immigrants has swelled the population of those with minimal English skills, and where the Hispanic population is expected to grow by nearly forty percent over the next ten years to a population of 38.5 million by 2010" (Benmanan, 446), we can no longer allow ourselves to be linguistically handicapped.

It is clear that we need people in all walks of life who can speak at least one language other than their own. The question is, how do we get them? It is my opinion that first we need to take foreign languages off the back burner and make them a priority. Some of our leaders are showing signs of recognizing the need for a population that is foreign language literate, and they are willing to do something about it. Senators David L. Boren, Sam Nunn, and John W. Warner co-sponsored the National Security Education Act, which provided funds "to train more language experts for United States intelligence agencies and the diplomatic services," action inspired after the Gulf War when the Senate and the CIA became alarmed at the lack of qualified Arabic speakers in the American Intelligence community. Senator Nunn has gone on record as suggesting that "if the foreign language skills of our diplomatic, policy, and intelligence communities had been greater in this instance, we might actually have avoided a military conflict. These are very high stakes indeed, in the Senator's opinion, literally, a matter of life and death" (Hopkins, 149).

Senators Christopher Dodd and Leon E. Panetta also made foreign language acquisition a priority when they wrote the Global Education Act of 1991 to provide financial resources for teacher training, study abroad, and international and foreign language education (Hopkins). But it still remains for us, the educators, the politicians, the community and church leaders, to educate the public regarding this need.

Second, we must re-evaluate how and when we teach foreign languages. Since it is obvious that the typical two-year program required at the high school level has not met our needs, we need to start the process at the elementary level, where young children are like language sponges, and carry it through the secondary level. Also, languages should not be taught in isolation in the curriculum. They should be integrated into the other subject areas and taught as another way to express one's thoughts and ideas in course work. A second language should also be used to examine how people in other cultures think about and deal with the same issues we do.

Research in Foreign Language Across the Curriculum would seem to indicate that when second languages are integrated into the entire school program, they have more relevance in our lives and more easily become second nature to us (Sudermann and Cisar).

Third, students and teachers should be encouraged to spend some time living and studying abroad. Immersion into another culture and language group is a very efficient way to develop speaking and comprehension skills as well as cultural understanding. When I served as International Director of Trinity Christian College's Semester in Spain program, I saw firsthand how much more quickly students were able to communicate in Spanish when they had to use the language in all their daily activities than when they used it only in the classroom. Government officials have taken steps to make money available for study abroad programs. However, more help is needed from businesses and local communities who would benefit from such programs.

Students and teachers should be encouraged to spend some time living and studying abroad.

The global age is here, and it is time for us to take off our blinders and see that to be competitive we must make it a priority to learn to communicate with the rest of the world in their own languages and in their own cultural contexts. And if we as Christian educators are going to fulfill our commitment to train our students for a life of service in this new global community, we have to evaluate how and when we are teaching foreign languages to see if we are truly doing what we need to do. After all, it is only when we can speak the language of our non-English-speaking neighbors that we can truly demonstrate how much we love them.

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Developing the Gift

Kristen Westerhof

I see the ability to learn and to use a language as a God-given gift. We are all reasonably proficient in our own language, but learning another takes a special capacity: not everyone can do it. God has guided me in helping me recognize my gift and giving me the chance to develop and to use it as a gift for him.

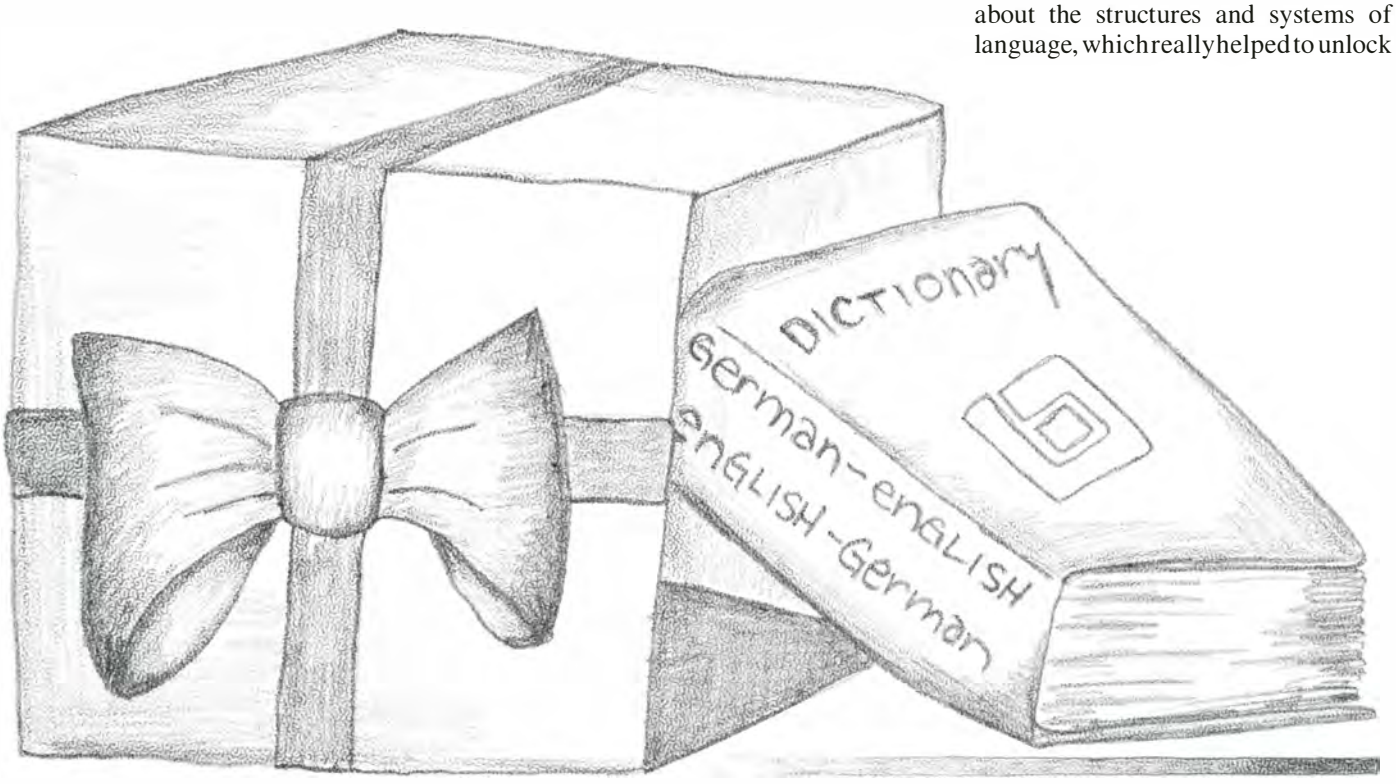
I took my first German course as a sophomore in high school, mostly because I wanted to take a foreign language and my mother taught the class. I enjoyed the class, but I wasn't sure that my gift lay there. I still had other, equal interests.

As I continued in German as a junior and senior, the courses became more in-depth and we started covering more history and literature, which really drew my interest. Learning German became more important to me because I realized that it was something I could comprehend and enjoy. I had discovered my gift, but I was still hesitant to create with and speak the language. I never said anything more than absolutely necessary. Of course, later, the definition of "absolutely necessary" changed.

I spent my first year of college at Dordt College, with a tentative German major. Although the college is strong academically, the German program is not its main focus and is, consequently, not a particular strength. I became more and more frustrated as the year went on because I knew that I wasn't developing the gift as I needed to do. Aware of my feelings, my parents agreed with my decision to transfer to Calvin College for my sophomore year.

The move to Calvin was a turning point. I couldn't change my mind and settle for another major anymore. I was up to my ears in German and I loved it. My courses challenged me. I took two literature courses, which not only helped me with reading skills, but also gave me insight into the German culture and people.

I also took one grammar and composition course, which challenged me to use what I had learned to write German effectively. I learned more about the structures and systems of language, which really helped to unlock



meaning. The hardest course I took was an intensive, communication-oriented course, which focused on fluency and clarity in communication. My pronunciation improved so that at least I began to sound more like a German student and less like a student of German.

Another step toward the fulfillment of my gift came through travel. During the summer of 1990, I traveled through Germany, Austria, and Switzerland for seventeen days with a group from my high school. This summer directly followed the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. I saw history come alive before my eyes and under my fingers as we visited the remains of the Wall. This experience moved me to wonder about the kind of people who had lived behind this wall and come through it.

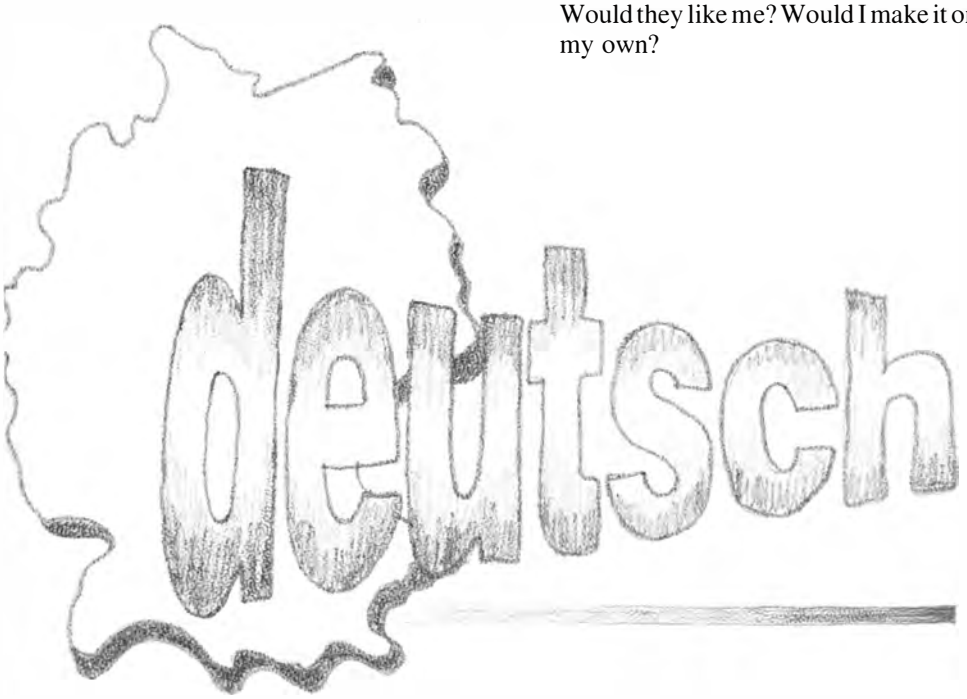
Still more moving to me was our visit to Dachau, a concentration camp just outside Munich. I had never before seen a record of such vicious crimes as had occurred there. I went from display to display, growing more horrified with each step. I wondered again about the people—those who didn't know then and those who do know now and have to live with that knowledge.

I took another trip to Germany with the Interim group from Calvin College in January of 1993, preceded by an intensive preparatory course. This was our chance to see what we had learned.

The most rewarding part of the trip was our opportunity to stay with host families, where we had no choice but to speak German. The families encouraged us to speak and had unknowingly created for us the best possible environment by making us comfortable, asking us many questions, and explaining things thoroughly. The only pressure was to say something, anything that would make sense to a native. The magic of the gift was that after a while, speaking German was almost as easy as speaking English. We didn't always succeed in making sense, but we had plenty of fun trying, and we were grateful for every nod and smile of understanding.

When speaking with my host families, I realized that what I said had to be important enough to me to justify my effort in saying it correctly. As I showed them pictures of my family and friends, I went through linguistic twists and turns to describe the people and events pictured because that was what I wanted those families to know about me—that was important.

The gift flourished during my latest trip last summer. I was on my own, working in a hotel in Groemitz, Germany. In the beginning, I was not excited to be spending my summer alone working in a hotel kitchen. I knew it would be good for me to put my language skills to the test, but in this case, my language skills were my key to survival. Would the people understand me? Would they like me? Would I make it on my own?



I had forgotten that I wasn't on my own at all. God would never have given me this gift and brought me there if he were just going to leave me alone. This was my chance to see what I could do through him.

The staff was very helpful. I worked with six Finnish girls, two of whom became my good friends. The staff teased us and prodded us to respond, and if the answers weren't good and quick and correct, the teasing increased. Listening became all-important when I had to know exactly what to do in the kitchen. I learned quickly that these Germans did not appreciate it when their systems were interrupted.

God brought me some special witnessing opportunities there. My Finnish friends and I became close to some American college students who also worked in the town. For the first time in my life, none of my friends were Christians. They just didn't give any thought to God, other than to wonder if he might exist. When they learned of my background, they quickly dubbed me "church girl." But this distinction led to interesting discussions. One of the girls told me that I was lucky to have a set of morals to help me make decisions since she could only try to figure out right and wrong in each situation.

I am completing my education back at Dordt, where I now stand at the crossroads between student and teacher. The logical fulfillment of my gift is teaching, and I am excited with the idea of passing on my love for German.

Language learning gives me a peek into other cultures and sparks a sensitivity and appreciation for cross-cultural differences and similarities. People feel my respect when I show interest in them by speaking their language.

I have learned that in order to love our neighbors, we must learn who our neighbors are and how to talk with them.

Kristen Westerhof is a junior German-Secondary Education student at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Teaching French in Ontario's Christian Elementary Schools

Thea van Til Rusthoven

Focus on developing French teachers' expertise: oral-aural competency, pedagogical insights, cultural knowledge, and Christian perspective of their work.

The person teaching French represents French culture(s) to the students and is their main francophone model. This is true even when tapes or videos are used in the classroom. The teacher's expertise in the above-mentioned areas is the main factor in forming students who can function in French as responsible Christians. A teacher may be hindered by textbooks that rely on ineffective methods and unauthentic speech, but even the best textbook or method will not produce students who can communicate acceptably if the teacher's pronunciation, fluency, cultural and pedagogical knowledge are weak. The halting speech, the strong English accent, and the scant cultural knowledge that were acceptable twenty years ago are no longer acceptable in Ontario. Many public elementary schools in Ontario have even gone beyond FSL (French as a Second Language) certificates and require "native or near-native fluency" for their teachers. Seventh and eighth grade French teachers are expected to do 95 percent of their teaching in the target language.

Schools can raise requirements because of the growing availability in the Ontario marketplace of people with francophone or French immersion backgrounds. The person speaking French with a strong English accent or hesitancy has little chance for finding a job that will include his or her French skills. For example, an employer like GM Visa in Toronto will hire an anglophone with good fluency and pronunciation in French combined with less-than-great grammar before hiring an anglophone with impeccable grammar but a strong English accent in French or fluency problems. Many bilingual or semi-bilingual jobs in Ontario require the sort of speaking and listening skills one needs on the telephone.

. . . a student's poor pronunciation or poor fluency habits are difficult to correct in secondary school if they have been reinforced for years at the elementary level.

A second reason for the constant rise in skill levels is the overall trend toward globalization. Instead of confirming English as the only language to be used worldwide, as some had predicted, the rise of the EEC and other trading blocks has strengthened the resolve of many countries to teach languages other than just English.

Now in Ontario, elementary school French teachers have the responsibility of laying the foundation for good language study and for informed attitudes toward not only a subject area but also toward Quebecois and Franco-ontarien cultures. Unfortunately, a student's poor pronunciation or poor fluency habits are difficult to correct in secondary school if they have been reinforced for years at the elementary level. Likewise, erroneous cultural stereotypes combined with linguistic frustration in the early years in French have led many a student to the conclusion that he or she can't learn French or that French is awful and the Quebecois are to blame for forcing students to learn it. This type of prejudice is difficult for the high school French teacher to dispel before the end of the mandatory one semester of French in secondary school.

The overall Christian perspective in a school needs to support the work of French teachers. If a Christian school believes that it is teaching French for superficial reasons, the program will remain superficial. If French is taught just to be in step with the public schools, or just because it's "nice," then the students will react negatively to learning something that no Christian adult around them values or uses. If they are not convinced that the endeavor is part of a Christian response to life, then Christian perspectival work needs to be done before any program can be rightfully undertaken.

Strive to teach via the message, not via the formal rules or verb charts.

In the elementary school French classroom, grammar should be in the service of communication, not the other way around. Knowing grammar, even doing exercises on a grammar point, does not necessarily give the student access to this knowledge when he or she needs it. Most of the time, speaking a language does not allow one the necessary pauses to think about grammar rules or verb declensions. There are some elements in French that only grammar can teach (example: the written forms of past participle agreement), but the vast majority of these elements are not essential to—and may even hinder—fluent speech for elementary school children. This is not to say that grammar is not to be taught in grade school, but it should be encapsulated in the content. This precludes the deductive grammar lessons with exercises that drill the grammar point but care little or nothing about the content, the continuity, or the importance of the messages. An activity or an exercise should force the student to think about the message. Pattern or substitution drills too often allow students to do them without thinking about their content. If one has to do exercises—which is very debatable in the first few years of French—one would do only those that force students to zero in on the message, such as a paraphrase of a sentence.

A preferred mode of teaching vocabulary and grammar is concrete activities, the more physical the better. An activity is initiated—like putting on one's coat—and the necessary grammar is learned as required by the activity (asking questions, describing). The grammar will follow mainly functional divisions (see Chamberlain's book for examples of the main communicative functions in French), but even these are subsumed to the meaningful activity that is going on. This is not chaotic, since the teacher, with or without a textbook, plans which activities will be undertaken. Usually, they are ones involving everyday routines in and out of the classroom and those centered around predetermined themes (the seasons, the Christian holidays, travel—to visit and learn about francophone places and the children there, outer space, animals, the environment). These types of activities are broader in scope than the often egocentric consumerism that characterizes the themes and activities in some French textbooks.

The classroom has to be a safe community where one can make mistakes.

Strive toward authentic speech.

One major deficiency of many textbooks is their overdependence on teaching nouns. Many games and books spend countless hours on "What is this?" "It is a _____." The faulty premise here is that identifying many objects in French will somehow help students to speak. The Total Physical Response Method (TPR) has reacted to this weakness and has been included in many classrooms, including those in the *Dimoitou* series; but even more authentic is the everyday bantering back and forth with students amidst routines or activities that require the constant manipulation of verbs and idiomatic phrases. This is easier than it sounds since francophone children before the age of seven rarely use verb tenses outside of the "L" configuration (je, tu, il, elle, on, ils, and elles). "On," which rarely gets its proper due in textbooks, is used by all francophones much more than "nous," and by children it almost completely takes the place of "nous": "On va sortir maintenant?" is a typical question asked by a francophone child. Almost all vocabulary can be taught *in situ,* not as a list on the board to be repeated, memorized, or drilled by means of exercises.

Students need encouragement to listen to whole paragraphs of speech in order to "get the gist" of the meaning, to become used to listening without expecting to understand every word. They should not have to answer back in complete sentences as the old textbooks usually demanded. They also need encouragement to speak without formulating the phrase ahead of time; they need to "jump in the water" and grab an English word here and there but continue the flow of the sentence. They need help with the strategies of hesitation ("Euh . . .," "Eh bien . . .," see Chamberlain) and paraphrasing.

Know when and how to correct mistakes.

When a student is freely speaking (not doing an exercise) and the meaning of his or her statement is clear, only an implicit correction should be given and then only if it doesn't interrupt the flow of thoughts. To focus on the message, the teacher may wish to stop saying "bien" and "tres bien" all the time after student utterances—which is reacting to the *form*, but instead say, "oui, je comprends," "explique-moi un peu plus," or just "oui," which shows a reaction to the content of their utterances.

Some students' internal "grammar cop" or external "grammar cop" (the teacher's corrections or other students' laughter) is so strong they never risk making mistakes in speaking. They need to be told again and again that making mistakes is absolutely necessary to learning a language. The teacher should not hide his or her own mistakes. In fact, watching their teacher speak to another person in French, all while paraphrasing, asking for help on various words, gesturing, keeping calm at mistakes, being polite, and obtaining information, is a terrific lesson for students.

The goal is to communicate and to treat each other with respect, not to study for years and years and finally, carefully, enunciate that perfect sentence. And ability to engage in respectful social interaction in French is more important than perfect grammar. Granted, continual sloppy speaking does show a certain lack of respect for the other's language, but the anxiety that arises in some students over the slightest mistake is not appropriate. The classroom has to be a safe community where one can make mistakes.

Make good use of financial support.

Each school in Ontario receives a per-student grant from the government, which is to be used exclusively for the upbuilding of the French program. In some schools this money (usually $1000-$2500) could be spent more wisely on teacher upgrading than on the continual buying of workbooks whose content is often artificial. This money can be used to improve teachers' competency and knowledge in French by sending them to one Ontario Modern Language Teacher's Association convention per year (for example, the one in Toronto in March), by joining the Association, by subscribing to the Canadian Modern Language Review, by granting them money to travel (camping is cheap!) and/or study in Quebec. This last suggestion has multiple benefits, not the least of which are the cross-cultural experiences that a teacher needs in order to convey authenticity to the students and to counteract the negative stereotypes about francophones that exist in some students' minds.

Some schools may decide that hiring a fluent person with a B.A. in French is more cost-effective and pedagogically more cohesive than trying to upgrade each classroom teacher's skills in the cultural knowledge of French.

French teachers need audio-visual support such as a small but yearly budget to buy French storybooks, one children's magazine, audio and video tapes, and listening equipment such as personal tape players for use in the classroom. A collection of methodological aids should be developed (example: free videos and information from the Commissioner of Official Languages; books on the TPR method, Krashen and Terrell's *The Natural Approach,* Kenneth Chastain's *Developing Second Language Skills* (3rd ed.), Chamberlain and Steele's *Guide Pratique de la Communication, The National Core French Study* syllabi, and publications by the CEC (Centre Educatif et Culturel) in Montreal, who puts out the *Dimoitou* series.

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Flying High with French Literature

by Manuela Lindemulder

From Villon to Prevert, from the smooth coaxing lines of *The Renaissance* to the simple direct rhythm of contemporary poetry, advanced level French students seize the challenge to expand their writing and analytical skills in the tradition of the French "analyse du texte."

The activity of focusing in on a specific work and engaging in an in-depth study of the author's background, researching his or her motives for writing the piece, speculating on the choice of words and manner of expression is routine and regularly done by students in France. Our students, in mimicking the tasks of their French peers, engage in a genuine cultural experience.

We choose eight selections each school year. Each selection is designated to a four-week study period. In that time the class collectively reads, translates, and discusses the work. We schedule library time for research. We distribute guideline questions to encourage a superficial review of the piece and then a more thoughtful survey. Finally, when all the preliminary work is completed, the students independently organize and compose their analyses of the text.

Each paper carries the same weight as a unit test. There are a possible one hundred points. Forty points relate to students' grammatical expression, another forty points credit their insightful expression, and the remaining twenty points are awarded for their ability to memorize and correctly pronounce five lines of their choice in the targeted work. In this manner the grade is "complete" in that it reflects all skills: speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. These skills are key in the study of any foreign language.

Students view this assignment with both enthusiasm and apprehension. They work hard and long. The excitement comes when they discover the ability to express themselves in a language other than their mother tongue. They come to enjoy literary works they might never discover without the previous study of French.

Finally, after three years of an intensive language study mostly involving rote learning, the students are given wings and the freedom to fly. Yes, their flight is sometimes clumsy and precarious, but as the school year progresses, the golden occasions increase with their confidence. It is indeed wonderful to see students become secure in their abilities. At this point the students claim the French language as their own, the ultimate joy of every foreign language teacher.

Manuela Lindemulder with some of her French students.

Manuela Lindemulder, who teaches at Eastern Christian High School in North Haledon, New Jersey, speaks French, German, and Spanish fluently and is becoming acquainted with Dutch.

"What Am I Doing Here?"

David Koning

Matthew 28:19-20 ". . . Go and make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. . . . And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

The March morning matched Harold's mood as he headed to school, his mind as foggy as the stuff he drove through. The fog was as thick as any he remembered in his twenty-some years of teaching. Half-way through his fifteen-minute trip, he realized that he already arrived at the corner of Main and Walnut. He didn't remember going through the last two intersections. He continued picking his way through the dense mist as he contemplated his year.

It would take more than the short drive to school that morning for him to sort out his thoughts about the events and feelings of the past months.

Harold turned left onto Walnut and proceeded toward school. A right turn would have brought him dangerously close to the interstate and off to points unknown in an attempt to escape the question that nagged him for the past few weeks, "What am I doing here?"

The energy required to educate his fifth graders was being eroded by "extra-curricular" pressures. It was tough trying to motivate students who found him less entertaining than Arsenio and the Simpsons. The thought annoyed him. It was frustrating trying to answer criticism from parents and students who found his methods of teaching different from "what we're used to." Dealing sensitively with the two children in his class whose parents split up was emotionally draining.

He turned into the school parking lot as he had every day for the past umpteen years. His fingers tightened around the wheel as he thought ruefully, "I could have gone into the landscaping business with my brother-in-law. What am I doing here?"

"I've been teaching covenant children for twenty-plus years," thought Harold, still musing as he plunked down into his place at the devotions. "Sure, there have been ups and downs before. Working for the Lord is what it's all about, . . . right?" He rubbed his eyes, trying to concentrate on the meeting.

"Lately there have been so many downs in a row!" he thought as Sandra Brown's devotional flew right past him. He focused his attention on his own load of troubles. The hassles with parents, the discipline problems, the committee work, the mountain of papers to correct had Harold wondering, "When is enough, enough?"

Harold's mental fog began lifting about midway through the weekly faculty devotions. A glimmer of light penetrated as Sandy wrapped up her meditation. She read from Matthew, Jesus' final instructions to his disciples, "Go and make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded. . . . Surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

After prayer, Harold walked down the hall to meet this year's candidates for discipleship. He didn't know if he would last in this job until the "end of the age," but he figured 3:10 that afternoon would be a good start.

David Koning teaches fifth grade at East Christian School in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Adding Up in Christ

Kenneth R. Kuipers

Ephesians 1:10 . . . to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

One summer I was visiting the University of Maryland with our History Fair students, and I had some free time, so I slipped over to the library and did some browsing. I came across a newspaper titled the *Peoples' Daily.* It was, of course, the Communist party's newspaper. In a special feature article, "A Philosophy of Chaos," the author made a case for a disorganized universe without any particular purpose or intelligent direction in it. The little amount of order that we perceive or think that we see is really just a random set of events that have coincidently come together for just a moment in time. He likened it to a person standing just up from the Niagara Falls watching seven little paper boats sailing along and getting in line with one another just as the paper fleet floated in front of this person. Of course all this person sees is a very orderly line of seven boats heading down the river in a perfect row. Little can the observer see that only a hundred yards down river from where he is standing, these seven little boats will once again be thrown into the complete chaos they apparently were in before they arrived in front of the observer.

We, of course, are the observer, and the seven boats are whatever order and purpose we see around us in life. The order, however, is deceitful, and humankind is fooled into believing that the universe has design and purpose to it. Really, claimed this author, the universe at its very base is chaotic, and if you doubt it, just look around at all the evidence of random evil spread throughout the universe. One need only think of recent natural catastrophes. Shakespeare in *Macbeth* said it so well. "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day. . . . It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

On the contrary, Paul writes to the Ephesians, God is bringing all things together under one head, even Christ. There is indeed a direction to all of this activity around us, and it is being brought together into Christ. Paul writes elsewhere that all things were made in him, all things have their being in him, and here he writes all things are being brought together in him. Is there purpose to the universe? Is there a plan to all of this? Is there direction to all the days that follow all the days? Paul answers with a resounding yes.

Paul uses the word meaning "to sum up" to describe what Christ is doing here. It is really a mathematical term and it means "to find the answer to." Picture for a minute a student who is working on a column of figures rather than a man by the side of a river. The student is diligently working at these columns to find the sum, to find, as it were, the end total or, as we say, to see what it all adds up to. The student is checking each figure and adding it to the next one to see if, at the end, one can arrive at some final figure—the meaning of the whole. Well, Paul says, that's what Christ is for us. He is the final answer, he is the sum total and end of all things.

Going back to the man on the side of the river, I must say, he is going over all the figures and, frankly, for him it just doesn't add up. For him, there is no sum or final answer to all of this. Life just doesn't make any sense at all. He's looking at the same figures that we're looking at, but he is continuing to arrive at different answers each time. Being a weak math student, I can readily identify with the frustration and disappointment he must be experiencing. It can only lead to a final sense of hopelessness or meaninglessness.

For us, though, it means that it all adds up. We're the ones who "get it." We are the ones who have our hands flagging in the air. Do you get it? Have you added it all up yet and arrived at the answer? Will you share it with your classmates?

What an opportunity we have in Christian education to do just this. What an obligation we have to go beyond the classroom and share it with those who are still struggling to find the answer.

Kenneth R. Kuipers is principal of Holland Christian Middle School in Holland, Michigan.

From Africa to the NBA and Back

Stefan Ulstein

"They lied to us in school," Bob McAdoo said shaking his head. "Africa is full of culture and history. It's a lot more than a bunch of savages hitting each other over the head with clubs." Beside him on the couch at the KIRO TV studios in Seattle sat his friend, nineteen-year-old Charles Gitonga Maina. Maina, the slam-dunk champion of Kenya, stars in Hollywood Pictures' *The Air Up There,* an action-comedy about an American college's attempt to recruit an African dunker for their basketball team.

McAdoo, one of the all-time NBA greats, served as technical advisor on the film. In the 1970s, McAdoo was the NBA's scoring champion three years in a row. He and Maina were in town to promote the film.

The Air Up There is an unpretentious action-comedy that delivers more than a few laughs and some hot moves. Screenwriter Max Apple, a novelist and Rice University English professor, describes himself as "a great basketball fan who is 5'4" and white." Inspired by African NBA players like Dikembe Nutombo and Manute Bol, he wanted to write a story about contemporary Africa. The result is *The Air Up There,* which begins conventionally enough with Assistant Coach Jimmy Dolan (Kevin Bacon) setting out to recruit an amazing slam dunker he has spotted in the background of a missionary film.

When Dolan arrives in Africa the film begins to take off, with gorgeous shots of the African veldt. Much of *The Air Up There* is filmed in South Africa, where, McAdoo says, "I was surprised to find out how short those Xosa guys are. We had to bring most of the basketball extras down from Kenya where the story is located.

The fictional village of Mingori was built from scratch and peopled with members of the Samburi tribe, a group similar in some ways to their more famous neighbors, the Masai.

"The Samburi are very tall, like Charles here," McAdoo said gesturing to the 6'10" Maina. "They are muscle stretched over bone. I was a pretty fair jumper—I still am—but these guys are amazing."

Referring to the climactic game, McAdoo continued, "In that scene you see a line of Samburi warriors, all decked out in their beads and paint, carrying their shields and spears. You can't get the full effect, but those guys are jumping two or three feet high, completely synchronized. And they can do it for thirty, forty, even fifty minutes."

McAdoo was deeply moved by the reception he got from African people. "Some of the guys in the towns knew who I was. They watch basketball and play it. The Samburi are much more rural and isolated, but they were very nice to us. After a while I got so I could see the difference between the tribes, just like you can tell a Scandinavian from a Frenchman or an Italian. People say 'Africa' like it was a country but it's dozens of countries. We never learned anything like the reality of Africa in school."

McAdoo found himself drawn to learn more about his own African roots. "You wouldn't call yourself a European-American," he said to me. "But we call ourselves African-Americans because our past, our link to the old country, has been stolen from us and erased.

"I asked some people, 'Where do I look like I'm from?' They said maybe Cameroon or Ghana, somewhere around there. That was a fascinating and deeply moving experience. It changed the whole way I looked at myself."

Maina, who belongs to the Kikuya tribe, agreed. "You should come to Africa. It's not all dying children and fighting. There's dying and fighting in Europe, too.

"I still have much to learn about Africa, or even my own country, Kenya," he said. "I didn't really know too much about the Samburi people except what I'd learned in school, even though we are both Kenyan. Living with them was a real experience."

One of my high school students

Charles Gitonga Maina (pronounced Gih-tong-a My-ee-nah), makes his motion picture debut in "The Air Up There." The 6'10", 19 year-old member of Kikuya tribe in Kenya won the role after the producers conducted an extensive search for a basketball player with the ability to act.

Bob MacAdoo (left) is one of the greatest players in the history of basketball and serves as the basketball technical advisor for "The Air Up There." Kevin Bacon also stars.

asked Maina what his first impressions of North America were. "Food! I'm from a middle class family, but we don't have the quantity of food you have here. In Kenya a chicken is expensive, so you have it for a special meal. We eat one or two meals a day.

"In Toronto Bob took me to a mall. There was food in every other store! People just walking around eating and drinking all day long!"

McAdoo laughed. "You started to blimp up, man. You were getting big!"

"I had to slow down," Maina agreed. "I wasn't really so hungry, but everybody else was eating and it was good, so I ate too."

Getting back to McAdoo's comment about school, I asked him what he wanted to say to teachers. "February is Black History Month. That history starts in Africa. You can only teach about slavery for so long. We were slaves, but then we were freed. Our history began in particular places in Africa. Just like you draw from your European heritage to define who you are, so should we. I'll never be the same after seeing Africa in person. Teachers and students should understand that."

Seeing *The Air Up There* is one small way to get a start. It's a simple American action-comedy, but those with eyes to see will start asking important questions.

Stefan Ulstein teaches at Bellevue Christian Junior and Senior High School in Bellevue, Washington.

The Unique Birthday Card

Josie Chinnery and Eleanor Mills

"What kind of birthday card shall we make for Trevor?"

"A math card. He likes to do math the best!"

Trevor is invited by his teacher, Mrs. Chinnery, to stand on a chair, the class soapbox, and tell the class something he knows about math. "I know about fractions," he proclaims. "My dad taught me. He cut an apple in four quarters, and it was a whole apple, and that's fractions."

Classmates in his primary classroom are impressed. Mrs. Chinnery folds a piece of construction paper for a cover, while each child fills a blank page with math challenges for Trevor. They create wonderful problems with colored markers. Megan declares that she's going to give Trevor a division problem, one hundred divided by two hundred. She says she's making a hard problem because Trevor is good at math. Will Dad need a hundred apples in order to show Trevor how to solve this one?

Trevor takes home a personalized, "working" birthday card. His unique gift has been celebrated, and the children have thought about math, color, and design while creating an appropriate card for him.

For another child's birthday, the card will emphasize that child's special gift. The card-making activity can also provide an opportunity for children to write with a genuine, immediate audience in mind.

Some possibilities for cards:

Gift book:

Each child is given a small construction paper shape to glue to the page, for example, a yellow hexagon, an orange square, or a green triangle. Then children dream up the most creative, wonderful birthday present they can think of, using the shape as part of the gift. The message that accompanies the picture may follow a sentence pattern, "I bought you a _____." Or each child may write an individual message.

Food book:

The message begins with a sentence on the cover: "For your birthday..." Inside the card, the children continue the sentence by using descriptors to wish the birthday child a special food, for example, "I wish you a super gooey fudge sundae."

Story circle:

Ideas for this card are generated by an oral story-telling by the class, each child contributing a sentence. Then each one writes the sentence on a separate page and illustrates it.

Question book:

Each child writes a question or riddle on a page of the birthday card. The page is folded up on the bottom to create a pocket, and the answer is tucked inside. An appropriate illustration may provide a clue to the answer.

Appreciation:

Each child completes the sentence, "I'm glad you're in our classroom because. . . ."

Directional drawing:

This book begins with specific drawing instructions. For example, if the birthday child enjoys animals, children are given pointers on drawing animals. The children might draw only the animal or part of an animal, and the birthday child draws its habitat. At other times, the background is drawn and the birthday child adds the picture of an animal, following directions written by the artist. For example, instructions might read, "Draw a killer whale with a baby by its side. Show the whales breaching in an Atlantic storm."

Other possibilities for cards could be games, jokes, mazes, recipes, draw-by-number, an alphabet book, or tall tales. The children in the class will begin to volunteer ideas, as they did for Trevor, and the ideas you obtain will be endless.

The birthday child has many opportunities to receive acknowledgment for special gifts and interests. A sharing time allows the child to show pictures brought from home, to read a book, to share a creation, or to provide a snack. A sparkler, the singing of "God Bless You Today," and an appropriate number of cheers, "Hip, hip, hooray," climax the celebration. The birthday child chooses a game for everyone to play, outdoors.

A celebration such as this takes advantage of the natural connections between reading, writing, and illustrating as it reminds the children of the God-given uniqueness of each child. Motivation is high because the situation demands the creation of a quality product.

Josie Chinnery is grades 2-3 teacher and Eleanor Mills is learning assistance teacher at Abbotsford Christian School, Heritage Campus, in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Our school administers tests to students routinely at certain grade levels. We get a printout for teachers and parents, but beyond our being informed, nothing happens. I question the waste of my time and students' time for this "activity." Do other schools have better application of test scores, or is there really no validity to this tradition?

I find your question interesting, particularly because I was just required to administer the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills to my seventh graders. Admittedly I do not enjoy this yearly routine, but professionally I act the part.

With your question in mind, I actually read parts of the manual other than the directions to the tests. Most information seemed rather obvious; but the list of specific purposes, which would be similar for any batteries of tests, demanded my attention:

1. To determine the developmental level of each pupil in order to adapt materials and instructional procedures more precisely to individual needs and abilities
2. To diagnose specific qualitative strengths and weaknesses in a pupil's educational development
3. To indicate the extent to which individual pupils have the specific readiness skills and abilities needed to begin instruction or to proceed to the next step in a planned instructional sequence
4. To provide information useful in making administrative decisions in grouping or programming to accommodate individual differences
5. To diagnose strengths and weaknesses in group performance (class, building, or system) which have implications for change in curriculum or instructional procedures or emphasis
6. To provide a behavioral model to show what is expected of each pupil and to provide feedback which will indicate progress toward suitable individual goals
7. To report progress in learning the basic skills to parents in objective, meaningful terms

If our schools used the tests for these purposes, perhaps we could justify the time spent. Maybe some schools do.

Questioning the validity to this traditional testing is educationally sound. Granted, academic standards are crucial and school performance data is vital to prevent paralysis and/or stagnation and to implement the most effective methods and materials. As educators, however, we do ourselves a disservice if we fail to critically analyze the instrument used to measure the strengths and weaknesses of our school and our students. Does the test cover what we do teach, what we should teach, or neither? Faculty discussion could result in improved attitude, and this annual necessity might become an academic challenge to us and our students.

If schools find their testing results dependable and are willing to address problems systematically, then, I believe, they will discover that implementing and refining curriculum to meet the students' needs are exciting and God-glorifying tasks.

If, however, our institutions wish only to compare scores with other schools and pat themselves on the back or ignore or excuse deficiencies, then, I predict, they will also conclude, if objectively honest, that this futile exercise is not conducive to good stewardship.

As Christian educators we are accountable for the time spent in our classrooms with the students entrusted to us by parents and by God.

I was excited to be hired by the same school I graduated from and looked forward to teaching there. But now, I feel uncomfortable and awkward with my former teachers. I don't really feel like a colleague and wonder if I ever will. Is there anything I can do to make this easier?

Having never experienced the situation, I asked Mark DeNooy to answer the question. Mark graduated from Denver Christian Schools and returned to work with his former teachers and administrator.

Your question doesn't reveal if you got your job fresh out of college, or if you have been teaching elsewhere for several years and then went back to your old school. Regardless, both situations are valid.

First, let's assume that you have just graduated from college and this is your first teaching assignment. The feelings that you share with us are very normal for any first-year teacher in any teaching assignment! If veteran teachers would look back to their first years, they could tell you that they felt uncomfortable and probably even intimidated by some of the seasoned teachers at that school. A lot of these feelings are only natural. Will these feelings go away? Yes, I think they will. First of all, don't neglect to pray about them; prayer is a powerful tool. Rely on the Lord to give you the wisdom to work through this situation. Also consider time to be your friend. As the year progresses, your confidence in your own ability will continue to grow. Your style will develop, and you will soon feel more like a peer to those former teachers instead of the "new kid on the block."

Is there anything you can do to make it easier? Yes, we already mentioned the power of prayer in our lives. Along with that, remember that it

takes much work to develop strong relationships. Don't be afraid to be honest with your former teachers. The saying "honesty is the best policy" is still very true. If you have questions that they may be able to help you with, ask. Seek advice or tips that they might be able to give you; you just might flatter them by asking. But in all seriousness, don't hesitate to rely on their wisdom and experience to guide you along in your first year.

Now let's consider the other situation. I would suggest to any person going into the teaching profession who has aspirations of going back to a former school, that they teach elsewhere first. Spend some years away from your hometown allowing yourself time to get experience and develop your style, techniques, and confidence. Then you can start teaching at your former school as a veteran and a peer, not just an ex-student.

Finally, I commend you. It sounds as if you are excited to be back at your former school and are willing to put some work and effort into making it a success. Please don't get down on yourself and reach a point of frustration. Good things take time and are worth the wait! Blessings to you in your work and teaching endeavors.

News

Dordt Initiates Master's Program in Elementary Education

Lorna Van Gilst

Dordt College will offer the first of its three-year sequence of courses in its new Master of Education program starting this summer. Developed primarily for teachers of grades K through 8, the program concentrates on curriculum and instruction.

Dr. Jack Fennema, director of the program, says Dordt is responding to a need similar to the one for which Dordt was originally established. Christian schools need teachers who can both articulate a reformational worldview and also translate that covenantal view of God's kingdom into actual practice in the classroom and in the community.

The new master's program emphasizes a hands-on approach, including action research focused on classroom problems. Participants will be required to share their research findings with the broader Christian school community, either in published form or in workshops or presentations.

"These teachers are called to effect growth," says Fennema, "not just take courses. If they graduate with a piece of paper and thirty hours of credit with no growth evident in classrooms or schools, we will have failed."

Fennema's experience as a Christian school teacher and principal has influenced his view of the program. "We need teachers who are leaders," he says. "I'd like to believe any teacher graduating from this program can really understand and 'do' Christian education in a covenantal, Christian perspective."

Graduate students in the program can follow either a summer track over three years or a summer/evening track that is possible to complete in one year. The summer courses will operate on a pre-campus phase, a one- or two-week on-campus phase, and a post-campus phase, to allow non-commuters minimal time away from home. Dordt will also consider offering short-term courses in local communities distant from the college, provided the interest warrants that kind of arrangement.

The graduate program has been approved by the state of Iowa and by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Searching for Bobby Fischer

Jeff Fennema

Bobby Fischer single-handedly dealt a blow to the U.S.S.R. in 1972 at Rejkjavik, Iceland. This brash American chess star defeated the Soviet grandmaster Boris Spassky at the World Chess Championship, a tourna-ment filled with psychological warfare, temper tantrums, and complete exhaustion. I vividly recall watching the evening news with my dad as Walter Cronkite described the combatants' daily maneuvers on this sub-arctic island. As the tournament progressed, I came back to the news for more fascinating tidbits about this game and the opponents who seemed consumed by it. I was hooked. I discovered much later that this championship proved to be the major enticement for the new generation of chess recruits.

After defeating Spassky, Fischer declared a self-imposed exile that would eventually cover 20 years. Our school began its junior high chess club in 1992, the same year Bobby Fischer came out of hiding for a tournament with his rival and good friend, Boris Spassky. This gave the chess community the shot in the arm it had been missing for so long. Was the inception of the Lansing Christian School chess club somehow symbolic of the chess world's reju-venation? Maybe. Has the experience in our school been rewarding? Absolutely!

Why Chess?

Why have state legislators in New York and New Jersey promoted a bill to make chess part of their state's academic curriculum? What inherent value does this little game possess? What possible benefits could be derived from such a radical proposal?

Richard L. Brodsky, a New York assemblyman, says that "research over the last 20 years shows that chess helps develop clearer thinking, better concentration, a greater sense of responsibility and higher self-esteem among children. Chess is an incredibly inexpensive, effective tool that cuts across lines of race, class, and geography. All the things that divide people in education fall before chess" (*Chicago Tribune*).

Research from the New York City Schools Chess Program (see sidebar) suggested that chess can be used to teach the value of hard work, concentration, and commitment while helping students take responsibility for their own actions. These benefits seem compatible with Christian school values. The social benefits are present as well. A sense of respect and acceptance surrounds these matches. Boys and girls compete and interact through chess. I find it beautiful to watch the opposite sexes push aside their hormones and awkwardness for a game of chess. The competition tests and reinforces community skills for students, teachers, and coaches alike. An adult may be humbled when one's student emerges victorious over his or her mentor, yet a great sense of pride wells up inside when this occurs.

Gaining mastery in something helps students feel good about themselves, which happens to be a part of the learning process. The complexity found in chess rivals any Nintendo or computer game. It makes verb conjugation and geometric theorems look like search-a-word puzzles. Success at any level in chess proves to the student that he or she can tackle difficult problems with concentration and persistence.

U.S. Chess Federation
186 Route 9W
New Windsor, NY 12553
(914) 562-8350

International inquiries are welcomed.

Chess Club

Many schools find the idea of teaching chess in the classroom outlandish. However, viable options are available for incorporating chess into a school's intrascholastic offerings.

Some schools have organized chess clubs that meet after school hours at the same time as sports practice. Parents and teachers are usually the catalysts for these programs if they can arrange the time.

Some schools carry activity or exploratory periods in their school days or allow a chess club to meet during study hall time. A colleague of mine offered her students the opportunity to play chess once their homework was completed. We expanded that oppor-

Parents and children nervously await the beginning of the tournament.

tunity into a club last year.

Initially, our group met during study hall for two days each week. I secured permission from the parents of the students involved because chess took the place of homework and study time. We watched instructional videos and pored over handouts. Once the students felt comfortable with the rules and simple strategy, they began a series of friendly matches with each other. Eventually we held a club tournament, over the period of a few weeks. The top six finalists were selected to play against students from a nearby Christian school in an afternoon competition. These finalists loved the excitement created from this meeting, and the students not selected were envious of their classmates' encounter.

Contestants make final notes before the match.

I toyed with the wild idea of organizing a team for the upcoming junior high national tournament to be held in Chicago during our spring break. When my principal sanctioned this idea with both his blessing and the entry fee, we followed the top four players in junior high through yet another tournament. They spent two days of their vacation playing chess against junior high students from around the country. Their games took anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours. They got whooped a few times, but they also won some matches.

Getting Started

The U.S. Chess Federation is a valuable resource for any teacher or parent wishing to further investigate the game of chess. This organization provides tips on starting and maintaining a chess club, magazines for beginning and advanced chess enthusiasts, and a catalogue of books and equipment. Most department and toy stores carry chess sets for as little as $4.00. Local chess clubs can also offer support with advice and possibly guest speakers. The book *Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess* is a time-tested classic for beginning players.

Paramount to the whole idea is a person's willingness to invest the time and energy necessary for a meaningful program. As you close out this school year and prepare for the next, consider the possibility of a chess club for your students. You may have the next Bobby Fischer sitting in your classroom right now.

Jeff Fennema teaches seventh grade language arts and coaches at Lansing Christian School in Lansing, Illinois.

Just a Game?

Between 1986-1990, the New York City Schools Chess Program showed that chess can accomplish the following benefits:

-promote a sense of self-confidence and self-worth
-dramatically improve a child's ability to think rationally
-increase cognitive skills
-improve communication skills and pattern recognition
-result in higher grades, especially in English and math
-build a sense of team spirit
-teach the value of hard work, concentration, and commitment
-help students take responsibility for their own actions and accept the consequences
-teach students to try their best to win while accepting defeat with grace
-provide an intellectual, competitive forum through which children can assert aggressiveness in an acceptable way
-instill a sense of intellectual success that encourages a child to try other demanding endeavors
-provide bright youngsters with an opportunity to use their intelligence in an exciting, rewarding, and continuing way
-allow girls to compete with boys on a non-threatening, socially acceptable plane
-help children make friends more easily because it provides an easy, safe forum for gathering and discussing
-allow students and teachers to view each other in a more sympathetic way

New York City Schools Chess Program (Manhattan Chess Club School), Description and Findings, 1990.

SEARCH and Gifted Education

A Two-Year Report

Mary Lynn Colosimo and Michael VanderWeele

"It was amazing to see these kids brainstorm ideas from the books they had read—or written—but the best part of the two weeks was watching them learn to cooperate, to work out ideas together, to find what I would call creative compromises." The comment came from the teacher of dramatic puppetry, Charmaine Spencer, talking at the wrap-up session for the second annual session of SEARCH.

SEARCH, the acronym for Students Excited about Reaching Creative Heights, as far as we know, is the first gifted education summer program associated with a Reformed Christian college or with local Christian Schools International (CSI) schools. SEARCH classes are designed for highly motivated students who have been recommended by their teachers and parents and who test at or above 95% on achievement tests or 130 on IQ tests. Our program at Trinity Christian College enables students to study a particular interest area in greater depth and at a faster pace than is usually possible during a school year. We try to offer a broad spectrum of classes that will appeal to students of various kinds of giftedness and interests, ranging from math and science to history and foreign languages to writing and the arts.

Our first year (1992) we needed 80 students to break even, that is, if the director would receive no salary and the teachers would agree to minimal start-up salaries. We were blessed with 152 students from grades 1-8. The second year 231 students enrolled from grades 2-9, which affirmed for us that a need was being met. A description of the program's context, goals, problems, and blessings may be helpful for administrators and teachers interested in gifted education.

But first, here is a sampling of what we heard at a wrap-up session with teachers: Two classes on the city (second/third and fourth/fifth graders) argued over and worked out changes as a forested river front changed to an Indian village, then to a frontier settlement, then to a town, and finally to a city. A class on insects and spiders constructed and set up artificial webs out of synthetic and natural materials, wrote up the process and results, and sent their research to *Young Entomologists.* A math class designed a survey of small businesses in the local community and constructed word problems based on their results. For other work, they used a math text that gave no correct answers in the teacher's or students' editions, which led to heated debate and eventual consensus. The teacher said that students often were so involved in developing math strategies that they "forgot I was in the room."

The Write-On class commissioned the class on the history and making of paper to design the cover for their anthology of writings; and the paper-making class, in turn, commissioned the calligraphy class to write the titles. A seventh-grade researcher, in a debate class, having been instructed in the importance of working quietly in the library, did a fast walk out of the stacks in pursuit of his instructor and proclaimed in the loudest whisper he could muster, "I found it! I found it!" A eureka moment had taken him by surprise in the library. Second and third graders performed "Music Around the World" and worked not only on the songs but also on the instruments, customs, costumes, dances, and maps of the countries of Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. An older group did "America in Song" but didn't make it past the 1930s because the students were so enamored by early whaling songs. The list could go on. There were twenty-five courses in all, most of them enrolling between ten to fourteen students.

Goals

Our first goal was to help students identify and respond to intellectual challenges in the knowledge that they themselves are an integral part of God's good but fallen creation. This meant that teachers were more often mentors and guides than note-givers and testers. We also wanted to emphasize group work and social involvement for this group of students. Social skills of gifted students cannot be taken for granted. We wanted them to feel part of a larger group working on a common cause but with individual talents. We also encouraged multicultural experiences, both in the content of courses and in the make-up of participants. This included putting together students from private and public schools, from city and suburbs. Our final goal was to keep the cost reasonable, not to let the program exclude students on an economic basis.

Problems

The most difficult problem to resolve (in fact, it may be unresolvable) is screening students into and out of the program in ways that everyone recognizes as fair. Whatever test one chooses will have some arbitrary elements to it, and different schools use different tests. Junior high programs for the gifted usually resort to SAT scores, but that, of course, is not possible when working with elementary students. Arts education presented another question about entrance criteria. Though we have many courses in the arts, we have not developed a separate set of entrance criteria for artistic giftedness. We have used the arts, instead, as a great opportunity for problem solving and group work for academically gifted students, many of whom have been artistically gifted as well. Teacher and parent recommendations usually are quite close, but sometimes we have had to interpret a considerable discrepancy between what one writes and what the other writes. We now allow parents to

send in scores and recommendations from one of the last two years instead of from the last year alone.

Other problems include finding teachers for all areas, developing a multicultural environment, getting adequate funding, exercising quality control, and, occasionally, working with parents whose goals are quite different from our own. Teachers have been most difficult to find in math and science. In the first year space science sparked great interest among both boys and girls, but there were only two girls in the elementary math class and none in the junior high class. Achieving multi-cultural student participation, and creating an atmosphere in which that participation is rewarding, is also a regular challenge, though one we think we've faced quite well.

Occasionally parents and grandparents have a radically different agenda from our own. Thankfully, most are more interested in keeping their children's interests alive than in developing bragging rights. Funding is always a problem, but so can be quality control when trying to get teachers from many different schools and backgrounds. So far we have been blessed with very good teachers, even when we knew less about them and their recommenders than we would have liked.

Blessings

The program could not have begun without the dedication of the director and teachers, which translated into volunteerism for her and self-sacrifice for them. Teachers who did or still do teach in other gifted education programs commented frequently about the strong organization and the good spirit of the program. If it's true that new programs come out of the life-blood of one or another enthusiast, then that enthusiast for us was the director of the program, who worked for a year without any guarantee of remuneration. Though salary for teachers was limited, she found other means of encouragement: an on-site childcare program for the teachers' children, a letter of recommendation to teachers' principals or school boards, efficient meetings, professional organization, respect, and adequate social opportunities for teachers to interact with each other. These opportunities included a pre-SEARCH meeting for information and motivation, a mid-week picnic, a final luncheon and wrap-up session to give closure to this year's program and opportunity for committee members to hear teachers' suggestions for the next year. Several teachers commented on their evaluations that the salary was a bonus; the real reward was teaching excited children in a professionally-run organization.

The initial enthusiasm of the teachers was usually met and frequently surpassed by the students. The team for radio theater, Dave and Chris Jousma, has done radio theater in the Midwest Radio Theater Workshop and improvisation in Chicago comedy clubs. Their students' final performance was conducted in the radio studio of the Back to God Hour. Chris and Dave talked about a junior high student who felt more like a peer to them, who, once they gave him an idea, ran out ahead of them. At the same time, one fourth grade student turned to his mother after the first week of radio theater and said, "Well, they sure are right, Mom, about kids reaching creative heights! SEARCH is great!"

Music instructor Deb Hatmaker, who team-taught with her husband, Ted, also talked about students who soaked up everything she could give them. Lesson plans that had lasted for a month in school were completed in a day. Students learned the multiple rhythms of African music or learned simultaneously to sing, dance, and play the instruments for a Japanese song. Steve Wiersum, who had directed a children's theater in Colorado before finishing up his teaching degree at Trinity, told of students memorizing and preparing Walt Whitman's "I Hear America Singing" in half an hour while it had taken his advanced juniors four days to complete the same work during the previous semester.

In the second year we managed, working through Trinity, to get fifteen scholarships for students from schools with predominantly African-American or Hispanic students, increasing our ability to establish a multi-cultural environment for SEARCH. For a sign language class, offered for the first time this year, we were able to team a sign teacher and a mother of a deaf child, which greatly encouraged the mother and made the importance of signing more obvious to the students. In junior high math we found a female instructor completing her master's work in math education. Her emphasis on strategies over computation and her enthusiasm for her field were exactly what we wanted. Thankfully, seven of the fourteen math students were female and seven were male, a better split than our first year, when only two of the fifteen students were female, despite the course being geared to younger students.

The support of parents has also been important to the life of SEARCH. One mom, whose twin children were in the program, wrote on her evaluation form, "It was very refreshing to watch the enthusiasm on all of the children's faces as they were dropped off in the morning. They couldn't wait to get to class! My children were so enthusiastic. It was a very pleasurable experience for all of us." Other parents commented on the small class sizes, the field trips or extended-day activities, mixed age groups, hands-on experiences, a wholesome Christian spirit, a well-organized and friendly program, and their children's association with motivated students from many different backgrounds.

Director, teachers, networking, learning environments, parents—these are some of the blessings we experienced in SEARCH last year. The final one we'll mention also closed SEARCH '93. It was a liturgy of praise using Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem "God's Grandeur" to trace the themes of creation, fall, and redemption. Students from many of the SEARCH classes led the liturgy as it wove through music and prayer, slides of art work, dramatic readings, responses of parents and grandparents, and class presentations of praise to God. It seemed like the right framework for conducting a gifted education program.

Mary Lynn Colosimo is a part-time member of the education department and Michael VanderWeele is a member of the English department at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois.

Of Caterpillars and William Shakespeare

Nancy Wade Zappulla

Even before she exploded into my classroom, I could hear her. "Mrs. Zappulla-a-a-a!" surged into the room, and I braced myself for the inevitable yarn. Every day she came in with some Bunyanesque story about passing out or losing her purse or breaking up with the most recent "real-true-love-of-my-life." A vise grip on the chair before me, tightly clenched jaws, the ritual response of "No, you may not"—these were my regular preparations for the explosion of this particular sophomore into room 206.

Sure enough, on this spring day, she announced her presence vocally before she actually arrived. I braced myself, and far too quickly, here she came. With a gaggle of her current best friends, she dashed in, all of them jabbering at a machine-gun rate. For a second I just watched them—arms waving and mouths working feverishly. Soon, however, my reflexive teacher responses kicked in, and I held up my hands to slow things down. "Wait, wait, wait! Somebody tell me what's going on," was what I said, but what I was thinking was "QUIET!!!" The noise level dropped just a bit, and Toni was pushed forward.

"Look, Mrs. Zappulla, look what I brought you! Isn't it cute? It looks *just like you*!" Propelled by the elbows of her comrades, she revealed my special gift. Latecomers joined the crowd, and within a few minutes all twenty-six sophomores were laughing and making those "Aw-w-w!" sounds so favored by adolescent females—and all at *it!*

It was a bright-green caterpillar made of soft rubber. Standing about four inches tall, its oversized glasses were perched on chubby cheeks underneath a bright blue baseball cap. With a face-splitting grin the little green thing looked over an open book. The overwhelming consensus of the third hour English class was that it was most certainly me.

With a smile more theater than life, I thanked Toni and began my regular "quiet-'em-down" routine. Here I was, my thoughts whirled as I instructed various students to sit down and stop talking, working harder than any teacher ought to have to work during the last weeks of April, and I had to deal with kids like Toni. One prone to interrupt prayer request time regularly with "show-and-tell" stories or wails of "I can't find my literature book!", she lived life teetering on the edge of disaster. Teaching "Julius Caesar" was strenuous enough without another day of Toni.

Having gathered the class's attention, I called out, "Okay everybody, turn to page 348 and let's get ready. Today we're going to read this scene in the Shakespearean language. I know, I know, you haven't had time to practice, but let's just give it a try."

I kept my fingers crossed as I surveyed the upshot arms and tried to imagine who would desecrate the Shakespearean language the least. Amidst the waggling arms, Toni's was the most conspicuous. "Me, me. Let me do it. I can, Mrs. Zappulla, I can. Please let me do it!" To stop the flood of words, I smiled thinly and said, "Okay, Toni, you can be Cassius."

The students chosen to participate straggled to the front, bumping into one another and asking, "Where are we?" With another theatrical smile I launched the scene, and off they went. The reading was halting and painful to hear, but at least they were reading Shakespeare before their classmates in an upright position. Focusing on this exhilarating event, I was not prepared for Toni's Cassius.

Toni the flighty was reading the scene with clarity and understanding. She was doing all of those things that English teachers obsess about—reading to the punctuation and taking it slowly and thinking about the words. Gradually the students also noticed the phenomenon, and the whispering died down. Toni and her Brutus continued their reading, oblivious of the effect they were creating. At the end of the scene the room filled with applause and the familiar shouts of "All right!" as everyone reacted to this unexpectedly competent Toni.

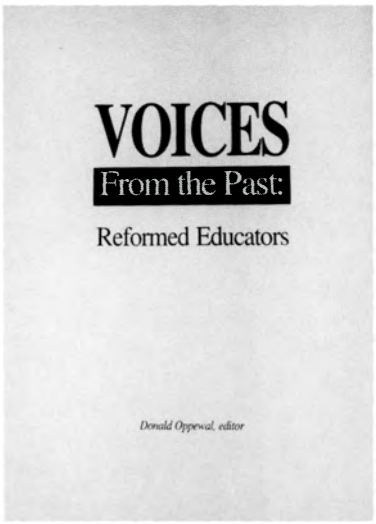
That scene lodged in my mind, sometimes because other students would ask about the caterpillar on my desk, but more often because of the element of surprise. I had not been surprised that Toni would give me a bright green caterpillar because she thought it looked like me. That fit perfectly my expectations of her. I was, however, flabbergasted at her ability to read a very difficult piece of literature with no preparation.

Then, as Toni read so beautifully, an awful truth slammed into my consciousness. I, the teacher who glibly lectured younger colleagues on the importance of the student as an individual, could slam a door in the face of this student. I could expect her to be the crazy one without allowing her to be the shining one. I could stop at the facade without seeking for the soul within. I could do exactly what I had done that day—be a respecter of persons, assigning seats of importance at my English banquet table.

So I have placed the bright green caterpillar on my desk to serve both as a rebuke and as a reminder of the wondrous creativity of our God in his creation of sophomore girls. I have also requested new eyes with which to view all of my Toni's from now on. Tomorrow when I return to my classroom, I promise to peer more intently past the exterior and beyond the customary behavior. I will more vigorously avoid that sloth of spirit that permits such blindness and will, with equal energy, pursue the hidden treasure that is Toni.

Say, would you like to read some Shakespeare with me?

Nancy Wade Zappulla teaches secondary English at Lynchburg Christian Academy in Lynchburg, Virginia.



Voices from the Past: Reformed Educators

Donald Oppewal, editor

University Press of America, 1994, 207 pp.

Reviewed by Greg Mellema, Chair of the Philosophy Department, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

This volume brings together an outstanding selection of writing on Christian approaches to education. All of the authors address the subject from a Reformed perspective and represent a tradition that has been surprisingly influential in shaping educational thought in Protestant evangelical circles. Most of the selections in this book appeared either in a periodical some time ago or in a book or monograph that is no longer in print. Donald Oppewal, editor of the collection, is to be congratulated for the extraordinary efforts he made to obtain the rights to publish these materials and gather them into this anthology.

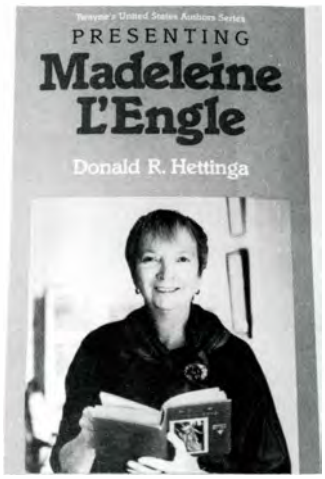
The book begins with selections by W. Harry Jellema and Henry Zylstra, both of whom represent a traditionalist approach to Christian education. This approach emphasizes subject matter; in addition to understanding the Christian mind, students must become learned through studying languages (ideally Greek and Latin), reading the great books, and acquiring a depth of exposure to the great ideas of western culture. Representing an opposing point of view are several selections by Cornelius Jaarsma, who followed the lead of Herman Bavinck in articulating a decidedly progressivist, child-centered philosophy. In this approach the teacher begins by taking account of needs and interests of the individual learners rather than covering a certain amount of material from a predetermined curriculum. And two chapters from Henry Beversluis's venerable book, *Christian Philosophy of Education,* are included, representing a third approach.

Rather than endorsing the ideas of the traditionalists or the progressivists across the board, Beversluis builds a Christian philosophy of education by borrowing the best that both sides have to offer. Those who are unsure about whether it is well advised for Christians to follow the path of eclecticism in designing a philosophy of education will find that Beversluis makes a persuasive case for his point of view.

Already there is enough worthwhile content in *Voices* to form the nucleus of a course in Christian philosophy of education. But this volume also includes selections by Nicholas Wolterstorff, Louis Berkhof, Paul Scotchmer, Doug Blomberg, Peter De Boer, and Donald Oppewal, as well as excerpts from *Christian Liberal Arts Education,* a volume prepared by the Calvin College Curriculum Committee in the late 1960s.

A collection of this type will almost inevitably leave out selections that certain readers would like to have seen included. Thus, some Canadian readers may be disappointed that the volume includes no writings by those associated with the Institute for Christian Studies (Calvin Seerveld's "Cultural Objectives for the Christian Teacher" might be a good candidate for inclusion in a later edition) or Canadian Christian colleges. But, all things considered, the editor has produced a collection that can be commended for the rich diversity of its contents. And people both inside and outside of the Reformed tradition who are concerned about approaching education from a Christian perspective can be grateful that these readings have been made available.

Speaking as one who has used this collection in teaching courses on the philosophy of education, I can attest to its benefits. I recommend it to all supporters of Christian education who would seek to know more about its underlying principles. Those who take the time to read the essays in this volume will surely acquire an added depth of understanding.



Presenting Madeleine L'Engle

Donald R. Hettinga

New York: Twayne Publishers, Macmillan, 1993. $20.95

Reviewed by Lorna Van Gilst, Associate Professor of English, Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa.

For fifty years Madeleine L'Engle has been touching the lives of readers with her special gift of storytelling, a gift from God, she says, for understanding the world and living creatively rather than fearfully.

Recognizing L'Engle's extraordinary contribution to the developing genre of adolescent literature, Twayne Publishers include her in their Young Adult Author Series of biocritical studies of every leading contemporary young adult author in the United States. In this volume Donald R. Hettinga, professor of English at Calvin College, aptly notes L'Engle's insistence that young adult literature isn't just for young adults. Though her young protagonists question the pain in their lives rather than simply surviving, they process that pain in complex ways, often the ways L'Engle herself did.

Early in the book Hettinga provides a full chronology of L'Engle's life and works. Equally helpful for teachers and critics is the bibliography of L'Engle's primary works – novels, nonfiction, and essays – and secondary works – interviews, articles, and books. He also lists selected book reviews of twelve books he discusses in detail. If in earlier chapters readers suspect Hettinga of being too enamored by L'Engle's strengths, by the final chapter they will realize that he takes an even-handed approach.

Clearly, Hettinga admires L'Engle's handling of pain and death in her novels as she searches for understanding of truth through the use of story. He acknowledges the various points on which critics judge L'Engle's theology, particularly in her fantasy and nonfiction works. Hettinga reviews the criticisms, but he lets L'Engle herself defend those views by providing quotes from her own works that discuss the connection between her writing and her faith. She insists she is not a universalist, yet she says Christians see Christ everywhere. Hettinga acknowledges the theological confusion that arises from her emphasis on the loving nature of God that leads her to say the whole creation will be redeemed. But he supports L'Engle's unwillingness to limit God to human explanation.

From this overarching discussion on L'Engle's sense of story, Hettinga goes on to trace the principal themes in most of L'Engle's primary works of fiction, starting with her controversial 1963 Newbery winner, *A Wrinkle in Time*, and the other two books in the time trilogy. As he points out the strengths of the circular rather than linear quest pattern of the characters, Hettinga comes to L'Engle's defense against those who question their free movement through time and space. He resurrects the Greek origin of *kairos*, God's time (as contrasting with *chronos*, ordinary time) and the Scottish origin of *kything*, communicating without words, which L'Engle discovered in her grandfather's old Scottish dictionary. And Hettinga commends L'Engle's handling of the uniformity of evil in the universe and the need for self-sacrifice in order for love to bring victory over evil. Hettinga's careful analysis of structural elements of the series lends weight to his defense of L'Engle's characters as heroic servants who risk their lives in self-sacrifice.

For the Austin series too, Hettinga commends L'Engle's accurate portrayal of difficult and unanswerable questions, to parallel the maturity of her protagonists. The O'Keefe novels he finds somewhat less believable; good and evil are too obviously delineated. Nevertheless, Hettinga defends L'Engle's sensitive treatment of complex issues, such as dealing with homosexuality and promiscuity.

And he is openly complimentary of L'Engle's successful fictional recreations of stories from the Bible.

L'Engle's three earliest novels Hettinga finds less than convincing, however, particularly *Camilla* and *And Both Were Young*, largely because they fall into the pattern of formulaic romance novels.

He is not purely objective; nor is he indifferent. He shows us the writer's life and the writer's art, cast in a way that we can see the weaknesses if we look for them. But he concentrates on L'Engle's depth of thought, the rich texture of her work, and her conviction that she has a responsibility to address the spiritual dimension of human experience in a broken world.

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