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Dialogue

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These parodies were gestures against what he considered the inflated importance of "retinal" art when it came to altars and artists and junk. In 1917 Duchamp rescinded its policy of not accepting any work at an entry fee, a $5 entry fee, and controversy. A porcelain urn went down and Philadelphia sculptors, of course.
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Back in the U.S.S.R.
you don't know how lucky you are

Gil Besselsen

After a fourteen hour delay, the Swedish DC-8 pushed us into our cushions and tilted slightly. One hundred ninety Americans whooped it up for ten seconds, until from the front rose a song, the shouting ebbing, blending to make a thrilling chorus. We were off Soviet soil, heading home and God Bless America was our uniform, exhilarating confession.

A year earlier my membership and fifty dollars had reserved my place in a Soviet Seminar sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, an honorary society for males interested in public education. Now at lift-off, I could recall and consider whether the purposes of my visit had been met.

One travels for many reasons, both rational and irrational. I remember thinking that few educators were among the 800,000 people that visit USSR annually and that I just as well could be one of them. Soviet education serves a complex industrial society and ought to reveal observable likenesses and differences to our schools. I had read about the Soviet emphasis on character education and believed that some observable results of their methodology would allow me to compare their texts and methods. I had read about Brother Andrew's Bible smuggling into Russia and carried a silent determination to encourage these struggling Christians in Moscow with my presence in their assembly. I knew that the British primary school had become a model for segments of the Christian day schools, as well as the public elementary schools, and believed that a reportedly severe contrast to the English view of education could clarify some educational issues that arise in my work as an educator.

Three large cities, Novosibirsk in Siberia, Moscow, and Leningrad were the sites of our visit. Although a tentative schedule had been distributed to us before departure. Intourist made daily arrangements with schools for visits. A choice of kind of schools—nursery, kindergarten, ten-year schools, special ten-year schools, boarding, technical, institutes, and universities—were available to us.

Limiting my perceptions to use of space, I observed little difference in the appearance of class rooms. In all Russian classrooms of a ten-year school, the standard equipment is 42 desks in six rows facing a larger desk, usually on a platform. The walls are display areas for plants, students semi-permanent projects, recognition awards, and slogans. American schools, both public and private reject the large number of desks. Some desks are even distributed in patterns other than rows. Slogans are the difference. In Soviet schools the bust and portrait of Lenin were visible regularly. Huge red-lettered mottoes urging some State directive interpreted by an Intourist guide, told us of some feat of progress for which the Russian must think highly of his nation. In American schools the scene is similar. Only the content of the slogan changes. In Christian day schools one senses the importance of the Bible in the display of its words, extolling the observer to consider a Christian control over life-style. Both use space similarly for their own reasons.

Use of time in the schoolhouses of the Soviet is a six-day sequence for all ten-year schools, giving a 7-year-old a 5 hour day and a 12 year-old a 6 hour day. The departmentalized school day is uniformly applied to all ages, 7 to 17. Teachers are known for example, as mathematics, science, and
nguage teachers. They use school time to present curricular area. Students move from room to room on a 40 to 60 minute cycle, depending on. When the normal day ends, teachers, who are additional pay schedules, lead clubs which have utilitarian as well as a political purpose. Club me for students means political action, a promo-

gion of Communist ideology, and the grooming of the best students for Communist Party member-

Near Novosibirsk a new university was con-

structed fifteen years ago to service Siberian agri-
culture and industry. It is surrounded by some twenty institutes which specialize in curriculum such as American universities have colleges. Stu-

ents enroll in an institute and, if they beat the competition, in the university. This complex of buildngs in a forest has its forestry clubs in the cal ten-year schools. A 12 year-old dressed in the young Communist uniform of blue and red, spoke English to us on the purposes of the club—to allow their interests in forestry (fifteen individuals near fifteen microscopes) and to maintain cleanliness and animal life in 40 hectares of forest. A ten-year school specializing in English as a second language the club had prepared a Robert Burns room in the school. In a technical school a club had on display a room-filling model railroad hat included every hazard and situation that arose the Leningrad electric train system, for which these twelve-year-old boys were preparing to work.

Both Soviet and American schools consume time developing literacy. The Soviet system seemed more efficient. An instructor in the Institute for Pedagogy in Leningrad claimed all students in the third month of their first year were able to read and needed no further instruction in reading. Thus, literacy there would be using reading and writing to develop cultural and vocational competence. American schools seem to need more time to develop literacy, especially in reading. The most recent change in administrative planning for all Soviet schools reveals this difference. The primary school program was reduced from four to three years, giving subsequent programs an extra year for cultural and vocational development, which seemed necessary for the thirteen subjects a Russian student studies.

"The school, of course, is the Soviet child's second home and the chief molder of his or her character." This quotation from Mike Davidow's Public Education, reveals the Soviet Union through the eyes of an American reporter for the Daily Worker. I wanted particularly to observe such molding.

Other preparatory reading had focussed on Makarenko as the Soviet writer whose influence had shaped Soviet education. He patterned, it was written, the school environment after the worker's environment. Each worker is responsible to a group in his occupation, and, in turn, each group is responsible for its individuals. Thus, the classroom would be a place where the collective was of first importance. Grades would be given to the group, not the individual. Those who couldn't or wouldn't effectively learn an assignment received the aid and force of his collective to maintain a learning en-

vironment. The success of a group depends upon the effectiveness of the individuals and only the group is rewarded.

I observed none of that. I observed a student of English stand, read a passage for three minutes from her text, and look to her teacher for approval. The teacher said some words which I interpreted from non-verbal cues as approval, wrote a 5 in the record book, and handed it to the reader who wrote some words near the 5. I observed a forty-minute class in English which enrolled 12 seven year-old pupils who had completed twenty-five lessons of English study. No Russian was spoken during the class. Throughout the class the consequences of a successful recitation were the obvious pleasure of the teacher as well as the series of 4 and 5 she recorded in her book. Failure to pronounce correctly or to comprehend the meaning of a question and answer called for a repetition of the correction until mastered. I talked to three student teachers in Moscow and tried to gain some understanding from them about their training. After overcoming my inability to speak a British English by slowing my flow of words, they understood me well enough to look at each other, until one said that Makarenko had been studied but he was better known for his advice to parents on rearing children. I asked a teacher in Leningrad through our interpreter whether Makrenko's teaching had some effect on her teaching. Her response nonverbally was a great headshake—yes. The interpreter explained to me that whenever this teacher observed a pupil with a special treat (a candy bar) she urged him to share it with his two best friends. It seems the gulf between theory and practice, between textbook and practice, is as great in the USSR as in the USA.

A recurring question from our groups to class-

room teachers focused on managing children. No-

where did I see disruptive behavior. Upon entering a school during classes in session, I noticed the halls had pairs of monitors stationed in the halls and stairwells. If we entered during recess, the halls were a mass of clusters of conversing children, invariably separated by sex regardless of age. Not a hint of hyperactivity! No running, no shoving or pushing! It proved to be a noticeable variation from what our Phi Delta Kappans and their guests knew in our schools.

Upon our entering a classroom, the command of a teacher brought all students to their feet, the
cautious eyeing their teacher and the brave and foolish gazing openly at these strangers, especially blacks. Usually an American urged them to be seated. Frequently the best student recited. Occasionally in classes for older children, we offered to answer their questions about America. The response was to ask where we lived or how well we liked our tour.

Members of our group distributed gifts and remembrances to Russian students, usually postcards, artwork, and American Postage stamps. This practice resulted in an “ugly American” incident and again revealed the difference of students in responding to management. Gum is prohibited in the Soviet for dental health reasons, so it is much sought after by Russian boys near tourist attractions. One of our group distributed Doublemint sticks under his postcards as he passed up the rows of desks. Any adult observer soon sensed the change in children whose desks he had visited. My view was unobstructed. Some boys looked down, around, and composed themselves, slipping the stick into some hiding place. Others, in fact most, looked at the gum and placed the stick at the top of their desks in open view of all. In response to questions afterward the principal (director) stated that discipline was no problem. Another principal stated that children behaved as they were expected to. Although the chief problems in his technical school were the students who earned 2’s and were capable of earning 5’s.

Another bit of curiosity about the function of religion in Soviet schools needed an answer. Russian philosophy in education is complete in materialism. Schools will aid the State function so that creature comforts are equitably distributed among Soviet citizens and so that the collective and individual talents are developed for “good” citizenship. Schools teach a Russian history in such a way that a confessing Christian of the Moscow church would not be allowed to teach it. As the minister of the Baptist church in Moscow explained the wife of a pastor is employed in a ten-year school as a teacher of English as a foreign language. This seems safe, to me, as the text used is uniform across the entire land and the methodology is prescribed. Only by her personal actions and behavior could she witness to her students. Russian history would likely be taught by a party member, roughly 25% to 35% of the faculty membership. The pastor also suggested that Christian children would feel some ridicule as they studied and discussed the history of religion or when tours of museums that once had a religious function were taken. The church in Russia he stated, is not allowed to assemble for catechetical instruction, limiting Christian instruction to home life and six worship services weekly.

Dr. Rose in our seminars stated several times in answer to questions of why particular differences and similarities existed between Soviet and American schools, “Every society gets the schools it deserves.” At first I considered this answer a cloak avoidance of a precise answer. But reflection allowed me to accept it. Whatever a nation considers primary and important will become a control and a vehicle for its achievement. Soviet schools will reflect the needs of its complex industrial society and sacrifice the individuality of its citizens to the collective needs. Pupils learn to stress the deeds of cooperation and participation, for not doing so results in becoming a non-person not worth keeping. America, with its wealth of goods for most already realized and its democratic ideal stressing individuality, will need schools that stress individual differences and practices that encourage responsible activity. It may be that the evolution of American schools to suit the American dream of individual worth creates its problems too and cause the American educator to desire a school day like that of a Russian teacher.

Those of us interested in Christian day schools should consider this answer. The Christian confession is a radical one that requires a consistent, long-term, united effort such as has been done in our Calvinist history. Our radical nature has been preserved by careful selection, usually an ethnic criteria. Today we seek a broader enrollment in which the radical nature of the enrollee’s commitment may be less evident, requiring the school to alter its methods and materials to maintain its radical nature. As the pastor in Moscow stated in response to a question about the future of a Christian church in Russia, “The Holy Spirit will not be limited, neither by Socialism or Capitalism. It is our business to be responsive to the Spirit wherever we live.”
The Christian College:

Some Reflections on the Adjective

Clarence Boersma

This contribution to Dialogue supplements a spirited discussion at the September Board-Faculty Conference led by Professor Wayne Joosse of our Psychology Department and our Professor of Mathematics, Dr. Paul Zwier. The subject was "Christian Perspectives on Teaching." These thoughts of mine, however, were first conceived in connection with a CPOL team discussion last winter concerning the nature of Christian higher education. One of the reading selections each member of our CPOL team was to discuss with his students was an article in Christianity Today (July 31, 1970) by Arthur F. Holmes, Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College, bearing the title: "The Idea of a Christian College."

Of the essence of the article are statements regarding the true nature of Christian collegiate education as these:

- "the active interpretation of faith and learning and of faith and culture."
- "a lively and rigorous interpenetration of liberal arts learning with the content and commitment of Christian faith."

To Calvin students and teachers expressions of this kind have a familiar ring. Commencement addresses, our college catalog, our statement: "Christian Liberal Arts Education" all dwell on this theme. I wish to suggest in these remarks that the raison d'être of a Christian college is only partially reflected in such phrases.

The integration of faith and learning is generally presented to us as an intellectual activity that is of the very substance of our scholarship and our teaching. And indeed it is! But if this is so, this intergration should be evident just about every day between the bells of each class period. I have an uneasy feeling that such public statements on the distinctive nature of a Christian college produce an exaggerated impression of the degree to which we actually integrate faith and learning. It is even possible that at times they constitute no more than a mere rationalization of our existence as a Christian institution of learning.

I said, integration of faith and learning is a rational, intellectual activity. The Christian "bias," in the best sense of the word, will be readily evident in the study of literature, history, philosophy, psychology—all of which involve the consideration of values. To all these disciplines the Christian scholar "brings" something, something Christian—inescapably and significantly. It should be obvious that a Christian parent would demur, for instance, at having his son or daughter study Paradise Lost, the French Revolution, Medieval Philosophy, or Introductory Psychology with a non-Christian professor.

But these constitute a specially chosen segment of the curriculum. They are qualitative studies. They are studies involving, by their very nature, the consideration of values. But a good portion of
our curriculum consists of deliberately quantitative, descriptive studies in the natural sciences and in mathematics. The question is: "How does the adjective Christian apply to education in subjects such as introductory math, written rhetoric, violin, chemistry, or elementary German?"

Here one could insist on a Christian professor for the same reasons. These latter subjects touch only tangentially on ultimate values and in the day-to-day pursuit of such studies "a rigorous interpenetration with Christian faith" just does not seem to happen. How does a Christian music teacher engage in this "vigorous interpenetration" in teaching a student to play some Bach two-part Inventions or prepare a student for a senior recital? How does an Engineering professor do this in Engineering 101: "Graphical Communication and Concept Design"? How does this "active integration of faith and learning" take place in Physical Education classes: bowling, golf, badminton? How does a language teacher do this—let us say in German—in his attempts to teach his students how to use modal auxiliaries or the double infinitive? How about Education professors teaching "The Teaching of Reading"?

Then what does the adjective Christian add to the word college besides the integration of a Christian view of God and man in such subjects as are laden with qualitative judgments, value judgments? It seems to me we have been overlooking and underemphasizing one characteristic that should pervade our campus and dominate every classroom. Our Christianity and our Christian commitment touches not only the what of our subject matter but also the why and the how of our studying.

We have a tendency in our intellectualism to react with a somewhat superior air when a college speaks of its atmosphere of piety or a sense of Christian community. Yet I think this is a sine qua non for a Christian college. We probably are not sufficiently aware of the inescapable moral dimension of Christian learning and teaching. The very word discipline implies this. A Christian college must indeed teach whenever possible how biblical revelation relates to our studies. That is proper training of the Christian mind. But a Christian college, to be distinctly Christian, should develop a Christian conscience as well as a Christian mind. A German professor might be at a loss to be able to put any Christian content into his analysis and drill in the various intricacies of German grammar, but he may pull John or Jane aside on occasion and/or talk to the whole class to make it plain that sloppy, careless work is immoral and tends to deny one's commitment to Christ as Lord and Master. It is Calvinistic to use Calvin's favorite phrase coram deo—in the presence, awareness, of God. Students and instructors alike must be sensitive to the presence of God in their lives, yes, and in the specifics of campus life. John and Jane are at college within the generous Providence of God. This constitutes a calling as students, and no Christian has the right to answer that calling with a supercilious "so what?" Rather, the committed Christian does his best, striving for scholarly excellence saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

We hear much of secularism as a threat to the Church. Secularism, I think, is certainly the pervasive threat to the Christian campus as well. The Christian college must confront it intellectually at every opportunity, but must never think that the understanding of the implications of Christian thought for an area of learning is sufficient for the Christian student. The molding of a Christian conscience is at least equally integral to a Christian education and to the perfecting of the Christian man.

Really, what I am saying is that on a Christian campus the faith-response to God's revelation can not be limited to a propositional acceptance of that revelation wherever these propositions touch upon our subject matter. One seems to sense this limitation in the Holmes article we studied in CPOL and in passages on faith and learning in our Calvin College declaration: Christian Liberal Arts Education. Our faith-response on campus must reflect the encounter of the whole scholar, the whole man, with the saving Christ. This encounter results in a complete surrender of the entire student conscience and will, as well as intellect. This encounter subjects him to the sovereignty of God through Christ's Kingdom completely.
"Academicians are concerned with the content of education; educationists spend their time with the process." This judgment expresses a dichotomy which needs some breaking down. Early in my teaching (of academic subjects) career I became convinced that some of the most crucial content being taught and learned in my classes was the content of process. It was that conviction which led me to become what is called an educationist.

That conviction also provides the first thesis for his article:

Some of the most pervasively influential and enduring content which is learned in school is the content implicit and explicit in the educational process.

This thesis gives formal expression to some rather commonplace knowledge. It is sometimes expressed in these words: "An education consists of what is remembered after you forget what they taught you." In such words the learner is expressing a judgment that, though he surely did learn to read, write, and do arithmetic in school, nevertheless his intuition—if nothing else—tells him that some other vitally important things were learned here. But he finds it most difficult to explain in words just what those learnings were.

Such judgments are expressed most pointedly with regard to specific teachers. When asked why they think so highly about some former teacher the answer is frequently given that they aren't really clear about it, but that something very important happened to them in that class or course. Those important learnings are in part what we mean here by the content of process.

Definition of terms

By the term content we refer to the compendium of information which comprises the learning material for a particular course or grade. The information may consist of a related body of facts, laws, theories, and generalizations, as in a traditional science course, or a description of events, as in a history course, or in any other predetermined arrangement of a particular segment of man's knowledge. Content, in short, "is a rhetoric of conclusions to be transferred to the student."

Parker and Rubin use the above definition to distinguish rather sharply between content and process, defining the latter as "the cluster of diverse procedures which surround the acquisition and utilization of knowledge."

Content, being the rhetoric of conclusions, is what is characteristically found in textbooks. It is the distillation of the findings of a scientist or an artist; it does not include all of the processes engaged in by the author as he located the data and formulated his findings.

A Manual of Christian Doctrine contains the findings of a scholar who employed a wide range of methods in arriving at the rhetoric of his conclusions, which he codifies under the above title. We do not know how the author went about the task of theologizing; all we have are his conclusions.

If one wishes to learn the rhetoric of conclusions of physics then he learns Newton's laws, Ohm's law, and all the rest of the laws. If one wishes to do physics, he goes to the laboratory. If one wishes to learn the rhetoric of conclusions of sociology, he learns the concepts and generalizations found in a textbook. If he wishes to do sociology, he engages in some kind of firsthand empirical or analytical study.

Clearly, competent academicians are vitally concerned, not only with content, but with the methods of their disciplines as well. But competent academicians are not always vitally concerned with having their students engage in the methods of their disciplines. There is quite a direct correlation between the degree to which a teacher seeks to pass on the methods of a discipline and the degree to which "active" learning is going on in his classroom. Likewise there is quite a direct correlation between the degree to which a teacher seeks to pass on the rhetoric of conclusions and the degree to which that teacher has "passive" learning going on in his classroom. This relationship may be diagrammed as follows:
"Active" Learning

Students are doing science:
— working in laboratory,
— applying, discovering through first hand experience
Students are doing history;
— reconstructing the past, whether last year or 1066 AD

I think that this is the best use of the terms "active" and "passive" when applying them to classroom learning. It is not that the student engaged in learning the rhetoric of conclusions is not active; rather, it points out that the student in the one case is functioning passively as a receptacle for conclusions passed on to him by others, and that in the other case he is being actively exercised in the use of the tools and methods of a discipline, thus learning and evaluating the (rhetoric of) conclusions for himself. Used in this way, the terms should not be viewed as pejorative or complimentary. No student can rediscover all that man has concluded, and so there must always be a lot of passive learning.

An educator who emphasizes active learning would understandably be called a liberal. His emphasis on giving the student the tools and methods for arriving at his own conclusions and for evaluating the conclusions of others poses an obvious threat to those who would maintain the status quo.

Thus far we have been focusing on the specific processes and methods of the various academic disciplines, noting that scholars do indeed view methods as very much a part of the essential content of mastering their disciplines. But the process of education includes more methods than those specifically identified with the several disciplines. There are methods of evaluation, classroom control, teaching and learning, and general management. All of the methods together constitute what we refer to as process.

Process and content are inextricably interwoven,

Excommunication

With at least six other possible ways of handling it, Jakie Ploegster stood up, his suit still crumpled from the night before, for his excommunication.

As soon as proceedings began three years before (the consistory was not hasty) when his case was announced to the church without his name, he could have said, "Churches are full of Pharisees," and never gone to church again, resigning his membership.

Or he could have said, "This Middelburg church is full of Pharisees," and gone to a more permissive church which does not excommunicate alcoholics.
He could have done so even after his case was announced to the church with his name a year before.

Or he could have moved away and made a new start in a new church.

Or he could have repented and given up alcohol, though had any of us including the overweight dominie who pressed for excommunication—"It sharpens up a church"—comprehended what it is to give up a hand or an eye for the Kingdom?

Or he could have continued going to our church but not have come on excommunication Sunday, though it would have weakened his case: he only skipped for hangovers.

Or he could have come and not stood up.

But Jakie—motherless from birth and now too old to marry for who would have a drunkard?—stood up. His father seated next to him cried quietly.

Why shouldn't Jakie stand up?

He felt the full implication of the bond written in ordinances against him: the rebukes from the elders and the dominie, his promises before them and God to reform, the patience of God and the church running out, and the fear of Hell.

Why shouldn't Jakie stand up?

He knew that excommunication is a key which seems to close but actually opens, threatening the sinner into grace. How would it take if he were not there to take it?
distinguishing between them is not always possible. Perhaps this is most obvious in the teaching and learning of reading. Reading is a process of decoding symbols, and the symbols are the vehicles which carry most of the cargo of educational content. And if process and content are as inextricably interwoven in the most basic skill for school learning, then surely the two are interwoven throughout education.

Nevertheless it is possible to distinguish between them in order to deal with the thesis of this article. Illustrations will serve us best here. Following are a number of facts, concepts, and generalizations that Nancy Tyler learned, primarily in school. Before each one place either a P or a C. Place a P if the statement is something you would judge that Nancy learned primarily from the process of education which she was engaged. Place a C if the statement is something you judge that she learned primarily from the content of her education.

1. Columbus discovered America in 1492.
2. History is a bore.
3. The Bible is a book given to us to find the proof texts given to us to prove the doctrines given to us to believe.
4. \((A + B)(A - B) = A^2 - B^2\)
5. You can never become a great mathematician if you make mistakes in computation.
6. \(H_2O\) says that water is made up of two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen.
7. “I'll never amount to anything.”
8. Light travels at about 186,000 miles per second.
9. I am no good at art because the things I draw never look like what they are supposed to be.
10. # indicates a sharp in music.

If I were to classify these I would say that 1, 4, 6, 8, and 10 are examples of C-content (content learned from the content of education) which Nancy learned primarily from the process of education which she was engaged. 2, 3, 5, 7, and 9 are examples of P-content (content learned primarily from the process of education).

If the reader disagrees at some points, then we have a good example that the distinction is not always easy, especially when we do not have before us a complete record of what happened to Nancy.

Why shouldn’t Jakie stand up to show that he accepted his alienation as his own responsibility when the dominie read the form? Since by his stubbornness Jakie daily aggravates his transgression, he is to be accounted as a Gentile and a publican. We exhort you to keep no company with him to the end that he may be ashamed. He is excluded from the fellowship of Christ and the church until he amends his life?”

Why shouldn’t Jakie stand up? Jesus himself had set up the procedure, followed by St. Paul, John Calvin, and other fathers Jakie respected.

Why shouldn’t Jakie stand up? That there was not in twenty centuries a single precedent for the bodily presence of excommunicants at their excommunication is insufficient reason for Jakie not to, each case being private.

was not in protest though the dominie thought so
it was not in stupidity though the congregation thought so
at Jakie stood up for excommunication—until he died of cirrhosis
was to attend as regularly as before, though he did not partake of communion.

Like Jacob wrestling with God and saying, “I will not let you go until you bless me,”
Our Jakie was wrestling with us and God though lacking Jacob’s talent for articulation.

Jakie’s standing said more explicitly than its verbal equivalent:
I will not be cut off as though I do not exist.
I am God’s child all right, God’s naughty child but still God’s child: Jakie.

And what of us who attended church regularly out of custom and superstition and without much desire but also without any questioning at all that we had a right to be there? What of us who had never wrestled like Jakie?

Though he did not intend it, by standing up to be excommunicated was Jakie excommunicating us?

The church is gone now, the lumber used for a cattle shed, but in memory the place where Jakie stood is holy ground.

Was Jakie excommunicating me?

Sietze Buning
Identifying the Content of Process (P-content).

If we use Parker and Rubin's definition of content as the rhetoric of conclusions, then we must make clear just how process (a cluster of diverse procedures) becomes content. The answer has been implied by the ten concepts or generalizations that Nancy learned in school.

All ten are treated alike; they are all stated as declarative sentences. All are stated as conclusions of some process. “Columbus discovered America” is the conclusion of some research historians. “History is a bore” is the conclusion of Nancy. In her life both conclusions function as the content of her education, though I dare say that her conclusion about history is a far more pervasive, influential kind of content than is her knowledge about Columbus.

There are some distinctions which normally can be made between C-content and P-content. Looking at the list of ten, those identified as C-content (1,4,6,8,10) were in all likelihood explicitly given to Nancy; they were in the materials—textbooks, teacher talk, etc. Those identified as P-content were probably not explicitly given to Nancy. Rather, they were learned inductively by her; they are conclusions to which she came as the result of a long series of experiences. It is very doubtful that Nancy’s teacher explicitly taught her, “history is a bore.” That content was implicit in the process.

The first distinction, then, is that C-content is normally explicitly taught whereas P-content is commonly implicit in the teaching-learning process.

A second distinction is that the learner is commonly passive (using the definition given above) in learning C-content, but invariably active in learning P-content. Nancy was the passive recipient of the conclusions of research historians that Columbus discovered America. She did not do the research which led to that particular rhetoric of conclusion. But she personally did the “research” which led to her conclusion that history is boring. This is probably an important clue to understanding why the P-content is generally so much more pervasive, influential, and enduring than C-content. It may be compared to the Vietnamese war prisoner who learned from the Bible that “God is alive.” But that learning did not become pervasive and influential until it was inductively arrived at through the experiences in the prison camp.

A third distinction is found in the degree of verbal precision with which the content can be articulated. “# indicates a ____ in music.” Nancy, if she has done her work, can fill in the blank with perfect precision. This is not to suggest that the precise verbal response represents any more than rote verbal learning. It does not tell us how much understanding there is, whether or not the response is more than a parroting. But we do know that it is the correct response. In this sense there is a high degree of objectivity with C-content. The rightness or wrongness of the answer does not depend on the subjective states or experiences of the learner.

P-content does not necessarily have this objectivity. To illustrate we may take an item from Nancy’s list of learnings: “I am no good at art because the things I draw never look like what they are supposed to be.”

When Nancy entered high school she had negative feelings toward art as a subject of study. She could not state clearly why she felt this way: as a matter of fact, her feelings were quite mixed. There was something which drew her toward art and something which pushed her away. The art teacher, noting that Nancy dressed tastefully and often wore accessories that she made herself, asked her why she did not study art. Nancy fumbled for an answer. “I don’t know. I just don’t care to study it . . .” (is that answer right or wrong?) Through many conversations the art teacher finally “got it out” of Nancy. In elementary school her art work was never selected for bulletin board display nor was Nancy ever asked to explain her art creations to the rest of the class. She noted that the art work which was posted on the bulletin board was invariably accurate reproductions of reality: the more a student’s production resembled a photographic reproduction the more attention it got. No one ever said a word about realism or impressionism, but Nancy was taught some very profound content: / Realism is good art; impressionism is bad art. My art work is impressionistic; therefore I am not a good artist.

When the teacher finally elicited a precise and accurate verbal label on Nancy’s feelings and experience, then Nancy was able to cope with her conflict over art. Counseling by the art teacher had
The effect of translating feelings and emotions into words which were a precise and accurate formulation of the cognitive content implicit in Nancy’s experiences with art in the elementary school.

According to our definition of content (the rhetoric of conclusions), it would not have been accurate to say that Nancy’s feelings about art were content until she was able to express those feelings with the precise and accurate cognitive content which was associated with them.

Distinctiveness in Methodology.

Is there anything distinctively Christian to be found in methodology? Typically the discussion of this question will get bogged down when someone asks, “What is distinctive about, e.g., repetition as a way of learning?” My second thesis deals with his problem.

*Anyone who wishes to implement a specific philosophy of education, Christian or otherwise, must be as concerned with the content, implicit or explicit, of process as he is with the content of the rhetoric of conclusions: that the identification of the P-content is the first step in making judgments about teaching methods from a Christian (or other) perspective.*

First we shall accept that norm for judging methodology which asks very simply whether or not it works. Now, quite obviously, all educators would judge methods which don’t work to be inadequate. That is not where the difficulty lies. It is found where there are alternative methods, all of which work with apparent equal effectiveness so far as the measured outcomes of education are concerned. An example of this is found in the research on the teaching of mathematics. It is not at all clear that the “discovery” method is superior to the “tell and do” method when the outcomes measured are mathematical competencies.

If we take two such methods which appear to be equally effective in achieving certain goals and try to determine the content of those different processes, then we will have an added way to make evaluations.

“Society is a jungle; survival of the fittest is the law; the best motivation to instill in people is ‘Get ahead of the other guy’; competition is the key to success. . . .”

I take the above statement to be patently unchristian if it were taught as C-content and as a norm for living the Christian life. We recognize this rather clearly when that content is stated as the rhetoric of conclusions.

But if that same content is neatly hidden in the process and taught as P-content, then we may witness the peculiar phenomenon of someone who is vehemently opposed to biological Darwinianism espousing social Darwinianism—which I take the above statement to be an expression of.

Examine that proposition (“Society is a jungle . . .”) and then plan teaching methods which would teach that proposition as a way of life though no one would ever utter the words of the proposition. The teaching scenario would probably begin by using some method which will rank the participants. There will be winners and losers competing for a short supply of rewards. Each child must work on his own for his own reward. Arrange

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**Opus No. 5**

*for one hologram, two views, and any tune*

- violins soothe sense while eye corner catches sense soothing motor hum
- cornets flash the same sun dancing to a steel can tune
- cymbals pure clash mashed by smash of Dempster dumped
- flutes crane to catch sense lost in claws maw

through endless endings until we catch the sense

---

L. Van Poolen

Author’s note: A hologram is a three-dimensional image of an object made by reflected laser light on photographic film. Two separate images can be made on the same film by changing the angle of the laser light to the second object. Hence, two objects—a band and a disposal crew—can be viewed on the same film plate by shining the same laser light back through the plate.

Dempster is a company which makes disposal containers and dumping mechanisms.

Editor’s note: Lambert VanPoolen is Associate Professor of Engineering, and a closet poet.
it so that helping someone else is self-defeating. And so on. The reader can fill in the details of the scenario.

If it is successful, then the student may graduate a practiced social Darwinian and potential advocate of a radical individualism. Now grown and "successful" in the jungle, he rises to his feet and labels another scenario as Socialistic and Communist.

The scenario he condemns goes somewhat as follows in its broad outlines: "We are members together of one body. We seek to help each other. The least among us is the most important, and, while rendering honor to whom honor is due, we esteem others as better than ourselves."

Placing these two contrasting statements of P-content next to each other, it is quite evident that the educational philosopher has a clear entree into the question of this section—is there anything distinctively Christian to be found in methodology?

The Task of Philosophy.

William Frankena says that the task of a normative philosophy of education is three-fold. The first task is to list and define a set of dispositions to be fostered by parents, teachers, and schools (and by the pupil himself). Frankena uses "dispositions" to refer to the full range of education outcomes desired. With that use it includes both the C-content outcomes and P-content outcomes with which we have been concerned. Such dispositions should be as carefully stated as possible so that their intended meaning is shared by all.

The second task of the philosopher is to present a line of thought which shows that the dispositions listed are desirable. Here there must be some appeal to basic premises about life, about what is to be valued, and what is obligatory. For example, one may say that the Christian life is a life of service to God and fellow persons. From that assertion one would seek to develop a line of argument which would legitimize or mandate the several dispositions. This second task is the most technical of the three.

The third task is to tell us what we should do in order to acquire or foster those dispositions, and then to make recommendations about content, method, curriculum, and administration. This third task must involve the social sciences, particularly psychology and sociology. Empirical studies and findings are necessary to help us understand how to foster the desired dispositions.

Classroom teachers, whether or not they think of themselves as philosophers, are constantly engaged in the first and third tasks. They identify desired dispositions (objectives) and they are responsible for implementing methods and procedures for achieving those objectives. They do not always engage as much in task 2. These three tasks do provide us a framework within which the Christian teacher can make evaluations of methodology.

Making Christian Evaluations of Methodology

Following is a scheme for making normative Christian judgments about methods and processes in education.

(1) P-Content
(2) Dominant Processes which would teach such P-content
(3) Behaviors Which would indicate that it is being learned.

(1) P-Content. The teacher identifies the concepts and generalizations about the world, life, oneself etc., which a student should learn from the process of education. If the teacher and the school are really thoughtful about the educational process and wish to escape the charge of Silberman—"Mindlessness" is the great affliction of American education—they will engage as best they can in Task 2.

To begin filling in P-content, it would probably be best to identify some concepts which are rather basic and general to all of education. Several examples have been given. Another would be, "My (or The) motive for working in school is to..."

Perhaps for a subject matter specialist it might...
be easier to begin with some P-content which is very much a part of the methodology of a specific discipline. A science teacher might say; “By actively exploring God’s creation we discover the laws which govern it. . . .”

(2) Dominant Processes. Earlier we used the term “dominant scenarios” to indicate that we must begin by sketching out the broad and basic patterns which will dominate, or by identifying a generic (characteristic of a whole group of class) method or program. In the field of science education an example would be the SCIS (Science Curriculum Improvement Study) program. In it the students are actively engaged in working with and observing aspects of nature. My first contact with the program was in the hallway of a Christian junior high school. There, instead of in the classroom, were some youngsters rolling objects down inclined planes. In the room were other groups, some working with pulleys, others with scales. This was active learning, as previously defined. They were busy “discovering.” My initial reaction was, “hooray!” At the intuitive level I felt that it was a more Christian method than the “authoritative transmission of the laws” method. I was not able to articulate why until I dug the P-content out of the method. That content was akin to the statement of the science teacher stated earlier, “By actively exploring. . . .”

But to stop here and not be a bit more critical about the discovery method is to be “mindless.” David Ausubel is an intelligent critic of the discovery method overdone. His contributions are to the third task of the philosopher. Ausubel’s brilliant analysis of the discovery method overdone includes the following caution: “Discovery is not enough; in order really to know and understand, we must engage in dialog with others who are competent to help us better grasp the insights we obtain through discovery.”

For this the generic process might be “discussion to clarify, interpret, integrate. . . .” Reflection by the Christian teacher will indicate that, of course, discovery by itself is not enough. A dominant P-content in Christian education should have to do with its dialogic and communal quality.

(3) Behaviors. How does one know that the P-content is in fact being learned? In order to answer that question one must identify the outward, observable behavioral correlates which he thinks are expressions of the concept about self, the subject being studied, or the methods being engaged in. If the concept is “history is a rewarding subject to study,” then one would list such behaviors as, “Works with enthusiasm.” “Chooses to read history. . . .”

Identification of the behaviors is a crucial step to understanding the intended meaning of the P-content. By forcing out into the open just what is intended by the P-content—what is the behavioral expressions of that conceptual statement—it enables one to make a much better normative evaluation of the P-content.

Following this general procedure it seems to me that the Christian teacher can make just as normative and definitive judgments about method as he can about content.

Books for Further Reference


This item is included as an illustration of a source which provides a neat sourcebook for recent curriculum developments, new programs with statements of objectives, bibliographies—full of places to go for someone who wishes to do an analysis of the P-content of a particular curriculum or program. Note: the 1973 edition is up-to-date.


This book helped me to understand the
importance of “naming” the content of process. Psychiatrists make a living helping people “name” their demons. Digging into childhood experience, they assist persons in getting out into the open what was buried, non-verbally deep in their psyches.

“Traditionally, the way man has overcome the daimonic is by naming it . . . the Word discloses the daimonic, forces it out into the open where we can confront it directly.” (176, 167)


Metcalf uses “Columbus discovered America . . .” to illustrate the “Reflective Theory of Method.” In so doing he provides a good illustration of the relationship of process to the rhetoric of conclusions.


The whole book is devoted to the topic of this paper. However, for Parker and Rubin, process is the “highest form of content.” This is true for anyone who faithfully carries out John Dewey’s theory of education: means are more normative than ends.


Peters defends the thesis that mental health aims in education can probably be better dealt with under the more general notion of “rationality.” His concern is akin to mine. But he is too Aristotelian.

Omphaloskepsis in the Ed Department

Peter Dykstra

A refugee of the history department looks at what he’s doing in the education department.

What propels a student into teaching? The money? The hours? The prestige? The thrill of working with young minds? Or the sheer momentum of seventeen years as a successful student? Chances are that if somebody does well at something for seventeen years he will not want to give it up. This hesitancy to quit the education business seems to be a strong factor in many students’ decisions to become teachers. Only the cream of the educational crop makes it into the ed department—ed students are all people who have been successful in school. Whatever their other reasons for becoming teachers, these people have been good students.

The problem is that success as a student requires different qualities and abilities than success as a teacher. How different is learning from teaching? Few of us have ever had to teach what we have learned; we just assume that anyone who knows something can teach it.

Most of Calvin operates under this assumption. College professors are all incredibly brilliant, yet few of them have ever taken an education course. One history professor explains to his classes that by the time people learn enough to be able to teach at a college nobody expects them to know what they’re doing anyway. This reflects a general-
y held attitude—if somebody knows something he
an teach it; if not, nobody can teach him to teach
. One professor told me he had always wanted to
en someone who actually knew what was being
ught in the education department so he could
out that it was not really as ridiculous as he
ad heard. “What is this behaviorism? What is a
havioral objective?” he wanted to know. I was
ken aback. This was an intelligent man—a college
essor—a teacher—and he did not know what a
havioral objective is. Every junior education stu-
ent knows that behavioral objectives are basic to
eaching, that without them teaching inevitably
isintegrates into a state of muddled disorganiza-
. I had wondered how it is that John Dewey’s
ragmatism—a chief force behind much of what
he ed department teaches—can be debunked in
osophy and history courses and held up as a
odel in education courses. This happens partly
ecause nobody knows what the people in the
ther departments are teaching. But more than
is—and only partly because of it—the ed depart-
ent seems to operate in a frame of reference
different from that of the rest of the college. Its
courses reflect different assumptions about how
people should be educated and what they should
be educated in. As I tried digesting some of these
differences over the past semester the unity of our
Christian vision seemed to be beginning to come
part at the seams. Or is there such a vision?

Most college educators are concerned primarily
with the content of their courses—which period of
istory they are teaching, or which poem, or which
skills they want the students to master. Professors
of education, on the other hand, are preoccupied
with the psychology of learning. This preoccupa-
tion results in a lot of attention paid to the meth-
ods used to teach, and the psychological and phi-
osophical implications of these methods. To the
ephyte education student all this learned dis-
course sounds like so much hot air. Many such
students go away grumbling. These people give the
education department a bad press. The person who
has taken the learning process for granted for 17
years reacts initially by saying “Is all this really
ecessary?”

The ed department provides the student with
several perspectives on the educational process be-
fore it sends him out into the schools for a semes-
ter of student teaching. First the student gets the
psychological perspective—the ed psych course.
The ed psych course comes in a package with a
teacher-aiding course. Together they expose the
student to various theories of learning, theories of
curriculum design, of classroom management, and
the like. The courses provide him with practice in
applying some of these. They also provide oppor-
tunities to observe grade-school teachers in action.
A tenth-grade classroom is a remarkably alien place
to a college senior who can remember being in one.

Then the student takes the philosophy of ed
course. This course is necessary, the department
says, because it is here that we formulate our
“ideological self-identities,” as one professor put it.
How do spoken and unspoken philosophical as-
sumptions about epistemology, metaphysics, an-
thropology and sociology affect our conceptions of
the school’s role, of proper teaching methods, of
curriculum, of classroom management principles?
These are things every teacher should know.
Should schools plan teaching around reasoning
skills and intellectual development, or should they
center teaching objectives around values? Should
students be lectured to or should they discover
what they learn? Should a teacher’s relationship
with a class be based on their common relationship
with a body of subject matter or based on their direct
relationship to each other as individuals? What
difference does it make?

These questions and others are posed before the
education student in the form of dilemmas. It is
probably not odd, in view of their respective pre-
occupations with content and process, that human-
ities professors and education professors tend to
fall (in various ways shapes and forms) on opposite
sides in answering these questions. Education
people usually think that the teaching of values is as
ecessary to plan as the teaching of skills; they feel
that students learn better if they can be induced to
quire instead of being lectured at. English and
history profs tend to be more traditional in their
attitudes about curriculum, presentation, testing,
and the like.

This difference can be illustrated by the use of
an interesting anecdote. As part of establishing
their ideological self-identities, students of philos-
ophy of ed are instructed to find “biblical-creedal
support” for their positions on various educational
issues. They decide whether to believe that materi-
al should be organized into disciplines or to believe
that it should be organized around themes, such as
“war” or “love,” for example. Then they go to the
back of the Psalter Hymnal or to the epistle to the
Romans—much like the mafia goes to the mat-
tresses, it would seem—to gather quotes to defend
their positions, whatever they may be. This is not
to say that the supporting quotes will have no
subsequent influence on the philosophical posi-
tions, but it does indicate that the students’ “bibli-
cally based” philosophies are not derived from
scriptures or creeds at all. They are merely sup-
ported by them after ‘the fact, by a method which
anyone can use to support many positions. It may
or may not be possible to “derive” biblical educa-
tional principles in any other way, but this prag-
amic approach (“For heaven’s sake, formulate
something or you won’t know what to say in your
job interview.”) is different from that which would
probably be recommended by the idealists in the
academic disciplines, where people who formulate
their theses before they start are frowned upon.

This approach to formulating a philosophy is influenced by Dewey’s philosophy of pragmatism. Though the naturalistic tenets of Dewey are explicitly rejected by education professors, their educational philosophies are undeniably influenced by him. Such an influence is not necessarily disastrous, and it may not even be cause for great alarm, but it does raise some questions. Does the education department remain part of the same reformed philosophical-theological tradition as the rest of the college? Or has it gone off on a tangent from that tradition and in some mistaken way mixed Christianity and pragmatism? Such a question defies analysis by a first-semester education student; but, whatever the convictions and depth of understanding of education professors about how their educational philosophies complement and enrich their reformed world-life views, another important questions arises. Are ed students unwittingly forgetting the proper context of educational psychology and accepting standards of teaching which are ultimately pragmatic? Dr. Snapper’s article (“The Content of Process”) suggests that the content of process is often far more effectively learned than the content of subject matter. And a semester in the ed department leaves one with a sense of the strong role of psychological learning theories in the planning of education courses. Could this impression leave the learner with a conception of the learning process built on pragmatic considerations, not really in a distinctly Christian framework?

From here it is difficult to shift smoothly into a discussion of the third part of the ed student’s education—the grade school classroom—but the education student naturally tends to evaluate the rest of the education program in terms of his experience in the schools. What connection is there between what professors are telling him and what he is seeing? Does what they tell him in college look like it will help him do what these high school or elementary school teachers are doing? How does he feel about high school teaching after seeing it from this new perspective—not a teacher yet, but probably for the first time no longer a student? What makes a good teacher? Are the good teachers doing the same things right that his college professor said they would be doing right? Are the bad teachers doing the right things wrong? How are the teachers’ philosophies reflected in their teaching? And what do teachers in a high school have to say about what the student is being taught in the education department? How does what they have learned in the education department work for them?

A student soon recognizes that he must bend his new educational theories to fit his situation. Even educational theorists who recognize the human element in education are forced to leave it out of their theories, which are designed around models with no room for personality idiosyncracies. The education student has to learn to reintroduce the human element, to merge the neat theory and the unanalyzable personality factor, if he is to develop them into his personal teaching style.

Many schools are emphasizing values education of late, particularly in the lower grades. A friend of mine teaches a third-grade course specifically titled “Values Education.” This emphasis fits nicely into some of the educational theories which emphasize the importance of the school’s developing the Whole Man. The teacher I worked under, however, was more concerned with the teaching of basic skills than with the teaching of values. In fact, she did not seem to plan the teaching of any values at all. The principal was concerned about tenth-grade pupils’ deficiencies in reading and writing, which he felt were results of too little attention to basic skills in the lower grades. Students were flunking English en masse. Some tenth graders did not know the difference between a subject and a verb. The principal is planning remedial reading programs for next year, not values education classes.

Secondary school educators are forced to confront their problems; and so they have a different perspective on them than education professors do. Most teachers do not seem concerned with the planning of “process” aspects of their lessons. And they speak little in the teachers’ lounge about their philosophies of education. Pressed, they often cannot come up with biblical/creedal support for their actions. When informed by a helpful teacher aide that they obviously are going about their jobs all wrong, teachers let it be known that they do not agree with much of what the aide reports is going on in the ed department. “I have my differences with that so-and-so,” one teacher said of a prof. A few recent graduates revealed that much of their time in the ed department had been time wasted. They claimed that the only place to learn to teach is in front of a class.

Already having been exposed to two professors’ ideas about how to teach a given concept, a student may find it being taught yet a third way in the school. Which way is right? Is any way right? Education students have to decide for themselves whom to believe.

What, finally, are the most important qualities of a good teacher? His knowledge of Spanish or English or math? His rapport with students? His effective use of educational psychology? His ability to deliver an interesting lecture? Common sense says that all these things are important, and that teachers should have all these and all kinds of other qualities, in balanced proportion. But the teacher’s task is different from that of the education student. For the student, a semester in the education department suggests, the important quality is an ability to maintain a modicum of faith in all the people to whom he is apprenticed, while at the same time continuing to muddle on through it all until he makes it to the other side.
Calvin's Core Curriculum:

The Rhetoric and the Reality

As in politics, so in education—rhetoric and reality threaten to split apart and live separate lives. Making campaign promises and making legislation, for example, are such utterly different activities that politicians are rarely equally adept at both, and often practice the first with greater dexterity than the second.

This can also happen in education. Calvin College's campaign promises about the core curriculum, the liberal arts component of its total program of studies, is contained in its publication Christian Liberal Arts Education, often called CLAE for short. This article is an analysis of the gap between the rhetoric of CLAE's goals for a "liberal arts education" and the reality of the core as it is implemented in a collection of core requirements, many of them called Introduction to __, and bearing the number 151 in a departmental sequence.

The purpose of this analysis is not to urge the Calvin community to abandon its rhetoric, but rather to suggest a way that core courses can be brought into greater agreement with the rhetoric. Its purpose is surely not to disparage the teaching of any of my colleagues who teach core courses. Even if many students do express dissatisfaction with the value of their core courses as compared to their elective and major-field courses, I do not believe it due to poorer teaching as much as to difficulty in translating our goals of general education into meaningful curriculum content and organization.

The Rhetoric of Core Goals

The Preface of CLAE early makes clear that liberal arts education is that part of the total college program which is general education, non-vocational and non-professional education. It clinches the goal of liberal arts in two sentences: "It does not point toward the scholar's life, nor the diplomat’s, nor the clergyman's, nor the banker's. It points toward human life." Later in the Preface is introduced the language that the ultimate aim of (Christian) liberal arts is to "equip the student for living a Christian life in contemporary society ...." These are no mere unfulfilled prefatory promises, for under the rubric "Benefits of Christian Liberal Arts Education," as well as elsewhere, CLAE repeats the theme that the outcomes of education include benefits for the person's daily life as citizen, parent, neighbor, and church member. Some selected quotes:

- The aim of Christian education, then, will be to educate the student to live the Christian life.
- And so, in the school, we shall have to pursue the implications of the biblical revelation for recreation, for commerce, for politics, for art, for every area of human life.

These general goals are made more specific in the following:

- ... train the student to become a leader or perceptive follower in the tasks of molding society according to Christian standards and promoting Christian culture.
- ... training him to make informed Christian evaluations and to pass solid judgments on this society and culture.

The conclusion that one might draw from these statements is that both awareness of and disposition to solve contemporary moral, intellectual, and social problems should be deliberately planned outcomes of liberal arts courses.

The Reality of the Core Curriculum

While some gap between stated ideals and actual practices is always to be expected, the language and behaviors suggested for the implementation of goals should at least be on the same wavelength as the goal statements. Evidence from CLAE itself, from core course descriptions, and from student perceptions of their core courses all suggest a disjunction between proclaimed goals and the course structure and teaching of core courses. The common message of these three is that core courses are introductions to theoretical systems called disciplines and not introductions to some aspect of life in contemporary society as lived. They are, as CLAE puts it, "... disinterested theoretical study of some aspect or segment of reality." They are, as numerous course descriptions put it, introductions to both a specialized vocabulary and problems peculiar to a given discipline, and a set of methodologies for gathering and reliably testing data for the system. The outcomes, as numerous students see it, are at best a fumbling grasp of a series of new terms and an impossibly amateurish ability to imitate the methods of doing that discipline.
While for some students the exposure to new horizons and new ways of seeing things is intellectually stimulating, core courses do not lead anywhere unless the student pursues that discipline further in the form of a major or minor concentration in it. For the rest of the students the rhetoric of “preparing the student to live the life of faith in contemporary society” is replaced by the reality of a series of readings, lectures, and discussions pursued in a psychological vacuum—that is, pursued in a disinterested manner. The rhetoric of pursuing “the implications of the biblical revelation for recreation, for commerce, for politics, for art, for every area of human life” is replaced by the reality of pursuing the rudiments of theory building, whose main payoff comes chiefly if the theory building is pursued further.

**Toward a Curricular Solution**

Students and faculty who believe that the remedy is to urge professors to give more interesting and lively lectures, or to provide more classroom dialogue with provocative questioning, or to do more ‘applying’ of knowledge in the discipline to present life problems, social or personal, are seeking an aspirin remedy. The task of building a discipline and the task of applying the fruits of that discipline to the moral and intellectual problems that confront all Christians are tasks which are mutually incompatible within the curricular framework of separate courses taught by separate instructors, each of whom is specially trained in his or her separate discipline. This is both because of the complex nature of the structure of a discipline and because of the complex nature of any ‘problem’ to which knowledge from a given discipline may be applied. If the knowledge in the disciplines is to be successfully integrated with the non-vocational aspects of the lives of young Christians in contemporary society it will require more drastic curricular measures than asking professors to be more lively and contemporary.

“If the knowledge in the disciplines is to be successfully integrated with the non-vocational aspects of the lives of young Christians in contemporary society it will require more drastic curricular measures than asking professors to be more lively and contemporary.”

more ‘applying’ of knowledge in the discipline to present life problems, social or personal, are seeking an aspirin remedy. The task of building a discipline and the task of applying the fruits of that discipline to the moral and intellectual problems that confront all Christians are tasks which are mutually incompatible within the curricular framework of separate courses taught by separate instructors, each of whom is specially trained in his or her separate discipline. This is both because of the complex nature of the structure of a discipline and because of the complex nature of any ‘problem’ to which knowledge from a given discipline may be applied. If the knowledge in the disciplines is to be successfully integrated with the non-vocational aspects of the lives of young Christians in contemporary society it will require more drastic curricular measures than asking professors to be more lively and contemporary.

A promising alternative would seem to be the creating of a series of team-taught interdisciplinary core courses, with the focus of each being a single, or a series of related, social-moral problems common to all young Christians. A modest beginning already has been made in the contextual-disciplines area of the core by the creation of CPOL (Christian Perspectives on Learning). The insights gained there remain to be applied to other selected areas in the core. Trial efforts at such interdisciplinary offerings have been made in Interim courses (e.g. environmental studies, film arts). Enrollments in and voluntary staffing of these reveal that both faculty and students at Calvin College regard this curricular form as a promising format for responsible Christian higher education. Courses such as these have demonstrated that the disciplines do have significant input for general education, but that their contribution is best revealed to the underclassman student if those parts of the discipline which have the most direct bearing on common human concerns are the focus of the course, rather than the incidental by-product.

Most problems that confront the young Christian as citizen, as group member (family or otherwise), as mate-seeker, or as worker with others, require input from more than one discipline in order to be confronted with any understanding or maturity. For example, a mature understanding of sexuality and a life style built on that understanding require insights from the disciplines of biology, psychology, sociology, and theology at the very least. Any attempt to apply the principles from only one discipline gives the learner a distorted picture of his/her own sexuality. An interdisciplinary team-taught course on this or any other vexing human concern—whether war, poverty, pollution, or racism—has more promise for fulfilling the rhetoric of the goals of a liberal arts education than does a series of separate introductions to the disciplines which leaves the application of each and the integration of them all solely to the student. Such a course would also offer more promise of identifying the Christian dimension of the pervasive human problem of sexuality than would any isolated courses, because the religious-theological dimension of the problem would be a necessary constituent of every core course.

If it be said that professors cannot collectively integrate their disciplines for a concerted attack on vexing human problems, than can the less experienced and less mature learner be expected to perform the integration?

The Calvin Curriculum Study Committee, which produced CLAE, has itself suggested that the college explore the feasibility of what it called joint courses or integrated courses for the general college student. It remains only for us a Calvin academic community to put our money where our mouth is, curricularly speaking.

20
Evolution and the Christian School

Joel Kuipers

I sometimes wonder whether people ever change. I don’t mean just their clothes, cars, and lifestyles, but their ideas, and their way of looking at the world. Maybe a thousand years from now, as Anton Chekhov wrote, “Men will fly in balloons, change the style of their coats, discover a sixth sense, perhaps, and develop it, but life will remain exactly the same—difficult, full of mysteries, and happy.”

In this last decade, many traditional ideas were challenged in the Christian schools. During the sixties, one of the most hotly debated issues was evolution, for traditional religious thought was in conflict with the scientific theory of evolution over many questions. First of all, the age of the earth was questioned: How long has it been here? Are the genealogies of the Bible unreliable for dating it? Did creation take longer than six days, or were there longer days back then? Secondly, when anthropologists began finding prehuman fossils, and speculated that man might be a million years old, many more questions appeared: Did man come from the apes and not from the dust? Were Adam and Eve actually the first humans, and were they specially created? Were there other men living at the same time? And thirdly, does natural selection rule out God’s sovereignty? The validity of the Scriptures was questioned along with the validity of the scientific method.

But as Donald Wilson, anthropologist in Calvin’s sociology department, says, for most people, the “question of evolution is not on the front burner anymore.” While at one time he had from 75 to 100 speaking engagements a year on this topic, now, he thinks, “for all practical purposes, people regard evolution as a dead issue.” In the aftermath of this controversy, which peaked out in 1970, it might be fruitful to take stock of what has happened. The problem stemmed from the question, “What do I tell the children?” Many parents were angry with what their children were being taught in the Christian schools, and dismissal of a teacher because of his or her stance on the issue was not unheard of. Trying to find out what the present policy is, I went to several schools and talked to teachers and students, most of whom preferred to remain anonymous. The sampling is not intended to be representative, but only to discover how some people are handling the issue.

One school administrator reported that the curriculum materials are structured so as to make teaching evolution in the school difficult. Most of the materials, the administrator said, are topical in organization, not historical. Emphasizing that he does not teach any facts with regard to the age of the earth or man, he feels that there is not enough evidence in the fossil record to warrant teaching this type of history to children. “Dinosaurs probably existed,” he admits, but man is certainly not the result of the process of evolution.

“If it ever came up, I would not be afraid to present theories as to what some people believe,” he said. Although in general he avoided the subject of evolution, he repeated that he was not afraid of it. He used the word fear several times in this context. He said that he taught the “Biblical account of Adam and Eve as the first man and first woman,” and the universality of the flood, “in spite of contrary evidence,” for when teaching the Bible, “what scientists say is not important.” In short, he makes no attempt to integrate the Bible and evolution.

Why? Because, he contends, “children just aren’t interested in the problems of evolution until much, much after elementary school.” Therefore, he does not encourage them to fit evolutionary ideas into what they know of Scripture. And while he says he is “not afraid to stop and expose them to ideas,” he feels that kids are very limited as to what they can assimilate.

However, this administrator admits that “a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing,” meaning that if one knows too little about a subject, it will come back to haunt him. But that still does not mean that one should therefore study evolution, he says, because this also can be dangerous. He knew of one fellow who was not “careful” where he did his research, and as a result, lost his faith. Did he know too much?, I wondered. Or did he fail to integrate his faith with his learning? The administrator never brought the subject up again.

He sees no need for more materials regarding evolution in the curriculum, especially now that his program is topically and not historically oriented. He emphasized preparing his students for high school and college, and therefore, he “anticipates no changes in the future.”
Wandering around in the same school, I questioned a teacher’s aide, whose response was considerably less detailed. Evolution? “Oh yes, we talk about it. It’s one of those theories that we don’t believe.” Why? “Because we believe the Bible,” came the honest reply. There seemed to be no middle ground in her replies—one either “believes” one or the other. Like her principal, she chooses to avoid unpleasant topics.

Questioning the children drew considerably different responses. Apparently they hadn’t heard that they weren’t supposed to be interested in such things, and they greeted my questions with splendid answers. Indeed, their imaginations seemed to manufacture interesting theories which, while fanciful, contained an astonishing amount of logic. Nor did they reflect the certainty of the teacher’s aide. One teacher told me he has been fielding such questions as “Is there a God?” “Did Jesus really live? How do you know? Can you prove anything by the Bible?” These questions, he told me, reflect the learning in the home, and from television, and not from the school.

I asked the children certain questions about the origin of man, and the elaborate nature of their responses was truly remarkable: “Cave men lived because I saw them on T.V. They weren’t real men. Adam and Eve were the first people.” Another: “Adam and Eve were the first people written down in books, and all the people before them, they just didn’t have any books.” “Did you come from the apes?” I asked. “I think we look something like them,” said one little fellow. “How do we know God isn’t an ape?” asked another. I asked them about dinosaurs: Did they live before people? “Yes they lived then, but I don’t believe what I see in the museum.” Why not? “Those bones are plastic and not real.” Although in general, the interest and curiosity of these elementary school children was very high, they seemed somewhat suspicious of the issue, and felt deceived by what they had heard.

In the high schools, of course, the position was more clearly developed. The head of the science department has formulated a clear and concise statement as to their stance on evolution. In it, he

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CALVINIST SUNDAY DINNER

Wasn’t that a good sermon, Gertrude? Orthodox.
The rich Jesus and the poor sinner.
And what poor sinners we all are,
apart from grace, of course.

These potatoes are a little hard, Gertrude,
too hard for the side of my fork.
Hard to chew too.
You say some rump-roast gravy’s coming?
I shouldn’t really, for my weight,
but it would help these hard potatoes.

Yes, what poor sinners we all are.
And how Dominie mashed up those Catholics.
Deprived of grace, they say they are.
They admit they need something more they haven’t got—

Pass the rolls and butter this way, Gertrude—
but they won’t admit they’re depraved,
that what they’ve got is worth no more than filthy rags. Do you remember how he shouted?
“Filthy rags!” Dominie shouted and hit the pulpit.

The nicest thing about rump roast’s the gravy, Gertrude.

Good talk for young Mrs. Vande Zwey.
Haven’t they been married two years come June?
Then it must be one year that Dominie finished with her
on the Catechism.
It keeps the Catholic nonsense reformed out of her
when the Dominie hollers “filthy rags” the way he did.
It’s like a refresher course in Reformed Doctrine.

Pass the green beans, Gertrude, please, with the vinegar.

Yes, and when he got to the cheap grace of the Baptists.
“Cheap grace,” he’d say, and sneer to the side.

Great rump roast, Gertrude. The knife slides through it.

You value grace when you know you’re
totally depraved, that you can’t even find God if you
wanted to, except nobody can even want to
unless God makes them want to.

Only one-eighty per pound for choice rump roast, Gertruce I can’t believe it.

It’s all just that cheap come-to-Jesus stuff with the Baptists.
O they’ll agree that they’re desperately wicked—

Pass the beans for second helpings, Gertrude—
but we sinners can do everything for ourselves
according to them.
We can come to Jesus, they say.
We can stand firm in Jesus, they say.
And then comes the backsliding.

Pass the meat and potatoes again, Gertrude.
The diet’s off. It’s Sunday.
We’ve just been richly fed in church
and now we’re being richly fed at home.

Backsliding.
That’s what comes of all that cheap grace.
And we’ve got a few in our own church too,
Baptists at heart
and backsliders.
I see Johnny Poort sneak to the tavern Saturday nights
and others see him too—
it’s reported at the elders’ meeting.
akes a distinction between using evolution as a theory, and as a philosophy, pointing out the dangers of the latter.

One high school biology teacher feels that treating evolution as a philosophy leads logically to a world governed by survival of the fittest. He feels that this concept and Christianity are unalterably opposed. However, he does not avoid the data of the fossil record and explicitly presents it to his students, although he himself believes in a fossil continuity between man and the apes, which allows for creation. The danger with evolution, of course, is that one might “lose one’s faith,” so he tells his students, “if what you have to accept in science in any way affects your faith in God—you better not.” Although this might seem like a stick-in-the-mud policy, he says, “you have to live with what is comfortable for you.” This rather aggressive stance toward the integration of faith and learning is in contrast to the impressively modern theories and up-to-date textbooks dealt with in class.

In one junior high, I talked to a science teacher:

I'll clear, Gertrude, while you cut the apple pie.

in Sunday mornings he sits in church and cries.
here's that cheap grace for you.

What about a little of that a la mode on the pie, Gertrude.
I'll start dieting hard tomorrow.

Of course, Catholics and Baptists are duck soup compared to the liberals.
Liberals think they don't need any grace at all.

My, what good pie, Gertrude,
made from Spies, I'll bet.

Dominie knows how to preach, doesn't he?
He turned all quiet and intellectual-like
out the liberals, did you notice?
Put it to them in that sincere way of his
that liberals are pompous and self-satisfied,
saying heaven is here on earth already.
he only way you can fault Dominie
that he could have called attention to the
section here,
and reminded everybody that liberals usually vote democratic.

Well, let's close.
I'll read what the preacher read in church.
est proof text in the Bible for total depravity.

Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil.
That put darkness for light and light for darkness.
That put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.
Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes.

Doesn't that lay it on the line, Gertrude?
Not a Catholic, Baptist, or liberal can refute that.

Now let's pray.

Our father in heaven,
we thank thee for this pleasant Sunday,
for this delicious food and for the hands that prepared it,
for our orthodox church and for our orthodox Dominie,
and for his sound sermon on Total Depravity.
We thank thee that he has the gift for serving it up
so appetizing.
We thank thee that it seems to go down so easy with us
and with the young folks too,
most of them anyway.
Bring many Catholics, Baptists, and liberals
to a saving knowledge,
and if it be thy will,
keep any more of our children from marrying any of theirs,
for we know that unless we build on Total Depravity
we will never amount to a thing.

All this we ask with the remission of our
manifold sins and transgressions—
too numerous to mention in detail—
though as we have been reminded by they servant
we must always be aware of our Total Depravity.
Help us to appreciate it.

With the remission of our transgressions,
for Jesus's sake.
Amen.

Sietze Buning

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them, 'Do you see the difference between the fossil record and creation?''

The religion teacher in the same school also mentioned curriculum problems. Her Revelation Response textbooks also emphasize the "now" aspect of education, at the expense of historical matters, and interpretation. She emphasizes in her classes the personal experience of Christianity, rather than examining its historical validity. Avoiding problems of scriptural interpretation, she feels that the student must "first understand what the Bible is saying."

Some of the junior high students I talked to reflected a different attitude. Yes, they saw the difference between the fossil record and creation, and after some hesitation one student blurted out, "I don't believe it!" What? I asked. "What I saw on T.V." The others shook their heads in agreement. They were referring to the television special on "Primal Man." One said regretfully, "They made it sound true." Another wrathfully denounced it as "interesting fiction." Most of them felt defensive, saying, "If it contradicts the Bible, it's not true, is it?"

When I asked them about certain fossil remains they had learned about in class, they began to construct some interesting theories. "Perhaps the dinosaurs in American museums are really as old as they say, y'know, evolution," one proposed, "but over in Israel, in Bible times, it happened according to creation." Several of them thought that the earth once turned much more slowly than it does now, so that the seven days of creation were actually long periods of time. And while they did not think evolution was possible from apes to humans, many thought that man could evolve into a higher form, and cited television examples, including "Planet of the Apes," and several Saturday morning cartoons.

These children felt threatened, deceived, confused at the very least. Although their answers reflected interest and good deal of time spent in thought, they felt compelled to reject whole areas of their learning experience as "interesting fiction," while accepting similar ideas in a different context involving "higher beings." Why is this? Whether or not the administrators "believe" in evolution or not, is it right to let the issue just ride? It leads one to wonder whether they are being supplied with adequate conceptual equipment for the more penetrating questioning they will confront later on in life.

At one rural Christian school I visited, no evolution whatsoever is accepted. Yet in spite of their "conservative" stance, they have a curiously integrated approach. Although the principal at the school says they accept a literal interpretation of the Bible, there is much awareness as to what is going on in science in this community. Because the constituency feels threatened by the advances in scientific knowledge, "they must be students of the world as well as of the Bible." Scientific knowledge is then integrated into a literalistic interpretation of Scripture, with evolution generally coming up on the losing end. Under this view, the fossil record merely represents "man's ideas" as to what happened in history, and only "God's ideas," recorded in the Bible, count.

This second principal had a very positive image of the children, saying that they are inquisitive and that they are capable of grasping such matters as evolution. However, they are taught to resolve all such "conflicts" in the home at a very early age. Therefore, they feel very little need to teach such matters in the schools, and their emphasis is mostly on the "three R's." The school had no science program until last year.

I questioned a young junior high science teacher in the same school. Although she felt that the students were generally very bright, and they actively questioned her on evolution, she admits that her policy thus far has been one of strict avoidance, mainly out of fear for her job. She skips all sections in the textbook that deal with origin of the stars, geological time, or natural selection. This type of attitude occasionally caused some trouble, as when she took her students to a planetarium. They were disrespectful and inattentive during the lecturer's presentation, because they felt they had no need to listen to his theories on the origin of the stars, saying, "It's all lies, anyway."

One very positive aspect of this conservative attitude is the parental concern it entails. She cites the fact that at the last parent-teacher only two parents, out of a total class of sixty-eight students, did not show up. Although it is rather restrictive at times, this type of attitude in the home, she feels, leads to a well integrated education. At times the parents may not agree with an accepted scientific theory, but they try to come up with what they feel is an equally compelling argument in response. To many people in this rural community the issue of evolution is still alive and important.

But obviously, in the wake of such issues as women's rights and homosexuality, most of the schools in my random sampling seem to feel that evolution is an issue of the past. They all seem to share a general policy of avoidance. To avoid the issue, many of the schools I visited have had to change a few things. For example, in the elementary and the junior high schools, the curriculum is changed so that it deals with the academic subject matter topically and not historically, thus effectively avoiding the controversy. In other words, they have changed in order not to change.

Why should they avoid the issue? In some cases, it makes sense, as in the communities where a teacher will lose his job if he doesn't. Some teachers didn't think the children were interested or ready for it, or even realized there was a conflict in
a student's mind. One principal I talked to simply seemed afraid of the idea, and of the prospect having to upset a stable pattern.

It is still an open question to me as to whether people ever change, but one would hope that we n actively respond to issues at hand (like evolution) and progress from misconceptions of ourselves to a greater understanding. If no attempt is ade to reconcile two conflicting ideas, they will be in perpetual tension, until the more appropriate one overcomes the other, just as in natural selection. So it might be with the conflict between evolution and the Christian Reformed schools. If the teachings of the denomination do not present a clarity which meets the needs of its coming generations desire for meaningful religious life and a coherent world-view, it will be ground under, perhaps for a new form, perhaps for none at all.

This lack of integration can also be seen in moral terms. We live in a throwaway culture. We look for packaged, mass-produced commodities, disposable experiences, instant solutions to complex problems. And even the curriculum reflects this attitude with its "now" emphasis on learning. But if this "Pepsi generation" is ever going to make it out of the decade with a system of standards which have any value beyond right "now", the emphasis has to shift from instant experiences to an awareness of process, of history, of change. It seems to me that such a theme is involved in the teaching of evolution. We mustn't look apprehensively at anthropologists with avoidance, fear, and disdain, but rather actively seek out knowledge with which to examine creatively the processes, selections and developments at work in history. After all, people might change.
Signals

H. K. Zoeklicht

—approximately 3:30 on a Wednesday afternoon—library at Omni Christian High where several large round tables have been shoved together for a special faculty meeting called to discuss (as rumor has it) possible confiscation of Omni Signals, the student paper—atmosphere jovial as faculty help themselves to coffee and sugar donuts—some lighthearted banter about cocky editors and ineffective sponsors—a few sharp remarks about bad influence and educational values—mostly a display of nonchalance about the issue and restrained impatience to get meeting over with—thoughts of teams waiting to be coached, snow to be shoveled, errands to be run, groceries to be picked up, hair to be washed, papers to be corrected—exception is Karl DenMeester, English teacher and sponsor of erring Signals, who as incarnation of the art of taking oneself seriously is busily jotting down verbal ammunition for the case of Faculty vs. Signals staff—and history teacher Bob DenDenker, the faculty’s liberal mind who, according to faculty consensus, would sooner embrace a student cause any day than the most eligible of bachelorettes, and who now shakes head in dismay and wonders aloud what was the straw that broke the camel’s back—and Ginny Traansma who with face full of concern turns to DenMeester and asks him if Chip Freeman, Signals editor, knows about pending action—when Peter Rip, principal, enters, manila file folder and stack of Omni Signals under arm, passes by coffee urn and donuts box because of heartburn that is wont to flare when good public relations are in jeopardy, seats himself and asks John Vroom, Bible teacher, to lead in devotions—which catches Vroom in act of dipping last hunk of donut in coffee cup and then, quite oblivious to all alerted eyes, hastily downs soggy tidbit in one prodigious swallow, wipes off sugar and crumbs from mouth with left hand, implores Susan Katje, librarian, with right hand for Bible, accepts reluctantly copy of Good News while strongly regretting lapse of memory which left King James in his classroom, pages through Gospel of Luke till eye falls on word “teachers” and starts reading 52nd verse of chapter 11:

How terrible for you, teachers of the Law! You have kept the key that opens the door to the house of knowledge; you yourselves will not go in, and you stop those who are trying to go in!

stops abruptly but then quickly reads remaining verse of chapter and launches into prayer that adequately compensates for brevity of Scripture passage—at conclusion of which, Pete Rip slows raises shoulders, presse fingertips together, and announce with eyes down on stack of Signals: “The school paper is supposed to come out tomorrow, as you know You may also know that I requested Chip Freeman to discontinue the reviews of movies and certain books This request has not been honored, a you may see for yourself. To make matters worse, there’s also an editorial now that is highly critical of many facets of our particular program here academic and otherwise. I frankly fear the ramifications of all this. We must not raise unnecessary static, you know, and therefore I’m seriously considering not to allow this particular issue to go into circulation tomorrow. Of course I want your advice on what action is best; that’s why I thought we’d better meet and talk about this.”

Rip picks up the stack of papers which are then distributed, and for the next few minutes all heads are bent as eyes quickly scan the offending pages.

Klaas Oudman was the first to respond. He felt confident that his many years of experience could provide what seemed to be the obvious answer. “Well,” he snorted in his still-heavy brogue, “the Dutch proverb says, ‘if you want to kill the veeeds you got to pull out the roots!’” He paused to let the profundity of the expression weigh...
in the minds of his listeners, then continued, "and in this case the veed is that thing they call a newspaper nowadays and the roots is the editor. Why not use some old fashioned discipline and send that 'deugnet' home to his parents?" He leaned back, satisfied that he had solved the problem. What one might do to a student besides give assignments he had up to his twenty-fifth year of teaching given little thought.

Ginny Traansma was quick to reply. "Oh," she said earnestly, "but Chip is such a sincere, kind person. Must we be harsher on him than on one who's caught skipping a class?" She stopped suddenly as she caught P.R.'s frown.

In the pause which followed Ginny's outburst, Bob DenDenker put his arms on the table and leaned forward, "What seems to be the problem? Isn't straight reporting would. And I s'pose we depend?" asked Peter Rip quickly; more important work was waiting. In the darkening room, among stray copies of the Omni Signals on the littered table, stood the empty coffee urn, a silent sentinel, impassive, its gleaming chromium belly effectively belying the dregs within.

But can we afford to have a controversial school paper divide our community on whose good-will and support we depend?" asked Peter Rip while paging nervously through a Signals copy. He continued, "Many parents are still opposed to movies as such, and I think we must be sensitive to that. It is good to be idealistic, but I don't think the community is ready for this. The school board told me as much at our meeting last night."

Karl DenMeester recognized the opportunity for a contribution. "I think many students are unduly attracted to movie attendance and reading of questionable books through these reviews. Furthermore, such reviews and scathing editorials disturb the community. That is not Christian. Why not let our principal suppress this issue and personally supervise future issues until the board can recommend a specific set of guidelines for what the Signals may transmit?" He smirked a little at his own pun.

Oudman quickly rose to the occasion. "I'll make that a motion."

"Seconded," came several responses.

"All in favor?" asked P.R.

There was a mumbled chorus of "Ayes."

"Opposed?"

There were two decisive "Nays."

"The motion is carried," P.R. announced with obvious relief. DenDenker leaned forward, eyes flashing. "You realize what you have done," he said, addressing the group. "You're taking away the freedom that is an indispensable condition for the exercise of responsibility. Without freedom there is no opportunity for making responsible choices, and without that opportunity there can be no growth toward maturity. This motion takes away this necessary freedom from the students, from us as faculty, and hands it to the Board. We in effect have not used some old fashioned discipline and sent that 'deugnet' home to his parents."

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Kafia Hiss knelt in the corner, trembling, feeling more dead than alive. "My God," she said aloud, "I'm trembling," and then, "I'm going to be killed."

Another stone crashed through one of the remaining windows and the glass exploded into a thousand tinkling triangles. "God help them," she prayed. God help them, let them be warm now, too. In the quiet her whimpering could barely be heard. She felt the wind pour into the room silently, almost like a shroud being pulled neatly, without compassion over her dying body. Kafia Hiss was a twenty-one year old second-grade school teacher in Brownsville.

The people stood outside, shivering with the cold, flapping their arms crazily on their chests and arms like so many seagulls. They were silent. No one spoke of temperature or danger. They knew. In the sky above the people too small, white clouds seemed to balance on the large, orangish moon to give the appearance of a hat. The craters on the moon's face made a somber look, and stern. A fat man shaped somewhat like a large vase had approached the end of a time of silent inactivity. He was building his many emotions to a peak where control would no longer be possible. Violence would follow. He selected a smooth, oval stone a child might use for skipping on a lake and weighed it in his hand. It skipped against the house when he threw it, missing with a dull thud the window, some six inches away. Tears were flowing down his face in thin streams. He made another attempt, but he was too exasperated, too frustrated, and he missed again. Another man, somewhat thinner and taller, more muscular, perhaps, joined the fat man's efforts and soon the window was broken. The others watched, solemnly and some shook their heads with a firm belief in the rightness of their actions. When some of the sharp glass fell to the ground they all watched it closely. Only silence followed. Of some thirty windows, only nine were left. Before long, they would all be broken.

One woman with a gray shawl draped over her head had tried to stop it, but her words made no impression. "Don't you know," she pleaded, "if the windows are all broken, it will do no good? Warm will turn to cold, that's all." No one listened. They stood firm, turning colder, ignoring, proceeding as if by some irrevocable plan: breaking windows, smashing doors, turning warm to cold, so that all finally cold, could begin to turn warm. One does not refill the sugar bowl until the sugar is all gone. One cannot begin to make the world warm until all is decidedly cold, with no unjust exceptions.

Nearly seventy men and woman stood silently, sometimes restless, like a wolf pack, waiting. Soon, like the fat man, others of them would approach their end of silence and take their violent turns. Hard, determined faces, even children's faces, bundled stubbornly against something they could not understand, but which they faced, nevertheless.

One child whimpered at her mother's coat, sounding much like the woman inside the house. The child tugged at the sleeve of the coat with her hands, the fingers of which were turning blue with the cold. Her mother stopped her constant vigil for a moment to look down at her daughter. So young and pretty, she sighed, but looked up, finally, to resume her share of the watch.

The cold—relentless, sharp as a danger, without conscience, had taken the people by surprise, pursuing record low in below zero regions. Patient, beleaguered people, devoted to an ethic which viewed danger as a block of ice to be melted by the slow, steady flame of technology and big government. But complacency and blind, stubborn hope fell slowly by the wayside and the deep roots of panic set in, creeping up their backs, the arms, like the cold itself, cinema of hunger, seizing the brain and numbing them to all except survival, to the roots of existence. They were reduced. Old loyalties, verities abandoned, relationships tattered, persons, places, things all changed, confused, obscured.

When the factories closed, Kafia thought, they went crazy. Hoarding woolens, stealing. Fires were tried, but fires were impermanent. Something secure and lasting was needed. The snow drifted worse every day as the winter progressed, but still no one moved South. At first, the storms had hit too quickly. No one was ready. Besides, they had thought, this is only temporary. The situation will change. Fuel will come through. Things will get better.

Kafia had been lucky. She was the only one left who had gotten fuel in the last months who still had some left. Lucky, she thought, with a harsh laugh.

The people surrounding the house were getting restless again. They had been there seven hours, off and on watching and waiting, with little or no
lea of what was occurring within. The house stood alone there before them, so miles from the town, an object of violent derision and scorn, as much as as the young schoolteacher inside. They knew her as blond, quiet, but they soon learned that she was by no means weak. Spurred on by their initially rude and violent attempts to enter, she guarded her house jealously as the attempts became more violent. She had surprised them all with a warning shot from an old Winchester deer rifle she had unloaded in the basement when she heard them. Still, the people, cold, and red to the bone, began to get more and more restless.

One man, about forty, with graying hair and a slight paunch, turned to a companion who was carrying a small hammer. He began to whisper furiously and make insistent gestures with his hands. Receiving a serious, appreciative nod from this man, the man with the paunch moved decisively to a group of men who had the appearance of leaders, who also carried impromptu weapons. They were no guns or knives. They wanted no killing, they had decided, although they all remembered distinctly the warning shot fired by the schoolteacher more than seven hours before.

"Now listen," he addressed the group, "we've got to move. We can't sit on our hands any longer. If we do, why we might all freeze to death." Some nodded in approval, but others were reluctant. The woman with the gray shawl saw this and stepped into the circle now to speak. "It's just a girl. You'll be killing a girl, John." The use of his first name by her, making the idea so personally his, provoked him to anger. "Shut up now, Mary," he said, "it's not for you to say. It's beyond you now. You can't stop it. There's nothing else to do."

The darkness seeped through the air and enveloped all who stood by the house, sealing them into the night. Those who stood there formed a rough circle around the house and the six tall pines which flourished to the front and back. Kafia knew this. She had been to all possible escape routes; first, sneaking quietly, then frantically, not finding, finally hopeless with despair. Trapped. Resolute, persistent, she had at first refused to open her doors to them. It was her house, after all. By no means would they approach it with violence and be received, she had thought. Later, after seeing their persistence, she was willing to give up, but she no longer had the strength. Lying on the floor, the energy almost sapped from her body, Kafia continued to whimper. The pain, the fear was becoming too much.
Encountering injustice they could not cope with, the Brownsville townspeople lashed out with fury at a kind of injustice with which they could cope, and solve with the mind, with one’s two hands. To deal now, to act on this smaller matter of the house would give more time for the ice of danger to melt. Things will get better, they thought. Science will see us through. Feeling an evil surround them, they found a center from which they felt an evil emanating and they proceeded to slowly, carefully destroy it.

After searching for exits and finding none, the young school-teacher, breathless and excited with fear, had fallen down the twelve stairs leading from upstairs to the main floor and had broken her jaw and her right leg, leaving her helpless. That had been five hours ago. She could barely manage to crawl to safety now from the rocks and falling glass, escaping with her arms and the one good leg to another room, to more warmth. Doing this now, she became aware of a noise. Faint, but undeniable. Reaching the next room, panting, aching, exhausted, the young school-teacher found an appropriate corner which she approved as safe. It was warm. She could rest for a time. Resting, she thought, like a creature not unlike themselves was inside and would soon die. Although a few of them were becoming aware of the largeness, the rawness of their savage fire, they could feel the heat, but none dared to move closer. They also knew with a little sense of horror that a creature unlike itself was inside and would soon die. Although a few of them were becoming aware of the largeness of their action, they all remained frozen, in another way now, in shock, in fear. The people of Brownsville watched the second story being demolished surprisingly quickly and some became impatient for the first floor to collapse, for the whole house to go, to leave now, to go home and relieve themselves, to sleep for ten hours, to get up to a new day and begin the rebuilding.

None could have imagined the possibility and all were extremely shocked to watch the little girl run. Before anyone could move she was on the porch, to the door and inside. Sensing the danger, sharing the fear, she knew only that her teacher needed help. Once through the door, the roof of the porch, which had long been burning, collapsed. The other who had begun to chase after her stopped in horror. A solitary scream pierced assorted shutters in the attic. Some went to comfort the mother, some herself with grief and regret at shock.

Inside, the little girl reached the teacher and they embraced hard, like reunited lovers, as if rediscovering a quality in life they had once known. They remained that way, in an odd kind of happiness.

Two men died and seven others were hospitalized with severe cuts, burns, lacerations resulting from the mad, futile attempt to gain entrance to the house to save the teacher and her student.

The town of Brownsville is a sm.

town. There is Henry, a locksmith, Stella, a bookkeeper, Rory, a gas station attendant and Harold, a baker, to name few, and oh yes, don’t forget Sheri Shearer and Peter who runs the grocery store and Forrest, one of his clerks.

There is a mayor, of course, for there are seventeen hundred inhabitants there and also, two schools. In the elementary school, a new teacher begins in the fall in the second grade.

It is a nice town; a friendly and quiet one. The winters are very cold, but what is that? The summers are pleasant enough to wait for and one has only to turn up the heat, bundle up and stay inside in the winters, where the children have their cartoons, their plastic gur and their Barbie dolls.

Outside, in summer, fathers are painting the house and they call across the street to their neighbors to come over for a beer. Inside, mothers are baking their cherry pies, their chocolate cake, their cakes and their hams for Sunday dinner. Yum.
BURYING THE APOCALYPSE

It was announced that the specter stalking our land
Would glimmer recognizable at high-noon of midsummer’s day.
The people flocked around the square, faces turned
Saucer-eyed toward the podium where the phantom was to appear.
All morning they had rattled into the city
To mill about and sweat with the growing heat.

As the court-house clock crawled toward twelve,
Young boys quit dodging through the crowd yelling, Gottcha!
And mothers nervously shifted their children to another hip,
Exposing damp grey marks on summer-print dresses.
A child’s cry strangled on a ring of hostile glances,
And the lemonade-vender’s bark faded into hollow whistled breathing.
Will-less, the people were toward destiny by a large black hand.

Corrugated heat floats off the platform as chimes clock the finish of the wait to watch.
Reverberating eyes strain to pierce the void before them.
I see it! the editor cried, Fear! You see it? There, it is Fear.
No, no, wailed the teacher, it is Famine.
There, hollow-cheeked and fell-eyed, it is Famine.
Oh, no, smirked the Doctor, you are wrong, it is Pestilence.
Look! Just as I have always said, see the festering gore, Pestilence.
No, but no, shouted the preacher, can’t you see, it is Death.
There, in the silver cloak, surely it is Death.
At each voice of authority, the crowd strained for a glimpse of the apocalypse.

When the clock ceased chiming, silence rang its restless rhythms,
And the leading citizens hastened into a cramp to soothe the situation.
The mayor as spokesman heaved himself onto the platform
And announced the people’s decision; There is no specter, he said.
The crowd thundered the barometer’s accuracy while the mayor turned to go;
But an old man shouted, What? How do you say there was no specter?
Because there was none replied the mayor, unless perhaps you saw it?
The people laughed at his jest: thirty years the old man had been blind.

I can still hear, Aaron said,
And I heard articulations of eyesight.
How do you say there was no ghost?
You say you can hear, said the mayor,
What stopped your ears when I said there was no apparition?
All the people agree, why don’t you forget about it.
There is no phantom, old man, that is consensus.

Consensus . . . said old Aaron, shaking his head slowly,
So the specter appeared after all.
Who would have thought it,
Who would have thought it?

Mark D. Lipscomb
Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Teacher hit me with a ruler.
I knocked her on the bean
With a rotten tangerine...