



CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL

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MARCH, 1968

CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL, VOLUME 7, NUMBER 3, MARCH, 1968
A medium of expression for the Calvinistic school movement in the United States

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Christian Educators Journal Association, composed of several member or sponsoring organizations, publishes the Journal as a channel of communication for all educators committed to the idea of parentally controlled Christian schools, whether at the elementary, secondary, or college level. The general purpose of the Journal is to foster the continuing improvement 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, with issues published in the months of November, January, March, and May. Correspondence concerning articles or book reviews should be addressed to the editor of the appropriate department or to the Managing Editor.

AN APOLOGY. . .

This March issue of the Christian Educators Journal is very tardy, a whole month late. The fault was not with the printer, nor the editors, nor the writers, but the layout staff. Please forgive, good readers?

. . .AND GOOD NEWS

Beginning with the next issue, for May, a new layout editor will begin work and the CEJ will appear in a new and finer format, made possible by this year's wider group participation and larger subscription list.



The Devil's Advocate Methodology

I BELIEVE THAT the Devil should be given his due, pedagogically speaking. We as teachers can acknowledge the usefulness of the Devil in our teaching method. By that I do not mean that we use him as a goblin who will get the student if he doesn't get his lesson. This would be only to import the Devil as an occasional motivational whip. I mean that he can be made integral to the teaching method itself and on numerous occasions rather than just in emergencies.

The method would consist essentially of making a practice of placing the true and the false, the correct and the incorrect, in proximity to each other. For example, one could put on the board the wrong process in math along with the right, the incorrect way to diagram a sentence next to the correct. In its more extreme form it might consist of having the teacher assume a devil's advocate position. He or she would actually argue for the acceptance of a false or at least implausible explanation of some phenomenon. An example of this might be the assertion: If a lamp in my house doesn't work, I should first check to make sure that the cord isn't snarled or kinked, because that would cut off the flow of electricity. The method, then, calls for the persistent presence of the wrong as well as the right, the poorer as well as the better. It calls for the presence of the Devil in the classroom, not for adoration but to make his contribution to Christian instruction.

There are, of course, dangers in such a procedure. Among them are the possibility that through some quirk of the learning process the error-laden or the implausible gets grounded more firmly in a given student's mind than the intended learning. Also there is the possibility that the contrast between the two is not dramatic or significant enough to engage the learner in the pull and tug of the alternatives, and thus he feels no compulsion to decide or choose between

them. In each case the method has not achieved its objective of causing the learner to pledge himself to the true and good.

Granted the dangers, and there are dangers in all methods, several things can be said in support of the devil's advocate method. For one, the presence of two alternatives clarifies the meaning of each. The meaning of "Water runs downhill" is clarified and reinforced for a young learner if it is examined in the light of its contrary, which could be either "Water does not run downhill," or "Water runs uphill." The learner is led more strongly to test out the implications of each if he has to CHOOSE among alternatives and not just accept the single one proffered. He has a livelier and clearer perception of each because of their contrast. Also, his eventual commitment to the true one is more durable when it has survived the collision with error and emerged as superior.

A second reason for favoring a devil-deity method of teaching is that personality development and moral maturity require a constant revision of what a young person regards as true and false, poorer and better. Reformulations of the student's perception of the world are necessary, and only a constant testing of himself against these two will keep his categories loose enough so that he can restructure his perceptions when necessary. For example, a person progresses through something like the following in his pursuit of the "truth" of Santa Claus:

- Santa Claus is an actual person, who lives at the North Pole, and who comes down my chimney with presents.
- Santa Claus is my father or uncle who brings things for me.
- Santa Claus is a spirit of good will that comes at Christmas in the form of gift giving.
- Santa Claus is a secular substitute for Christ who is



the real embodiment of good and of God's giving of himself.

In this instance, as in many others like it, it is chiefly by the collision of his little "truths" with opposing data or "error" that the child is forced to improve his "truths." Part of the teacher's role is to supply that "error" in a way that forces growth.

Perhaps a third advantage in a deliberate use of this principle of contrast for learning is that its persistent use in the classroom trains the student to test all claims and to try all spirits to see if they be of God. If we take this Biblical injunction seriously and if we realize that the Christian life is full of instances in which error comes in plausible guises and from respectable sources, we will wish to prepare students when young for the painful task of sorting truth from error in real life.

The best reason for attempting the devil's advocate method is that in so doing we are honoring Christian theology. In Christian thought the Devil is the incarnation of the forces of evil, error, chaos, and falsity, the veritable father of lies. Christ is the incarnation of the opposites. We miss half our theology in our instruction if we describe only the true, the good, and the beautiful, acting as if their opposites are not valuable for Christian instruction.

Christian teachers incessantly seek models for understanding the learning process in some way that is consistent with their theology. Too often their actual model is one



borrowed from stimulus-response psychology or pragmatist philosophy, usually to the detriment of the distinctiveness of their teaching. Christian teachers could do worse than look for their model in the Book instead of just any book. D.O.

Parent-Teacher Conferences in the Primary Grades

Hugh A. Johnson†

Principals' Perspective



The parent-teacher conference as an effective means of maintaining communication between the home and the school is becoming more popular each year in Christian elementary schools. In the primary grades the conference may be the sole means of reporting progress, or it may be combined with a written summary or a formal report card. The number of scheduled conferences per year may vary from one to three depending on the grade and the place of the conference in the total school program. The annual or semi-annual parent-teacher conference is used by many Christian elementary

schools as a supplement to the report card method of reporting progress and as a means of fostering better relations between the home and the school. The incidental parent-teacher conference deals with a specific problem and may be called at the request of either the parent or the teacher. In kindergarten, first, second and third grade, the parent-teacher conference can be successfully used to replace the report card as the chief means of communication between the school and the home. Why should we change from report cards to conferences?

CONFERENCES VS. REPORT CARDS

It is generally agreed that grades, although essential and important at the high school and junior high level, are impractic-

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cal in the early elementary years. (1) The maturation level of the primary child and the nature of the primary program make the giving of grades often meaningless, misleading and sometimes harmful to the future development of the child.

The parent-teacher conference gives the parents an opportunity to find out why their child is progressing as he is and enables them to find out how they can help at home. The personal exchange of a conference gives the teacher an excellent opportunity to interpret the Christian school program to the parent, while the teacher gains needed background information about the student. Communication is a two-way street: the report card, too often, is a dead end. (2)

The conference releases the student from the pressure or stigma of grades on report cards and allows him to grow at his own rate depending on his individual potential. This period of development in the primary child is of such a varied nature, that each child needs the freedom to achieve at his own rate, without fear of needless and often harmful comparison with other students.

HOW TO INITIATE A PROGRAM

The gradual introduction of the conference method of reporting pupil progress is preferable to the sudden change. Parents and teachers need to be involved in the study and consideration of a new program. Participation by both parents and teachers in any decision regarding a change will greatly enhance its acceptance and future success.

One way to introduce the conference method of reporting is through a regular yearly conference in addition to the usual reporting procedure. If a school is already using this approach, then a gradual change to reporting by the conference method can easily follow. The kindergarten usually begins the program and then one grade is added each year until all three grades and the kindergarten are included. By adding only one grade per year a drastic change is avoided and parental support is encouraged.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The parent-teacher conference method of reporting pupil progress is not easy. If proper preparation and post-conference reporting are combined with a rigorous schedule of conferences, few teachers find this easier than marking report cards. On the contrary, this method of reporting is more difficult, but also more rewarding for all those involved. The success of this method of reporting depends, for the most part, on the teacher who must be properly schooled in conference techniques, adequately prepared to discuss the problems of a given child, and willing and able to record the necessary information gained from the conference.

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT

Parents that attend parent-teacher conferences will find that receiving a report card is much easier than making all the necessary arrangements to meet with their child's teacher at school. For the parent, as well as the teacher, the conference method of reporting is not the easiest solution. However, for the parents that really want to know how their child is progressing in school and what they can do to help, the conference is one of the best ways of communicating this information.

Preparation is important for parents as well as teachers to insure the success of a conference. Some schools send home

questionnaires for parents to check the areas they are interested in discussing. Parents should be encouraged to come to the conference with specific questions they would like to have considered.

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

In his position of leadership, the principal is involved in all aspects of the parent-teacher conference program. He encourages the initial study and planning. He is directly concerned with parent and staff participation in the decision to start a new program. The principal is also responsible for the preparation of the staff and the organization of the necessary record keeping. Although the teacher may make the individual appointments, the principal must set aside the time from the regular school schedule and make the other necessary arrangements.

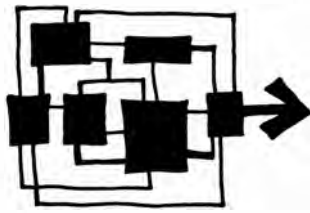
CONCLUSION

The place of the parent-teacher conference in the total school program depends ultimately on each school situation. The value of the conference method of reporting pupil progress stems from the personal contact between the parent and the teacher. In this day of impersonal communication, the person to person conference gives the parents and the teachers an opportunity to coordinate their efforts to help the individual student.

¹ Eugene Klemm, "Parents and Report Cards," *P.T.A. Magazine* (October 1966), p. 25.

² "If You Are Thinking About Dropping Report Cards," *School Management*, XI (April, 1967), p. 104.





PROFESSION-WIDE

Sheri Haan, Department Editor

The Pseudomorph

Philip Elve†

DOCTOR ALFRED B. PENWELL practiced medicine with a flourish. He not only seemed always to use the right drugs, but he also had a knack for using the right words, and his patients thought he was great — at least those who lived. You see Doctor Penwell was a pseudomorph. He took on a deceptive or irregular form. He was not a doctor at all, even though he acted like one and treated patients as well as or better than some of the other irregular forms.

Medicine is not unique in its acquisition of pseudomorphs. Education has more than its reasonable share. Let's get out our trusty microscope and examine a few species.

There is Mr. P. A. P. Research. Mr. Research is familiar to all who have ever taken a course in education or have ever sought to uncover the latest finding on the most likely color of a fourth grade boy's hair. Ole prove-a-point will often accumulate a mass of statistics to prove a mini-point or will slip a fact or two into a report which purports to prove

and college classrooms. There he masquerades as an intellectual who finds it really below his dignity to teach students who are less than genius. He is the one who will proudly proclaim, "I never give an A," or, "A number of



you will not get through this course." He uses the magical letters of his degree as if they are his license to speak authoritatively on all matters.

The classroom species of the pseudomorph is not limited to the intellectual snob. He has a country cousin who specializes in magic. He ascribes exclusive knowledge and understanding to himself which is not really exclusive at all. Parents are told, "Don't try to teach Johnny anything at home; you don't use the right methods and actually have a negative influence on his learning. You do not have the magic which we have in school." If the truth were told, we would have

that all education is ineffective. Mr. Research's closest cousin is Mr. M. A. P. Bias. Ole make-a-point is the fellow who will make ole prove-a-point's research say what he wants it to say regardless of what it really says. It's a pity that the net result of having so many pseudomorphs in the education research woodwork has reaped a wasteland of aimless wandering in some of our schools.

One does not have to leave the classroom to find the pseudomorph in education. He operates in some high school



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to admit that most learning problems are made at school, not at home. Teachers posing as magicians of method are pseudomorphs. There is no magic, and few parents are so incapable that they make a negative impression on the learning of their children when they are honestly trying to help them.

I once knew a swarm of educational pseudomorphs who had the notion that they didn't need textbooks to teach their classes. They tried to give the impression that they could



store all the knowledge and ideas of great teachers in their minds. The organized thoughts, methods, and aids devised by others in the form of a textbook were simply not wanted. They were proud in their own conceit and actually trumpeted abroad their great achievement, "WE DON'T USE TEXTBOOKS." It's something like saying we don't use libraries, or we don't use other teachers' ideas, or thoughts, or methods. Pseudomorphs? You bet.

And then there is that sophisticated pseudomorph who turns up his nose at Christian textbooks. His criteria for judging textbooks is the amount of money the large publishing company spends on it and the four color pictures that grace



its pages. Whether its thought direction is pragmatic, humanistic or whether it is Christian seems a minor matter. One wonders why he bothers with Christian education at all since its purposes all revolve around this same "minor matter." This pseudomorph is inclined to put his pseudo-sophistication before his convictions. I don't mean to imply that all textbooks labeled Christian should be unquestioningly accepted, but I do say that the reasons for rejection should be substantial.

Of course it is true that we live in a day of veneers, a day of the reign of the pseudomorph in all walks of life. It's a day when the politician who can be all things to all people

gets elected and where principles are the common denominator of public opinion. We live in a day when ministers of the gospel of Christ no longer teach Christ as the Bible pictures Him, but as they conceive Him to be. We live in a day when we all mouth the principles of equality but practice the principles of snobbery and of class citizenry. We live in a day when some who get fat on the misfortunes of the populace will masquerade as those who serve mankind. We live in a day when the hunger for wealth has eaten up the desire to serve. Is it any wonder that in this day education has its pseudomorphs?

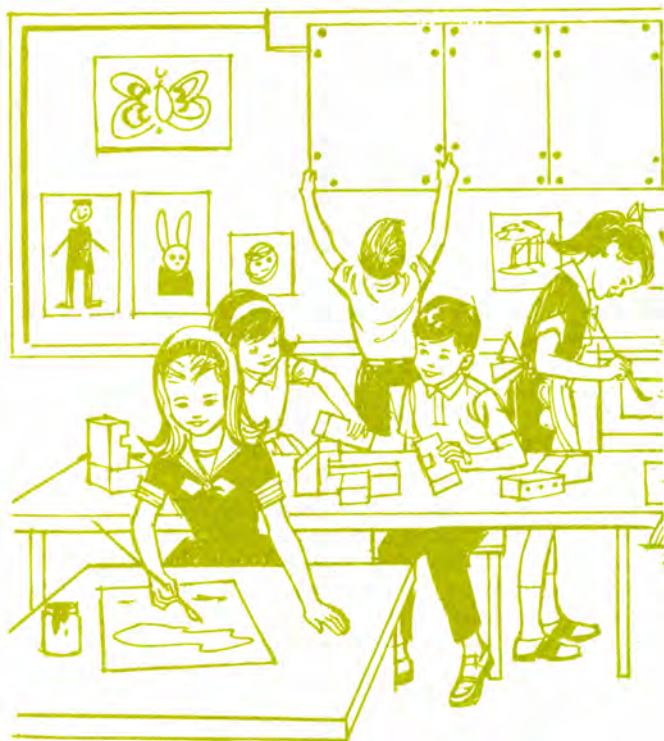
If any one group of people can be influential in changing the atmosphere; if any group of people can make the climate of our environment unhealthy for the pseudomorph, it is the Christian school teacher. First, he of all people should shed his pseudomorphic tendencies, recognize his limitations and shortcomings, and present himself as he is and as he should be: a hard-working person who has no magic, no ax to grind, but just a sincere desire to see God's youth grow in the knowledge and fear of his Lord. In short, the CHRISTIAN teacher is not haughty, is not puffed up, is not a pseudomorph. He searches his classroom for those of like mind and tries to lead them into Christian school teaching because he is concerned about replacing all that is pseudo in life with that which is truth.

Books

HOW CHILDREN FAIL, by John Holt (Dell Publishing Company, 1964, \$1.75 in paperback). Reviewed by Peter S. Uitvlugt, principal of the Battle Creek, Michigan Christian School.

ARE YOU A TEACHER WHO PROMOTES "answer-grabbers" and "teacher pleasers?" Whether you are or not it would be well for you to read this book. The informal and anecdotal method which the author uses in this book is enough to interest any teacher. However, you may be disappointed in that Mr. Holt does not organize his clinical studies into a neat list of educational and psychological norms. It is my thinking that this is done intentionally. The presentation is thought-provoking. The reader is left holding an educational bag into which he must delve further.

MR. HOLT LOOKS AT EDUCATION WITH A CHILD'S EYE VIEW. We soon get the impression that as teachers who use traditional methods, we are akin to those who arrange marriages for their children. If our pupils would only see things our way they would understand what we think is best for them. The marriage of the child and learning does not involve romance or love at all. In fact, Mr. Holt indicts



the traditional teacher for promoting a distaste and fear of education. No wonder many students elope into the realms of drop-outism.

STRATEGY

THE FIRST SECTION OF THE BOOK POINTS out the strategy that takes place in a typical classroom. Under the system, teachers promote the basic objective of learning as being the correct answer. A pleased reaction on the face of a teacher shows that the answer given is correct and the pupil almost immediately puts the problem out of his mind. If the response was incorrect the student's thinking revolves around finding an excuse or substitution for the mistake he has made.

NOW MANY KINDS OF STRATEGY DEVELOP. It may be that the student will quick-guess an answer. Depending on his experience at playing strategy and on who the teacher is, various methods can be employed. Some students can ward off questions by waving their hands as if they were bursting to tell an answer. Others find safety in speaking answers in a soft voice, hoping that if the teacher is tuned in to the correct response she will hear that response. Other forms of strategy include mumbled responses or ambiguous writing. Mr. Holt discusses some of these strategies in clinical detail. You should not miss reading about "minimax", the "guess-and-look" and "plenty-of-talk" methods. Numeral and word shoving as well as the disguised blind guess are all a part of the student's strategy.

SOME TEACHERS, THINKING THEY HAVE DECIPHERED THE STRATEGY, try their own. In response to this, students seem to have developed more and more complex strategems. A sort of ping-pong takes place in which nothing seems to be learned but better and more complex strategy.

FEAR AND FAILURE

MR. HOLT ASKS US TO SUPPOSE THAT EVERY one of us is assigned ten pages of addition problems. They

are to be completed in a given time with no allowances for mistakes, or we lose our job. The anxiety that builds up "under the gun" is enough to break down our coordination and confidence. Yet, we expect this of our students. No wonder even the most capable ones "crack" under the strain.

WHAT MR. HOLT TRIES TO TELL US IN THIS second section is the proper atmosphere for learning must prevail. He states: "Children who take time to see, and feel, and grip the problem soon find that the answer is there." Some years ago Dr. C. Seerveld in discussing what a school ought to be remarked that a classroom is a place where learning takes place in a DELIBERATE, and LEISURELY manner. We ought to ask ourselves time after time: Do I give my pupils the time needed to properly come to grips with the problems? Much of the failure that takes place in our children stems from improper learning atmosphere.

ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTES POOR atmosphere is the penalty and reward system that teachers use. Mr. Holt goes into some detail on this matter. He points out that if we observe a baby we will notice how he fondles his playthings. He will attempt to do things that are seemingly inconsequential. He will repeat his activities over and over. He encounters failure upon failure. But, he goes on contentedly and surely. We do not penalize him for his mistakes. In fact, we may think he is so cute that we point him out with pride to our friends.

YET HOW DIFFERENT WE ARE IN THE CLASSROOM. We do not tolerate learning via mistakes. We do not allow the leisure of trial and error to be an avenue of learning. Students must learn OUR way: making few mistakes and under the constant pressure and fear of being penalized for them. Mr. Holt wants us to ask ourselves: What am I doing to rid my students of the fear that inhibits learning?

REAL LEARNING

RETURNING TO THE BABY WHOM WE DID NOT penalize for his mistakes, we find that learning does take place. Surely the infant does not remain ignorant of the situations he encounters. At times the progress may be slow, and then again there comes into view "something learned all by himself." The child learns often by the procedure that seem best to him, not to us. This is real learning. As Holt describes it, "a child who has really learned something can use it, and does use it." Once the child learns to stack blocks so that they will not fall he begins to group them so that they serve a purpose such as constructing a building. Real learning makes the thing learned a part of the totality of life.

Real learning leads to an understanding of what is being learned. Mr. Holt defines understanding thus: "I feel I understand something if I can 1) state it in my own words, 2) give examples of it, 3) recognize it in various guises and circumstances, 4) see connections between it and other facts or ideas, 5) make use of it in various ways, 6) foresee some of its consequences, and 7) state its opposite or converse."

HOW SCHOOLS FAIL

In a Canadian Christian school system in which I taught, provincial examinations were administered to the ninth grade students at the end of the year. Both teachers and students were acutely aware of this to the point that we would use previous year's exams to study for the new batch that would be dumped into the laps of the students the following June. It was nothing

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YES, SOMETIMES RECESS IS
MY FAVORITE SUBJECT TOO □

NO
BOYS
AND
GIRLS,
FIRST
GRADERS
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GO ON
PEACE
MARCHES
□
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WHAT IS A TEACHER TO DO ?

ROBIN

What Language Shall We Speak?

Bernard Pekelder†

ONE OF THE IRONIES OF OUR TIME is that the means of communication are becoming more highly refined and sophisticated while we are witnessing the breakdown of man-to-man relationships. Although we continually develop techniques for better communication between men, the person-to-person relationship suffers. We talk about the "lonely crowd." Consequently better communication is no guarantee of better relationships.

You and I, as teachers and preachers, are engaged in communication. The very nature of our work puts heavy emphasis on verbal communication. We are usually talking, employing words to teach others. The development of this mode of communication to a proficient degree is important for teaching; no one should minimize the power of the spoken word.

There is another language, however, which is even more important. This language undergirds and transcends the spoken word. It is the most rudimentary and universal language of all. It is the "language of relationship."

This language is the first we encounter. The mother speaks this language to her new born babe. At this point, verbal communication is meaningless; to a baby a murmured "I love you" are empty words. It is the tone and quality of voice, the tenderness or harshness of the touch, that communicates acceptance or rejection. This is also true later in life. I dare say it is that language you remember best from your early school days. I remember little of what my early teachers said. But those who influenced me most did so not primarily by their words, but by the personal relationships they maintained in the class.

Certainly this emphasis on the language of relationship is nothing new for a Christian teacher. This is but a practical implication of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation God spoke the language of relationship. God came in the flesh and identified with us on a person-to-person basis. This personal relationship formed the foundation for later verbal communication. God first revealed his love in the Act. Only one who understands the language of this relationship really understands the verbal language God uses in Scripture.

This had educational implications. Teachers meet children and adolescents on a continuing personal basis, at a most impressionable time of their lives. It is a period in which basic attitudes, value systems, and goals are being formed. Indeed a "philosophy of life" is being developed. But in educating to this end we may be in danger of over-emphasizing the verbal communication and under-estimating the powerful language of relationship.

The term "Christian teacher" does not describe a place of employment; it is the description of the teaching person. It describes what we are, but also points to the nature of our educational relationships. I Corinthians 13 would be a good passage for every teacher and preacher to place over his desk.

†Mr. Pekelder, B.D. Calvin Seminary, M.A. Northwestern University, is the chaplain at Calvin College. This is a resume of a talk given to the Grand Valley Educators Club.

"...though I am the most scintillating and exciting and provocative teacher, though I am brilliant in illustrations and imagery and puns, and have not love, I am a big noise." The Christian teacher may not try to ride through his professional career on the effectiveness of his verbal communication. Paul reminds us that relationships are much more crucial than words.

In general this means that the teacher's growth in Christian virtues and graces is as indispensable for excellent teaching as it is for personal sanctification. The conquest of personal weaknesses and the development of Christian character has far-reaching educational implications.

It is also important to remember that we teach persons, not subjects. The most basic attitudes of life are learned from us, not books. A child's awareness that a teacher cares about him as a person is foundational for education.

Particularly is this true in grade school where teachers are with the children for the entire day. Don't underestimate the trauma of the child who must have his tonsils removed during Christmas vacation or the deep fears of the child whose mother is undergoing surgery in the hospital. Do you realize what the birth of a new baby may do to your well-behaved first grader? I am told I became an ungovernable demon in the first grade when my sister was born. Fortunately a wise teacher sensed that my conduct was the desperate effort of a jealous boy to gain attention denied at home, and her short visit with my parents helped the situation greatly.

This does not mean we are to pry into family affairs. But we are to be alert to the fact that the children in front of us are persons and we must relate to them in a personal way. We must take account of their individuality. Only then are we fully equipped to speak the language of relationship.

Such relationships are fundamental, for example, in our exercise of authority. We all agree we must be fair and impartial. But in honesty we must admit we are all susceptible to some prejudice and arbitrariness. We can be petty and small persons ourselves. We can have it "in" for some student with whom we do not quite "click." At such times our exercise of authority can become extremely arbitrary. Then there is a breakdown of relationships, the most significant language we speak. This not only undermines our exercise of authority, but also hinders our educational effectiveness.

If this language of relationship is well established, we can have an openness of mind to questions, to varying opinions, even to a bit of "heresy." Questions reflecting religious concern, while verbally formulated, often arise from personal problems. Then no mere verbal answer is sufficient. We must sense that often we are not simply facing a problem about which we must talk, but are involved with a person to whom we relate. If we encourage questions, promote creativity, remain unthreatened by the perceptive objection or outspoken challenge, and remain firm and secure in our faith, we are establishing a relationship of mutual understanding and acceptance. Then I think we are in a real position to help, to educate.

Finally, our personal faith in God and love for Him and others must be natural, spontaneous, pervasive. Again this is not simply a matter of verbal confession. It is rather a faith reflected in attitudes and values and judgements. There must be nothing synthetic or phony. We must be genuine Christians and relate to our students as such.

What language shall we speak? Surely the language of relationship. It takes time to learn a language, whether native or foreign. We can spend a life-time becoming proficient in its use. The language of relationship must be learned and cultivated no less. I have a feeling that the real success of our educational endeavors will be determined by how well we are learning this language.



COLLEGE FORUM

Peter De Boer, Department Editor

EDITORIAL

IN THE LATE SPRING OF 1963 the administration of Calvin College appointed a faculty Curriculum Study Committee to re-examine the then present curriculum and propose all necessary revisions.

In a preliminary report of its work, published in the spring of 1964, the Committee noted that the general premises of the Calvin curriculum, first adopted in the early 1920's to help win academic recognition for the then "fledgling college", had "never been seriously reconsidered nor . . . their application . . . carefully evaluated"; the Committee felt such a general appraisal long overdue.

The committee, in its first report, attempted to define a "Christian liberal arts education." In doing so, the Committee tried to make clear that they were not saying that Calvin College ought to be exclusively a liberal arts college; rather, that the liberal arts (and sciences) when taught, ought to be taught along certain lines. In their attempt to focus on a Christian liberal arts education, the Committee rejected the notion that such an education was aimed at preparing a student to hold a specific occupation (though the Committee wanted a liberal education to be useful). Nor should a liberal education primarily be an exploration of the problems of contemporary life, aimed at developing mature Christians (though the Committee wanted to see students matured for responsible Christian living). Nor was education properly focused on mere understanding and evaluating man's cultural products in the light of the Word, for such a view usually did not include the notion of creative contribution to culture; Christian liberal education ought to be creative.

The Committee chose to define a Christian liberal arts education in terms of the scholarly disciplines which comprise the liberating arts and sciences. A discipline being the disinterested theoretical study of some aspects of reality, the disciplines, argued the Committee, have their own distinguishing aims, concepts, and methodologies. The Christian scholar, by faith, is committed to an engagement with the disciplines. But because the Christian scholar is directed by the Word of God, his answers to fundamental questions about aims may be different from the non-Christian; such differences may affect not only the content of the disciplines, but the very way in which the Christian scholar pursues the disciplines.

The Committee, in the face of its commitment to a disciplinary approach to Christian higher education, concluded

that any Christian student in the twentieth century needed both a specialized knowledge of at least one discipline, and a general knowledge of many disciplines if he were to engage in a Christian liberal arts education.

In January, 1965, the Committee published a brief document outlining proposals for implementing its study. (A more complete document was published late in the same year.) A fundamental change was a course plan as contrasted with the semester-hour system. For eight terms, each full-time student would take approximately four courses each term. The course plan, the report stated, allowed for achieving a number of desirable goals: reducing the faculty course load per term, which would give the faculty more time for "scholarship"; increasing a student's ability to educate himself by decreasing the number of courses per term to which he would devote his time; allowing for flexibility in teaching methods, especially through supplementary work in library and laboratory.

In addition, one of the more striking proposed changes was a course in "Christian Perspectives on Learning," designed to enlist all freshmen in the study of the relationship of their faith and Christian learning. Another was the prescription of a basic curriculum or "core" required of all students, whether or not they were in the "liberal arts," to be "taken" largely in the first two years at Calvin.

The college year 1966-67 was one of further study by the various departments of the proposed changes, and planning on the departmental level for implementation. Many students, though not nearly all, enrolled in September, 1967, were "under" the new program; all were on the new schedule.

At this moment it is difficult to evaluate the changes that have been introduced. No one is really certain that the new is necessarily better than the old. It appears, however, that a number of faculty members are "from Missouri." Others, under the influence of a heady cup of coffee, have disparaged some of the innovations. Others, to be sure, enthusiastically endorse the program and its ideals. But no one, on the faculty or close to the faculty, has thus far written ANY KIND of a critique of the report of the Study Committee, still less written criticism of some of the fundamental EDUCATIONAL assumptions at work in the report.

"College Forum" is therefore pleased to present to its readers the following article, written by Lester DeKoster, a member of the Calvin faculty. Dr. DeKoster's provocative argument, we trust, will call forth rejoinders as constructive, we judge, as his is.

P.D.B.

Comment on CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Lester De Koster†

... The aim of Christian education must be to prepare the student to live the life of faith in contemporary society. This means that he must understand this society.

... The primary focus on a Christian liberal arts education should be on teachers and students together engaging in the various disciplines, directed and enlightened in their inquiries by the Word of God. (Christian Liberal Arts Education, pp. 37, 45).

I.

IF IMMANUEL KANT was correct in declaring that "the greatest and most difficult problem to which a man can devote himself is to the problem of education," then it must be added that these difficulties are compounded by prefixing the qualifying adjective "Christian" to the term "education."

It is noteworthy, in this connection, that Calvin did not call his Geneva Academy the CHRISTIAN Academy of Geneva, and that the title of Cardinal Newman's famous lectures "On University Education," is THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY, not of a CHRISTIAN University. The Library of Congress classifies "Christian school" as Sunday School, and even our forebears cautiously called their educational institutions "School for Christian Instruction." Nor did the founders of Calvin College choose to call it Calvin CHRISTIAN College.

Implicit in this long history of reticence to attach the qualification "Christian" to the concept "Education" is a sensitivity to the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of giving a generally persuasive and satisfying account of what modifications are introduced into a concept--EDUCATION--already ambiguous by virtue of its own problematics, when prefixed to it is the attributive CHRISTIAN. For if the definition of the term "education" be difficult, what of the definition of "Christian"?

Apart from this theoretical problem, he who wishes to define "Christian education" in terms of a curriculum faces the additional difficulties implied by the complex relations between "education" and survival in our highly structured society. Undergraduate collegiate curricula must be respectful of entrance requirements to graduate and professional schools, just as secondary curricula must be disciplined by college entrance requirements. Whatever theoretical definition is given, therefore, to the term "Christian education," it must accept, if not imply, admission to its curriculum of certain pre-college and pre-professional courses. And no doubt the school which, on the basis of its own theories, went too radically on its own way, would threaten the acceptability of its graduates at higher educational levels. Were the conjunction of CHRISTIAN and of EDUCATION to mandate a curriculum far out of step with prevailing content and sequence requirements at the next higher educational level, that Christian School would no doubt be bravely under-pupiled and understaffed. This might become a real test of the sincerity of

such a school's supporters, but there are few if any who, outside the Amish, aside from rhetorical flourishes at convocation time, really mean to go their own, principally-mandated way in today's educational labyrinth. The high school curriculum turns out to require what the colleges will accept, be it without excess enthusiasm; and the college curriculum is not blind to what the universities view as minimal. These become the curricular limits within which theory may have its way.

When, therefore, a Calvin College Faculty Committee undertook to define the Foundations of a CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION, and to base a curriculum upon these, it chose to wrestle not only with the "greatest and most difficult problem to which a man can devote himself," but it accepted the added burden of qualifying that problem with the attributives "Christian" and "Liberal Arts." The arena in which this wrestling was performed was bounded by four years in time, and by graduate school entrance stipulations in depth.

The Committee's REPORT--I shall also call it their DOCUMENT hereafter for variety's sake--entitled, CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION, achieved in the first instance the notable accomplishment of stimulating the Calvin community to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its own goals, methods, and curriculum. This the REPORT could do because it is a serious, sustained, and closely reasoned address to the problems whose difficulties I have already underlined. As was inevitable, the DOCUMENT did not speak the whole mind of everyone who participated in the extensive Faculty discussions based upon it, including that of the writer of these lines. But I advance now certain criticisms of the REPORT in the spirit of promoting further elucidation of its significant contributions to the basic question which engages us all: how to school our children after the mandates of our common Lord.

II.

I think I detect two lines of argument running through the REPORT, one a constructive contribution to the theory of Christian Education, namely that it is essentially preparation for life as a Christian in all the myriad "situations" into which men are cast. This, which I should not hesitate to call "pragmatic" or "instrumental" approach is, I think, the only one which could be true to the mind and work of Calvin. The second line of argument thinks in more esoteric terms, both as regards the "Liberal Arts" and "Christian;" and were, in my judgment, the REPORT purged of this, it would serve us all better. My remarks are directed, then, to the discrimination of these two lines of argument, and to the critique of the latter.

It is to be regretted, if discussion is to be most fruitful, that the DOCUMENT makes no explicit definition of its conception of EDUCATION. Perhaps another issue of the REPORT, or its publication in more permanent form, will make good this oversight. One reads on page 2 the following:

It is in the context of a mature understanding of the Christian religion that a Christian college must impart to its students the knowledge, understanding, methods, and skills necessary for living

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and working in the Kingdom of God as this is manifested in contemporary society.

Presumably this allows the influence that the DOCUMENT assumes EDUCATION to be the PROCESS, or the RESULT, of IMPARTING to students "knowledge, understanding, methods, and skills. . . ." Other sentences might be quoted to substantiate the conclusion that the DOCUMENT does conceive of EDUCATION as IMPARTATION. The teacher presumably imparts; the student imbibes.

If this is indeed the view underlying the DOCUMENT--and the point is worth clarification--then a commitment is made to a conception of EDUCATION which requires elucidation and discussion. Is, for example, IMPARTING by itself genuinely pedagogical? Does not the fact, experienced by all teachers, that we learn our subjects thoroughly only after, or as, we teach them--that is, as we impart, NOT imbibe-- of any importance in defining what we mean by EDUCATION? Still more, does not Calvin's conception of "wisdom" as essentially the experiential fruit of active response to the Truth, ENCOUNTERED rather than imparted, PERSONAL rather than formal, qualify in significant ways the conception of genuine, and Christian, EDUCATION, and point away from the notion of IMPARTING?

The REPORT will serve its purposes better, I am saying, when it undertakes to define its own conception of EDUCATION.

And, though I do not wish to linger on this formal matter too long, the REPORT ought also, I think, to correct its abdication of responsibility for a definition of a key term in its title and contents, namely LIBERAL ARTS. We read:

What everyone who uses the term agrees on--and perhaps this is the only thing everyone agrees on--is that a liberal arts education is one which is not aimed at training the student to hold down some specific occupation. Accordingly, when we speak of 'liberal arts education' in the discussion which follows, whether in presenting our own views or the views of others, we wish to be understood as meaning non-vocational and non-professional education. A liberal arts education, we are convinced, can be of great utility to men in their vocations and professions (pp. 1-2).

The definition of a key term by negation, I repeat, is an abdication of responsibility to productive discussion. It does leave the DOCUMENT free to define any curriculum it wishes, so long as it is non-vocational, as a Liberal Arts curriculum; but the title of the REPORT might less ambiguously be, then, CHRISTIAN NON-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. Because, in fact, as the writers of the REPORT are well aware, the concept "Liberal Arts" does have a long and relatively stable history. The Liberal Arts were for centuries divided into TRIVIUM and QUADRIVIUM, however the content of these divisions was modified by accretions in knowledge. Moreover, and what is in this connection of crucial importance, in the relation of TRIVIUM to QUADRIVIUM was involved not only a pedagogy but also a conception of the highest end of Man and of the means to achieve this end. "My aim," writes Quintilian, "is to produce the good man, speaking." His means: the Liberal Arts!

Classicism, the fount of the Liberal Arts tradition, "aimed at producing," says H. I. Marrou, "a man." It means to this end was Education. The tools of this Education were the Liberal Arts. Is this conception echoed when the DOCUMENT before us says:

It (a liberal arts education) does not point toward the scholar's life, nor the diplomat's, nor the clergymen's, nor the banker's. It points toward human life (p.2).

At issue between the Reformation and the Renaissance, and coming to expression in Calvin's DE SCANDALIS, is precisely the question if, (1) the HUMAN can be defined in classical terms, and (2) if the traditional "arts" are competent to evoke the HUMAN when it has been understood. On both scores, Bohatec points out, Calvin rejected the 'liberal arts' tradition. He rejected, further, the amalgam of the "liberal arts" and the "Christian" traditions attempted by Johan Sturm in the Academy of Strasbourg--where Calvin himself was a teacher during his exile from Geneva--to produce "the learned and pious Doctor, speaking well."

I am not suggesting that the REPORT does define the "human" in classical terms. On the contrary, I am inquiring if its casual combination of "Christian" and "Liberal Arts" in both the title and the language of the DOCUMENT does not in fact obscure a tension which it would be highly profitable to explore, the more so because the Document asserts:

The conspicuous need for a strong Calvinistic liberal arts program. . . (p. 2).

Apart from the question of fact as to how "conspicuous" a need there is, and by whom so recognized among us, this sentence combines what Bohatec argues that Calvin set asunder; and this remains true, I think, even if one accepts the DOCUMENT's negative definition of the Liberal Arts. Nor does one find, I believe, any validation in the DOCUMENT or the right to call ITS curriculum, or even the "Core" of that curriculum, "Calvinistic."

In short, light will be shed upon our pedagogical approach and upon our pedagogical problems if we discuss in more detail than the REPORT could afford, the tension inherent between the meaning of "Christian" and of "Liberal Arts" when applied to EDUCATION. If, for example, we retain for the term "Liberal Arts" its historical content as a mode of evoking the "human" in Man, a tension arises between this and the "Christian" mode of evoking the "human" in us. If, on the other hand, we empty the term "Liberal Arts" of its historical denotation to avoid this problem, then why not speak directly and precisely of "Christian Non-Vocational, Non-Professional Education"?

III.

A "Calvinistic" alternative, I think, would be to understand by "EDUCATION" what Calvin sought to accomplish through the very life of the whole city of Geneva, namely growth in godliness, which is "wisdom," and then to understand by "TRAINING" what Calvin intended should be accomplished by the Academy as a vocational contribution to the life of the whole.

Swayed perhaps by this "Calvinistic" utilitarianism, the REPORT does not sustain throughout its pages a conception of purely "non-vocation" Education. The reader will have noticed, perhaps with surprise, that in the very paragraph where the REPORT specifies "Liberal Arts" Education as "non-vocational and non-professional," quoted above, the next sentence attributes to this kind of Education a "utility."

It would be inadequate explanation of this phenomenon to suggest that the REPORT is early aware that the question is going to be posed: Why should the Church sponsor "non-

vocational and non-professional" Education? and is thus before-hand with an answer. It is more likely that the Calvinistic conscience cannot really concur in Newman's conclusion that knowledge is simply an end in itself. To make any created thing an end in itself is to practice idolatry, and the Calvinist is sensitive to the fact. The REPORT is, therefore (and happily) restive with advocating just "non-vocational and non-professional" EDUCATION as if the accumulation of knowledge, or the training of the intellect, could be justifiable ends for a Calvinistic conscience.

But this decision for "utility" decisively discriminates the REPORT from the conclusions attained in Newman's IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY, unless I misread the REPORT. Newman says:

"That alone is liberal knowledge which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be INFORMED (as it is called) by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation" (p. 88, Everyman's Edn.).

"All that I have been now saying is summed up in a few characteristic words of the great philosopher. 'Of possessions,' he says, 'those rather are useful which bear fruit; those LIBERAL WHICH TEND TO ENJOYMENT. By fruitful I mean, which yield revenue; by enjoyable, where NOTHING ACCRUES OF CONSEQUENCE BEYOND THE USE'" (p. 89, IBID.).

When the REPORT opts for "utility," it rejects both Aristotle and the schema erected by the great Cardinal upon Aristotelian precepts. For the REPORT declares, in language as unacceptable to Newman as to Aristotle:

The aim of Christian education, then, will be to train the student to live the Christian life (p. 33).

Very good! But why, then, label THIS kind of Education with a term--"Liberal Arts"--long associated with Newman's conception of it? If the purposes for which Calvin College is maintained do, because they are ultimately utilitarian, discriminate it from other "Liberal Arts" colleges, this need not be deplored, nor be camouflaged. We are what we are in order to perform as best we can God's work in the world. If our conception of that work is not appropriately labeled "Liberal Arts" except by evasive definition of the term, might it not best be said plainly?

For, a curriculum which is, in fact, carefully designed to TRAIN--and the term is important, too--not the intellect as an end in itself, nor even the "good man" as an end in himself, but to train "a wide range of young people for living the Christian life in contemporary society," (p. 64) is misnamed by the designation "Liberal Arts." This is so even if we accept the REPORT'S negative definition of the term, for an Education designed to train for the Christian life in the myriad callings of the educated can only euphemistically be described as "non-vocational and non-professional." I know that the REPORT seeks to avoid a curriculum specifically oriented to specific occupations and professions. But the term "Liberal Arts" certainly implied for Newman, as it did for Aristotle, MORE than THIS discrimination, by suggesting, instead, the life of leisured study, or the training

of the mind, or the cultivation of the Self -- AS ULTIMATE ENDS! Inasmuch as the REPORT does NOT subscribe to this view of Education, a term other than "Liberal Arts" in its title, and throughout its "Foundations," would do much to remove little ambiguities of expression and meaning.

IV.

Involved also is, or may be, a matter of pedagogy. Are courses taught for the sake of "utility" the same in technique, in content, and in desired outcome as would be those same courses taught as ends in themselves under the rubric of the "liberal arts"? The question is at least worth discussion.

One thinks, in this connection, of the Reformers' insistence upon the teaching of the classical languages. Is this evidence that the Genevan Academy of Calvin was a "liberal arts" school? Not if Bohatec be correct. Were the languages taught as ends in themselves? No. Were they taught as a means to "culture"? Not likely. As vehicles for training the intellect? Improbable. They were taught as TOOLS for exegesis!

Calvin did not suppose, so far as I can determine, that St. Augustine would have been more "liberally" educated if he had been schooled in Greek and Hebrew, as he was not. But Calvin was sure that, had Augustine been so trained, he would not have been misled by Jerome's mistakes in the Vulgate, because he would have compared Jerome, as Calvin himself did, with the original. By the same measure, if the Reform was to prosper, the ministry must be trained to handle the classical tongues, not as "non-vocational and non-professional" instruction, but as Marx was later to phrase it, as "weapons in the struggle for life." And it seems likely, at least worth exploring, if courses deliberately set in a utilitarian context do not undergo significant changes from their postures in a "Liberal Arts" context.

It may be, also, that the conception of the "Core" curriculum would undergo some modification if it were expressly set in a utilitarian context. And this opens another evaluation of the REPORT, namely of the relation between Part I, "Foundations. . ." and Part II, "Curriculum. . ."

V.

Much of the justification adduced for the choice of a course as part of the curriculum, in Part II, is based upon the relevance of that course for orientation to the modern world. In view of the objective announced in Part I, namely to train young people for Christian service in their time and place, such justification is both reasonable and relevant. It might be wished that there were explicit lines of inference leading from specific premises in Part I to the selection of specific courses in Part II. The absence of such chains of implication may reflect the inherent impossibility of discerning them, indicating the great difficulty of the problems involved; or this absence may indicate the desirability of further discussion among us of the relationship between our "Foundations" and our practice. It would be unfortunate if the vantage points achieved by the REPORT should remain unelaborated by continued investigation and study, designed to enlarge and, where necessary, to amend the DOCUMENT.

I think, as indicated above, that a second strand of argument adduced in the "Foundations. . ." ought to be amended.

To suggest what that strand is, let me take one step away from the REPORT.

It is natural that advocates of "Christian" Education should feel obliged to present apologia for their convictions. We have been discussing one such apology, namely that an education merits the appellation "Christian" if it be designed deliberately, and knowledgably, to train students for Christian service. But it is obvious that this leaves open the question whether the attributive "Christian" when prefixed to EDUCATION does not also imply specific characteristics of the pedagogical process itself. Might not, otherwise, say, the Education be "neutral" even though its use be "Christian"?

It may first of all be replied that if, in fact, the utilitarian design of the curriculum, in terms of the kind of service envisioned, governs that curriculum and its pedagogical application, then the courses will betray their orientation from the beginning. This is a question which, I have suggested, merits investigation.

It may further be argued that the "perspective" which governs both the life on campus and the learning in the classroom, if a "Christian" perspective, will in ways both definable and indefinable, make for "Christian" pedagogy. To this end, it may be observed, the REPORT prescribes a course entitled "Christian Perspectives on Learning" for all Freshmen, both to acquaint them with such Perspectives and to alert them to what transpires around them as they move from course to course. Whether in fact such a course does not become one in "Christian Perspectives on LIFE" instead of on "LEARNING" remains to be seen. Whether or not, in a curriculum designed to train for service, another course in "Perspectives on Christian Service" would not also have a role to play is at least open to discussion, the more so if it be true that, in Calvin's terms, the truly "human" can be evoked only in and through service of God to the good of man. Such SERVICE, then, ought to be, from the beginning, an intimate part of a "Christian" curriculum, carefully practiced ON CAMPUS by teachers and students alike. If the "community of scholars" is the Liberal Arts ideal college, the "communion of saints" is the pragmatic Christian ideal.

But there is always the temptation to insist that there is something so unique about "Christian" education as immediately to justify its practice. This temptation comes to expression in the REPORT in the form of the argument, not unknown among us, that all of life is "religious." This means that all of life is, as the REPORT puts it, "response to God" (p. 32). The next, and inevitable, step is to maintain that because response is never neutral, it can only be either in "obedience" or in "disobedience."

If, now, the process could be halted here, placing upon the student the imperative that he conform his life to "obedience," then the theory would lend support to the general thrust of the REPORT, and simply admonish the student--and the teacher--to respond "in faith" as he prepares for service, and as he serves.

But having theoretically divided the world into sheep and goats, the temptation is irresistible to designate which, among human agents and institutions, is which. "Finally," says the Report, on page, 48,

in those disciplines in which we study the institutions and creations and activities of men, what we as Christians also aim to uncover and discern is the religious perspective, the mind, behind all those cultural products. This, indeed, is one of the most important results we are

looking for in such disciplines. For, a fact of great significance about a man's cultural endeavors is that they are the expression of his religious allegiance and dogmas. What eminently deserves investigation, then, in our consideration of human products--whether these be economic institutions, political arrangements, works of art, philosophical systems, liturgical practices--is the spiritual kingdoms which inform and pervade those products (p.48).

If in fact the REPORT itself took cognizance of this "important" result of a "Christian" education, it is to be wondered why the "mind" which comes to expression in the "Liberal Arts" was not discerned and disavowed. Moreover, it is to be inquired, on this position, whether the "Core" curriculum as a concept, and the 4-1-4 division of the school year as a pedagogical theory, stem from the "mind" of obedience or of disobedience. And it may be asked if the conception of the "discipline" so carefully worked out in the REPORT has its roots in the "Christian" or the non-Christian "mind"--assuming that as between these alternatives there is no third option. Or, once more, might it not be inquired, in all sincerity, if the REPORT itself reflects a "mind," and if so which of the two possibilities? And, then, of what "mind" might those be who reject part or all of the DOCUMENT? Or, to go no further, of what "mind" is the position which rejects the one I am now criticizing?

These are not facetious questions. They arise from the conviction that it is pedagogically unsound to aim at the discrimination of the world into "obedient" and "disobedient" MINDS and their cultural products. It is, further, questionable what is implied by talking, as the REPORT allows itself to do once or twice of "the man of sin," as applicable to any human being.

It is, moreover, at odds with the thrust of the REPORT which opts for Christian service, to be trying at the same time to produce "judges" of cultural products and institutions they barely understand, and that from the outside. The JUDGE is rarely much of a Participant. He seldom finds an institution worthy of his energies. Get a student into the habit of trying to ferret out, if he can, the "mind" of the Red Cross, or of the Republican Party, and how likely is it that he will attempt at the same time to put that organization into Christian service--yet it is for this end, presumably, that he is to be trained.

There is, of course, a prudence for which Calvinism has long been noted. Discrimination is the basis of evaluation, and indispensable to conduct. But there is a wide gap between prudent calculation of where one's energies can best be spent, and the attempt to divide the world into faithful and apostate cultural products.

It is of no contribution to the essential thrust of the REPORT that this highly abstract argument be included. No curricular guidelines flow from it. The REPORT will be more clear and consistent without it.

But all this has been argued, in other contexts, before. It has been the substance of some discussion among us of "separate organization," and it is no more useful here in establishing the ground for "Christian" Education, than it has been in implying other institutional formulations.

In conclusion, the REPORT is essentially a constructive effort to deal with very complex problems. It merits continued discussion as well as a note of commendation to the Committee for long and arduous effort.



SOCIAL SCIENCES

Burnie Wiersma, Department Editor

EDITORIAL

HOW OFTEN DON'T WE HEAR THE CLICHE' "First impressions are lasting ones"? And so it is regarding much of what we teachers attempt to impart. How many times don't we meet a seemingly built-in antipathy toward learning in certain subject areas? The very name of some subjects elicits responses from students hardly indicative of a healthy desire to immerse themselves in this new endeavor. Much of the aversion shown may be only the result of an older brother's or sister's assessment of the subject. However, some of the apparent loathing may be a result of the student's initial contact with the material. The 'blah' attitude many students have caught may be the result of what we as teachers have done or not done.

It then becomes incumbent upon us, as teachers, to introduce any new course cautiously. How can we preclude the development of a poor attitude toward learning in a certain field? There are, perhaps, many answers, and in the case of certain students we may not be able to eliminate poor attitudes. It should be a truism, however, that we begin with what the student knows. We must never discount the pleasure of recognition. We adults are always more comfortable discussing what is easily comprehensible; how much more isn't this true of children?

And so in Social Studies we sometimes introduce our courses citing facts and concepts which appear to the student to be from another world, and these events and ideas rapidly become incomprehensible. A child's dislike of history may be due to his inability to gain a feeling of personal involvement. Possibly the most important reason for the ineffectiveness of history in the classroom is our inability to invest history with an air of reality.

One real possibility of instilling reality into history was made clear at a recent convention of the Michigan Historical Society which this writer was privileged to attend. The purpose of the sectionals presented was to emphasize the importance of and interest inherent in the use of local history. We are, it was stated, most interested in those things which are closest to us.

Which of our students do not know the names of many of the main streets in our towns? How many, however, know that in many cases these streets bear names of early pioneers who helped settle the neighborhood?

How many local parks are not studded with statues, historical markers, etc., which in most cases are better known to the birds than they are to the children we teach?

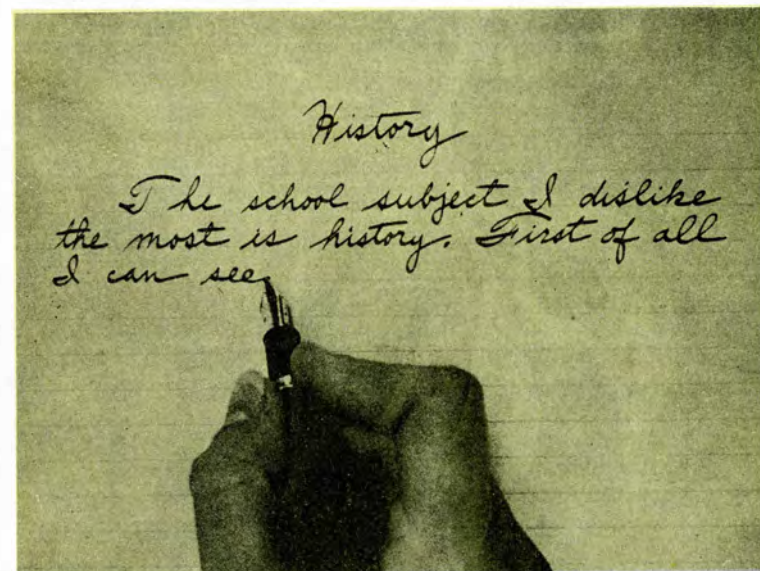
One of the most gratifying experiences we can have is to be able to associate events of the past with what we

are already familiar. I was amazed to discover that the route which I cover from home to school each day in about fifteen minutes was at one time traversed by a stage coach which took three and one half hours for the same trip. I was equally impressed with the knowledge that not too far from our home an early fur trader was knifed to death by an irate Indian whom he had cheated.

We ought to give our students, particularly on the lower levels, the pleasure of wisdom before the fact. We should never hesitate to use all the local lore we can. Most of the children are much more familiar with the local scene than we realize. We should utilize their natural interests to engender an interest in the past, and only then should we broaden out to enlarge their horizons and vistas. Most textbooks, because of their national distribution, cannot make use of this method.

Many of us may be teaching in communities with which we ourselves are grossly unfamiliar. We all are limited in terms of time by family duties and a host of other demands constantly being made on us. Where can we go to familiarize ourselves with the raw materials we need to have?

The town library is the best place to begin. It's amazing how many pamphlets, booklets, chronologies, etc., one finds dealing with strictly community history. In one two hour stint in our local library, I found enough material to stimulate



discussion in several class sessions if I choose to use it. Don't limit yourself to the library; we are surrounded by other sources which can be tapped with a minimum of effort. Most areas have local historical societies, the members of which are constantly engaged in research on community levels. Centennials and other celebrations are usually accompanied by a spate of material of historical interest. Local museums usually contain sections devoted to area history. Daily newspapers regularly contain articles dealing with material of this nature. Even cemeteries sometimes can be helpful in gaining a knowledge of provincial history.

Local history, then, can be used at lower levels to beget an appreciation of history in general. In the upper grades it can also be useful, but, perhaps, in a different manner. Every village or community offers itself as a sieve through which broader history can be strained. No national

event occurs which does not have local repercussions. Sometimes our understanding of national events is based on strictly provincial reactions. Our interpretations of such a national phenomena as 'Black Power'; our reaction to hippies; or our concept of the war in Vietnam is to a large degree determined by those with whom we come in contact.

In another sense, our understanding of national history cannot be complete without realizing that some national movements, ideas, etc., are but manifestations of a collective notion which is broadly based on community opinions all over the country.

Let's instill a sense of reality in our teaching of history by using material of which the students are already aware. Perhaps in this way we can implant the seed which will develop into a lifelong interest in the past, both local and national.

B.W.

Books

GOD IN AMERICAN HISTORY, by Benjamin Weiss (Zonder-van Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966, \$4.95). Reviewed by John De Jager, teacher of social studies at Grand Haven, Michigan Christian Junior High School.

"IS CHRISTMAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL?" was an article printed in a daily newspaper recently which would cause many Christians to be disturbed and alarmed. The article relates several incidents where acknowledgement of the Christ of Christmas on tax supported property was declared unconstitutional on the basis of the First Amendment to our Constitution. Singing of Christmas carols in a public school assembly, constructing a nativity scene on the City Hall lawn, placing a lighted cross in a municipal park are all activities deemed by some Americans to be a violation of their rights.

Mr. Benjamin Weiss would view this as a contradiction of our heritage. He shows quite clearly in **GOD IN AMERICAN HISTORY**, that America not only has a "religious heritage" but more importantly a clear thread of references to God.

The author begins with our very conception, pointing to the references made to God and to His providential care by the early settlers in such documents as the MAYFLOWER COMPACT and the FUNDAMENTAL ORDERS OF CONNECTICUT. The early settlers found their lives with all their desires and motivation intricately connected with a belief in God and a reliance on Him. This is recognizably a legacy of Europe. This line of thought is continued in America as we develop our nation.

To support the view that this religious heritage is a continued motif in America, Dr. Weiss directs his readers to the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE which expresses this theme. In these words: "And, for support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence we mutually pledge. . . ." (page 40). The author also sees this



Christian heritage continued by our presidents from George Washington to Lyndon Baines Johnson. Our presidents recognized this Christian heritage as they made references to it in their inaugural addresses, in the speeches made before the Congress and in letters written to friends and subordinates. This section dealing with the presidents is the longest and most interesting. The author shows a thread of continuity in recognizing God by our highest elected officials. Whether they truly accept this belief as a personal conviction is another matter and the author leaves this well enough alone.

Dr. Weiss has accumulated references which our state governments have made to God. Looking at the State Constitutions he found that in all fifty states expressions of faith in Almighty God have been made. He points out further that these expressions were not emergency statements but were made with deliberate care. These statements have become an expression of the faith of the American people. (page 155).

Faith in God has been expressed by Americans in inscriptions they have placed on public buildings and monuments. The Capitol Building, the Supreme Court building, the Washington Monument, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier are cited as public buildings containing inscriptions expressing faith in God. Because of these many inscriptions of faith in God, Dr. Weiss states that it is clear our nation has recognized that the source of our strength is and has been God.

Faith in God is also expressed in songs which Americans sing: Our national anthem, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," and "America the Beautiful" are examples used by Dr. Weiss to illustrate this point.

This collection of documentary material is very useful and we as Christians and Americans do appreciate the efforts made by high ranking officials of our country to express reliance on God. This book should be read by anyone interested in America's religious and political heritage.

There is a word of caution to any reader, however. We must remember our heritage is based upon much more than words, documents, and monuments. What Americans have done is considerably more important. How America has lived with herself and with others in this complex world is also our heritage.

Sex Education in Our Schools. . .

Holy Ground? (III) [†]

Dr. A. Vander Maas

The booklet "God's Temples", by William C. Hendricks, discusses the need for self-control in part three. It starts out by stating clearly that "the first and most important reason why we should control our sexual behavior is the same as the reason for controlling all of our thoughts, words and deeds: God commands us to do so" (page 50). In the following two pages it then deals with what could happen if this command-

ment were not followed up. It mentions many of the fearful and sad possible consequences and, ironically enough, goes on to discuss methods of birth control by which several of these consequences can be avoided.

It is undeniably true that the trespassing of God's commandments may result in punishment in this life. This may certainly be stressed, also in the area of sex. But it should never be used for keeping a commandment. That would make us refrain from stealing because we might end up in jail. Fear is no basis for self-control.

I wish Mr. Hendricks had given more space to the basis of marriage, the typical bond of love. Our children should know what happens with marriage when this bond is not given a chance to grow or is simply replaced by a physical desire. They should know that intercourse in human beings is given to express a ripened marriage--love and that only when used in this way will it strengthen the bond of love, while otherwise it will be merely an exciting experience, followed by a hangover.

Since we have dealt with sex education rather extensively in connection with "God's Temples", I should not omit to discuss a few smaller details also.

In the student booklet I found one statement that appears in many books and which has caused great anxiety to innumerable children; yet it is utterly wrong. On page 57 I read: "In very rare cases syphilis may be spread by kissing." One can only get syphilis on that part of the body that is in direct contact with a syphilitic sore on the partner. Kissing can therefore only cause syphilis if the partner already has such a sore on the mouth. Usually, however, syphilis on the mouth is not caused by kissing, but by some form of perverse sexual behavior.

I would have liked to see the use of tampons mentioned. All new things need time, but there is no doubt that tampons are the best sanitary dressing for girls and I hope that more and more mothers will teach their daughters how to use them.

The Teacher's Resource Unit contains a great amount of valuable information. This is given in a well-organized form, covers all possible aspects of the subject and is full of source references. It would be hardly possible for such an extensive unit not to contain any errors. I should like to point out a few which I noticed.

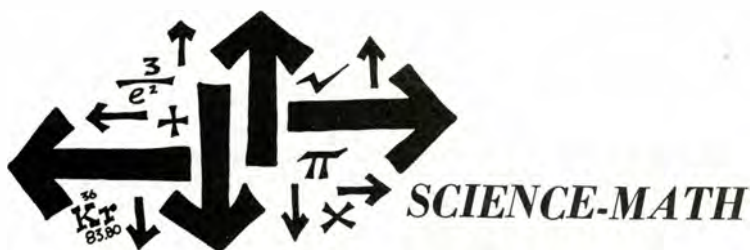
That childbirth would be painful because of sin (page 38) is too oldfashioned a misconception that it should appear in a recent writing. In the first place, the work done by Dick Read and others has sufficiently shown that labour is not always painful. In my own practice I have seen this confirmed in a number of cases. Second, instead of blaming painful childbirth on sin, as if sin had this special result, we had better remember that all temporal existence with its shortcomings is the result of sin. In John 9:1-3, Jesus himself denies a specific connection between sin and illness in general. The words of Genesis 3:16 - "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing" - have a much broader meaning and should not be isolated from the rest of the chapter.

That the clitoris is the center of sexual excitement in the female (page 20) is another example of a scientific statement that gets copied over the ages without any criticism. In their recent book, "Human Sexual Response", Masters and Johnson have proven this is to be incorrect. With most women the principal center of sexual excitement is situated in the heart.

Finally, it is defended that unborn children also have life before birth (page 32 - I assume human life is meant here and not biological life). The proof quoted to support this is not very scientific. That God's covenant promises

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[†]This article originally appeared in THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HERALD and is used with their permission.



William Selles, Department Editor

Open the Door, Please

Helen Oostdyk†



where to from here?

Artistically speaking, four is a golden age. Not yet are young imaginations curbed with such adult strictures as: But two of the feet point the wrong way, or You've made the eyes too big.

But when the converging roads of custom close in, what then? As the youngster enters grade one and moves on through the school, how do you keep the sense of wonder alive . . . prevent the creative wells from drying up . . . keep conformity at bay? Above all, how do you keep your students tuned to the Creator of all things—even of bugs like the one at the top?

A SLIGHT FORM stands outside the door. Two tiny hands are clutching a large cardboard carton. Eyes beg, "Open the door, please." Eager children are pressing. "What you got, Todd? What's in there?" As the door opens the crowd falls in. Quickly the box is set down and peering eyes try to peek inside. "Let Todd have the first turn," the children eagerly call to the pupil-teacher who is in charge of the Kindergarten news for the day. As Todd nonchalantly pulls aside the flaps of the box the children nearest him see nothing in the box but a pile of grass and leaves. How disappointing! But Todd's hands are busily pushing grass and leaves aside while looking for the hidden pet. "Is he gone, or is he hiding?" the teacher, Miss Van, inquires. Suddenly the children shrink back! Todd has come up with something. Silence. Then Sue exclaims, "Looks like a baby alligator!" "Is it a baby alligator, Todd?" Miss Van asks. Todd shakes his head and answers, "No -- a salamander." "Where did you get it? Where does he like to live? Did he always live

there?" And so develops an introduction to the amphibian family, contrasted with reptiles. Soon we discover that there are also mammals, fish, and birds.

* * *

There's singing in the Kindergarten room this morning. Open the door. Let's listen.

"Winter is coming, Winter is coming,
How do you think I know?"

Wait. A lone voice answers:

"The squirrels are gathering nuts, I know it
must be so."

Another voice:

"The geese are flying south, I know it must be
so."

And still another:

"The caterpillar made his cocoon, I know it must
be so."

The obvious leads to the less obvious, and we soon have developed a unit on how God cares for His creation as winter comes. What happens to trees and vegetation? Why? What happens to insects, birds, and mammals? Why do some creatures go away and others stay? How does God provide for those that stay?

This may also be the opportune time to discuss the seasons: why seasons change, the effects of the changes, and the locations where there are only slight seasonal changes.

* * *

"Ding-dong, ding-dong---" As Miss Van goes to open the outside door she notices several children with large speared icicles in their hands, and some with snowballs. Her first impulse is to say, "Please leave your snow and ice outside." But on second thought she decides to let the children bring them in and see what will happen. Bobby holds up his long icicle proudly for display as he is given the first turn for news. "This was hanging by our front door this morning My Dad got it down for me." "What's it made of, Bobby?" inquires Miss Van. "What makes ice, and what makes it that shape?" A discussion of temperatures ensues. The thermometer is mentioned. (Miss Van displays a large one she has made of cardboard with a movable red ribbon.) "Is

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it freezing cold in our room? What will happen to Bobby's icicle if we leave it in here? What shall we do with it?" Most children suggest bringing it back outside, but to follow through with a scientific discovery we decide to place Bobby's icicle in a jar. Bette's snowball is next for display. It evokes little interest until we suggest putting it in the sink to see what will happen in an hour or two. Later we notice Bobby's icicle and Bette's snowball look the same. "Did they look the same to start with? Why do they look the same now? Are there any other forms of water?"

* * *

Open the door -- with a book, YOU WILL GO TO THE MOON, or a newspaper clipping of a recent blast-off. Soon the Kindergarten room is a buzz of activity. Each child is making his own rocket, his own space suit. "Why are there three parts to a rocket? Why do we need a space suit? Is there more to God's world than our earth? Where do we

want to go with our rocket? Where is space? What's it like?" So while playing, we're discovering. Then one day you'll hear the count-down and the blast-off!

Blast off - we're heading for outer space,

Off we go at a zipping pace.

Our rocket is ready, so all hands be steady.

We're off to visit the moon.

And of course each little astronaut makes a safe return landing back on the earth. Then he makes his report at the T.V. station: "No air up there." "Not much gravity." "It was very hot." "Big holes on the moon." "No food."

* * *

"Open the door, please," is the plea of each child today. And even in Kindergarten, as we are alert to opportunities, and with specific planning and units, we are able to open the door to science and the wonderful discoveries in God's great world.

Should We Teach About Evolution in Our Christian Schools?

John Riemersma†

The teachings of evolution are potentially upsetting to our present concepts of God, man, and the universe. The theory of evolution involves some very basic dogma which would have to be reconsidered and perhaps restated should we accept its teachings. This is even the case when theistic evolution is accepted.

The conflict between evolution and sudden creation is again actively discussed in our church community. This problem has been with us for many years, and it is not likely to be resolved in the near future. Our Synod may, within the next few years, make some pertinent pronouncements with respect to evolutionary theory and the meaning of the Genesis account. However the Synod may guide and lead us, its statements and conclusions will not remove the conflict.

HOW TRUE IS EVOLUTIONARY THEORY?

The conclusions of evolutionists are in many ways extremely tentative. Most scientists will recognize this fact. Many science textbook writers, however, do not reflect these uncertainties in their writings. They often imply, through ignorance or intent, that evolution is proven truth. Proof for evolution as understood by secular science is completely lacking. At the same time it must be noted that much information from fossils, rock strata, and present geological events points to a very old earth and the evolution of plants, animals, and man. Evidence appears sufficient for us to give serious consideration to some of the teachings of evolution. We must involve this theory in our search for truth relative to the origin and development of all things about which

it speaks. We are not intellectually honest if we rule out the possibility that God used evolution as a means of creation.

HOW SHOULD WE HANDLE EVOLUTION?

In view of the significance of evolution with respect to both science and theology, my answer to the title question of this article is in the affirmative. Yes, we should teach ABOUT evolution, in detail, in our Christian schools. In doing so we should emphasize the methods used by evolutionists, the findings on which it is based, and the many assumptions that make it so tentative. The Scriptures, in so far that they speak on this topic, must be used abundantly. The following may be considered as particularly good reasons for teaching about evolution in detail:

1. A sound Christian witness, for or against evolution, is not possible if information about it is lacking. To witness is our task! Debating the issue with an unbeliever is not an easy matter. However, taking the Bible and saying, "God said and it was" is at best a very naive approach with one not having such faith in the Bible. Even when faith in the Bible is present this answer leaves much to be desired. Evolutionary theory is very vulnerable in many places, but casting doubt upon it within the minds of those believing it will require sound and logical arguments not possible with insufficient knowledge. A short time ago a leading theologian lamented the fact that our witness against modern

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evolution is so sporadic and ineffective. Our general lack of knowledge may well be the reason for this ineffectiveness.

2. Leaders in our churches will deal with this conflict for years to come. Can we, with present knowledge, actively participate as we ought? Much evidence today points to the possibility that the Bible alone will not yield all the answers we desperately need regarding the origin and development of man and the universe. Science speaks about God and His works. We may be wise to listen, even when at times there appear to be conflicts between science and the Scriptures.

3. Since both the Bible and nature are God-given revelations, we may safely assume that in our search for truth we will find them ultimately in complete agreement in so far that both speak on the same subject. With one God as the source of both they cannot be in conflict. All conflicts must only be so in appearance and therefore, subject to solution. One God, the Source of both science and the Bible, is sufficient motivation for a detailed study of the findings and assumptions leading to the evolutionary theory.

4. Apart from God, man's view of man is based to a large degree on the assumption that he is a product of materialistic evolution. One may carry this to its ultimate conclusion and say, perhaps, that he is a passing product of nature. Such a view of man dictates a human behavior much different from the view that holds that man is the

crown and ultimate product of God's creation. We can better understand the views of others, and deal with them more effectively, if we better understand their own views about their origin, development, and purpose in life.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

Much could be said about correlations already made between the findings of science and the revelations of the Bible. Showing these is not the intent of this article. There is much science in the Bible. There is also much about God in the "book of nature." We need both of these revelations for a fuller understanding of the riches and power of God. The Bible has always dictated our interpretations of nature. Perhaps the time has come that the findings of science can help us, at least in part, to gain a better understanding of the Genesis account.

A detailed understanding of evolutionary theory is essential for us if we want to witness against it effectively. This understanding will not come without effort. Our Christian Schools can fill a void, thus better preparing us for the future as we continue to deal with this problem in the days ahead. Then it need never be said of us that we lost this struggle for lack of knowledge. I pray that neither lack of knowledge nor tradition will stand in our ways as we continue our search for truth regarding the origin of man and the universe, an issue so inherently fascinating and theologically significant.

Coordination of the Science Curriculum Impossible or Imperative?

Henry Triezenberg†

Article I. We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good.

Article II. We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God even his everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Rom. 1:20). . . (de Bres, 1561).

HOW WE "READ" THE UNIVERSE

The study of science is a way of "reading" the natural universe. In studying science we are concerned with two aspects: (1) a logical structure of facts and concepts that describe nature and (2) the processes by which the structure is obtained. The first aspect is the product of the second. The

process of science is one way we read the natural universe; a logical structure is the result of the way that scientists have read it. Logical structures may include both facts and concepts. By facts we mean observables or percepts. In a logical structure, facts are related by and to concepts. Concepts represent conscious relations between facts or between ideas; they also may be generalized ideas. A subject belongs in the curriculum when it is seriously and sequentially organized for long-term study; the structure and the processes of science fill this criterion. The science curriculum should be sequentially organized to transmit both aspects of science.

Science is not technology. Technology is the application of science to achieve a practical purpose. It is employed to provide things necessary for the sustenance and comfort of human life. We speak of agricultural, educational, medical, engineering, rocket, and television technologies, to mention only a few. Rightfully used, they permit us to serve God more efficiently. Wrongfully used, they strike fear into the hearts and minds of people. Science continuously interacts with technology, they are symbiotic, they feed on each other, and they grow apace. This rapid growth startles people in our time and in-

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creases our need to understand the overarching concepts of science. Science depends on technology for its growth, but science is not technology and science education should not be concerned with technological applications except when considering the implications of science for society. Technology is concerned with the production of goods for our material welfare; science is concerned with the production of logical structures to help us read the material universe. "Science is not concerned with THINGS; it is concerned with IDEAS, although those ideas often are ideas about things" (Roller, 1960, p. 16).

UNITY OF PROCESS

Science finds its unity with other liberal arts in the creative formulation of ideas or concepts. The process of science may be described thus:

It grows from a comparison. It has seized a likeness between two unlike appearances; for the apple in the summer garden and the grave moon overhead are surely as unlike in their movements as two things can be. Newton traced in them two expressions of a single concept, gravitation; and the concept (and the unity) are in that sense his free creation. The progress of science is the discovery at each step of a new order which gives unity to what had long seemed unlike...

The poem or the discovery exists in two moments of vision: the moment of appreciation as much as that of creation; for the appreciator must see the movement, wake to the echo which was started in the creation of the work. In the moment of appreciation we live again the moment when the creator saw and held the hidden likeness....

And we test the concept... by its implications. That is, when the concept has been built up from some experiences, we reason what behavior in other experiences should logically flow from it (Bronowski, 1965, pp. 15, 19, 35).

There is WITHIN science no single predetermined "method" in the formation of concepts. Scientists characteristically utilize whatever method seems most appropriate for a specific situation. Nonetheless there are some identifiable processes in which scientists commonly engage. The processes include some basic assumptions accepted on faith and some basic operations. Scientists proceed on the assumption that there is ORDERLINESS and CONSISTENCY in the universe and that an experiment performed today can be REPRODUCED tomorrow if run under similar conditions by other scientists. This belief in an orderly universe is commensurate with faith in a perfectly wise Creator. The belief that men can discover the orderliness is consonant with the concept of a man created in His image and able to think His thoughts after Him. While scientists have faith that this orderliness is discoverable, they do not believe that science will discover it completely. Apparently the frontier of discoverable science is endless, for important new discoveries open countless new problems and new ideas to be discovered. Consequently scientific concepts are necessarily TENTATIVE. And this view is consistent with the Christian view of imperfect human, the fallen image-bearer, constantly striving but never arriving at a complete knowledge of the universe in this life. It promotes humility in the scientist, prohibits arrogance, and allows continuous effort and progress in the scientific endeavor. It is consistent with the Christian view of an infinite and incomprehensible Creator. Not only are the statements of science

tentative and probabalistic but also its MEASUREMENTS, one of the important operations in the process of science. A science is not exact because of precise measurements but it is exact when it can assign the approximate magnitude of error or other degree of credibility to its conclusions. Some other important operations in the process of science are OBSERVING, CLASSIFYING, and DRAWING INFERENCES. It is important in science education to give students experience in the process of science in order to promote healthy attitudes toward science, to impart an awareness of concept limitations as well as strengths to help them recognize situations in which a concept can apply and where it cannot, and to avoid a false impression of science as a static and authoritarian endeavor. If we use grades in school only to reward acceptance of the logical relations of science as conceived by the teacher, students will be careful not to think.

To too great an extent we associate this noble word (science) with the mechanical, deterministic, physical science of fifty years ago... the science of today deals with concepts that involve abstractness, imagination, the beauty of conciseness, and at the very core of the subject something which can properly only be called faith...

We are determined... to respect the abilities of science at the same time that we realize its limitations, to know enough about science so as to be able intelligently to meet the responsibilities of modern citizenship (Weaver, 1957, p. 365).

Job tells us (American Standard Version, Job 12:7-10);

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
And the birds of the heavens, and they shall tell thee:
Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
Who knoweth not in all these,
That the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this,
In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind?

Our responsibility is to teach pupils to read "the most elegant book," recognizing that they "know in part," that they may sense more "clearly the invisible things of God."

UNITY OF PRODUCT

The formation of a concept is a piece of a drive toward a unified view of the universe. Here again the concepts a scientist actually does form are imperfect and subject to refinement by other scientists. A unified and complete logical structure of science is a hope but not a fact. Nonetheless there is unity in the natural world that we observe, and some people think that science progressed rapidly in the western world because of the prevalence here of the idea of one God, Creator of the universe. In science, generalized ideas not only summarize the broad findings of science but also serve to guide further search; in school they should guide student discovery in the laboratory as well as in the classroom. A student's concepts are not only the product of his classroom experiences, important as these are; they are also influenced by his entire extracurricular experience.

In short, the pattern we perceive when we note "a fact" is organized and interpreted by a whole system of attitudes and thoughts, memories, beliefs, and learned constructs. It is thought that gives us eyes.

...in the course of time, despite great innovation and revolutions, there accumulates in science

a set of internationally acceptable, basic, and fairly enduring conceptual schemes (Holton and Roller, 1958, pp. 240-41, 215).

A similar process occurs in the life of an individual.

DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN SCIENCE EDUCATION

The teacher who has the best opportunity to coordinate and integrate science teaching with the teaching of Bible, language arts, mathematics, social studies, etc. is the primary teacher. Her pupils are generalists and she teaches all subject areas of the curriculum. For considerations of time alone, she cannot afford not to integrate her teaching. To accomplish such an integration, her pupils must engage in the process of science even as they engage in processes of art, creative writing, etc. She should organize her teaching in terms of major conceptual themes in each subject area. And here the Christian school teacher has an opportunity that the public school teacher does not -- she can coordinate all her teaching under a "world-and-life" theme, God the Creator and Provider. She fails when she does not take advantage of this opportunity. And if this is true for a single teacher, it is also true for a school. For practical purposes, the school is organized at secondary levels of instruction into disciplines. At these levels it becomes increasingly evident that the conceptual schemes invented by men working in separate disciplines are most applicable within a discipline and their only unity is inherent in their having been derived from the same world. Even at these levels, however, Christian schools have an advantage in their common subscription to a Creator God who is active in the universe today.

A CURRICULUM DECISION

A big question in science education today is the extent to which the logical structure of science should be given the pupils and to what extent they should be allowed to formulate such a structure for themselves. If we give it to them directly we teach the meta-lesson that science is authoritarian and unalterable truth, and if we only turn them loose with materials of science, hoping they will formulate the desired concepts, we abdicate our responsibility as educated adults. The teacher should know some science and should know to what end the activities should lead, or she should split her pay with the pupils. The loose utilization of such terms as "inquiry," "discovery learning," and "concept" to describe every textbook sold on today's market does not help the situation. Pure inquiry is an autonomous effort by children in concept formation and modification. Discovery is a method whereby a teacher engineers the concept into children's thinking through careful sequencing of activities as a proper way of interpreting the natural universe. And in expository teaching the teacher simply tells children the facts and the concepts whereby the teacher interprets the facts. Expository teaching is the most efficient and most commonly used method of teaching. However, experience with the material of science is necessary if we are to teach our pupils to read the natural world for themselves and to appreciate science as an effective way of interpreting the natural universe and of communicating what they read. It is too easy in education to overemphasize the formal aspects of science; we need more participation with wonder and delight in reading the "most elegant book." Christian citizens particularly should acquire a healthy attitude toward science. A good teacher uses a variety of techniques and part of the art of teaching is to know what methods to use and when to

use them. Conceptual organizers help both the teacher and the students to keep in mind the big picture, to see the essential unity of reality. A good science teacher utilized conceptual organizers in expository and discovery methods to achieve immediate as well as ultimate objectives.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

School children can learn to read the "most elegant book" by engaging in the processes of science. Meanwhile they can perceive a degree of unity with processes of other disciplines as well as within science itself and can realize the potential and the limitations of science. They are guided by a logical structure that may be considered a hierarchy of facts, concepts, and conceptual schemes by which others have read the natural universe. Their own logical structure becomes the product of their experience in and out of school. At the summit of the total structure of science and other disciplines is the child's ideas of God with His infinite characteristics. Herein children can also perceive a degree of unity with the products of other disciplines as well as within science itself. It is the distinctive task of the Christian teacher and school to subject all teaching to this ultimate idea. To accept this is to recognize that it is imperative to coordinate the science curriculum with other disciplines as well as within itself to the end that the child becomes a literate Christian citizen of his age, "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (American Standard Version, II Tim. 3:17).

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Children who are taught the traditional mistake that there is only one correct answer to every question become dutiful students who get good marks - - but they also become rigidly incapable of any truly original work in any field, and especially in the sciences."

Sidney Harris



Grace Huitsing, Department Editor

To Write or Not To

Mrs. Bastian Kruithof†

IN HIS MIRTH -- but also thought-provoking little book *EVERYTHING BUT MONEY* Sam Levenson has a chapter entitled "Off My Chest", and in it he proceeds to deliver a series of tirades against current practices in America that disturb him. Perhaps "Off My Chest" is what this purports to be, no more, less. As I read again the other day Emerson's essay on "Self Reliance", I wanted to shout in Emersonian fashion, "We have built ourselves a mimeograph and have lost the use of the pen." This was, perhaps, a rather exaggerated reaction to several incidents which had built up to convince me that previous efforts to have students become literate and competent in writing were being defeated.

There was the general lackadaisical attitude toward note-taking in class. It was a practice I had always found profitable during my years in high school and college. It kept one alert, distinguishing between main points and sub-points and getting them down in a note book in their proper logical relationship. It taxed one's ability to listen closely for names and places and to spell them as accurately as possible. It called for as near as possible exact reproduction of the professor's style of expression. And in those days we looked upon our teachers as magnificent creatures whose utterances were worthy of emulation. As a fringe benefit those notes later proved 'invaluable' in a review of the subject. Why then the present indifference to this form of class participation? A possible explanation came from a college teacher whose ideas may reflect those of many high school and college teachers. He said that he didn't expect teachers to take notes in class. "Notes", he added, "deal mainly with facts and I don't consider these important. If I want students to have an outline of my lecture, I merely make mimeographed copies and shove them under their noses." Somehow it set me to thinking. Wasn't something being lost here? Did the lively discussion of issues which the professor said took the place of the former lecture and note-taking activity entirely compensate for what was lost?

TALK IS NOT ENOUGH

In the course of the conversation that very evening another teacher spoke of no longer giving written examinations. He said he could discover all he wanted to know about a student's proficiency in a subject through a twenty-minute

oral exam. Again the student was nicely relieved of having to express himself with any degree of clarity on paper.

Surely we are all aware of the increasing popularity of the bull session, the buzz group and the panel discussion. Of course there is something very heartening about the emphasis on original thinking rather than accepting the pat answers of the past. There is an open-mindedness, frankness, and curiosity today which is commendable. But are our students sufficiently informed about issues which they often discuss so glibly? Isn't it true that often the least-orientated are the most ready with snap judgements and easy panaceas? Could these same people write clear, cogent and accurate dissertations on those subjects about which they speak so freely? Students have been known to attack the theology of John Calvin very sharply without having read a single one of his volumes. Could such students write satisfactory critical analyses without punctuation errors, misspellings, ill-constructed sentences, gaps in logic and irrelevancies? Spouting is easy and often goes very much unchecked.

The objective test is still also very much with us. Here again the mimeograph works overtime. There is no need to write a sentence or formulate a paragraph when a word letter, or sign will suffice. Again the opportunity to organize one's ideas into proper paragraphs is sacrificed.

The charming practice of letter-writing may even become a lost art in the closing years of the twentieth century what with ready telephones, reduced long-distance rates and rapid communication. As one person put it to me the other day, "It's worth a buck or two to me if I don't have to write a letter."

INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS NEED TO BEGIN TO WRITE

Now that I've aired my gripes, I'd like to make the point that in the face of this trend we teachers in the intermediate, junior high and high school grades should feel challenged more than ever to cultivate the use and control of the written language as an accurate vehicle of expression. From an early age children often achieve a natural ease in speaking. This is not true of writing. The latter demands continual practice and applica-

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tion because it involves greater exactness. Who can forget Francis Bacon's "Writing maketh an exact man"?

A few weeks ago a father told me about his young son who boasted of the discussion his junior high history class had on Viet Nam. The father, a wise but rather cynical soul, queried, "But what do you know about Viet Nam?" The boy admitted he didn't know much, but neither did the other students. He said, "I spoke up when someone else said something and I said 'you're wrong' and so did they when I said something." Surely some of this in a junior high class has value, but one is apt to wonder whether the time in history couldn't have been spent more profitably in writing paragraphs on some of the events or facts with which the students might have been more familiar. Why do some folk think that discussion is the ultimate these days? Why must an antithesis be set up between the mastery of facts and the discussion of issues anyway? Aren't the facts often necessary to the competent handling of the issues?

WRITING IS DISCUSSING

Besides, expository writing IS discussion. We observe, hear, see, reflect on what we observe and express our reactions. In the last step, putting our reactions on paper, comes the demand for greater exactness. In the "blooming, buzzing confusion" which someone has said results from the many senses, there is that which is translated into the language of thinking. This language of thinking calls for precise expression when transferred to the page before us. Writing has a frightening permanence which the spoken word of ordinary mortals doesn't usually have.

I am inclined to feel that we cannot over-emphasize the importance of the expository paragraph as a means of arriving at clarity of expression. One does not acquire mastery of this form easily, however. Attending the Composition Workshop at Calvin College in the summer of 1965, I came to see the value of setting up a composition sequence for students as they advance through the grades. Perhaps no writer becomes truly competent until he has tried his hand at many forms of writing. I suggest a brush with essays, sketches, short stories and verse. The narrative, the descriptive and the lyrical are excellent preparation for the expository. Through the composition sequence there is a progression in expression, a gradual building up of a vocabulary, a more precise definition of terms until in the eleventh and twelfth grades of high school a few of these forms should emerge for special study.

DEFINITION TEACHES ECONOMY

One of these basic types is the paragraph or essay of definition. This form involves careful selection of words, precise use of terms, and wise choice of concrete examples. Because the essay of definition implies narrowing a concept down, ruling out what is irrelevant, I believe it is basic to essays or comparison and contrast. It is also excellent preparation for the composition of argument and the critical essay. For those who aspire to take a more active part in the discussion club, the writing of this essay is an invaluable preliminary discipline. It teaches one to use words carefully and economically. As life becomes more complicated, I believe this is an imperative.

I like to begin this assignment by giving the students a group of simple words to define without the benefit of a dictionary. They must decide to which class the object belongs and how it is differentiated from other objects within that class. A sonnet, for example, belongs to the genre, poem,

but what distinguishes it from other members of this class is its length, meter and rhyme scheme. The students soon discover that the simplest everyday words are often the most difficult to define. As they attempt to narrow the concept down, they strain to find the proper words. A class testing of the definitions follows a completion of the assignment. Frequently the students discover that the definitions are not airtight. Often they are too inclusive and call for sharper distinctions. A second assignment involves the definition of abstract terms like correctness, integrity or sportsmanship. This demands even greater attention to word choice and sentence formulation.

DEFINITION OF A BRUSSEL SPROUT NEEDS DETAIL

The longer paragraph or essay of definition follows very naturally from the simple definition. Now the student must add a clear and vivid description of the object defined. He is challenged to find appropriate adjectives, create interesting word pictures or try some fitting similes and metaphors. How better can he describe brussels sprouts than by saying they resemble miniature cabbages or show a Christmas ornament than by saying it is a pear-shaped object not too unlike a falling translucent drop of water? Surely definition is enhanced by comparison and contrast.

Writing an essay on an intangible quality proves an even more difficult assignment. I have suggested to students that additional clarification often comes by contrasting the concept with another abstraction closely related in definition. Envy, for example, is jealousy with an added feature, the desire to possess what another has. Also showing what the abstraction is NOT often sharpens up a definition. Discussing its causes or effects can be a good way of building up this particular essay. Finally I recommend that the students search their experiences in life and literature to find vivid examples to illustrate the concept. Here is where a wide reading proves helpful.

DEFINITION OF A HAGGIS DEMANDS EXPERIENCE

I like the essay of definition very much because one can reach into many fields for subjects. I discovered that an essay on an exotic food proved a favorite one with classes. To get them started I read to them one of my own making. It was about haggis, the national dish of Scotland. In the introductory paragraph I explained that I had become fascinated with "Address To A Haggis" by Robert Burns:

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face

Great chieftain o' the pudding-race

It sounded like such a delectable dish, but when I learned of its contents (barley, liver, kidney and the "unmentionables" all sewed up into a sheep's stomach), I decided that it was one of the Scottish delicacies I could do without. I had no difficulty by-passing the butcher shops where the haggis hung in the window like so many stuffed grey purses. But then one night the picture changed. We were invited to a Bobbie Burns Birthday Dinner held at the Liberal Club in Edinburgh, Scotland. After the Burns invocation --

Some hae meat and cannae eat,

And some there be that want it;

But we hae meat and we can eat,

And so the Lord be thankit,

the haggis, reclining on a huge silver platter, was piped into the banquet room. The master of ceremonies, The Honorable Mr. Daiches, one of the biographers of Robert Burns,

stepped forward, slashed the sheep's stomach and the steaming contents bubbled forth. What an impressive and important dish it seemed now! Perhaps we strained courtesy to down the first sampling, but the next forkfuls slipped by rather easily. Even though the "unmentionables" included lungs, we liked haggis.

By the time I've finished my essay, students are recalling their first experiences with pizza, tacos and smoked eel, and they're ready to begin their essays on strange new foods.

An essay on teen-age jargon I discovered to be another rewarding assignment. Having dealt with my kind of definition long enough, they were eager to "clue me in" on their universe of discourse. Believe me, it was a good education for a high school teacher. I learned what it meant to be back at your "pad" by ten, to drive a car that is completely "mint," to "blow your cool" when something goes wrong. I was on speaking terms with my students.

ESSAY OF ANALOGY CALLS FOR IMAGINATION

One of the most satisfying essay assignments for twelfth grade students is the essay of analogy, the expository form often used to make an object or concept more understandable. There is a challenge in trying to clarify or illuminate a subject by speaking of it in terms of another subject which is more generally familiar. I like the analogy because it calls for imagination to see the like in the unlike. It takes a penetrating insight to jump across from one universe

of discourse to another. Skillfully handled, it drive a point home more convincingly than if the subject were handled in the traditional way.

A reviewer speaks of Sinclair Lewis "landing a haymaker on the glass jaw of society" or of Jonathan Swift "planting a knee in the groin of mankind" and most of us get the impact through this terminology of pugilism.

Early in my experience with this assignment, I had difficulty discovering subjects which lent themselves to reasonable analogy. I received some good papers, though, on: A research student is an archaeologist of a type; A man's mind is the repository for his best investment; The Bible is a treasure chest. Soon I became very analogy-conscious and I began to see them everywhere as I read. Metaphors, waiting to be blown into full-sized essays, kept jumping at me from the pages. "Life is but a stroll upon the beach"; "jealousy is the green-eyed monster" were but a few of the metaphors which the students expanded into paragraphs and essays.

I firmly believe that of all forms of writing the expository essay with its orderly argument or critical analysis is one most necessary as a preparation for satisfying work in college. If we can teach students to write clearly what they wish to communicate by defining their concepts and issues; if we can persuade them to support their statements with strong logical arguments, reliable quotations and valid comparisons; if we can keep students from dishing out bland generalizations, perhaps fewer college teachers of freshman English would "blow their cool."

Reading for a Long Hot Summer

Grace Huitsing

I RECEIVED A REVISED EDITION of the book WE BUILD TOGETHER, which suggests enough good titles to keep elementary and junior high teachers reading all summer. But it should reach a wider audience as well. Subtitled A READER'S GUIDE TO NEGRO LIFE AND LITERATURE FOR ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL USE, it offers careful annotations on books, and a sensitive introduction on the criteria for acceptable books in this field. Editors Rollins and Edman explain the importance of accurate handling of dialect, of a careful concern for words which can set off highly emotional responses, of sensitive and imaginative illustrations, and of successfully creating individuals, not stereotypes.

On the language, for instance:

Viewed in the proper light, every dialect has form and beauty and is a potential medium of literary expression. Folklore, songs, stories and poetry are evidence of this. Perhaps the

problem with variant dialects, as they have appeared in books, has been that most often what is presented is not an accurate use of the dialect but an artificial and stereotyped version carelessly researched and used by an author unfamiliar with



it. Specifically, there is no Negro dialects spoken as such in America. There are a number of regional and social dialects spoken by Negroes and often by whites in the same areas and occupational groups. Just as a stereotyped portrayal of the Negro must be replaced by a sensitive, accurate portrayal, so the caricature of his language should be replaced by accurate, understandable use of the vernacular.

The second misuse of language has been with words that have connotations of disrespect and even contempt for all Negroes. Because of their emotional overtones, many expressions are completely repugnant to Negroes and, of course, to most well-informed whites. While these words may vary in their connotations in various parts of the country, there is a consensus that a considerable number of such words are not suitable for use in a book for young people.¹

BOOKS BREAK DOWN STEREOTYPES

For the many young Americans in small or suburban communities, contact with Negroes is limited. For them, as the editors state, quality television programs and books may be about the only way to overcome simplistic opinions or uncritical judgments:

Fortunately, many books available do this. They picture Negroes as holding all sorts of positions, not the traditional menial ones. They are not universally of the lower class, uneducated, simple souls, often picturesque and childlike. More often now they are people filled with the universal problems of all mankind: earning a living, hating and loving, rejoicing and grieving, experiencing successes and failures, learning to find their way through a complex world of ideas, and living with other people. The chief effect of breaking down stereotypes is to reverse the dehumanization of labeled groups.

A presentation of the introduction and a review of some recommended books might serve well for a PTA discussion. Adults need to know what books are available for their families--some that stir the imagination with beauty and some that "tell it like it is."

STERLING EXPLORES PROBLEM

Then I opened the February, 1968 issue of *ENGLISH JOURNAL* and read Dorothy Sterling's vigorous article, "The Soul of Learning." I had just read one part of Meltzer's documentary history written by Negroes and entitled *IN THEIR OWN WORDS* and agreed with her commendation of it, but I knew very few others in her list of books by and about Negroes.

After completing her biography of the slave-Civil War hero-Congressman Robert Smalls (*CAPTAIN OF THE PLANTER*), Mrs. Sterling continued her research on the South, including history in the making as she watched children experience school integration for the first time. The illustrated *TENDER WARRIORS* and the fictional account *MARY JANE* were her response. Since then she has appeared before the House Committee on Education and Labor as witness on the treatment of minority groups in textbooks.

MORE BOOKS NEEDED

Her *ENGLISH JOURNAL* article, which should be reprinted for all adults in the CEJ circle and for college students who think about teaching significant units, questions why no more than 3%--at most--of all books for young people concern the Negro. (Her discussion includes comments on the U. S. Information Agency, the attitudes of publishers towards textbooks and trade books, and publishing history.) The reader echoes Mrs. Sterling's question: If money is now available for books for the culturally deprived and for all school libraries, why should there be a dearth of books about Negroes?

You do not take minds that have been hobbled by centuries of racism and say, "Now you're free to write the truth." What is the truth? Many white people and many Negroes don't know. And there's more than that, of course. When you begin to write the truth, you bump into all sorts of obstacles. Consider the rule of the happy or at least upbeat ending. Should we tell the children that in real life people do not always live happily ever after?

I faced this problem when I was writing *Mary Jane* and didn't really solve it properly. I comprised by letting her make one friend in school and ending with the hope that she would make more next year. When the book was published the bright, warmhearted little girl who lives next door asked, "Is it really that bad?" "Much worse," I answered. "Why today's paper tells about the bombing of the home of an eight-year-old boy because he went to a 'white' school." "Oh, don't tell me about it," she said and ran home. Should she be told? I think so.²

WE CAN BUILD TOGETHER

Her suggestions? That history be rewritten so that the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle can fit in. That publishers "seek out Negro writers and manuscripts with Negro themes." That teachers set up a unit of readings on the gifts and the spirit of the American Negroes--all that makes up the "soul", as she calls it. (And she suggests many titles.) There is place for drama and history and papers and language study--and the chance for meaningful, perhaps painful growth.

No alert Christian student, teacher or parent who has read the Sterling article or the N.C.T. booklet of suggested titles will turn comfortably from his *PRESS* to a sports magazine or fashion spread this summer. There's too much to read. The reading may be disturbing? We build together.

¹ *WE BUILD TOGETHER*, National Council of Teachers of English (508 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois, 61820), p. xv.

² *ENGLISH JOURNAL*, February, 1968, p. 173.

Between the great things that we cannot do, and the little things that we will not do, the danger is that we shall do nothing.

PICTURE WORDS

The creative mind is playful, and a writer plays with words. Are there children in your class who would have fun with word pictures or ideographs? Written words can be so arranged on the page that their physical appearance suggests the object, action, or idea. As such, they seem to the eye what onomatopoeia is to the ear.

Stuck

after

QUICKSAND

CLIFF



THE ARTS

Robert Achterhof, Department Editor

Promoting Musical Literacy in the Junior High

Merle Mustert†

As in other areas of the curriculum, music education has, in recent years, undergone increased scrutiny. On a national scale the Yale University Seminar of June 1963 produced a very significant report. This bulletin is available through the U.S. Office of Education under the title, "Music In Our Schools: a Search for Improvement." Moreover, many important articles have been appearing in school music journals concerning the need for re-evaluation of each school's music program.

What general conclusions have been reached by these studies? All are agreed that the most important aim of music education should be the development of musical literacy. This means that a course of study must be developed in which our students will be able to express musical ideas in a variety of ways and in which they will be trained to listen to great music more perceptively, thus developing a keener aesthetic sensitivity.

IMPLEMENTING THE AIM

In order to implement these goals, ALL of our students must be reached. The junior high is the ideal level for this since it includes the student in his transition from childhood to young adulthood - a time when he is becoming more aware of himself as an individual. Consequently he needs to explore his world. Concerning music, he wants to know its essence and its basic understandings. Therefore, we must devise a course which will involve the structure of the subject. If the central aim is to make a person more musical, then the traditional performance type music class cannot fulfill our purpose. In the past, performance skills served public entertainment and public relations purposes. Fortunately, music educators now see that this does not produce musical growth. For these reasons, the basis for all music education in the junior high school is rooted in required general music classes. It is neither the

function nor the responsibility of this class to make up for the lack of performance opportunities; neither is it a preparation for later musical endeavor. It has its own work to do as a culminating experience. All the material studied should be aimed at developing aesthetic awareness and increasing musical expression. Much general music is taught by using a hodgepodge of topics such as, "Songs of Cowboys" or "South African Folk Music", and these may be followed by the construction of musical instruments from paper materials. When listening is engaged in, music is chosen from the "program music" repertoire which teaches every student to make up stories to fit the various "moods" of the music.

SUGGESTED COURSE OUTLINE

I would like to describe, briefly, a course outline for use in general music. Other outlines are certainly possible if they provide for the essentials of music. Obviously, the methodology would vary with the individual teacher, and it would also be influenced by the cultural background of the community.

In the seventh grade such a course begins with a discussion of the science of sound. Excellent recordings are available which emphasize the concept of frequency and the effect of overtones upon quality.

Following this, the study covers the elements of music: melody, rhythm, harmony, form, dynamics, and tone color. As these units are studied, a variety of approaches is used to involve the entire range of student ability. In order to explore these "tools of the composer", the students read and discuss basic questions about them; they listen intensively to musical examples illustrating various points about the elements; certain members perform in class; and many activities such as singing, clapping, writing, and conducting serve to make the structures of music more meaningful.

In the unit on Melody we begin by formulating a definition from the contributions of the class. Next, we study melodies from significant works in history such as the plainsong, "Hodie Christus Natus Est", and many others from various stylistic periods. Through singing and listening, the class

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formulates the important characteristics of melody. From them we make a study of scales, since they form the tonal organization of melody. Scales such as pentatonic, chromatic, major, and minor are studied in relation to carefully chosen melodies. Singing, playing, and constructing scales offer great opportunities for improving sight singing. Key signatures are discovered only as they relate to the scales, never in isolation. I have found this to be much more effective than expecting memorization without understanding. Continued study involves the building of phrases through the use of melodic motives and rhythmic figures—all of which are located in songs from our textbook. The climax of such a unit is realized in the creating of an original melody by each student, incorporating the ideas of scales and phrasing.

When studying Tone Color, the human voice and the instruments of the orchestra are considered. The study of the voice in junior high is indispensable, because so many boys feel embarrassed about singing. The care and feeding of the voice is critical, since successful singing experiences at this age can mean continued enjoyment in music-making for life. While realizing that there are many views on this subject, I believe that, through enthusiasm, persistency, and explanation of the rationale of each approach, adolescent boys respond beyond all expectations. This approach gives the boy the recognition and improved self-concept he so desperately needs. Such a unit lays the ground-work for every vocal situation. The actual physical changes are discussed because the growth of the larynx is the key to proper singing in adolescence. Subsequently, general aids to tone production such as proper posture, correct breathing, articulate diction, and vowel formity are drilled.

How can the voice develop properly during the change?

(1) All singing should be done lightly and freely with an open throat. (2) Stressing proper breath support must be practical and meaningful. (3) Vocalizing should be downward to insure the "mixing" of light, unchanged quality with the heavy, changed register. This helps the boy, in particular, to cope with his "break" and develops the natural, mature voice. If this were done in all junior high singing, more tenors would result instead of only baritones or basses. To do justice to the students, the teacher must be thoroughly trained in voice production, and he must carefully choose music which is musically sound. It should be chosen to fit the ranges and abilities of each grade level. I use S.A. or S.S.A. in the seventh and eighth grades and S.A.T.B. in the ninth. S.A.B. is not workable, in most cases, due to the wide range of the baritone parts and its undesirable sound. If it is presented in the right manner, I have found that boys do not object to singing soprano or alto. Presently, I have eight boy-altos in the ninth grade choir.

Having laid the ground-work for further musical experiences in the seventh grade general music classes, the eighth and ninth grades should include a more intensive listening program; performance and study of music literature from all the periods of history; development of the capacity for value discrimination; and emphasis upon part-singing.

When studying music literature, the lives of composers are studied by stressing those characteristics which affect the composer's expression. The student must be taught to listen to those structures of music which reflect the composer and his times. This requires repeated listenings and intensive questioning. He must hear accurately and remember. Short passages must be repeated and an intellectual response must be insisted on, to complement physical and emotional responses. In this way, the students become more perceptive listeners. Moreover, musical understanding is increased for all by the

study of musical forms such as the concerto, oratorio, opera, cantata, symphony, and others. Without the consideration of the internal design of such forms, the student will never be able to perceive the subjective insights inherent in great music—those insights which bring enriched spiritual meaning to one's life.

BUILDING ON THE BASE

Upon the broad base of general music, vocal and instrumental classes should flourish. These are provided to meet the needs of the students with various levels of achievement and to help them with particular skills and talents. This writer advocates a volunteer choir in each of the three grades. This provides for more effective work with the stages of the changing voice. Selected ensembles should be encouraged for the more gifted singers. The aim should be to sing more challenging music and to increase sight-singing proficiency.

The instrumental program in the average junior high is currently concentrated in the band, since most of our schools have not yet been able or willing to provide for a sound orchestra program. Much great music is available in its original form only for the orchestra. It is the hope of this writer that more of the schools will promote string classes as well as wind classes in their instrumental activity.

We know that the junior high years are crucial in general education. Through a sound music curriculum, built on the essentials of music as an art, our Christian students can be stimulated to greater service to God.

Books

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN BOOK Compiled and edited by Wilma Vander Baan and Albertha Bratt. Illustrated by Armand Merizon. The National Union of Christian Schools, 1962. Reviewed by Charles Bouwsma, music teacher at Sylvan Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

THIS BEAUTIFUL DEVOTIONAL SONG BOOK has been available for five years. Teachers who have made the effort to become acquainted with it have been richly rewarded. Children have learned to love the simple, charming melodies, many of which are the finest hymn tunes of Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian and Reformed traditions. The illustrations, twelve in color, immediately attract children's interest. Armand Merizon has captured a childlike wonder and innocence which complements the words and music. The editors have done a real service for homes, schools and church schools in assembling this fine collection. It should be the principal devotional song book for kindergarten through fourth grade in Christian schools of Reformed background. The National Union of Christian Schools

deserves a slap on the wrist for continuing to make available to schools the inferior LET YOUTH PRAISE HIM.

The music for this book has been chosen to include many musical styles from plainsong to the twentieth century. It has been unsettling for some teachers—refreshing for others—to find unfamiliar tunes for “Holy Bible, Book Divine,” “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” “Away in a Manger,” “There Is a Green Hill Far Away,” and “Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us.” I am especially fond of “God Who Touchest Earth With Beauty,” “Little Children, Come To Jesus” and “Come Jesus, Holy Child, To Me.” Patriotic songs for Canada as well as the United States have been included.

Some traditional tunes have been given new harmonic settings by Derek Ferris, a contemporary musician. These settings have confused some teachers who were accustomed to the traditional harmonizations. Ferris’ arrangements are usually quite effective. However, sometimes his harmonic treatment raises questions of taste and style. Are the original harmonic settings of Haydn’s “A New Created World” or Mendelssohn’s “If With All Your Hearts” lacking in interest or not appropriate? Nineteen songs in the book are Derek Ferris settings. “I Was Glad When They Said Unto Me” is his original composition, one of the less interesting selections in the book.

Some of the songs are pitched in keys which may be high for some children. Younger children who have not had much singing experience will need transposition downward.

The publishers of the book would do a great service to schools by publishing a pupil’s edition with the melodies, words and illustrations—omitting piano accompaniments. Children who are beginning to use music books are confused by the accompaniments. Teachers and schools would find the book more useful if a teachers’ guide were provided with a suggested age or grade level at which each selection might be best introduced. This classification should be based on vocabulary, child interest, and vocal range.

Many of the songs provide excellent material for use with beginning recorder players. The book has an abundance of songs in G major which have rhythmic simplicity and a limited range—ideal literature for recorders.

REVIEW OF "HOW CHILDREN FAIL" (from p. 8)

new. All the school did it. Generally you were rated a good teacher if you covered a wide range of material. Your students got credit for knowing a great deal about each subject, which they did not. It was kind of a game which we all played.

Unfortunately, this “Tell-’em-and-test-’em” way of teaching as stated by Mr. Holt shows that “school is mainly a place where you follow meaningless procedures to get meaningless answers to meaningless questions.” The romance of learning that begins before the child enters school is slowly snuffed out so that by the time a child moves from the primary to the intermediate grades he is bored and indifferent. This, besides fear, contributes to much of the stupidity that is so evident in our schools of today. This is how the school fails to make the child succeed. Fortunately, many children suc-

ceed in spite of it. Read this book for some of the practical suggestions Mr. Holt gives.

HOW ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

It seems to me that the Christian school has an obligation to react to the indictments of Mr. Holt. Not, first of all, because we owe it to the child, but because we owe it to the Creator. The cultural mandate to “subdue the earth and have dominion over it” carries with it the idea that man should do so with all his mind and strength. How can intelligent man be indifferent to knowledge established by God the Creator of it? If for no other reason, educators, whether they be teachers or parents have an obligation to educate to the best of their ability to the honor and glory of God.

Once we have viewed the ultimate goal of education, it behooves us to look at the stuff of the educational process. The Christian school teacher is dealing with individuals. Each child has his talents and potential. Unlike robots, children react to different situations in different ways. The nature of the child demands teaching flexibility. Individuality calls for individual treatment. I can see nothing else than that this demands a “child-centered curriculum.” If we are not presently using such an approach it is high time that we do so. Modern aids and devices are available to help us do so. Psychological and sociological studies have made the various needs of children known to us. Are we going to continue standing in the wings watching the show go on?

It would seem to me to be an obvious result of the child-centered curriculum that education of this sort needs more time in the life of the child. I strongly feel many precious years of children are wasted because we begin their formal education at the arbitrary age of 5 or 6 years. There is much to be observed and properly taught before this age. Perhaps this will mean getting into the pre-school nursery program. It will surely mean that we reexamine our curricula and give more serious thought to non-graded programs and better progress reporting. Whatever it may be, the Christian school and the Christian school teacher have both a divine and human mandate to fulfill in the process of education.







SEX EDUCATION (from p. 18)

apply to the children of believing parents and therefore also to children who die before birth, is merely stating what needs to be proven yet. That some governments require vital statistics or funerals in cases of premature birth only reflects the thinking within those governments or countries. The question itself is a purely theoretical one. Whether there is life before birth or not should not influence one’s stand on, for example, illegal abortions at all. The Bible already condemns the intention to do evil and there should be no doubt about the intentions of someone who commits an illegal abortion.

The German humorist Richter has said, “Criticism often takes from the tree, caterpillars as well as blossoms.” I must stop before I do any damage.

Personally, I am very happy to have received, “God’s Temples” and the “Teacher’s Resource Unit”. It has stimulated me into further study of sex education. I can only hope that my essays on this subject will help to convince principals and board members that sex education is an absolute necessity in our Christian schools and that “God’s Temples” can be an excellent tool in the hands of our Christian teachers.

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Christian Educators Journal Assn.
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