

#### CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL

A medium of expression for the Calvinistic school movement in the United States and Canada

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#### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Christian Educators Journal Association, composed of several member or sponsoring organizations, publishes the Journal on a quarterly basis as a channel of communication for all educators committed to the idea of parentally controlled Christian schools, whether at the elementary, secondary, or the college The general purpose of the Journal is to foster the continuing improvelevel. ment of educational theory and practice in Christian schools. Therefore, its pages are an open forum for significant articles and studies by Christian educators on Christian teaching. Editorial policy favors those contributions that are normative and evaluative rather than merely descriptive of existing trends and practices in American education. All articles and editorials appearing in it are to be regarded as the expression of the viewpoint of the writers and not as the official position of the Christian Educators Journal Association or its member organizations.

Business correspondence concerning subscriptions to the Journal or membership in the Association should be sent to the Business Manager. Subscription price is \$ 2.00 for four issues per year.

Correspondence concerning articles or book reviews should be addressed to the editor of the appropriate department or to the Managing Editor.

# METO THEE ducators anaging

As anyone can see, the Journal has outgrown its former mold. Like the Chambered Nautilus of Holmes' poem, it has grown into "more stately mansions," at least in terms of more elaborate format and organization. Just how stately it becomes depends on a number of factors, not the least of which is your willingness as an on-the-firing-line educator to give the rest of us the benefit of your battle experience.

The change, and, hopefully, growth has come about as a result of both transfusions and infusions: transfusions of money for our 'Nautilus' to feed on and infusions of editorial energy to shape and fill the new 'Chamber.' This has made feasible a number of changes, both in the administrative structure of the body publishing the Journal, and in the financial structure and format.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE

As the masthead of this issue indicates, 'the Association publishing this journal is now made up entirely of member organizations, each of which supports the Journal with money and Editorial Board members. These member organizations consist of teacher groups or educational institutions with a particular interest in the improvement of the teaching profession and Christian education. The present member organizations are: the Midwest Christian Teachers Association, Calvin College, and the National Union of Christian Schools. Other associations interested are invited to correspond with the Business Manager, who is listed in the masthead of this issue.

#### FORMAT CHANGE

Another important change, made possible by increased finances, is in a greater editorial division of labor. The Journal will now be composed of five separate sections, each with its own editor responsible for assigning and receiving manuscripts, book reviews, letters to the editor, etc. Four of these are curriculum areas, with one section devoted to matters of profession-wide concern. This division of labor and this format should guarantee not only a wider use of writing talent in the Christian School movement, but also

a broader coverage in each issue of the problems and topics of concern to educators.

The use of the graphic arts to brighten the appearance of the pages and to underscore the meanings of the sections and articles is a further change informat. Such improvement was also made possible by increased income from member organizations.

#### **FUNCTION CHANGE**

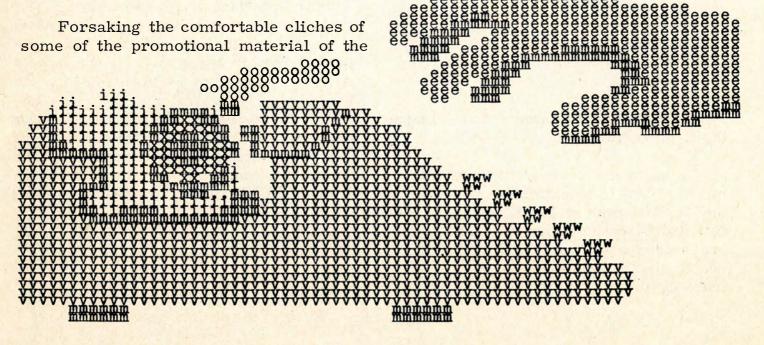
Lastly, and most significantly I believe, the Editorial Board has revised the central function of the Journal. We have decided to become more explicitly provocative and lively. We plan to concen-✓ trate our energies on what the Editorial Board calls the normative-evaluative dimension of educational trends and policies. We aim to be lively and controversial, with our pedantry and or profundity couched in lively language. While we want no irresponsible journalism or attacks upon people or institutions, we hold it our function to be critical and evaluative in regard to the Christian schools which we serve. We plan to include in our scope the whole American educational scene, examining trends to see which we should as Christian educators follow and which resist.

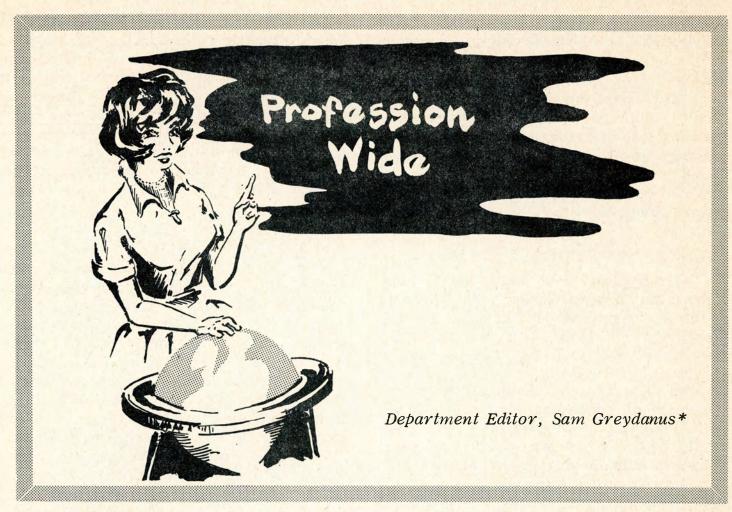
Christian School movement, we hope to be constructively critical. We have no official axes to grind, campaigns to conduct, or programs to promulgate, but rather play to provide an open forum for the carrying on of a fruitful dialogue about our common task. The articles and reviews carried in this issue begin to reflect this critical-evaluative function, and we solicit from our readers more of the same.

#### CLOSING COMPLIMENT

A special verbal bouquet should go to two persons who have labored to bring the Journal to this point. For three years of publication Dr. John Van Bruggen as Editor and Mr. Nicholas Yff as Business Manager have struggled manfully with meager funds and minimum manuscript to get to press. Since both are leaving these positions, readers of these pages should know the debt of gratitude they and the present Board owe these two. While they were backed and assisted by an unofficial Board, the burden of the work fell on them. The present staff will do well if it can make the gains in the next three years that they made in the past.

D.O.





# A HIGHER DEGREE IS EVERY TEACHER'S BUSINESS

A consolation prize for unsuccessful Ph. D's?

A stepping-stone for teachers to earn more money?

An automatic reward for plowing through the fifth year of college?

These were some of the caustic remarks found in an article on the value of the M.A. degree in the February 1, 1964 issue of Education Summary. The article urged graduate schools to insist that the recipient of a master's degree should be trained for and actually do some respec-

table research. I might agree with the premise that the M.A. program is being increasingly downgraded. I disagree with the conclusion that the emphasis should be on research.

What is the value of advanced degrees to our Christian school movement? Assuredly, we want better teachers and at the moment the only yardstick for measuring "better teachers" on the salary scale is an M.A. or a Ph.D. degree.

To the extent that those who study for advanced degrees take a variety of courses in the humanities and sciences that enable them to become master teachers, the programs help us. To the extent that

\*Introducing the department editor: Mr. Samuel Greydanus, A.B. Calvin College, M.A. University of Edinburgh, post-masters work at University of Washington, has had teaching experience at both the junior and senior high level in both public and Christian school systems, including Cannonsburg, Michigan, public, Oakdale Christian in Grand Rapids, and Holland Christian High.

those who study for advanced degrees conduct research on some minute aspect of human knowledge, the programs are of doubtful value in the teaching needs of our schools.

Is the ability to do research the greatest single qualification in becoming



a master teacher? General medical practioners do not receive the M.D. degree because they have done exhaustive research on one part of the human body. It is difficult to see the value of intensive research on the history of Italy from 1850 to 1860 for one who will teach all the history courses in one of our schools. It seems equally irrelevant for a pastor to study one aspect of some person's theology if he intends to minister to a local congregation. Is the ability to do research the criterion for success in teaching?

You will note that the people in mind in this article are the general practioners: the family doctor, the pastor of an average church, the general teacher in our schools. Certainly we need researchers in medicine, theology, and education. As Calvinists we see all research as adding to the glory of God and the fulfillment of our cultural mandate.

Why not be realistic? We have our own schools, our own body of teachers, our own colleges, our own qualified leaders. Let us set up in broad terms programs for advanced study that will prepare master teachers for our schools. Give the degree Master of Christian Education or any other appropriate name you

prefer. Our schools are entirely free to honor this degree in their evaluations of teachers and in their salary schedule.

#### SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The M.C. E. program very likely would consist of three broad areas. First, there would be the professional courses required for recognized mastery of the teacher's field. Probably many of these courses would be taken in the graduate schools of recognized universities, although the choice of courses would be somewhat in control of our colleges awarding the degree. We want competent teachers. A teacher of first grade should have wide knowledge of the theories of teaching reading as well as the psychology and pedagogy needed to best teach sixyear-olds. A chemistry teacher in high school should be a master of the field of chemistry as well as being an able counsellor and curriculum builder,

Second, there would be a required period of successful teaching. The degree should not become "an automatic reward for plowing through a fifth year of college." Holders of this degree should not be paper-master-of-arts who have never faced a classroom.

Third, there would be the distinctive courses that we desire for teachers in our schools. After some experience in actual teaching, the teachers will be able to come to clearer understandings of the Christian approach to their fields as well as the raison d'être of our parental system. If one aspires to be a master teacher in our schools, he should be willing to grapple with the difficult problems of making his courses and our schools distinctive.

But we want even more of our master teachers. They will be leaders in our churches and communities. They should



broaden their outlook by including courses in sociology, Communism, theology, economics, curriculum studies, and scholastic areas other than their majors. They should be able to give guidance in applying biblical principles to many areas of life. No Christian teacher should be merely a subject matter specialist.

It may be wise to require the renewal of this degree by taking a certain program of courses every decade or face the alternative of having the honor rescinded. The problems that face the educator and problems that face the Christian are not solved forever by getting a degree. A master teacher in 1974 cannot rest on the laurels he gained in 1954.

Who is in a position to initiate such a radical idea as this? It is unlikely that a college would, since it cannot dictate to school boards. School boards could start such a movement by offering incentives for a certain program of courses. But school boards are not likely to see the problem or this suggested solution.

The Christian teaching profession itself is the best qualified to show leadership in exploring any program that would lead to better teaching. A staff of a school or a teachers' or principals' club of an area could set up a tentative program and ask their boards to honor it.

#### MEETING THE OBJECTIONS

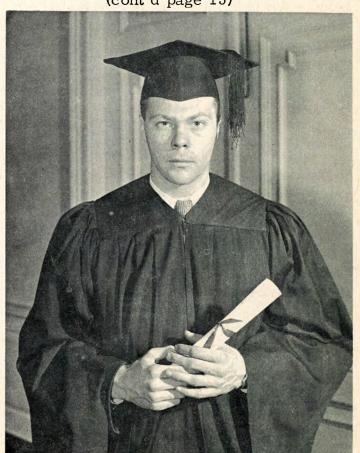
Is this to be the end of M.A. and Ph.D. degrees among us? Are we to be

totally ingrown with only our own advanced program? Of course not. There will be those who wish to pursue a program entirely different from that which we could offer. Others will need degrees for positions that require them.

Most of our teachers and administrators will remain in our schools. My contention is that these will be better served by a program that will promote academic excellence and will also promote the spiritual values for which we have established our schools. It is not in the best interest of our schools to have all advanced training taken at non-Christian universities where the distinctiveness of the undergraduate courses at our colleges is absent.

The program must be wisely constructed. The requirements for permanent certification must be met. The professional courses recommended to the

(cont'd page 15)



Underwood photo



#### Dear Editor:

As a knucklehead in the field of education, and some people think in other fields also, I would like to ask a question. Perhaps the answer is very easy; however, I cannot find it in the education primers that I am able to understand.

My problem is this. In trying to learn something about the psychology of learning, I read about Plato and how he tried to understand the mechanism of an idea going into a child's head. I also read about John Locke and the formal discipline, then about the transfer of ideas, the association of ideas, innate ideas. I read about Hall's theory of "cartharsis," structuralism, functionalism, Gestaltism, and other "isms." Now then tell me, when a teacher stands in front of her class and prays that the Lord will help the children learn or remember what they have learned, which of these psychological mechanisms is the Holy Spirit going to use? Does He have His choice, or does He have an "ism" of His own?

I hope this is not too troublesome for you. Perhaps one of your staff or readers could give me the answer. Please write the answer in simple terms as I do not always dig educational shop talk.

Thank you, C. J. De Boer, M. D. Grandville, Michigan

The question posed by Dr. De Boer, president of the N.U.C.S., is a penetrating one. The answer we give it will to a degree determine the "distinctiveness" of our education. Letters, book reviews, and essays in reply are most welcome. — EDITOR



Department Editor, Roger Bratt\*

A voluminous amount of work has been done and is being done in the revision of science and mathematics programs for use in the elementary and secondary schools of the United States. The necessity of some innovations became apparent during the last decade when the pendulum of emphasis in education swung decisively toward mathematics and science. reaction, was, to a great degree, pragmatic as the nation sought to steady and defend itself against a potential scientific monster. The image of the scientist was projected as the savior of our civilization, and the burden of creating men with "the key" fell on the schools.

The tremors of this "educational quake" and in some cases the shock waves have been felt in our Christian schools across the country. Our schools struggle with problems such as: "Should we intro-

duce the 'new math'?" and "Is 'new biology' vital to our curriculum? and "Is our elementary science program satisfactory?" We grope with the problem of determining whether the philosophy underlying these new programs dove-tails with our philosophy of Christian education. We attempt to discern whether these new programs are of greater academic value than the traditional programs in which most of our teachers have been traired.

Thus the fields of science and mathematics are demanding critical thought and evaluation by our teachers. Mathematics-Science section of the Christian Educators Journal will reflect the ideas and convictions of our teachers concerning methods and philosophy of education in these fields. We invite--we challenge our readers to examine the articles presented in this section with a critical eye. The opportunity is here presented for you as educators to communicate with each other as we continue to attempt to solve problems of education in the fields of science and mathematics for our schools.

Introducing the department editor: Roger Bratt, the new editor of this section, has specialized in biology throughout his teaching career. He has the A.B. from Calvin College, and an M.A. in progress at Western Michigan University. Last year he attended an NSF institute in science. He has taught junior high at Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and is presently biology teacher at the new Calvin Christian High School in Grandville, Michigan.

# LET'S THINK ABOUT JUNIOR HIGH SCIENCE

--Gordon Bouman\*

This article will list a few random thoughts on science in the junior high school. In no case is a complete discussion given. The ideas presented are not final but are intended to be thought about and then challenged or accepted.

#### WHY?

A question that junior high school science teachers should always be aware of is why science is taught in the junior high school. Three thoughts come to mind as part of an answer.

Science is taught in the junior high school in order to form an adequate foundation for the more formal and specialized sciences taught in high school. The student then enters high school with some feeling for, and some appreciation and knowledge of "general" science.

Careful thought must be given to junior high science because for many students this may be the last science class they will have. Some science (biology) may be taken in high school, but many science areas (physical and earth sciences) are not taken by the high school student. Therefore, the junior high science teacher has the "last chance," as far as many of his pupils are concerned, to help them to be able to interpret life in the age of science.

Finally, science should be taught in the junior high school for a very well known, even overworked, yet inescapable bit of thinking in which we often indulge. It is this: everyone should have a liberal arts education i.e., the educated person should be informed in many areas. The liberal arts argument is often used to support the

presence of the humanities in the curriculum, but I would like to reverse it now. For as large a part as science plays in our life, both the direct and the unthought of indirect effects, certainly we would be willing to spend a significant amount of time on science.

Yet how often is this view, which is easily accepted, violated? How long, for example, has it taken science to find a place alongside history or English in the junior high school curriculum? (And often the elementary school still places science in the "if we have time" category.) Even now science sometimes seems to be present as a concession to the recent spaceage emphasis instead of having a well-founded, legitimate position in the curriculum. Certainly no mathematical rational be established to compare science



with other subjects; however, in a practical way is one class period devoted to science each day out of five or six class periods inconsistent with what has been said?

It seems that on the high school level we also often fail to carry through on our thinking. When a person can pass through high school without having any science or very little in only one area, does such a

<sup>\*</sup>Mr. Bouman, A.B. Calvin College, teaches science and mathematics at Byron Center Christian School, Byron Center, Michigan. He has participated in National Science Foundation institutes at Purdue and Eastern Illinois Universities.

one possess a liberal arts education? Does this situation reflect a balanced perspective? Is this situation resulting from poor guidance given to students or a lack of conviction on the teacher's part?

#### WHAT?

The question of what to teach in the junior high school science class now comes. Again, permit a few thoughts on this topic.

The term general science is often used to describe the science taught in the junior high school. I take this to mean that unity from several major divisions of science are taught. This makes good sense since it would be an introduction to science and to things coming in high school sciences and also give an overview of science to those who will not take science in high school.

There are some areas which are often neglected or do not receive their proper recognition—namely the earth sciences. If we intend to carry out the program of a liberal arts education for all and to give the student some insight into all significant areas of science, then meteorology, astronomy, and geology ought to receive due recognition in the junior high general science class. Since the high school generally pays little attention to the earth sciences, it would be well to give special attention to them in the junior high school—within the ability of the student.

#### WHO?

One thought as to who should teach science arises from the above ideas. If the earth sciences are going to be taught and taught well, teachers who are well informed concerning them are needed. It is here that teacher training institutions can help by including the earth sciences in their course of study for prospective teachers. The fact that many teachers are ill prepared to teach the earth sciences may account largely for the fact that these

are often the forgotten sciences in our schools.

#### HOW?

History, people, places, and circumstances are not separate from science but often very closely related--for example the development of the atomic bomb involved all these factors. This relationship was and is of importance in and of itself both in understanding science and the people, places, and circumstances involved. Also, it can be a point of interest or contact for students whose first interest may not be science. A knowledge of this face of science will also result in a greater



appreciation of all that has gone on before us in order to have, know, and understand what we have today. Life, both individual and corporate, displays a unity, a relatedness, a continuity; it is not fragmented and isolated. This should be reflected, even taught, in our science classes.

A basic principle in learning is that pupils learn best by doing or using in a

significant way what has been learned in an academic way. Certainly a student attaches more meaning and significance to a lesson if he can see, handle, or do something in addition to talking, thinking, and writing about the subject. Any reasonable opportunity to provide a student with these experiences ought to be used. This does not mean that an elaborate outlay of equipment is needed. It does mean that teachers must be aware of every chance and every way to teach their students.

Often the tried, tested and tired procedure for laboratory work is used with limited results. (The ability to follow through from step one to step two, etc., is usually well learned, however.) The emphasis, of course, should be on learning and not on mere activity. Have teachers made effective use of the student's environment outside of the classroom for science learning? Questions and problems

which have not been investigated before can often be answered by junior high students. How many crickets are there in the backyard? or How much of the possible time did the sun shine last week? or What can be learned about ecology from a local stream or field? are possible questions for which the junior high student can devise methods of solution and experience the scientific attitude or method for himself. Such originality involves more than the facts in the textbook but challenges the student's imagination, observation, and ability to reason clearly. In this situation science as a way of thinking can be well learned. (This part of science is often neglected in deference to the facts of science.)

Teaching is not rigid or static; each day and class differ. Yet I trust that some ideas and thoughts have been offered that will apply to all junior high school science.

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# **BOOK REVIEW**

--Ben Johnson, Unity Christian High, Hudsonville, Michigan

### THE SCIENCES AND THE ARTS by Harold Gomes Cassidy

Why should college students who don't become scientists be required to study science? In answer to this question, chemistry professor Harold Gomes Cassidy seeks to increase the understanding of science by the artist (humanist) and of art by the scientist. He compares the sciences and the humanities, giving possible "cures of some present cultural ills." It is his belief that "a union of the sciences

and the arts can enable men to agree on what is practical, moral, and just."

At the outset of his book, Professor Cassidy considers Christianity to be standing in the way of a better understanding between science and art. He quotes the historian H. Butterfield to point out that science is no longer an insturment of the classics or Christianity, but that it is the power which is changing our culture. Christianity has become sidelined and becomes one of the almost forgotten humanities. A Christian educator cannot agree with Professor Cassidy's basic philosophy of education. By giving God predominance in the classroom, the educator creates a misunderstanding between science and art, or so believes Professor Cassidy.

The balanced response to science and art that he seeks centers in people who

(Cont'd p. 28)

### A Look at BSCS Biology

--Bernard Ten Broek\*

It has been five and one-half years since the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) was initiated by the American Institute of Biological Sciences. The results to date of the work of the BSCS committee are well known to most secondary school teachers of biology. three color-coded textbook and laboratory versions are available commercially for the second year. Other teaching materials have been and are being produced by the committee. Included in these are the Laboratory Blocks, the Biology Teachers' Handbook which includes the Invitation to Enquiry, and the Gifted Student Program materials. The impact which the BSCS approach will have on the teaching of biology is beginning to be felt. Other publishers are rushing new textbooks and laboratory manuals to press in order to compete in a changing market. Suppliers of laboratory materials have special catalogues and services for BSCS biology. Private film companies are producing films which complement materials both in the classroom and in the laboratory.

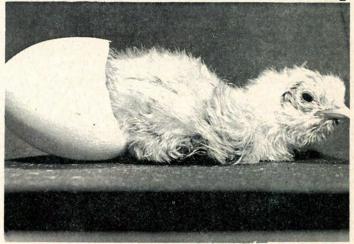
Several of our Christian high schools have adopted BSCS textbooks and laboratory manuals. Perhaps it is time that we take a hard look at this new approach to biology in reference to our own particular situation. Should our Christian high schools go along with this trend? There are several facets of the BSCS biology which should be studied in order to give a rational answer to the above question.

#### PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS

One important question which might be raised is, "What is unique about BSCS biology?" This approach to biology differs from the more traditional biology in shifting the emphasis from knowing the facts to knowing how the facts were and

\*Dr. Ten Broek, Ph. D., University of Colorado, is acting head of the biology department at Calvin College. He has also been an instructor in NSF In-service Institutes for science and mathematics teachers.

are being found out. This difference is clearly evident in the laboratory work which is investigatory in nature rather than being solely demonstrative. What makes this shift in emphasis significant is that this new approach is truer to the real nature of the discipline of biology. The traditional dogmatic presentation of biology gives the student a false conception of what biology really is. The well-worn cliche "Science is Doing" is essentially true and this must be impressed on our students. The end result of a course in BSCS biology is that the student does have a much more mature understanding



Harold M. Lambert

of the real meaning, significance, and limitations of science. Another significant change which BSCS biology initiates is a course of study which presents in balanced fashion all of the levels of organization inherent in biological systems. Traditionally, high school courses in biology emphasized the organ-tissue level of organization to the near or total exclusion of the molecular, cellular, population, community, and ecosystem levels.

There are some real problems incurred by the introduction of this new biology. Laboratory rooms must be better equipped with such services as sinks, gas outlets, and storage space. More sophisticated instrumentation for pursuing the

new levels of investigation is also a must. The teacher's basic attitudes must undergo a re-orientation. During the laboratory period the room is in a state of controlled bedlam rather than in the welldisciplined state in which every student is dissecting the same organ of the same type of animal at precisely the same moment. The teacher will have to maintain adequate cultures of living material which must be ready to be used at just the precise time. In general, the teacher will need much more time to prepare materials with the BSCS approach. This is a hard fact which administrators must face realistically when assigning schedules to teachers.

The problem which is likely to give the most qualms to Christian school teachers, administrators, and boards when considering the adoption of BSCS materials is the conspicuous place given to the subject of evolution. In more traditional texts (possibly to insure adoption in areas of the country where the subject is referred to from the pulpits as EVILution) evolution is sidestepped or relegated to the last chapter. This has made it possible for the teacher to end the school year without "finding" enough time to discuss this chapter. Because BSCS biology emphasizes the principal concepts of biology, evolution is introduced early and is woven throughout the entire course.

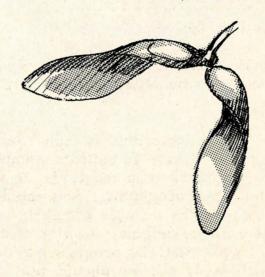
#### PARTIAL SOLUTIONS

The approach needed to resolve this problem of the conspicuous place of evo-

lution in BSCS texts must involve a mature analysis of the place of the idea of evolution in the discipline of biology. The word evolution is used in more than one way by biologists. First of all, evolution is used to refer to the process by which the genetic constitution of populations changes with time. This process can be studied and verified in much the same way as any other biological process. Another way in which the concept of evolution is used is in the formation of a naturalistic philosophy of reality. The origins of life and species can thus be explained without the activity of any supernatural force. This philosophy is patently atheistic, hence false. A third usage of the term evolution is in the theory of organic evolution. Evolution in this sense has given and is giving Christian biologists the greatest problem. An approach which may be a partial solution to this problem is to analyze the real nature of a scientific theory. Since science has limitations built into it, its theories also have these restrictions. A scientific theory, in order to be useful, must be subject to verification by the methods of science. This obviously reduces the possible elements (which might be included in an ultimate explanation) included in a scientific explanation.

Also, scientific theories are subject to change with the accumulation of additional evidence. We should never make the mistake of equating scientific law and theories with God's unchangeable natural laws built into creation. We hope that scientific laws do reflect much of natural law, but this





- 14 -

can never be finally determined, especially by the scientific method. In one real sense, then, the only thing that a scientist can ask of his theories is that they are useful in his science. Useless scientific theories are discarded. The theory of organic evolution has been quite useful and has stimulated much research which has led to dramatic discoveries of biology which in turn have led to many applications in health and medicine. Hence, I feel we should teach the idea of evolution for what it is. This can be done most adequately in a Christian school. In BSCS biology texts, the naturalistic philosophies of some of the writers are definitely revealed. Quantum jumps occur in which a useful scientific theory is equated with history as it must have occurred. This point of view is not brought out adequately by the writers, but here is a situation where the teacher can and must warn against this all-too-common error.

In summary, BSCS biology has much to offer. The problems are certainly not insurmountable. It will take much work and thought by the teacher. He may find it necessary to undergo additional training in some of the more modern aspects of biology. But, if this approach to biology is better, may Christian high schools ignore it?

## M. C. E. DEGREE? (Cont'd from p. 7)

candidate must be such that he can also work for the M.A. and Ph.D. if he desires.

The acquisition of any degree is merely a device to indicate competency. Many holders of a master's degree are not masters of anything. Many holders of a doctorate are not able to teach, although this was the original meaning of the title. No doubt a M.C.E. program could also be prostituted, but we should not reject a

plan because a few would misuse it. We have our own schools and our own undergraduate training. It is a pity to have our teachers following courses of graduate work which are not of the greatest use.

Would this program be superfluous when Calvin institutes a master's program? The answer would be No for two reasons. First, in order to receive accreditation, any program to award master's degrees will have to lean heavily toward the academic, and it will have to emphasize research. The burden of this article is to state that these two emphases do not necessarily make master teachers in a Christian system. I am heartily in favor of Calvin's instituting a graduate school, but the program of a Master of Arts degree has a different emphasis than that of a Master of Christian Education.

The second reason why this proposal would not be superfluous if Calvin awarded the M. A. is that there is no reason why Dordt and Trinity should not participate in the program. Obviously, since it involves teachers, it would be primarily summer work. Visiting professors, lecturers, and resource persons could easily augment staff members. Co-operative planning and execution of this proposal among the three colleges, teachers' groups, and the National Union could be a boon to our entire school community.

We have the courage to organize distinctive schools. Let us have as much courage to develop a distinctive program for advanced studies.

-- John Brondsema\*

<sup>\*</sup>Mr. Brondsema, A.B. Calvin College, M.A. University of Michigan, is presently teacher of Bible at Grand Rapids Christian High. Until recently he was for several years the Director of Publications at the National Union of Christian Schools.



Another black beast that we should worry is the graded poem; we let anthologies determine which poems we should teach and when. The devotional poetry of Donne, Herbert, and Cowper, for example, must endure cavalier curtness in twelfth-grade texts, whereas the egocentric effusions of Keats, Shelley, and Byron swell to near a thousand verses. Of course, no ninth or tenth grade youth could be educated to appreciate a Donne sonnet, a Herbert lyric, or a Cowper hymn.

If writing essays is better than work-book drill for developing linguistic sensitivity, then how should one structure assignments in expository writing: what is the sequence of concepts to be learned and what is the strategy of presentation? Moreover, is our use of language—choice of word or metaphor—a moral consideration as George Orwell suggests in his essay, "Politics and the English Language"?

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How can teachers in the language arts justify spending class time on creative writing—that is, at any level below the 15th grade? Perhaps one student in 50,000 becomes a professional fictionist and maybe one in 50,000,000 a professional poet. I'd like to read a defense of the "creative—writing unit"—if, indeed, such a title means more than unstructured phantasy and arty impracticality.

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No formal grammar until the tenth grade and then one semester only to teach terms, tricks of diagraming, and syntactical intricacies? Nonsense; how would we fill our teaching time in the other grades four through thirteen? Besides, all students need annual help in deciphering a handbook of their own language.

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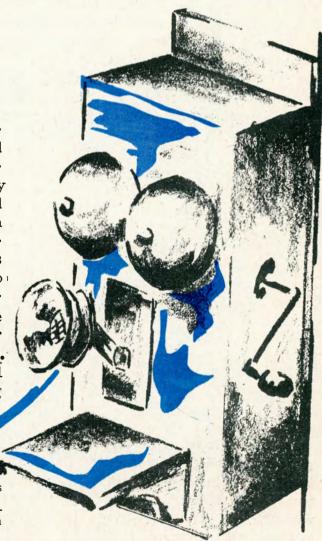


Department Editor, Merle Meeter\*

### FOUR NOT IMMODEST **PROPOSALS**

On these subjects and their ilk I solicit your staid ruminations, John and Bob, Donna and Rosemary, Tom and Rosemary, Marg (e) and Marv(e). Every quarterly issue of the C.E.J. should flaunt at least two 1000-word-maximum articles from you (and there is an honorarium), a brief editorial like this, letters to the department editor (length: one to five-hundred words), and book reviews-kinds of things we'd like to have you type off and send in; when you wish to ponder in print, use the pages of your Journal. We can make the C.E.J. a felicitous tool for renewing acquaintance, redefining norms, and reviewing values.

Introducing the department editor: Merle Meeter brings to this position considerable experience and past achievement. He is presently pursuing a doctoral program in English at the University of Iowa. He has his A.B. from Calvin and his M.A. from the University of Michigan. His teaching experience embraces Christian secondary schools in Muskegon, Michigan, and Lynden, Washington, and Dordt College in Iowa. He has published both poetry and essays in this Journal, Christianity Today, Torch and Trumpet, and Christian Home and School.



# THE STAGE--A SCHOOL FOR VICE?

-- David Koldenhoven\*

To be disillusioned, go back stage to meet the cast after a dramatic performance. If the production was good, if the illusion came off well, the shock of seeing the actors in real life is greatest. I talked once with the cast which presented the frolicking She Stoops to Conquer. Marlow sat relaxed, wiping off his make-up. He spoke to me, but he left his dialect on the stage. All was gone but the costume, and that seemed to fit in oddly now. I was not talking with Marlow, but with the actor.

I have heard it said by more than one of our Reformed play-goers that there is something morally wrong with an actor's playing the role of a character. times this accusation is made directly, sometimes by implication. Though there is no reference to drama in the Bible, the accusers suspect that acting also violates a Scriptural principle--perhaps the noidols commandment. It is one thing to represent good and evil in a novel through human representatives, but quite another to give the human agents of good and evil more fleshly manifestation in drama. The first is under criticism, the second under censorship. What really happens in the mind of the average play-goer is that a transfer is made between the character and the actor. What the character does becomes the actor's responsibility. When the character employs language that is racy--to say nothing of profanity--the average play-goer cringes a bit, not because it is the character, but the Christian actor who speaks. Then, intermittendly between "questionable" language and "coarse" actions, our play-goer allows himself the pleasure of the illusion.

#### TRANSFER-OF-GUILT OBJECTION

Of the many suspicions about drama, the one that insists on a transfer of guilt and responsibility between actor and character is most serious. One implication is that the actor's guilt increases in proportion to the character's guilt. equation is complete. This is the most that can be implied form the assumption. It means, for instance, that the actor playing Macbeth becomes guilty of murder. Distinction is made between play guilt and real guilt only insofar as the actor will not be punished by real civil or natural powers--though he may (or may not) be punished by civil or natural powers within the play. Though few people will go this far in the argument, their basic assumption of the transfer of guilt



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puts all drama in a precarious position. We can only conclude that any drama which deals with sin in any form is corrupting to the actor, if to no one else.

To insist on a further generalization: since drama makes its statement with human agents and since humanity can be represented only as creatures of sin, we are forced to conclude that no drama is permissible. Where has the logic broken down? It follows, does it not? Perhaps we need pigs for characters; then the actors might safely take the parts. Pigs are amoral. But this is no help because the playwright who is moral represents even pigs in a moral framework when he puts them into an illusionary mold such as the drama or the novel. Think of Orwell's pigs. They are despicably "moral."

#### GUILT-BY-ASSOCIATION OBJECTION

The position of the one-to-one equation between actor and character makes at least one Reformed Christian decision easy. Drama has to go. There is no place for it in our educational or community circles. But it is not so easy when we meet the play-goer who makes complaints about racy language, let us say, but does not admit that the actor is equated with the character. Furthermore, he says he is not concerned about offense that he takes, but he is concerned about the cast, the actor. He would not like to hear his son speak the lines of a character who uses racy language. Though he does not think that his son becomes Marlow, for instance, yet he suspects some change is taking place in his son. This sort of playgoer modifies the total equation of actor and character with a guilt-by-association clause. Then the actor playing Mr. Hardcastle is not guilty of the morality of Marlow--or as Macbeth he is not fuilty of the murder of Duncan--but the actor is hardened to sin. In this case, the actor experiences the "thrill" of indelicate lan-



Underwood photo

guage or of murder and, I suppose we may conclude, becomes a potential user of profanity or a potential murderer. Again, how is it possible to think there is any drama of actions or words which are ideally pure? Drama is always a humansin-filled representation.

Here then are the two possibilities that arise from the assumption that to some extent an actor and his character are identified. Either an actor is completely responsible for his character's behavior or he assumes some of that behavior. In either case, the play-goercritic sees in the actor-character relationship a kind of equation.

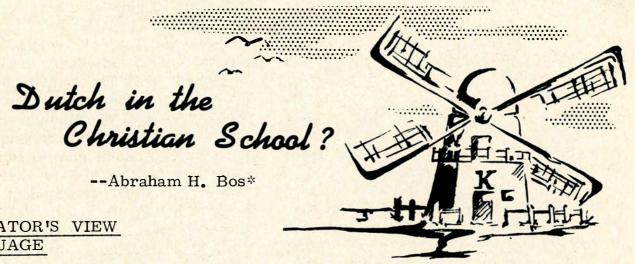
#### OBJECTIONS NEED EVALUATION

It is this proposition of identity or transfer that needs evaluation. Our Reformed Christian educational institutions cannot go halting between two opinions. It is not as so many play-goers suspect, that the directors of drama are intent on bringing every kind of drama to the stage. It appears that way when school boards stand as the final judges over the choice of plays for presentation. The director becomes the villain who insidiously at-

tempts to pollute the student-actor and the audience as well. Not that this procedure of selecting a play is so insulting; it is, rather, that there is no common understanding among director, school board, audience, and cast as to what really takes place in the representation of human action and thought, be it in a box in the auditorium wall or on a platform at the end of the school gym. When the audience, board, and director have agreed on what a play is intended to do and what

happens to the guts and souls of the actors and actresses, then we will be able to choose a play wisely and with fewer adverse repercussions.

In a subsequent article I should like to begin an answer to the problem of transfer of guilt and responsibility between actor and character. This is also an invitation to others to help settle a history-old question that runs parallel with the church.



#### AN EDUCATOR'S VIEW OF LANGUAGE

If you will be patient with a series of three articles, I will try to establish why we can and perhaps ought to offer Dutch in our Christian school system. The titles of the articles as I now see it will be "The Educator's Approach to Language," "Language's Approach to the Student," and "Society's Approach to Dutch." If I can do so much as create a faint rumble in our schools, my purpose will have been accomplished. Certainly, when you make your affirmation or denial, you have sufficient reason for your attitude. I at least have opportunity to discuss with you the framework out of which I make my affirmation. First of all, we must establish why we study foreign language and then we

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can better say which foreign language ought to be studied.

There are at least three attitudes which educators have concerning foreign language study; one concerns "transfer value, "another the reading materials used in language courses, and a third concerns the practical use of foreign language.

#### TRANSFER VALUE OF LANGUAGE

Language teachers, especially those who teach the classical languages, have made claims for the disciplinary values derived from the study of the rules and patterns of structure which necessarily must be observed. The transfer values are mental development, ability and skill in learning, and eradication of carelessness. Now all of these fine benefits of language learning are swept away by some educators who say that there is very little "transfer value" in the study of foreign language.

Let me suggest that there are many subjects, areas of thought and practice, curricular and extra-curricular, in the school and out of the school, which contribute to the development of the person, the changing of personality, and the establishment of desirable habits; and that this is at least part of the reason for using some of these "subjects" in the curriculum. Naturally, we try to select the subject areas which will get at the most important goals. But there are other criteria which also play a part in the selection of one subject over another. These have to do with the intrinsic values and the extensive scope of the subject matter. Can the area be exhausted or is it without limit in its examples or material, and inexhaustible in its implications within itself and with other identifiable subject areas?

To dismiss this aspect of foreign language study by saying that educators do not believe that there is very much transfer value, is to be presumptuous. Perhaps more concrete proof is available to support this view. Or, perhaps the same can be said about every subject, in which case, this ceases to be an argument or becomes a good reason for closing schools altogether.

#### LITERATURE VALUE OF LANGUAGE

The second attitude arises again out of the claims of foreign language teachers, namely that one learns much literature and culture of other countries. The educator's attitude to this claim is that the abundance of time spent in the two-year mandatory time period is consumed by mechanical drill on the structure of the language or on junk prose. If the student is confronted by good literature, he

is forced to use translations or have some worse form of encounter.

To teach literature and culture certainly are two of the important goals of foreign language study. Some questions can be raised. Can this be done in other ways? Literature in translation plus a course in German or Greek civilization or anthropology might get this job done. I have serious doubts whether the literature can be as beneficially taught in translation, and I believe that a course in civilization will be enhanced greatly by knowledge of the language. In addition, literature and civilization are not the only goals of foreign language study.

Are the state departments of education and NCATE interested in these goals? Page 15 of NCATE's Standards and Guide for Accreditation of Teacher Education (1960) states: "All teacher curriculum should require a pattern of general education in such amount and of such a nature as to assure that all teachers will be broadly educated and cultured persons." Recognizing all the difficulties involved in the phrase "cultured person," I mean to state my opinion, that a person is neither broadly educated nor a cultured person unless he has been exposed to a foreign language. Certainly one who knows very little about a culture other than his own is not a cultured person, and one who has not been exposed to another possible mode of language expression is not broadly educated. Foreign language study is a means of freeing the individual from this type of provincialism.

Bulletin No. 32, p. 17, of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction reads: "Good general education should contribute to active and effective citizenship, to the improvement of human relationships in all spheres of group living from the home to the inter-cultural and inter-national realms. . . " Perhaps there are other

ways to accomplish the above task, but certainly foreign language study can.

Let us return to the attitude that foreign language teaching does not teach worthwhile literature. Serious limitations exist, but language teachers do work toward that end. There is a time limitation, and perhaps this argues strongly for more foreign language study.

Do students who study two years have a mastery of the literature and an understanding of the culture? The answer to this question will vary from language to language, from school to school, and from teacher to teacher. In the German class I find it possible for the student to have a small beginning of an understanding and appreciation for German Romanticism and Existentialism. It is possible to give the student an acquaintance with a period of literature or a genre. As far as culture is concerned, a beginning is made to differentiate North American cultures from the German culture. Insight into how the German thinks and what he deems important can be attained. Students have an opportunity to see pictures of art works, architecture, landscape, cities, rivers, and other cultural geographical features.

The only goal we set is "some," not an extensive and intensive grasp of literature and culture. We can only hope to have given the springboard for further investigation, and to hope that the student thinks in terms of more than one culture, more than one language, more than one literature, more than one age.

The allegation made against "junk prose" is especially addressed to foreign language study on the college level. This is a possibility but not a necessity. Maybe the so-called junk prose is not taught as prosebut rather has to do with a method to teach vocabulary and language patterns. This may also point to the fact that basic

vocabulary learning is a job which ought to be completed on the high school or elementary levels.

#### TOOL VALUE OF LANGUAGE

The third attitude is a practical one and it must be stated in two parts. First of all there are those educators who rejoice in the new audio-lingual method, because something concrete and practical is finally being done in the language class; and second, and perhaps in the extreme opposite direction, there are those who say the analytical approach to translation for the scholar is practical for the availability of technical writings in foreign languages. They admit that although the requirements in some schools may be artificial, it is still considered useful and proper motivation to study a foreign language to meet advanced degree requirements. There are educators then who admit that this is a valid reason to offer foreign language.

This is not the only practical reason for offering language. The practical aspect of foreign language study is emphasized today. Let me refer you to the pamphlet, "The National Interest and Foreign Languages" sponsored by the U.S. National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. In section three of this pamphlet, pages 67-101 deal with the needs and goals, and the necessity of teaching foreign languages. I am not opposed to a



statement on the utilitarian values of foreign language learning; there are many, and by way of introductory lecture I try to point this out to the student. However, I do not believe that this is the primary reason for the teaching of foreign language. The basis upon which it is built is too flimsy and tentative, important as it may be to the individual and the national interest. It is my contention that the type of fluency in the spoken language which some people posit as the only goal in language learning can best be learned in a short time under special circumstances--if not in the country of the target language. I am in favor of the aural-oral approach for other reasons, namely that this is the method by which most learning takes place, the least corrective teaching goes on, and the highest degree of retention results.

As to the benefit of language as tool, may I suggest the following: It is true that language requirements in some graduate schools and by some departments may seem contrived and artificial. must be remembered that they are dealing with language in a specific way as a tool: one studies to pass a test, indicating a desired skill or ability. But in a broader sense or in a more general way, language is the tool by which we get at the printed page. Language stands in a similar relationship to the humanities as does mathematics to the sciences. It is the key to the most-used vehicle for explicit and concrete communication. It touches the scholarly thesis and the directions given on the most mundane gadget, the beautiful and the vulgar. Cannot this be done through English? Not as well. Why? Because of the kind of confrontation. The why and the how and the what of the language follow so closely in presentation, that the why and how of language become meaningful by necessity. Second, because of the learning principle of contrast,

something seen in relationship or contrast to something else is more focused and, consequently, more meaningful.

In this article I have listed several goals of foreign language teaching. I have not yet listed all the goals nor the most important goal. This is forthcoming. We have seen these goals under attack and compliment. We rest in the knowledge that the sum of the parts does not necessarily give a picture of the whole, or that the imperfection of a part does not destroy the whole, or that a failure to see all of the parts does not discredit the whole.



"We cannot teach what we are not, although we may sometimes hope to teach what we are."

--Bennett Weaver

"A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged; it is the skin of a living thought, and may vary greatly in color and content, according to the time when, and the circumstances under which, it is used."

-- Justice Holmes

"We are--or should be--labouring to make ourselves unnecessary. The fencing master's reward should be the day when the pupil can pink and disarm him."

-- C.S. Lewis



#### SOCIAL STUDIES STIRRINGS

National and local education groups are working diligently to revitalize social studies. Seven curriculum centers, research projects, and two "developmental activities" have been approved by Project Social Studies of the U.S. Office of Education. Two significant Anthropological projects related to the lower school curriculum, headquartered at Harvard and Chicago, are now moving ahead.

New approaches to economics, on the elementary level; increased attention to geography on the secondary level; historians, psychologists, and political scientists are launching national studies, producing new units, prototype courses, and new teaching materials. These are a few of the latest developments in our field.

Social science groups continue to discuss the merits of separate discipline ap-

\*Introducing the department editor: Herman Buikema, A, B, Calvin College, M, A, University of Michigan, has taught in the social studies area for eight years, first at Cutlerville Christian School and now at the new Calvin Christian High in Grandville, Michigan. This past summer he was an editorial assistant in the preparing of social studies material at the National Union of Christian Schools. All manuscripts on hi story Bible, civics, and the social dimension of physical education should be sent to him.

proaches versus integrated courses. In the primary grades the fused approach is accepted nationally. In the intermediate grades there is a 60-40 ratio, the majority using the fused approach. Traditionally, our schools favor the separate discipline approach. The leaders in the field today advocate the fused approach. They believe that the pupil must acquire a broad base of knowledge on the elementary level and use this to build the pillars of the separate disciplines on the secondary school. Improved texts have aided the successful fusing of the main social studies discipline. There is a need for re-evaluation on our part.

An interesting program is being developed in the Cleveland area. This is sponsored by the Educational Research Council of Greater Cleveland and is called the Greater Cleveland Social Science Program. They are developing a program using seven basic disciplines and sequentially covering these throughout 13 years. They have tentatively completed K-4. To illustrate the challenging aspects of this plan, they introduce Kenya, China, and Hawaii in the kindergarten; and the first

grade readers are based on the lives of twelve explorers from Magellan to John Glenn.

It is very evident that the social studies field is in a state of flux. We, as Christian educators, must keep informed of the changes and trends advocated by the studies and projects under way. We can then use what we consider worthy and discard the rest. We can sort and sift that which is done by others but wouldn't it be far better if we would create rather than copy?

Yes, create a distinctively Christian program written by Christians, implemented by Christians and taught to Christians. I think it's possible, don't you? More about this in the next issue.



# Putting More Life in the Bible

One of the school vocabularies most formed by rote in the Christian schools is that of the Bible class. The cyclical repetition of biblical data and doctrinal ideas assures the sixth grade teacher of a standardized answer to most of the questions he will ask. Lacking the personal interpretational experiences of the mature Christian, the pupil ejects another time the memorized answer of a relatively meaningless group of words. Such an answer is not all bad, for it reveals a biblical training which will bear fruit in God's own time. The frustration of the Christian teacher lies more in the desire for a meaningful answer to important questions.

An attempt toward a more meaningful introduction in the first Bible lesson of the year led me to gather the ingredients

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of the lesson much as a cook preparing a recipe in her kitchen: Draw an idea from a science experience lesson. Blend in the pattern of Jesus' teaching from the Gospels. Add a pinch of the teacher's personality. Brew in the volatile minds of thirty pupils for one class period. Serves one class for one year.

Have you ever used this gimmick to develop a scientific attitude among your pupils? The teacher chooses an object and wraps it well. The way in which it is wrapped increases or decreases the number of clues that a class may use to deduce its contents. For my sixth graders I chose this time a ball point pen wrapped in tissue paper to curb its movement. A box within a box further reduced the clues that were available as a basis for guessing the contents. Hide the wrapped package until the opportune moment.

Class discussion centered around the "why?" and "what do you mean?" questions that every teacher inevitably uses to bounce back the standard answers to these questions' Why do we study the Bible? Why is it called God's Word? Who wrote it? Are we sure that it is truly God's Word today? Has the Bible changed any in the last 2000 years? Do all people in our city read the same translation of the Bible?

Only a few of these leading questions needed to be bounced back to establish the inability of the pupils to define clearly the key vocabulary words of the lesson: God, Bible, author, trust, faith, and inspired.

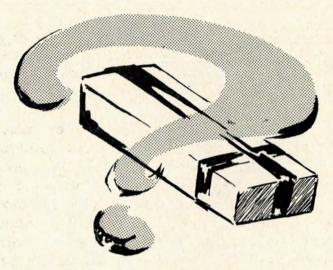
Retrieving the mystery package from its hiding place renewed the interest of the class. The question, "What is in it?" drew a variety of answers, all listed on the chalkboard with a running commentary on the value of the guess. Some guesses got a loud guffaw from the class, but others earned a murmur of appreciation for an astute guess. Passing the package through the class for shaking, tapping, hefting, and listening assured a wider response. The climax was near when someone suggested that the package was empty. This comment drew a firm denial from the teacher. The package was opened. No one had guessed correctly.

At this point in the lesson the pupils were ready to listen. I told them of the parables which Jesus told and elicited from them the thought that our lesson today could be a modern parable. We traced

Harold M. Lambert



comparisons of class and teacher with people and God. We fixed our attention upon the way the class accepted the teacher's word when he told the class, particularly the doubter, that the package was not empty. I made the words trust and faith a personal issue. We drew com-



parisons between our use of clues and the search of the Christian for knowledge and understanding of God, His Bible, and His creation.

The results of this lesson could never be tested in the typical paper-and-pencil form. The success of the presentation rests more in the future use that the pupils will make of it as they spend another year in Bible study. Then the pupils will write for me the mark of success or failure in reaching each of these objectives of the first Bible lesson:

- a) To develop the concept that the purpose of teaching a knowledge of the Bible becomes effective in daily activities.
- b) To develop a clearer meaning of common words in the Christian vo-cabulary: God, Bible, inspired, author, trust, faith, and doubt.
- c) To develop a healthy curiosity and a willing search for answers to biblical problems.
- d) To develop an awareness in the sixth grade pupil that he still knows only a little about the Bible.
- e) To develop a willingness to speak responsibly in class discussion.
- f) To avoid occasionally the monotony of a routine presentation of Biblical material from a manual.

### BOOK REVIEW

--Bill Gritter, Oakdale Christian Junior High, Grand Rapids

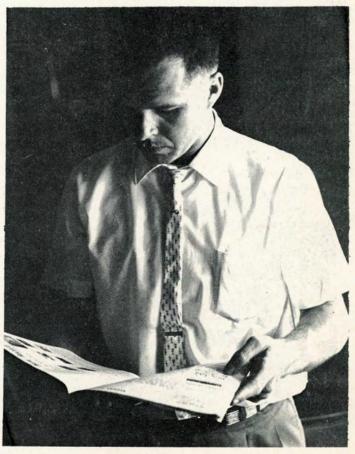
THE SOCIAL STUDIES: Curriculum Proposals for the Future edited by G. Wesley Sewards, Chicago, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1963, 136 pages, \$2.00.

If one is looking for an excellent statement setting down current thinking in the social studies, then this little book will be a fine investment. Composed of five papers presented to the 1963 Cubberly Conference, School of Education, Stanford University, it presents some solid thinking on the direction the social studies should take in the future. The interest of our schools in this question should be vigorous since a sound soical studies program can play a key role in presenting and developing that Christian perspective of the world that we would like to see in each of our graduates. That there has been sound thinking and real direction behind the social studies programs found in most of our schools is questionable and it's time we gave an earnest evaluation to our efforts.

Social studies on both the elementary and secondary levels is considered by the authors but the main concern is that there be a structured program for grades one through twelve. The separate subject approach is challenged as to its adequacy in view of the tremendous explosion of knowledge now confronting the school to teach in the brief time it has the student. This view is not uncommon in the social studies literature today. An interesting fact about this view is that it is held not only by many educators but also by some scholars in the separate disciplines. For example, Professor Arne Bellack in his chapter on "Structure in the Social Sciences and Implications for the Social Studies

Program," mentions the social studies project carried on under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies and Educational Services Incorporated. This project is headed by Dr. Elting Morison, professor of history at M.I.T., and includes Professor Jerome Bruner. the Harvard psychologist. They are developing a K-12 program that will teach social studies as a single subject. justify the single subject approach on these grounds: "History, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science may for convenience be separated as academic disciplines but they all deal with a single thing: the behavior of men in society. Accordingly we propose to teach them jointly, not separately."

Perhaps the most stimulating chapter is the one just mentioned by Arne Bellack, dealing with the question of structure in the social sciences. Professor Bellack contends that the idea of the "structure of knowledge" as advanced by Jerome Bruner of Harvard holds interest-



ing possibilities for the social studies and could lead to some sound curriculum proposals in the future.

These and other ideas presented in this stimulating book must be considered by us if we are to develop a social studies program that makes sense for our schools. It is clear from this book that the leaders in this field feel a sense of urgency that the social studies must make a more vital and positive contribution toward giving the student an understanding of the world that has meaning and order. We can question the ability, or even the possibility of the public school doing this, but we should first look at our own schools and ask what we are doing and if it isn't time for some changes. A sense of urgency should also characterize our concern!

"Like the other disciplines, history and the social sciences are tools by which we organize the chaos of sense experience, and are thus emotionally satisfying to master. Like the other disciplines, too, they are either worth learning for the intellectual competence they bring—or they are not worth learning at all."—Mayer, Where, When and Why—Social Studies in American Schools.

"Three-fold contribution of Social Studies to students: 1. Help every student acquire as extensive a reservoir of power knowledge as is possible for him. 2. Acquire the maximum facility in using his reservoir of power knowledge for purposes of critical and constructive thinking. 3. Engender in every student the maximum will to act on the basis of this knowledge and informed opinion." --John Haefner Address to National Council of Social Studies, 1959.

#### BOOK REVIEW (Cont'd from p. 12)

make science their faith and determinant of what is true and just. He recognizes the possibility that some people may interpret all matters in the light of an Absolute, but he prefers to use analyses and theories to arrive at absolutes "whose beams, so to speak, may be focused in the Absolute."

Terminology used in the book is carefully defined throughout, giving the reader greater opportunity to grasp the thoughts expressed. The Sciences and the Arts cannot be read hastily and requires concentration of thought to be fully understood. Though much of what Professor Cassidy says about the likenesses and differences between the sciences and the arts is helpful and informative, it nevertheless lacks a true understanding of the world as we apprehend it. Only when God has preeminence in the lives of students can the goals for education be attained.

# # # #

Not until individual man rebels against mediocrity, spiritual illiteracy, and group subservience will our unique experiment of universal education become once again a bright hope and promise in American life.

--Mortimer Smith





# THE ARTS

Department Editor, Vernon Boerman\*

# 'The Play's the Thing'

Drama--that most vital of the arts-has taken quite a beating in our Christian
school system--if, indeed, it ever had
much life at all. For a few decades we've
been content with putting drama "on the
boards" largely of the melodramatic or
sentimentally moralizing variety: the
"Closed Door," "Old Doc," "In Old Virginny"stuff.

Perhaps this "corn" is inevitable if interest in the dramatic arts gets badly subjegated to some financial motive ("Well, it's the ONLY chance the senior class has to make some money for the annual class trip!"), or some anemic attempt at esprit de corps ("The students ENJOY so much working together on such a big project!"), or rationalizing the way out of more significant drama ("Besides, the audiences wouldn't UNDERSTAND it. . !"), or the

occasional well-intentioned but misdirected echo of the 17th century Puritan ban in England ("Live drama is WRONG, you know.").

And, alas, the drama which has remained as textbook/classroom dramausually Shakespeare, and maybe a bit of Ibsen-has fared little better. Typical student reaction is probably not a delighted bang, but a dismayed whimper.

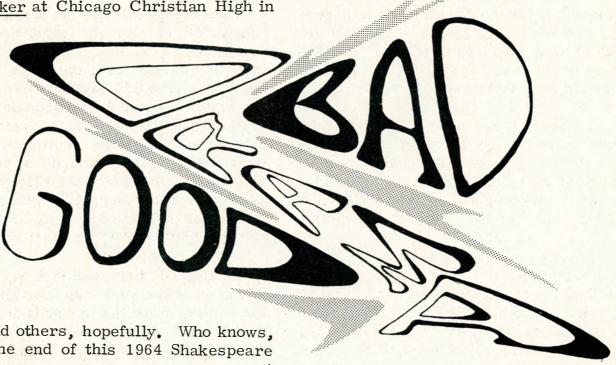
Our non-idealistic, defeatist attitude toward high school drama seems most annoyingly inconsistent. In other areas, such as choral music, we say, "The only way to develop a higher understanding and level of appreciation in both student body and constituency is to work with and DO better things!" In music, we go so far as to "excuse" mediocre performances of very fine things in order to expose audiences to and give students a chance to work with the BEST. Voicing a defense of very fine music, we use poet Browing's "glory of the imperfect" theory: the striving for the goal is more important than the attaining of it, providing the goal is the finest and most excellent one. If we used this same criterion in drama, Merchants of Venice would be sprouting everywhere!

There are (rejoice!) some encouraging signs of vitality. The grapevine tells

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of an exciting production of Rostand's Cyrano De Bergerac last year at Holland Christian High, a pioneering presentation of Our Town at Unity Christian High in 1962 and a notable staging of it at Illiana Christian High in 1963, a sensitive Miracle Worker at Chicago Christian High in

doubt, to the work being done at Calvin and other schools feeding our high school faculties. And don't overlook either the impact of our best TV drama, as well as



1964, and others, hopefully. Who knows, before the end of this 1964 Shakespeare anniversary year, someone may yet try... who knows?

Three cheers, then, for those who are DOING something with significant drama, on stage or off. Some of the credit for the encouraging signs belongs, no

the occasional availability of fine live drama for our more perceptive students.

And where do we go from here? Let's talk with each other via the  $\underline{CEJ}$ , and then be up and  $\underline{DOING}$ .

# BAN THE BAND

--Leroy Vandering

One of the most sacred of cows<sup>1</sup> roaming the pastures of Christian education is that organization known as BAND. It's present at all levels--from the youngest toddler to his counterpart as a senior in

college. BAND is big in our schools. But there is no part of our educational theory and practice which is more actually suspect than BAND is.

Now, let's get some matters straight immediately. This attack is not against

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Or is it really a holy bull?

the arts as a whole; in fact, its major contention is that BAND is draining the resources—instructors, competent students, money, facilities, time—that should be channeled into other areas of the arts. And these volleys are not aimed even toward music; the study of music in the classroom is excellent, choir is a good thing and orchestra is not vulnerable to most of what I will have to say. No, the culprit is BAND. Why? BAND is neither Christian nor education.

BAND would not become Christian by adding more of those Psalm adaptations or Hymn Medleys which mark the pious opening of many of their public concerts. Any BAND director will admit the extreme difficulty of finding adequate program material (which should make them suspicious, for if English Literature, or even vocal music, did not have a solid core of substantial repertoire, distinctively Christian as well as aesthetically good, objections would quickly be raised). No, the basic reason why Christian teachers and students should not be expending time,

effort, and money into BAND is that it glorifies the second-rate, it exalts the mediocre, it thrives on the trivial and insignificant; it does not contribute to the distinctive education which should mark the Christian student and teacher.

Neither is BAND educationally sound. One could expose the tremendous cost: soundproofed rooms, director's salary, instruments (at least the large expensive ones), and the \$40 each uniforms. <sup>2</sup> Cr, one could discuss the pedagogical looseness of a BAND session, a characteristic also shared to some degree by speech, physical education, and home economics classes. Then there's the sticky problem of Credit: generally, administrators and most other instructors are against it, while

<sup>2</sup>The fact that concientious Mothers' Clubs or some such organization and not the school, pays the bill still does not get at the heart of the problem: Where is the effort, time, and money being expended in Christian education?



most BAND directors want it as a club, gentle or otherwise, to hang over his students' heads (another one of these suspicious characteristics—see what I meant by speaking earlier of "suspect"?) BAND is frequently now The Kingdom Unto Itself, like that of athletics, complete with feeder system and upsetting schedules of other teachers ("Our visiting BAND director can only be here from 10:15-11:30—please change your schedule"). Each of these, and certainly the combination, is educationally unsound.

The three reasons, in varying kinds of emphasis and sophistication, I have been told by BAND directors why BAND is a good thing are: (1) Public schools have it, (2) Parents like it, and (3) Students need and/or want an outlet for their "talents" now and later. Reasons 1 and 2 are completely unanswerable; I do not feel I could ever possess enough acumen to meet them on their own ground. But the last is most subtle and needs careful scrutiny. This is the area of "values," cultural and aesthetic. I propose there is an unexamined assumption: It doesn't make much difference what medium the student chooses or is encouraged to develop, just as long as he finds an outlet. Thus, the parental expectancy, urging, and sometimes demand that a child develop his talent in music by playing a horn, is similar to the piano syndrome of a generation ago.

Or, "BAND gives them something for later on." Haven't you heard the moan:

Christian Educators Journal Assoc. Art Wyma, Business Manager 64 East 48th Street Holland, Michigan "Suzy's in college, now there stands her horn," or "Johnny's married; what can he do with his drum?" Precisely. Only a very small percentage continue in their interest, for the simple reason that BAND is a dead-end. It requires a group, and where is the group later on? Or, what contribution does BAND make to the Kingdom, either narrowly or broadly conceived? An occasional rollicking trumpet trio at the Mission Chapel.

A final word, especially to those directors who, having had top-notch musical training and interest, are a bit embarrased to don the \$60 uniform and make that 1,2,3,4 beat. Why not rebel? Why not call the bluff on spineless administrators and doting parents? Posethe question: If it doesn't make any difference what form of music we have in our schools, as long as it's "Christian," and popular, and can be baptized by using Christian tunes, why not suggest to your critics an accordion band or a harmonica ensemble?

Obviously, this presentation is not unanswerable; its very purpose is to smoke out the bandleaders and administrators who feel that BAND does not have to be vindicated. Not only must there be no objectionable reasons for its presence, but also BAND, as well as any part of education, must contribute positively to the total program. Needless to say, I doubt that. So this article is really pleading: "Take me to your (BAND) leader."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>If a teacher were especially hired to work at all levels with students who write well, perhaps we'd have something in the end for the Kingdom.

How about considering the European way of having all music organizations be a civic enterprise?