

# Entry points

for Christian reflection  
within education



Pamela MacKenzie

with Alison Farnell, Ann Holt and David Smith

*Care* FOR EDUCATION

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# Entry points

for Christian reflection within education

*CARE for Education is very grateful to the couple who shared this vision and whose personal donation made the research and writing of Entry points possible. Thank you!*

The logo for CARE, featuring the word 'Care' in a stylized, cursive script font.

Christian Action Research and Education  
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## Entry points - for Christian reflection within Education

Researched and written by Dr Pamela MacKenzie with Alison Farnell, Ann Holt and David Smith.

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**Ann Holt** began her teaching career in Jamaica and then was head of History in secondary schools in England for eight years. As head of the Cambridge Education Development Centre she organised and facilitated INSET in all subjects and across all phases of education. From her position as Director of Action for Governors Information and Training, she developed an expertise in school governance and management which is nationally recognised. She has co-authored *The School Governor* (Kogan Page). Currently she is Director of CARE for Education and has recently been a member of the SCAA Forum on Values in the School and Community.

**David Smith** has taught modern languages in various British schools and has recently been pursuing post-graduate study at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto. He is curriculum team leader for Modern Languages for the Christian Schools Trust (UK) and co-editor of *Language in God's World*. His publications include curriculum resources for French and German as well as journal articles on the relevance of Christian faith to modern language teaching.

The examples cited in this document are taken from a survey of current practice. They are examples of what exists and the authors are not necessarily committed to what is stated here as the ideal for Christian education and curriculum.

We have endeavoured to be as accurate as possible in our reproduction of the models and examples used in this volume. In the end, the perceptions of the contributions are those of the authors.

The authors are sensitive to the gender issue, but since there is no gender neutral term in English it has been difficult to use inclusive language in every case. The authors would like to apologise for any offence which may be caused where it was not possible (for example, in direct quotes or examples) to change the language.

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## A personal note from the authors

As we have prepared the contents of *Entry points - for Christian reflection within education* we have become increasingly aware of the wide spectrum of opinion about Christian education. This ranges from the Christian teacher who thinks they cannot do anything significant because they are teaching what is dictated by others, to those who are striving to make every aspect of their teaching stem directly from the Bible. And of course there are many others in between.

We offer *Entry points - for Christian reflection within education* to all Christians in education, not as the definitive, exhaustive work on Christian education, but as something for you to consider. It is for you to agree or disagree with the examples and models cited; it might make you angry, sad or excited! We hope that you will think through your responses to the many questions raised, find helpful new ways to work, or confirm ideas that you have already worked out. It may help you to develop your own thinking from whatever stage you are at, and in ways relevant to the teaching context within which you work. We hope it will also prompt you to share your own practice in Christian education with others.

While working on this project, we have been very challenged by the example of Daniel. Despite having high office in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Daniel refused to compromise what he knew to be the truth of God about the way in which he should live and work. Daniel was renowned for his wisdom and tact, but he was also bold. Because of Daniel's example, Nebuchadnezzar recognised that God's ways were better than his own.

Our prayer for *Entry points* is that everyone who reads it will be challenged to consider before God ways in which, like Daniel, we can be faithful to God's truth in our education practice in the schools and positions in which we work.

# Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our grateful thanks to all who have helped in the development of this handbook, whether that has been in providing the actual examples found in the handbook, in commenting on them, or in general discussion of the ideas presented herein. The individuals, and the headteachers and staff of those schools mentioned below have all contributed in various ways. If we have missed anyone who contributed to this handbook, we can only apologise, as without the hard work and inspiration of these teachers and educationalists we would not have been able to get this far.

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The Christian Schools' Trust curriculum co-ordinator can be contacted at the Christian Fellowship School, 1 Princes Road, Liverpool, L8 1TG

The Charis Project, Stapleford House Education Centre, Wesley Place, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 8DP

Other initiatives relevant to the Christian who serves God in education are:

Engaging the Curriculum

Liverpool Hope University College, Room K.E.W. 098, Hope Park, LIVERPOOL, L16 9JD (Tel: 0151 291 3489; Fax: 0151 291 3177)

The Open Book

The Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, SWINDON SN5 7DG (Tel: 01793 418100; Fax: 01793 418118)

Christians in Public Life Programme

Westhill College, Selly Oak, BIRMINGHAM, B29 6LL (Tel: 0121 472 7245; Fax: 0121 415 5399).



# Foreword

In Act I, scene IV of *Hamlet*, during the Ghost Scene, Marcellus comments that “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark”. Many in Britain, the US and other Western industrialised countries would echo Hamlet’s sentiment. Writing in *Light and Salt*, CARE’s Charlie Colchester noted that “Economic indicators aside the UK is, sadly, doing rather well in a number of other European league tables. Britain is now Family Breakdown Capital of Europe (with over 150,000 divorces in 1995) ... The UK is also Teenage Pregnancy Capital of Europe. Each year nearly 8,000 children under sixteen give birth - the highest level in Europe ... Britain can also ... claim to being the Abortion Capital of Europe ... What is happening to Britain’s moral and social fabric is alarming ... We have to recognise that in Britain there has already developed a particularly decadent strain of western liberalism which is causing massive damage to society ...”<sup>1</sup>.

At last there appears to be a recognition that as a nation there is a moral malaise, which is particularly affecting the next generation. 80% of all the crimes committed in Britain are committed by children under the age of sixteen. The growing violence in schools, the defiance of authority, the brutal murder of James Bulger in Liverpool in 1993 and the mindless killing of the well-respected headmaster, Philip Lawrence, outside his own school in London in 1996, have been catalysts that have led to an intense national debate about moral values. Who is to blame and what can the schools do to redeem the situation? The responses to such hand-wringing questions seem unwilling to recognise what the psalmist regarded as obvious: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,” (*Psalms 33:12*). There is a fear of offending people in our plural, postmodern society. There is also a reticence to acknowledge that a secular humanist world view has relegated any sense of the religious to individual and preferably private belief and faith. The resulting individualism, hedonism, selfishness, greed, materialism, competition and liberty without responsibility are at the root of our plight in which there is not only moral confusion, but intellectual confusion.

The confusion continues in our attitude towards schools. Teachers particularly are seen as at the same time both scapegoats for our current social ills and the agents of salvation for the next generation. Recent government educational reforms compound the flawed logic which characterises the responses to the perceived spiritual and moral breakdown. There is a significant mismatch between legislation which requires compulsory RE of a “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” and the assumptions underlying not only the rest of the curriculum, but the system for measuring and judgement.

Christian lobbyists and others created a sufficient pressure between 1986 and 1993 to achieve legislation which includes worship, RE, statements of values and parental choice. The 1988 Education Reform Act begins with the rubric that schools should be concerned with the spiritual development of pupils as well as the academic. But such laws do not guarantee that the concepts are taken on board and intellectually internalised either by the politicians or the teaching profession. For most of them the educational world view which they propagate is one of economic determinism. The trend towards skill training and National Vocational Qualifications is testimony to this. Such influential bodies as the World Bank have been advocating this approach for some time.<sup>2</sup> Schools and colleges are perceived as business organisations that need to be managed efficiently. Teachers, and especially headteachers, are increasingly seen as managers. The success and effectiveness of both staff and pupils are measured in performance targets. The ranking of schools in academic league tables has become all important. Terms such as customers, clients and consumers and the language of business management are now all too familiar. The idea of a ‘liberal education’ that is as concerned with the development of the child as a ‘whole person’ has in reality been marginalised in favour of the academic and vocational emphases.

Not all teachers subscribe to this message fortunately, but the prevailing messages that are coming through to children, and parents, are not spiritual or moral; they are essentially economic. RE is not an assessed part of the National Curriculum and in Personal and Social (and Health) Education, the moral and spiritual issues are influenced by the values in particular resources used and the personal values of the teachers concerned. There is the general acceptance that postmodernism prevails, that moral and religious values are

<sup>1</sup> Colchester, C. (1996) What Future for Europe? *Light and Salt*, Vol. 8, No. 1 p1-2

<sup>2</sup> World Bank (1996) *Priorities and Strategies for Education*, Washington, D.C.

relative and open to individual interpretation.

One consolation is that there is nothing terribly new in this confusion, as Aristotle's remarkably contemporary comments remind us:

*"In modern times people's views about education differ. There is no general agreement about what the young should learn either in relation to moral virtue or to success in life; nor is it clear whether education should be more concerned with training the intellect or the character. Contemporary events have made the problem more difficult, and there is no certainty whether education should be primarily vocational, moral or cultural. People have advocated all three. Moreover there is no agreement as to what sort of education promotes moral virtue."*<sup>5</sup>

Christians do have a responsibility to be 'salt and light' in the world (*Matthew 5:13-16*); to challenge the prevailing wisdom; to bear witness to the Truth that God has revealed Himself both through His creation, through His intervention in history and above all through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Recently, groups of Christians - parents, teachers, clergy - have formed distinctive, new Christian schools as a reaction against the secular humanistic and materialistic viewpoints prevailing in many state schools, even in some church schools. They have sought to provide a holistic education for their pupils, based on the premise that God exists, that each one of us is a spiritual being, that we have minds and talents that need to be developed and that we have an understanding of right and wrong (*Romans 1:18-21*).

The staff in many of these schools, as well as other groups of Christian teachers and educationists in some maintained and private schools, have been seeking to develop a new, Christian approach to education. Some of this work has been concerned with the most humane way to manage and administer a school; some has been concerned with issues such as discipline and punishment from a biblical perspective; some has been concerned with developing a close relationship between school, children and the family, including the issuing of a home-school contract. Above all, however, there have been serious attempts to develop a Christ-centred curriculum, which is not indoctrinatory, but which recognises that there is a God-given spiritual perception of every aspect of knowledge and the curriculum. The chapters in this volume use some examples which have been developed in an attempt to address these issues. The hope is that some of the thinking and ideas revealed here might have a spin-off into many more schools in mainstream education.

St. Paul in his letter to the *Romans* (12:2) urges Christians: "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will.*"

*Entry points - for Christian reflection within education* is designed to provoke Christians, in whatever aspect of education we might find ourselves, whether as teachers, parents or administrators, to think about our world view regarding education; to challenge double-minded, split personality approaches which confine 'Christian' thinking to Sundays and occasional midweek meetings, but which do not allow these to inform teaching or other actions and behaviour during the rest of the week. It is also designed to encourage us to realise that, in today's moral climate, we have tremendous opportunities to share our faith through a Christian approach to teaching and through a Christian interpretation of knowledge. For all these reasons I recommend this thoughtful volume wholeheartedly. I believe it ought to make many of us think afresh about what it is we are doing, and why.

### **Keith Watson**

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January 1997

<sup>5</sup>Aristotle, *Politics VII*,  
Harmondsworth, Penguin

## How to use this handbook

*Entry points - for Christian reflection within education* offers a collection of examples and comment on different approaches to serving God in our schools. While using this handbook remember that it is intended to:

- stimulate thinking and discussion, not to offer the definitive statement on education from a Christian perspective.
- encourage schools to identify, articulate and practice an education which more closely represents their Christian mission and policy statements.
- encourage schools to develop their own integrating framework for good practice.
- encourage individual teachers in settings where they cannot fully implement a Christian world view, to develop ideas which can legitimately and with integrity be introduced.

No education is neutral, but will be the outworking of an underlying world view. This will be seen in:

- the purposes of the educational process
- the policies affecting practice
- the teachers who bring their own beliefs into the classroom
- their methodologies and the content of the curriculum
- the resources which contain certain underlying assumptions
- the organisational structures of the education system.

Education is generally defined in modernist terms, considered to be secular and humanist in nature, and is based on individual rational autonomy. This means that the individual is self-defining, chooses for themselves and is responsible to themselves alone.

The world view on which this is based assumes:

- there is no ultimate law, there are no ultimate values. Individuals and communities construct norms and values for themselves.
- there is no inherent design to human nature that sets limits to fulfilling life.
- the autonomous person decides in the light of reason; an independent faculty which functions as the source and guide for life. Reason is only influenced by the sense experience of personal history and of culture which can be refined though education.

The assumptions underlying this world view are now being seriously challenged by Christians together with a number of different groups including environmentalists, New Age followers, post modernists, etc., but in many spheres, including education, modernity still remains dominant in public life.

As you use this file continually ask yourself the questions:

- what is the world view underlying this particular example or model?
- how does this differ from my own situation or practice?
- what are the assumptions underlying my own practice?

Working through these questions will help you clarify your thinking on the curriculum you offer and help you to compare it to biblical truth. For example, does your teaching suggest that:

- behind all things is a personal Creator?
- humankind was made in the image of God for a relationship with Him?
- truth is founded on the Word of God?
- knowledge, and wisdom are based on our relationship with Him?
- we are whole, integrated beings, created for holiness and righteousness in every area of cultural expression?

Use these questions and others in your own mind to analyse and assess the *Entry points* examples. As Christians we come from different traditions and views are often expressed in different terms. Some of the examples in this manual therefore do little more than encourage a greater compatibility between what is being taught and Christian beliefs and values. These examples are helpful to the extent that they stop us being actually God-denying. Others express approaches that seek to nurture young people into a full blown Christian understanding of the way the world is. Wherever you fit in the spectrum of approaches to honouring God in the classroom, we hope that you will find something in *Entry points* to help you move forward.

Above all we pray that you will be encouraged as you realise that however tentative your attempts to apply a Christian mind to your teaching, you are part of an army of ordinary teachers with a vision to transform education by the grace of God.

# Preface

***I remember the occasion as though it were yesterday. It was a class of fifteen year old girls, doing 'O' Level history. One of them, Deborah, was a lively girl with whom I got on particularly well. "May I ask you a personal question?" she asked. I braced myself, expecting it to be something about men! I was certainly not ready for what followed.***

"Why does the fact that you are a Christian not make any difference to the way you teach history?" she quizzed. The rest of the class looked on, sensing a welcome diversion from the exploits of the Spanish Armada. My first thoughts were about behaviour, mine, not theirs. Had I shouted at someone that morning? As someone unhelpfully pointed out to me later that was because I was operating with a "sweet-tongued and punctual" version of what it means to be a Christian! After all, it was common knowledge that I was a Christian. I ran the CU, I led assemblies, took young people away to Christian camps.

But the question wasn't about that. It was much more about my view of history, my world view. Deborah had spotted a classic case of dualism. In Bible studies and when I gave talks at church, I was more than ready to put Christ at the centre of history, but the classroom was a different matter. There I was an unwitting, though not unwilling slave to the latest textbooks and eminent historians. True, I wanted to be a fully committed Christian. I talked the language of "Christ as Lord of all." But I had no developed Christian mind when it came to the content of my history course. To tell the truth, I was not terribly conscious of historical perspective with fourth form GCE and CSE students. When I reflected on what precisely I was teaching, I decided that for those who weren't particularly interested it was, probably, the Henry Ford view - the "history is bunk, one damn thing after another" view.

More insidiously, I had been indoctrinated by my own education, right up to and beyond university, to buy into the "Progress" view of what has been happening over time in the universe. Humankind has been progressing over time, gaining greater and greater knowledge over mystery and matter, and greater autonomy over all human affairs. In reality, as a Christian this is not the way I know and understand things to be. I believe that we, and the world in which we live, are created by God and that, ultimately, we are subject to Him.

The search for autonomy is, in fact, a manifestation of our alienation from God and from one another which, in theological terms, we call the Fall. What is more, almost two thousand years ago in real time and space, God did the most amazing thing. He sent His Son to become human, to live, die and rise again so that we and the creation could be reconciled to Him.

So real are these events in history, that cultures founded on a Christian world view construct their calendars with the birth of Christ as the pivotal point. One way of looking at history is to analyse thoughts and actions according to their reflection of Creation - Fall - Redemption - Future hope.

So what did I do, having received what I later perceived to be a confrontation by God Himself, through the words of my challenging pupil? At first I was irritated! After all, I was a good, if somewhat inexperienced teacher. There were other Christian colleagues on the staff and I didn't see them being exercised about their teaching. Why me? What is more I didn't know where to turn. Then as now, much of our church teaching and practice colluded with the compartmentalising that so many of us engage in. After all, we have been educated systematically to pigeon-hole everything into boxes on the timetable.

*"Why does the fact that you are a Christian not make any difference to the way you teach history?"*

*So what did I do, having received what I later perceived to be a confrontation by God Himself, through the words of my challenging pupil?*

If we are conscientious Christians, we have our Christian activities - Church on Sundays and midweek if we are keen! We try to be nice to one another and when our courage doesn't fail us, we might even witness to someone about our faith. At best what most of us aim at, most of the time is some kind of COMPATIBILITY between the overtly Christian slots in our lives and the rest. In short we try not to be too openly God-denying.

*Even when our consciences do get exercised, we don't know where to begin. I didn't know where to go for help.*

In schools, the temptation to compartmentalise is even greater. There are Acts of Worship and there is Religious Education. But as the Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out in his speech to the House of Lords on 5th July, 1996 "I am sure that the noble Lords do not need reminding of the inadequacy of 'ghetto-ising' the moral and spiritual dimension of education in religious education lessons. It should surely be there in the teaching of the arts, of music, of literature and of course in the endless mysteries of science and in questions about the use of science."

But even when our consciences do get exercised, we don't know where to begin. I didn't know where to go for help. Now twenty years later as I go about urging Christian teachers, parents and governors to be more fully Christian about what they are doing, I get a mixture of reactions. Some are hostile, particularly if they have "privatised" God to the point that they have convinced themselves that it is actually immoral to refer to God in a group where not all are Christian. Others are uncomfortable and, frequently confused. They know that God ought to be more evident, but to make Him so might make them unpopular, or worse still, jeopardise the exam chances of the children. A third group see the compulsion of taking "every thought captive unto Christ" but do not know where to begin or what it will mean. Time and again I have been asked, "What do you mean. Give us some examples." Hence *ENTRY POINTS*.

*Time and again I have been asked, "What do you mean. Give us some examples." Hence ENTRY POINTS.*

We have sent Pam MacKenzie out and about to find examples of Christians who in different ways are seeking to be Christian in their classrooms and in their schools. We have sought to recognise that people will approach this calling in different ways depending on their circumstances, their own understanding and even their theology. One thing they have in common is that they all take seriously the call by God to be salt and light in the world. They have a desire to be a TRANSFORMING presence in the place where they are called to serve.

Some are putting a toe in the water by trying out a particular activity or lesson; others have designed a whole scheme of work or a radically different approach to their particular subject. Some of the examples are from Christian schools which, because they are independent of state control, are free to experiment and engage in developmental activity. Some of these are seeking to go back to first principles, RECONSTRUCTING aspects of, or their whole curriculum, basing their approach on a different theory of knowledge which looks at the business of knowing more holistically, with Christ as the integrating force<sup>1</sup>. The best of these schools see themselves as "cities set on a hill", as models from which we can learn. The examples that we have chosen to include are from Christian schools who want to serve the whole field of education; they hope that their work can offer pointers for those who work in different circumstances.

*ENTRY POINTS* offers case studies and a brief introduction and analysis of what each example is trying to do. It is our hope that the reader will find something that inspires them to go and do likewise. We do not think that this is the definitive prescription for Christian education in this country. It is a description of some faithful service to God - of some real school worship, teaching and learning undertaken in submission to God, the Creator and Redeemer of all things.

For those who work in state controlled schools, there always surfaces the question, "What am I allowed to do? Shouldn't my teaching be value free?" In truth nothing is value free, least of all education. John Patten, when he was the Secretary of State recognised this in the White Paper "Choice and Diversity". Over a third of

<sup>1</sup>While many schools are in the process of developing alternative (or reconstructed) models based on a Christian world view, for both the curriculum and the various subjects included therein, the methods used, particularly at KS3 and KS4 would be transformation. The term "reconstruction" tends to conjure up pictures of authoritarian teaching methods with the intention of control. This is not an objective of Christian schools in the UK.

the schools in this country are church schools with an acknowledged Christian Foundation. Despite increasing secularisation and an obviously plural society, parents are queuing up to get their children into these schools. The 1988 Education Act begins with a rubric which governs the whole curriculum enjoining all schools to attend to the spiritual and moral development of their pupils as well as the social, cultural and cognitive aspects. It is no secret that schools are struggling with this, not always out of antagonism but because they are out of practice after years of neglect. The law may add clout to the mandate to rethink the education enterprise but it does not supply the real and the urgent motive for a radical rethink. That comes from the young people themselves.

Whether you call them Baby Busters or Generation X, we have a generation of youngsters who don't know who or what they are. Their behaviour is often fearful and escapist or selfishly hedonistic. As the consumerist, materialistic dream breaks apart before their waking eyes, they are plunging into a spiritual crisis which is possibly deeper than that which faced the world at the time of the Reformation.

In the words of Brian Walsh:

*"The myth of progress is engraved in our school text books ... propagated in our universities, assumed by our political parties, and portrayed in the situation comedies, dramas and news broadcasts on the popular media. ... It is in the context of this idolatry that we are called to be Christian witnesses. ... Foundationally, this is the world view that captivates the imagination of our society. We experience our lives in its terms. Looking at life with this world view is as natural as breathing for us. Because after all it is in the air we breathe everywhere, and the church provides no gas mask ... And, like the exiled Jews (in Babylon), we find it tempting to think that all of this is normal. A proliferation of cheap and useless consumer goods is normal. Environmental collapse is normal. Dedicating one's life to economic growth is normal. People living for the weekend is normal. A throwaway society is normal. Deficit financing is normal. Rapid and greedy resource depletion is normal ... If our presence in this culture is to be CHRISTIAN we must recognise with Christian insight the profound abnormality of it all."*

Subversive Christianity (1992) Bristol: Regius p16

Many of our students sense in their hearts the shallowness of it all but don't know where else to turn.

This is the gospel which another keen Christian thinker, Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, says we must proclaim if we are to offer this and the next generation any hope.

*"We have to proclaim it not merely to individuals in their personal and domestic lives. We do certainly have to do that. But we have to proclaim it as part of the continuing conversation which shapes public doctrine. It must be heard in the continuing conversation of economists, psychiatrists, EDUCATORS, scientists and politicians. We have to proclaim it not as a package of estimable values but as the TRUTH about what is the case, about what every human being will have to reckon with. When we are faithful to this commission we are bound to appear to threaten the achievements of these centuries in which this has been the reigning belief. In truth we shall be offering the only hope of conserving and carrying forward the good fruits of these centuries into a future which might otherwise belong to the barbarians."*

Newbigin Truth to Tell; The Gospel as Public Truth (1991) SPCK p69

*Some are putting a toe in the water by trying out a particular activity or lesson; others have designed a whole scheme of work or a radically different approach to their particular subject.*

*It is our hope that the reader will find something that inspires them to go and do likewise.*

Brian Walsh, *Subversive Christianity*, Bristol, Regius Press, (1992) © Brian Walsh. Used by permission.

Lesslie Newbigin, *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth* (1991) © Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Used by permission.

Calvin Seerveld, "Our lives as God's letter of reference", *Perspective* 29(2) (June 1995) ©Institute for Christian Studies. Used by permission.

Strong words, but do we believe them? We have witnessed the Bosnians and the Serbs crushing each other; children in Dunblane and Tasmania have been futilely murdered; drugs, vandalism and violence mindlessly abound. We are paying a high price for the breakdown of meaning. Many younger people are already turning their backs on secularism for the increasingly popular New Age manifestations of paganism. Primitive religion and barbaric behaviour can go hand in hand. So how should we then respond and live?

Well, says St. Paul,

*"Don't let your being educated puff you up to think that you are not called to live according to Scripture. I preached the simple truth to you people that Christ was crucified for your sins and was resurrected, remember? So that you might repent, not fight among yourselves, and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to know a deep brotherly-sisterly communion that deals in what really counts: holy living in God's world, as you make the forgiveness of sins in the name of the risen and ascended Jesus Christ known TO ALL YOUR NEIGHBOURS."*

*Paraphrase from 1 Corinthians 4:6-7; 8:1-3 Seerveld (1995)*

*"So what did it mean for the young history teacher twenty years ago? Firstly, it meant recognising a call to be faithful rather than successful. It meant a lot of hard work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."*

That includes your pupils and your colleagues!

So what did it mean for the young history teacher twenty years ago? Firstly, it meant recognising a call to be faithful rather than successful. It meant a lot of hard work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It meant some courage and support from the headteacher. I rewrote my scheme of work to take in a look at some historiography and the different approaches to the subject. Imagine my delight when one Year 7 child answered the question "What is history?" with "History is about Jesus Christ". Her classmates laughed and mocked her by saying that she thought she was in the wrong lesson - RE.! See what damage we do with our false fragmentation of knowledge! They were surprised when I took her response seriously and the laugh was on them when we did some work on time and looked at what was behind the notions of BC and AD. For any period of history that we looked at, we tried to discern the different and dominant views of the world as portrayed at the time and in the sixth form we put on the spectacles of various modern historians.

What were the results? Well, I think I proved that God is no person's debtor. For a start the person I turned to, to be my mentor in this became my husband! History remained a popular subject in the school and the exam results were among the best. But that was not all.

*"You see, it was, in part, because of the way you taught me. Nothing else seemed to make sense in the end."*

I want to end this introduction with the story of Susan. She was in the class that first challenged me. I continued to have a special relationship with them and a number of them including Susan, formed my first 'A' Level group. Susan went on to university to read history. She would visit us in the holidays, frequently dismayed at the teaching, which was from an exclusively International Socialist perspective. They even tried to teach the English Civil Wars, she complained, without any mention of the king! She challenged the indoctrination of the lecturer and was told that she had been too well taught! Susan finished her degree and we lost touch until one day, I received a 'phone call from her. She wanted to see me. She had become an archaeologist but, more importantly, she had just become a Christian. Ten years later. "You see," she said, "it was, in part, because of the way you taught me. Nothing else seemed to make sense in the end."

Whenever the going gets tough, I remember Susan. Many of you will have your own Susans, your stories, your examples of God's faithfulness to you as you have tried to be faithful to Him. Some of them are in this collection. We would like to add to this treasure store. Do write to us if you have developed something, or



when you do. There is no definitive way of being a Christian in the classroom. God is full of delights and surprises. Whoever you are, dipping into this, we hope that you will be inspired to do more as you seek to obey St Paul's injunction in *Romans 12:1*

*“Therefore I urge you my brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is God’s will - his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (NIV)*

For those of us who have been so thoroughly indoctrinated by our own not very Christian education, we shall need some remedial help. Another challenge awaits the church - to recover its teaching function and provide for us, men and women in leadership, who face us when we are tempted by the ways of dualism, and who help us to hold all things together in Christ - not just the so-called spiritual bits. Maybe your church leader would like to read this too!

**Ann Holt**

Director of CARE for Education



# Introduction

The purpose of this introduction is to highlight the role Christianity has played in the development of education in England and Wales, and in particular to examine the influence some Christians have had on the development of mass education.

## The early years

The church in the UK has had a long-standing involvement in education dating back to the 7th century when the first Augustinian cathedral school was established by missionaries from Rome. Education was in the hands of the monks and was conducted by the church, for the church. Christian theology and philosophy were at its heart, as they were also in the development of the great medieval universities in the later Middle Ages. All were permeated by the Christian faith. These ideas continue to influence Western culture profoundly; the foundations of the modern university lie deep in the Christian world view.

## Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment

The Reformation both built on the ‘humanism’ of the Renaissance and gave the Bible a plainer role in education. Erasmus, for example, believed in liberal education, but was also greatly influenced by John Colet, a highly respected and influential scholar and teacher in the 16th century. Although Colet, a forerunner of the Reformation, believed in the mental discipline of Greek and Latin study, to him the spiritual values expounded in scripture were more important. Scripture, he believed, contained everything that belonged to the truth and if we feed on the wisdom of the “heathen”, we lose the “principles of our Lord”.<sup>1</sup>

The Reformation launched a literacy revolution since people had to be taught to read the Bible. This affected Germany more than anywhere else, where the church eventually joined forces with the state in the reform of society. There, as in some other places, the control of education moved into the hands of the government. Some Christian groups, however, (e.g. the Anabaptists, the Hutterites and the Mennonites) argued that the coercive methods of the state were unbiblical (Estep op cit). John Amos Comenius, for example, a Moravian school teacher, developed a child-centred, activity based theory and practice of education (Pott 1992).

The so-called ‘Enlightenment’ of the 18th century asserted that everything could be explained through logic and reason. This would make humanity independent of God and any obligation to God and His word. The supernatural was denied. The acceptance of such secular presuppositions and the “refusal to decide issues by the criterion of Scripture” was one of the most serious attacks on Christianity.<sup>2</sup> The influence of biblical thinking on educational philosophy has gradually diminished since the Enlightenment. Even today the church maintains a place within the structure of the educational system,<sup>3</sup> however its influence has been greatly reduced. Some Church of England schools now bear little distinction from county schools.<sup>4</sup>

## Christian reformers

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, new social contexts developed, with increasing industrialisation and a higher birthrate. The fabric of society was thought to be disintegrating and morality was perceived to be in decline.

The Sunday School Movement developed as one response. Robert Raikes gave the movement momentum when in the mid-eighteenth century he set up a school in Gloucester in response to his concerns about the increasing numbers of children on the streets. In 1785 the Society for the Establishment and Support of Sunday Schools was founded and by 1800 three quarters of a million children were attending. By 1850 the

<sup>1</sup> Curtis and Boulwood *A Short History Of Educational Ideas* (5th Ed) Slough: University Tutorial Press (1977) p121.

<sup>2</sup> McGowan A. T. B. *A Biblical Approach to Education* CiE Discussion Paper I London: *Christians in Education*, p2, (1993); see also Newbigin L. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* London: SPCK (1989)

<sup>3</sup> O’Keeffe B. Faith, *Culture And The Dual System* London: The Falmer Press (1986)

<sup>4</sup> Francis L. *The Decline in Attitudes Towards Religion Among 8-15 year olds* Educational Studies 13(2) (1987) p125-34

number had grown to two million; 23,000 Sunday Schools, 10,000 day schools and 250,000 teachers were involved.<sup>5</sup> There was still, however, no general educational provision, and about two million children in Britain had no schooling at all. While the Sunday School Movement has been retrospectively criticised, the Hadow Report, published in 1926, stated that the Sunday School Movement profoundly influenced the development of ordinary primary schools.

Several educational societies were set up during this time. The British and Foreign School Society (BFSS), for example, was established in 1808 by the Presbyterian and Unitarian Churches. In Wales, schools supported by the BFSS affirmed Welsh language and culture, and were instrumental in changing the 80% illiteracy rate to 80% literacy among the poor.<sup>6</sup> The Church of England set up the National Society (for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church) in 1811. It had two aims: to provide literacy and numeracy skills for the poor to enable them to work, and to educate them in the Christian religion according to the established Church. By 1830 one third of a million children were being educated in these schools and in 1833 the society received a grant of £20,000 from the state. In 1847 the Catholic Poor School Committee was set up and also received a grant from the state. Thus began the state assistance in the maintenance of church based schools and the partnership in education between the church and the state.

John Wesley was also very concerned about education, establishing schools for Methodists with the aim of providing Christian education. In 1850 Wesleyan schools numbered about 400 and characteristically the pupils were the children of manufacturers, merchants and tradesmen.

The freedom from child labour won by Lord Shaftesbury, a Christian political leader, made the provision of more widespread education even more necessary. Ragged Schools developed in response to these needs in the early 1800's. John Pounds, a shoemaker in Portsmouth, founded the first Ragged School teaching the poor and the handicapped to read. At the same time Thomas Cranfield started Bible studies in the slums of London where the children were also taught to read. This eventually led to a full time day school. The leaders of these schools formed a group to encourage one another and in 1844 the Ragged School Union was formed with Shaftesbury as president. The main concerns of those involved were "to give the knowledge of God ..., of things eternal" and "to raise (the children) from the disgraceful conditions in which they were found". The schools were said to be "a powerful means of spreading religion and morality among the poorest" and helped lessen crime in the cities; a means of rescue, welfare and training. It was said that "Lord Shaftesbury had recognized the firm truth that the hope of a nation rested in its children".<sup>7</sup>

### The State takes over

Prior to 1870 Church related groups controlled much of the education then available. Not all children were able to attend schools, however, and in 1870 legislation was passed in order for government funded schools to be established which would "fill the gaps", starting what has become known as the "dual system".<sup>8</sup> Although the 1870 Education Act stated that religion should be part of the curriculum, during the year prior to the 1870 Education Act there was a nation-wide debate about the content of religious education which resulted in what was described as "a meagre, pointless" compromise.<sup>9</sup> The state system, Shaftesbury propounded, would become more powerful than voluntary and church schools so that "ten thousand are taught to read, not one hundred will be taught to know that there is a God".<sup>10</sup> Mary Sumner, as early as 1893, observed that national elementary education was "becoming secular".<sup>11</sup> The result was that future generations had less and less vital Christianity, so by the time of the 1944 Education Act the position of the Church and state in education had been reversed.

<sup>5</sup> Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, (April 1856)

<sup>6</sup> Pott D., Notes from Lecture for Bridgehead for Education: Oak Hill, Bristol (1990)

<sup>7</sup> MacGregor (1885) p116/7, 127; Pollack J. Shaftesbury: *The Poor Man's Earl* London: Falcon (1985) p152

<sup>8</sup> O'Keefe (op cit) (1986)

<sup>9</sup> Coleman D. (in progress) John Hall Gladstone PhD Thesis in progress London

<sup>10</sup> Pollock (op cit) p154

<sup>11</sup> Coombs J. George and Mary Sumner: *Their Lives and Times* London: Sumner Press (1965)

## 1944 and beyond

The churches were no longer the main providers of education, but had become “junior partners” with their influence considerably diminished.<sup>12</sup> Yet religious education and worship were not only seen to be compatible with, but an essential component of every school’s educational task. Education was seen to take place within a Christian context for a Christian community and so the right of the church to have a voice in education was still accepted. The presuppositions and assumptions of Christianity were still taken for granted, providing an acceptable code of moral values, attitudes and behaviour.<sup>13</sup> In the decades following 1944 ‘a presuppositional shift’ in thinking occurred and Judeo-Christian values and norms could no longer be taken for granted<sup>14</sup>. Many educators argued that secular assumptions shaped educational theory and practice in both religious education and throughout the curriculum. In 1988 Watson suggested that the principles of secular humanism were so much in evidence at both theoretical and practical levels in education “that children are in danger of being conditioned into it” (p10). Francis (1987) states that secular presuppositions and assumptions have been accepted unquestioningly, and Hill (1985) argues that this has happened to such an extent that there is a lack of understanding of secularisation itself. Thus its presence often goes undetected, even by the church, and this results in what many have described as a type of ‘cultural brainwashing’. It is in response to the dominance of secular thinking in many of our schools that we have seen the recent emergence of some 90 new Christian schools.

## Where are we today?

This increasing secularisation would seem to indicate that we, as a nation, are in danger of losing the ability to live and act Christianly in religious as well as everyday life. However, there are still ample opportunities and ways in which Christian belief can be applied to and influence our educational practices. Firstly, our county schools have never been declared secular; they are still referred to as ‘non-denominational schools’ in official documents. Secondly, the 1988 Education Reform Act requires schools to “promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils”, even though it makes a distinction, for the first time, between religious education and the ‘secular curriculum’. Section 83 of the Act requires collective worship to be broadly Christian, and says that RE should reflect the fact that the religious traditions are in the main Christian, whilst taking into account the teaching and practice of the other principle religions represented in Great Britain. Thirdly, the 1992 Education (Schools) Act, which needs to be seen in the context of the statements about Christianity made in the 1988 Act, states that the spiritual and moral development of pupils should be encouraged across the whole curriculum. This needs to be done in accordance with the mission and aims of the school, and Registered Inspectors have to report on all these aspects of pupils’ development.

The consequent Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) discussion paper on Spiritual and Moral Development (No. 3, Sept 1995) and the OFSTED Schedules for Inspection (1993, 1994 and April 1996) make it clear that they expect pupils to be given opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally in English, mathematics, science, technology, languages, art, music, sport, history, geography, dance as well as through RE and collective worship. According to these documents, every teacher in every subject across the curriculum is encouraged to:

- provide pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs
- enable them to reflect on and develop their own beliefs and values, aspects of life and experiences so that they develop spiritual awareness and self knowledge
- encourage pupils to consider life’s fundamental questions, and relate religious teaching to those questions
- encourage pupils to explore meaning and purpose, values and beliefs

<sup>12</sup>Wedderspoon A. G. *Religious Education 1944-1984*

London: Allen and Unwin, (1966) p204; Curtis and Boulwood (op cit); Kay Wm “The Church in Education” *SPECTRUM* 21(1) (Spring 1989) p39-43

<sup>13</sup>Francis (op cit) (1987)

<sup>14</sup>Todd N. *Church and State in Religious Education 1944-1984 - A Critical Survey of Trends in England from the Point of View of the Christian Parent with Special Reference to the “Christian Schools Unpublished MED Thesis, University of Durham, (1984)*

- teach the principles which allow pupils to distinguish right from wrong
- enable pupils to make moral decisions
- foster values such as honesty, fairness, respect for truth, justice and property
- encourage pupils to express moral values across issues affecting the school community
- encourage pupils to respect other people and relate to them positively
- teach pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions, and the diversity and richness of others, to gain understanding of societies, families, school and communities.

It can be argued that because of the fact that in 1994, 71% of the people in Britain, when asked what religion they belonged to, declared themselves to be Christian,<sup>15</sup> a mandate has been provided to maintain Christian beliefs and values in education for all. However, many see British society as more mixed, with about 4% giving their allegiance to faiths other than Christianity, 22% claiming “to be nothing” and the vast majority of the population making up a spectrum of belief from a weak and heavily secularised allegiance to Christianity through to committed Christian. Thus Britain has a variety of beliefs and behaviours evident in the life of the country. The existence of a strong residual element of Christianity permeating our social structures provides many opportunities for Christians. In order to advance Christian truth in most of our schools and to re-establish the Christian beliefs and values that we believe to be true, a persuasive approach is necessary, thus effecting a transforming presence in our society.

### ***Entry points - for Christian reflection within education***

This handbook contains examples of education practice that we found in schools in the UK, during the period between 1994-1996. They offer a whole variety of approaches to thinking Christianly about different aspects of education. We realise that this is not an exhaustive collection, nor are the examples necessarily perfect as they represent the stage of thinking at that particular time. We hope that it will encourage Christian heads and teachers to reflect on the Christian perspectives provided here, on the curriculum they offer to their pupils and to find for themselves points of entry within education for the truth of the Christian gospel.

<sup>15</sup>“Seeing is Believing” (1994)  
Independent Television  
Commission

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# Management and leadership

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# Management and Leadership

## Introduction

The crucial role of the leaders in a school cannot be underestimated, but while being encouraged by the recent Government initiatives to improve schools, many headteachers and governors find they are not sufficiently well equipped for this task. This section shows ways in which some headteachers and governors are becoming better prepared for their management and leadership roles; and indicates how Christian beliefs and values support and shape management processes.

## 1 School effectiveness

School effectiveness has been the focus of much research in recent years. The characteristics of an effective school, and how to achieve it, are all important in improving the experience of education in schools and the attainment of the pupils in them. As stated in the DfEE document “Governing Bodies and Effective Schools”, the features of an effective school are described as follows:

- *Professional leadership: purpose, involvement, and ability to provide opportunities for others.*
- *Shared vision and goals: staff working together with a common sense of purpose and clear targets.*
- *A learning environment: orderly, purposeful and attractive environment.*
- *Concentration on teaching and learning: central purpose is to help pupils to learn and achieve.*
- *Explicit high expectations: expect pupils to achieve, lessons intellectually challenging.*
- *Positive reinforcement: Discipline is clear and fair, praise given for good work.*
- *Monitoring progress: systematic monitoring and evaluation of achievement, and of the school as a whole.*
- *Pupil rights and responsibilities: promotes pupils’ self-esteem, encourage them to take responsibility.*
- *Purposeful teaching: quality of lessons, efficient organisation, clear purpose, well-structured; taking into account the different way in which pupils learn.*
- *A learning organisation: where training and staff development are seen as important.*
- *Home-school partnership: Supportive and co-operative relationships; active involvement of parents in their children’s work and in the life of the school.*

For many, these ideals are seen as a positive goal to aim at, so that schools which reveal the characteristics of ineffectiveness such as lack of vision, unfocussed leadership, dysfunctional staff relations and ineffective classroom practices can be changed. School improvement, in terms of effectiveness in management and leadership, has thus become a major concern of most schools.

The complementary roles of the headteacher and governing body are recognised in many recent government documents as keys to effectiveness. The governing body shapes the policy and direction while the head is responsible for the day to day running of the school. The following sections of this chapter look firstly at the role of the governing body, then at the role of the head. It should also be remembered that in the majority of cases, the head is a full member of the governing body.

## 2 The governing body

An important focus in recent years for the leadership and management roles has been the new style governing body. It is here that headteachers, teachers, parents and members of the wider community come together to discuss and express the vision and the values of the school, and to translate them into policies and practice. Every governing body is also required by law to make public their vision, values and aims and to monitor their application.

Governors are not there to inspect the work of the school, but they are responsible for what happens in the school through its aims and policies. They are not to be overly concerned with the details of the school's day to day activities, but they are there to oversee the school's direction, progress and performance. Governors thus play an extremely important role in determining policy.

The role of the governing body is therefore:

- *To provide a strategic view.*
- *To act as critical friend.*
- *To ensure accountability.*

The main features of effective governing bodies in their working practices as highlighted by the DfEE Document (for Governing Bodies and Effective Schools) are:

- *Working as a team: regular attendance, commitment from all governors, making use of expertise, sharing workload, give-and-take on individual issues, respect for colleagues and their opinions. Loyalty to final decisions.*
- *Good relationship with the headteacher: need for clear understanding of the respective roles, respect for the professional leadership of the head.*
- *Effective time management and delegation: identify priority issues, delegate with clear terms of reference.*
- *Effective meetings: carefully planned agendas, a clerk to organise meetings and provide information and procedural advice, purposeful chairing, clear minutes with action highlighted.*
- *Knowing the school: visit the school.*
- *Training and development: consider own training and support needs.*

As Christians, we whole-heartedly welcome these moves which have created a mechanism that more faithfully honours the teaching expressed particularly in *Deuteronomy 6*. This places the responsibility for the education and up-bringing of children with parents in their community who, in contemporary society, delegate much of that responsibility to the school; and it is right for there to be a forum, the governing body, which brings all the partners together.

Every governor comes to items on the agenda with a point of view. Christians who become governors (or School Board Members in Scotland and Northern Ireland) should think in advance about how their faith relates to the issues before them, and come prepared to advance those views into the discussion at the governors' meeting. They may not win the day, but by advancing the perspective they will influence the situation.

The context in which governors find themselves will vary. These could include:

- *One Christian amongst other Christians as governors of a Church School - C of E or RC.*
- *One Christian in isolation in a Church School.*
- *One Christian amongst other Christians as governors in a maintained school.*
- *One Christian in isolation as a governor in a maintained school.*

Some situations will be easier than others, but governors are free to follow their conscience in all of them. Their calling is to be faithful to biblical principles in the discussion, even if the outcome does not reflect a Christian perspective.

The following provide some general principles which apply to all those in positions of government in a school.

## ► Guiding principles

The following set of Biblical insights into Christian governing is used by CARE for Education in their Governors' Training Workshop.

- To become a governor means that Christians have an opportunity to play a part in God's redemptive processes in our fallen world. By their involvement in society governors are acting as **salt and light, the yeast in the dough**, and even as **cities set on a hill** as examples to others.
- Christian governors are also loving their neighbour and following Christ's example of **servanthood**. The serving model is also made clear in Jesus's teaching about **visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, etc.**
- The Gospel charges us with our responsibility towards children - not to be **stumbling blocks** but to **bring children to Jesus**, which could be a consequence of involvement in governing.
- We are all **accountable to God** for our actions and this includes the area of education.
- Christian governors are encouraged to **be transformed by the renewing of their minds**. Governors in schools today have an enormous amount to learn and understand, and are charged with using their renewed minds to that end.
- The Gospel story of the **wheat growing among the tares** encourages Christian governors to develop positive Christian alternatives in education to counter management and teaching decisions which are not grounded in Christian belief
- Christian governors need to be very mindful of their responsibility to **speak for those who cannot speak for themselves**.
- In all that they do as Christian governors they are **yoked to Christ**, and are indwelt by the **Holy Spirit** to work in His strength and for His glory.
- Christians usually easily understand that **their behaviour** matters as a witness to God, and they consequently understand the importance of truth and honesty.

## ▶ Seeking to transform

There is a sound biblical basis for Christians to seek to be a transforming presence wherever they are. In a fallen world the calling to the Christian community is to bring the processes of redemption not only to individuals, but to public life. The following highlights the scriptural basis for the Christian's involvement in that redemptive process.

Humanity was made in the image of God.	<i>Genesis 1</i>
God saw that His creation was good.	<i>Genesis 1</i>
We live as Christians in a fallen world.	<i>Romans 8:18, 27</i>
We are salt and light.	<i>Matthew 5:13-16</i>
The yeast is in the dough.	<i>Matthew 13:33</i>
Cities set on a hill.	<i>Matthew 5:13-16</i>
We are all accountable to God.	<i>2 Corinthians 5:10</i>
We need to love our neighbour.	<i>Luke 10:25-26</i>
We need to build trusting relationships based on honesty.	<i>Zechariah 8:16-17</i>
We have responsibility to children.	<i>Mark 9 &amp; 10</i>
We need to encourage the wheat growing amongst the weeds.	<i>Matthew 13</i>
Our lives need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.	<i>Romans 12 1-2</i>
We need to put on the whole armour of God.	<i>Ephesians 6:13-16</i>
We need to remain yoked to Christ.	<i>Compare Jeremiah 27 and Matthew 11:29-30</i>
Speaking up for those who can't speak for themselves.	<i>Proverbs 31:8-9</i>

All of the above need to be lived out trusting in God, and with the humility and ability to accept that mistakes will be made.

## ▶ The language of pictures

Imagery conveys powerful messages. Sometimes when training governors, the CfE trainers have asked the participants to draw pictures either to represent things as they are now or of a vision for the future. Examining other people's language and imagery may provide greater revelation about their motives and vision.



*Is your governing body fit?  
Do all the parts work  
together?*

The term "governing body" in itself conveys an important biblical metaphor. It signifies that governance is a corporate activity where responsibility and power are shared. The members bring different opinions, knowledge and skills. Everyone should be encouraged to exercise their part for the effective and efficient functioning of the whole.

Each body is unique and each body is accountable. There are many roles that the body will play. One of the most crucial is that of "critical friend". We need to remember that critical

comment, be it positive or negative, comes better from a basis of friendship.

As governance develops we are moving from the more negative images of the 60s and 70s, e.g.

rubber stamp  
delivery board  
cipher

to the more assertive and positive images of

encouragers  
supporters  
imitators  
enablers

and another biblically informed word

GUARDIANS

Other images we have come across include:

a bridge, champion, watchdog, think tank ... but above all, a body.

We suggest that one of your tasks in your governing body is ...

- to find the images that work for you.

Think about

- What does giving service mean for us as a governing body?
- What kind of system do we think we are in?
- What do we want to do with our body?

*Ann Holt*

### 3 Governor training

Christian training events for school governors are run by a number of agencies. Dioceses concentrate primarily on governors in their own denominational schools. CARE for Education runs training events for Christians in every school context.

The aim of CARE for Education's Governors' Training Workshop is to envision governors to be more involved in the whole ministry of governing, and to be more effective for Christ as they govern. It tries to help governors not only to be good witnesses in behaviour, but to work out what they believe as Christians about the issues they will face as governors, and to be more effective in their Christian contribution. They may, for instance, have clear views about the way in which teachers teach and behave, but they also need to be concerned with the content of that teaching.

In particular, CARE works on Biblical principles which Christian governors can then apply to policy making. For example, when advising on the policy on behaviour and discipline for a school, which Biblical

principles should predominate in the thinking and discussion among the governors? How should the criteria of justice, fairness, valuing the individual, compassion, care of the weak and vulnerable, accountability, opportunity to “repent” and start again be applied?

The seminar also aims to enhance the communication skills of governors, so that they can better contribute to discussion and debate. Listening and speaking skills, with particular emphasis on articulating a Christian perspective, in a clear yet non-threatening way, are the foci of one workshop.

There is a clear understanding that all that is done by and through Christian governors must be undergirded and surrounded in prayer, and indeed Christian governors are encouraged to use the whole armour of God. The ideological and spiritual battlefield encompasses education.

Christians are encouraged to be involved in education in a constructive way. Schools are much more likely to respond to a cause for concern or complaint if a parent or governor is recognised as one who is supportive and involved positively in the school. First encounters with the headteacher should not be to make a complaint.

### ► CARE for Education’s governors’ training workshop

Christian governors have an agenda to think strategically in their policy making decisions following Biblical principles. This is the basis for training in the following outline of one of CARE’s workshops:

#### **CHRISTIAN GOVERNORS - WHAT’S THE AGENDA?**

##### **Thinking Strategically - Policy Making**

##### Biblical Principles in Policy Making

##### **LOVE**

God’s love is for His creation, for a fallen world, and supremely for humanity, especially for the underprivileged, distressed and marginalised. This love should be reflected in our dealings with people and our relationships with the school community and governor colleagues.

##### **VALUE FOR EVERY INDIVIDUAL**

Every individual is of equal value to God because we are made in His image. This must be reflected in our policy making.

##### **JUSTICE and FAIRNESS**

Where priorities and decisions need to be made the criteria established in the policy should ensure justice and fairness. In the interests of justice there may be times when a policy needs to be reviewed because circumstances have changed.

##### **EQUITABLE USE OF RESOURCES**

Policies should allow for the equitable uses of the resources available to the school. To promote equity greater resourcing may need to be allocated to one area one year, and to another area the next year. Long term planning should be seen to be equitable.

##### **GOOD STEWARDSHIP**

The governing body is accountable for the overall management of all resources: human, financial, materials, energy, time etc. We need to ensure that resources are used wisely - neither wasted nor spread too thinly.



**TRUTH**

We may be faced with making judgements between different parties or making decisions about difficult or contentious issues. We need to be sure that truth is established and forms the basis of our deliberations.

**COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING**

In our dealings with all members of the school community we need to show compassion and understanding through our policy making. Enabling the governing body to really enter into a particular problem or situation and show understanding is an important contribution we can make as Christians.

**WISDOM**

Wisdom is one of the greatest gifts to be exercised in fulfilling our roles and responsibilities as Christian governors. As we prayerfully consider our input into the policy making processes, so God will enable us to speak with wisdom.

**CARE FOR THE WEAK AND VULNERABLE**

In contemporary society care for the weak and vulnerable very often has a low priority. A Christian approach to policy making would be to reduce the emphasis on self-centred individualism, which is often at the expense of the under privileged.

**HONESTY**

We need to be honest and open in our working relationships. When governors are reporting to parents or monitoring policy, honesty should prevail. If it becomes necessary to challenge the basis on which decisions have been made we need to be honest in our presentation of facts and argument. We need to be able to accept criticism, and act upon it if it is justified, and defend our opinions if not.

**UNDER AUTHORITY**

Governing bodies have to act under the authority of the law. Each of us has a responsibility to see the governing body fulfil its corporate responsibilities. Our policy making should reflect this. As Christian governors we should act and speak under God's authority. Then we shall be able to make a Christian impact on the life of the school.

**TRUST**

Once the governing body has drawn up a policy, although it still needs to be monitored, they should trust the head and staff to implement it, and deal with the day-to-day management of the school in line with the policy. Christian governors can encourage trust to grow as they themselves prove trustworthy and demonstrate their willingness to trust others.

**SERVANTHOOD**

Jesus demonstrated service, so Christian governors, following his way need to serve:

- the interests of all children, staff, parents and community;
- being willing to commit time and energy to the task;
- giving time to being well-informed;
- by putting one's skills and expertise at the disposal of the governing body and school.

Serving God by our distinctive attitudes, values, behaviour and input based on Biblical principles contributes positively to the work of the governing body.

## ▶ The Church of England training manual

The National Society, the Culham Foundation and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education together have developed a training manual<sup>1</sup>, the purpose of which is to encourage church schools to discuss and maintain their distinctive Christian vision and identity. The manual states that all aspects of school life should relate to the distinctive aims and ethos of a Church school. Notes for leaders, background papers, notes for participants, overhead sheets and tasks, are provided. The following activities are taken from the sections on mission and appraisal.

### A suggested activity from the manual

**Aim:** To help staff and governors spell out what might be distinctive about Church Schools in general.

**Resources:** A set of 32 cards bearing statements which may or may not be true of Church Schools.

#### Statements for Activity 1

1. The Church school provides a grounding in the Anglican faith for all its children.
2. The Church school's main purpose is the achievement of high academic standards.
3. The Church school teaches understanding of, and respect for, other major world faiths.
4. The Church school stands for Christianity as the only true faith.
5. The Church school welcomes children no matter what the background of beliefs.
6. The Church school exists to serve local parish(es) in return for their input of finance.
7. The Church school is distinguished by the excellence and special character of its religious education.
8. The Church school places collective worship at the centre of its daily life.
9. The Church school is distinguished by the quality of care extended to all its members.
10. The Church school fulfils its Christian character by having occasional services in the local church and the vicar to lead some assemblies.
11. The Church school attaches high priority to strong links between school, home and parish.
12. The Church school provides a counterbalance to the materialistic and secularist influences in society.
13. The Church school maintains an effective balance between the twin aims of service of the Church and service to the community.
14. The Church school sees its mission as primarily to the poor and disadvantaged members of society.
15. The Church school seeks active dialogue with other faith groups.
16. The Church school is concerned that all pupils develop their full potential.
17. The Church school gives high priority to the spiritual development of all in the school community.
18. The Church school produces well-behaved, law-abiding citizens.
19. The Church school promotes attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility.
20. The Church school deals firmly with those who flout its rules.
21. The Church school community is based on the model of a Christian family.
22. The Church school exerts no pressure to believe yet Christian values are built in to the ethos and teaching.

Material from *Mission Management Appraisal: A Guide for Schools of the Church of England and the Church in Wales* The National Society (1992) is copyright ©Lois Loudon and David Urwin and is reproduced by permission.

<sup>1</sup>See resources

23. The Church school is distinguished by developing in its pupils a sympathetic understanding of the Christian faith.
24. The Church school seeks to excel in its attractiveness to parents of potential pupils.
25. The Church school has an attractive and welcoming environment.
26. The Church school has prominent Christian symbols in its entrance hall or on the outside wall of the building.
27. The Church school is distinguished by the active involvement of its foundation governors and local clergy.
28. The Church school co-operates actively with other Church schools as part of the “diocesan family”.
29. The Church school employs a significant number of practising Anglican staff.
30. The Church school is distinguished by the support of all its staff for its Christian foundation.
31. The Church school is now an historic anachronism.
32. The Church school strives to generate maximum funds to provide good accommodation and resources.

#### Task:

- Each person takes four cards rejects one card which he or she thinks least applies to Church schools.
- Arrange participants in pairs. If pairs consist of a teacher and a governor, or two teachers who do not normally work together, check that members know each other. Each pair looks at their shared six cards, and rejects the two which are liked least.
- Rearrange pairs into fours. Each group looks at eight cards and rejects three more. If groups insist that some aspect is missing, give out a blank card.
- If possible, form groups of eight, each group again ending up with five cards.
- At the last stage, put the five cards in order of priority.

Plenary: Hand out a complete list of all the suggested statements. On a flip chart, write up each group’s selection of cards in order of priority.

Identify the top choices, and allow groups to discuss which cards they wish they had been given. Ask whether any aspect is missing.

This may lead into further discussion of topics such as “in what ways do you wish to modify your selection in relation to your own school?” and “are the statements in the school brochure consistent with this selection?”

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#### The manual also reflects on appraisal:

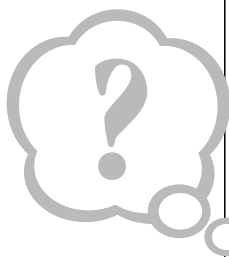
As the responsibility of the governing body, Church Schools, in common with most schools, will want to ensure that appraisal is positive and encouraging. Appraisal is seen here as an opportunity *“to discover more of the responsibilities and challenges faced by headteachers, and to see how ... governors can best support and enable headteachers and their staff to continue to offer the best there is to the pupils in their school.”*

It is argued that appraisal in a church school will, in addition to other aims, *“seek to promote the spiritual development of the school and the pupils”*.

This entails:

- *having due regard for the uniqueness of each individual;*
- *seeking ways to assist and encourage teachers in their professional development and their contribution to the Christian ethos of the school which should permeate every aspect of the curriculum;*
- *fostering a Christian attitude towards everyone identified within the school community.*

The insights, ideas and processes offered by this manual are helpful in the development of schools other than Church of England establishments.



## 4 Christian governing in practice: case studies

*If you don't do it, who will articulate the values which should guide our decision-making?*

Community leaders, headteachers, teachers and parents are all able to influence the direction of school policy and practice by being part of the governing body. The following six examples relate the experiences of Christian governors in a variety of school contexts.

### ▶ In partnership with parents

A report by a high school headteacher who, as a member of the governing body of her county school, encouraged the development of genuine relationships with parents, to work in partnership with them to improve the education provided by the school:

*"In common with most governing bodies ... (we) found Annual Parents' Meetings disappointing and frustrating. Disappointing because, after hours of thought and effort had gone into producing a parent-friendly report, very few parents turned up at the meetings, and frustrating because those parents who did come were reluctant to ask questions. Indeed, the organisation and format of the evening made genuine dialogue virtually impossible between parents and governors.*

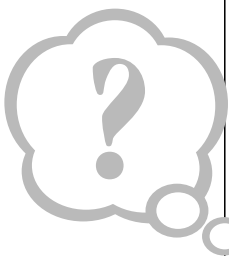
*In 1991, after thought discussion and prayer (a group prays about each governors' meeting), we decided to try a new approach. The governors produced their report as usual, but the Annual Parents' Meeting became a Parents' Forum Evening. We spent less than ten minutes as a large group in the hall. This gave the Chairman time to outline developments in the work of the governors, and to invite questions from the floor. We then broke into small discussion groups of about eight people and moved into offices and small rooms. The small groups were made up predominantly of parents, but there was also a governor, a teacher and a sixth form student in every group. Chaired by the governor, each group focused on two questions:*

***"What are the strengths of the school that we should build on?"*** and

***"What are the main concerns that you would like the school to address?"***

*Each group appointed a scribe, and reports from the groups were collated and a summary sent home to every parent in the school.*

*Parents were very positive about that evening in 1991 and the same format was used in 1992 and in*





*This type of process is very time consuming. What is the biblical justification for this type of cooperative working? Can we apply the principles “the body” as outlined in 1 Corinthians 12 in this situation?*

*1993. For those who did come, it has been a positive experience and their comments have been very important in our Development Planning Process. For example, as a direct result of feedback from the 1991 meeting we launched a weekly Parents’ Newsletter and this has been a major step forward in further improving home-school communications.*

*Some colleagues have described this kind of evening as “risky”. As a leader, Jesus took these kinds of risks. He showed us an inner attitude of honesty and transparency, which we need to mirror if we expect others to be honest and open with us and to work in genuine partnership with us. Christian leaders have a responsibility to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and acceptance within which parents feel safe enough to voice their real opinions and share their real feelings. The governors’ Parents Forum has been one way in which our governing body has sought to develop a real partnership with parents, so that we can work together to improve our children’s education.”*

*Jill Garrett, Headteacher, Stratford-upon-Avon High School*

### ► **Biblical values in operation**

*“Our 11-18 comprehensive school of 1200 pupils had just become an LMS school, and I was Head of Biology there. My two children are also pupils at the school. When the opportunity came up to be a parent governor I felt that this was a chance to put into practice the call of Jesus to be salt and light wherever He places us. I was elected and have been serving now for 6 years.*

*Those who only have a secular mind-set, and Christians can be included in this, tend to think situationally. They will be guided by expedience in any situation and without intending it, the values behind their thinking so often originate in the sinful nature. Values which are behind the work of so many are values such as pride, self-interest, individualism, greed, deceit, slander, disrespect of authority, anger, partiality, arrogance and guile.*

*The words of a Christian governor should be different because they flow from a different source. James says: “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behaviour his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom ... the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:13, 17-18 NASB)*

*This passage has inspired me to realise the following regarding my role as governor:*

- 1. Christian wisdom is not all words. First of all it is behaviour, deeds which show goodness, gentleness, and righteousness.*
- 2. The wisdom from above does not give us clever solutions to the real problems of life and governing. Wisdom from above is not solutions but, first of all, purity. When we speak in meetings, it is not necessarily to give answers to the hard problems, but to input purity, gentleness, peace and reasonableness, etc. It is a wisdom which guides the values of the decision making rather than the solutions. Once the governors have the right values, the nature God has given us is able to create solutions.*
- 3. Christian wisdom, ultimately works for peace. We do not have to fight for righteousness in a self-righteous manner. The wisdom that God gives us helps us to be peacemakers, and to lead opposing parties to peaceful solutions.*

*It is this mind-set which should guide me in every meeting, in every discussion, in every action. In this way I have a Christian influence in society, whether the issue is school uniform, special needs, sex education, support staff, selling soft drinks from a machine or showing “15” videos in the youth annex!*

*It has been this which has motivated me in encouraging the governing body to have an annual “strategy day”, and to use part of the governing body genuinely to capture the expertise of the governors in improving the quality of the education for the good of the children.”*

*Parent Governor*

Much of what this governor seeks to contribute is recognised by his non-Christian colleagues as truth even though he may not always be explicit about the source.

### ▶ Sex education policy

*We were required by law to write a school Sex Education policy. I volunteered to sit on this sub-committee and worked with a teacher who specialised in Health Education. Working together, he developed the sex education syllabus, and I helped write the draft policy for the governors. After some interesting meetings and discussions, the policy was approved by the governors and now serves to guide the teaching of Sex Education in the whole school.*

*These small steps of service grew into a bigger project. I was asked to join a working party to produce Guidelines for Governors in writing a school Sex Education policy. Our own school policy was used as one of the examples in the appendix of an early CARE sex education document which was used by many secondary schools in the UK.*

*Parent Governor*

▶ ***Your School and Sex Education: Developing and Resourcing your School's Policy*** is available from Care for Education. This includes information on the requirements of the Education Acts and what this means for different types of school. Sensitive issues, such as cultural, faith and moral perspectives are considered. A section is devoted to “Questions to consider when developing a school Sex Education Policy” and another section is on the process of developing a good policy. The guidebook considers:

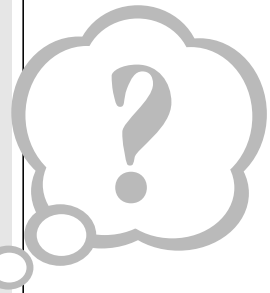
the teacher as the best resource in the classroom, whilst most resources can be put to good educational effect if the teacher uses them skilfully. To do this the teacher needs to be aware of:

- his/her own values,
- the values implicit in the resources,
- the values which have been negotiated and agreed with the parent and governing body.

The table below provides a check list which may be of help to those responsible for monitoring the content of Sex Education programmes.

Questions to ask when assessing the content of sex education:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does the content of what is taught fit in with the values stated in the Sex education policy and the mission statement of the school?</li> <li>■ Are religious and diverse cultural views being presented positively and fairly?</li> <li>■ Is there variety in the teaching methods and approaches?</li> <li>■ How are diversity of views dealt with?</li> <li>■ Do the young people concerned think the programme is interesting?</li> <li>■ Is time devoted to supporting young people who are not sexually active, as well as those who may be?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Are there opportunities for pupils to consider abstinence from sexual activity in a positive way, as well as safer sex options?</li> <li>■ Does the teaching affirm the individual's right to say No and not to be sexually active?</li> <li>■ How are communication skills, decision-making skills and the skills needed to resist sexual pressure being developed?</li> <li>■ How is information presented about controversial or sensitive topics?</li> <li>■ How do the views of staff, parents and young people help to shape the programme?</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



► **Special Educational Needs**

*Our school governors found themselves with more money in the budget than was at first calculated. We were obviously concerned about the most effective use of the extra moneys and there were many options. In the end the governors chose to use a significant proportion to fund the salaries of two extra support staff for children with special educational needs. We wanted to provide these children with support in the normal classrooms so that they could receive education along with the other children. Although most other governors were in agreement with this proposal, the articulation of some of the guiding (Christian) values helped in the decision-making process.*

*This has since been taken further. When the last opportunity to nominate co-opted governors came up, I suggested the co-option of a Christian friend whose partially hearing daughter was due to come to the school. The other governors agreed with this and he now serves as the governor with a special interest in the needs of these children. He has taken great efforts to become acquainted with the staff and the approach taken by the school, and has attended a number of events on behalf of the governors. He now works with the new Head of Special Needs in making developments in this area.*

*Parent Governor*

?

*Which Christian principles do you think influenced the use of this money?*

► **School assemblies**

A Christian teacher in a Scottish primary school expressed to a Board member her concern about school assemblies. Few teachers attended with their classes and instead used the time to catch up on other jobs whilst the school chaplains led the assembly. The Christian teachers quite rightly felt that this effectively put a very low value on assemblies in the eyes of the children.

The Board member asked that the school assembly policy should be put on the agenda of a future Board meeting. This request was entirely appropriate as it is within the powers of the School Board. The head-teacher responded by suggesting that the deputy in charge of assemblies should be at that meeting, present the Assembly policy to the Board, and respond to questions for discussion. In the ensuing discussion we were able to ask questions about why the teachers did not want to come.

The outcome of this discussion was that class participation in the assembly has increased, more imaginative Christian outsiders were welcomed to take assemblies and the standard has improved to such an extent that staff now willingly attend, as do members of the School Board.

### ▶ Handling controversial issues

It takes courage to make a contribution about such a sensitive issue in a school meeting, whether at a meeting of parents, teachers or governors. It often helps to have thought in advance what it is that you want to say, and it may be wise to have written down what you want to say. This usually means that your contribution will be more effective, and probably less confrontational.

### ▶ DESC technique

CARE for Education, during their governor training sessions, introduce governors to this useful DESC technique, to help them make effective contributions to meetings.

- D** Describe the facts / issue as straightforwardly as possible
- E** Express your feelings about it in words
- S** State clearly what you would like to happen
- C** Calculate the “What ifs” i.e. the possible outcomes of the discussion, and be prepared to take each one up, beginning again with the D part of the formula, followed by E, S and C.

One real example concerns a summer fete where a clairvoyant had been invited to take part. A concerned Christian Board member was able to raise this matter for discussion and convinced the Board that this should not happen. In this instance his contribution might be as follows:

#### **D - Describe the situation factually:**

“I want to thank the summer fete committee for all the hard work that they have done in preparation. We do appreciate the effort that goes into this event, and the money raised for the school each year. As the committee outlined their plans, we heard that the usual cake, jams, sweets, paperbacks and white elephant stalls would be run again. I also understood them to say that Crystal Ball Clara had asked if she could take a stall this year.”

#### **E - Explain your feelings:**

“On hearing that I became very uneasy. I am concerned that we are considering a departure from the normal type of stall. I am particularly disturbed that we are contemplating allowing a clairvoyant into a school event. I believe that Christian teaching clearly forbids consulting such people, and warns against fortune telling by whatever means. I would find it difficult to reconcile having such a stall at our summer fete as our school is grounded in the Christian faith. I am concerned that we would be giving the children and parents very mixed messages about what we believe is important.”



**S - State what you want:**

“ I would like the School Board to ask the planning committee not to grant Crystal Ball Clara a stall. I am sure that there are lots of other interesting possibilities that could be considered. My children always like to visit a face painting stall at a fete, that is great fun.”

**C - Calculate** the possible outcomes, and prepare your response**Possible outcomes:**

1. The Board agree and a resolution is passed! - You breath a sigh of relief and a prayer of thanks.
2. There is a lively discussion with a number of members admitting that they have seen fortune tellers and can't see any harm in it. It's all a bit of fun! - You will need to have some more concrete reasons for thinking it unwise, and be prepared to voice them. Or be prepared to explain more fully why fortune telling conflicts with Christian belief. You may need to enlist support from others at this point in the discussion.
3. The whole School Board, with the exception of you, admits to listening to Mystic Meg every Saturday to see if their Lottery tickets will win. They are adamant that it is harmless, and gives a lot of entertainment. You may have to indicate that your concerns are such that you would want to disassociate yourself from their decision. Try to be constructive with alternative suggestions, and offers of help to arrange different attractions. You may not have achieved your hoped for outcome, but you have been faithful to your beliefs, and expressed your concerns.

**Hallowe'en**

Celebrating Halloween in schools is often a great concern for the Christian governors. It is no use, however, just ignoring the fun of such a celebration. To do so would probably be counter-productive. Presenting a Christian alternative can be a positive move. A booklet entitled “Hallowe'en in School” by Richard Wilkins, published by the Association of Christian Teachers, gives some helpful information and advice about the significance of Hallowe'en, why it has become popular, and what it has to do with children's spiritual development. It provides some alternative activities to replace those which Christians judge to be undesirable. It also includes an appendix giving ideas for alternative parties.

Alternative topics for primary schools are suggested as the focus for the Autumn term; one focuses on the celebration of All Hallows and the other on One World Week. An example of part of one of the topics follows:

**Topic 1: Opposites**

Introduction: This topic investigates the idea of Opposites, and includes an exploration of that subject in many curriculum areas including the religious and moral. The belief that good and evil are opposites, forms the basis for looking at All Hallows.

**Art**

Opposites in shape, texture, colour and design could be studied. Texture collage can be created and colour explored. Fold out pictures are good for this as they show up the contrasts in colour and shape at the same time.

**Creative Writing**

- Opposites in expression and feelings can be explored in writing. Try associating colour and feelings and displaying them as opposites. Write different feelings on pieces of card and give each group or child one

card. The group then has to write about colours they associate with that feeling, e.g. Anger is red hot metal poured out, orange lava snaking like a river, and white sparks as metal hits metal.

- Opposites can also be explored by using the topsy turvy technique, e.g. people in cages at the zoo; rain that goes upwards, water that is dry.

Other areas which are included as part of this topic include poetry, movement, music, PSE and RE.

## 5 Headteachers

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the complementary roles of the governors and the headteacher are crucial in the effective management of any school. Not only is the head of a school in a prime position to shape the vision and influence the educational policies and practices of a school, it is also the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that the vision for the school is implemented and maintained throughout the school. Thus, as most research on school effectiveness will argue, the role of the head is the pivot by which a school can succeed or fail. The leadership the headteacher provides is, therefore, of vital importance in all areas of school life. Christian headteachers are in a prime position to put biblical foundations into practice in their schools.

*This is my parish, the church  
that I work in ...*

*County School Headteacher*

This section begins by looking at management and leadership in schools. The new focus on the marketing of schools, with its emphasis on competition for pupils and league tables, has led some Christian educators to believe that schools with a Christian foundation are in danger of giving up their distinctive culture. While all schools need to be faithful to their beliefs and values, they also need to operate efficiently. The first example argues that Christian beliefs and values are not necessarily absent in approaches driven by efficiency.

The suggestion is that, by making a distinction between leadership and management functions, the head will be able to resist their managerial role dominating, and develop the qualities of Christian leadership.

***With all the implications successful marketing strategies have on the budget, staffing levels etc., Christian heads need to ask questions such as "How far does love of neighbour extend, when institutions are competing for students?" and "How far does the Christian school remain silent when they are under attack from a neighbouring institution?"***

### 5.1 Principles of educational leadership

In his book on school leadership, Professor Gerald Grace (1995) looks at the role of the head in a Catholic school as traditionally perceived, in both its leadership and managerial aspects, and at a list of contemporary challenges to those roles. The extracts below are based on his work, and taken from the material used at a training day at St Aelred's Catholic High School, 1994.

▶ **Educational Leadership** in England and Wales has historically involved a commitment to a particular culture of values and practice. An educational leader has been expected to:-

- exemplify in person the moral and spiritual values of the good life as represented by Christian traditions;
- articulate powerfully and persuasively the historical educational goals of "Godliness and Good Learning" in all schools;

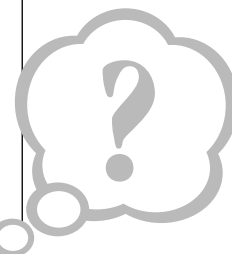
- inspire, organise and support teachers and pupils in their attempts to realise those goals;
- generate an ethos or school climate which educates in spiritual, moral, academic and personal values alongside the formal school curriculum;
- exemplify a high personal input of energy and time in the life of the school (vocation) and significant direct pedagogic involvement with teachers and pupils in the day to day activity of the school (being about the school).

**Educational management** has historically involved a commitment to a culture of technical operation and efficiency. An education manager in different historical periods has been expected to:

- exercise close surveillance and control of teachers and pupils, give detailed specification of pedagogic tasks for teachers and pupils, and monitor their professional and scholastic performance (i.e. nineteenth century management);
- establish a culture of professional and consultative decision making about pedagogy and organisation in the school, and administer a budget and resources provided by the LEA/Diocese (i.e. social democratic management);
- provide a more sophisticated and specialised approach to the management of educational institutions viewed as budget centres, corporations or businesses, and give more attention to budgeting control and forecasting, public relations and market research, performance indicators and quality control (i.e. market culture management).

The danger is that educational leadership, which has to do with values and vision, could easily be undermined by the preoccupation with finance and performance in the educational market of today, and be transformed into market leadership. The move from a conception of education as a public good to a conception of education as a commodity in the market place, which began in the 1980's means that school and college survival in a market culture in education may now depend upon headteachers' entrepreneurial and market skills. The question is,

***On what is the school's reputation based? What goals are being pursued, what values are being conveyed and what kind of performance is required?***



## ► Contemporary challenges for leadership

### ■ *Religious Education as the Core Curriculum*

To resist the marginalisation of religious education implicit in the National Curriculum and assessment arrangements by ensuring that the subject has continued priority status

### ■ *Religious Education as school ethos and culture*

To recognise that the religious culture of educational institutions (the lived curriculum) is as important as the formal curriculum and to give priority to maintaining its quality and vitality.

To recognise that pupils and students experience these cultures and are often sharply aware of the discrepancies between official principle and lived practice.

In the light of this, to give pupils and students a greater voice in discussions relating to both formal RE and Catechises and the nature of the school ethos.

■ *Catholic values in schools and colleges*

To renew the conception of education as spiritual, moral, principled and focused upon community and public good commitments when faced with an aggressive, competitive, individualistic and market-centred conception of education (a secular education).

To demonstrate to parents that the choice is not between spiritual and moral values and academic excellence as Catholic schools and colleges can unite the two goals ...

■ *Education as a community enterprise and a community service*

To work to maintain the conception of education as a community service rather than as a commodity in the market place.

To work with parents and governors to formulate and implement the school's mission statement and as educational leader to articulate the special mission of the Catholic school.

*St Aelred's Catholic High School*



*What steps could a senior management team take to ensure that there is integrity between the beliefs and values of the school ethos and the formal school curriculum?*

The language of analysis often separates ethos from the formal curriculum. If this division is carried forward conceptually and in practice, this could lead to a dualistic approach (however unwittingly) where one set of beliefs underpins the culture, but not the curriculum content.

Although Grace wrote with particular reference to Catholic schools, his ideas may apply to other Christian foundation schools.



*This isn't a Christian school, but as head I regard myself as a Christian leader and I hope that I give a certain leadership model which is rippled through school.*

*County School Headteacher*



## 5.2 Leadership styles

There are various ways in which Christian headteachers organise and manage their schools, but the styles of leadership tend to fall into two main categories: the corporate leadership model and the Family School. Headteachers using either of these approaches are seeking to base their leadership on biblical beliefs and values, and both contain qualities and characteristics which are an expression of their Christian faith. They represent two recognisably different views of Christian leadership and are thus a good example of the fact that our attempts to work out our faith in practice will not produce a blueprint for action by all. The two approaches also contain many similarities. It is often the language used to described them which is different. The important thing to remember is that however we work, we must all seek to be obedient to God and faithful to His Word.



### Corporate leadership

In the first approach the head and senior staff form a school management team and the community is encouraged to be involved in the decision making process. Teachers, pupils, parents and others may be included in the process and, although the final decisions lie with the team, it is the head who ultimately bears the responsibility.

There are certain basic ideas underpinning this approach to leadership based on the Biblical ideal of the body. The following provides an outline of some of the principles which are central to this style:

- *A senior team, made up of head, deputies, assistant deputies, and/or senior teachers who share and are committed to the vision, the goals and the values.*
- *All are seen as members of a team rather than a hierarchy of professionals (there is no pecking order, and all have an equal place on the team).*
- *Each member of the team has a specific role to play and clear responsibilities, with the accompanying [delegated] authority to carry out those responsibilities.*
- *Recognising a degree of interdependence on others with a measure of accountability.*
- *Important decisions are never made without the senior team being involved.*
- *Mutual trust and respect is required. All have to work with integrity and no-one can take advantage of another.*
- *Room to make mistakes is essential, and it is not considered a disaster when mistakes occur, but is seen as a learning process for all. The ability to confess and apologise is necessary, knowing that there is forgiveness.*
- *Interpersonal skills are essential, relationships are important.*
- *The team provides support to enable teachers to fulfil their responsibilities in the best way.*

The head's role, while being one part of the team is, nevertheless, vital. The following looks at how one head described her role.

## ► The role of the head

### 1. Empowering others

The head's role in encouraging the development of personal gifts and abilities is vital, enabling the achievement of that vision for each individual member of the community.

### 2. Guardian of the values

The head is often seen as the one who guards the values of the school, encouraging all to live up to the expectations they have together agreed to maintain.

### 3. Developing right relationships

This model of leadership involves the community in the decision making processes, therefore the ability to develop good relationships with all in the school and wider community is essential. Involving the wider community in the purposes of the school, it is felt, begins to break down the long held ideal of individualism and brings into practice the ideal of community where the members learn to work in mutual support and co-operation. Some of the activities might include encouraging prayer support from local churches and Christian groups, as well as involving the school in serving the community in a variety of ways.



*Besides the idea of the body, on which Biblical principles is this style of leadership based?*



*My view of a leader is someone who goes out and empowers the others and gives them a clarity of vision by which to live.*

*County School Headteacher*

*You're as tough as you can be, in the nicest possible way, if something isn't exactly in line with the values.*

*County School Headteacher*



*With each office goes an authority and responsibility appropriate to that office ... There is no supreme authority from which all others derive their right to act. In no case does the holding of an office confer power to control the community as a whole.*

*Stuart Fowler et al, (1990)*

*My role gives me the authority and strength to deal with people and situations ... Jesus behaved like that. It can't have been pleasant for him to say to Peter, James and John, "well actually that's a load of rubbish."*

*County School Headteacher*

*If you're a Christian you often (mistakenly) assume you must have it right*

*County School Headteacher*

#### 4. Authority

In this approach to leadership the roles of individuals in the team are clearly defined. The head allows those within the team to use the authority they have to fulfil their role. Some headteachers feel that because of the openness in relationships required to operate the corporate leadership model, they find themselves, at times, in a vulnerable position. The difference between the personal and role relationships is not always recognised and a conflict between the two may become apparent particularly when the headteacher is obliged to use his or her authority to deal with people and situations in order to maintain the best learning environment for children. A school based only on personal relationships could become flimsy and difficult to manage, particularly if those personal relationships fragment. The head must also be able to use his or her authority to deal with conflicts and make decisions where necessary.

Those who have decided to work in a team may put themselves in a position of vulnerability, but for many headteachers, to do so not only gives greater job satisfaction, but helps them as a person to become more Christ-like, living out the principles of faith and belief in the world. Thus within this model there are several characteristics and qualities which need to be developed.

#### Characteristics of a Christian headteacher

##### 1. Modelling humility

It is essential that the head also lives out those values and is made aware of areas to which s/he is currently blind.

Humility, whose consequence is a willingness to learn, is a vital quality of leadership. A head needs to be able to receive criticism, to be open and honest and not feel threatened when challenged by others. Some have suggested that instead of being the *headteacher*, the head should be regarded as the *head learner*.

##### 2. Serving others

Some heads who use this approach to leadership also describe it as the "servant leadership model". The purpose of serving others applies equally to any other approach, but in living out this vision of service to others, a head needs to be prepared to do whatever the occasion requires, such as serving coffee on parents evening.

##### 3. Treating all people with respect, dignity and consideration

*Leadership ... is based on differentiation of tasks and responsibilities and not on hierarchical position"*

*Blomberg et al (1994) p110*

All who are part of the team need to be given equal respect and consideration. The corporate leadership model is seen to provide the basis for this respect and dignity.

In order to show the equal status of all within the community, one school devised a behaviour code which applied to every one, not just children. The document was given to all staff, parents, pupils and governors. Another school devised a written communication policy which stated that, regardless of the circumstances or

incident, replies would always be given in a positive and friendly manner (see Policies). Another school decided to put names in alphabetical order on the list for appraisal rather than on a hierarchical basis, and to abolish preferential parking where there had been ranking in the staff car park.

## ► The school as a community

A school which operates under this form of leadership is often described as a community. Interaction, developing relationships, and the notion of inter-dependence rather than independence are promoted.

The school is seen either as a community in itself where values, aims, policies and practices are worked out within and for the school community, or as part of the wider community, in partnership with parents, other organisations, members of the local community and the church. Thus the idea of the community often extends to those beyond the immediate school community.

### 1. The importance of shared values

It is particularly important for those Christian heads who manage their schools using the corporate leadership model, that the whole team are committed to the vision, the values and goals of the school. This does not eliminate dialogue and discussion, but actually demands a lot of trust.

While some would argue that being committed to certain secular values inevitably requires a certain amount of compromise, others suggest that the task of the Christian in society is “to proclaim the Christian message, ... not to impose the Christian message”. While Christian values and beliefs cannot and should not be imposed, one head felt that where biblical beliefs and values are translated into policies and practices they would gain staff support as “they are the way things are meant to be”. In other words, “there are certain ways of operating things for the well-being of society” (County School Head). Thus it is possible for biblically based values and norms to be promoted within the school community.

### 2. Partnership

One school has created what they call the “Partnership Experience” where mutual co-operation and accountability between the home and the school is intended and built into the school’s policies. The positive involvement of parents at all levels of their children’s education is seen to provide a basis for whole and healthy development of individuals and the community. (For further information on this policy see Policy).

*This approach raises the issue of Truth. Although dialogue and consensus are good methods for reaching a goal they are not goals in themselves. Consensus can become the ultimate decider of truth, whereas the real goals are Truth and glorifying God. How can we seek for the Truth together with those who have a different value system?*

## ► The family school

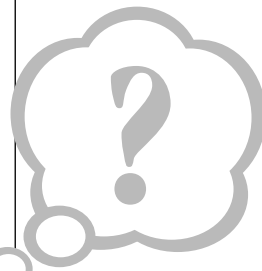
Schools operating with this approach use the language of family to describe the structure of relationships within the school. In these schools the head is seen as the head of the family, whose duty it is to oversee and protect the family of the school, both pupils and staff.

*If the head doesn't treat the staff with dignity and consideration then they are not going to treat the children like that.*

*County School Headteacher*

*A community is a unified human organism with a distinct identity characterised by a shared life in which all its members participate.*

*Fowler et al (1990)*



*We don't want to be an institution, we want to be a family.*

*Christian School Headteacher*

The school may also be seen as an extension of the family, giving support to the family in their God-given responsibility to bring up their children. The head and staff are “in loco parentis”; in the place of the parents while the children are in the school. The home and the school work in close partnership.

Others who use this approach use the word “parent”, whereas “father” is used here in this example.

## **The role and characteristics of the head**

### **1. Father figure**

The ideal is to reflect the character of God the father, although parenthood, the attributes of both fatherhood and motherhood, are valued aspects of this role. One Christian school headteacher stated that “*Relationship is the key. I don’t want to be an ivory tower, distant father figure. Personal contact is important. I try to speak to lots of students as I go round. I take an interest and am available, especially to those who have difficult backgrounds.*”

To this head, the fatherhood aspect of the role is especially important for those who live apart from their natural fathers. In practical terms this may mean that the head will spend time with such a pupil by, for example, having lunch with him or her.

Good relationships, particularly with teenagers, where room for questioning is given, is seen as part of the role.

### **2. Pastoral care**

Nurture is a focus, thus the pastoral aspect is an essential part of school life. The head is available to staff and pupils, to listen, encourage, approve and rebuke. Training in character is essential, knowing that as individuals, we are responsible and will be held accountable to God for our attitudes and the way in which we behave.

### **3. Discipline**

Using the Bible as the source for the boundaries which God originally set for humanity, pupils are encouraged to learn obedience. Individuals are given the freedom to work out what obedience and respect for authority means, involving attitudes to parents, staff and God. Although the goal is to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions, forgiveness for failure is an important aspect of the process. A friendly, loving and positive atmosphere is essential. Discipline must be balanced in the fatherhood model with affirmation, love, acceptance and approval.

Although there are expectations, written rules are avoided as much as possible. It is a heart response, a willingness to respond positively to those expectations which is encouraged by showing pleasure and approval.

### **4. Serving**

The headteacher’s role is seen as that of serving parents, pupils and staff. In practice this requires a demonstration of humility. So, for example, the head may take classes for teachers who need time and space to develop the curriculum, or to go on a course. The headteacher is also there to be a back-up for problems where his or her input is needed, for dealing with parental issues, complaints and so on. Leadership is seen to be by example and being willing on occasion to do the menial tasks.



## 5. Vision and values

The head sets the tone of the school and guides the staff who share the vision and values, keeping it on course towards the goal. The practical aims arising will be sustained by both the head and the staff. Prayer and intercession are important in the life and growth of the school, in maintaining its focus, direction and ethos.

### ► Authority

Good government is seen to bring peace and security and stems from the person who is recognised as having the proper authority. The position, or role, requires the head to provide clear guidelines and principles, which provide the basis for security and support, and to be ultimately responsible for decisions made. The authority of the head is thus stressed more strongly here than in the corporate leadership model.

Some would argue that this is a “top-down” model of leadership and results in an authoritarian structure, requiring an autocratic head, where views and beliefs are imposed on teachers and pupils, limiting freedom of choice, personal autonomy, and corporate sharing and decision making. However, it need not mean necessarily that particular views, beliefs and behaviours are imposed on others. To do so may put pressure on pupils which could, according to one headteacher, be a complete “*turn off!*” Pupils in this school, while it functions as a family, are given the space to make faith their own and to discover their own relationship with God. The school does not experience “*hard rebellion*”.

Many teachers and administrators who work under this kind of authority find that it provides a supportive, relaxing and accepting environment in which they can take risks, develop their strengths, work on their weaknesses and reinforce their best attributes without fear of failure.

Properly and humbly exercised authority and freedom are, from a Christian viewpoint, not contradictory opposites, but rather complementary. Essential requirements of a leader in this model are faithfulness and integrity.

?

*What principles from this model apply to your situation?*

### ► Accountability

The head usually works with a senior management team and is accountable to the governors and/or church leaders. Thus the head is also “under authority” and not an isolated individual having complete control. The ability to delegate is essential, thus encouraging others in the team, as well as staff members and pupils, to develop their own roles, gifts and abilities, seeking to fulfil their potential and destiny in God.

Mistakes are made and the ability to apologise and forgive, and to maintain an attitude of teachableness are essential characteristics for a head.

“  
It is not a differentiation into higher and lower offices with greater and lesser authority but into different kinds of service with different kinds of authority.  
”

*Fowler et al (1990)*

## 5.3 Comparison between the various leadership styles

There is in reality a considerable amount of overlap between these two models and the difference between them in practice may be mainly one of emphasis. Both seek to draw on Christian values, balancing the head’s calling to be answerable for the school’s direction



*What is the model of leadership which operates in your school and can you recognise and justify it biblically?*

*Whatever model of relationships we say we operate, how do we function in them - as a co-operative of individuals, or as a community?*

against the desire to allow others to unfold their gifts and insights. Both models assume that individuals have a calling to fulfil a certain function within the community of the school, which is recognised, supported, and encouraged by others.

Both of these models recognise that there are different kinds of authorities, each of which is “a calling to serve God in the community in a particular way ... The key is the recognition of the differentiation of office into different kinds of service” (Fowler et al 1990).

The school in each case is seen as a body, reflecting the characteristic of the biblical body in which each part with a different role to fulfil. The head’s role is one of a number of different roles which have different kinds of authority within the school community, such as parent, administrator, teacher, student. The freedom to exercise the authority of an office comes only as there is mutual respect for, and submission to individuals, as they seek to fulfil various offices. The misuse, or abuse, of the authority which goes with a particular role happens when “the power of one office” is used “to coerce others in the exercise of their office” (Fowler et al, 1990). Jesus is quite clear on this matter. “... the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.” (Luke 22:26)

#### **Resources and further reading**

Stuart Fowler, H. W. van Brummelen, J. van Dyk (1990) *Christian Schooling: Education for Freedom* Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education

Gerald Grace (1995) *School Leadership. Beyond Educational Management: An Essay in Policy Scholarship* Falmer Press

Ann Holt and Tim Hinds (1995) *The New School Governor: Realising the Authority in the Head and Governing Body* Kogan Page

Care For Education 53 Romney Street, London, SW1P 6RF.

*Mission Management Appraisal: A Guide for Schools of the Church of England and the Church in Wales* Lois M. R. Loudon and David S. Urwin, The National Society (1992). This manual for school development is available from The National Society, Church House, Great Smith Street, LONDON SW1P.

*Your School and Sex Education: Developing and Resourcing your School's Policy.* Guidelines for teachers, school governors, school board members and parents. Available from Care For Education, 53 Romney Street, London, SW1P 6RF

# Mission statements, development plans & aims

## Introduction

### 1 Mission statements

#### 1.1 Independent Christian schools

- ▶ The Dolphin School
- ▶ Oak Hill School

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- ▶ Trinity Roman Catholic School
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- ▶ Christ Church Finchley

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- ▶ Cavendish School

## Resources and further reading



# Mission statements, development plans & aims

*Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

*Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)*

## Introduction

A statement of values, or a mission statement, is now required of all schools. Inspections must also take account of the way in which the values of the schools are implemented, throughout the life of the school, including the management, ethos and the curriculum.

Mission statements are based on a vision, or philosophy of education and through them the purposes of the school are revealed. They set out the rationale for a school's existence and purposes in terms of the values underlying:

- the education it offers to its pupils;
- its commitments to staff and parents;
- its services to the community.

The mission statement is the template against which the school is measured.

Before we can consider mission statements, we need to think through what we mean by Christian education. The following three statements represent real definitions of Christian schooling taken from research by Sheri Haan in North America.

- a) To create a learning environment characterised by academic excellence, positive socialisation and Christian values.
- b) To prepare young people to live fully for God in a rapidly changing world, with the ability to understand, evaluate and transform their world from the foundation of God's unchanging Word.
- c) To keep children separate from the world; to encourage children to proselytise the unsaved; to bring children to salvation; to inform children about God's Word; to keep children immersed in God's Word; to lead children to enter full-time service by becoming preachers, teachers and evangelists, and failing this, to live for the glory of God.

***Which one comes closest to your view of Christian education?***

***If you are uncomfortable with all of them, how would you define Christian education?***

*What is your goal; a good quality of life or a high standard of living?*

*George Oliver*

*The mission statement is the basis for a school's policies and development plan and is the focal point for all its activities.*

*Mission Management Appraisal  
The National Society*

*Where there is no vision, the people perish ... where there is no vision and the possibility of perishing is far away, people muck about.*

*George Oliver*

something to do

## 1 Mission Statements

The following are examples of mission statements developed in a variety of schools including Independent Christian schools, Voluntary Aided or Controlled Church schools and County schools, both primary and secondary. They vary in the degree to which Christian values are made explicit, but there are certain common themes apparent which may help to give a school a distinctive Christian quality, even where it is inappropriate to spell this out in a distinct manner.

Schools with an overt Christian foundation can be more explicitly Christian in their mission and aims than other schools, but this does not mean that it is any easier to ensure that their aims are developed throughout the school. It is often just as difficult for them to make the links between mission, aims and practice, as it is for any other school.

Different examples have been included because not every Christian expresses their views in the same terms.

**As you read through the various mission statements which follow, analyse the central truth being expressed, and consider how you could apply it in your school situation which may well be very different from those cited here. To examine the underlying assumptions you can use the questions in “How to use this handbook”, or the example “Analysing world views” as suggested in the chapter on Religious education.**

### 1.1 Examples from independent Christian schools

#### ▶ The Dolphin School: Primary

We believe that God longs for every child to have a close and loving relationship with Him; to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him and to be with Him in eternity through the saving grace of Jesus Christ. We have founded the Dolphin School to create an educational environment in which this longing can be realised. It is our desire that every child should have the opportunity to discover the nature of God and His love and grow up into the full wisdom and maturity of Christ.

**Its objectives are summed up by Jesus’ commandment to:**

Love the Lord your God with  
 all your heart (spiritual)  
 and with all your soul (emotional)  
 and with all your strength (physical)  
 and with all your mind (intellectual)  
 and “love your neighbour as yourself” (social)

*Luke 10.27*

*Dolphin School, London*

#### ▶ Oak Hill School: Primary/Secondary

***“Like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever they do prospers”***

*Psalm 1*

Oak Hill School represents a new vision for education - a distinctive approach which is based on Christian

principles. We are concerned not only with providing a high standard of education, but a learning environment that nurtures children in the values of the Christian faith as they encounter the world and grow to live responsibly within society.

**Oak Hill School seeks to be a learning community founded on the Christian faith, working in partnership with families, churches and the wider community:**

- nurturing each pupil's unique character and talents;
- encouraging each pupil to develop spiritual, moral and social values in relation to each other, the wider community and God;
- helping pupils to acquire understanding, knowledge and skills relevant to life in the twenty-first century;
- enabling pupils to responsibly use their knowledge, understanding and skills as they learn to be faithful to God in the face of the challenges of the contemporary world.

Oak Hill School seeks to shape all aspects of its educational task by the implications of a faith commitment to the triune God, creator of all things and Jesus Christ who is the way to God. Our faith cannot be limited to church or to our personal lives only, but has implications for all aspects of life - from banking to farming and from housekeeping to scientific endeavour, as well as influencing the way we conduct human relationships.

- We acknowledge that everything has been created by God and that our task is to exercise stewardly care and development of the creation. Humankind however, has an in-built tendency to both obey God's life-giving and affirming principles and to disobey. It is for this reason many aspects of life and the world have been spoilt.
- The opportunity for reconciliation to God, between people and in other aspects of the created world now exists because of the redemption effected by Jesus. It is by the faith commitment of the individual and the corporate response of the home, the school and the church that we find the wisdom to be a healthy influence in our society.
- Such a faith commitment influences all that we think and do. The philosophy of education we work with - our view of the child, the role of the teacher, the content and methods of teaching must all be shaped by the principles for life which are found in the Bible.

*Oak Hill School, Bristol*



*Which essential truths in these mission statements could you take and introduce into your school's mission statement, albeit worded differently?*

## 1.2 Different examples from Voluntary Church schools

These examples are taken from both Church of England and Catholic schools. Most of the examples are taken from Voluntary Aided rather than Controlled schools.

### ► Bury Church of England High School: secondary

#### **Mission Statement - Our Values, Aims and Vision**

The governors and staff of Bury Church of England High School are committed to the provision of a high quality education within a Christian context.

We want our pupils to become fulfilled, self-motivated, independent, self-disciplined, responsible, worshipping and caring members of society. We want them to set themselves high standards and aim for excellence in all they do. We want to help them to develop a passion for learning and to go on learning, developing and growing to become completely the people they have the potential to become.

At the heart of this commitment is the notion of the uniqueness and infinite worth of the individual, that every person's being is valuable in the eyes of God.

We also believe that if each child feels valued as an individual with an important contribution to make then, in turn, each pupil will learn to value others.

**We are determined to work to enable the school to:**

- pursue its commitment to Christian values and principles, to be a worshipping community and to continue learning as it looks to Jesus Christ and faces the challenge of the Gospel in its life and work.
- sustain a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of pupils, promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- provide a positive environment in which all pupils irrespective of ability, age, gender, ethnic or social background, may have equal opportunities to achieve their potential.
- foster and maintain an ethos which is supportive to all members of the school community, and enables them to use their talents to the full, encourages positive attitudes towards others and ensures that all feel valued, cared for and secure.
- promote a strong collaboration with parents, the Church and the wider community to enable us to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our pupils and to serve our partners in society.

*Bury Church of England High School*

### ▶ **Trinity Roman Catholic School: secondary**

Trinity is a Catholic School deliberately based on the values of the Gospel and the living traditions of the Church.

**The basic premise of the school is that:**

God, who is love, is Person, Someone. Jesus Christ is the image of the unseen God. Every child is made in the image of God and as such is of unique value. We recognise this value by doing our utmost to promote the child's growth into Christ, in the freedom of the Spirit.

**Hence Trinity School makes the following statements:**

- We regard love as of central importance; that love encompasses persons of all beliefs.
- We recognise and affirm the value of each pupil, irrespective of their various gifts, needs and abilities.
- Children are unique individuals, equal in the sight of God, with all the rights, liberty and dignity of humankind, irrespective of gender, ethnic origin and belief. These differences, however, may claim special attention. As a Christian establishment, we have a particular obligation towards the disadvantaged and oppressed.



- Both unity and diversity are desirable for theological and educational reasons.
- The staff should promote in pupils a sense of purpose, confidence, self-understanding and concern for others. Children must be enabled to explore issues freely and frankly in the pursuit of truth and justice.
- Good personal relations are the foundation of learning, and the most desirable teacher-pupil relationship involves a sense of common purpose and concern, a sense of mutual respect and partnership. Learning involves activity, experience, and open-ended enquiry. The pupil is, and must feel, agent rather than merely recipient in this process, which includes a gradual, though not necessarily complete, devolution of responsibility for learning from teacher to pupil.
- It is part of the learning experience for pupils to exercise choice and initiative. It must be accepted that children will make mistakes and will need support and guidance as they re-discover their way.
- Children should be led to consider for themselves - in a rational, social, and autonomous way - what sort of behaviour is acceptable. They must learn to anticipate consequences and justify their actions. For this reason school rules are to be kept to a minimum.
- When discipline is required - which means emphasising the constraints that love imposes, as well as the freedom it implies - it must be seen as a learning experience within a relationship.
- Worship is an essential part of the life of the school community, staff and pupils should be encouraged to recognise its significance. They should, therefore, have the opportunity to participate actively in that worship, and the freedom to decline such an opportunity.
- Although the primary focus of religious education remains the Catholic tradition of the Christian faith, pupils should be encouraged to respond to different values, and world views, in a sympathetic manner.
- Trinity School is open and welcoming. We encourage close working relationships with the local community, in particular with parents as partners in the education of their children, with the parishes and schools from which our children come, with the local education and diocesan authorities and with local secondary schools.
- We aim to foster children's individual growth and to offer them an experience of community, to enable them to take an active part in the wider community of Church and society in a critical and responsible spirit.

The values they see as essential to the operation of the school are captured in the following:

### **Gospel values at the heart of the school**

God's love is central

Love is the basis of relationships

Each person is unique as a child of God

Challenging material success as the basis of happiness

A community of freedom based on love, reconciliation and justice

Importance of spiritual development

Seeking truth

A vision of what it means to be fully human

*Trinity R. C. School, Leamington Spa*

The school brochure also states that:

*“What is perhaps most characteristic of Trinity School is the willingness to perceive the practical implications of these general principles and to carry them out fearlessly in the day to day life of the School and in our relationships with individual children.”*

Many schools have a well-developed Christian basis for developing an appropriate ethos, but to take biblical principles beyond the personal and relational into the curriculum as a basis for knowledge and truth is much more complex and controversial.

### ▶ **St John Houghton Roman Catholic School: secondary**

*St John Houghton School is a Catholic Secondary School offering a Christian education, where prayer, worship and liturgy are integral parts of daily life.*

#### **We aspire as a school**

- to be recognised for the quality of care extended to all associated with us and to respect each person’s dignity and uniqueness.
- to make the faith–life of the school inform and affect work in all areas of the curriculum.
- to be a ‘family’, embracing home and parish, with an awareness of its responsibilities to both local and world-wide communities.
- to establish a whole curriculum which will balance the highest academic standards with the life skills and critical awareness necessary to enable all students to reach their full potential and respond to the needs of society.

*St John Houghton School, Derby*

Each mission statement has to be understood within its own context in order to grasp why some aims are included. The following statement is from a school which also operates as a community centre in an inner city area. It was drawn up in consultation with teaching and support staff, governors, parents and community centre members. The school documents state that the mission statement, and the values which it enshrines, are owned by everyone, and this is intended to underpin all policies and practices of the school and community centre.

### ▶ **Wigston All Saints Church of England Primary School and Community Centre**

- We are committed to serving our local neighbourhood by offering in our school an education of the highest possible quality in order that our children may realise their full potential; and the facilities and resources of our community centre to promote education, health and leisure for everyone
- We are a caring community where attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility are fostered and promoted; where everyone is valued; where personal endeavour is encouraged and where achievements are recognised.

- We aim to ensure that Christian values underpin the ethos of the whole establishment and the curriculum provision.
- We attach high priority to developing good relationships and strong links within the wider community.
- We strive to maintain our buildings, facilities and resources in the best possible condition in order to provide a safe, welcoming and attractive environment for the whole community.

*Wigston All Saints Church of England Primary School and Community Centre*

Some statements are simple and direct, but none the less provide that important focus which is then detailed in the aims and objectives.

### ► **St Mary's Church of England Primary School**

*"To provide a caring Christian learning environment which inspires each child to fulfil their unique potential and become a responsible, concerned and active member of God's world".*

*St Mary's Primary School, Bootle*

## **1.3 County schools**

The mission statements of county schools often cannot be explicitly Christian in their wording. They can, however, be compatible in many ways with biblical values and beliefs. The following are examples of such statements:

### ► **Stratford High School: secondary**

#### **Values Statement**

- Our overriding school aim is to provide all our young people with the best possible learning opportunities so that they are well prepared for life.
- We seek to provide a positive and purposeful environment for pupils. In this they are supported by a secure and caring framework and by very good staff-pupil relationships.
- Our concern is to educate the whole person. We seek to make school a rewarding and stimulating experience for everyone.
- Central to our work is the notion of the uniqueness and value of each individual. We also believe that if each child feels valued as an individual, with an important contribution to make, then, in turn, each pupil will learn to value others.
- Working with parents, the LEA and the wider community, we aim to contribute to the development of mature adults who enjoy learning and see it as a life long process. We will encourage pupils to accept responsibility, to look for the truth in all situations, and to value generosity, reliability, kindness, politeness, compassion, excellence, hard work and courage.

- Our concern as a school community is to make our best better and to continue learning as we face the challenges of preparing young people for life in the twenty-first century. Not everything goes right all the time, but we will certainly do our utmost to ensure that all our children achieve their maximum potential within a purposeful and caring learning environment.

*Stratford High School, Stratford upon Avon*

## ▶ The Cavendish School: secondary

### Statement of Purpose

The curriculum (that is, all that we do at school, in and out of the classroom) is directed towards enabling pupils to attain a measure of 'wholeness' which will improve and preserve society by equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to balance, as far as possible, the conflict between personal fulfilment and enrichment, and co-operation with, as well as contribution to, the rest of society. The success of our purpose will be determined by the quality of the partnership established with parents and pupils. We invite prospective parents to consider the demands of the 'Partnership Experience'.

*The Cavendish School, Eastbourne*



*When Christian values are stated in non-Christian language, are we simply left with humanistic values and ideas?*

*What do we, as Christians, mean by the terms we use in our mission statements and aims, such as independence, excellence, full potential?*

*How can the translation of beliefs and values, conveyed in mission statements from Christian or Church school contexts, maintain biblical insights in a county school environment?*

### 1.4 Common themes and concepts

#### 1. There are several concepts which are common to the mission statements such as:

- a caring ethos
- a respect for the individual
- the development of relationships with those outside the immediate school community
- preparation for adult life
- the nurture, or development of faith.

#### 2. The common values which are inherent in the statements include:

- love, justice, peace, fairness, reconciliation, forgiveness, community, responsibility, accountability.

#### 3. Some schools also acknowledge the importance of:

- the person of Christ
- the after life
- the Kingdom of God
- the focus of the (secular) curriculum.

4. The translation of these concepts and values from a school with a Christian foundation to a county school is not an easy task, but the mission statements of some county schools include these concepts and values without using Christian vocabulary. Mission statements are often the first thing that parents look at when choosing a school. While many Christians will not be satisfied with an education which does not explicitly honour Christ's name, schools based on values which are compatible with Christianity are better than schools whose values are hostile to Christianity.

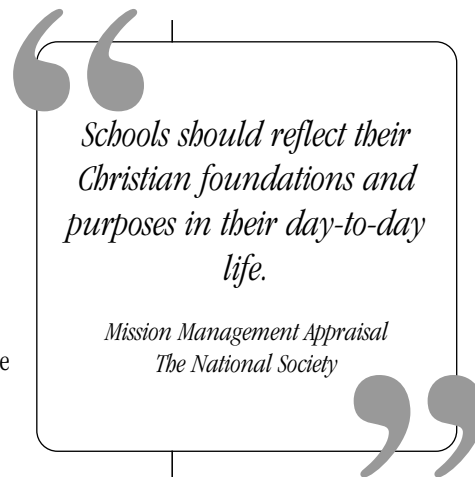
## 2 From mission statements to aims

A mission statement means nothing, however, unless it is put into practice in all areas of school life. How this is achieved depends mainly on the ability of the Head to implement the vision in practical policies; and the degree to which all members of staff support the school's values and seek to put them into practice in the life of the school.

Independent Christian and Voluntary Church schools share some of the social, and educational aims of county schools. However, Christian schools start from different foundations expressed in their mission and aims, which should lead to some distinctive practices. The mission and goals may appear to be similar, but the underlying world view on which they are based plays an important role in offering a distinctive quality and purpose.

Catholic, Church of England and other Christian foundation educational institutions have developed procedures by which the mission statement becomes the focal point for the whole school development plan.

The following is an example of how a mission statement can work in practice. You may not choose to do it this way, but it may stimulate you to think about alternatives.



### ► St John Houghton School: secondary

The following extracts are those parts of a mission statement, aims and objectives of a school development plan focusing on the relationship between the curriculum and faith.

#### **Mission statement:**

To make the faith life of the school inform and affect work in all areas of the curriculum.

#### **The aims included:**

- to support the parents' efforts in the faith journey of their children.
- to provide Religious Education based on the Catholic Faith.
- to promote Christian relationships in classrooms.
- to encourage a Christian approach to the entire curriculum.

Following each aim, several objectives were outlined. Under the final aim, "To encourage a Christian approach to the entire curriculum", the following objectives were suggested:

- encouraging methodologies which respect a Christian view of people and subjects.
- reviewing and evaluating teaching materials and identifying those consistent with our Mission Statement.
- ensuring that the aims of the Mission Statement are reflected in departmental policies.
- disseminating information about relevant INSET.
- providing appropriate INSET so that all teachers are aware of Catholic teaching on issues such as homosexuality, sex, abortion, contraception, AIDS etc.

*St. John Houghton School, Derby*

## St Aelred's Catholic High School: secondary

St Aelred's Catholic High School, Newton le Willows, produced a school development plan beginning with its mission statement:

As Aelred's is a Roman Catholic school. It is inspired by the example of Christ and the teaching of the gospel.

### As a Christian community it will:

1. be distinguished by its care for all its members, meeting individual needs with fairness, understanding and justice.
2. provide an education which will prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
3. promote an active partnership between the school, the home and the parishes.
4. affirm, nurture and develop the faith and spiritual growth of all its members.
5. seek to be a vital, responsible and integral part of local and wider communities.

Each statement was then expanded, firstly through aims and then with objectives.  
The following example expands The Fourth Statement:

- St Aelred's will affirm, nurture and develop the faith and spiritual growth of all its members.

### To fulfil this Statement, we have the following Aims:

1. to provide opportunities for all to take part in worship and liturgy and organise celebrations which mark significant events in the lives of pupils and students.
2. to provide a curriculum which develops the spiritual lives of our pupils.
3. to nurture relationships in School which are characterised by the Christian faith.
4. to create a prayerful atmosphere in School.
5. to establish links with the parishes and wider communities which feed the spiritual life of the School.

### To achieve these Aims we have set ourselves the following objectives. We undertake to:

- 1.1 organise retreats for pupils and staff.
- 1.2 organise a Caring Church week at regular intervals, place emphasis on religious assemblies.
- 2.1 keep under review the RE Curriculum.
- 2.2 look at curricular aims and focus, in departments, on the spiritual dimension of every subject.
- 2.3 prepare pupils for confirmation as appropriate.
- 3.1 call all pupils by their Christian names and address them in a Christian manner.
- 3.2 promote a sense of self-discipline in pupils.
- 4.1 provide a designated place for worship
  - prayer room
  - chapel
- 4.2 establish a school prayer book

- 5.1 request that a full-time chaplain be provided for the School
- 5.2 encourage charity work
  - fund-raising
  - Christmas hampers
- 5.3 display parish newsletters
- 5.4 liaise with the Gideons and ensure that all pupils have a copy of the Bible.



*How far in these examples do you think the aims actually reflect the mission statements?*

*How do we get beyond merely adjusting the external environment to effecting a fundamental change in the lives of staff and pupils?*

## ► Church of England schools

The Church of England handbook, *Mission, Management Appraisal*, provides materials for training and discussion for developing mission statements, aims and objectives through a school development plan.

## 3 AIMS

The following sets of aims are drawn from a variety of schools, some of which are definite about being founded on biblical values, while others are more open to interpretation. The interpretation will be seen more clearly in the policies and practices which are developed from them.

### 3.1 Independent Christian school

#### ► Dolphin School: primary

**The main aim of the Dolphin School is to:**

“Love the Lord your God with  
 all your heart (spiritual)  
 and with all your soul (emotional)  
 and with all your strength (physical)  
 and with all your mind” (intellectual)  
 and “love your neighbour as yourself” (social)

*Luke 10.27*

The aims which were developed from this were:

#### **Spiritual**

- To grow in knowledge and understanding of a loving heavenly Father who is the Creator of the world.
- To develop a relationship of love with Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
- To learn to recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit and to obey His prompting and to depend upon His power.
- To recognise Scripture as inspired by God and to base his/her life on its teaching
- To learn to worship God in the fullness of the Spirit.

- To understand and enjoy all the benefits of being a beloved child of God and to enter into the joy of fellowship in the body of Christ.

### **Emotional**

- To learn to receive love and to give it to others.
- To learn to forgive others and to receive forgiveness.
- To learn to express emotion through speech, the written word, music, art, dancing and drama.
- To learn to recognise the nature of his/her feelings and to channel them appropriately.

### **Physical**

- To participate in indoor and outdoor sports and physical activities in order to develop good muscle control, co-ordination and strength.
- To learn to co-operate in a team while also becoming more confident in individual ability.
- To develop skills in practical activities such as cooking, woodwork, pottery etc.
- To learn creative expression through physical disciplines such as drama, dancing and the playing of musical instruments.
- To develop correct posture through deportment and physical training.

### **Intellectual**

- To stimulate imagination.
- To encourage independent and original thought.
- To assist problem solving and develop logic.
- To develop language skills and to widen the vocabulary.
- To increase ability to concentrate and to lengthen the child's attention span.
- To build up reading ability, writing skills and elementary mathematics to the optimum level dictated by the age and ability of the child.
- To prepare the child adequately for the next stage in his/her education.



*To what extent does the school where you work share any or all of these aims and how would the reasons for such aims differ from Dolphin's?*

### **Social**

- To help develop an understanding of the nature of his/her relationship with God and others.
- To learn to relate in a loving and humble way with those in authority and with the peer group.
- To learn to serve others, especially those in need, such as the lonely, the elderly and the infirm.
- To learn to work and play in harmony with others.
- To learn to respect others' property and persons.
- To foster appreciation of and relationships with people from other races, religions and sections of society.

*The Dolphin School, London*



## 3.2 Voluntary Church of England schools

### ▶ St Peter's Collegiate School, Wolverhampton: secondary

#### Mission Statement

*“A caring and purposeful Christian community, St Peter's Collegiate School seeks to uphold the highest academic and cultural standards. By combining the best of our traditions with considered innovation, we offer each student the opportunity to discover the keys to success through the realisation of personal potential.”*

#### Their aims are:

- To provide an education within the framework of the Christian Church as exemplified by the doctrine and principles of the Church of England.
- To educate the whole person by actively encouraging the physical, emotional, religious, moral, academic, social and creative development of each student in our care.
- To keep parents fully informed of the child's progress and to work in co-operation with them in attempting to realise the child's full potential.
- To give pupils competence and confidence in expressing themselves orally and in writing.
- To help them to achieve their full academic potential by teaching them to observe, to read critically, to select and evaluate evidence and to reach logical conclusions.
- To encourage each student to respect the environment in which she/he works and lives, to encourage a healthy respect for others, including those whose stance is different from her/his own; and to attempt to instil the discipline of voluntary self-control which recognises the need to balance one's own interests with those of others.
- To encourage good relationships between staff and students, and between students and adults in general in preparing for the transition to the adult world.
- To encourage students to develop their natural talents and interests in constructive leisure activities.
- To encourage each student to be fully committed to Christianity and His Church by involving himself/herself in the worshipping community.
- To use all available resources efficiently and effectively in furthering these aims.
- To provide equal opportunities for all pupils according to ability regardless of sex or ethnic origin.

*St Peter's, Wolverhampton*

### ▶ St Mary Magdelene's Primary School, Islington

#### In order to realise the aspirations set out in their Mission Statement the aims at St Mary Magdelene are:

- to form a worshipping community where all individuals are equally respected regardless of age, creed, sex, colour or ethnic origin;

- to encourage an awareness that the dignity of each individual has its basis in Christ's humanity;
- to prepare all pupils to play an active part in building the Kingdom of God here on earth;
- to make available to all pupils, regardless of ability, the whole of the curriculum we are able to offer;
- to offer a curriculum (based on the National Curriculum) which is permeated by the Gospel message of love and justice;
- to help pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills;
- to help pupils to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a fast changing world.

*St Mary Magdelene's Primary School, Islington*

### ▶ **Christ Church School, Finchley: secondary**

**Their mission statement and aims are stated together as follows:**

#### **1. Character**

To help pupils to find joy in service, to exhibit a love of truth, to develop strength of character, to pursue good, to value their neighbours and to work in all things for the glory of God.

#### **2. Community**

To provide a secure and caring community in which the Christian faith is central to the philosophy and practice of the school. Christian values and character are both expressed and experienced and the relevance of that faith to the life of the individual, the nation and the world shown.

#### **3. Individual development**

To encourage the full and balanced development of all pupils.

#### **4. Personal fulfilment**

To have a common sense of purpose in order to build up the self-confidence of all personnel through the development of a community which demonstrates the uniqueness and value of the individual, encourages the development of individual gifts and provides opportunities for all to experience success in as many spheres as possible.

#### **5. Decision making**

To develop in all pupils the capacity to make informed, responsible and realistic decisions.

#### **6. Sensitivity**

To encourage sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others and to develop knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences between people, their opinions, social organisations, religions, moral values and ways of life.

#### **7. Curricular breadth**

To assist all pupils to fulfil their highest potential by providing opportunities for involvement in the intellectual, creative and technological spheres while encouraging a critical appreciation of human achievement in these areas.

**8. Environment**

To assist pupils in their observation and understanding of the world, creating and nurturing an awareness of our responsibility for God's creation.

**9. Skills**

To develop in pupils those skills, including literacy and numeracy, which will equip them for personal fulfilment and service.

**10. Christian faith and practice**

To enable pupils to understand what Christians believe and so to develop the understanding and skill necessary to translate that faith into practical living.

*Christ Church School, Finchley*

**3.3 County school****► Cavendish School, Eastbourne: secondary**

The Cavendish School, Eastbourne, developed the **Partnership Experience**. The aims set out below were developed from this. Some of the statements are compatible with a Christian world view; others may not be. The outcomes, however, will principally depend on the interpretation of the aims in the content, methods and activities which take within the curriculum.

**Cavendish School Statement of Purpose:**

*‘The curriculum (that is, all that we do at school, in and out of the classroom) is directed towards enabling pupils to attain a measure of ‘wholeness’ which will improve and preserve society by equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to balance, as far as possible, the conflict between personal fulfilment and enrichment, and co-operation with, as well as contribution to, the rest of society. The success of our purpose will be determined by the quality of the partnership established with parents and pupils. We invite prospective parents to consider the demands of the ‘Partnership Experience’.*

**Students are encouraged to:**

- Fulfil their potential by acquiring knowledge, skills and practical abilities, together with the will to use them to the end of finding their own areas of excellence.
- Develop communicative and numerative skills so that they are able to express themselves clearly and convincingly to their peers and others.
- Experience the fulfilment of engaging in acts of creativity.
- Appreciate the place for a technological approach to solving problems, and to develop the initiative and interest for further research.
- Develop their personality through an understanding of self, while appreciating the needs and beliefs of others, and in the light of this, exercise discernment which will enable them to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Achieve an awareness of their own abilities and attributes through creating an environment where these

something  
to do

can be explored, thus enabling positive ambitions to be pursued with confidence.

- Develop the ability to work with others in a spirit of co-operation.
- Appreciate the principles and implications of the democratic process.
- Prepare for adulthood when at home, work, leisure and in society as consumers and as members of the community.
- Accept responsibility for the conservation and development of the world's resources, and be aware of the imbalance of materials amongst nations.
- Be exposed to as wide a variety as possible of sporting, social and cultural activities so that education will be perceived as a life-long activity.

*Cavendish School, Eastbourne*

**Choose an aim from the above examples which you agree is an important aim for Christian education.**

- 1. In what ways is this aim realised (or not realised) in your school?**
- 2. In what ways could you fulfil this aim in your own classroom practice?**
- 3. Are there any practical examples in other sections of this handbook which might help to fulfil this aim?**

**Are there any aims in the above statements with which you are not comfortable with? Why not? How could you change them in order to improve them?**

### **Resources and further reading**

*Mission Management Appraisal: A guide for Schools of the Church of England and the Church in Wales*  
Lois M. R. Loudon and David S. Urwin, The National Society (1992)

This is a helpful guide, developed by the National Society, the Culham College Institute and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, for translating mission statements and development plans into the practices of schools. The principles outlined in this document can be widely used in any school.

# Policies

## Introduction

### 1 Developing school policies

### 2 Models of school policies

#### 2.1 Equal opportunity policies

- ▶ St Mary Magdelene's Voluntary Church of England Primary School
- ▶ St Peter's Church of England Secondary School

#### 2.2 Behaviour policies

- ▶ Examples of behaviour policies

#### 2.3 Communications policies

- ▶ Written communication

#### 2.4 Curriculum policies and curriculum aims

## Resources and further reading



# Policies

## Introduction

The law requires school governors to document certain policies on the life and work of a school. Other policies are not legal requirements, but it is advisable for schools to have them. These are clearly mentioned in the 'Handbook for Inspection' (OFSTED) and will be asked for during an inspection visit. Still others, while not being required, are nevertheless essential for efficient management of the school.

Policies are vital management tools. They need to be carefully written, developing the content through a process which involves those for whom they are meant, including governors, teachers, support staff, pupils and parents, some of whom can, or should, contribute to their making.

It is no good, however, if the policy document is kept on a shelf where nobody refers to it, as it should be used daily and be easily available to members of the school community, including parents. Policies also need to be regularly evaluated and systematically reviewed.

## 1 Developing school policies

The following steps have been suggested, by AGIT (Action for Governors' Information and Training), as a reasonable process:

1. Assemble helpful information
2. Brainstorming
3. Drafting
4. Consultation
5. Adoption
6. Dissemination

Fuller discussion of required policies and the policy making process can be found in the *School Governors' Do-It-Better Guide* (see resources).

## 2 Models of school policies

The following models of various schools policies were developed with certain biblical principles in mind. Some are from Christian or church schools where the foundations for them can be made explicit, while others are from county schools which do not have the same freedom.

### 2.1 Equal opportunity policies

Many schools adopt their local education authority's equal opportunities policy indiscriminately, without thinking through the implications. The following two church schools have worked out their own policies, seeking to apply their Biblical beliefs about humanity to their policy statements.

## ▶ St Mary Magdelene's Voluntary Church of England Primary School

As a church school, St Mary Magdelene's has attempted to function in all aspects of its life as a model of Christian behaviour. This has been its intent for two hundred and seventy five years: it was why the school was founded and remains central to the school's philosophy.

In relation to the diversity of people and cultures there are in the world, and who have settled in Britain, the school takes its stand following Scriptural principles to guide its witness to both the majority population and the various minorities. We acknowledge the command of Christ to love our neighbours, resulting in service to the church and society, in seeking reconciliation for all with God and their fellows, in proclaiming liberty from every kind of oppression; and in spreading Christ's justice in an unjust world. We hold a conviction of the unity of all true believers in Christ without distinction as to race, language, colour or social position, and their equal worth in the sight of God, who shows no partiality.

St Mary Magdelene's School believes in equal opportunity for all, and declares that there will be no discrimination with regard to race, age, sex, class, or disability in recruitment, deployment, training, or promotion. As the natural extension of this, our dealings with the children will reflect the same commitment to equality of opportunity for them.

The Bible teaches us first to love God and then 'our neighbour as ourselves' (*Leviticus 19:18*). This is expanded in the same chapter as follows:

"The alien living with you must be treated as your native born. Love him as yourself. (*v34*).

It was in clarification of this point that Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:29-37*). This is the same Jesus who sent his disciples to baptise "all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (*Matthew 28:19*).

Paul writing to the Galatians spells out the radical nature of Christianity, clearly laying down a racial, social and sexual equality, revolutionary in concept then, and still being striven for today.

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Galatians 3:26-28*).

Given such clear, specific and unambiguous biblical teaching, it is even more important for church schools to put God's instructions into practice, than for those schools who do so from a humanistic striving to do that which is right.

*St Mary Magdelene, Islington*

## ▶ St Peter's Church of England Secondary School

### **Equal Opportunities with Particular Regard to Ethnicity**

The Governors of St Peter's School welcome the multi-ethnic nature of present day British society and are committed to the promotion of tolerance and mutual respect. The Governors condemn all expressions of racial intolerance, either through remarks or conduct. We express a positive expectation that all staff, parents and pupils will think it right to adopt a similar attitude.

In accordance with this philosophy, all within the St Peter's community are expected to support these fundamental principles:



- We regard all students as being of equal value, with each person created in the image of God.
- All students should be treated with dignity and should feel that their particular culture is valued by the School.
- All students should be given equal opportunity to develop their potential. This should be monitored by the Co-ordinator for Education guidance, with the full and active co-operation of all colleagues.
- Since the School has a Church of England Foundation, it is expected that School life will reflect this and in this context, take into account the differing denominational backgrounds of the children.
- The curriculum of the School should reflect the Christian ethos, paying due respect to other faiths in the community. This should naturally include consideration and discussion relating to the challenges and opportunities for Christians living in a multi-faith community.
- Departmental syllabi, together with books and materials used in School, should, amongst other factors to be considered, reflect active concern for the implementation of this policy statement.
- Any racial incident or dispute, whether physical or verbal, should be dealt with according to this declared School policy. Any incidents should be reported to the Deputy Head with responsibility for Equal Opportunities.
- The distribution of any literature which may be construed as racist will not be allowed, nor will the Governors allow the use of the School premises by any group which promotes or condones racist ideas and philosophies.
- Opportunities should be sought to promote positive role models from the diverse cultures in the local community.
- Opportunities should be sought to reflect a positive concern for racial equality of opportunity in all aspects of School life, including staffing and staff development, student participation and leadership opportunities, patterns of worship, etc.



*To what extent will a biblical view of equal opportunities differ from a secular one and how will this be reflected in practice?*

*St Peter's, Wolverhampton*

## 2.2 Behaviour policies

Most schools outline in a policy statement their concept of discipline, its aims and purposes, with guidelines for moral and social behaviour.

Usually, discipline is seen to have two major functions:

- Certain standards of behaviour are necessary for the smooth running of any organisation, and rules are required to ensure that the purposes of schools are achieved.
- Discipline is necessary if pupils are to come to a place of self-discipline and maturity.

Most schools also suggest that those who have the responsibility to correct wrong, and teach right attitudes and behaviour, also need to be accountable themselves in their attitudes and behaviour. In other words, what is modelled is as important as what is said.

## i Understanding the Christian concept of discipline

The outline which follows is a summary of the biblical concepts and uses of discipline on which many schools with a Christian foundation base their policies.

### ■ *Right and wrong*

For Christians, the norms and laws guiding moral and social behaviour are revealed in God's word, Creation, the Bible and Jesus (the Living Word). Pupils may be encouraged to adopt values, attitudes and behaviour which reflect the biblical principles and norms which God has written into the hearts of all human creation whether they acknowledge it or not.

### ■ *Human nature and personal responsibility*

Human beings are responsible to God and answerable to Him, not simply in the traditionally 'spiritual' areas, but in every area of personal and corporate life. We do not always respond positively to God's norms, however. When these are rejected or violated, relationships are broken, and disorder and distress are the result in both human life and in creation. The tendency towards wrong-doing and rebelliousness are acknowledged by many schools as an aspect of life. Discipline policies are implemented in order to enable pupils to equip them with positive attitudes towards God and His creation, enabling them to make the right choices when responding to situations in personal and social life.

Discipline is a tool to develop right attitudes and behaviour, to challenge wrong ways and to restore broken relationships with God, fellow human beings and the rest of creation. One school discipline policy suggests that, although it may have been painful at the time, the end result of discipline is "*a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it*" (Hebrews 12:11).

Discipline is intended to refine and hone our understanding and ability to develop Godly responses with the aim of becoming more Christlike. One school pointed out, however, that transformation in attitudes and behaviour requires a change of heart:

*"we can't only make a set of rules, since these so often produce legalism and condemnation, but we can also ask God to write His principles firmly on our hearts, and from that starting point we can ... deal with each child as the individual that s/he is ..."*

*Oak Hill School, Bristol*

In order to enable children to take responsibility for the choices and decisions they make, consistent and positive guidance is essential, as well as the development of the critical faculties.

In recent years it has been fashionable for schools to emphasise the acts of autonomous choice, rather than the choice between right or wrong. Such an approach reflects a relativistic and individualistic view born out of liberal humanism. While the Christian view agrees that an individual has the freedom to do right or wrong, in the end he/she should not be left in any doubt as to the choices (NB. The story of the rich young ruler).

### ■ *Maturity*

Discipline is seen as a prerequisite of self-discipline enabling growth and development towards maturity. Without guidance, correction, repentance and forgiveness children will neither understand nor be able to make responsible choices. Discipline is essential in building character so that children are capable of responding with integrity in any situation, so that eventually they take responsibility for their actions.

## ii Understanding the Christian context for discipline

The mandate for bringing up children in the ‘ways of the Lord’, which includes discipline, is given to parents (*Proverbs 1-8; Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:7-10*). To the extent that schools are operating ‘in loco parentis’, they will endeavour to emulate some of the criteria from the family context. Such a criterion might be “a secure and loving environment”, or “a firm and loving atmosphere, not one of fear”. Such a context reflects God’s unconditional love for all humanity (*Romans 5:8*) seen in His acceptance of each one of us.

Another criterion is that discipline is “what is done for a child, not what is done to him/her”. This recognises and respects the worth of the individual whilst not ignoring the wrong-doing. Where punishment is involved the child does not lose his or her self-respect, but understands it is for his or her good. This is based on the biblical fact that God disciplines us as a father does his own children, in love, for our own sake (*Heb 12*). Understanding the love, grace and mercy of God and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour is necessary for the sake of the child.

Any school seeking a Christian behaviour policy must have strategies which embody the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness. Acceptance and forgiveness of the individual are two of the main characteristics of the discipline policies of most Christian schools.

### ■ *Sharing the same values*

Developing relationships with homes and establishing shared values is considered an essential aspect of discipline by almost all schools. The aim is for teacher, pupil and parent (and sometimes the church) to work together to create a disciplined environment conducive to teaching and learning, in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect where similar expectations are maintained. The consistent reinforcement of attitudes and behaviour, reduces the tensions often encountered between school and home. Children are not confused by different standards, values and behavioural norms. Many parents are looking for schools which reflect the values of the home and schools are increasingly looking for co-operation from parents to maintain the ethos of the school.

Some schools have developed home/school contracts such as St Mary Magdelene’s Church of England Primary School in Islington.

### ► Home-school contract

	School’s undertakings	Parents’ undertakings	Child’s undertakings
Learning	To encourage each child, teach her to value education, give her the confidence to succeed and celebrate her achievements in all areas, academic, creative, physical, social and spiritual.  To provide work of a suitable standard for each child so she can engage with the work and be challenged by it.	To set aside some time every day to talk and listen to my child and encourage her in all aspects of learning and praise her for making an effort.  To encourage my child to complete all work set and give her all the support I can, making sure she gets a good night’s sleep every night.	To learn to have confidence in myself and value my education.  To complete all work set as well as I can at school.

continued

	<p>To identify and provide for the special needs of all children whether for special talents, English language help or subject specialist needs.</p> <p>To set homework regularly, and let Parents know what it is.</p>	<p>To ensure school staff are aware of any special needs my child may have, and of any temporary difficulties that may affect her learning.</p> <p>To encourage my child to complete her homework and provide, to the best of my ability, suitable conditions for her to do this.</p>	<p>To work hard at any special work that's specially for me.</p> <p>To do all my homework as well as I can, before I watch TV, and not argue about it with my Parents.</p>
Behaviour	<p>To ensure that all children are able to work in an orderly atmosphere characterised by respect and courtesy for all and by all members of the school community.</p> <p>To record every absence, and check with Parents if no letter is received.</p> <p>To record arrival time, and let Parents know of any unexplained lateness.</p>	<p>To encourage my child to treat all members of the school community with respect and courtesy.</p> <p>To encourage my child to attend school every day and inform the school of any absence.</p> <p>To ensure my child is at school on time with all she needs, (uniform, PE kit, pencil case, books, swimming kit, etc).</p>	<p>To be polite and kind to everyone in school, and to work quietly so other children can get on with their own work in peace.</p> <p>To come to school every day unless I'm really ill.</p> <p>To get to school on time, and go straight in when the bell goes and settle down to work.</p>
Home, School, Church links	<p>To give detailed information to Parents about their child's progress; about their codex and about the things they do well in addition to the things of which we disapprove; to provide a written report at least once a year and to make other contact as appropriate. To listen to Parents and take any concerns they have seriously.</p> <p>To give sound straightforward Christian teaching, and endeavour by example to demonstrate a Christian lifestyle to all at school.</p>	<p>To regard all written and verbal comments about my child's progress and conduct seriously, to talk to staff about any concerns I have and to attend parents' meetings regularly.</p> <p>To accept and value the Christian ethos of the school, accepting its links with the church, and supporting the school's Christian aims.</p>	<p>To show my parents my work and tell them how I've been behaving at school.</p> <p>To realise that this is a Christian school, and try to understand what that means.</p>
Equal opportunities	<p>To provide every opportunity for children to develop their</p>	<p>To encourage my child to take advantage of all the</p>	<p>To use every opportunity to develop my talents and</p>

	talents and abilities through extra curricular sport, school journeys, visits etc..  To recognise explicitly that each child is an individual, listen to what she and her Parents have to say, to strive to know each child well, to celebrate her talents and achievements and to give support with her difficulties.	opportunities provided through the school.  To do all I can to help the school to understand my child so she can be best helped.	abilities in class, and in extra activities.  To talk to Teachers when it's the right time, and tell them how I'm getting on.
Entitlement	To make clear who deals with what concerns, or complaints, and to provide the opportunities to discuss them in private.	To calmly discuss with school staff any concerns or complaints I may have, expect them to be seriously listened to and acted upon if necessary.	To tell an adult if there is any trouble and not get involved in name calling, an argument or a fight.
Date:                      Signatures:			

■ **Positive encouragement**

Most schools agree that children learn better if they are encouraged rather than being 'put down or discouraged'. Praise is necessary in order to show that a child does not have to misbehave to gain attention. Equally, rewards should not be only behaviour related.

Many schools, like the Cavendish School, Eastbourne, have a variety of awards presented on Special Awards Evenings. These include not only academic and sporting achievement, or art, music and drama awards, but those things which are not always so visible and noticed such as work for charities which may or may not include fund-raising, help and encouragement to others in the school or wider community.

▶ **Examples of behaviour policies**

The following behaviour policies have been developed by two Christian schools:

▶ **Code of Conduct**

Follow Jesus's example in how we behave, in what we say and in how we act towards others ...

At Great Walstead, Jesus Christ is both our example and the one who makes it possible to be like Him. Because of this, it goes without saying that we look for and encourage kindness, truthfulness, honesty, thoughtfulness, courtesy and good manners, and discourage lying, stealing, disobedience, bullying and so on. This is the background and foundation of our Code of Conduct. We look to Jesus as He shows himself to us in the Bible and take our direction from Him.

*Great Walstead, East Grinstead*

## Code of Behaviour

Aware that external behaviour always follows internal attitude, we seek to establish in the children ... the 'Three R's':-

**Respect**

**Responsiveness**

**Responsibility**

### Respect

Pupils are trained:

- to respect themselves
- to respect others
- to respect property

### Responsiveness

Pupils are taught to respond positively:

- to each other
- to those in authority
- to difficult situations

### Responsibility

Each child is helped to be responsible:

- with their own belongings
- in their behaviour towards others
- in their use of materials
- in their decision making
- in their attitudes

## *Disciplinary Procedures and Pastoral Care*

### ■ *Creating the Right Environment*

The first criterion for good discipline is the creation of a secure and loving environment where each child is respected for him or herself.

Essential in the creation of such an environment is praise and encouragement for good behaviour and hard work. Our concern is that a child does not feel he or she has to misbehave to gain attention.

As rewards, a system of merits is awarded throughout the school to recognise kindness, courtesy, hard work, achievement, etc.. Alongside this is an emphasis on verbal praise and encouragement from all members of staff.

Our understanding is that a child who feels good about him or herself will learn better than one who feels put down or discouraged.

Within this environment there will, however, be times when the code of behaviour is breached. At that point various sanctions and disciplinary measures are available to be brought into play.

Whilst the code of behaviour does not fundamentally change throughout the school, the methods of enforcing such behaviour do.

### ■ **Sanctions**

The purpose of all sanctions is two fold - to punish the offence and restore the offender. This is why discipline and pastoral care go hand-in-hand.

Pupils will not always behave well, and violations of the code of behaviour need to be reprimanded. Normally this will be by the class or subject teacher through verbal rebuke. Beyond this a number of ways are used to deal with issues:

- loss of certain privileges
- offering some service in lunch hours
- detentions in the Senior School
- to be supervised at home
- corporal punishment<sup>1</sup>
- suspension for a short period and, in extreme cases, expulsion.

Where offences are serious or persistent, parents will be informed and may be asked to come into school to discuss the matter.

Discipline Books are kept in school as a record of serious misdemeanours and as a warning to the pupils concerned. Parents are notified if their child's name is placed in this book.

### ■ **Pastoral Care**

Class teachers in the Primary School and tutors in the Secondary School take an active prayerful interest in every child within their care. Each member of staff prays for the children and seeks to nurture and encourage them in every way possible.

Staff meet regularly to pray together for the school and take time to ask God to help pupils.

When a child has had to be punished, they will be prayed with afterwards and made sure they are restored to a place of forgiveness and acceptance.

Emphasis is placed on each child coming to terms with his or her own failings, with the failings of others, with God's standards and with God's forgiveness and grace. Pupils are trained to be honest about their own shortcomings, to be repentant, to receive and enjoy forgiveness and restoration.

Our goal is to build in good and right habits and outlooks in the daily lives of our pupils.

In later years pastoral care encompasses training in sex education, relationship building, finding a career and involvement with actual work experience.

Pastoral care within the school obviously goes hand-in-hand with the care given at home, and the closest co-operation between school and home is encouraged and fostered.



*To what extent do you think that this code of conduct developed in a Christian school would be acceptable in a county school?*

*The King's School, Southampton*

<sup>1</sup>This is not an option for state maintained schools

### 2.3 Communications policies

Good communication is vital in any organisation and there is much that could be said about the “how” of communication.

#### Written communications

In one school the primary guideline for written communications are that “we will be polite to everyone we write to ... we will be positive and tell the truth ...”. Letters home are regarded as the ‘sharp edge’ of good school-home relations. Their policy statement reveals that letters ...

“should be consistent with the school’s ethos and value system. They should be of high quality, written in an open and welcoming tone, be easily accessible to readers and show respect and consideration for the rights and views of others. All written communications sent from the school should be easily identifiable as coming from the school. They should be straightforward, clear, welcoming ... sensitive ... efficient and non-threatening”.

*Stratford High School, Stratford upon Avon*



*On what biblical principles is this policy based?*

On receiving an offensive letter, for example, the point is made that the recipient has been hurt, and surprise is expressed by the fact that trust in the school was not an element. Letters are intended to open rather than close the channel of communication.

### 2.4 Curriculum Policies and Curriculum Aims

All LEAs and individual schools are required by law to have Curriculum Policy and Aims statements (Education Act 1986 (2)). Since the Education Act (1992) schools are also required to develop those moral and spiritual values enshrined in their mission statements throughout the school, including in the subject areas of the curriculum. For those schools maintained by the state, such policies must incorporate the National Curriculum.

**Sections II and III of this handbook offer insights and examples into the different ways in which teachers have worked out in practice in the curriculum, the aims and values articulated in mission and aims statements, and policies.**

#### Resources and further reading

*School Governors’ Do-it-better Guide* No 1: AGIT. This can be obtained from AGIT, Manor Hall, Sandy Lane, Leamington Spa CV32 6RD. Tel: 01926 413740



## **SECTION II**

### **THEORIES, METHODS AND MODELS**

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# Viewing the whole curriculum

## Introduction

### 1 The nature of knowledge

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- 1.2 Wisdom
- 1.3 Knowledge and the curriculum

### 2 A biblical view of the child

- 2.1 The nature of humanity
- 2.2 The child and learning
- 2.3 The child with special needs

### 3 A question of methods

- 3.1 What and Why?
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- 3.3 Whom?

### 4 The teacher's role

- 4.1 The changing nature of the role of the teacher
- 4.2 Calling or Profession?
- 4.3 Developing relationships
- 4.4 Commitment

### 5. Assessment



# Viewing the whole curriculum

## Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the way in which a Christianly planned curriculum is developed. It looks at a Christian perspective on a number of different aspects of schooling which shape the curriculum including a biblical view of knowledge and the learner, teaching methods and the role of the teacher and the role of assessment. Following this, Chapter 5 looks at the various curriculum models which have been devised. While those who have developed these models continue to refine them, each of the models is intended to develop more fully a biblical understanding of the nature and processes of education.

## 1 The Nature of knowledge

For several centuries, knowledge in our culture has been understood to be based on logically correct propositions which are the result of human reasoning and theoretical speculation on observation, experience, or scientific investigation. This post-Enlightenment view considers empirical and rational knowledge to be the path to truth. Knowledge is seen to be objective and neutral, not necessarily requiring personal commitment or a response. Any reference to values and responsibility is seen as moralising which has nothing to do with knowledge.

This is a form of dualism which has separated thinking and knowing from moral responsibility and action. Even the Christian, educated in the West, has been thoroughly influenced by dualism. An education based on these ideas is costly in social and environmental terms, creating a dysfunctional society. A biblical view of knowledge is far more than intellectual cognition. It involves experience, relationship, friendship and application.

*Modern knowledge is characteristically non-committal. Much is known, but all is consequence-free. What we know and what we do are two different things.*

*Guinness (1995) p147*

### 1.1 The biblical concept of knowledge

A biblical understanding of what it means to “know” is derived from yada, the Hebrew word for knowing. Yada is used in different contexts in the Old Testament giving clues to the extent of the biblical concept of knowing. Its various dimensions include:

- **knowing by learning** (Proverbs 30:3), *by experience and observation*, (Genesis 3:7; 41:31; Judges 16:20; Ecclesiastes 8:5; Isaiah 47:8; Hosea 5:3) *and through technical skills* (Genesis 25:27; 1 Sam 16:16, 18; 1 Kings 7:14).
- **knowing in the intimacy of personal relationships** *as of that between friends* (Deuteronomy 34:10), *or in marriage* (Genesis 4:1; 19:8). *This has implications for the development of a personal, active relationship involving commitment, conception and growth* (Jones 1990).
- **knowing in the context of distinguishing between good and bad**, *as well as in practical issues such as knowing left and right* (2 Sam 19:35; Jonah 4:11), *relates to the choices which can be made. Refusing evil and choosing good, in every area of life; moral, economic, emotional, material.*
- **“watching over” and “caring for”** (Ps 1:6; 37:18; Proverbs 27:23) *are further meanings of the word yada. Just as God “knows” (loves and cares for) those who are His, love and care for each other and the rest of creation is implied* (Proverbs 12:10; James 1:27). *Knowing God bears a responsibility to live according to His word. It is inseparable from administering justice, and from caring for the vulnerable and powerless.*

*People like Attenborough can have a lot of information but they don't, in a biblical sense 'know', because they don't see what that knowledge means; they can't relate it properly to where everything is going and what it's here for.*

*Christian School Headteacher*

*Commitment is something you are raised with. It springs from a wider background of belief systems and relationships and cannot be generated overnight.*

*Schluter and Lee (1993) p61*

Intellectual knowledge, or storing up facts and information, whether about God, or creation is not the whole of knowledge. A biblical view of knowledge involves not only intellectual capacities and personal observation, but is multi-dimensional. Knowing in the biblical sense requires a heart commitment and involves the will, consciousness, emotions and intellect. The commitments of an individual will thus have an impact on the cognitive processes and operations shaping motives, intentions, desires and values. A revelation of God fundamentally re-orientates life and revolutionises the way in which an individual sees, thinks and understands.

Knowledge, in the biblical sense, demands a response and this requires wisdom.

## 1.2 Wisdom

Wisdom and knowledge are often linked in the scriptures both originating in “the fear of the LORD” (*Proverbs 9:10; 8:32-36*), the New Testament equivalent of which is faith in Christ. Acknowledging

- *that God exists*
- *that He created the world according to His wisdom* (*Psalm 104:24; Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 10:12; 51:15*)
- *that everything comes under the “sovereign control and care of the Lord” and*
- *that all is dependent on God*

is the beginning of wisdom. All wisdom comes from God (*Romans 16:27*) and anyone who “lacks wisdom” is told to “ask God for it” (*James 1:5*). Wisdom is thus God-given and God-taught.

Wisdom is mentioned in connection with

- *skill in songs and proverbs*
- *understanding and describing God’s creation* (*1 Kings 4:33*)
- *metal working* (*1 Kings 7:14*)
- *seafaring* (*Ezekial 27:8*)
- *building* (*Proverbs 24:3; 1 Corinthians 3:10*)
- *warfare* (*Isaiah 10:13*), *government* (*Genesis 41:33-40; 1 Kings 3:9-12*)
- *farming* (*Isaiah 28:23-29*).

The biblical definition of wisdom is the ability to make judgements and act on the basis of knowledge, or to “discern modes of action with a view to their results” (*Vine’s Dictionary of the New Testament*, undated p1244). Wisdom is practical and involves the integrity with which an individual uses knowledge, based on an understanding of God’s word and His will for humanity. Wisdom involves the intellectual and critical faculties as well as insight and the right use of the mind. It is the ability to understand and discern, to distinguish between right and wrong, administer justice and manage affairs practically and sensibly so that we can live in right relationship with God, with other people and with the world.

Many Christian educators would argue that there is no divide between “knowing spiritual things for which we need revelation” and “knowing ordinary things that don’t”. Wisdom comes from applying biblical norms to everyday life situations and makes no distinction between sacred and secular areas.

### 1.3 Knowledge and the curriculum

The educational process is shaped by how knowledge is viewed. The kind of knowledge that is regarded as valid and worthwhile will influence the selection of knowledge for inclusion in the curriculum. How the world is viewed will also influence the interpretation and the use of that knowledge. While some suggest that schools should focus on rational and empirical knowledge rather than commitment (Hill 1989), many Christian educators now argue that beliefs and values, which are the foundations to commitment, cannot be separated from what is taught and how. Whether we acknowledge it or not, beliefs and values, which have a bearing on our commitments and actions, are intimately linked to and integrated with the educational enterprise.

Beliefs about what is real and what is true are determined by the answers to metaphysical and epistemological questions which define what is valued and thus govern action. Thus questions of worth and value, considering what is “good” or preferable, have an *“influence on classroom content and procedure, and can affect the entire curriculum structure”* (Peterson 1986 p20). The existence of Christian and other independent schools, is an indication that beliefs and values influence educational systems and structures. Biblical values are often radically different from those regarded as “normal” in a world dominated by secular and humanist assumptions. The values of the Kingdom of God can be exhibited in the lives of individuals and communities, through a growing relationship with Christ and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. But while the Bible does not provide a blueprint or a formula by which life can be lived and behaviour determined, it does provide a framework by which moral judgements and ethical decisions can be developed. These decisions may be somewhat distorted in their application, but certain principles remain. These include:

- **A biblical understanding of love** which demands responses of unselfish giving, service to others, forgiveness, kindness, justice, righteousness and holiness.
- **The inherent worth of individual human beings** because of the value God places on them seen firstly, in the creation of the image of God in humanity and secondly, in the sacrifice made by God in Christ.
- **Caring for creation** by developing communities and cultures according to God’s justice and righteousness.
- **Restoring broken relationships** and bringing peace and reconciliation rather than death and destruction; bringing wholeness instead of brokenness.

This is dependent on a personal response, a growing relationship with God and choosing to use gifts and abilities, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the well-being of others; to be God-honouring.

The work of Christ on the cross was not limited to individual Christians, nor simply to the Body of Christ. It was not even limited to the whole of humanity (*Romans 8:18-22*), but was intended for the whole of creation (*Ephesians 1:9-10; Col 1:19-20*). The process of reconciliation continues until Christ comes and everything is renewed. God’s plan is revealed in the concept *shalom*, which involves bringing *“harmony, justice, righteousness, responsibility in all our relationships ... wholeness and prosperity”* and release from sin, death and destruction for the whole of creation (Bishop and Droop 1990 p44).

## 2 A biblical view of the child

### 2.1 The nature of humanity

Human beings are created in the image of God, distinct from the rest of creation, and endowed with certain qualities which reflect the nature and character of God. Each person is unique, able to choose and act according to individual character, nature and desires. Human beings, in common with the rest of creation, are finite, and dependent on God, but as with the rest of creation, human beings are in a “fallen” state. This alienation from God creates a distorted image of God in humanity with characteristics pertaining to self-determination, selfishness and a preference to control and master. The result is that judgements and decisions tend to damage or destroy relationships with God, fellow human beings and creation. God’s plan for redemption, reconciliation and restoration, through faith in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit means that the potential for righteous and just development is available and can be visible in a broken world. Humanity has a special place of moral responsibility within the world. God has given the earth to humanity to use creatively, to care for and develop responsibly in a way that “beautifies and glorifies Him”. The human purpose is to be obedient to God’s will, to the norms, values and order He has established, to reflect God’s glory, holiness and righteousness. Human beings are, in the end, accountable to God for what they do.

The following sections<sup>1</sup> look in more detail at the points outlined above answering the questions, Who are we? Why are we here? and What is our nature?, in relation to children.

#### ■ **Created by God**

*God created each person as:*

■ **A religious being:** *“then the Lord formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). God gives life; God made human beings living beings, not by chance but by design; we breathe the breath of God. We cannot be partly religious, as is often the view; sacred or spiritual part of the time, secular the rest. As a religious being, there is an intrinsic desire to worship, which is seen in the ways in which individuals and communities structure their lives. Worship is directed either towards the one true God, another human being, or towards creation (or part of it).*

■ **A creature:** *a child is not autonomous, but dependent. He or she is also finite. The child does not gain his or her identity by what he or she does, but from God. All are equal before God; one is not better than another. Being a creature also means there are absolutes which are there for the benefit of the created.*

■ **Unique:** *each child is different with his or her own special characteristics, abilities and gifts given by God (Romans 12:4-8). Dealing with each child in a way which does not lead to conformity is necessary.*

#### ■ **An Image-Bearer**

“God created man in his own image” (*Genesis 1:27*) and, even though the image is spoiled, human beings continue to bear evidences of the image of God.

Although the implications of this are enormous, and human beings in their finiteness and dependency cannot fully comprehend what is infinite and incomprehensible, Fennema shares two aspects: tasks and functions.

<sup>1</sup>Much of this section has been adapted from “A Biblical View of the Child”, Chapter 1 of Jack Fennema’s book *Nurturing Children in the Lord* (1977) ©Presbyterian and Reformed Publish Co. Phillipsburg, New Jersey, USA. Used with permission.



The tasks of an image-bearer are:

- **to glorify God** and enjoy Him forever
- **to love the Lord** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... and love your neighbour as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39)
- **to go and make disciples** of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20)
- **to care for and develop the earth** - "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15) - The Creation Mandate.

The functions of an image-bearer are:

- **the prophetic:** to know (God's revelations and truths) and share knowledge
- **the priestly:** to intercede to bring a person together with God, other people and creation.; to resolve conflicts; to be a peacemaker and healer.
- **the kingly:** to administer the world God has created.

*Humanity's task is to unearth the riches of creation and bring them into the service of humanity for the glory of God*

Fennema (1977) p7

■ **The nature of the child**

Human beings have a particular nature, with certain characteristics and abilities which allows the fulfilment of the task. These reflect God's infinite, independent and absolute nature in a finite, dependent and conditioned way.

- **Unity:** the child is a total, unified, integrated person; the various aspects of a child's personality – rational, emotional, spiritual, physical and social - are interrelated and interdependent and cannot be separated.
- **Rational:** the child is intellectual, possessing the ability to think and to understand. A child needs and seeks an orderly and logical environment in which to live. Goals are set and actions have purposes which move towards that goal.
- **Interactive:** the child is always in relationship, to God (broken or whole), and to others. The child both initiates and responds to action.
- **Responsible:** a child acts upon or responds to truth as far as it is known.
- **Free to choose:** a child is not passive, but able to make voluntary and unique responses (for the Christian there are limits of nature and function, and boundaries of norms and principles which, if submitted to, bring harmony and peace with God, others and creation).
- **Accountable:** being responsible for choices made, a child is also accountable against criteria determined by God.
- **Morally aware:** the child is able to place greater or lesser value on things which relate to norms or standards. It is because human beings have the ability to discern right and wrong (a conscience) that they are held accountable for their actions. With no reference to norms and standards, confusion and a lack of direction is the result.

■ **Creative:** *a child can recognise and appreciate beauty and can create products of beauty, unity and harmony in music, movement, literature, nature, architecture and so on. A child can “give expression to the beauty of God’s holiness and holy array evident within himself and in the world” (Fennema p17).*

There are two other aspects of the nature of the child which must be taken into account; the child is a sinner and the child can be a new creature in Christ.

■ **Sinner:** *From scripture, we find that human beings are essentially drawn towards thoughts and actions which are bad or evil. However, even though the image may be distorted and misdirected, they still reflect God’s nature. At the same time, the child also retains dignity and worth as an image bearer and, because God is still present and active, and in control of the world, sin is being restrained by God.*

■ **New Creature:** *Although the relationship between God and human beings has been broken, we can be reunited with the Creator and life can be put back into its proper context and meaning. “A personal relationship with God through Christ.... signals the beginning of the restoration of the image of God that is completed by him in heaven.” (Fennema p21).*

## 2.2 The child and learning

A biblical view of the child needs to be taken into account in any model of learning which is developed. Firstly, the child as a responsible being, made in the image of God; secondly, the religious heart, or world view, which influences all other dimensions of human being: moral, juridical, aesthetic, economic, social, lingual, cultural, rational, emotional, physical, will determine what and how they will learn. A third aspect which needs to be acknowledged when developing a model of learning in schools is that school is not the only place where children learn. They have already had five years in the home, and there are many other strands of life which contribute to their learning. Schools may focus on certain aspects of learning, rational, cultural and lingual, but pupils bring their whole being with them - social, emotional, physical and moral. One part influences the others.

Each child is unique, with differing gifts and abilities which need to be recognised and developed. Strengths need to be developed and each one needs to be encouraged to explore areas in which they are less confident, knowing that failure does not destroy confidence. Children will not all learn in the same way or achieve the same things.

## 2.3 The child with special needs

The general understanding which prevails among educators now is that whatever the ability of a child, personal worth and value comes before what he or she can do or achieve. For Christians and Christian schools this attitude is based in the belief that everyone is made in the image of God and that Christ died for everyone, regardless of ability, or looks. Acceptance and love flows from the life of Christ and should influence all attitudes and behaviour of both pupils and staff. Whatever the disability, whether of an intellectual or physical nature, the child him or herself is completely loved and accepted. Some feel that many disabilities, such as dyslexia, are still misunderstood and that most of us need to be better informed. We all need to be reminded, or made aware from time to time of any negative attitudes.

One school has developed procedures for helping pupils with difficulties in learning to read. They suggest that unless we are careful, the “need” itself may obscure a sense of:

- the intrinsic worth of the person regardless of need.
- the God given potential and gifts which need developing.
- the truth, perspective and uniqueness of God’s calling for each individual, that a life is not of less value or use to God if its expression falls outside of academic gifting.
- to have gifts and abilities that are non academic does not in itself constitute a lack or disability in the person. It may reveal an impoverishment in the curriculum.
- God’s desire and ability to heal, restore and release faculties so that healthy living and learning are not hindered. This is not the same as conforming to ‘norms’ of measured achievement.
- the personal nature of the difficulty even though the learner may fall within a broad category.
- human frailty and circumstances generally, highlight in us all special needs of some sort at some time. The use of ‘norms’ and comparisons is very superficial. Weaknesses are not failures.

### ■ *Creating the right atmosphere*

One school suggests that when a difficulty is discovered, the child may feel particularly sensitive and vulnerable. Therefore, any procedures which then take place need to be in atmosphere of “warmth, respect, privacy, reassurance and encouragement”.

▶ A good ethos will include:

- a good relaxed relationship with the teacher.
- all teachers involved with the pupil need to know and understand the problem and be supportive.
- classroom life should be designed to limit frustration and sense of failure.
- systems of marking and praise should not lead to comparisons.
- there should be no exposure to despising attitudes or humiliating situations.
- a close relationship with the parents should be at the heart of the help given. Parents have a special understanding of the child and consistency of approach is important.
- where appropriate the place of prayer should be considered.
- subtle inferences that a hierarchy exists where academic gifts are more highly prized or more useful to God should be minimised.
- all should be made aware and accept the idea of a person’s unique function in the community.
- a variety of personal gifts should be developed which help build self esteem.
- strategies for ensuring that each child receives the support to which they are entitled.

Assessment policies should always reflect the equal worth of each person and their calling.

The question of methods is therefore important.

*The question of teaching methods must be related to a larger framework of educational questions. Too often the methodological question of how one should teach is asked in isolation from a clear understanding of what and why one is teaching as well as from questions concerning when, where and whom one is teaching.*

*Robert W. Pazmiño (1992) p133*

### 3 A question of methods

When we turn our attention to the methods we use in our teaching it may seem that the central question is:

**“Do they work?”**

We choose techniques because we think they can achieve our desired ends in the classroom. We reject older methods in favour of newer ones because we perceive that the discarded methods were failing to deliver something which is promised by their replacements. However, for a number of reasons the question ‘Does it work?’ does not get us very far taken on its own.

#### 3.1 What and Why?

Implicit in our concerns for effectiveness as outlined above is a set of goals, either consciously chosen or unconsciously held, perhaps as part of the shared ‘common sense’ of our particular educational context. The question ‘does it work?’ only has any meaning if there is clarity as to what it is that we are trying to achieve. If a neighbour buys a new garden gadget, the question

**‘What does it do?’**

is likely to be followed by the question

**‘Does it work?’.**

‘Does it work?’ is the second question, not the first.

Different methods promote different goals. But what are our goals?

***Do we want to teach a body of knowledge or a process or a set of learning techniques?***

***Are we aiming for fluency or accuracy?***

***Do we want an abstract grasp of a concept or a practical ability to work with it?***

***What are the situations in which we expect the skills learned to be used?***

If we know what we want to achieve, we can consider which techniques might help or hinder us. This has several implications for Christian teachers:

- *We can’t think Christianly about methods before we have thought carefully about Christian aims for education (see Chapter 2: Mission Statements, Development Plans and Aims) and for our particular subject area (see Section III).*
- *Christian aims for our subject area will be related to a Christian understanding of our subject area – our view of what is to be taught will also influence our methods.*

If we want our teaching to be Christian we must work to tighten the cords binding our methods (the how) to our aims (the why, as, for example, articulated in a mission statement). If we do not, our methods may undermine our goals, however carefully stated. We may, for example, claim to aim for responsibility while encouraging passivity by our methods.

### 3.2 When and Where?

Our teaching methods are chosen within a given context, and all teachers, very often unconsciously, give consideration to that context when choosing techniques. The context includes:

- *the time and equipment available*
- *classroom conditions (size of class, time of day, weather etc.)*
- *the individual learning styles of pupils*
- *the teacher's personality, skills and relationship with the class*
- *the school's values and expectations*
- *the values of pupils' families and community*
- *the values of the wider society within which the school is situated.*

As Christian teachers we understand ourselves to be called by and answerable to God. One implication of this is that while we will seek to be sensitive to all of these contextual factors, we will not let them have the final word. We will seek to make responsible choices as to which elements of our context to support and work with and which to find ways of overcoming or counteracting. Sometimes we adapt our teaching to the world of the student, at other times we find ourselves at odds with the values of that world. Here again Christian beliefs and values can be a guide. Our Christian concern for each individual may lead us to recognise individual learning styles, for example, while rejecting certain values of the wider society which might also be reflected in pupils' approaches to learning, such as intense competitiveness.

### 3.3 Whom?

Children's education includes being socialised into certain patterns of learning. A student from Korea, having grown used to an education system in his home country where authority is emphasised and questioning and discussion are not encouraged, would struggle to adapt to a class where it is not a mark of disrespect to offer one's own ideas. All of us learn how to learn from our community. This is a process which is far from being confined to schools, but in which schools play a significant role. Where particular methods of teaching (and therefore expected styles of learning) dominate, pupils will gradually be socialised into those particular ways of approaching learning and of viewing and interacting with the world in which the methods concerned are grounded.

- *Some methods teach that detachment and intellectual reflection are the privileged ways of being in the world.*
- *Others imply that the student's own search for truth and sincerely held feelings are more important than any truth outside the student.*
- *Some ways of running a classroom foster initiative, others encourage conformity; some demand passive compliance from students (and sometimes teachers), others treat the student as autonomous.*

This implies that our reflection on aims and methods, and on which constraints to work with or resist, will include reflection about the nature of the people we teach, and about the kind of person we would like to see leave our classrooms after being taught.

Viewing students (and teachers) as made in God's image we will seek to pattern our teaching in ways which are appropriate to those who are:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| ■ <i>spiritual</i>                   | ■ <i>rational</i>                        |
| ■ <i>creative</i>                    | ■ <i>emotional</i>                       |
| ■ <i>responsible and accountable</i> | ■ <i>embodied</i>                        |
| ■ <i>moral</i>                       | ■ <i>created in and for relationship</i> |

We will be aiming to foster (and therefore to model in our teaching) qualities such as:

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ <i>compassion</i>   | ■ <i>forgiveness</i>        |
| ■ <i>truthfulness</i> | ■ <i>faithfulness</i>       |
| ■ <i>love</i>         | ■ <i>readiness to serve</i> |
| ■ <i>patience</i>     |                             |

while acknowledging and living with the reality of the Fall as it affects both our students and ourselves. Such a view of our students may help us to correct imbalances in methodologies which focus on one or more of these aspects of their personhood while neglecting others.

Does all of this lead to a Christian methodology?

Yes and no.

Choosing a method which 'works' and sticking to it may, ironically, make teaching less effective in the long run. There is no one methodology which can achieve all of our goals with all of our pupils. If we put our trust in a given methodology we will discover that like all idols it takes life rather than giving it. For one thing, methodologies often arise to correct perceived weaknesses in their predecessors, and so carry their own particular slant or focus. For another, given varying learning styles, some methods will bear more fruit with certain pupils than others. We need a range of techniques at our disposal in order to be effective.

This means that if Christian values are reflected in teaching methods this will not be seen in one specific Christian method, but rather in the way in which the various techniques chosen are shaped into an overall pattern. Eclecticism may in and of itself lead us no closer to our aims. The growth which we need is growth in adeptness at doing such choosing and shaping in a way which is sensitive to the contours of our faith commitment. Even then, believing that human beings are responsible and not fully determined by their environments, we will not put our trust in method as an automatic route to our goals. Students must have room to respond, and can respond negatively. Teaching methods are important, but must take their place within the context of the work of the Holy Spirit and the responses of both teachers and pupils.

## 4 The teacher's role

The teacher is a central part of the process of education, but any attempt to explain the complex nature of the role of a teacher inevitably over-simplifies the reality of the situation.

## 4.1 The changing nature of the role of the teacher

As stated in the section on methods, the nature of the role of the teacher changes with social and ideological changes which affect the purposes and practice of education. For example, 'traditional' and 'progressive' ideologies have very different views concerning the nature of teaching and learning.

The 'traditional' role has focused on authoritarian methods of instruction and the transmission of specific content, knowledge and skills to the uninitiated child. The teacher is seen as an expert in knowledge, passing on that knowledge to the child who is seen as the passive recipient of facts and information. Traditional classrooms are characterised by a curriculum divided by subjects with teacher initiated and directed input. Testing is used to find out whether *teaching* has been effective.

The 'progressive' role, on the other hand, focuses on the personal growth and the development of the individual. The emphasis is on processes of learning, the relevance of the content and skills to the child's interests and of teaching methods to the child's ability. The teacher is seen as a resource and a guide, exploring knowledge with the child. The teacher is regarded as an expert in the learning process, facilitating learning by providing the right experiences at the right time in order to develop the full potential of individual pupils. Active participation on the part of the learner is encouraged. Progressive classrooms are characterised by the use of integrated subject matter, discovery methods, co-operative group work, individualisation, creative expression, intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation and little formal testing.<sup>2</sup>

Other approaches might include:

- **liberal education:** concerned with handing on knowledge in an objective way. The teacher is seen as the knowledgeable one.
- **humanist education:** the individual's need rather than community and relationships is the focus. The teacher is seen as a facilitator whereby the individual achieves personal goals.
- **technological education:** efficiency and production are the goals of this view. Training towards the task is the main concern.
- **radical education:** this seeks to empower individuals and communities towards freedom and liberation.

Teachers using any of the above approaches reflect a particular view of humanity and knowledge. Any one of these approaches taken to extremes will result in imbalance, but when analysing these views from a Christian perspective each one has something to recommend it.<sup>3</sup>

## 4.2 Calling or Profession?

The majority of Christian teachers see teaching not simply as a profession, but as a calling from God. In recognising that the "gift of teaching" comes from God they are accountable to God for the work they do. This does not mean that Christian teachers place professional development low on the list of priorities, but training in secular contexts in education is often seen as deficient when it comes to developing a Christian mind. Such training often imbues teachers with theoretical concepts and practical habits which are opposed

*Whatever aims teachers adopt must surely be intended to have **some** influence on the kind of person a pupil grows up to be, and thereby, however minimally, on the kind of society in which he grows up.*  
White (1979)

?

*To what extent do these models borrow any understanding from a biblical view of teaching and learning?*

<sup>2</sup> This is an oversimplification - critical pedagogy, for example, is quite hostile to humanist progressivism (both labelled progressive and modern in nature).

<sup>3</sup> Descriptions of these and other views can be found in *Learning for Life* by Yvonne Craig (1994); Mobwray and in *Tomorrow is another Country: education in a post-modern world*, compiled by the Board of Education of the General Synod of the Church of England, Chapter 5 "Six styles of Education" by Yvonne Craig and Sheila Green. Although both refer to Adult and Continuing Education within a church context, the descriptions will be familiar to teachers and they offer a helpful Christian critique.

to Christian beliefs and values. A Christian critique or view of education is often rejected and the would-be Christian teacher needs to carefully assess the content of teacher training from a biblical perspective. They need to learn to discern. Training is welcomed as a way of enhancing the gift of teaching, but training like teaching, is not value-neutral. Moreover qualifications alone are not sufficient if teaching is a calling, and state qualifications are therefore not always regarded as important in Christian contexts.

### 4.3 Developing relationships

In formal education the teacher is a central part of the process and is present in that process as a concrete person, not as a depersonalised professional. Personal qualities and characteristics play a fundamental role as well as qualifications, abilities and experience. As teachers and pupils interact over time in an educational relationship, more than knowledge, skills and concepts is imparted. Teachers communicate something of who they are. The values which shape a teacher's identity play a significant role, whether acknowledged or not, in students' educational experience.

Education is based on a creative, relational dynamic which grows, changes and responds to situations and people, thus the quality of relationships is an important factor in teaching. The relationship developed between the teacher and pupil is not a purely intellectual one; it is one of personal involvement and care. Many feel the "professional" approach to schooling may lack the personal involvement required to operate a fully effective classroom.

### 4.4 Commitment

There are two aspects of commitment which need to be highlighted. They are related to both the teacher's personal and professional capacity. Firstly, basic beliefs undergird every teacher's world view, morals, and classroom practice. These "faith" commitments influence the educational process. Secondly, teachers need to share, or be committed to, the values and purposes of the school. Some may experience a conflict between personal aims and vision and those of the school. Personal integrity may well be challenged and being true

to one's own beliefs can present teachers with an often overwhelming dilemma. One teacher, who had recently moved from a county school to voluntary aided school, noted that in her new post there was, for her, integrity "between my own purposes in education and the school's"; an aspect regarded with relief. Another teacher, who had felt stifled by the secular system, stated: "I am able to share my faith with the children without fear". For her, it was no longer an embarrassment to be known as a Christian.

"Freedom" is the word most frequently used to describe how teachers felt when they were able to be themselves instead of denying their beliefs and values. Attempting to teach in schools where the values and aims conflict with those personally held is challenging. The problems experienced by many working within an educational system, or a school, which opposes the teacher's personal world view are further evidence that the educational process is not neutral with regard to beliefs and values.

Because a school is a county school it does not necessarily follow that the beliefs and values which it embraces are secular in every instance (cf. See Management and Leadership). Teachers in schools whose staff share a sense of purpose and commitment to a set of goals tend to experience a deeper level of personal care and support. There is often less backbiting in the staffroom and an absence of vindictiveness in discussion of staff and pupils. Personal gain and career moves are subsumed by the common goal.



*To what extent are you at one with the vision and goals expressed in your school?*

*How far are you prepared to stop and test whether the purposes of your school conflict with those of the Christian?*

*Are you in a position to begin to transform the situation that you are in?*



## 5 Assessment

***“Educational assessment has become a bogey which interferes with the learning process and erodes the self-esteem of countless students. Currently, it is used for purposes that are more political than educational, and the teaching profession at large acquiesces in this state of affairs. Worse still, Christian teachers have been just as conformist as the rest, though there are several distinctly Christian reasons for opposing many current practices.”***

*Hill (1993) p56*

This is the provocative conclusion of a recent article on assessment by well-known Christian educationist, Brian Hill. To many Christian teachers the notion of there being a Christian approach to assessment may be an unfamiliar one - but this is precisely Professor Hill’s worry, that Christian teachers have perceived few pitfalls in current assessment practices.

It is clear that some kind of assessment and evaluation in education is necessary. It is necessary if students are to gain a realistic picture of their own strengths and weaknesses, progress and potential. It is necessary if students are to make informed choices with regard to future study or work. It is necessary if teachers are to gain a clearer idea of the effectiveness of their approach, and if there is to be accountability to parents and to society. There are, however, two serious complications.

First, there is not simply one kind of assessment. In fact, the purposes listed in the last paragraph are likely to require different kinds of assessment. The question is not simply ‘to assess or not to assess’ but ‘how to assess?’ What combination of tests should be used: oral/written?, multiple choice/question-answer?, silent/collaborative?, closed/open-ended?, individual interviews and discussion?, marks and grades?, profiling?, formative or summative assessment?, continuous assessment?, norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessment?

Second, evaluation is necessarily a valuing activity. The way in which we assess, and the particular qualities and achievements which we reward through our assessment says a great deal, not least to pupils, about the values which underpin our teaching. These may not be the same as the values which we profess - there will be little point in fine words about co-operation and mutual service if our methods of assessment actually promote competition and rivalry. By the same token, implicit messages will be sent by our choices not to assess or reward certain things.

The choice of which kinds of evaluation to use in a given setting will clearly be a complex one. It should be guided not only by pragmatic considerations but also by reflection on a Christian understanding of the value of each individual, the diversity of gifts which God has given, and the qualities and achievements which represent growth and fruitfulness. The following are examples of the questions which may be raised by such reflection:

- *Do our methods of assessment acknowledge that God has given different gifts in different measure to different individuals? Or do they exalt intellectual ability over other abilities and compare students on the basis of their ability in a narrow area?*
- *Do our methods of assessment encourage students to adjust and improve their learning, or do they discourage by repeated messages of failure?*
- *Do our methods of assessment encourage students to learn for worthwhile goals, or do they promote a tendency for students to learn for the sake of grades, without regard for the meaning of what they learn?*



*As you read the rest of this handbook, to what extent do the examples and models described reflect the understanding that has been set out within this chapter?*

- *Do our methods of assessment focus on helping each individual to grow, or do they promote forced competition and rivalry by ranking students against each other?*
- *Do our methods of communicating our assessments to pupils and parents encourage renewed care and effort or do they promote resignation or public pride or shame?*

## 5.1 Encouragement

National Records of Achievement have to be completed by the students themselves, but, as with most of us, students find it hard to say positive things about themselves. The deputy head of one county secondary school, however, uses them to build students' self esteem and self worth as he feels that encouragement is one of the most important things a teacher can do for a student. One idea he uses is within the context of the classroom itself; everyone in the class has to say something good about everybody else. Not only will they be able to see the diversity of gifts, but students will be helped to see what their particular strengths are.

### Resources and further reading:

Jay E. Adams *Back to the Blackboard - Design for a Biblical Christian School* Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company (1982). Chapter 15, 'Upgrading by Degrading', discusses Christian objections to some common models of assessment and suggest changes.

DfEE, Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. For further guidance on the management of children with special needs within the maintained sector.

S. Bishop and Droop *The Earth is the Lord's* Bristol, Regius (1990)

Jack Fennema *Nurturing Children in the Lord* Presbyterian and Reformed Publish Co. Phillipsburg, New Jersey, USA (1977). The focus of this book is discipline. Chapter one gives some helpful insights into a biblical view of the child.

Os Guinness *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds* London, Hodder and Stoughton (1995)

Brian V. Hill "Spiritual Development in the Education Reform Act: A Source of Acrimony, Apathy or Accord?" *British Journal of Educational Studies* 37(2) (May 1989)

Brian V. Hill 'Is Assessment Compatible with Agape?', *Spectrum* 25:1 (Spring 1993) p39-56. Hill describes Christian views of assessment and discusses some of the different options available.

Robert W. Pazmiño *Principles and Practices of Christian Education: An Evangelical perspective*. Grand Rapids, Baker Book House (1992)

M. L. Peterson *The Philosophy of Education* Leicester IVP (1986)

Michael Schluter and David Lee *The R Factor* London, Hodder and Stoughton (1993)

# Models of curriculum development

## 1 Integrity in curriculum development

1.1 The curriculum is not neutral

- ▶ St Mary Magdelene's Church of England Primary School

1.2 Foundations are important

- ▶ Oak Hill School
- ▶ St Mary Magdelene's
- ▶ The Shepherd School

## 2 Curriculum models

2.1 The nature and character of God as a focus for learning.

- ▶ Model A: The King's School, Witney
- ▶ Model B: Oak Hill School
- ▶ Model C: The Dolphin School

2.2 The Christian world view as expressed in Creation-Fall-Redemption and Consummation, as a focus for the curriculum.

- ▶ Model D: Christian Schools' Trust Science Curriculum Team

2.3 The creation order as a focus for curriculum development

- ▶ Model E: Covenant Christian School
- ▶ Model F: Christian Schools' Trust

2.4 Knowledge of God as a central focus for learning

- ▶ Model G: The Shepherd School



# Models of curriculum development

## 1 Integrity in curriculum development

A whole curriculum is more than just a collection of individual parts - subjects, tasks, pieces of information. Taken as a whole, the way in which study of the world has been ordered conveys a certain picture of reality, a view of the way things are, the way things should be distinguished from and related to each other. It may be argued that a curriculum approach which divides knowledge into separate compartments, symbolised by slots on a timetable and leaves it there, presents a rather incoherent picture.

Many Christians are well practised in witnessing to their faith through the type of people they are and through their participation in RE, Worship, and the Christian Union. However, if their faith is merely perceived as relevant to the “God slots” many pupils pick up the view that God is marginal, an added extra, not necessarily central to the whole of life.

Brian Walsh, in his book *Subversive Christianity*, suggests that we must ask ourselves “whether our Christian faith, our allegiance to Jesus, has any integrity at all. Or are we simply mouthing pious words and going through pious motions that betray a hollow faith?” (p28). He suggests that the Western Church is facing a “spiritual catastrophe” and that

***“our consciousness, our imagination, our vision has been captured by idolatrous perceptions and ways of life. The dominant worldview, the all-pervasive secular consciousness, has captured our lives ... in our sleep ... We simply bought into the materialistic, prestige oriented, secular values of our age ...”***

Walsh (1992)

Even when we become aware of this “enculturation” and the need for our minds to be transformed, he suggests that most of us still live lives which lack integrity. To become right thinkers does not necessarily mean we will become right actors. Dualism still occurs because to live a life that demands total commitment to Christ, and which is so all-encompassing, so radical, asks too much of us, so we limit God’s claim on our lives; it is more comfortable. As teachers, we too need to examine whether we have compartmentalised our lives, whether our imaginations have been captivated by the dominant cultural vision, and whether or not we expect God to be active in our situation. Could we really be radically different? How much will it cost?

This chapter looks at how schools are dealing with some of the issues highlighted in the previous chapter: that the curriculum is not neutral, but conveys one or another particular world view, and that all schools need a foundation on which to build. Those offered here are based on a biblical view of the world (see Chapter 4: Viewing the Whole Curriculum).

Some Christian foundation schools have had the freedom and space to develop a more fully integrated Christian curriculum across the whole breadth and age span. Other Christian foundation schools are seeking to apply their models to the prescribed National Curriculum. For those whose calling it is to work within the National Curriculum in the state system, the task is to develop their thinking upon their own area or subject discipline. It may mean transforming their view of the teacher, the learner and the knowledge. It will mean undertaking some remedial education within ourselves since most of us have been “trained”, if not indoctrinated unwittingly into a secular worldview.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 The curriculum is not neutral

For many decades, the curriculum has been seen as a neutral area of facts and information, but as most educationalists now agree, the foundations of knowledge itself, the selection of knowledge for inclusion in

<sup>1</sup>An analysis of the dominating features of the curriculum can be found in Mark Roques’ *Curriculum Unmasked* Monarch (1989) and in Position Papers developed by Dr Arthur Jones for the Christian Schools’ Trust, available from 108 Ratcliffe Drive, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS12 6UB.

the syllabus, the teaching methodologies used, and the interpretation of knowledge (see Chapter 4: Viewing the Whole Curriculum) are all based on, and all contribute to the development of a particular world view in the minds of pupils. Several schools make statements within their curriculum policies similar to the following, implying that a neutral curriculum is impossible:

**Church of England Primary School**

“All schools implicitly or explicitly teach within a world view - they teach from a philosophical perspective. All schools inculcate values, mores, morals and standards based on that perspective and none are or can be neutral.”

*St Mary Magdalene’s Church of England Primary School, Islington*

**1.2 Foundations are important**

The foundations on which a curriculum is built are therefore important, particularly if coherence rather than confusion is to be the result. Some schools, while stating the lack of neutrality in the organisation, content and methods of the curriculum, also make explicit that which is at the foundation of the curriculum and unifies the whole:

**Independent Christian School**

It is commonly assumed that knowledge in the curriculum is neutral, value-free and independent of any religious belief. However, school curricula carry hidden messages about reality that are not always consistent with a Christian view of the world and of life. Oak Hill School meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but the day-to-day learning programme also reflects the educational principles and priorities of the school. All subjects are brought into a unified, coherent Christian framework which acknowledges the structure and interdependence of the creation.

*Oak Hill School, Bristol*

Some schools relate their curriculum aims to the reasons for which their school was established:

**Church of England Primary School**

This is a Church of England school with an Evangelical tradition. It was founded in 1710 “to give a Christian Education to the children of the Parish of Islington”

“As a Church school, St Mary Magdalene’s has attempted to function in all aspects of its life as a model of Christian behaviour. The Bible teaches us first to love God with all our being, and then to love our neighbour as ourselves. This is central to our school’s philosophy.

Our educational aim is primarily to enable children to develop an inquiring mind and a thoughtful, considerate approach to life, as our understanding ‘of’ God’s world is far more significant than knowing ‘about’ it. Within this over-all framework the National Curriculum will be delivered as one of the tools to enable each child, irrespective of their race, sex, class, or ability, to achieve security, significance and self-worth based on a real understanding of their value in God’s eyes.”

*St Mary Magdalene’s Church of England Primary School, Islington*

The following statement indicates that Curriculum Development from a Christian perspective, as well as ethos, RE and worship, is an important aspect, revealing that all areas of school life are influenced by the foundations, as this independent Christian school states:

### Independent Christian School

“The Shepherd School is a Christian school and so we endeavour to provide a Christian education. This means that we are not merely aiming to have a generally Christian atmosphere in the school or to ‘do a bit more RE than other schools’, but rather that no part of the school’s life is outside the affirmation that ‘Jesus is Lord’.”

*The Shepherd School, Lewisham*

The underlying beliefs and values on which a curriculum is based will determine the outcomes of the curriculum. These will influence what pupils learn and their actions. The mission statement of a school is intended to make explicit what those beliefs and values are. The curriculum aims and content should contribute to the aims and purposes outlined in that statement. Teachers therefore need to have an understanding of the implications of both the content of the curriculum and the teaching methods employed in order to support the aims, beliefs and values of the school. It is essential that the beliefs and values are articulated, and that teachers develop courses and use teaching methods which support them.

## 2 Curriculum models

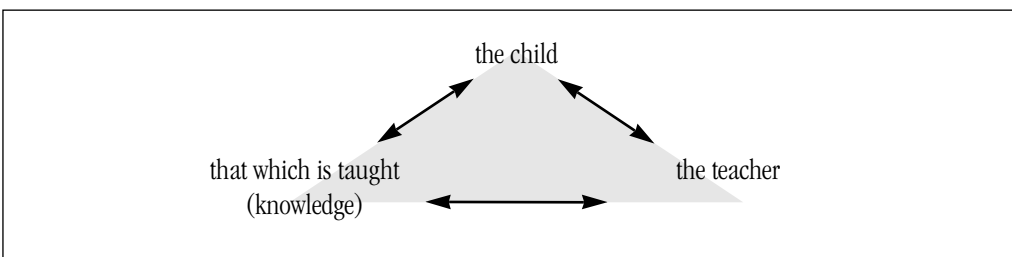
In this section we offer some whole curriculum models which have been developed by different Christian groups, and which act as the foundation to curriculum development in those schools. Some of the examples and approaches to specific subject areas outlined in Section III have been developed from these models.

Even if there is no immediate possibility of the whole curriculum of your school being transformed, the material presented here may help all teachers to re-examine the assumptions that underlie their school’s whole curriculum as well as their own teaching.

Before presenting curriculum models based on a biblical view, which some schools are developing, the models we are most familiar with in our teaching can be represented by the following two diagrams<sup>2</sup>:

### The education equation

#### i) Romanticism/Progressivism



?

*“It is all very well preparing children for life, what about preparing them for death?”*

*George Oliver*

*To what extent does looking at the world from the perspective of eternity alter the Christian’s understanding of life and its purposes?*

*How can this be reflected in what we teach?*

“

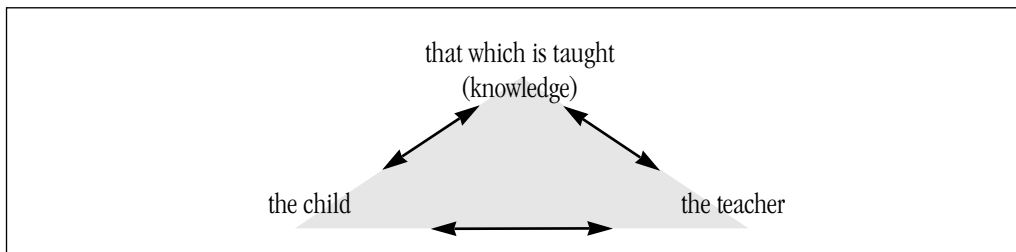
*Any definition of curriculum chosen needs to be translated into a model to work from. The model chosen will depend largely on the overall philosophy of life, and philosophy of education ...*

*Dolphin School, London*

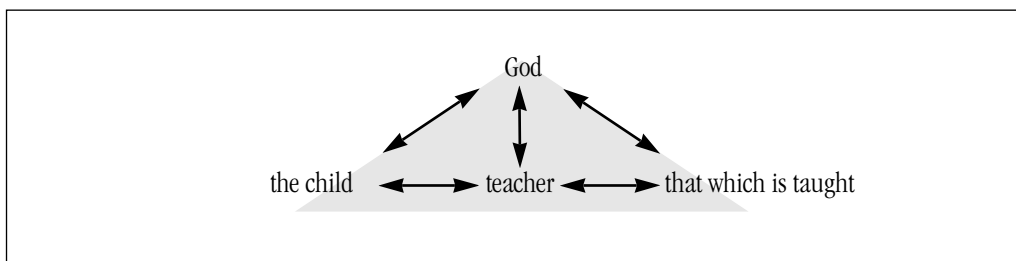
”

<sup>2</sup>For diagrams which represents a dualistic curriculum and a curriculum which displays the integrity of a Christian world view, see Religious education chapter, section 5: The Religious Dimensions of my Subject.

**ii) Rationalism/Traditional**



For many Christian teachers the challenge will be to find ways of honouring God within these models, but we have to face the fact that this will be a far cry from the models needed to transform our society. A model that fully honours the place of God in the sphere of education would look more like this:



In the curriculum models examined below, the key concerns are:

- *to maintain faithfulness to a Christian world view.*
- *how are the various possible curriculum contents to be brought into a harmonious whole?*
- *how can the curriculum be structured in such a way that the 'hidden curriculum' as well as the explicit curriculum are communicating a Christian understanding of the world?*

Within these general concerns, several approaches are pursued, reflecting different focal points rather than mutually exclusive alternatives.

- *Some seek the point of integration in God's revelation of his own character in the Bible - parallels are found between curriculum design processes and God's nature and work, or God's attributes, which are used as themes for integrated study (Models A, B and C).*
- *Some take as the unifying focus the question of world view, especially as expressed in the Bible's answers to the basic questions about life - Why are we here? What is wrong? What is the answer? - often expressed as Creation - Fall - Redemption. This includes the future hope of the Christian world view - Consummation.<sup>3</sup> (Model D).*
- *Some look to basic distinctions in the Bible's presentation of the created world as organising principles for curriculum material - the divisions of creation and the 'creation ordinances' found in Genesis 1, for instance. The order of God's world is a key idea here. (Model E and F).*
- *Some take the knowledge of God Himself as a central focus for the curriculum. (Model G).*

<sup>3</sup>Some argue that grappling with this in relation to the idea of relativism is the greatest challenge facing Christians today. "What distinguishes the Christian view from the modern absolute relativism and nihilism, is not that we have some absolute in creation, but that our faith rests on the One who is the Creator, and who at the end of time will judge and redeem both us and our work" (Dr Arthur Jones).



All see God's revelation and the knowledge of God as having the potential to make all human learning hold together in a meaningful and coherent manner.

None of these models is prescriptive in such a way that a single specific set of curriculum contents, processes and sequences automatically follows from them<sup>4</sup>. All can be implemented in a variety of ways. Neither are they to be interpreted as static grids - children's development is taken fully into account. They do not represent an attempt to design an exhaustive or exclusive blueprint but rather a model to guide and shape teachers' planning and to remind teachers to approach such planning in a consciously Christian way. They are an attempt to provide the whole curriculum with a foundation for all aspects of knowledge which is faithful to Christ.

## 2.1 The nature and character of God as a focus for learning

God has revealed himself to us in the Bible, and has also declared that we are made in his image (*Genesis 1:27*). Furthermore, creation itself is said to mirror certain of his attributes (*Romans 1:20*). This is the basis for seeking insights from the study of God's nature and character which will help us to order our own experience of life, and to order children's learning about the world.

### ► Model A: The King's School Model based on the concept of the Trinity

The Trinitarian model, being developed by the King's School, Witney, aims to guide teachers in the process of planning units of work. This model is based on an understanding of the work of the Trinity derived from Romans 11:36. It seeks to define a process of moving from an initial, foundational and prayerful consideration of the source of the curriculum unit, to the choice of appropriate means, to the goal. They have the following guides concerning:

i) the source:

- *Why are we learning this?*
- *What educational aim has given rise to it?*
- *What does God want our pupils to learn from this?*

ii) the choice of appropriate means:

- |                                       |                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ <i>methodology</i>                  | ■ <i>relationships</i>      |
| ■ <i>specific learning objectives</i> | ■ <i>teaching resources</i> |

iii) the goal which is

- *ownership and application of the concepts under consideration (not simply the ability to repeat them).*

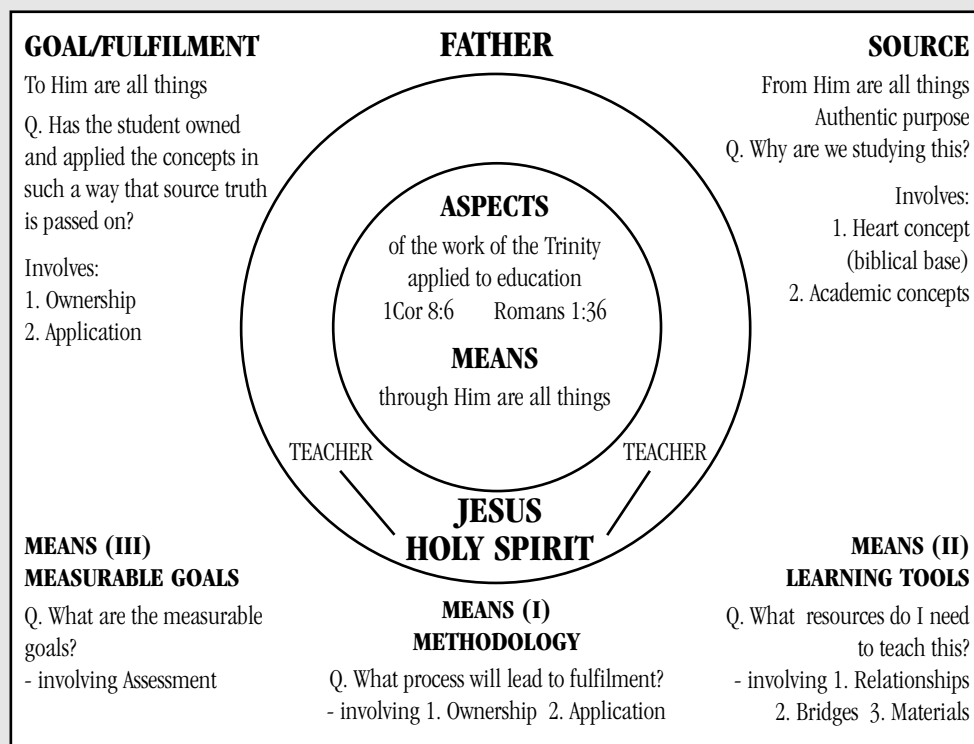
Alongside academic concepts (e.g. facts about life in the Roman empire (see History), or the functioning of the digestive system) are 'heart concepts':

- *God's sovereignty in history*
- or*
- *God's workmanship displayed in the fact that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.*

The concern is for pupils to own both, so that the authentic purpose of learning is fulfilled.

<sup>4</sup>Some of the examples which follow in Section III come from the schools which developed these models, but even these need to be examined critically to see whether they support the beliefs and values they claim to do. Many of these models and the curriculum content which has developed from them are in the process of development and, as suggested here, the curriculum is not static, but a dynamic, relational product.

The model which follows was devised by the school to bring the various aspects into focus.



The following example uses the above model to develop a lesson on fractions:

**Source**

**Heart concept:** each part of God's creation belongs to, and is part of, the whole. Without each part the whole is incomplete. (1 Cor 12:27)

**Academic concept:** wholes are divisible into smaller components. We can explore mathematical relationships between a whole and its divisible parts using various formulae.

**Goals**

- To appreciate the complex inter-linking of each part of God's creation with the whole. e.g. applying observational skills to dissect aspects of creation in order to see fractions in God's world.
- To use certain systematic rules and procedures to resolve practical sharing problems.

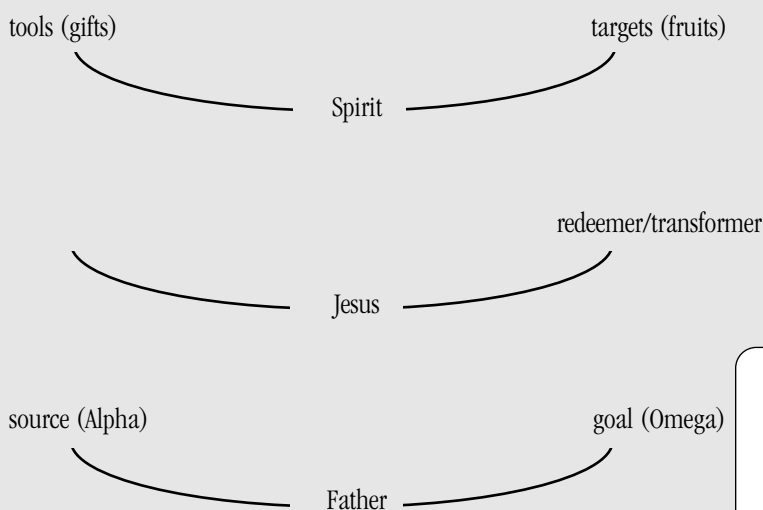
**Means**

**Biblical Bridge:** the problem of equal sharing of resources between people who need each other's parts to make up their whole.

**Materials used:** pie charts, real cakes, chocolate bars, fruit segments etc. A story approach could be used with younger or less able pupils, e.g. Mr Fickle's Fraction Pie Factory.

Here we offer a simplified version of how the idea could be interpreted:

**Unifying Concept**



?

*Application: How could this model be used further to develop the moral and spiritual as well as the cognitive?*

Other examples from this school found in the chapters on English Literature and History borrow more from model B, although the central focus is still on the nature and character of God.

**Model B: Curriculum developed at Oak Hill School**

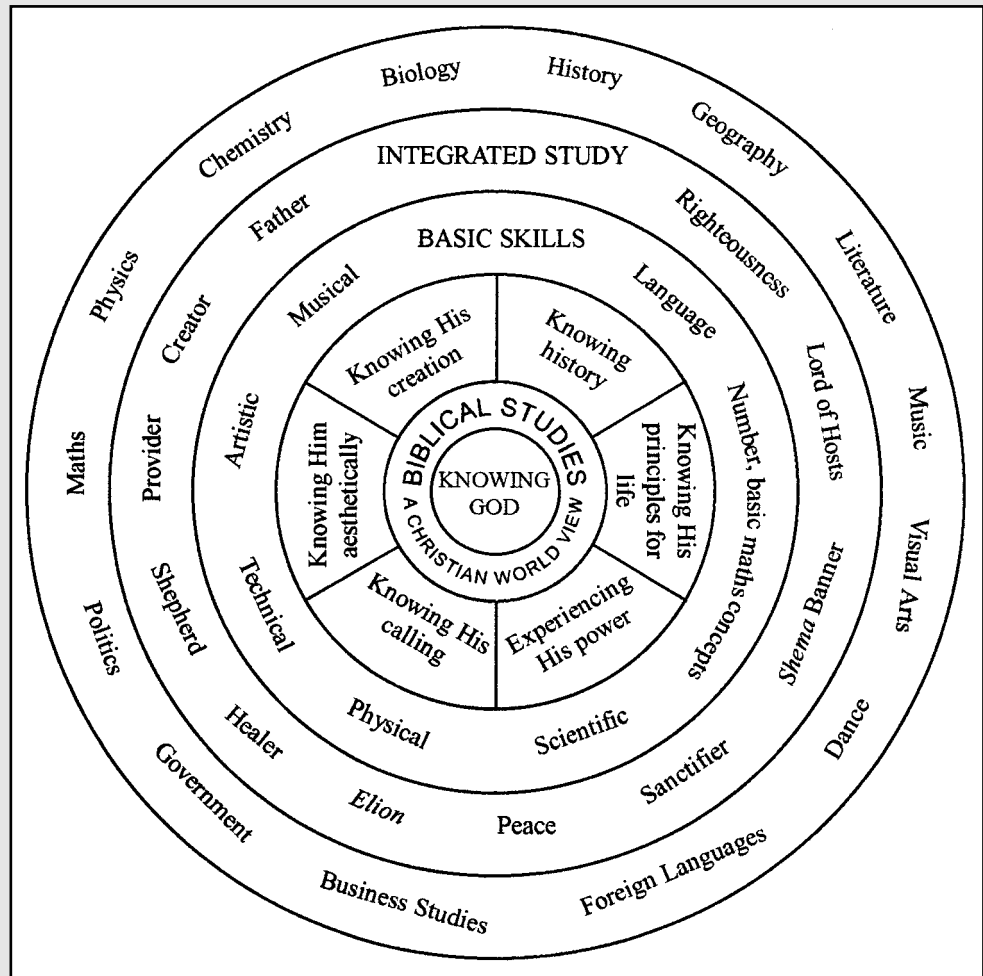
This is a form of a model which is commonly found as the basis of many of the curriculum examples to be found in the Christian schools cited throughout this file.

The introduction to the description of this curriculum model states:

*“It is commonly assumed that knowledge in the curriculum is neutral, value-free and independent of any religious belief. However, school curricula carry hidden messages about reality that are not always consistent with a Christian view of the world and of life. Oak Hill School meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but the day-to-day learning programme also reflects the educational principles and priorities of the school. All subjects are brought into a unified, coherent Christian framework which acknowledges the structure and interdependence of the creation.”*

In the Primary and Middle departments integrated areas of study, often based on attributes of God, bring together a variety of curriculum areas viewed in the context of “God’s principles for life”. Integration continues to be pursued in the Senior department: “The heart of the Senior curriculum is the Biblical Studies/Investigations course. This teaches critical thinking skills combined with an introduction to the ideas that have shaped our world, including a serious study of all other major religions and contemporary ideologies, and develops a basis from which the children can begin to think from a Christian perspective. This way of thinking is then encouraged and developed in all other areas of the curriculum.” The curriculum model is as follows:

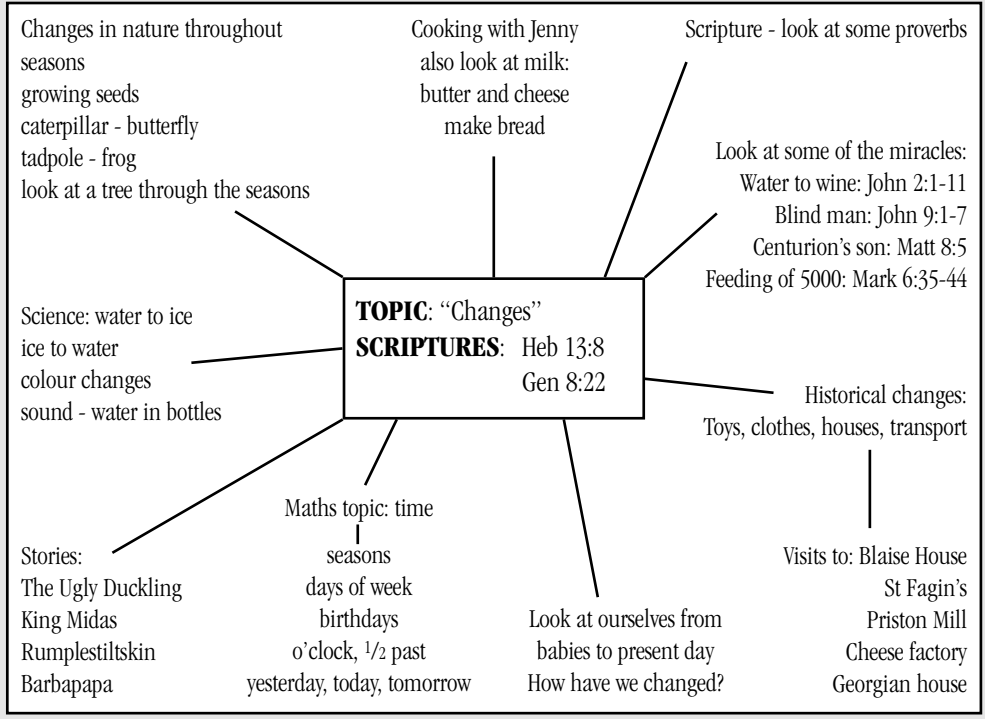
Curriculum model B



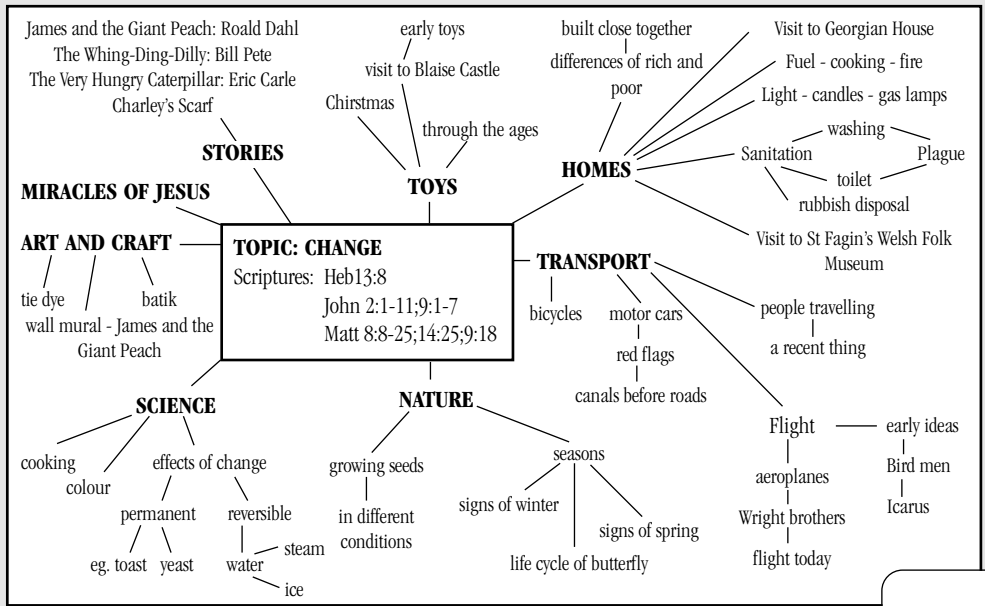
This is worked out in the curriculum using the names of God, which reveal the attributes of God and the principles for living which these names portray.

The following two examples are based on the name, The Lord Host High and focus on the idea of Servant King, looking particularly at the principle of change. This first flow chart is for age 5/6 (year 1) and the second is for 7/8 (year 2).

**God's Name:** Lord Most High    **Attribute:** Servant King    **Principle:** Change



**God's Name:** Lord Most High    **Attribute:** Servant King    **Principle:** Change



?

*How far can this model be used when planning primary school topic work in your school context?*

At the secondary level it is often through the humanities that an integrated curriculum has been developed. The humanities was a curriculum intended, for the most part, to integrate knowledge and learning by developing inter-disciplinary links between those subjects which bore some relationship to each other. Included in the humanities are subjects such as

*The greatest challenge facing Christian education today is that of discovering the unity of all that is known, of formulating for our children a single mental vision, of bringing every little bit of interpreted fact and every theory of explanation into subjection to Christ.*

*Norman De Jong, Education in the Truth*

religious education, geography and history; others would also include science, social studies and philosophy. The humanities is about people, their beliefs and way of life, their activities in both past and present in different parts of the world and their relationship with the environment. A humanities course encourages the development of pupils' understanding of their own and other peoples' societies. Through this it is intended that pupils become active, responsible and sensitive members of the community.

With the introduction of the National Curriculum, the humanities has probably received less attention than the separate subjects which go to make up the humanities. One school states that "we should not waver in our aim to promote amongst our children an all encompassing mental vision of the universe which will require an integrated approach to the curriculum". Oak Hill School continued to develop humanities courses realising the importance of cross-curricular links in developing a meaningful, wholistic picture of life and the world.

### Rationale for a humanities course

God sees no subject boundaries. To Him there are no distinctly geographical facts, or historical facts, or social facts or even any distinctly scientific facts. To Him every bit of knowledge is united and held together by Christ, as it waits to be brought by the sons of God out of its fallen state and put into its rightful place in creation under the Lordship of Christ (cf. *Rom 8:18-22*).

*Oak Hill School, Bristol*

#### Aims

*"To have an all encompassing Christian world view and mental vision of the universe, in which (pupils) are able to unite all that they know into a meaningful whole."*

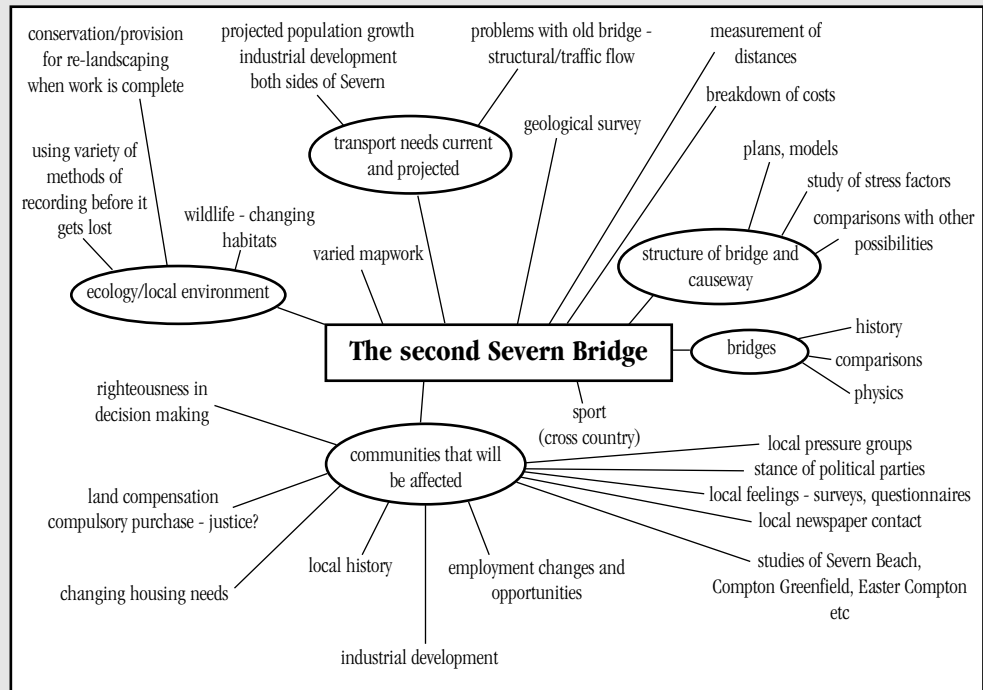
1. To stimulate pupils' interest in the nature and quality of human life.
2. To demonstrate the contributions, singly and jointly, of the humanities disciplines to our understanding of how people's lives are influenced by beliefs, aspirations, values, human actions and the environment.
3. To engender enthusiasm for the past and sensitivity to values in contemporary society and issues affecting the environment.
4. To promote understanding of individual human action, community and social development, past and present.
5. To promote understanding of the social, political and ecological processes affecting the development of the human environment.
6. To develop awareness of the contrasting opportunities and constraints facing people living in different places under different physical and human conditions.
7. To ensure knowledge is rooted in understanding of the nature and use of evidences.
8. To develop a range of skills and competencies through enquiry approaches, fieldwork investigations, data collection, collation interpretation, analysis and prediction.

9. To develop awareness of the major economic and political factors which have shaped the contemporary world.

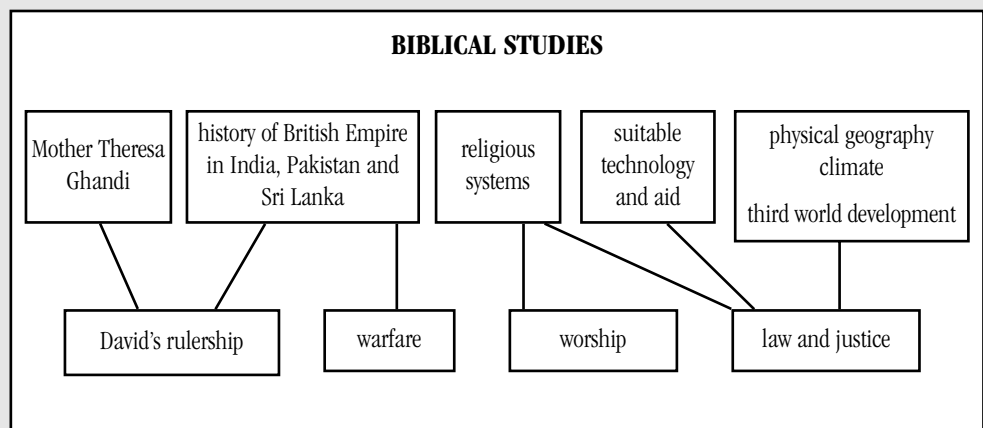
Oak Hill developed a five year humanities programme. The following is an extract showing the topics covered during the first year.

<b>TERM 1</b>	
<b>topics</b>	<b>norms/attributes</b>
BRISTOL	
Trade (slave)	Justice
Brunel GWR	Stewardship
Muller	Shalom (aesthetics)
Wesley	Faith
Geography	Faithfulness
local government	God's kingship
<b>TERM 2</b>	
<b>topics</b>	<b>norms/attributes</b>
INDIA	
Religious system	Law and justice
Suitable technology	Call of God - destiny
Mother Theresa	A holy nation
	Warfare
Ghandi	Prophet/priest/king
Climate	David - godly rulership
Development	Worship
History - empire	
Pakistan/Sri Lanka	
<b>TERM 3</b>	
<b>topics</b>	<b>norms/attributes</b>
ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS	
	Wisdom/shalom
Medes and Persians	Hearing God
Greeks	Service
Romans	Anointing
Evidence/Archaeology	Confrontation with powers of
darkness	
Time line	Integrity/holiness

Flow chart for Term 1:



As topics about India are taught in Term 2, reference and comparison would be made to the Biblical themes. The links are shown here by the dotted lines.



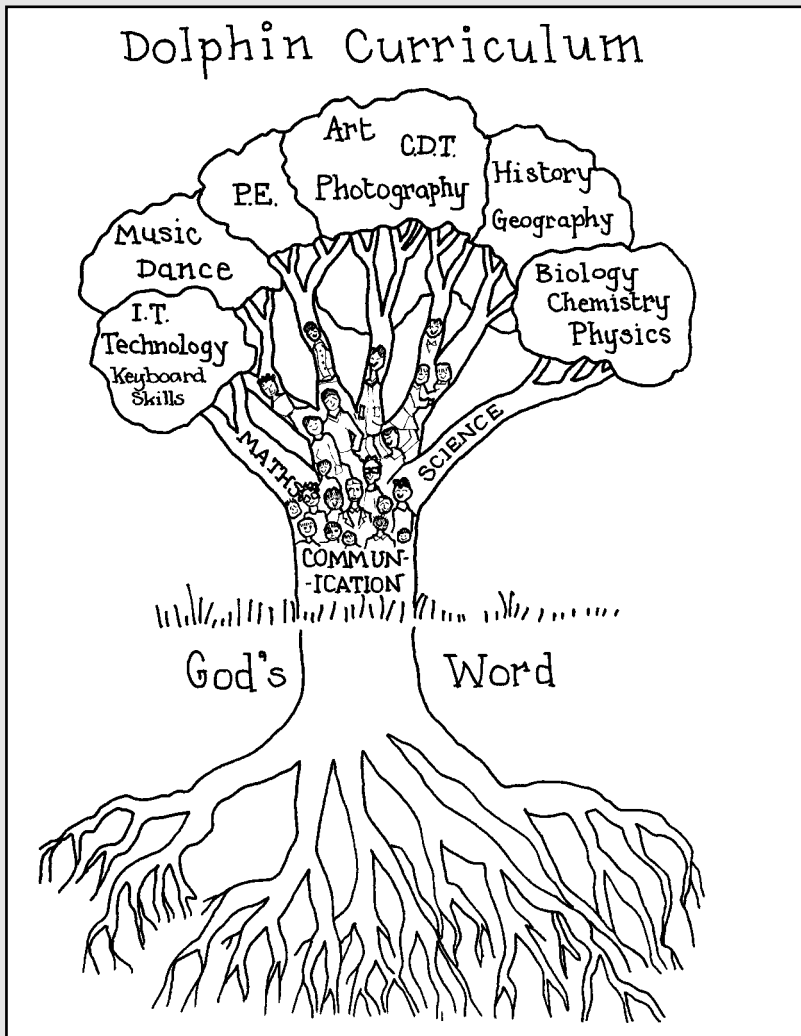
**Model C: The Dolphin School**

Dolphin describe their curriculum model as an “integrated/interactive” model, in which knowledge is seen as more than simply academic facts and more than segregated pieces of information. It is rather seen in terms of integration and wholeness, with God as the source, centre and end of each piece of information. He is woven throughout and encompasses all. While they use a diagram to represent their ideas, they realise that it is not wide enough or broad enough to deal with complexities of the relationships within education.



They also recognise that the model might need to change to represent the curriculum more adequately as they themselves develop their understanding of God and the world.

*He (God) is before all things, and in Him all things hold together (Colossians 1:17)*



An explanation of the diagram is given as follows:

- The curriculum is firmly and complexly rooted and grounded in the Word of God, His nature and character, His works and ways as revealed in His word, the Bible
- The trunk of the tree is Communication which pervades all areas of the curriculum taking essential nutrients to every part of the tree. The trunk is made of people: teachers, parents, children and other adults who are constantly communicating that which derives from their roots. Communication can also be through dance, drama, art, music, newspaper/magazines, graphs, maps, computer graphics etc.
- Just as the food made in the leaves is taken back to the roots, so, as various areas of knowledge are studied, a greater understanding of God and His word is gained.
- Languages (English, modern and ancient foreign languages), maths and science form the larger part of the timetable.
- The branches at the top of the tree show other areas (not exhaustive) of the curriculum.

“If you look up into a tree it is often hard to tell which leaf or small branch or cluster comes from which larger branch. This is how it is with knowledge. It is integrated and interactive.”

**The basic framework of the curriculum is as follows**

The Dolphin School intends to give each child the opportunity to:

- know and enjoy God
- understand the Universe God has created and to know his (the child’s) place in it
- be equipped to live constructively in contemporary society especially in the God-given social units of family, church and state.

**Principles for the selection of content**

The Dolphin School selects content on the basis that God has three goals for the individual:

- Knowledge: skills and information
- Understanding: the ability to utilise those skills and information ... knowledge of God
- Wisdom: the ability to make right judgements in the light of understanding and knowledge ... knowing God which is our ultimate purpose.

These goals will be attained by enabling each child to know the Creator, know the created, know the creation.

**Principles for making decisions about the sequence**

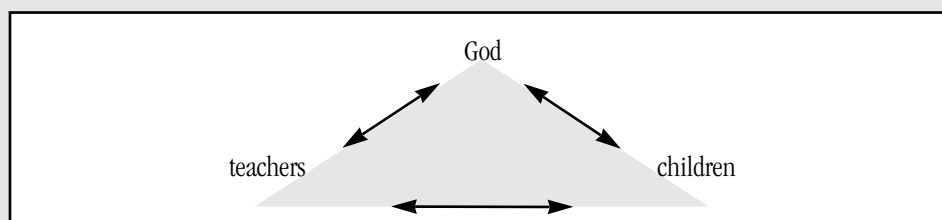
The Dolphin School makes decisions about the sequence on the basis that:

- God commands us to train up a child in the way he should go (*Proverbs 22:6*).
- Training is progressive (*Isaiah 28:1-10*).
- We are aware that the development of children progresses through various stages that are not necessarily related to age.
- We will ultimately trust God, who promises to give all wisdom and understanding, to reveal to us the right time to teach the next stage to each individual child.

**Principles for the development of a teaching strategy**

The Dolphin School intends to develop a teaching strategy based on:

- the understanding that teaching depends upon relationships of love and obedience.



- the provision of a secure environment in which children are aware of clearly defined behavioural boundaries.
- the provision of meaningful experiences in which children will be given opportunity to develop ability and creativity, express themselves and discover new information.
- the God-given role of the teacher to explain, interpret and direct.
- the understanding that knowledge is seen as a whole relating to all aspects of an individual and their environment.

**Principles for making decision about the priority given to areas of the curriculum**

The Dolphin School intends to make decisions about the priority given to areas of curriculum based on:

- the understanding that God gives wisdom, from His mouth come knowledge and understanding (*Proverbs 2:6*).
- the belief that as we seek the Lord He will reveal to us His plans for our particular situation at any time.

**Principles for studying and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of individuals as they affect progress, and adapting the above to meet their needs.**

These will be based upon any of the following:

teacher assessment, corporate prayer among staff, discussion with parents, revelation, professional support services, all in the context of unconditional love and acceptance.

**Principles on which to evaluate teacher performance**

Evaluation will be based on:

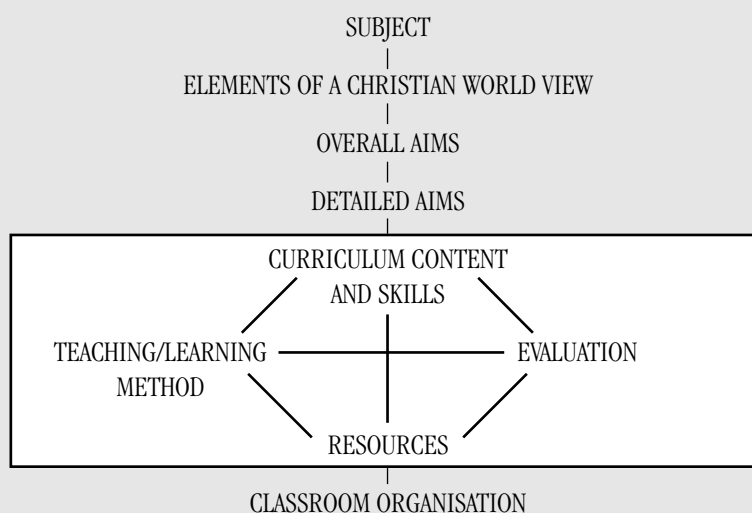
discussion with colleagues, in-service training, interaction with and visits to other schools, educational advisers input, self-evaluation and revelation.

All the subject material is assessed in the light of the Christian world view which the school upholds. The content (which includes the content of the National Curriculum) is incorporated into the syllabus as it relates to the themes which are based on the Names of God as they are revealed in the Bible<sup>5</sup>:

Age	Name of God
5-6	Elohim - Creator God Topic - Creation
6-7	Adonai - Father of a family from all nations Topic - The Nations
7-8	Adonai Jireh - Provider    Adonai Rophe - Healer/ Restorer
8-9	Adonai Nissi - Banner    Adonai Mkeddish - Sanctifier
9-10	Adonai Rohi - Shepherd    Adonai Shammah - The God who is There
10-11	Adonai Tsidkenu - Righteous    Adonai Shalom - Peace
11-12	Adonai Zebaoth - Lord of Hosts
12-13	Adonai Elyon - Lord, Most High
13-14	Elohim - Humanity made in God's image

<sup>5</sup>Throughout the Old Testament God reveals Himself to His people through His name. As the people of God encountered various circumstances God acted and in doing so showed Himself to His people revealing more of His character and His ways. "The name signifies the active presence of the person in the fullness of the revealed character" (J.D. Douglas et al (Eds) *The New Bible Dictionary*).

They have devised a process for working this through into the curriculum which is as follows:



From the Elements of the Christian World View for each subject, overall and detailed aims are developed. The syllabus is then written, the content and skills of which are conveyed to the children through the themes outlined above. As the teacher chooses a topic within their syllabus three questions are kept in mind so that each area of knowledge is conveyed through a biblical perspective.

- What is God’s intention for the particular area of creation?

This has two aspects:     at creation initially  
  as we unfold it

- How has this purpose been distorted by the effects of sin, as reflected in human idolatry and the out-workings of God’s word of judgement?
- What are the avenues by which we may hope to bring about healing and reconciliation? In what ways does the Gospel impel us to action so that the Lord’s Shalom might at least be partially restored, on the basis of Christ’s mighty work of redemption?

The “Rationale and aims” of the geography curriculum based on the above model can be found in Section III: Chapter 12, sections 1 and 2 Geography.

## 2.2 The Christian world view as expressed in the Creation-Fall-Redemption and Consummation as a focus for the curriculum

### ▶ Model D: Christian Schools’ Trust Science Curriculum Team

A common model for integrating Christian concerns with curriculum development centres around the themes of Creation, Fall and Redemption. These themes are seen as being foundational to the Bible’s

account of our world and our place in it, and therefore equally foundational to an exploration of a Christian understanding of education. This model has been developed by members of the Christian Schools Trust Science Curriculum Team (CST SCT).

The Creation, Fall, Redemption themes can be expressed as a series of questions:

In regard to each area, entity, or aspect of creation,

■ Why was it created?

What is God's intention for it? What are the foundational created roles that it has, whether it be a metal or a microbe, magnetism or mutation? ...

■ What were humans meant to do?

What potential does this thing have and how were human beings meant to develop that potential to God's glory? ...

■ What has gone wrong?

Have the roles and purpose, and the development of the potential, been distorted or misdirected in any way?

■ What is the remedy?

How can the proper roles be restored? How can the brokenness in this realm of creation be healed? How can those who are alienated from God and from each other be reconciled? In what ways does the Gospel compel us to action, so that the Lord's *shalom* might be restored, at least partially now, on the basis of Christ's mighty work of redemption?

(Many times, the answer to the questions may well be an incentive to more study: 'We don't yet know'.)

These general questions are supplemented with more specific tools for tackling areas such as human relationships and responsibilities or study of a society.

One teacher at Oak Hill School approached the National Curriculum topic North American Indians using a "Christian World View" model. What follows are samples from the teacher's notes which were part of the planning for a half term's scheme of work on the American West.

**North American Indians**

<b>1 The West as a region (one week)</b>	<b>2 The Plains Indians way of life (4 weeks)</b>
Maps of rainfall vegetation population density Travel time Natural frontiers of America Film: The Making of a Continent Politics - Frontiers Maps of 15 States Louisiana Purchase (etc)	Individual projects + videos + skills exercises America's Indians Beliefs of Plains Indians Buffalo The Tepee/On the move Family Life Government of the Land and Tribe Warfare

3 The Struggle for the Plains (3 weeks)	4 End of Indians' way of life
i. Whiteman's view of the plains a) Great American Desert b) Coming of Railroads c) Land unfit to cultivate d) Manifest Destiny e) The struggle for the Plain ii. Final Conflict and Sioux Wars iii. Custar's Last Stand	Conclusion: Images of the West Westerns + Dances with Wolves

To show how a biblical world view penetrates the scheme of work, more details are given below on some of those areas in which the integration of biblical beliefs and values are more obvious.

### The Plains' Indians

**A Aim:** To see American Indians and their culture as God would see them rather than as Westerners would see them.

**B Background reading:** *Earthkeeping*  
*The Transforming Vision*

**C Learning methods:** want to explore it with the children

- brainstorm
- discuss
- debate
- wall display

### 1 Study American culture/world view.

- Become acquainted with North American culture
- Brief introduction of American history
  - Why was it as it was (geography/environment)?
  - What is Western world view?
- From Gods' perspective:
  - What was obedient about it?
  - What was disobedient?
- How would we see it?
- What is the difference?

### 2 The Idea of Progress

- The Idea of Evolution

### 3. Plains' Indians

- Already living on land
- Railroad - settlers
- Struggle for plains - reservations
- Buffalo slaughtered

- War
- Attitudes to the land

- The Great Spirit: Is the Great Spirit same as Christian God?  
Are the animal spirits God, angels, demons or what?

**4 Modern situation of American Prairies**

- Show textbook bias
- What is good or bad about modern use of Prairies compared with the way it was under the Indians?

**5 Finally, a class debate was held on what was good and what was bad in the different cultures.**

This is a summary of the class debate:

<b>GOOD</b>	<b>BAD</b>
<p><b>Beliefs:</b> Respected all things: wildlife, nature, nothing abused like today, everyone equal. Environment well balanced.</p> <p><b>Buffalo:</b> Well used, not wasted at all, only the heart (cf. Whiteman's waste today). Only killed when necessary.</p> <p><b>Tepee:</b> Indians said - always clean, and warm in winter. Men protect women, but women did go out to the hunt.</p> <p><b>Family life:</b> tribes playing on ice - happily Dances with Wolves</p> <p><b>Government:</b> Warfare: Horseman - skill, bravery. Never developed modern weapons. Grasslands unchanged for 1000 years Land developed - progress: railroads, wheat, cattle, reduction of erosion. Good use of land - different farming methods for different geography and climate.</p>	<p><b>Beliefs:</b> Medicine man, healing, bad spirits Prisoners burnt alive. Great Spirit, animal spirits, all life holy not just man. Contact with spirits. Self torture.</p> <p><b>Buffalo:</b> Too many hunted, some stolen, whole herds over cliffs.</p> <p><b>Tepee:</b> Animals on outside, filthy, awful conditions, women did all the work, carry all possessions, men made all the decisions. Very sexist.</p> <p><b>Family Life:</b> Children rude and disrespectful, widows had to marry even if had many wives (needed protection).</p> <p><b>Government:</b> Warfare: Cutting stomach, scalping, for spiritual reasons. Grassland needed to be cultivated (Creation mandate)</p>

*Oak Hill School, Bristol*

### 2.3 The Creation Order as a focus for curriculum development

#### Model E. Covenant Christian School

This model begins from the way in which the Bible divides and categorises the world when it describes God's creation and his desires for it.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND CREATION

God	Creation				
	Angels	Human Beings	Animals	Plants	Non- living

Pupils study different aspects of a topic following the progression of creation outlined in *Genesis 1* using the "ladder of creation" (see Table below).

#### LADDER OF GOD'S CREATION

			Buy and Sell Have conscience Use language Worship
		Communicate Have senses Move about Live in groups	
	Feed Grow Reproduce Change		
Weight Colour Size Shape			
Non-living things	Plants	Animals	Humankind

Topics are taken from the above over a two year period, so 5/6 year olds study the divisions of the sub-human kingdom of *Genesis 1*: dry land, water, plants and animals; 7/8 year olds study human relationships through the "three creation ordinances": work, family and worship. Projects on farming are given as an example of work and the human relationship to the environment, shopping as an example of relationships with one another and mission as an example of relationship to God. As pupils move into the secondary years projects are continued, focusing on communication, law and society. *Communication* involves communication of God to humanity, between human beings, including the history of English and different types of



communication through the ages, and amongst animals. *Law* includes mathematics, science, economics, psychology, linguistics and ethics as well as “legal law”. *Society* traces the history of the state, the church and the family and includes world views and community studies.

**Covenant Christian School - Curriculum Outline**

Ages	Ages 5/6 (yrs 1/2)	Age 7 (yr 3)	Age 8 (Yr 4)	Age 9 (Yr 5)
<b>Continuing Studies</b> English Language, Mathematics, Physical Development, Music, Art and Craft etc				
<b>Projects</b> (With continuing studies integrated where appropriate)				
Autumn	WATER	PLANTS	FARMING An example of man's relationship with the sub-human kingdom.	WORK
Spring			SHOPPING An example of man's relationship with the human kingdom.	FAMILY
Summer	DRY LAND	ANIMALS	MISSIONARIES An example of man's relationship to God.	CORPORATE WORSHIP These are the 3 "Creation Ordinances" of Genesis 1 & 2
<b>Building a Christian Mind</b>				
<b>Laying the foundation</b>		*	<b>Building at a higher lever</b>	

?

*How far could all the projects on shopping, farming and mission look at our relationship with the environment, one another and with God?*

	Age 10/yr 6	Age 11/yr7	Age 12/yr 8	Age 13/Yr 9	Age 14/yr 10	Age 15/yr11
<b>Continuing studies</b>	Physical Development					
	Art and Craft					→ GCSE
	Music					→ GCSE
	Mathematics					→ GCSE
	English (Language and Literature)					→ GCSE x 2
	History					→ GCSE
	Geography					→ GCSE
<b>Projects</b>	Man Himself					
	A study of man made in God's image, human personality, abilities, creativity, physical make up, health etc..	Communication	Foreign Language			
		Communication between God, angels, man and the animal kingdom especially God's communication to man through the ages.	Language Awareness	Computing		
			Science	Religious Education		
			Law			
			A study of God's law and man's law in many different spheres eg. number and shape, science, economics, linguistics, ethics and legal matters.	World views		
				Family and community studies		
<b>Building a Christian Mind</b>						
<b>Underpinning GCSE</b>			*	<b>GCSE</b>		

The framework is divided into three main sections; what exists; how it functions; its value. The following illustrations using this process, "Dry Land" and "Work" are for ages 5/6 (years 1 and 2) and age 8 (year 4) respectively:

### Dry land

a) When answering "what is it?" in the topic of "dry land" some of the areas include:

- colour: maps are studied, a collage made, papier mache model, imaginary landscapes, sets and subsets of different land types such as sand, soil, stones.
- shape: earth is spherical, old theories, exploration; shapes of non-living things, prism, cuboid, crystals.
- size: language of comparison, measuring methods, distance, names of continents.

Weight, texture, temperature, strength, minerals and land formations are also studied.

- b) When answering the question of “how does it function?”, history, beauty, order, variety and purpose are studied, as are the spoiling of all things and their restoration and reconciliation through Jesus. All are linked with appropriate scripture passages. Relational aspects are also studied, including God’s relationship to the earth as creator and sustainer, and humanity’s relationship to the earth as steward. The “creation mandate” of caring for and developing the earth is the foundation of this section. Development, exploration, technology, art, enjoyment, use and misuse of non-living things are discussed.
- c) The final question, “what is its value?” concerns its value to humanity and its value to God.

### Work

- a) What is it? God’s work in creation, providence and redemption which has a strong emphasis on the supremacy of God and the principles of overcoming through the work of Christ. The work of angels in worshipping, ministering and conveying messages and human work is described in terms of the God given mandate of stewardship. Animal work is discussed using as examples the work of bees, dogs and so on.
- b) How does it function? The historical aspects of work are dealt with in terms of Adam’s work, before and after the fall and of Christ’s work on earth and the future. The relational aspects of work are studied using specific occupations with a view to showing that there is no sacred and secular divide in God’s eyes, but all work is acceptable when seeking to please God, based on service to others and stewardship of material possessions. Both use and abuse is dealt with using biblical norms and principles as the standards for judging.
- c) What is its value? Using different occupations such as housewife, gardener, pop artist, nurse, fireman, dustman, the importance of the work is looked at in terms of God’s creation, the effects of the fall, idolatry, stewardship and helping others.

*Covenant Christian School, Stockport*

### Model F: Christian Schools’ Trust

A more philosophical version of this works from a basis provided by Christian philosophers in the Dutch Reformed tradition who have sought to analyse the irreducible aspects of God’s creation and their interrelations. A sample list is as follows:

Quantitative	(discrete quantity)
Spatial	(continuous extension)
Kinematic	(uniform motion)
Physical	(energetic action)
Biological	(generation)
Psycho-sensory	(feeling/sentience)
Formational	(cultural formation)
Aesthetic	(allusiveness)
Linguistic	(symbolic communication)

continued ...

Rational	(distinguishing)
Social	(communing)
Economic	(stewardship)
Judicial	(justice)
Moral	(love/truth)
Confessional	(committed trust)

Arthur Jones

This more complex kind of model is used in particular to guard against reductionistic treatments of any subject matter studied, i.e. as a way of exploring topics from all aspects rather than reducing them to one or two. It is currently being developed by the Curriculum Development Unit of the Christian Schools' Trust.

**2.4 Knowledge of God as a central focus for learning**

Previous models have sought to express a Christian world view through looking at the different facets of God's Creation. The following model looks at the knowledge of God as the key to understanding knowledge itself and how we should understand the relationship between different forms of knowledge.

**Model G. The Shepherd School**

**Policy on Curriculum Development:**

Here are two key scriptures in relation to curriculum development:

*"He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge. The fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure."* (Isaiah 33:6)

*"In Christ all things hold together"* (Colossians 1:17)

We can see from these Scriptures amongst other things that:

- **The knowledge of God is foundational.** If the fundamental premises underlying any curriculum ideas either ignore the knowledge of God or are against the knowledge of God, they are clearly not acceptable for a Christian school.
- **The knowledge of God is relevant.** ("for your times") True Christian education, with its basis in a true understanding of the character of God, will not be old-fashioned and irrelevant. It will, in fact, provide the key to a correct interpretation and understanding of today's world.
- **The knowledge of God is diverse.** The emphasis on riches, treasure, knowledge and wisdom shows that true Christian education is broad. Knowing God is not a private mystical experience but should lead us out into a great fascination for the intricacy and complexity of the world God has made.
- **The knowledge of God is moral.** When people have a deep respect for God and for his holy character it has a consequent effect on the character of the learner. Christian education is not just concerned with the acquisition of facts and information - it is about learning to live and work righteously before God and other people.

■ ***The knowledge of God is integrational.*** Here is the other side of diversity (point 3). All truth is God's truth. There is no religious/secular divide. Any programme of learning will be fragmented if there is not some reference point. Much education today could be likened to beads (like different subjects) rolling haphazardly around on a floor. In Christian education the beads are put together on a string - there is coherence and an understanding of the inter-connectedness of things in Christ.

*The Shepherd School, Lewisham*

## Conclusion

All the models described in this section would agree that developing a knowledge of God himself, as well as an understanding of his character, and his creation, is a primary aim of the curriculum. To place God at the centre of curriculum development is seen as a way out of the secular dilemma of child-centred versus subject-centred approaches to curriculum outlined above.

Therefore, it could be said that most of the examples in this file fit loosely within 2.1 and 2.2. There are examples which are drawn from teachers who are trying to engage in activities that seek to bring God into an essentially secular model (see 2 above). We have included these because mission activity requires engagement with a culture before we can transform it.

The next Section looks at how different teachers have applied their Christian beliefs to the practices of the curriculum. Some teachers, while they have not completely restructured the foundations of their curriculum area, have nevertheless applied their thinking to certain aspects of the curriculum. Not all teachers have the freedom to apply their Christian thinking as the Christian schools are able to do. The examples found have thus been analysed and grouped under various headings showing where practice currently stands and the areas of any curriculum area where a biblical application might apply. While some Christians argue that a total reconstruction of the foundations is essential before developing Christian curricula, others believe that a transformational approach, moving on from where we are at the present time, is required. This handbook is intended to encourage the critical reflection of practising teachers on their own practices, looking both at a complete overhaul of the curriculum, as well as seeing how far they can influence the present.

## Resources and further reading

Harro van Brummelen *Stepping-stones to Curriculum* (1994) Seattle, Alta Vista College Press

Harro van Brummelen *Walking with God in the Classroom* (1988) Burlington, Ontario, Canada, Welch Publishing Company Inc.

Geraldine J. Steensma and Harro van Brummelen *Shaping School Curriculum: a biblical view* (1977) Terre Haute, Signal Publishing, Indiana

Robert W. Pazmiño *Principles and Practices of Christian Education - An Evangelical Perspective*, (1992) Grand Rapids, Baker Book House

Brain Walsh *Subversive Christianity* (1992) Bristol, Regis Press

John P. White "The Primary Teacher as Servant of the State" in *Education 3-13* 7(2) (1979) p18-23



## SECTION III

### CURRICULUM CONTENT

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# English literature

## Introduction

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- 1:2 Aims

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- ▶ Possible themes to discuss in *The Merchant of Venice*
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## Resources and further reading



# English Literature

## Introduction

***English (literature as well as language) is about expression and communication. We need language to think, as well as to communicate to others. It is vital that pupils are able to express themselves clearly, effectively and accurately. Communication is essential for the development of human relations and relations with God himself. Pupils need opportunities which will enable them to access all that is available to them through literacy.***

Many Christians, even in English teaching, have hardly begun to think about language or literature in a way which is relevant to the current social and cultural milieu. English Literature has received more attention from Christian educators than other areas of the English curriculum, but Christian views of the linguistic aspects of the English curriculum also need to be developed. Some issues and ideas related to language have been developed and summarised in the chapter on Modern Languages. These also apply to the teaching of English.

This chapter, with its main focus on literature, looks first at what a Biblical rationale for literature might be, with some comments and statements of aims from various schools and teachers. It then considers specific uses of literature, including the Bible as a source of literary study. It identifies Christian elements in various works, exploring world views and ways of using explicitly Christian literature. Finally, it looks at the role and responsibilities of the teacher of literature. Further insights into any of these areas, and other written and oral aspects not mentioned here, would be welcomed.

What these examples demand of us, whatever our situation, is that we look for truth in what we find and develop that truth as far as we are able.

## 1 Rationale and aims

What is the value of teaching and studying literature? Faced with suggestions that literature is ‘not useful’ when measured against technological or economic priorities, Christian educators have joined other professional students of literature in articulating defenses of the value of literature for human life and growth.

### 1:1 Biblical rationale for the study of literature

David Barratt (1985) argues that the study of literature can give:

- sensitivity to language (including God “speaking”)
- an extension of our experience of life
- growth in understanding for others
- increased awareness of the complexity and mystery of human personhood and creativity, and a sense of human uniqueness
- greater awareness of the created world
- insight into moral patterns of life as well as the moral nature of the universe and transcendent issues of good and evil

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- awareness of our traditions (both general and Christian)
- awareness of social patterns and their benefits or dangers

“  
*Christian teachers in certain secular settings will need to think about how to articulate the Christian basis for their appreciation of literature in their departmental documents, as well as their personal planning of their work.*  
 ”

A number of Christians have sought to articulate a rationale and justification for the study of literature. Their statements reflect aspirations similar to those outlined by Barratt.

### 1:2 Aims

In this section there are three examples of aims for the English Curriculum.

#### ▶ Aims for the teaching of reading

The following aims for the teaching of reading have been taken from various sources:

- to enable the children to read the scriptures and appreciate God’s nature and revelation to mankind (*Is 34:16*)
- to develop the love of reading and of good literature
- to develop a love of language and an appreciation of its variety, precision and power.
- to develop communication skills
- to develop the mind, aesthetic sensibilities and moral faculties
- to develop the child’s ability and willingness to assess critically the values and content of texts
- to enable the children to achieve a measure of independence in their ability to gain access to information and develop a means of self-instruction
- to be a means of building self-esteem. Success in learning to read increases the degree of independence and self respect
- to broaden the children’s understanding of cultures and their development, in the light of the Kingdom of God
- to develop responsible attitudes to reading (i.e. to learn the skills of discernment)
- to be a means of enriching the child’s life and that of others

#### ▶ The aims of Special Literature Studies

The Christian School in Liverpool has designed a literature course to stimulate reason and imagination. This course focuses on books, whether sacred or secular, which leave the reader with a sense of wholesomeness and worthwhileness. Their criteria for good books are based on Gladys Hunt’s which can be found in *Honey for a Child’s Heart*. “Good literature” should:

- have life
- capture reality

- arouse what endures in the heart
- reflect profound morality (shallowness may breed narrowness and lead to insecurity)
- inspire and draw out what is noble
- respect the ability of the child to understand (principles do not need to be ‘preached’)
- have a variety of style (including illustrative style)
- show characterisation at a memorable depth
- be of good quality in presentation

Books can reflect the richness and abundance of God’s creation and truth, can find expression in humanity’s creative imagination. These studies include an opportunity to develop empathy, aspiration, appreciation of truth and beauty, intuitive response and moral discrimination. This type of reading allows for an awareness and discussion of a number of life issues, and develops an appreciation and enjoyment of the observations of an artist. It is also intended that children become critical readers developing a sense of responsibility and discernment in their own choice of books.

*Critical appreciation of literature must be concerned not only with the art form but with whether or not it is handled responsibly.*

## ► Aims for the study of literature

The King’s School, Witney, suggests that

*“Literature is one form of communication. It is (also) a means of encapsulating and conveying the message of our inheritance... Literature created by men and women... communicates values and principles, experiences and ideals which can shape our responses to life... Literature offers an interpretation of life, exposing it to our gaze and broadening our horizons... Our aim...is a controlled exposure to issues of right and wrong. This will hopefully lead to deeper awareness, sensitivity and understanding of the world and the people in it... (It is) a responsibility... that needs dependence on God and prayer, allowing ourselves to be guided by the peace of God and other wise counsel, e.g. the Head, other staff... Literature is not an isolated study. It can serve, enhance and helpfully interpret aspects of life and culture in History, Geography, Political Studies, Science etc... In broad terms, the Christian (teacher) has a responsibility to ensure that the literature studied should be helpful in developing our knowledge of God, His Kingdom and His Righteousness... Philipians 4:8 is a general guideline - “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.”...*

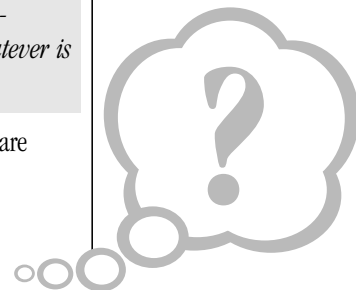
We need to be careful about the choices we make. We are responsible for those choices and how they are handled. We can either affirm and promote the Kingdom of God, or deny and destroy it.

Key questions to be asked of a text might include:

***What is the message of the text?***

***How can this be viewed in the light of our understanding of God?***

These aims add pedagogically focused concerns to more general reasons for appreciating the value of literature, such as, helping children to grow in moral discernment and to make wise choices.



Of course, aims remain empty unless carefully worked into concrete practice. The kind of personal growth which Christian educators see as important cannot be left to take place mysteriously and accidentally. The following examples illustrate some varying ways in which Christian teachers of English literature are building Christian concerns into their teaching.

## 2 The use of the Bible itself in the teaching of language

In view of the literary significance of the Bible and the degree to which it permeates English literature, there need be no apology for introducing Biblical examples in secular educational contexts with the aim of increasing Biblical literacy.

### 2.1 The Bible used as an object of literary study and to exemplify literary genre

The Bible obviously contains examples of poetry (*Psalms*, prophets), metaphor and symbol ('The Lord is my shepherd'), dramatic narrative (David and Goliath), and so on. Some teachers also use parts of the Bible allegorically, but there is some argument about whether the Bible actually contains allegory (see section 7 - The power of allegory).

#### ▶ Esther: a play

Some parts of the Bible are a fruitful source for literature study involving careful study of the story, attention to historical detail, use of the imagination and an eye for the inherent drama and imagery. This is not to reduce the Scriptures to this level alone, however, but to encourage imaginative reading. A play based on the book of *Esther* (Jerman 1984), focusing on these points, has been read and staged by some schools. The play focuses on the idea that believers are "not to consider themselves as the Lord's Bride only, but also as His Queen, having His ear and able to rule with Him. It is a play about the power of intercessory prayer and an instruction not to fear in perilous times, but to realise the position and function on earth that Christ intends His Church to have." (Jerman). A supplementary book on the history of the time was written as a basis for costume and stage design. Music was also written and performed to accompany the play.

This and other plays and stories based on Biblical characters can be obtained from the Christian Schools' Trust.

### 2.2 Using the Bible in learning to read

A team from several Christian schools, led by Carole Leah, are developing a primary school reading project, called *Diamond Books*, based on the Good News translation of the Bible. Although they suggest that these books are designed to supplement the early stages of existing schemes (pre-school to age 9), they are actually a fairly comprehensive aid to the teaching of reading. The project aims to develop reading skills and encourage the enjoyment of reading through real books as well as a focus on

- pre-reading skills
- sight vocabulary
- phonics
- spelling rules

## ▶ Diamond Books

### The stated aims of the project are:

- to foster a love for the Bible
- to provide well illustrated and carefully structured texts with practical ideas and instructions to develop reading at various learning stages
- to bring a refreshing light-hearted dimension - including the antics of three little modern day characters who appear in all the books
- to teach reading skill, e.g. sight vocabulary and phonics
- to assist struggling readers with a special set of books
- to equip children in difficult times with Biblical resources to alleviate fears and bring positive ideas into their lives
- to give children examples of moral and spiritual choices and their consequences

There are Christian distinctives at the heart of these aims. The project will:

- provide systematic Bible based reading for children who may lack regular Bible teaching in their own homes.
- promote Christian standards and the concept that God is real.
- in the Genesis series, provoke and answer fundamental questions about origins.
- in the Jesus' series, establish norms for human life, and a context for the child's future interpretation of what he learns.
- develop a child's confidence and sense of security on the basis that God is in control.
- introduce the supernatural in a biblical manner, unlike the occult material in some reading books which often generates confusion and fears in children and hinder their spiritual development.

It is anticipated that up to sixteen sets of books will be complete, with an average of eight in each set. The series on Creation and Jesus will be ready for production in 1997.

Content of the other series includes stories of key people and events and teaching about God's character and Kingdom. Teaching notes are provided throughout.

Care has been taken to control the complexity of vocabulary and sentence construction. However, priority has been given to conveying meaning that is faithful to biblical truth and to using language which is descriptive and lively.

The full colour illustrations extend the understanding and imagination. They also facilitate discussion and bring a tone of warmth and humour.

The project allows for a variety of teaching methods. The series for pre-readers is to be read to children. This

*In view of the literary significance of the Bible and the degree to which it permeates English literature, there need be no apology for introducing Biblical examples in secular educational contexts with the aim of increasing Biblical literacy.*

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encourages enjoyment, general book sense and familiarity with written language and key vocabulary. Those for early readers are designed with one text for adults to read and a more simplified form or repeated phrases for the children. This arrangement also facilitates paired reading techniques.

There is also a separate workbook manual to go with each set of reading books with many varied activities including sequencing, matching, writing, and listening (taped activities) skills.

This is intended to encourage the notion that reading the Bible is not something separate from other areas, but an integrated part of life and work.

### 3 The identification of overtly Christian elements in literary works

Many works of literature make reference to Christian institutions, beliefs, practices and images. If these Biblical images and allusions are not understood, texts become one-dimensional. In order to understand some works of literature, pupils need to gain an understanding of Christian beliefs and images. Not only images and allusions, but authors influenced by Christianity are often misunderstood. A knowledge of the Bible greater than that possessed by many in today's society is needed in order to appreciate the works of such authors. University teachers are finding that many students do not understand Christianity and therefore cannot be taught literature without an introductory course in Christianity in literature.

The Department of Educational Studies, University of Surrey has devised such a course which aims to:

*“explore the relationship between the Christian Faith and English Literature down the ages, showing the influence of Biblical and liturgical texts on literature, and the expression or echoing of Christian ideas in various texts.”*

The Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority has become “alarmed at our ignorance” and has set up a new GCSE to bridge what Libby Purves has called the “cultural gap” (*The Times*: 30.6.95). Christianity is so much part of Western heritage and background that having no comprehension of its beliefs and practices results in a loss of cultural identity and shallowness.

One reading policy states: *“It cannot be ignored that Biblical themes and images are a part of our literary heritage, and perhaps would be so again if (the Bible) were more widely read.”*

A potential two-way process becomes apparent. Study of the work of literature in this way can lead to an enhanced understanding of the Christian faith while at the same time study of the Christian faith will enrich the study of much English literature.

#### Units of work on *Silas Marner*

*Silas Marner*, by George Eliot, is a book currently studied in secondary schools. A Christian might include in this unit of work:

- consideration of the kinds of religion presented in the work, the attitudes of characters towards God and the consequences of those attitudes. For example, “we learn from Silas’ reclusiveness that he is mistaken in losing his faith in God and cutting himself off from people” (*Penguin Passnotes* p.48).



- the imagery of gold, the idea of Redemption, the gift of God, and sin brought to light are also possible issues for discussion.
- an author's biographical background can also be used to understand the spiritual attitudes revealed in the writing. George Eliot herself rejected her Christian faith.

### ► Charis Project - *Macbeth*

As part of the Charis Project, a group of Christian English teachers are working on materials which aim to help pupils gain a greater understanding of Christian belief through exploring *Macbeth*. The ten units are intended to be used to supplement the National Curriculum aims. The units include:

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ■ Relationship                | ■ Moral decline of Macbeth                |
| ■ Questions of responsibility | ■ Imagery                                 |
| ■ Good and evil               | ■ Language                                |
| ■ Order and disorder          | ■ The play on stage and screen            |
| ■ Supernatural influences     | ■ The historical and religious background |

Further details from The Charis Project, Stapleford House, Wesley Place, Stapleford, Nottingham NG8 9DP.

### ► Biography: a study of character

Historical and contemporary biographical accounts of Christian men and women, such as St Joan, can be used as examples of biography. These are important for students' personal development since most of the heroes on which young people model themselves are fictional (i.e. soap characters) or pop culture figures portrayed by the media. Several Christian biographical sketches are mentioned in this document, including references in the chapters on Science and History.

A useful source of Christian biography is *Expecting the Impossible* by Christine Leonard (Scripture Union). This is a book of contemporary hero characters written specifically for the purpose of providing 10-12 year olds with Christian role models.

## 4 The use of literature to explore beliefs and values

Works of literature raise and invite reflection on a wide variety of issues - moral, social, personal, spiritual, philosophical, economic, etc..

The following questions might help to explore basic beliefs:

***What is human nature?***

***Are people basically good or biased towards sin?***

***Are people locked in deterministic patterns, or can they change?***

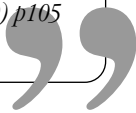
***Is radical change to be viewed as implausible?***





*Literature is a human, imaginative, symbolic response that expresses some vision of life's meaning. As such, it offers a coherent aesthetic experience that has the power to influence lives. Christian teachers help students develop spiritual maturity in their reading, especially so that they are enabled to discern the vision that is being presented and promoted.*

*Harro van Brummelen, (1990) p105*



***What is the cause of evil and injustice?***

***Is there ultimately hope or meaning?***

The following questions focus on the decisions and choices made:

***Are they good or bad?***

***What kind of relationships between people are developed?***

Studying literature will involve interacting with such questions at two levels:

- from the perspective of the particular vision of life of the author;
- from the perspective of the reader's own vision of life.

For the Christian, the Bible provides a point of comparison for the various beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours which might be portrayed in literature.

### ► Relationships

The purpose of a module such as this example from the King's School, Witney, is to study different types of relationships as portrayed in a selection of literature and to compare this to a scriptural plumbline of God's plan for relationships.

#### **a) Books used (older pupils)**

<i>The Bible</i>	<i>1 Samuel 18-26</i>
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Shakespeare
<i>Great Expectations</i>	Charles Dickens
<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>	Charles Dickens
<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Charles Dickens
<i>Rebecca</i>	Daphne du Maurier
<i>For This cross I'll Kill You</i>	Bruce Olson
<i>Peace Child</i>	Don Richardson

#### **b) Books used as lower school texts:**

<i>The Cybil War</i>	Betsy Byars
<i>Madame Doubtfire</i>	Ann Fire
<i>The Fortunate Few</i>	Tim Kennemore

*Third Class Genie*

*Buddy*

Nigel Hinton

**c) Types of relationship and characters explored:**

**Friendship**

David and Jonathan in *1 Samuel 18ff*

**Recluses**

Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*

Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*

**Sacrificial love**

Sydney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities*

Jesus

**Marriage**

Max and nameless heroine in *Rebecca*

**Ambition and those in authority**

Cassius and Caesar in *Julius Caesar*

David and Saul in *1 Samuel 18ff*

**Cross-cultural relationship**

Bruce Olson: *For This Cross I'll Kill You*

Don Richardson: *Peace Child*



*Do you think the modern Christian biographies such as those by Bruce Olson and Don Richardson could be called literature?*

*Would you feel comfortable using them in this context, or do you think any other area of the curriculum would be a more suitable context?*

**Major themes:**

The general approach to the study of literature is through questioning and guided investigations so that students have to think, consider, evaluate and listen to each other. Topics include, godly relationships involving love, giving, truth, acceptance, communication, commitment, loyalty, vulnerability, sacrifice, trust, respect; why relationships fail; and what to do when this happens.



*To what extent does our Christian world view help us to assess the contribution to literature made by authors such as Shakespeare in a way that is different from the prevailing fashion?*

*What is the prevailing opinion of what constitutes good literature?*

**Possible themes to discuss in *The Merchant of Venice***

The themes in this study of *The Merchant of Venice*, also from The King's School, Witney, highlight the influence literature may have in shaping views of the world.

**Main aim**

- to enjoy this first introduction to Shakespeare!

**Subsidiary aims**

- to understand the story
- to overcome the language barrier
- to grasp some of the main themes of the play



*Are there times when Christians ought to challenge these opinions?*



*Is Shakespeare always good when thought about from a Christian perspective? His attitude to Jews, for example, in The Merchant of Venice was very complex.*

**Several main extracts were read together or acted including:**

Act 1: Sc. 1	Antonio and Bassanio's meeting - introduction to Bassanio's love for Portia
Act 1: Sc. 2	Portia and her maid.
Act 2: Sc. 1 & 7	Portia and Morocco
Act 2: Sc. 9	Portia and Arragon
Act 1: Sc. 3	Bassanio meets Shylock

The class was informed of the elopement of Jessica (Shylock's daughter) with Lorenzo, taking her father's treasure with her.

Act 3: Sc. 1	Bad news of Antonio's ships: Shylock's prejudice
Act 3: Sc. 2	Bassanio chooses a casket
Act 4: Sc. 1	The trial
Act 5: Sc. 1	The ring

**Main themes discussed**

- Racial prejudice - Shylock's prejudice against Christians (this term needs explaining as 'Christian' here means 'Gentile' rather than born-again Christian), Antonio's and Bassanio's against Shylock
- Hatred/unforgiveness vs mercy/forgiveness (evaluate how real it is at the end)
- Values. The caskets. Greed. Mercy - Bible study
- Substitution, sacrifice
- Character portraits: Shylock; Bassanio; Portia



**Values held by characters in *Silas Marner***

Discussion topics arising from *Silas Marner* used by teachers at the King's School, Witney, in order to reveal the world view of the characters have included:

- Reactions to people who are 'different' for various reasons
- Dangers of 'blind' submission contrasted with biblical authority/submission
- Was the way the deacons investigated the matter biblical?
- Do people today develop bitterness against God about deeds for which they think he is responsible? - In what circumstances may this happen?
- What is a right response to injustice and/or apparently undeserved tragedy? e.g. Joseph, Job. Marner's money is later stolen, leaving him desolate.
- The dangers of building one's whole life on money/material possessions

- The reliance people may put on luck and chance in its various forms today
- Attitudes to rich and poor in various cultures and at different times in history
- Lying or concealing the truth - the illicit relationship

Such approaches need not amount to a reduction of literature to a tool of moral exhortation. It may rather be a question of exploring themes raised by the works themselves and providing opportunities to reflect on them. In the examples above, it should be remembered that these are brief outlines of the main themes of the term's work, not an exhaustive description of work done. Other aspects of literary study are, in other words, not excluded.

The teacher's Christian commitment will influence the choice of issues to be raised and discussed, the points of reference outside the work which are offered to pupils for comparison, and the views contributed by them in discussion.

?

*Christians are often quick to condemn contemporary literature. Should we be applying the same criteria for acceptability to authors from history as well as contemporary writers?*

### ► Looking at the beliefs and values of authors

In a study which compared the beliefs and values of two authors, Dickens and Hardy, who were contemporary, one class drew diagrams to show hope and hopelessness, curses and blessings which came true, fate and the lack of control over life, forgiveness (as with Henchard and what would have happened if he had been forgiven), and fatal mistakes and the lack of repentance. In this way pupils were able to develop a visual expression of the different world views held by the two authors.

### ► The value of books which contain images which are difficult for Christians

Studying books containing swearing, sex and violence in the classroom may cause some controversy, as it seems to promote the behaviours and views contained in them. Many Christian teachers argue that with careful planning some of these books can be used. Pupils should not always be sheltered from reality and it is possible to explain and discuss controversial issues in the class. God's perspective can be envisaged in a situation to see his compassion. The following books could cause some concern, but Christian teachers have also found there are positive elements in their use:

*Kes* may help pupils to understand and empathise with boys such as Billy and lifestyles which may be either similar or different from their own.

*Z for Zachariah* (Robert O'Brien) is a book about fear and courage, selfishness and dominance. Some questions which might be asked of a novel like this include:

***What would a Christian attitude be in this situation?***

***What would I be like in a situation like this?***

***Would my reactions be positive or not; hopeful or hopeless?***

*A Question of Courage* (M. Drake) is another book in which it is possible to look at a Christian perspective on women's issues, violence, swearing and blasphemy.

One teacher, using *An Inspector Calls* (J. B. Priestley) looked at the conflict which arises from how responses are made, at family breakdown and at the attitudes of the characters to God and to others (e.g. old people).

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Mildred Taylor) is not a book simply about racism. It is a book about moral choices.

## 5 The power of the spoken word<sup>1</sup>

Oral communication is extremely important. The power of the tongue, the Bible tells us, is immense and we spend most of our time speaking and listening. The following unit of work focuses on a number of famous speeches. It was devised by one school to look at the influence of the spoken word and to examine the skills needed for successful public speaking. The speeches used were:

- Churchill - War Speeches, May 1940 June 1940
- Elizabeth 1 - to troops at Tilbury
- Martin Luther King - 'I have a dream'
- Bible: Paul in Athens, *Acts 17:22-32*
- Shakespeare: Henry V's speech at St Crispian's Agincourt  
Shylock: *Merchant of Venice*, 'Hath not a Jew eyes?', Act 3: Sc. 1  
Antony: Julius Caesar's funeral
- *A Man for all Seasons*: Thomas More's Speech on the need for laws
- Rhodes Boyson's speech on society, 9 October 1986

## 6 The Christian teacher as guide

The Christian teacher of literature can exercise a number of moral responsibilities in the light of his or her Christian understanding. These include choosing edifying literature which comports well with Christian values and omitting other works (e.g. those with an occult or sexually explicit or nihilistic emphasis). This does not mean that only Christian literature is appropriate, as the literature policy from this Christian school states:

*"Almost any variety of story is acceptable but we should be careful to avoid occult influences subtly conveyed in atmosphere and art work. Also there are many stories on the market now that have been 'manufactured' to illustrate some point - either political, moral, environmental or some other cause. These are often manipulative and may not stem from any creative gift, and come over as sterile. God created man to be creative and books should express this. If children are constantly exposed to this creative gift they will recognise it and respond to it. (Incidentally some Christian books have been manufactured to illustrate Christian points, and ... (do not) seem to touch this creative urge which God gave us, and children seem largely unaffected by them.)"*

*Special Literature Studies: The Christian School, Liverpool*

<sup>1</sup>In the National Curriculum this example would count as reading, not spoken English.

## ► Developing the ability to discern

The Christian teacher has a wonderful opportunity to introduce pupils to the world of literature, and to give them the skills to select what they read with discernment.

In providing a critique of the beliefs and values portrayed through literature, pupils are encouraged to cultivate their perception and judgement. On this, one teacher comments:

*“The Christian will find it impossible to avoid discussion of ideas and beliefs in this area... Any teacher committed to a worldview or ideology, including the Christian teacher, is at a positive advantage over his ‘open-minded’ colleagues in this respect.... He may prevent pupils from being swept over with the implied ‘orthodoxy’ of some of the set texts. The impact of a Thomas Hardy or a D. H. Lawrence on a sixth former cannot be overstated. Coming fresh to a powerful novel, with but limited background reading, many take on board the philosophy of the writer in its totality. The Christian teacher can provide a healthy sense of dialectic by showing a different position, held with equal conviction.”*

*Andrew Marfleet*

A genuinely critical approach to any work can only come where alternatives are possible. Discussing literature in this way can also help pupils to evaluate the worldview of their own social context. The ability to analyse world views and detect bias, to judge and discern the content in fiction, non-fiction and the media is vital.

## ► The nature and place of literature

David Barratt (1985) observes that some views of literature make it an idol, attributing to it salvific powers and the status of revelation. Others undervalue literature with views which are reductionist. The Christian teacher can help pupils to gain a healthy perspective on the nature of literature and its place in life.

## ► Shared enjoyment

It is common in primary schools to emphasise the role of parents in helping children to learn to read and to benefit from good books. Encouraging the use of literature in this way can contribute to healthy family life.

## 7 The use of explicitly Christian literature

There is a rich heritage of Christian literature on which the teacher of English can draw. The poetry of Donne and Milton; John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*; the Bible which contains poetry, parables, historical data, and other genres. Some teachers might use biographical accounts of the lives of Christians such as Wilberforce, Shaftesbury and Florence Nightingale.

The teaching of Christian literature does not amount to teaching religion; nevertheless, the study of examples of such literature can help pupils to gain spiritual insights.

*“The teaching of Christian literature does not amount to teaching religion; nevertheless, the study of examples of such literature can help pupils to gain spiritual insights.”*

## The power of allegory

Allegory is an extended image where the writer takes that image and examines it in a point by point comparison. Allegory is one way to use fiction to promote truth. *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan is one example of this, as is *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis. Several schools use allegorical texts with the aim of

*“realising how powerful allegory and symbolic language can be and to utilise it in our own communication”.*

*The King's School, Witney*

At various times in church history parts of the Bible have been interpreted allegorically. During Medieval times several levels of meanings were given to scripture: moral, allegorical, spiritual and personal. The Bible does not, as a rule, use allegory (but see *Galatians 4:21-31*). It is tempting to use some of the historical stories and parables for allegorical interpretation, but this is maybe to confuse categories. If genres are confused, small points made in this way can bring confusion later on how scripture is used. For example, the *Song of Songs* has been interpreted allegorically as has the book of *Esther* and the parable of the Good Samaritan. An approach to the Bible that does not work against the Spirit is needed, understanding that the Spirit can speak directly through the Bible for a particular purpose. This should not be applied as the general meaning of the text; that meaning should not be lost in personal interpretation.

### Resources and further reading:

David Barratt 'The Continuing Value of Studying and Teaching Literature', in *Spectrum 17:2* (Spring 1985) p6-19. Compares a Christian understanding of the place and value of literature with various alternatives.

David Barratt and Roger Pooley (eds.) *Reading Literature: Some Christian Approaches* Leicester: UCCF Literary Studies Group, 94pp. A varied collection of essays on specific works as well as general issues.

David Barrett, Roger Pooley and Leyland Ryken (eds) *The Discerning Reader* (1996) Apollos

Christian Schools' Trust *Diamond Books*: for more information, contact The Christian Schools' Trust, The Christian Fellowship School, 1 Princes Road, Liverpool L8 1TG.

Susan V. Gallagher and Roger Lundin *Literature Through the Eyes of Faith* New York: Harper and Row (1989)

Leland Ryken *Triumphs of the Imagination - Literature in Christian Perspective*, Downers Grove: IVP (1979). A wide-ranging discussion of literature and literary criticism from a Christian perspective.

Harro van Brummelen *Walking with God in the Classroom* (1990) Welch Publishing Company Inc; Burlington, Ontario, Canada

Clarence Walhout and Leland Ryken (eds) *Contemporary Literary Theory: A Christian Appraisal* (1991) Eerdmans.

The UCCF Literary Studies Group is a specialist group, organised by UCCF Associates, to explore the implications of the Christian faith for research and teaching in the field of literature. Although it is rather theoretical for direct use by teachers, it is good for studying a text. For more details write to LSG, UCCF Associates, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP.



# Mathematics

## 1 Theoretical perspectives

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# Mathematics

## On me ... as a dustbin

by Helen Goff

Sometimes I feel like a dustbin  
 Filled and ever filling  
 With things disposable  
 Junk food  
 Polluted air  
 Adult's opinions  
 And I say  
 "STOP, STOP  
 You're filling me  
 Too full!"  
 And they say  
 "TOUGH"  
 And teach me  
 TRIGONOMETRY  
 I want to know what happens  
 When I flip my lid.

Cadbury Seventh Book of Children's Poetry, *Arrow* (1989)

©Cadbury's Seventh Book of Children's Poetry, Arrow, (1989).  
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How many of the thousands of children in compulsory mathematics day in day out would echo the sense of meaninglessness felt by Helen Goff in her trigonometry lessons?

Our suggestion is that we need to look more carefully at how we teach mathematics and that the often heard comments

***How can you have Christian maths?***

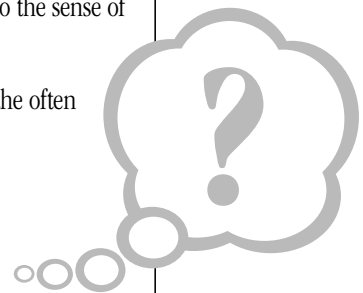
***Maths is maths, isn't it?***

aren't good enough.

For most of us, our understanding rests on beliefs about mathematics which have been formed through our learning of mathematics. Therefore, in our teaching, it is often difficult to see where a distinctiveness in a Christian perspective on mathematics might be found. Interestingly, some would say that theories about mathematics and how mathematical truths can be known require hypotheses which are illustrative of how religious beliefs are fundamental to our thinking; that is, they come from beliefs held about the nature of reality. Thus, in this chapter, we go back to the development of the subject to see where the fundamental differences lie. Even mathematics is not neutral.

## 1 Theoretical perspectives

Although some might argue that views of the nature of the child and the learning process have more impact on the teaching of mathematics than the philosophy of mathematics itself, it is important to be aware of the



different views of mathematics which influence the teaching of it. The following briefly explain some of those foundations<sup>1</sup>:

- **Number-World Theory:** This theory suggests that mathematical symbols stand for real entities in an eternal and changeless world outside of the natural world we inhabit. These entities are not physically observable in our world, because they are located in another dimension of reality. Mathematics represents, or interprets that other timeless and changeless world. These entities and their representation were considered to be more real than that which does exist in time and space. Pythagoras and Plato were proponents of this view. Mathematics was looked upon as a form of religion and although it is not easy, after three hundred years of scientific development, to imagine a time when “mathematical objects were regarded as symbols of spiritual truths or episodes in sacred history” (Davis and Hersh 1990 p97), the question of whether “mathematics is a form of religion, and in fact the true religion?” (ibid, p112) is still asked. The reason for this is that “if a mathematical question has a definite answer, then different mathematicians, using different methods, working in different centuries will find the same answers” (ibid).
- **Empiricist view:** J. S. Mill was a proponent of the theory which proposed that knowledge cannot exceed observation. Mathematical symbols and formulae are simply generalisations which are deduced from sensory perceptions and concrete experiences. Thus we cannot know that  $1 + 1$  will always = 2, but only that it probably will in the future because it has so often in the past. We have no grounds to suppose that there are eternal or changeless truths in mathematics. This theory is based on, and supports, the notion that there is no reality beyond that which can be experienced in the material realm.
- **Logicist:** Bertrand Russell rejected both the theory of the eternal realm and the theory that all is exclusively based on sensory perceptions. He proposed instead that mathematics is a particular way of ‘doing logic’; that logical laws, or the laws of thought, regulate the operation of our minds. It is these which are eternal and changeless. The logical reasoning required to ‘do’ mathematics thus takes on an independence which elevates the human mind above its limitations. Any understanding of the world and the nature of reality must conform to the reason and logic of humanity.
- **Instrumentalist:** For pragmatist John Dewey, mathematics does not stand for anything. It is simply a tool which human beings utilise to transform their environment. What is true for Dewey is what works, thus, it is not appropriate to ask whether mathematics is true or false. It is only appropriate to ask whether it is useful to accomplish certain tasks. The meaning of the tool is found in its use. In this view, often referred to as instrumentalism, mathematics is a method rather than a reflection of reality. Dewey argues that it is because mathematics has a long history and its various uses have been perfected, that mathematics itself is seen to hold truth. Mathematics is, however, a product of human invention and, in the struggle for survival, tools, such as mathematics, are an aid to that survival. This view reflects a particular biological perspective which reveals certain presuppositions about the nature of truth, of humanity and of progress.
- **Other categories:** Other categories to investigate include mathematics as simply a language (Hogben), mathematics as simply a social convention (Wittgenstein), and Hilbert’s idea of mathematics as simply a game of rules and symbols which, incidentally, led to the apparently disastrous New Math experiment in the USA.

Elements of truth can be found in each theory, but each views reality only in part and none takes into account the reality of God, His creative order, his redemptive purposes or humanity’s responses. A revised version of the number-world theory could be compatible with belief in God, but if this were so, the mathematical realm would be seen as part of the order God has placed in creation rather than being self-existent. This order would then be discovered through observing creation which would be described in mathematical terms using the logical reasoning powers of the human mind. These could then be used to develop and shape the world around us. However, the finiteness of the human mind, the limitations of human logic and

<sup>1</sup>This section has been taken from Clouser (1991) Ch 7

reason, and the fallen nature of humanity are not taken into account in any of the theories.

An understanding of the various theories is needed in order to be able to understand their consequences and to offer a critique of existing schemes or textbooks (see section 5 below).

*“It is recognised that there is much that is held in common among people of various faith perspectives and of no particular religious outlook. Values are often very widely shared and there can be quite general agreement on what is true, beautiful or good ... At the same time, the reasons why they are held and the basic beliefs about reality in which they are grounded differ from one perspective to another. The fundamental differences lead to different total outlooks and to detailed differences on what qualities, attitudes and actions are truly moral and/or spiritual.”*

*The Charis Project, Stapleford House (1996)*

## 2 Rationale, aims and objectives for teaching mathematics

For the Christian any theory of mathematics presupposes belief in God. We should therefore expect that mathematics is related to God, the source of truth. Mathematics is based on the reality of a created order; on the structure which has been given to it, and on God’s faithfulness in upholding the world through those laws which He embedded in His creation. Anyone can thus discover this mathematical order and put to use the structures and designs which exist.

A Christian rationale for studying mathematics would probably include the following elements: discovering God’s creativity and design, understanding its purpose, and responding to that knowledge by using it in the service of God, humanity and the rest of creation.

*“... since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

*Romans 1:19-20 (NIV)*

### ► Aims and objectives for teaching mathematics

In his book, *Shaping School Curriculum*, Van Brummelen sets out his aim which includes understanding, responding and using the knowledge gained:

*“Our first concern in mathematics is to help the student understand God’s creation more fully, his task in it, and how mathematics can help him fulfil his calling.”*

*van Brummelen (1977) p143*

He suggests that the goals of teaching and learning mathematics should include the following:

- The student must gain an understanding of the concepts of number and space and their interrelationship:
  - a. the student must learn to abstract mathematical properties from concrete situations;
  - b. the student must develop properties of number and space, analyse them, and apply the results of his/her analysis to new situations.
- The student must deepen his/her awareness and understanding of mathematics as a functional tool in solving everyday problems and in explaining quantitative and spatial situations in other subjects.

Geraldine J. Steensma and Harro van Brummelen, *Shaping School Curriculum: a Biblical View*, Terre Haute Ind. (1977). ©Harro van Brummelen. Used by permission.

- a. the student must learn that a mathematical situation can originate from almost any experience, whether it be in science, economics, the social sciences or music;
  - b. the student must see that mathematics does not exist independently of other disciplines but contributes to the unity of all aspects of creation;
  - c. the student must realise that mathematical results have given us a deeper understanding of other aspects of God's creation, but that at the same time the scope of mathematics is limited so that mathematics by itself cannot solve the problems facing mankind.
- The student must realise that mathematics is a developing science, and that throughout history it has influenced, and, in turn, has been influenced by cultural forces.

*van Brummelen (1977) p146*

### ▶ Rationale and objectives for the study of mathematics

The following example is taken from one Christian school's attempt to develop a rationale for the mathematics curriculum from a biblical perspective.

▶ Our teaching of mathematics is based on the following premises:

- The Laws found in creation are to be perceived as a testimony of God's Character and Covenant, e.g. faithfulness, reliability.
- As Creator, God is the Source of all mathematical structure.
- Structures which we define as "mathematical" are only one facet of the wonder of God's creation.
- Logic is an attribute of God.
- God's Logic transcends our finite understanding of conventional rationality, e.g. the profound reasoning of love, grace, righteousness, the Crucifixion, and Resurrection.
- Understanding of number is dependent on the number system used and as such is imperfect.



*What do we understand by logic?*

*How might a Christian view of logic differ from that understood by rational humanists?*

*How far can we base our understanding of truth on human logic?*

*What are the limitations of human thinking?*

- Discovery of the nature and purposes of God is possible in a more direct way if we are exposed to creation from first hand experience.
- We have the potential to reason and to solve problems and these faculties need to be developed in a healthy manner in line with God's design.
- The findings of mathematicians should be considered in the light of a godly perspective before they are taught as truth.
- The discipline of mathematical thought and practice is not divorced from other faculties; e.g. aesthetic appreciation, or from moral and spiritual implication.

We approach the subject in a spirit of humble discovery, wonder and enjoyment; glorifying God as the Source of what we learn and as the Giver of gifts.

The scriptural basis for premises 1 and 7 is *Romans 1:19-20*.

*The Christian Fellowship School, Liverpool*

The following set of objectives for mathematics was designed to develop and sustain the kind of biblical rationale and aims outlined above.

- To promote the concept of an orderly, patterned universe, established and maintained by God and to glorify Him openly as Creator.
- In this context, to develop the children's clear logical thinking through exposure to and experience of mathematical patterns in creation.
- To provide concrete experience of the mathematical features of creation such as: shape, number, physical quantity, space, time, movement, speed and causality.
- To channel the children towards an understanding of the essential structures of mathematics and to generate an appreciation of some aspects of God's character through the study of mathematical principles; e.g. faith, order, design, reason, purpose, reliability.
- To convey a respect for God's order and His authority, and to facilitate a sense of security.
- To enable discovery and appreciation of relationships that exist between mathematical concepts.
- To give each child the opportunity to pursue a mathematical study in depth.
- To give children an organised scheme of mental operations as a means by which to appreciate the world and to develop fluency in applying those operations.
- To assist the children to recognise when and how a situation may be represented mathematically; to identify and to interpret relevant factors and to formulate the problem.
- To encourage a flexible use of mathematical thought; to regulate and adapt it through the use of strategies; to problem solving, demonstrating initiative, competency and creativity in a variety of everyday situations, and to use it as a tool in the study of other subjects.
- To develop in the children a "feel" for number and measures etc. so that they can carry out calculations and understand the significance of the results obtained.
- To encourage the use of imagination and various forms of representation.
- To increase the children's awareness that mathematics is a powerful means of communication and to introduce the symbolic vocabulary and grammar necessary to the acquisition of this precise language.
- To show that mathematical vocabulary is in some respects limited and that more profound concepts exist. e.g. order, truth, reason, proof.
- To highlight where relevant, God's own use of mathematical language to communicate with man, e.g. Ark and Temple building, His significant use of number.
- To provide a broad mathematical curriculum for every child.
- "To enable each child to develop within his capabilities, the mathematical skills and understanding required for adult life, for employment and for further study and training, while remaining aware of the difficulties which some pupils will experience in trying to gain such an appropriate understanding" (Cockcroft).

*The Christian Fellowship School, Liverpool*



*To what extent does your teaching, stated or unstated, express similar understandings and purposes?*

*Are there areas, such as the history and development of mathematics, or fun in mathematics (e.g. games and puzzles), which you feel are missing from these objectives?*

## Charis Mathematics Project - rationale and aims

Charis Mathematics is the result of a recent project where a group of state school teachers worked together to translate biblical insights into a resource for teachers in the maintained sector. As it is now a requirement that moral and spiritual dimensions should be present in all curriculum subjects these materials can help teachers to seriously address this demand. The materials produced specifically relate to Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) of the mathematics curriculum and are intended to “promote in teachers and pupils through the study of mathematical themes and topics a greater understanding of God and His Creation and of our life in relation to Him” (The Charis Mathematics Writing Team). The teachers’ responsibility is not merely to develop the mathematical skills and understanding of their pupils, but to involve them in the development of the whole person, including the moral and the spiritual. Teachers are challenged to develop an understanding of how mathematics is influenced by basic world and life views, to critically examine their practices and to develop and apply Christian thinking to the teaching of mathematics.

After initial discussions the team produced the following set of aims which were for their own use:

The aims are that the resource units produced will help to bring about the following:

- a sense of the transcendence and infinity of God;
- sense of the immanence of God in Creation;
- a sense of the faithfulness of God in Creation;
- an appreciation that the Creation of God’s Creation;
- an appreciation of the order and reliability in Creation;
- an appreciation of the beauty of Creation;
- a sense of awe and wonder at God’s Creation
- a respect for truth in all its forms;
- an appreciation that all truth is God’s truth;
- an appreciation of human creatureliness and finiteness;
- a realisation that human beings are made in the image of God;
- an appreciation of human fallenness and its effects in all human activity;
- a realisation of the hope of redemption.

The group found that the following three approaches to the teaching of mathematics would encourage the inclusion of the moral and spiritual dimension:

- Mathematics has been developed and applied in a wide range of human situations, thus it is possible to use different contexts to reflect on “human issues” while using mathematics. (See Units 1, 2, 4 and 5 below)
- While exploring ideas within mathematics, insights can also be gained in other areas. (See Units 3, 7 and 9)
- Recognising how mathematics has been used to model and understand the universe and thus to develop a sense of awe and wonder at the reality around them. (See Units 6 and 8)



The following units were devised:

**Unit 1: Some of our citizens are missing!**

(significance of the individual: large numbers, percentage errors, interpretation of census table)

**Unit 2: Do you know your vital statistics?**

(issues connected with life expectancy and death; data handling, frequency diagrams, probabilities, use of actuarial life tables)

**Unit 3: What is normal?**

(importance of forming own attitudes and opinions: averages and measures of spread)

**Unit 4: How much is your gift worth?**

(giving to charity in relation to one's means: calculations with percentages and fractions)

**Unit 5: The work of Oxfam**

(compassion to those in need: percentages, trial and improvement, bar and pie charts, scatter diagrams and correlation)

**Unit 6: Fractals**

(the complexity of the universe: ratios, rearranging formulas, perimeters, constructions and accurate drawing)

**Unit 7: The moment of truth**

(respect for truth in all its forms: skills of mathematical reasoning and lines of mathematical argument)

**Unit 8: Can you draw it?**

(design of the universe: investigations of simple ideas of topology to illustrate nature of proof)

**Unit 9: The outer limits**

(the immensity of the universe: generation and investigation of sequences and series, exploring patterns, concepts of infinity).

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*Charis Mathematics, The Stapleford Project*

### 3 Curriculum development

As a Christian teacher of mathematics, how can we unlock the curriculum to allow opportunities to develop spiritual insights, keeping in balance the characteristics and limitations of mathematics? Some key concepts which might help us to do this are the nature of God, the unity of creation, the nature of reality, human creativity, and the beauty and wonder of mathematics.

#### 3.1 The nature of God

The laws of mathematics are not, as the Greeks assumed, eternal; neither is mathematics a set of abstract formula which can be manipulated by the rules of logic; nor is mathematics simply a construction of the mind. Instead God reveals himself to us in his creation (Romans 1:19-20; ). Creation has an order and a structure, regularity and pattern which is interrelated and interdependent, and which depend on God and is sustained by Him. The study of

“  
*Mathematics is not something in itself ... it is God's creation as experienced by human beings.*  
 van Brummelen (1977) p142  
 ”



*How would such an understanding of the nature of God influence the Christian's teaching of the number-world theory?*



*Mathematics is the science dealing with two distinct aspects of God's creation structure: the numerical and spatial.*

*van Brummelen<sup>2</sup>*



*Does van Brummelen make assumptions that young children can only develop mathematical understanding through concrete experience?*

*Does it indicate a too ready acceptance of Piagetian theories (i.e. concrete to formal/abstract)?*

<sup>2</sup>The kinematic could be included here as applied mathematics is an essential part of the curriculum.

mathematics can thus assist in developing an awareness of the nature of God and of His creation; of His creativity, integrity and faithfulness.

### 3.2 The unity of creation

As stated in 3.1 above, creation is a unity, interrelated and interdependent. Revealing the order, pattern and relationship that there is in mathematical concepts, highlights the integrity of creation. Another way is to encourage the integration of mathematics with other areas of the curriculum. Mathematics is an important area of human activity, explaining the quantitative aspects of other disciplines. Mathematical concepts and ideas can help us to gain a better understanding of the natural sciences, economics, social sciences and so on.

### 3.3 The nature of reality

For some, mathematics is primarily about modelling; that is, expressing the nature of things (i.e. God's world) in symbols and shapes. Mathematics describes the order which God built into the universe, and we can only make models of the structures because it is an ordered world. Some suggest, therefore, that mathematics should always be rooted in physical reality and not simply used to develop abstract mind concepts.

Van Brummelen, in *Walking with God in the Classroom* (1990), argues that mathematics in the classroom must maintain its link with everyday experience even as abstraction and generalisation increase through the years. The integrity of reality means that it is false to separate mathematics from other areas of learning.

On this basis, he also suggests that symbols are necessary entities in maths, but if introduced too early, they prevent an understanding of the concepts. He argues for a "great deal of hands-on experience with the concepts of numbers under ten before teachers introduce the symbols for the numerals" (ibid, p107).

These symbols are a mathematical language, which need to be developed from the concrete to the abstract. It has some kind of modelling component, of which  $3 \times 2 = 6$  is an example. "Playing with concrete", the first stage, is dealing directly with God's world, but children are often taught to abstract, or learn algebraic language, too early. If they don't understand they may miss the beauty of maths.

A curriculum for primary schools, called *The Number and Shape of Things* (Jongsma and Baker) has been developed by the Curriculum Development Centre in Toronto. This takes pupils through many concrete examples to theory. This handbook should be used in conjunction with *The Joy of Learning* (Steensma).

The study of mathematics thus provides a way by which we can understand the nature of creation and through that the nature of God.

### 3.4 Human creativity

Human creativity, while it is different from God's creative activity, is still an important aspect of mathematics. The exploration, investigation and discovery of the world through mathematics is one important

component of the curriculum. The historical and cultural significance of mathematics and mathematicians is vital to a fuller understanding of the nature of humanity. This is an important pursuit, but the finite nature of humanity and the limitations of human thinking must be taken into consideration. Questions of ‘what is truth?’ and ‘what can be taught as truth?’ must be asked (for an example, see *Charis Mathematics* Project Unit 7).

### 3.5 The beauty and wonder of mathematics

Most teachers of mathematics would agree that mathematics is an art as well as a science. There is an aesthetic charm and value in the inherent beauty of mathematics. It has pattern, rules, form, relationship. Its study brings pleasure, delight and wonder to human minds. Thus, for many, an important aspect of the study of mathematics is its beauty and mystery.

One teacher stated that:

“It may be true that much, if not all, of mathematics starts from physical experiences, but I would want to reject the notion that all of mathematics has to be demonstrated to be “useful”. This utilitarianism seems to me to be behind some of the blatantly artificial, and sometimes ludicrous, contexts of GCSE questions - and indeed of some traditional textbooks. Solving problems within mathematics itself can be like executing a good performance of a piece of music, and it is worth trying to enable students to experience this, and develop a sense of beauty.”

*Head of Mathematics, Birkdale, Sheffield*

For many people throughout history the study of mathematics has helped to foster and develop a deeper appreciation and wonder of God’s creation. Copernicus and Kepler, for example, believed that theories in astronomy should be beautiful. They felt that, as they discovered more of that beauty, they discovered more evidence of the existence of God and understanding of His nature. Isaac Newton agreed:

*“This most beautiful system of sun, planets and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being ... This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but Lord over all.”* (Isaac Newton quoted in *Morris Kline Mathematics and the Search for Knowledge* OUP (1985) p17).

The following examples are often used to develop a sense of awe and wonder at the amazing pattern and relationship found through mathematics.

#### ► Infinity

In mathematics we have analogues, or reminders of God’s incomprehensibility (we know but we do not fully know). The study of infinite sets should encourage a respect for God’s greatness and develop in us a sense of humility. Georg Cantor, for example, studied mathematical infinity because he wanted to understand better the theological concept of infinity.

*A scientist worthy of the name, above all a mathematician, experiences in his work the same expression as an artist; his pleasure is as great and of the same nature.*

*Henri Poincare*

*The mathematician’s patterns like the painter’s or poet’s, must be beautiful, the ideas, like the colours or the words, must fit together in a harmonious way. Beauty is the first test; there is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics.*

*G. H. Hardy*

*God seems to create more than is strictly necessary. There is a large spin off of material, pattern and relationship that can be developed simply for wonder and fun.*

*High School Teacher*

## ▶ The Fibonacci sequence

The Fibonacci sequence is formed by beginning with one as the first two numbers, and then each number thereafter is the sum of the two numbers before it, namely: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21 34 ...

How can we convey the “deep mystery” that mathematics ‘works’ in describing the universe to students?

This sequence is intimately related to a very special irrational number known as the Golden Ratio or Golden Section. Both occur in amazing ways in biology, botany, art, architecture and other areas of life, including the genealogy of a male bee, the placement of leaves along the stems of plants and the number of spirals in a sunflower. The Fibonacci Sequence and the Golden Ratio have an incredible number of very remarkable algebraic and geometric properties.

An ITV video is available showing the amazing beauty and wonder of the Fibonacci Sequence.

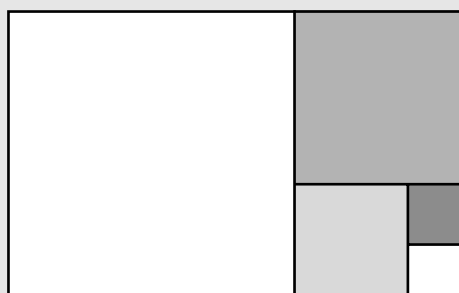
## ▶ The Golden Ratio

Neuhouser describes the Golden Ratio in his paper.

“The ancient Greeks believed that a rectangle whose ratio of length to width was approx. 1.618 was the most pleasing to the eye. Whether or not this was true, artists have used it in many ways from the Parthenon in Athens to Dali’s ‘The Last Supper’. This rectangle is called the ‘golden rectangle’. However, its beauty lies in something other than its visual appearance. For example, if a square is taken off of one side of the golden rectangle what is left is a smaller rectangle with the same ratio of length to width; that is, another golden rectangle. Therefore, one can take a square away from it again and again, ad infinitum.

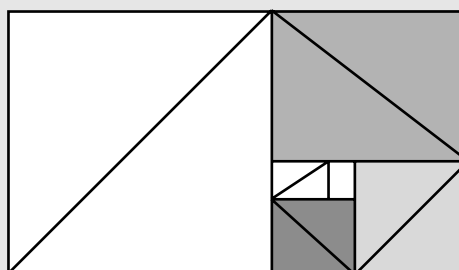
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When teaching mathematics, how can we convey Christian beliefs about the nature of God, his faithfulness and the way that He has chosen to sustain His creation?



“If one draws in diagonals and then replaces the diagonals by smooth curves, one obtains a lovely spiral. These spirals occur often in nature, for example the shell of the chambered nautilus and the arrangement of seeds in a sunflower.

Can you identify links between mathematics and the idea of worship?



The existence of beauty in this world does not prove that there is a God, let alone prove that Christianity is true. However, just as beauty is used by scientists as a path to truth, so it may be supporting evidence for the Christian hypothesis.”

*Neubouser*

## 4 The usefulness of mathematics

Mathematics originated from the activities of people in society and some suggest that if it is divorced from its applications, mathematics is meaningless. It could be argued that the ivory tower approach (obscure mind thinking, developing mathematics for its own sake) needs to be balanced with its application to the world.

The utilitarian aspect is probably the most commonly understood purpose of mathematics in our world today. Mathematics advances the cause of science and is a useful tool in everyday life for solving problems. Utilitarianism is also the basis of much of the thinking behind the National Curriculum.

Practical purposes are not wrong, but the curriculum could become unbalanced if this aspect becomes the main or only focus, and because mathematics is useful, it carries with it moral and ethical implications.

### 4.1 The contexts for mathematics

The contexts and practice of mathematical modelling and problem solving are important in conveying biblical norms and perspectives. The following provides examples in two areas where the Christian teacher of mathematics can encourage the development of a Christian mind in young people: stewardship and economic values, and honesty in the use and interpretation of data (see also *Charis Mathematics* Project Unit 5: The Work of Oxfam).

#### ■ Stewardship

Stewardship and accountability are two particularly important concepts inherent in a Christian approach to mathematics.

The economic systems of the world, time and motion studies are two areas which use mathematical models. Critical path analysis and other techniques of Operational Research, may be used in management to increase efficiency with resulting unemployment. The use of maximum and minimum values can be used to reduce the number of people in developing the most cost efficient work force. Thus maths is used to make people redundant. Is this right? This is an opportunity to look at the pressures that exist within our community including self-centred consumerism.

#### ■ The interpretation of data

Lessons in statistics could and should include a study of how data can be used and interpreted to inform or deceive. Children need to be prepared to look at statistical presentations critically. Many practical examples from everyday life can be found, particularly at the time of general or local elections.

Statistics are used to gather and interpret large quantities of numerical data. This helps in understanding underlying patterns and trends, especially those which can influence future events. Students can draw and analyse statistical graphs, calculate averages and standard deviations, use sampling techniques and



*At what stage can we start to introduce abstract concepts; e.g. the idea of a model?*



*What you choose to model shows values, which are not necessarily issues of maths. These are ethical matters of value or relationship.*

*Roger Slack, Christian School Teacher and college lecturer*





*How should pupils be encouraged to use mathematics in the care and development of creation? e.g. Can we or should we try to increase political awareness by using social statistics as examples in mathematics?*



*When we apply our Christian principles, what contexts should we use? On what values and norms do we base our decisions that will develop creation, be a redemptive tool and encourage reconciliation? (e.g. Do we set questions about the best value in missiles for a country to buy, or about the number of ploughshares obtainable from the same human or material resources that produce swords?)*

investigate normal distributions and their uses. They can also investigate how statistical analyses and conclusions are applied in various situations. They see how statistics can be used to make decisions, to inform opinion, to draw conclusions and help Christians be more responsible citizens and stewards of God's world.

## 5 Critiquing existing schemes

It is important for Christian teachers to be able to critique existing examples and schemes. In choosing or rejecting an example or scheme, a teacher needs to be able to say why the decision is made. One mathematics teacher devised a set of questions to help critique mathematics schemes and to identify which examples comport well with or are more supportive of biblical beliefs and values.

### General questions:

*What are the fundamental ideas behind the scheme?*

*What world-view/values/ideas does it convey to children?*

### Questions to ask from Christian perspective:

*Do the materials help point out the beauty of God's mathematical law structure in His creation?*

*Do they teach new concepts in a meaningful (ethical) context, using concrete materials and examples (where possible)?*

*Do they emphasise problem solving in meaningful settings?*

*Are skill enforcement activities as well as open-ended activities included?*

*Do they show the relationship between mathematics and culture?*

*Do they show the interrelatedness of the various aspects of God's creation?*

### What questions might you add to these?

### Resources and further reading<sup>3</sup>

Steve Bishop "Beliefs shapes mathematics *Spectrum* 28(2) (Summer 1996). Examines several philosophies of mathematics to show that maths is not neutral, but shaped by beliefs. A brief perspective on a Christian approach to maths is provided.

Rober L. Brabenec (1977) *A Christian Perspective on the Foundations of Mathematics* Wheaton College. Edited proceedings of the first "Mathematics from a Christian Perspective" Conference. Although this is primarily concerned with higher education, it contains some useful information concerning the integration of mathematics with a Christian world view. Available from CSU Widcombe Vicarage, Bath.

The *Charis Mathematics* Project: Stapleford House Education Centre, Wesley Place, Stapleford Nottingham,

<sup>3</sup>The resource section has been compiled with the help of Steve Bishop

NG9 8DP. Contains photocopiable materials for bringing out the “spiritual and moral” aspects of mathematics at Key Stage 4. Written by Christian teachers.

Harro van Brummelen (1990) *Walking with God in the Classroom* Welch Publishing Company, Burlington, Ontario, Canada. Now published by Alta Vista College Press, Seattle. Contains insights into mathematics teaching, although a general book on Christian education.

Roy A. Clouser (1991) *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame. Chapter 7 looks at some theories in mathematics and shows how they all depend on divinising certain aspects of creation.

Harold Heie and David L. Wolfe (eds) (1987) *The Reality of Christian Learning: Strategies for Faith-Discipline Integration* Grand Rapids: Christian University Press/Eerdmans. There are two chapters on ways of integrating the Christian faith and mathematics.

Calvin Jongsma and Trudy Baker *The Shape and Number of Things: An Integrated Math Curriculum for the Elementary School* Toronto: Curriculum Development Centre. A complete primary school package, based on set theory.

David Neuhouser “Beauty in Mathematics: Some Theological Implications”. Chapter 7 of a manuscript for *Open to Reason* (undated).

James Nickel (1990) *Mathematics: Is God Silent?* Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books. Written to show that God is not! Contains many useful examples.

Roger Slack *Mathematics: an Historical Survey* Nottingham: ACT Mathematics Group (1981-83) A 30 page booklet dealing with the history of maths from the Pythagoreans to the present from a Christian perspective.

Geraldine J. Steensma and Harro van Brummelen (1977) *Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View* Terre Haute, Indiana Signal Press. Contains a chapter on maths with examples for the classroom using statistics and deductive geometry.

### Other useful resources:

Philip J. Davis and Reuben Hersh *The Mathematical Experience* Harmondsworth, Penguin (1990). A good general introduction to the history and philosophy of maths, written to capture “the inexhaustible variety presented by the mathematical experience”.

Paul Ernest *The Philosophy of Mathematics Education: Studies in Mathematical Education* Basingstoke: Falmer (1991). The myth of the neutrality of maths is exposed in this book, showing relationships between beliefs of the maths teacher and their teaching of maths.

Paul Ernest (ed) *Mathematics teaching: The State of the Art* Basingstoke: Falmer (1989). This book is a collection of essays by mathematics educationalists. It includes a section on “Social and Political Values”.

Derek Stander “A Guide for School Teachers and University Lecturers wishing to use The History of Mathematics in their Mathematics Teaching” Exeter: Exeter University (1987)

### For the fun of maths:

Brian Bolt *Mathematical Activities; More Mathematical Activities; and Even More Mathematical Activities* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1987)

Theoni Pappas *The Mathematical Calendar; The Children's Mathematical Calendar* (annual publications); *Joy of Maths; Mathematics Appreciation* (Available from QED, 1 Straylands Grove, York, YO3 0EB)





# Science

## Introduction

### 1 Aims of science teaching

- ▶ Aims for Christian science teaching
- ▶ Aims for science teaching in a primary school
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## Resources and further reading



# Science

## Introduction

Any study of the richness and diversity of creation provides teachers with a powerful and delightful opportunity to develop a sense of wonder at the abundance, beauty, orderliness, balance, interconnectedness, shape and pattern in the world. This can encourage a sense of wonder at the marvels of creation and result in praise and worship of God, the Creator. Most Christian teachers will, during their teaching, take the opportunities to develop this awareness when they arise.

At the same time, however, Christian teachers are also having to contend with commonly held views about the nature of science and the scientific method. Even though it is now accepted by scientists that beliefs are at the foundation of scientific enquiry and much has to be taken in faith, teachers of science in schools have to challenge the idea of the unique objectivity of science and the contribution that it is thought to make to the notion that scientific knowledge is the only basis for truth.

*“Pupils in the 11-14 age group are at that difficult stage when they are beginning to be very much alive to the value of science as an interpretative tool, but are not so aware of its limitations. Often to them ‘science is facts’ and words like ‘proof’, which rarely escape the lips of a philosopher of science, are commonplace. If it ‘can’t be proved scientifically’ it may be regarded as hardly worthy of consideration and even if science has not got all the answers, then at least it is often tacitly assumed that it has to the questions that are worth asking. That this is Scientism rather than science may take years to appreciate and sometimes it is never understood at all.”*

*Michael Poole (1984) p10*

As soon as Christian education is related to science, the threat of another controversy looms; not just the continuing controversies over whether science contradicts or displaces religion, but the intra-church controversy over origins. Should Christians be creationists or should theistic evolution (creation-by-evolution) be the preferred option? Christian science teachers are to be found on both sides, and both contain a diversity of views. Creationists may be, for example, young-earth or old-earth creationists. Theistic evolutionists may believe that God so set up the universe that it would progressively self-assemble from the Big Bang; others believe that God controls evolution by directing processes of variation and/or selection. In terms of Biblical interpretation, creationists tend to follow traditional evangelical exegesis and theology. Some theistic evolutionists follow suit, but many adopt the ‘literary framework’ approach to the early chapters of Genesis, that rules out any real correlation with history. For these, the Fall is not seen as an historical event and Adam not a literal figure (or if he was, that he must be dated as much as 1 million years BC or earlier).

The differences revealed here have far-reaching implications for biblical exegesis and theology and will show themselves in the diversity of views about the nature of science. But the issue of ‘creation-by-evolution’ versus ‘special creation’ (or the creation of separate kinds) is far from being the sole issue of interest to Christian science teachers. There are other issues which are more fundamental, concerning

- the nature of reality (e.g. Is there a God? What does the world consist of?);
- the nature of human beings (Who are we?); and
- the nature of knowledge (How is it possible to know anything at all?).

Chapter 4, Viewing the Whole Curriculum, contains further discussion of the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge from a biblical perspective.

This chapter presents various approaches and models used by teachers relating their beliefs to the teaching of science. We look first at the overall aims of the science curriculum. From this it can be deduced that there

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are several misconceptions concerning the nature of science, its uses and its limitations. The second section suggests several areas where false notions arise and how pupils might be alerted to these. Sections three and four look specifically at the role of faith in science and section five at the human calling. Section six looks at using science to illustrate biblical beliefs.

## 1 Aims of science teaching

### ▶ Aims for Christian science teaching

The following is a well developed set of aims produced by the Christian Schools Trust Science Curriculum Team (CSTSCT). While these were conceived specifically for Christian schools, and may not be appropriate in this form in many maintained schools, the ideas they contain, particularly those to do with the basic nature of science, should not be dismissed. Christian teachers can think about how they can be applied in mainstream school situations.



*If, as a Christian science teacher, you believe that God is the source of all things, how do you make this evident in your classroom?*

*From where does the pressure to remain silent about such assumptions come?*

*At what point does our silence become denial?*



*Some of these aims, such as 7 and 9, appear to be more general. How would you seek to include them in the science curriculum?*

In outworking these ideas and developing our curricula, we would seek to fulfil the following aims for Christian science teachers:

- (1) God is the source of all things. Hence we will confront the idea that science is autonomous. We will seek to exemplify dependence upon God and foster awareness that we are accountable to Him for all that we do.
- (2) We will help our pupils to make sense of God's world, understanding the diverse roles of everything He has created. Our approach will generally be holistic and top-down, so that we can challenge the dominant bottom-up (reductionist, materialist) approach by exposing its inferiority for productive understanding.
- (3) We will show that the world is a consistent and ordered creation, whose lawfulness reflects the faithfulness of God. We will demonstrate the importance in science of descriptive laws and explanatory theories.
- (4) We will unfold the diversity within unity of the creation, celebrating its richness in both structure and function.
- (5) In all these ways we will cultivate a sense of awe and wonder, that leads into a worship of God, rather than of the scientific enterprise, or of a supposedly universal scientific method.
- (6) We will look at the ways in which roles and purposes are distorted and misdirected, how created things are misused or abused.
- (7) We will consider how roles may be restored to wholeness, how brokenness in the different realms of creation can be healed, how those alienated from God, from each other, and from the creation, can be reconciled, how the Gospel shalom might now be established, at least in part, on the basis of Christ's work of redemption.
- (8) We will address our four-fold responsibility before God, in both scientific research and technological application: to God, to ourselves, to our fellow human beings, and to the rest of creation.



*How might you apply aims 6 and 10 remembering the fact that a) even though 'quality of life' is not solely dependent on material aspects (quality of relationships is equally important), scientific discovery has produced huge improvements in the quality of people's lives (e.g. food and health), and b) scientific discovery has often been used both for good and evil in the past?*

- (9) We will tell the stories of science as strands of the universal story of Creation-Fall-Redemption-New Creation. We will seek to integrate the three levels of Christian story-telling: Biblical, cultural and personal.
- (10) We will promote the idea that science provides important tools for the study and development of God's creation, but for use by those who will be responsible stewards of that creation.
- (11) We will regard science as dealing with particular aspects of reality but not with the whole. We will not denigrate other areas of life, nor the role of other subjects in the curriculum. We will combat the notion that science is the only way to true knowledge, or that it explains the whole of reality (scientism). Equally we will contest the idea that, given enough time and money, scientific technology can solve all our problems (technicism).
- (12) We will view science as a human activity, which, by its very nature, can only be tentative, approximate and fallible. Scientific methods, theories, or facts, are rooted in creation, so they are never merely human constructions imposed on reality. But as human inventions, they are always subject to correction and modification.
- (13) We will promote equal worth and equal opportunities, actively combating false stereotypes of race, sex, age, class or status.<sup>1</sup>
- (14) We will expose the myth that science is morally and religiously neutral and show that scientific activity is always governed by the world views of the scientists and embodies their values.

*CSTSCT Summary Statement (July 1994) p8-9*

### ► **Aims for science teaching in a primary school**

This conception of the aims of science in a primary school, set out below, suggests that scientific enquiry is in order to understand God's world more fully. Although the study of science is placed within the context of a Biblical understanding of the nature and purposes of creation, some would argue that this statement actually reflects the modern secular emphasis on process, as opposed to content, and the popularity of constructivist perspectives.

► *"Our aim is primarily to enable children to develop an enquiring mind and a scientific approach to problems, and only secondarily to teach them (the content of) science, ... our understanding of God's world is far more important than just 'knowing about' some few aspects of it".*

*St Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School*

For further discussion of these two approaches as they are applied to the teaching and learning of science, see resources: Bishop and Carpenter *Process Science and Constructivism: and introduction and critique*.

<sup>1</sup> One resource for doing this is M. J. Reiss (1993).

## ▶ A discussion of the aims of science in the National Curriculum

Science teachers in maintained schools are, of course, mainly concerned with dealing with the requirements of the latest version of the National Curriculum. They need also to be concerned with the development of the spiritual and moral dimensions.

### OFSTED requirements

The following statement by The Office of Standards in Education has encouraged teachers to look more critically at the world-and-life view they promote through the content of what they teach in the classroom.

“Discussion and analysis of school documents should reveal whether the school has an agreed approach to the ways in which spiritual, moral, cultural and social issues should be addressed consistently through all the subjects of the curriculum and the general life of the school.”

### Science Orders

Following the Dearing Review much of the content relating to beliefs and values with science in the original science orders was removed. In response to this letters and articles were written on behalf of Christians in Science Education (CISE Newsletters 8 (Winter 1994) and 9 (Summer 1995)). They reveal that teachers may well have to add certain emphases which have been omitted or reduced. Two main ideas which have been omitted from the 1995 version of Science in the National Curriculum are highlighted in these extracts:



*To what extent do OFSTED inspectors confirm or challenge the notions that ‘cultural, spiritual and moral’ can be subsumed under ‘historical’?*

*To what extent do the National Curriculum Science Orders imply that cultural, spiritual and moral issues only arise from the application of science, rather than being part of the foundation and context of science itself?*

a) The omission of the phrase about how scientific ideas are ‘affected by the social, moral, spiritual and cultural contexts’ to be replaced by ‘affected by the social and historical contexts’. To subsume ‘cultural, spiritual and moral’ under ‘historical’ is felt to constrict, even denigrate, the importance of these issues in the present day life of pupils. In reply to an enquiry to the Secretary of State, the spokesperson for the DfEE stated that “the view taken was that cultural, spiritual and moral contexts were among the elements which comprised the ‘historical context’, and that there was no need to spell this out more fully”.

b) The passage “pupils ... should begin to recognise that, while science is an important way of thinking about experience, it is not the only way”, has been removed. All that has been retained is a modified form of another passage from the General Introduction to the 1991 Key Stage 4 Programme of Study, which now reads, “Pupils should be given opportunities to ... consider the power and limitations of science in addressing industrial, social and environmental issues and some of the ethical dilemmas involved.” The new formulation is radically different from the old. The old focuses on the inherent limitations of science in relation to issues of fundamental beliefs and commitments and in relation to other ways of knowing. The new could be interpreted as merely pointing out that science happens to be unable to deal with some aspects of particular problems.

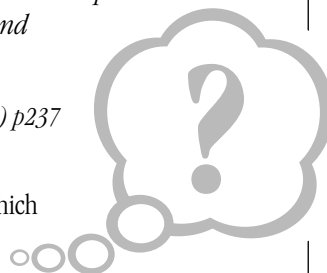
It is already apparent that there are a number of issues of concern to Christian teachers which have more to do with the basic nature of science than with specific theories. Some of these issues are examined further below.

## 2 The nature of science

*“The suggestion that science teaching generates an anti-rational closedness of mind will surprise those who are moved by talk of science as the supremely rational discipline where authority never rules and*

*where one is ever attentive to the evidence and its demands. However, recent developments in the philosophy of science indicate that many working scientists and science teachers have a false view of their own discipline ...”*

*M. A. B. Degenhardt (1990) p237*



So, what are the common misconceptions about the nature of science from which pupils should be helped to escape?

Here are a few suggestions:

- The idea of “science/religion conflicts” associated especially with Galileo and Darwin needs to be unpacked to bring out the historical complexity of the events and also the complex interactions of religious and philosophical commitments within science itself.<sup>2</sup>
- The belief that science deals with infallibly proven ‘facts’ while other subjects, such as religion, deal only with subjective ‘values’.
- The belief that scientific knowledge is either the only valid kind of knowledge or that it is superior to all other kinds (scientism). Also the idea that only ‘factual’ language can convey truth (ignoring the metaphorical language used in scientific discourse).
- The idea that all can be explained solely in terms of the simplest level of concept (see 2.4 below).
- The belief that there is a single ‘scientific method’ which is an assured path to scientific knowledge and therefore truth.
- The belief that all aspects of reality are equally open to scientific enquiry (‘prove to me scientifically that God exists ...’). The idea is not that some aspects of reality have a no scientists notice on them, but that the natural sciences are not particularly relevant in some areas. An investigation of the physical or chemical aspects of a work of art would be perfectly valid, but it would have no aesthetic/artistic meaning.
- The idea that scientific discoveries have ‘disproved’ Christianity.
- The idea that to explain something is to explain it away.

Pupils have probably never received any teaching about the role of faith commitments in science, but have rather picked up their ideas from the media where, for example, Richard Dawkins attacks creationism. But what is not highlighted or discussed is that the kind of creationism he denounces is actually based on American fundamentalism.

This short chapter is not the place for a detailed discussion of the nature of science. This and other issues can be explored further in the publications listed at the end of the chapter. However, as has been pointed out in Chapter 5 of this handbook, no curriculum development is neutral. All our efforts are based on one world view or another. This is perhaps more true of the items included in this chapter than of others. There are conflicts within the Christian community itself, as pointed out above in, for example, the creation versus evolution debate. It has also been suggested that some Christian science educationalists accept, to a greater or lesser degree, the modernist scientific tradition and do not offer a critique of the world view based on rationality and autonomy. These, on the other hand, would agree with their critics that all has been blighted

*Would you identify these as the key issues? If not, why not and what would you add or change?*

<sup>2</sup>There is a large literature that can be consulted - see Arthur Jones ‘Religion and Science’ reading list. A good starting point is Roy Clouser’s book - see Resources and further reading.

by sin, including human reasoning powers. But they would argue that reason is all we have to go on, and this itself is a gift from God, but it is neither autonomous nor infallible.

The following examples provide some ideas for lessons which could be constructed to help identify, and dispel, some of the common misconceptions about the nature of science.

## 2.1 Assumptions and misconceptions

The following excerpts from policy statements and lesson outlines illustrate ways in which Christian teachers are attempting to show pupils the limitations and the fallible nature of the scientific enterprise.

The object in the lesson outline which follows is to reveal some of our stereotypical thinking and misconceptions, and to discover where these ideas have originated.

### WHAT IS A SCIENTIST AND WHAT IS SCIENCE?

**Objective:** To identify the meanings given by the pupils to science and scientists.

**Equipment:** A4 plain paper (one per pupil), pencils and crayons, overhead projector, acetate sheets and pens.

**Activities:** **1. Draw a scientist**

Ask the pupils to draw a typical scientist at work.

**2. Discussion**

These pictures can then be used as the basis of small group discussion.

Why have they drawn the pictures as they have?

What do the pictures in the group have in common?

In what ways are they different?

How can you explain these differences?

Each of the groups feedback from their discussions.

*At this stage it is best if the teacher makes no judgements on the ideas proposed.*

*Stress that you want the pupils' own ideas and at this stage the only "right" answers are what they think.*

**3. What is science**

*Next, move on to find the pupils' own ideas about science.*

**a. Brainstorm**

Write the word "science" in the centre of an acetate sheet or on the blackboard. Ask for ideas that the word conjures up. Write down all of them without comment. (This task can be carried out either in small groups or as a large group.) OR

**b. Writing statements**

Ask each pupil to write down five sentences that describe what they mean by science. Then in small groups (no bigger than five) pool the sentences and classify them under three headings: AGREE, DISAGREE, UNSURE.



**Homework:**

Collect pictures or cartoons from magazines that depict scientists. Make them into a collage or poster. OR Choose a book/TV programme the children have read/seen recently that contains a scientist, how is the scientist described?

*These homeworks will be needed for discussion in another lesson.*

**Teacher resources:**

J. A. D. Matthew “Cartoons in Science” *Physics Education* 26 (1991) 110-4.

J. E. McAdam “The persistent stereotype: children’s images of scientists” *Physics Education* 25 (1990) 102-5.

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**2.2 Interpretation of scientific data**

Both the lessons under this heading were used to create an awareness of the way in which presuppositions and assumptions influence the interpretation of data. While scientific “facts” have to be interpreted, and this is world view dependent, care must be taken on how the idea is presented as it can easily lead to relativism.<sup>3</sup>

*“Theories, hypotheses, models and facts, though bound to the creation order, are human inventions. But laws and sub-human subjects exist independently of human knowledge.”*  
M. D. Stafleu (1980) p.9

**Lesson 1:**

**FACTS, AND NOTHING BUT THE FACTS**

**1. Which of the following are facts?**

- An egg yolk is yellow.
- Beethoven’s fifth symphony is very pleasant.
- Madonna’s music is very sexy.
- The sky can be blue.
- An explosion is very loud.
- Margaret Thatcher was the first female Prime Minister.

**2. How would your answers to the above question change if you were deaf, blind and lived in India?**

**3. Which of the following are facts?**

- The earth moves around the sun.
- The sun moves around the earth.
- A feather will hit the ground at the same time as a hammer if released from the same height and at the same time.

**4. How would you change your answers if you were (a) Ptolemy (b) Galileo and (c) an astronaut on the moon?**

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<sup>3</sup>See S. Bishop and J. Carpenter “Constructivism: an introduction and critique” *Spectrum* 25(2) (1993) p147-158 for a discussion of “critical realism”, that is, ontological objectivity, but epistemological subjectivity. ‘Critical realism’ in the science/religion debates is adapted by Christians, but this is based largely on Popper’s thesis whose antipathy to all religion influenced his views on science.

**Lesson 2:****Record 20 observations of a pencil (e.g. colour, shape, material).**

Introduce the concepts of interpretation and assumptions. As the students feed back their results ask them to try to analyse:

1. what interpretations they were making: e.g. pencil's colour - what if lighting were different? what if the person were colour blind?
2. what assumptions were being made: e.g. the material from which the pencil was made.

©Steve Bishop, Oak Hill School, adapted from Pearl den Haan *The Nature of Scientific Inquiry SCS Curriculum Resource Bank, Canada (1986)*

**2.3 Different kinds of knowledge**

This example shows that science is not the only, and sometimes not the most useful kind of knowledge.

**Questions for class discussion:**

If scientific knowledge is not the only sort of knowledge that there is, is it the best sort of knowledge for getting to know:

1. a newly found friend?
2. the composition of a newly discovered drug?
3. God?
4. whether you will enjoy playing a new record?
5. if a certain course of action is right or wrong?
6. the likely effects of spending long periods of time in space?

*Michael Poole (1984) Science and Religion in the Classroom Watford: ACT p15*

**2.4 Alerting students to reductionism**

*“According to accepted (scientific?) norms such [religious] experience cannot occur. If scientific explanations are the only kind of valid explanation, then there is no room for the numinous and the mystical. Indeed if I experience such things, it is possible that there may be something wrong with me - am I mentally unstable? Thoughts such as these, however conscious or otherwise, inhibit people from sharing what are truly enriching experiences.”*

*Rodney D. Holder (1993) p212*

This section picks up on a theme already present in the previous section - the common assumption that the necessary path of explanation is to reduce all phenomena to the most basic level of explanation, which is seen as residing in the realm of physics and mathematics. This tendency is reflected in the media's common claim that the physicist who finally discovers a Grand Unified Theory of Everything will have 'explained the universe'.

There are at least three kinds of reductionism: methodological, epistemological and ontological. The first is a research strategy that reduces things to their constituent parts and so long as we don't say this is all it is, it poses no threat to Christianity. Epistemological reductionism is the idea that one science (or theory) can be

reduced to another, so that, for example, biology is really chemistry and chemistry is really physics. Ontological reductionism means that some of a thing's properties disappear. In a secular world view, the distinction between methodological and ontological disappears.<sup>4</sup>

Christian teachers believe in a coherent and multifaceted creation, and are concerned to keep a firm grasp on the significance of wholes as more than the sum of their constituent parts; and to show the need of various levels of explanation to do justice to our world. The following examples were designed to reflect more than a narrow scientific world view.

### ► Four different kinds of explanation

In his book, *A Guide to Science and Belief*, Michael Poole (1994) suggests that there are four different kinds of explanation:

Michael Poole, *A Guide to Science and Belief* Oxford, Lion (1994) (2nd Edition). Used by permission.

<b>Interpretive</b>	which answers the question "What is it?"
<b>Descriptive</b>	which answers the question "How is it constructed?" or "What is it made of?"
<b>Reason-giving (scientific)</b>	which answers the question of "How does it work?"
<b>Reason-giving (motives)</b>	which answers the questions "Why was it invented?" "What was the creator's purpose or intention?"

*Michael Poole (1994) p37*

*Can you think of examples from your science curriculum where using these questions would provide pupils with a greater degree of understanding?*

Having a scientific explanation of things does not rule out the need for having other kinds of explanation for the same thing. For example, an historian might need a different explanation to a scientist. Each is equally proper and none eliminates the need for the others.

### ► Key Questions

Keeping in mind that there are different and equally necessary explanations for things, the following four questions are key ones in that they help us to reflect on Biblical faith:

1. *Where are we? What is the nature and purpose of the world?*
2. *Who are we? What is the nature, purpose and task of human beings?*
3. *What is wrong?*
4. *What is the remedy?*



Hence, in regard to each area, entity or aspect of creation that we study and teach in science, we need to ask the additional questions:

- a) *What is it? What is the purpose or role that it was designed to fulfil?*
- b) *What is the human task? What are our responsibilities in the network of relationships in which it is located?*

<sup>4</sup>For an alternative explanation of reductionism, a paper on the subject is currently being revised by CST:SCT, available from Arthur Jones (see resources).

Through our Christian understanding of what it means to be human, we should not be surprised that these remain the basic questions to which science forms a particular response. Our Western Christian heritage is still strong enough to raise the expectation of a Christian response to the scientific response.

### ► Reductionism

“Nothing buttery” is characterised by the notion that by reducing any phenomenon to its components (that is, to atoms and molecules) you not only explain it, but *explain it away*. To alert pupils to the idea of reductionism, one lesson in *Science and Religion in the Classroom* requires pupils to make up a reductionist, or ‘nothing-buttery’<sup>5</sup> statement for each of the following:

1. a danger sign on a building site.
2. the page you are reading.
3. your best friend.
4. a red flare sent up from a ship at sea.

In each case, make the ‘atom and molecule story’ as complete as you can and then ask whether there is anything more which could be said.

*Michael Poole (1984) p26*

### ► The uses of science

The following is a further example highlighting the different ways in which descriptions and explanations can be given:

1. Think of a picture that you like and give three complementary descriptions of it in the language of:
  - a) a physicist (length, areas, distributions, reflection factors and wavelengths of different coloured pigments).
  - b) a chemist (chemical compositions of pigments: e.g. cadmium sulphide (CdS) - yellow; titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) - white; carbon (C) - black; cadmium selenide (CdSe) - red.
  - c) an artist (composition, perspective, subject).
2. If you have a favourite song, or piece of music, how many complementary descriptions of it can you think of?
  - a) black dots on bar lines - the ‘score’.
  - b) frequencies, intensities, timing of the sounds.
  - c) the message or effect the composer is trying to communicate, etc.

*Michael Poole (1984) p27*

### ► Understanding the richness of creation

The following example from Science, AT3, KS3/4 is illustrative of the need not to limit the description of any part of creation. This example comes from a foundation which intends to look at all aspects of creation

©Association of Christian Teachers, St Albans, Herts. Used by permission.

<sup>5</sup>See Donald MacKay (1974) *Clockwork Image* IVP p42ff

holistically. To describe in scientific terms alone, or as in this example, in terms of its technological uses only, limits the understanding of the substance itself and of the fascinating elements which are part of the richness of creation.

Silicon: If silicon is mentioned at school level, it will almost certainly be in relation to electronics (transistors and computer chips) ... But silicon is far more than just that. It has nearly the same fundamental importance in the geosphere as carbon has for living organisms: it is the element of rocks and rocky planets, of the sand and silt skeleton of soils, and of the rock-forming shells and skeletons of many small water creatures. It is also the element of stone-age tools and weapons, of antique pottery and modern ceramics, of modern resins, oils and elastomers. The roles of silicon in God's creation and in human culture are richly fascinating and it is certainly not exceptional.

*CSTISCT (1994) p5*

## 2.5 Understanding the interdependence of creation

The following example is one teacher's experience of the perceptions which might develop in a science lesson. This teacher was discussing photosynthesis with a group of 9/10 year old pupils.

“We were about to experiment with growing cress seeds in light and dark places and in places with light coming from one direction. I also really wanted to get at the coherence of everything, at how photosynthesis fits in with everything else.

I began by starting a discussion on ‘what eats what?’ After lots of specific examples we gradually got round to the conclusion that the food chain leads down to plants. What do plants eat? They make food! (Just as well for us humans and animals!) Next question: what do they use to make it with? What do they take in from around them? Water, minerals, sunlight, air. I explained about plants using carbon dioxide and giving out oxygen and how it was the other way round for animals and people, so that all are interdependent. At this point one girl suddenly burst out with the question: ‘But how did it all get like that? It all fits together!’ It was a real moment of insight.”

*Secondary School Teacher*

## 3 The role of faith in science

Various writers have shown that the persisting idea of a continuing fundamental conflict between Christianity and science is false. Many go further and point out that science itself rests on certain assumptions which are matters of faith and which, moreover, accord with a Christian understanding of the world. These assumptions include faith in an orderly universe to which human powers of observation and reasoning correspond in some way.

### 3.1 Intelligent design

The basic assumptions of chance and necessity have formed part of the dominant philosophical framework in science for a number of decades. This has been challenged by Christians working in science and the philosophy of science as an inadequate explanation for the real world for an equal number of years, but the evolution vs. creation debate continues. Currently, Christians in science have only two options. The first is to view evolution as a God-ordained process, which God used to create all things. The second is to say that the

*The message broadcast by most opinion-formers in science is that science cannot be done without a prior commitment to naturalism (the idea that nature is all there is). What this rules out is any thought that the natural world exhibits design.*

David J. Tyler, Now World News  
(January 1997)

naturalists' definition of what constitutes science is wrong or at least deficient. The conclusion of those who opt for this second view suggests that living things cannot be explained without reference to the intelligent design of the Creator.

At a conference held at Biola University in Los Angeles, USA, in November 1996, a number of scientists gathered to discuss ways in which the debate proceeds might be changed. The main focus of the conference was on developing a new methodology which seeks to identify intelligent design and then to incorporate the concept into a new philosophy of science. They suggest that the issue is not 'evolution vs. creation science', but 'naturalistic science vs. theistic science'. The central question should therefore be, 'should science be undertaken with the prerequisite of naturalism, or should it be open to theistic possibilities?' Rather than saying that everything is either the result of chance or the consequence of law there should be a third option; the theistic option. This states that not only does God control and use both chance and law, but that things may be understood in terms of chance, law, or intelligent design.

Some of the issues explored included:

- the innumerable examples of irreducibly complex systems which appear to defy Darwinian explanations of origins.
- evidence of distinct groupings of organisms that are genetically related with the Type, but which appear to be genetically separate from other Types.
- distinct differences between different types of organism are apparent from the earliest development.
- applying the Basic Type biology concept to hominid fossils, points to a coherent story of intelligent design.

### 3.2 The world is knowable

Another basic assumption is that the world is knowable. Without this basic premise there would be no point in attempting science, since its aim is to know and understand the world around us.

The following lesson was devised to highlight this:

**OBJECTIVE:** To introduce some elements essential to scientific inquiry. These include: an underlying assumption that the world is knowable, that when someone sees something she believes that what she sees is an accurate description of reality, that observation is not a neutral activity.

1. To do science we must assume that the world is knowable.

*The picture people build up of the world through science can be to the glory of God or can lead to idol worship.*

Ask the class to give some patterns in creation that they would probably have known even if they never went to school. (They could also ask younger brothers and sisters at home).

Elicit such ideas as:

- order in the seasons
- day and night
- things fall when thrown up in the air
- falling objects pick up speed

Read *Job 38-41 Psalm 19 Romans 1:18-19*.

What ideas about creation are described?

©Steve Bishop, *Oak Hill worksheet 'Things are not what they seem'* Adapted from Pearl den Haan (1986)  
The Nature of Scientific Inquiry (*SCS Curriculum Resource Bank*)

### 3.3 Other main assumptions

Examples of lessons for other main assumptions which are essential to scientific enquiry including Rationality, Orderliness, Uniformity and Worthwhileness can be found in *A Guide to Science and Belief*: Michael Poole.

### 3.4 Founded on faith

Many scientific discoveries, when they were forming in the minds of scientists, demanded faith before scientific reasons could be given. Some Christian teachers of science point this out to their students.

“One of the things I have done, both in the classroom and in assembly, is to point out to them that scientists who really make discoveries have to have an incredible amount of faith - if not in God then in what they are doing. Louis Pasteur, for example, believed that bacteria were carried in the air. He did a phenomenal amount of work, enduring mockery and shame and being made to look an absolute fool. But because he believed they were there, he gave the best part of his life to prove that germs were airborne.”

Wendy Sharp

## 4 Using biblical beliefs to understand science

This section, written by Arthur Jones, provides an outline of a biblical view of the world by which to understand the nature of science teaching. This, along with the biblical world view presented in Chapter 4, can also be used to help us to discern the faith commitments which underpin the content of any of the other subject areas.<sup>6</sup>

“The Bible roots all of life in faith (*Hebrews 11-12*, especially *11:1, 3, 6 & 12: 2*) - faith in God and His Word (revelation). This faith ought, therefore, to shape all that we do. It gives us a distinctive ontology (understanding of reality, of what exists), anthropology (understanding of what it means to be human) and epistemology (understanding of how we can know anything at all):

- Ontology:** God is the ultimate reality. All else is created - depends on Him for both existence and meaning.
- Anthropology:** We are God's creatures, made to live in relationship with Him. In Christ we are His new people, the focus of his purposes for His creation, called to be truly human as children and heirs of God.
- Epistemology:** We know because God has created us with the capacity to do so, and because He actively communicates with us (revelation).

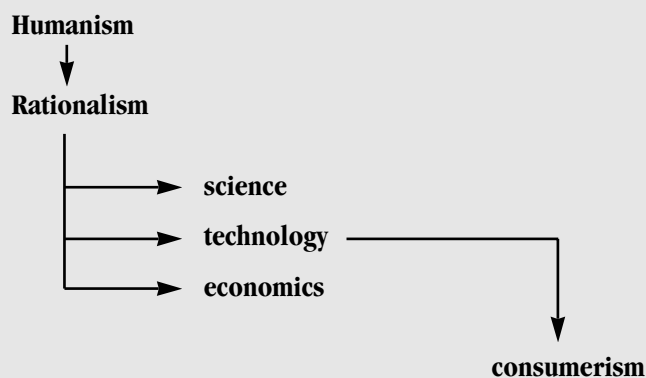
<sup>6</sup>For literature see John Kok, *Patterns of the Western Mind: a reformed Christian perspective*. Potchefstroom, RSA: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education 1996, (on the History of the Western concept of reason); Stephen Fowl and Gregory Jones, *Reading in communion: Scripture and ethics in Christian life*. London: SPCK 1991; Gavin D'Costa “The end of ‘Theology’ and ‘Religious Studies’” *Theology*, 99, 1996, 338-351.

To know anything (not just ‘church’ or ‘theological’ or ‘spiritual’ things) is to know it as God knows it, i.e. to know its place in God’s plans and purposes. That is the meaning he gave it by creating it, and there is no other source of meaning. God’s purposes centre in Christ (*Rom 8; 1 Cor 15; Eph 1, 3; Col 1; Heb 1, 2* etc.) and in us, in (relation to) Christ. To know anything is to know our role in relation to it in God’s plan, and what kind of people we must be to fulfil that role (cf. *2 Pet 3:11*).

Consider *Prov 12:10*: “A righteous man cares for his animals (NIV, GNB, NEB etc). The Hebrew is simply, “A righteous man knows ...” The modern translations rightly bring out what ‘knowing’ means. In the world created by the Biblical God, there is an unbreakable bond between knowledge, character and wisdom (wise use of knowledge).

The secular tradition breaks that bond by locating knowledge in the autonomous individual reason (i.e. universal reason replaces Christian faith). In the secular tradition, knowledge comes from the application of autonomous reason and there are no links with the character of the knower, or with the use, if any, that will be made of that knowledge. Consequently, the tradition enshrines a view of knowledge that can only undermine and marginalise all real communities and flatten out the richness of real cultures into bland uniformity. Today, science is the paragon of rationality and knowledge, and we worship a trinity of idols. We believe that the scientific experts can find out all we need to know, the technological experts can use that knowledge to control nature, and the economic experts can use that power efficiently to bring about constant economic growth. Thereby we hope to achieve the ultimate human good - ever-increasing consumption and affluence, with (forlorn hope indeed!) resulting peace, fulfilment and security. This idolatry dominates National Curriculum science and our textbooks. Here we must recognise the central mythic role of science in our culture. The fact that science works (“Even the bombs” - to quote Richard Dawkins!) functions to justify the deeper secular assumptions (see diagram below).<sup>7</sup>

### Western Modernist Tradition



Whatever our context, our calling as Christian teachers of science is to subvert and undermine these idolatries by incorporating into our teaching a much richer vision of reality that refuses to sever the Biblical link between knowledge, character and use.”

*Arthur Jones*

<sup>7</sup>Arthur Jones argues that the remnant of Christian presuppositions (held unaware by many secularists) accounts for the continuing fruitfulness of science.



## 5 Science - a human calling

Seeking to counter the popular presentation of science as an autonomous, omnipotent and omniscient enterprise, Christian teachers aim to set the scientific enterprise in the context of the human task before God. This includes showing pupils:

- how scientific discoveries have been intertwined with their political, cultural, historical, spiritual and social contexts,
- how certain scientific theories have been preferred for religious and philosophical reasons (see Clouser 1991)<sup>8</sup>,
- that questions of ethical limitations on scientific research and on the use of scientific discoveries are a pressing issue,
- that scientific knowledge and skills can be used properly in the service of God and man.

In short, the aim is to show that science is a human activity which is no more or less than one part of human life. Scientists and their work are answerable to God and are both responsible to and affected by the other aspects of human life.

### ► Responsibility

This statement, from Grangewood School's Science Guidelines, points to how scientific knowledge should be used and reveals that human beings have a moral responsibility in the uses to which scientific discovery and invention are put:

“Man's ability to glorify God through science is perhaps best seen in the sacrificial and loving use of scientific tools to help the needy (*1 Corinthians 13*) ... Children should be encouraged to see that even in the realm of science they have a responsibility to use their knowledge and ability in a loving and caring way.”

*Grangewood School, London*

### ► Stewardship

The Christian story ascribes a uniqueness to humans within God's creation, but the core of that uniqueness is that humans are *responsible* (answerable, accountable) to God. Throughout the Bible, responsibility to God has a fourfold relational focus:

We are responsible to God for how we live and act with respect to

- **God** (and, in relation to God, the angelic world)
- **ourselves**
- **our fellow human beings**
- **and the rest of creation**

The 'rest of creation' can be expanded, traditionally but usefully, in terms of: animals, plants, air, waters, rocks, and soil. The roles of created things intermesh forming an intricate web of relationships between these different realms. The teasing out of these relationships is an important aim of a science teaching that would capture the wonder of God's world.

<sup>8</sup>E.g. Fred Hoyle has been quite open about the anti-creation motivation of the steady-state theorists in cosmology; the Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum mechanics has been closely lined with logical positivism and non-realist philosophies; the link of evolution (in general) and Darwinism (in particular) with scientific rationalism is also clear.

The problem with many school texts and syllabi is that they often present a world view that sees Western culture and lifestyles as normative. Using **Energy** (Science AT4, KS1-4) as an example, high energy consumption is seen as normal and will continue to increase. The topic may be viewed solely from the perspective of human energy use (e.g. focus on electricity because that is most useful to us). Energy that humans cannot use is considered 'wasted' which implicitly regards the rest of creation as merely a source of fuels. The focus is often on economic cost and efficiency that assumes that scientific technology will meet all our present and future energy needs. (Paraphrase: CSTSCT (1994) p6)

By contrast we would want to elucidate world energy provision and use in relation to all the different realms of creation, to set forth the interrelationship and interdependence of energy sources, to see how everything God has created has some role in harnessing and sustaining the energy flows in creation, to view the human role in terms of responsible stewardship and the tackling of the problems created by greed and exploitation.

*CSTSCT (1994) p6-7*

### ▶ An extract from work on ecosystems

The following idea was taken from CSTSCT paper on NEAB modular science:

#### **The Environment**

A local ecosystem where there is high human involvement, e.g. a park, local woodland or school grounds, could be used to illustrate the part that people play in ecosystems. Studying human involvement in developing creation, will allow pupils to investigate the role of living things in a holistic way. This will include the idea that human involvement in ecosystems is right and natural and not artificial. It will also allow the study of functions that are overtly 'scientific', i.e. those that involve interactions, life processes, as well as functions that involve people in a more direct way, such as, provision for social activity, aesthetic enjoyment and legal structuring through local authorities. This kind of study will also involve the moral dimension of the loving care needed to maintain such ecosystems.

### ▶ Using biographies

The Christian Schools' Trust Science Curriculum Team has collected a series of stories and biographies for use in the science curriculum. They suggest that "the Bible...encourages us to teach through stories, especially the real stories that lie behind every scientific discovery and advance. These stories all bring us back to the basic biblical theme, often through a focus on key binary opposites such as good and evil, obedience and disobedience."

The following is one example:

**Blood Banks:** When the topic is blood (Science, AT2, KS4, PoS, L7-10), the story of Charles Drew is a relevant one. He was a key pioneer in the use of blood transfusions, through his development of effective blood storage techniques. What is less well known is that he was a black American and that both he and his blood bank service suffered much from racism. In 1950 he died following a car accident when the nearest hospital turned him away because he was black."<sup>9</sup>

*CSTSCT (1994) p4*

<sup>9</sup>On this see M. Reiss (1993) p69

## 6 Using science to illustrate biblical beliefs

The following three ideas were taken from an interview with Wendy Sharp, Head of Science in a maintained secondary school. She alerts students to biblical truths as she teaches science. These examples are not illustrative of a science curriculum based on a biblical framework, but of what many Christian teachers in state schools do, which is to relate the curriculum they have to work with to Christian beliefs.

### ► The conservation of mass

“Pupils find writing chemical equations difficult, particularly in making them balance. When I write an equation on the board I point out to them that since they are human beings and not God they cannot in fact create anything, not even something as tiny as an atom ... The simple fact of the matter is that though the world has some amazingly clever chemists who can make some amazingly clever chemicals, all they’re actually doing is rearranging the atoms that God made in the first place. As long as they remember that what’s on the left hand side of the arrow has to end up on the right-hand side of the arrow but in a different arrangement they can’t go wrong ... I don’t in any sense preach to them, but it’s something I refer to often so they’re aware of my belief not just in *a* God, but in God, who created everything that’s around us.”

?

*If these examples are not based on a fully integrated biblical framework, but rather on the dominant secular world view, what will pupils actually be learning through them?*

### ► Invisible and real?

“I say to them ‘In this gas jar I’ve got some hydrogen and in this jar I’ve got some oxygen’. I point out to them that as I do this, they are already working in faith. They have faith in me and that what I’ve just told them is the truth. If they have that sort of faith in me then it’s absolutely staggering because you can’t see hydrogen, it doesn’t smell, it hasn’t got a colour and oxygen is just the same ...

One of the things I point out to them is the simple fact that we live in a very, very visible world. We want things to look nice, we watch the TV, we expect everything that we do to be made visible. In the same way, if there isn’t some tangible, visible way of proving that God’s there, then we tend to dismiss it out of hand.

When I mix acid and alkali I point out to them that it’s absolutely boring, just pathetic. I take one colourless liquid, slop it into another colourless liquid and succeed in making another colourless liquid. That’s not an exciting lesson at all because you don’t see anything. I suggest that I don’t see why they should believe me that *that* colourless liquid will burn you and that *that* colourless liquid will make you blind if you get it in your eye, and yet *this* colourless liquid which I made by mixing the other two together is perfectly safe.

If you put indicators in it that show that this is a corrosive acid and this is an alkali and then you mix them together, miraculously you find that red and purple make green. They don’t do that in the art room when you mix paints! They actually see that we have made something drastically different and it’s enjoyable when it’s visible. I think that is a problem that’s particularly acute for today’s young people. Occasionally that can lead to discussions about the existence of God; they don’t believe me because they want me to show something to prove it.”

Wendy Sharp keeps these ideas and discussions light-hearted.

## ▶ An assembly on faith

“I show them a gas jar full of air and say ‘of course, this is really, really exciting, because in here I’ve probably got more than a million molecules and as if that isn’t gobsmacking enough, inside these molecules are dozens of electrons and, as if that isn’t gobsmacking enough, each one of these electrons is in fact going round and round (and I do this on stage, taking care not to fall over) at the same time as itself going round and round the nucleus.’

I look at them and they’re all a bit blank-faced and I say ‘I knew you’d be impressed’, because of course they’re not. They can’t see anything ... except a stupid science teacher twirling around on stage!

Then I mix acid and alkali with no indicator and say ‘now this is absolutely fantastic’. I tell them that this is dangerous, but I’m going to mix them and make something absolutely safe and useful. It looks as if you’re putting water into water to make water.

Finally, I show them gas jars which look empty but have hydrogen and oxygen in and they’re still nonplussed. (Keep the pace quick, otherwise they get fidgety!)

Then I go back to the beginning and I’ve got a super spinning top and I spin it on a tray. It lasts for ages and I say ‘that’s good, isn’t it? There’s something to see. You like to see the spinning top, but you weren’t impressed when I told you about the electrons’.

Then I re-do the neutralisation with the indicator in so you get a lovely pink and purple cascade turning to green.

And then finally I just put the two gases together and put a match to them and there’s an almighty bang.\*

I simply point out to them that the reason the first batch didn’t impress them is because it required them to act in faith, to believe in the invisible. In fact when they come to us for science, part of a science teacher’s job is to make sense of the invisible. I point out that in much the same way people who have a living faith believe in things that haven’t got coloured or visible substance to them. Just because they’re not visible doesn’t mean they’re not true. They don’t have to believe what I’ve told them, but it is the truth, and if they don’t want to believe it that’s just because they insist they want their lives to be visible.”

\* **DANGER:** Do NOT attempt to do this unless under the right and safe conditions.

Wendy Sharp

## Resources and further reading

Michael Behe *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, Free Press (1996)

Steve Bishop ‘Science and Faith: Boa constrictors and Warthogs?’ in *Themelios* 19:1 (October 1993) p4-9  
An introductory exploration of the supposed conflict between science and religion, including an overview of developments in philosophy of science and a discussion of miracles.

Nigel Cameron *Evolution and the authority of the Bible* Paternoster, London (1983)  
Looks at the theological issues concerned with evolution.

S. Bishop and J. Carpenter “Constructivism: an introduction and critique” *Spectrum* 25(2) (Summer 1993)

S. Bishop and J. Carpenter “Process Science?” *Spectrum* 27(1) (Spring 1995)

R. Clouser *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: an essay on the hidden role of religious belief in theories*, University of Notre Dame Press (1991) 330pp

M. A. B. Degenhardt “The ‘ethics of belief’ and education in science and morals” in Leslie Francis and Adrian Thatcher (eds.) *Christian Perspectives for Education* Leominster: Gracewing (1990)

Pearl den Haan *The Nature of Scientific Inquiry* SCS Curriculum Resource Bank, Canada (1986)

Rodney D. Holder *Nothing but Atoms and Molecules? Probing the Limits of Science* Tunbridge Wells: Monarch (1993)

A Christian response to reductionism and attacks on Christianity among contemporary scientists, including Richard Dawkins and Stephen Hawking.

Reijer Hooykaas “The Christian approach in teaching science” *Science and Christian Belief* 6(2) (October 1994) p113, 128

This is a reprint of a stimulating article first written in 1960.

Philip Johnson *Darwin on Trial* IVP: Downers Grove, USA (1993) (2nd Ed)

Challenges the evolutionary theory which had become a kind of fundamentalism within academia.

Arthur Jones “Common Schools - A Christian Reflection” *Spectrum* 27:2 (Summer 1995)

This article contains a critical response to the National Curriculum (science).

Donald MacKay *Clockwork Image* IVP (1974)

J. A. D. Matthew “Cartoons in Science” *Physics Education* 26, (1991) 110-4

J. E. McAdam “The persistent stereotype: children’s images of scientists” *Physics Education* 25 (1990) 102-5

Michael Poole *Science and Religion in the Classroom* Watford: Association of Christian Teachers (1984) 32pp. £1.50, available from Stapleford House Education Centre.

Part one examines common student misunderstandings of the relation of science to faith and of the nature of science. Part two outlines six principles which pupils should be helped to understand in order to lead them to more adequate views, and suggests classroom activities to support each one.

Michael Poole *A Guide to Science and Belief* Oxford: Lion (1994) (2nd edn)

This concise resource book explores the relationship between science and religion and the supposed conflicts between them. Its content ranges from the nature of scientific method to discussion of the church’s relation to Galileo and Darwin. It contains many illustrations and quotations which could be used in the classroom.

Michael Poole *Beliefs and Values in Science Education* Milton Keynes: Open University Press (1995) 150pp, £12.99 (pb)

A new book aimed at science teachers which examines how beliefs and values interact with science and science teaching. It contains resource material for considering how spiritual, moral, social and cultural factors have affected science and for considering the relevance of history of science. The relationship between science and religious belief is also discussed.

Michael Poole, Sue Hookway and Adrian Brown *God Talk: Science Talk*, Oxford, Lion (1996)

This book offers a range of resources, strategies and additional background material for presenting many of the issues raised in this chapter, in the classroom.

Michael R. Reiss (1993) *Science Education for a Pluralist Society* Milton Keynes: Open University Press  
125pp, £10.99(pb) ISBN 0 335 15760-2

An invaluable resource for a pluralist approach to science education. Chapter 6 to 8 provide a compendium of information highlighting the contributions to science of females and non-Westerners.

Keith Ward *God, change and necessity* One World: London (1996)

Critiques Richard Dawkins' views (from a theistic creationist view).

Christian Schools Trust Science Curriculum Team (CSTSCT), c/o Dr Arthur Jones, 108 Ratcliffe Drive, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS12 (Tel: 0117 931 4516)

The group has produced a range of short papers including policy statements, story units, analyses of the world views and an annotated bibliography for science. For a full publications list, write to the above address.

Christians In Science Education exists to provide a service to Christians who are involved in science education. It aims to keep people in touch with developments in this field and to help them to bring a Christian perspective to their work. It publishes a regular newsletter. Write to John Bausor, CISE Secretary, 5 Longcrofte Road, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 6RR.

"The Question Is ...?" Christian Education Movement, Royal Buildings, Victoria Street, DERBY, DE1 9BR.

A 4 part video (on one tape) with accompanying booklet which puts a particular Christian view, as well as other views. (Price £39.95, but £24.95 for educational establishments).

Creation Resources Trust, Mead Farm, Downhead, West Camel, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 7RQ. This group publishes a children's paper, *Our World*; a teenage paper, *Original View*; a magazine *Creation Update*; and other books, videos and seminars sharing the evidence for creation. They also maintain a web site: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/creationresources>.

# Design and technology

## Introduction

### 1 Values in technology

#### 1.1 Aims

### 2 Designing a technology curriculum which includes a values perspective

- ▶ The technical, the organisational and the cultural
- ▶ The Technology Compass Rose
- ▶ Keeping questions in mind
- ▶ Built in or left to chance?
- ▶ Technology - a mixed blessing?

### 3 The use of real examples

- ▶ The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

### 4 Cross-curricular links

### 5 Creativity

### 6 Human relationships

- ▶ Considering issues of relationships
- ▶ Understanding the value of the family and the community
- ▶ Practising hospitality

### 7 Developing a wider perspective

#### 7.1 Links with industry

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## Resources and further reading





# Design and technology<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Any life skills subject offers the opportunity for teachers to encourage the development of the values and world view of their pupils. Design and Technology (D & T) is a newly formed foundation subject in the National Curriculum. It includes some specialist areas such as Craft, Design and Technology (CDT), Home Economics (HE), to a lesser extent Art and Design, and Business Studies which have in the past provided an opportunity for the development of life skills. (Information Technology is a separate area taught right across the curriculum). Now that those areas which provided this focus, such as HE, have been subsumed under technology, which has an emphasis on designing and making marketable products, the personal and social development of pupils may well take second place. Some teachers feel that D & T could well fall prey to the dominant trends in society. Consumerism and economics, would support the argument that

*“... children must learn skills ... which allow them to become valuable members of a family and community and to help them become personally fulfilled independent beings. It is only when these skills are learned that they successfully explore technological activities and commercially directed tasks”.*

*Glenis Lomax, Head of Design and Technology, Bury Church of England High School*

However, since D & T is a new subject area with few traditions, an ideal opportunity has been provided for Christians and others to argue for spiritual and moral aspects to remain as part of the curriculum. This chapter discusses the interesting aspect of curriculum development that has occurred where values have been included to encourage the development of moral responsibility and spiritual growth.

## 1 Values in Technology

Technological products are not value-free. Value judgements are made throughout the design and production process, and the products embody the values of their designers, producers and consumers. Technology influences our lifestyles and the way in which we respond to other people. It impacts our understanding of ourselves. The choices we make in the development and use of products reveal our commitments, and our visions for the future. Young people need to be helped to prepare for their future, and be able to contribute to it.

The National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Design and Technology appear to suggest that skills, technical know-how and business acumen are all that are necessary to developing products. Ruth Conway argues that an essential part of the education of young people is that they should not only learn the skills to make cost effective products, but be able to reflect critically on the values that have shaped the technological world in which they live, and the values that motivate and guide their own decision-making. The inevitable impact of technology on society, culture and the environment should be investigated, and pupils should be able to understand the value judgements they themselves are making when designing and making their own products.

It is also important that teachers are able to understand their own underlying values in order to be able to help pupils explore theirs<sup>2</sup>.

*Life is dominated by the trappings of technology, the myriad of devices - fax machine, cellular phones, computers, pagers - designed to make our life easier, which can in fact accelerate it to a pace seemingly beyond our control ... Perhaps Christian educators, when considering the latest technology should go beyond discussing its effectiveness to ask, ‘What does this technology do to our souls?’*

*Monsma quoted in Stronks and Blomberg (1986)*

<sup>1</sup> The authors are greatly indebted to Ruth Conway for help in the analysis of this chapter and for many of the suggestions contained therein. A contact address for Values in Technology Education, which she co-ordinates, can be found at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> A list of resources for the development of both teachers' and pupils' understanding of the values issues can be obtained from Ruth Conway. See under Resources.

*We need to go back to the purpose of what we are making or using.*

Ruth Conway

## 1.1 Aims

*“The purpose (of technology) might be stated as ‘the enhancement of the quality of human life and relationships on the personal, community, national and international level’. The emphasis on relationships is deliberate for it is the quality of relationships, not the possession of wealth that determines the quality of human life.”*

Glenda Prime, University of the West Indies

The following fundamental perspectives and priorities are written into the aims of the Department of Design and Technology at The Mount School in York. Their overall aim is:

*“To equip pupils to become active collaborators in the creation of a more peaceful, just and sustainable society through developing their technological capability.”*

They add to that the following aims:

Pupils should be enabled to:

- Deepen their concern for the poor and those at the margins of society
- Deepen their awareness of the need to look after the earth’s resources
- Challenge racial and gender stereotyping and
- Develop respect for others and the skills necessary to work in groups.

*Ruth Conway, from a talk given at the Reading Fellowship, October 1994*  
(see also “Values in Technology” in *International Journal of Technology and Design Education 4* (1994) p109-116)

*In what ways would a Biblical understanding of creation and the Kingdom of God help teachers to develop projects that reflect these aims?*

## 2 Designing a technology curriculum which includes a values perspective

### The technical, the organisational and the cultural

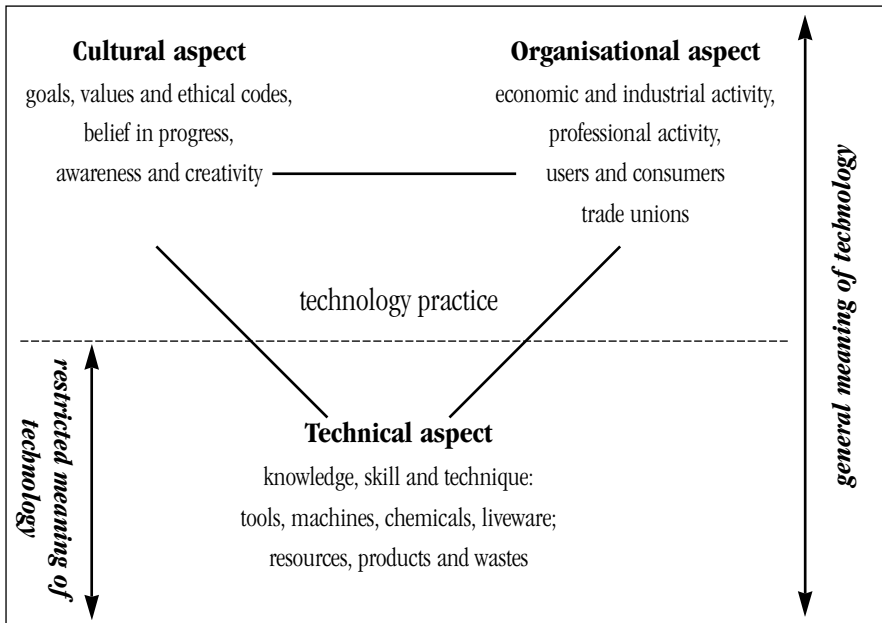
Arnold Pacey in *The Culture of Technology*, suggests that the technology curriculum should include three aspects: the technical, the organisational and the cultural. The restricted aspects of technology are often the main focus of the technology curriculum, while the wider impact of technology practices are often marginalised, if not ignored. The relationship between the three aspects are demonstrated in diagram 1 opposite.

Any technology project can demonstrate the above three aspects. The following example relates to the car:

**The technical aspect:** the car itself, its design, the materials and the fuel it uses; the skills needed for design, production use and eventual disposal

**The organisational:** provision of training for all those skills; management of the factory; organisations for employers, Unions, consumers; supply routes for raw materials and marketing; a road network; conveniently placed petrol stations; tankers for shipment of oil

**The cultural:** the value we place on personal mobility and individual freedom, over and above the high risk of accidents and the damaging effects of pollution. For some, the pleasure of a high performance engine and the thrill of speed.



?

*Under the cultural aspect, the idea of progress is given as an example of guiding beliefs. In what ways might you want to qualify this?*

©Arnold Pacey

?

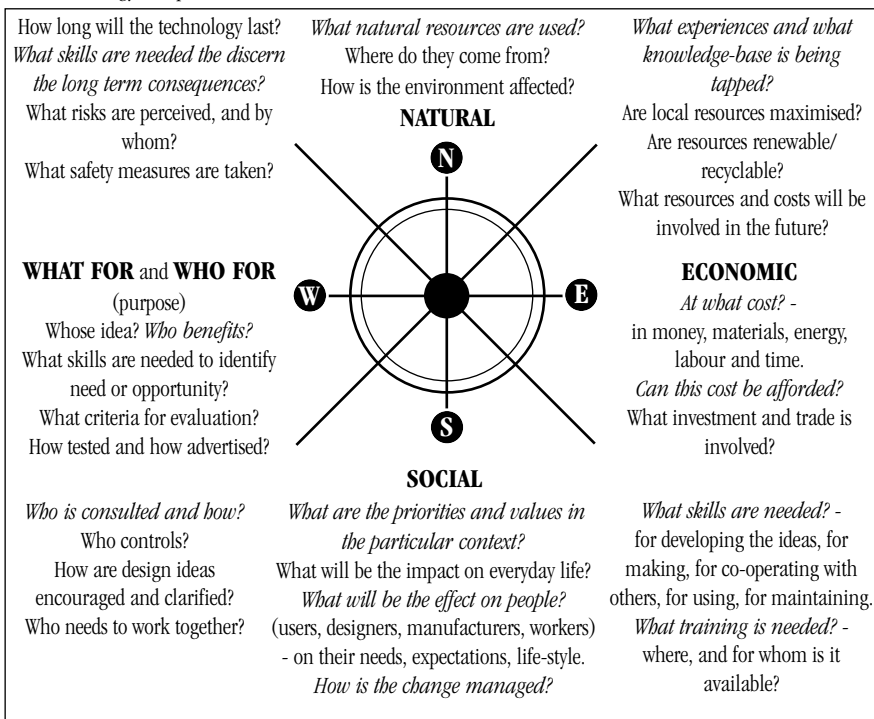
*As a Christian, can you take these models and change the details to reflect Christian assumptions and understandings of the technological world?*

Technology Compass Rose  
©Development Education Centre, Birmingham.

## ► The Technology Compass Rose

Another way of exploring the interconnectedness of the technical, organisational and cultural aspects is to use a questioning device called the “technology compass rose” developed at the Development Education Centre in Birmingham (see Resources for address).

(The Technology Compass Rose)



Any piece of technology (the car, a hi-fi system, genetically engineered seeds, a fast-food product, a wind-farm) can be placed in the centre and the four points of the compass suggest questions which might be asked.

This device helps to highlight the values and commitments which are/have been operating and the priorities that have governed the development of technologies.

### ► Keeping questions in mind

Questions concerning value judgements which need to be kept in mind during the technological process might include:

***Whose needs are being addressed and who should be consulted?***

***What resources are to be used, where do they come from and at what cost (not just financial)?***

***How might the product be used?***

***Should there be built-in constraints?***

***Might it have an “impact beyond the purpose for which it was designed” (a criteria mentioned in the National Curriculum)?***

***Faced with conflicting requirements (that already represent implicit values), how are priorities determined?***

### ► Built in or left to chance?

Gerald Haigh, in an article entitled *Two ways to judge a product's value* (*Times Educational Supplement*, 28.4.95), compared the centrality of values in the technology curriculum of two schools. In one school, the focus in teaching was on personal responsibility, and technology overlapped with Religious Education, Mathematics, Science and Environmental Education. Even where values are not central to the aims of the technology curriculum, as in the second school, but where technical quality and skills, value for money and so on were, the wider values issues were still sometimes apparent.

*How would you build into the curriculum questions of “values” and personal responsibility?*

*“A year 11 pupil ... was inspired by her work experience in a hospital pathology lab. Having seen the wiring diagrams for the expensive electronic devices which were used to keep blood supplies at a controlled temperature she determined to make something simpler and cheaper. What she has come up with is a set of controls, sensors and circuits that could be used in a range of settings and because of their cost might also be relevant in the Third World.”*

*Gerald Haigh (ibid)*

## ► Technology - a mixed blessing?

Technological developments have immensely improved life in many areas such as health, food, transport and communications. However, there are dangers which many suggest need to be explored as part of the curriculum. Ruth Conway suggests that these might include the following areas:

- Control - economic, political, and military - can be centralised in the hands of a minority; the majority of people are pressed into compliance, their contribution undervalued and their needs ignored. At its worst, the basic needs of whole communities are swept aside, as has often happened with large dam projects. (e.g. World Bank report on the Sanmenxia Dam).
- There is a failure to recognise that we depend on a planet of limited resources and delicately balance ecosystems. Our common inheritance, and that of future generations, is being plundered, inequitably shared and damaged in pursuit of profit and performance.
- Maximum financial gain easily takes precedence over provision of employment, and personal and social problems of unemployment remain external issues.
- There develops an inherent trust in machines, which are seen as sources of well planned and managed solutions, while people become sources of problems. We even try to iron out the people problems by using a production model in areas such as education, health care, social services, where there ought to be a holistic approach allowing sensitive response to circumstances. (e.g. the breakdown within 36 hours of the computerised system for emergency ambulance calls in London).
- More generally, much of the experience that gives significance and meaning to our lives is discounted in the structures and criteria that have become the norm in many areas of our common life and work:
  - Intuitive, affective insight is excluded by rational, logical processes
  - Spontaneity is suppressed by rule-following
  - Integrity is equated with 'quality assurance'
  - Trust is replaced by performance indicators
  - Solidarity is limited to accountability
  - Wisdom, Truth, Love and Beauty, which are gifts from beyond ourselves, have little place in the prescribed and efficiently managed schemes

## 3 The Use of Real Examples

### ► The MacKenzie Valley Pipeline

The inquiry into the building of the MacKenzie Valley pipeline through native Canadian lands in the far North in the 1970s took into consideration the various views and lives of people in technological developments:

“The inquiry gathered evidence in many different modes, ranging from listening to native residents in their own communities to questioning ‘experts’ on the reliability of forecasts of energy needs or gas reserves. This was a very participatory and interactive process, and resulted in the recommendation of a ten-year moratorium on pipe-line construction, during which urgently needed protective measures for the community and the Arctic habitat were to be carried out ... a workable plan to proceed while minimising potential harm ...

The complexities of the real world of technology offers no fundamental barriers for implementing strategies to minimise disaster.”

Ruth Conway

#### 4 Cross-curricular links

Time is a problem for many teachers when it comes to studying the value of a product. There are no immediate concrete outcomes and it is easier to emphasise the development of skills in working with materials. Ruth Conway and Dr David Barlex<sup>3</sup> agree, however, that “no technology should be developed in isolation from its implications and purposes”.

Teachers need to encourage sensitivity and a sense of responsibility for others and for creation. Cross-curricular links with such areas of the curriculum as Religious Education, Personal, Social, and Moral Education, History, Geography and Environmental Studies, are essential to help pupils develop a fuller understanding of the implications of technological products.

*Design and technology is an opportunity to engage the interests and creativity of the students themselves, to fire their imagination.*

Ruth Conway

#### 5 Creativity

In order to motivate, tasks need to be related to the experience of the pupils; they need to be seen to be worthwhile and not trivial; tasks to which pupils can make a positive contribution.

Pupils at Selly Park Girls' School have worked on ideas sparked off by real situations. One made a bath warning device for a blind person and another a feeding device for leaving an animal during a holiday. Both of these bring in issues of values: could more be done by society for blind people, and should pets be left alone, or should they be kept at all?

#### 6 Human Relationships

It is easy to divorce technology from the relational areas, particularly as human relationships are implicitly threatened by technological developments. Ruth Conway believes that, “It is only by looking with others at what we believe to be of ultimate significance and truth that we will be able to evaluate technologies at the level that really matters - where they crucially effect relationships”

#### ▶ Considering issues of relationships

The following ideas, based on work by Ruth Conway, are not strictly limited to design and technology, but offer several points to consider when dealing with the development of positive relationships:

- **Power in relationships:** There is always an element of power in relationships which can be used negatively to restrict or control, or positively to open up options and possibilities for another person (e.g. people with disabilities).
- **Justice in relationships:** The importance of justice in relationships is acknowledged, but this can either be ‘reduced to a form of social contract, balancing one person’s rights against another’, or as in the ‘Jewish and Christian traditions, as a gift not a bargain ... we free one another for each other’.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Barlex, Project Director of the Nuffield Design and Technology Project (1995) published by Longmans.

- **Relationships are two-way:** Many technologies require only passivity.
- **People are the focus:** The questions to ask are not what, but whose benefits, whose costs, and whose experience and knowledge are being taken into account?
- **Relationships are based on permanence and commitment:** Change and innovation are hall marks of places such as ‘Silicon Valley’. Employers and employees are only temporary and the stresses on individual and family life are enormous. ‘This is a warning against the mythology of perpetual progress which so easily leads to technological means becoming shifting ‘ends-in-themselves’. We must safeguard those significant experiences which call forth long-term commitment to God known in Jesus Christ, to other people in community, and to the wholeness of the created order’.
- Relationships are based on respect and trust: breakdown can easily occur and these aspects need to be nurtured.

► **Understanding the value of the family and the community**

Now that Home Economics has been superseded by Design and Technology its place in the curriculum has changed and there is a danger that previous opportunities to examine some aspects of family life could instead become a more technical approach. However, it is not all bad news. The best technology projects, set in a range of contexts, include being creative with food in the home and for special events. This puts the ‘designing’ of food in settings within young people’s experience, often with a view to celebrating relationships.

Although some might argue that these aspects might now be more appropriately found in PSME, this is no reason why they should not be taken into consideration in D & T.

The following example was developed by the Design and Technology department of Bury Church of England High School which would satisfy the technical aspects of the National Curriculum and at the same time promote family and community life.

**SURVIVAL**

**The Task**

Your grandmother has been ill for some time. You feel she needs some help. Prepare and pack a bag or basket to take to her, including some food you have prepared. Also plan what you could do to help when you spend the day with her.

Pupils were asked to:

- Make a list of possible ways in which help could be given to the grandmother
- Decide what to make and give reasons for their choice
- List ingredients, equipment and other items
- Make a plan of the work they would do in the practical session

?

*Which technologies encourage the responses of understanding, accommodation, co-operation and mutual celebration in community?*

*Can you think of examples from your programmes of study where issues of relationship apply? Are there instances in your teaching which run contrary to these aspects?*

*“The skills of design and technology should be harnessed to augmenting the quality of life and relationships, not merely to increasing the amount of money we spend and the number of things we possess.”*

*Ruth Conway*

## ▶ Practising hospitality

This idea, also looking at celebrations within the family, was taken from a distance learning course designed for parents who were teaching their children at home. This course was aimed at the junior age range. Details can be obtained from Steve Richards at CARE for Education.

The lesson began with an exhortation to:

“Use hospitality one to another without grudging” *1 Peter 4:9*

Sharing God’s gifts with others is both a pleasure and a duty.

### DESIGN BRIEF

Develop pattern ideas suitable for use on table mats (for your plates, not for hot pans) and coasters (to put drinks on). Make up at least two of each and invite someone for a meal at which you use these items. Plan the food, drinks and how the table will look.

### RESEARCH

Part of your research will involve deciding who to invite for a meal. You will want to find out whether there is any particular food they dislike and when they are available. You may already be adept in the kitchen and have a number of favourite recipes to call on. Do not worry if this is not the case. You are doing the planning so you can leave yourself plenty of time for trials and tastings.

Perhaps you will decide to have a theme to the meal. It may be a pattern theme with marzipan motifs on top of your buns matching the shapes on your coasters. Perhaps it will be a colour theme with green place-mats, green salad, green ice cream and fizzy green pop. Choose your guest carefully if this is the case!. A foreign country theme could be a possibility; Greek food, Greek designs on the tableware, Greek music playing in the background. It may be rather “over the top” to persuade someone to act as a Greek waiter!

Think about what size the place-mats and coasters will need to be. You may want to measure the plates you will use in order to determine this. Show all your research on sheets of A3 which will eventually be made up into a design folder.

*“I believe that the satisfaction from learning creative skills, allowing children to look after themselves and each other is so easy to recognise. Pupils display such obvious delight when they have made something for the family or friends. The giving and sharing of food has a much deeper significance than can be included in its technological development.”*

*Glenis Lomax, Head of Design and Technology, Bury Church of England High School*



## 7 Developing a wider perspective

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, a wider understanding of the use and impact of technologies is essential. There are many links which can be made with other areas of the curriculum, a few of which have been mentioned above such as RE, PSME, Science and Geography. Links can also be made with outside agencies such as industry and development organisations.

### 7.1 Links with industry

At a conference in February 1995, the Values in Technology group felt they were pioneering a different model in the links between industry and education, developing a mutually challenging dialogue. Honesty concerning the value judgements which have to be made through both resource materials produced by manufacturers and in face to face discussion in schools, was seen to be essential. The educators need to recognise the constraints which influence those judgements. A negotiated approach balancing a manufacturer's concern to promote a product, and a teacher's concern to help young people, encourages a critical reflection on the product's appropriateness, efficacy and impact.

### 7.2 Issues related to development

Some of the apparently positive technologies have proved, in effect, to have negative results for some people. Development agencies are some of a number of organisations which highlight these effects and ask fundamental questions about the uses and demands for a particular technology which may have negative effects in a particular region. Sometimes technologies themselves have been exported with disastrous results. Development Education, and those interested in intermediate technologies, look at people and life and at what might be appropriate to different regions and cultures. Issues relating to development can also be found in the geography curriculum.

#### Resources and further reading:

The following people, organisations and books are useful for resourcing the Design and Technology curriculum as it relates to values issues.

David Barlex *Nuffield Design and Technology Project* (1995) Longmans

Ruth Conway  
Coordinator  
Values in Technology Education  
c/o Selly Oak Colleges  
BIRMINGHAM  
B29 6LQ  
TEL: 0121 472 2462  
FAX: 0121 472 8852

An excellent resources list covering all aspects of technology including values, and alternative technologies, the Nuffield Design and Technology Project, RCA Schools Technology Project, SATIS (Science and Technology in Society) is available from Ruth Conway.

Arnold Pacey *The Culture of Technology*

*Guidelines for Evaluating Products* (Published by Department of Education)

This booklet was produced following a workshop on values in technology. It provides a case for a broad based evaluation taking into account the context of technology. It includes the effect decisions have on people, relationships and the environment. It indicates the areas and issues to explore when involved in decision making. Information, with some suggested questions, are provided on four products. Available free of charge from the DfE.

*Taking a Global view of Technology* by Roger McBryan

A review of how Development Education material can be used as a resource in technology, including Christian Action, Christian Aid, Oxfam etc.

Available from ITDG, Myson House, Railway Terrace, RUGBY, CV21 3HP

Development Education Centre

998 Bristol Road

Selly Oak

Birmingham

B29 6LE

# Religious education

## Introduction

### 1 Some issues currently under discussion

- 1.1 What is the basic way into learning about religion and religions?
- 1.2 What is the desired outcome of religious education for the pupil?
- 1.3 Where does religious education fit into the rest of the curriculum?

### 2 Approaches to religious education

- ▶ Classroom objectives from Birkdale School, Sheffield
- ▶ Objectives developed in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus for Suffolk schools.

### 3 What is the basic way of learning about religion and religions?

- ▶ Provoking spiritual experience or using real experiences?
- ▶ Analysing world views
- ▶ Key beliefs
- ▶ Stapleford Project
- ▶ Activity learning

### 4 What is the desired outcome for the pupils?

- 4.1 Encouraging personal growth
  - ▶ Understanding what it means to serve
- 4.2 Understanding belief and commitment

### 5 Where does RE fit into the rest of the curriculum?

- ▶ An assembly on “The Religious Dimension of my Subject”
- ▶ Links with history
- ▶ Links with drama and English

## Resources and further reading



# Religious education

## Introduction

Changes over the last 40 years have transformed Religious Education in schools from that which exclusively promoted the Christian faith, to a subject in which Christianity has just become one religion amongst many. For this reason, among others, some Christian parents decided to remove their children from the state school system. However, with RE being an obvious subject for Christian involvement in schools, much work has been done in this area. One of the issues tackled has been the prevailing view of theological pluralism; that is, the idea that “different religions are merely cultural expressions of the same reality” and that “all religions lead to God” (Hick 1989; cf. Cook 1991; Clements 1992).

Other issues which no Christian teacher can avoid include the continuing debate about teaching approaches, and the proportion of time that should be allocated to Christianity at the different key stages. Thematic approaches have been rejected in favour of teaching each religion separately, with Christianity just one religion among many to be studied. Both approaches can promote relativism and there are arguments as to how many religions should be taught, particularly at the primary level. Some suggest that to teach three non-Christian faiths before the age of eleven would be confusing for most pupils and to teach Christianity and Judaism only is preferable. It is interesting to note that while promoting, or even giving priority to Christianity, could be seen as indoctrination, some maintain that pupils who are well established in their own system of beliefs are more able to understand the beliefs and behaviours of those who are committed to a different belief system (McLaughlin, 1984).

This chapter seeks to highlight and discuss some of the difficult questions and opposing viewpoints with which many of those involved in providing religious education in schools are faced. It presents examples of the ways in which teachers have struggled with some of these ideas and issues. Through this it is hoped that further discussion will be provoked and new ideas will be developed which will confront the challenges of school life, the realities of the classroom situation and the diverse contexts in which Christian teachers find themselves. The resources section at the end of this chapter provides information about further reading for discussion of Christian perspectives on religious education.

## 1 Some issues currently under discussion

The following highlights some of the areas currently under scrutiny and discusses some of the controversial issues:

### 1.1 What is the basic way into learning about religion and religions?

#### ■ Is it through personal religious experience?

This approach is convenient in that religious faith can be reduced to the personal and subjective, to do with feelings and non-rational experiences rather than propositions about the way things are. Conflict of truth claims between different religious understandings of life is side-stepped. Relativism, or the idea that believers of all faiths have the same personal experience of ‘God’; i.e. that all religions are just cultural expressions of the same reality, may result from some religious education.

#### ■ Is it through the external phenomena of religious practice - festivals, buildings, costumes, dates and so on?

This again avoids fundamental controversy by focusing on objective external description, on describing what people do rather than wrestling with their claims. But is this really what religions are about? Such



*To what extent should religious education concentrate on the preservation and transmission of the Christian heritage?<sup>1</sup>*

*To what extent does nurture happen anyway?*

*Is nurture into an undefined faith more subversive than making the faith explicit?*

<sup>1</sup>Without an understanding of Christianity children lack an ability to understand our culture. University teachers complain that Milton can't be taught to students who don't know what sin means and Libby Purves suggests that where children have not been taught Christianity properly "they are artificially isolated from 80% of Western art, literature and music. Not to mention history ... If nobody provides you with the simple grammar of Christianity, how can you understand what moved Wesley and Bunyan, Giotto and Michelangelo, Mozart and Verdi, and T. S. Eliot? How can you study the Reformation, or appreciate the perverted fossilisation of sectarian differences in Northern Ireland, and why this is not Christianity? It is not a matter of indoctrination but of education: the transmission of certain symbols, words and concepts which alone can make sense of our history and culture." (*The Times* 30.6.95)

approaches can easily result in the different religions being squeezed into a common mould dictated by "liberal" views of the nature of religious belief. Confusion may also result if several religious buildings, festivals etc. are studied at one time in a thematic approach.

#### ■ Is it through theology and its way of explaining the world?

Most evangelical writers have urged that the focus should be primarily on meaning rather than on experience or information. Facts and experiences can be given proper consideration only when their significance is understood from within the view of the world which forms their context. Fundamental differences are not to be swept aside, but rather recognised and understood.

#### ■ Is it that Christian teaching of RE should be distinguishable from non-Christian RE specialists doing it?

Some Christian parents prefer their children to be taught RE by Christians. However, when looking particularly at county schools, and even some Christian foundation schools, it cannot be assumed that the contents of a syllabus will be taught by a Christian. In a society with minority faiths, and non-Christian teachers teaching RE, the challenge is how to do a good job that positively presents the Christian faith, whilst accurately teaching other faiths.

## 1.2 What is the desired outcome of religious education for the pupil?

### ■ Is it being nurtured into a specific faith?

This is the goal of some faith-based schools, but it is widely held to be inappropriate for a state school context. Although the HMI national summary reports on RE does indicate that many teachers at primary level teach little else apart from Christianity (whatever their agreed syllabus states) the degree to which this is "nurture into Christian faith" will depend on the school, the teacher, the content and the methodology used. Historically, county schools were founded to be non-denominational Christian schools, and whilst it is clearly wrong to manipulate pupils into belief, positively presenting the Christian faith is quite legitimate. For some, the idea of 'promoting' the Christian faith in schools is anathema, but all education nurtures into faith in something or someone. A legacy of the view that education is neutral remains in the widely held assumption that nurture into a faith in the school setting is somehow inappropriate.

### ■ Is it the ability to make free rational choices between faiths?

This sounds admirable, but methodology in RE tends to squeeze religions into a common mould and minimise the differences between faiths. The presentation of different religions as separate entities is felt by many to be a positive advance in the teaching of RE. But if choice is to be an aim, it is essential that each faith is presented accurately in a way which respects its claims to truth.

### ■ Is it personal spiritual development?

RE can help the child to mature in and reflect upon his/her own beliefs. The popular notion of 'spiritual development' is shaped by relativist views. A danger is that in some approaches religious material (e.g. a Bible story) can become divorced from its context, providing almost arbitrary raw material for the pupil's growth without ever being properly understood for what it is.

### ■ Is it to develop tolerance and citizenship?

The ability to relate to others whose convictions differ, it may be argued, can only be achieved if differences are really understood, and if pupils can be given the opportunity to see the world as it looks through the eyes

of an adherent of another faith (including secular humanism explicitly seen as another faith).

### 1.3 Where does religious education fit into the rest of the curriculum?

There has been a tendency in secular thought on RE to reflect on the Enlightenment separation of facts and values. This places RE firmly in the realm of values (with connotations of being relative, private, to do with opinion rather than truth) while identifying other curriculum areas (e.g. science) with the realm of public, assured fact. The result is that religious faith is viewed as a private personal option, often portrayed as irrelevant to real life, rather than as a set of truth-claims about the world.

Some Christian educators have resisted this division and are seeking to see beyond falsely posed dichotomies, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different positions through a biblical view, seeking ways of teaching which present faith in its integrity while engaging with pupils' experiences and interest. Teachers of religious education have approached the subject in different ways. Some of these are outlined in the rest of this chapter.

## 2 Approaches to religious education

Teachers of RE find themselves in a variety of situations whether in a school with a Christian foundation, or in a more secular setting. In a school with a Christian foundation, the aims and purposes of RE are often set within Christian aims and purposes. In the second type of school, specifically Christian aims and purposes for RE are usually labelled as inappropriate. Teachers in this situation, while it is in fact perfectly acceptable to present the Christian faith, often feel intimidated by views which suggest that it is not. They are thus often, and unnecessarily, presented with personal and educational dilemmas. The sets of aims presented below reflect different situations.


### ► Classroom objectives from Birkdale School, Sheffield


This example shows the set of classroom objectives developed by the R.E. department of an independent boys' school with a Christian foundation.


1. To enable boys to talk and think about religion in ways which are intelligent (informed).

This means:

- a) showing boys that there *are* facts, that they matter, and where and how they can be ascertained;
  - b) giving boys some basic tools for evaluating the claims of religions: eg. skills in use and understanding of religious language, logic and evidence;
  - c) helping boys to some grasp of the experiential and emotional aspects of religions.
2. To help boys to understand the differences between scientific and religious approaches to life, and that they are not necessarily opposed to each other.
3. To encourage boys to be aware of the mystery of life, especially in the fields of religion and of science.

  
*When a young person consolidates their own erroneous beliefs about God, can we speak of spiritual development?*

  
*In what ways is this affective approach to RE any different from the personal pietistic approach adopted within many Christian denominational schools?*

  
*In what ways could other schools imitate this model?*

4. To enable them to consider ‘ultimate questions’ about meaning, purpose, the nature of things, and the kind of life worth living.
5. To help to clear away ignorance, prejudice and misunderstanding, especially in the religious realm, so as to free young people to make their own decisions about beliefs and lifestyle.
6. To choose content which takes seriously boys’ own ‘religious’ concerns, while giving proper weight to the central documents of the Christian faith.

*Birkdale School, Sheffield*

### ▶ Objectives developed in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus for Suffolk schools.

This example was taken from a comprehensive course developed by an RE advisory team for a local authority<sup>2</sup>. This kind of model can enable Christian teachers to teach Christianity with integrity and present the Christian option honestly.

Whilst the syllabus and the objectives are far wider than the extract shown here, it has been chosen to show how the key beliefs of Christianity might be conveyed.

The objectives for this particular aspect of the RE curriculum state that pupils should be given the opportunities to explore the characteristics of two believing communities (Christian and one other).

■ At Key Stage 1 pupils are taught about **Religion in the family** and are encouraged to “find out about things families do, including religious families, as part of their weekly routine and on special occasions, particularly those which recur annually”. Pupils then go on to “explore some of the ways in which home and family life may be a focus of, and affected by, religious activity and belief”.



*To what extent as a Christian teacher, will you use the Christian perspective as a basis from which to critique other faiths?  
How else can one avoid relativism?*

■ At the next stage pupils learn about what a **faith community** believes and about the things they do which are important to them. Pupils

*“investigate what it means to belong to a local faith community and learn about the beliefs and practices which bind its members together”.*

■ Further stages looked at

- what it means to make a commitment to certain beliefs
- how these are expressed in the life of the community
- what impact this has on the lifestyles of individual members of that community.

At each Key Stage supplementary information is given for each of the major religions to help teachers present each faith accurately. The Christian material was written by Christians. Some of the key Christian beliefs and a practical example of how some of these beliefs and ideas are conveyed in the classroom are also given in 3 below.

<sup>2</sup>Another example from this agreed syllabus can be found in 3 below. More information can be obtained from Helen Thacker of the Suffolk RE Advisory Team, West Suffolk Professional Development Centre, Brooklands Close, Hospital Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3JY.



### 3 What is the basic way of learning about religion and religions?

#### ► Provoking spiritual experience or using real experiences?

The 1988 Education Act requires that all subjects, including RE, should promote the spiritual development of pupils. Since spiritual experience is seen to be at the heart of religious experience some teachers have argued that an exploration of spiritual experience should be the main concern of RE.

The experiential approach to religious education, which developed in recent years in response to both the dullness of content-based RE and the development of the spiritual dimension, encourages pupils to gain personal experience of the spiritual which, it is felt, has been lost in the secularisation of Western society. This approach is rooted in a child-centred philosophy of education and concerned with personal experience. It has been welcomed by those who see the approach as more relevant to the child and by those who believe the method will develop tolerance and understanding of the various religions and their adherents, without promoting a personal commitment to any particular religious belief. Others, however, including some Christians, question both the educational validity of the method and its claims of neutrality (i.e. requiring no personal commitment). Many argue that the content and methods promote religious views which are not Christian, while others suggest that this can focus too much on the child's psychological well-being becoming a form of therapy.

One teacher first encountered experiential learning in religious education through the book *New Methods in Religious Education: an experiential approach*, (Hammond et al, 1989 Oliver and Boyd). Here she honestly describes her dilemma as she tried to be faithful to her own personal beliefs and values, to her school, and her pupils. Many teachers face similar struggles to maintain personal integrity in the particular schools where they teach.

?

*To what extent is inducing spiritual experience of this kind encouraging pupils to be open to false gods and spirits?*

*Can a Christian who wants to take the first commandment seriously, invite pupils to engage in spiritual experience that does not promote a personal commitment to Christ?*

*“When ‘New Methods’ first appeared I felt that it was a book long overdue. At last, RE. teachers had a book available that concentrated on method rather than content. I was very new into secondary RE. and so read it from cover to cover. As I did so, I found myself feeling increasingly uneasy about large sections of the book ... I tried out some of the ideas myself (but) the basic unease still prevailed and after a few months I gradually stopped using any of the activities in New Methods or M. Beesley’s ‘Stilling’ which involved mind emptying or guided fantasy.*

*“Now two years later ... I am clearer about my misgivings and am finding models for experiential learning which are justifiable both educationally and as a Christian.”*

*Sue Hookway, Head of Religious Education*

The techniques employed by the new methods in this book to provoke ‘spiritual experience’, encourage pupils to first empty the mind, which the teacher then fills with a ‘guided fantasy’. Although some would suggest a certain paranoia concerning the roots and results of this kind of activity, others argue that dangers are inherent in the techniques. Guided fantasy/imagery is based on Eastern religious techniques used to invoke spiritual experiences and even though the techniques are said to be free of religious connections, it is questionable whether these activities can be detached from their roots. Many argue that to use these techniques is to involve pupils in actual religious experience which has its roots in a particular religious tradition.



*To what extent do Christians over-react to the dangers associated with spiritual experience in the classroom while failing to recognise the 'false gods' conveyed in more conventional teaching?*

Another problem is seen to be the psychological changes which could occur. It is felt that there could be manipulation as a child's mind is vulnerable in this 'empty' condition. Teachers should thus avoid putting pupils into any mind-emptying state and then invoking spiritual experiences, as they have not been trained to deal with the results.

Sue Hookway also points out that spirituality, particularly Christian spirituality, is part of the nitty-gritty of every-day life and not, as the New Methods approach implies, "just part of a world of fantasy and specially engineered experiences". She feels that experiential learning can still take place very effectively without running into these dangers, by grounding learning firmly in the real world of pupils' own experience, and that of others. To counter what she sees as a problem, she uses real-life situations which are linked to the content and concepts which the pupils are studying involving both imagination and reflection.

*"Pupils find their RE just as exciting as when I used more controversial methods. If anything it is more so since it is so much more relevant to their lives."*

Sue Hookway

After some considerable thought on Sue Hookway's part, she felt happier with the responses she has described. She does not suggest that the imagination should not be used in learning about spiritual matters. So, while creativity, the use of imagination, and reflection on experience should be encouraged so that pupils can empathise and understand the spiritual experiences of others, the techniques used in the experiential approach, sometimes described as 'deep imagining', is an area of considerable unease.

### ▶ Analysing world views

"Positive Deconstruction" is a process which has been developed by Nick Pollard<sup>3</sup> in his work in schools and colleges in the Solent area, mostly with 16-18 year olds, to enable students to 'seek after truth'. It is a process by which world views (religious or other) can be identified and analysed through a serious consideration of their meaning from within the context of the world view itself. This includes looking at the claims of Jesus and of Christianity in the same light. It recognises and helps pupils to understand the differences between world views.

© Nick Pollard. Used by permission.

#### A. The aims are:

- to help pupils to identify the philosophies from which their beliefs derive;
- to help them analyse those philosophies;
- to develop a positive attitude to thinking together with Christians.



*How far do you, as a Christian teacher, believe in these assumptions?*

#### B. Positive Deconstruction has five assumptions:

1. That there is such a thing as ultimate truth independent of ourselves.
2. That we must seek after that truth. It is important for us to engage in a search for truth, wherever it may lead us and however much we must change our minds.
3. That elements of the ultimate independent truth are reliably accessible to us. We can't know everything but we can know some things and we can know them reliably.
4. That our contact with the world and our capacity for reason is reliable. It is acceptable to trust our investigations of the world and the way in which we process and analyse the resultant data.
5. That truth will be coherent, will correspond to reality and will work.

<sup>3</sup>This section is expanded fully in a book entitled *Evangelism made a slightly less difficult* by Nick Pollard, published by IVP, (1997) © IVP. Used with permission.

**C. The process involves four stages:**

**1. Identifying the underlying world view:**

People are not generally aware of the beliefs they hold or of where those beliefs originate. Nick Pollard gives an example of how he might approach the problem of identification:

“Many students say to me ‘There’s nothing wrong with me having sex with my girlfriend because it comes naturally to us’. My reaction is not to confront them or oppose them, but rather to take their view very seriously and ask them why they believe this. In particular I ask them if they know where this idea comes from ... I have rarely come across someone who knows that they are expressing a belief that comes from the underlying world view of Naturalism.”

He argues that as teachers we all need an accurate and fair understanding of the world views which are currently most influential.

**2. Analysing world views:**

Pollard uses ‘the three standard philosophical analyses of truth’ in analysing a world view and to discover whether it is true. He states that a world view needs to stand up to all three to pass the test for truth.

- (i) Does it cohere? If a statement is true it will make sense and not contain logical inconsistencies or contradictions. An example of an incoherent statement is as follows: ‘Suppose I told you that I don’t believe in astrology, because I’m a Sagittarian and Sagittarians don’t believe in that sort of thing.’
- (ii) Does it correspond with reality? ‘Truth will properly describe the real world and will not make claims which are inconsistent with reality’. Example: A story which fails the correspondence test is that of the Mormons’ claim that groups of people, hundreds of years before Christ, founded a civilisation called the Nephites in America. It is a coherent story within itself, but “despite extensive archaeological investigations I am not aware of any evidence that such a civilisation ever existed ... Its claims simply do not correspond with reality”.
- (iii) Does it work? If a statement is true it will work, or “enable us to function, whereas error does not”. Example: “Psychoactive drugs will induce powerful illusions which may be completely believed by those experiencing them. Unfortunately there have been cases of people believing so strongly that they could fly that they have jumped out of windows, only to find that it wasn’t true ... to them it seemed to make sense and it corresponded with the reality which they saw. But, it didn’t work.”

**3. Affirming the elements of truth which a world view contains:**

Nick suggests that affirming the elements of truth is essential for two reasons:

- (i) pupils do not want to listen to “arrogant bigots, but will engage in discussion with someone who is on their side seeking after truth” and
- (ii) to affirm these elements will stop us backing off into our own errors. For example:

“Relativism says that there are no absolutes. Everything is relative - it depends upon who you are, where you are, when you are etc.. This stands in stark contrast to the teaching of Jesus who makes absolute claims. He said He was the way, the truth and the life - not a way, a truth, a life. Consequently, many Christians have totally rejected relativism. They will say that it is totally wrong, that nothing is relative. In effect they say that everything is absolute. This is clearly not the case. Context is important. There are absolutes, but not everything is absolute. If we reject relativism totally then we push ourselves into error.”<sup>4</sup>

*“Truth is never relative, but we express truth in different ways in different contexts and cultures.”*

<sup>4</sup>Others will say that relativism in morality is always wrong. There may be complex issues involved in certain scenarios, but that does not impinge on whether moral issues are right or wrong. Where the choice is between the lesser of two evils, both choices are nonetheless wrong. Relativism in cultural customs or habits may or may not be wrong. It is not wrong to drink wine with your meal, but it could be wrong to do so if you invited an alcoholic.



*Is it our perception of truth which may be relative, not the truth of God Himself?*

**4. Discovering its errors:**

Alternative world views will also contain error and in answering the three questions above it may be found that a world view is not coherent, it doesn't correspond with reality or it will not work. Pollard devised the following worksheet for use with students:

**POSITIVE DECONSTRUCTION WORKSHEET**

Identify .....

**Analyse**

**Affirm Truth**

**Discover Error**

1. Cohere?

2. Correspond?

3. Work?

	Affirm Truth	Discover Error
1. Cohere?		
2. Correspond?		
3. Work?		



*How does the teaching of Christianity compare with the teaching of other religions in your syllabus?*

**Key Beliefs<sup>5</sup>**

One way in which some local authorities have attempted to teach religions is through developing a curriculum around the 'key beliefs' of both Christianity and the other major religions. The following extracts are taken from the supplementary information provided by the RE advisory team in Suffolk. These extracts relate to the key beliefs of Christianity and were developed in support of the objectives outlined above (see 2.2 above).

**Key Stage 1**

**Christians believe in God as the Creator or maker of the world.** He cares about the world and wants people to do the same. Christians also think of God as a good Father, loving, caring and forgiving and wanting His "children" (followers) to be the same. They believe God has authority over His children but that, like a good father, He uses it wisely...

**Christians are followers of Jesus Christ ...** Christians believe Jesus is special; He shows them what God is like. They talk of Him as God's Son, a King, and give Him the title 'Christ' which is the Greek word for Messiah ('Anointed One')...

**Christians believe everyone is special and important.** They try to copy Jesus' example and love people in their families and others they meet (*John 15:12*). Jesus told His followers that the two greatest commandments in life were to love God and to love other people (*Mark 12:28-34*).

Other aspects of Christian experience which can be drawn on at KS 1 include:

Christians celebrate special moments in Jesus' life.

Christians have a holy book, the Bible, which they call the "Word of God".

Christians meet together as a Church.

Christians worship God together and individually.

<sup>5</sup> The editors are indebted to Helen Thacker and the Suffolk Advisory RE Team for information from their published documents. See note 2 above.

## Key Stage 2

**Christians believe God is the loving ruler of the universe**, a just judge of human behaviour. They believe God is three persons in one (Trinity) and talk of God the Father, who created and sustains the world, God the Son, who became a human being (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit, who lives in them. Ultimately, this idea of the Trinity is a ‘mystery’, but it is a little bit like being a father, son and husband at the same time. Christians believe God made human beings in His image, to be like Him. They also believe that humans have become sinful and turned away from God; they need to be ‘saved’ or rescued. Christians believe Jesus Christ was God in a human body (incarnate). He came to save people (‘Jesus’ means ‘saviour’) from the consequences of sin and, through His death and resurrection, offer them forgiveness and friendship with God (*2 Corinthians 5: 17-20*) Christ was a title given to Jesus by his Jewish followers; its Hebrew equivalent (Messiah) referred to a leader God was to send to rescue the Jews.

... They believe the Holy Spirit lives in them as their ‘helper’ (*John 14:16-17*).

Other aspects of Christian experience which teachers can highlight at KS 2 include:

The Gospels tell the stories of Jesus

The central act of Christian worship is the Eucharist (Holy Communion, Mass, Lord’s Supper).

The key Christian symbol is a cross.

Christians celebrate key events in Jesus’ life and in Church history.

The Bible is the source of Christian belief and teaching.

Christians worship and learn together as “family”.

## Key Stage 3

**Christians believe in God the Holy Trinity**, who has revealed Himself in three different but undivided ways. God is: *the Father*, who created and sustains the universe, *the Son*, Jesus, who is God incarnate, and *the Holy Spirit*, who gives comfort, faith and guidance. Christians use many symbols and figures of speech to help them describe the persons of the Trinity e.g. The Lord is my Shepherd, Lamb of God, Breath of God. Christians believe that human beings are made in God’s image, that each is of unique value and that, although sinful, they can be forgiven and redeemed (*Colossians 1:14*).

Christians speak of Jesus in a variety of ways e.g. Word of God, image of God, God’s only Son. They believe Jesus reveals God’s nature ... He showed love and forgiveness, and gave people a new start in life ....; Christians believe He offers these same things to the whole of humanity. They believe His death and resurrection provide a way to break free from sin (salvation) and the chance of reconciliation with God.

Christians believe the Bible reveals the truth about God ...

... Easter is the key festival with its central belief: Christ is risen!

Other aspects of Christian experience which can be included at KS 3 are:

Christians are committed to following Jesus Christ.

Christians belong to a world-wide fellowship of believers.

Many Christians follow a calendar which celebrates events in Jesus’ life and saints’ days.

Some Christians visit places in Israel connected with Jesus’ life.

**Key Stage 4**

**Christians believe that the nature of God is holy, truth, life-giving, love, spirit.** They believe that He manifested Himself most clearly in the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus the nature of God is pre-eminently seen as being that of self-giving love (agape). This is demonstrated most clearly in the crucifixion. They also believe that God is revealed as the Holy Trinity.

... Christians believe that, in Jesus, God has brought about atonement (i.e. at-one-ment or reconciliation) between himself and humanity. Jesus is seen as the Redeemer, who brings the world back to its original purpose: the purpose of the Creator.

The Christian view of humanity is that human beings are created in God's image (reflecting God's nature). They believe that human beings have fallen away from God's high standard (i.e. the Fall). Without assistance of the power of God, Christians believe that human beings are in the grip of self-centredness, guilt or powers beyond their control, and, as a result, they are separated from God (sin). Release from this state is described as salvation and it is offered to those who put their trust in God, through Jesus.. Christians believe that their lives should be informed by or based upon sources of guidance such as: -an interpretation of scripture (e.g. teaching of Jesus); church teachings (e.g. Papal teaching); prayer and inspiration of the Holy Spirit; reason and common sense.

**The Christian life is viewed as one of discipleship ...**

Other aspects of Christian life which could be included at KS 4:

The Virgin Mary is a focus of devotion for millions of Christians.

The Bible is central to Christians, although they interpret it in a variety of ways.

Christians have a history of expressing aspects of their faith through the arts.

The impact of Christianity on areas of national life includes - education, moral norms, customs and traditions, social institutions, government. law and monarchy, the arts.

It is suggested that noteworthy twentieth century Christians (including Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Pope John XXIII, Oscar Romero, Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, C S Lewis, Dr Billy Graham and Martin Luther King); and Key Christian concepts (such as incarnation, salvation, redemption, reconciliation, atonement, forgiveness, grace, revelation, resurrection) should also be studied.

In order to teach these key beliefs, and other aspects of Christianity, in a way which is relevant and interesting, and helps young children (KS1) to understand the importance of key issues in the lives of believers, pupils are introduced to imaginary children; Andy, Mark and Clare. These are from three practising Christian families from different denominations (these can reflect the churches in the local vicinity - the minister or parents can help provide details for the characters). The reasons for using imaginary families are several (adapted from Suffolk Advisory Team's materials):

- pupils may not be "experts on the family religions and the families may not necessarily be practising their religion".
- the approach "enables both pupils and teachers to step back from the Christian religion as something which belongs to Andy, Mark and Clare".
- teacher and pupil can "identify with them and share what they themselves know and do as Christians", or keep silent.
- "the integrity of teacher and pupil, practising Christian or not, is maintained and so is that of the religion itself, since the temptation to explain things away or view things only through secular eyes is lessened".

The teacher's pack notes that Christian artefacts are often unnoticed and unused. The books Christians use for teaching the Christian faith to their own children should not necessarily be written off as unsuitable for use in school. These are artefacts; but the way they are used in the classroom is important. "They should be introduced as books that Andy, Mark or Clare use at home or at church to learn about being Christians. Questions such as 'What does Andy find out about Jesus from this book?' or 'How/when does Clare use this book?'"

The Key Stage 1 pack produced by the Suffolk Advisory Team offers activities and ideas in line with the teaching objectives set out above, and introduces the Key Beliefs of Christianity and other aspects in the lives of Christians in the following ways:

<b>A Week in the Life of ...</b>	looks at the weekly routine of the children, including religious activities, especially praying and learning about God.
<b>Storytime</b>	looks at Jesus, whom Christians follow and at what they believe about Him.
<b>The Bible</b>	the Christian's holy book and why it is special.
<b>Going to Church</b>	places of worship, beliefs and activities which are important to Christians.
<b>Welcoming a baby</b>	explores some ceremonies in which children are welcomed into the Christian community.
<b>Celebrating Together</b>	looks at special family times, festivals and celebrations and looks at the stories and beliefs associated with them.

*The Suffolk Advisory Team: Notes on Christianity*

## ▶ The Stapleford Project

The Stapleford Project is a curriculum development initiative managed by the Association of Christian Teachers. It was set up in 1991 with the purpose of producing materials to support the teaching of Christianity in Religious Education in schools.

The Project is based on the philosophy that children need to be introduced to the key beliefs of Christianity if they are going to understand the meaning and significance of Biblical passages and of the Christian way of life. The Project materials are therefore all designed to teach theological ideas. The theological position adopted is that of credal orthodoxy, the traditional beliefs reflected in the creeds of the Church which are shared across all denominations.

A key task for the Project has been to develop a methodology which enables teachers to translate theological ideas into a form that makes sense to children of all ages. This methodology is called **concept cracking** (Cooling 1994), a process which contains four main steps:

### ▶ Step 1: Unpack the beliefs, or cluster of ideas

In the biblical story of Ruth these beliefs and ideas might be:

- God's care in time of difficulty
- Ruth's commitment to Naomi

### Step 2: Select one belief to explore

In this story one of the main beliefs is:

- commitment

©Trevor Cooling, *Concept Cracking: Exploring Christian Beliefs in School*, Stapleford Project. Used by permission.

**Step 3: Relate the belief to the child's experience**

This may be through:

- commitment to friends
- challenges to loyalty

**Step 4: Introduce the religious idea and make it relevant to the modern world**

The following are possible ideas:

- an exploration of the story of Ruth
- the marriage service
- *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom

*Cooling (1994)*

These ideas and others are explained in the booklet. Considerable emphasis is given to active learning techniques and the use of the creative arts as ways of helping children to engage with theological ideas.

▶ **Activity learning**

Drama, art and craft, visits, discussion and debate, and so on, are often effective means of promoting learning. Activity alone, however, is not enough to gain insights or establish understanding of an idea of belief. If the potential of any activity is going to be used to the full, interaction and engagement with the subject matter is required. Intellect, emotions and imagination need to be involved.

▶ **Role play**

Role play encourages pupils to identify more closely with people who hold particular points of view and to experience what it is like to stand in their shoes.

*"Over and over again, pupils comment on the fact that role play helps them to understand and empathise."*

*Sue Hookway, Secondary School Head of RE*



*If pupils are encouraged to role-play characters from other faiths, are there inherent dangers similar to those encountered when provoking spiritual experiences?*

This teacher uses role play in two areas in particular:

- i) Learning about important festivals and events in other religions - e.g. people involved in historical events such as Mohammed and early reaction to him, or as a vehicle for asking and answering questions about Ramadan.
- ii) Getting 'inside' Bible stories - e.g. events of Holy Week from the point of view of the boy at the feeding of the 5000.

When role play is at its most effective, pupils will become more deeply engaged in their role. It is important for the teacher to enable the pupil to de-role, or to have a time for debriefing, when the activity is over.



► **Collages**

Some teachers have used pictures from current magazines to help pupils create collages relating what they have been learning to the modern world. While engaging in work on “The Cross - God’s rescue mission”, pupils created collages of people making sacrifices in order to help those in need, in trouble or in difficulty.

► **Drama**

One teacher, Patricia Jerman, working in an area of the world where hardships and the threat of possible persecution for the church lay ahead, wrote a play based on the biblical book of Esther which was performed by the pupils and offered as “a message of hope and encouragement to the church at that particular time”. The play focuses on the idea that believers are “not to consider themselves as the Lord’s Bride only, but also as His Queen, having His ear and able to rule with Him”.

The introduction to the play suggests that “It is a play about the power of intercessory prayer and an instruction not to fear in perilous times, but to realise the position and function on earth that Christ intends His Church to have”.

A supplementary book on the history of the time was written as a basis for costume and stage design. Music was also written and performed to accompany the play.<sup>6</sup>

## 4 What is the desired outcome for the pupils?

Many schools with a Christian foundation state in their overall aims that their interpretation of knowledge in the curriculum is rooted in a biblical understanding of the world. Their approach is based in a biblical understanding of morality and values, and teaching is intended to encourage the development of certain characteristics and attitudes. Some argue that there is a danger when teaching biblical studies in a school with a Christian foundation that faith is forced onto pupils. While it is always wrong to manipulate young people into belief and each one must come to their own commitment, positively presenting the Christian faith is perfectly right and teachers can help pupils read and interpret the Bible in a meaningful way.

The following examples show different ways in which pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of the Christian faith, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour. As pupils increase in age, so the approach will differ.

### 4.1 Encouraging personal growth

Some schools offer an integrated approach to biblical studies particularly at the primary level (see chapter 5 on Curriculum models) while some focus on specific topics to highlight a specific attitude or value. This particular example is taken from a small community school which has attempted to underpin everything with a biblical foundation. The intention is to help young children understand the character of God and encourage the development of that character in their own lives.



*Is it right to see the teaching of biblical studies as more problematic than the teaching of mathematics?*

<sup>6</sup>This and other plays and stories based on biblical characters can be obtained from the Christian Schools’ Trust.

## ▶ Understanding what it means to serve

### ▶ Aims

- To help the children understand that serving is an attribute of God shown to us by Jesus in his coming to earth and giving Himself to us and in giving His life for all of us.  
 Also to help them see that because God's desire is for us to become like Jesus, He wants to produce in us a heart attitude that wants to give to and serve others as an expression of our love to Him - not expecting any reward except that of knowing that we are pleasing God.  
 To do this we will be looking into things such as love, serving helping, initiative and using examples from the life of Jesus and other characters from the Old and New Testament.
- We will also be looking at people who help us today such as policemen, nurses and doctors, and thinking about how they help us and what our lives would be like without them. Why do they help us? Do they just want to benefit others or are they seeking a reward?  
 We also want to study some characters from the past such as explorers, musicians, inventors etc. We want to draw out how these people used their abilities and talents that God had given them to create, explore, and help others. We want to enable the children to see our own differing gifts and abilities that God has given us and how they all can be used for the benefit of others.
- Lastly, to look at and encourage ways in which we can help one another and those in the community around us and so show the love of God to other people.

### ▶ The timetable:

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
<b>Infants</b>	Caring for family and friends Helping	Caring for hungry people Policemen	Caring for sick people Nurses and Doctors	Caring for hand-icapped people etc.	
<b>Juniors</b>	Servants of God Mark 10:45	Initiative Gal 6:10	Love (I) John 15:12-13	Helpfulness Luke 10:27	
<b>Juniors</b>			Love I & II	Women who served God	
<b>Assembly</b>		Joshua (questions)	Samuel (Worksheet)	Helping others	"Adopt" a child

### ▶ Classwork for Infants:

- People who help us:  
 policemen, nurses, doctors, milkmen, firemen, postmen etc.  
 Paintings and writing about these people. Invite some into school to talk to children. Think about how these people help us:
- what do they do?
  - what would happen if we did not have them?
  - do these people serve?

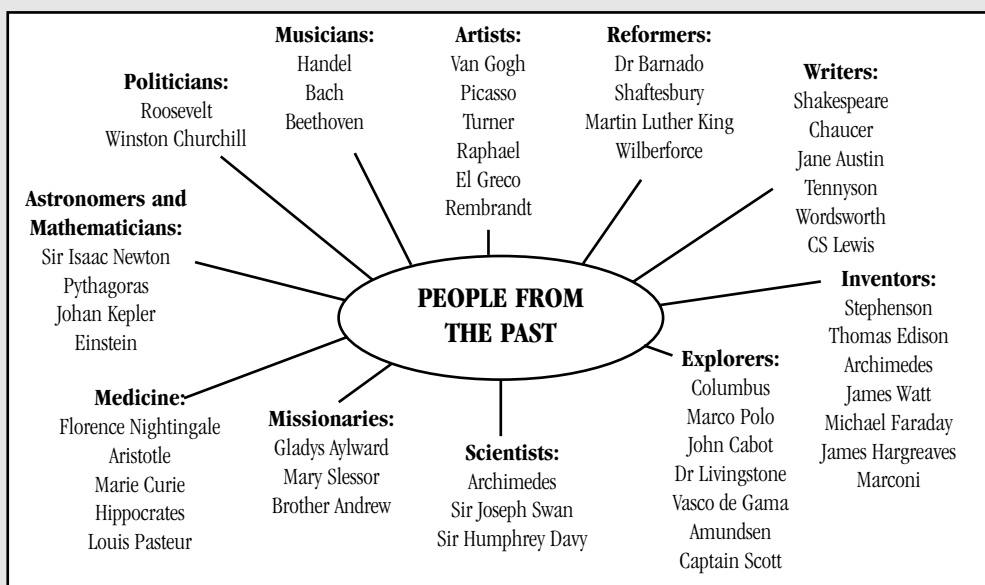
### Classwork for Lower and Upper Juniors:

Find out about different people in the past (see flow chart below)

Discuss and write about the variety of ways these people created, invented and explored. Think of the gifts and abilities God has given them - how can these be used?

- How did these people serve? God planted in them a desire to search, discover and explore.
- What has God planted in me? Ask Him to show us.
- Did these people serve for their own reward?

Possible visits: Art Galleries, museum, concert, science museum.



*Acorn School, Romford*

## 4.2 Understanding belief and commitment

In his booklet, Cooling (1994) points to another problem with teaching biblical studies which, he argues, has to be avoided. Biblical material, he suggests, is sometimes “selected for inclusion in the curriculum on the basis of a rather crude word association rather than out of a concern for its theological significance” (p15).

If the deeper theological issues are not examined and understood, “children complete their study of Christianity in school knowing something about what Christians do and a few Bible stories, but have little or no conception of why Christians do these things or what significance the Bible stories have. Their overall perception of the Christian life is of a relic in a world where religion has little part to play. The missing element for many pupils has been an encounter with the meaning of Bible stories and the significance of practices like baptism and communion” (ibid p.4).

Cooling argues that “the ideas involved in Christian beliefs are largely alien to children in the western world because they do not form part of their everyday experience. There is, therefore, a great challenge for RE in finding ways of relating these beliefs to children’s experience. Using story, including biography, and designing creative learning activities are important ways of achieving this” (ibid p.8).

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Thus, some argue that future RE has to engage much more with the realities of a “postmodern world in which meta-narratives such as the Christian world view are no longer credible” (Pollard: See 3: Analysing world views).

The following is one idea which might encourage a deeper knowledge and understanding of the reasons for particular religious rites:

*Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan from dawn to dusk. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim year. And so on. So what? Instead of copying out the descriptive details, pupils might be asked what questions they would ask a Muslim friend during Ramadan and what answers they would expect their Muslim friend to give. They might then be able to check to see whether what they supposed to be the case was in fact so. Instead of asking questions to which the teacher and the textbook can provide simple and straightforward answers, we could encourage pupils to ask adventurous questions and perhaps find adventure in pursuing the answers. But with all that they find out, all that the books say, or the Muslims, or Christians, pupils should discuss the ‘So what?’. What follows if this is the case? Does it really matter? To whom? Why? What does this imply for a Muslim/Jew/Christian? Does it say anything to outsiders?”*

Arthur Rowe 1992, p.49

## 5 Where does RE fit into the rest of the curriculum?

At one end of the spectrum RE is seen as an unimportant, and sometimes inconvenient, addition to the curriculum; a subject which holds no real relevance for life and meaning today. Some schools, however, particularly those with a Christian foundation, regard RE as central to the aims and purposes of education in the school, both in the realm of personal growth and nurture and in regard to understanding the religious aspects of the whole of life. RE as a subject and the links with other areas of the curriculum are therefore important.

### ▶ An Assembly on “The Religious Dimension of my Subject”

The following example was taken from the annual report of a well established independent school with a Christian foundation. It reveals how, in the Christian world view, all subjects are essentially religious. The place of RE in this school is to identify the Christian and other world views, and also to discern and understand the religious dimension in all areas of study.

Every Thursday of the Autumn Term in 1989, a teacher from one of the academic departments in school took an Assembly about the religious dimension of his or her subject. By the final Thursday Assembly, religious education was the focus.

▶ “Over the last few weeks, as boys have begun to realise that I would have to speak on the religious dimension of religious education, they have made one or two suggestions and comments; ‘Read the syllabus out, add a prayer and there you’ve got your assembly’. ‘Everyone knows religious education is religious - its obvious. There’s no point in doing the assembly.’

RE is no more religious than any other subject. That has been the whole point of this series of assemblies. It is intensely religious to study creativity as the art and design department do. God is the Creator and has placed with his creatures an appreciation of style, beauty and design and an urge to create. It is intensely religious to study the creations which geographers, biologists, physicists and chemists do in different ways.

The problem is that most of us are dualists. That is we make a very definite separation between ‘Real Life’ and God, between the religious and the secular, the spiritual and the worldly.

**REAL LIFE**

English, maths  
sciences, languages  
art, design, music etc.

**GOD**

RE

‘Real Life’ is secular and therefore the subjects which are concerned with ‘Real Life’ have nothing to do with the religions or God. So RE is the only subject which is properly religious. Just look at the content - all about church, God, worship and so on. So runs the argument of the dualist.

However, this way of thinking about life is fallacious. Truth is holistic and cannot ultimately be compartmentalised. Otherwise it would be possible to have truth in physics and truth in chemistry both mutually incompatible. God is intimately concerned with the material world in the most non-spiritual of ways. Our spirituality must be ordinary and everyday just as the mundane and everyday is redolent with spirituality. This is surely the message of the Creation and the Incarnation. A better way of representing this would be:

**G O D**

L	M	H	B	R	E	G	C	M	D	P	A
A	A	I	I	E	N	E	H	U	E	H	R
N	T	S	O	L	G	O	E	S	S	Y	T
G	H	T	L	I	L	G	M	I	I	S	
U	S	O	O	G	I	R	I	C	G	I	
A		R	G	I	S	A	S		N	C	
G		Y	Y	O	H	P	T			S	
E				U		H	R				
				S		Y	Y				
				E							
				D							

HOLISTIC

ALL TRUTH IS  
GOD’S TRUTH

**T R U T H**

“THINKING GOD’S  
THOUGHTS AFTER HIM”

ALL EQUALLY  
RELIGIOUS

It follows from this:

- a) All truth is God's truth. Christians have nothing to fear from the proper investigation of truth in whatever academic field it may occur. It can only shed more light on God's greatness.
- b) All truth is therefore equally religious and all subjects are in some way involved in thinking God's thoughts after him. Religious education is no more religious than any other subject.
- c) There is in fact only one subject which we may call theology and each subject department is involved in investigating part of God's truth in different ways. This is what the 'Religious Dimension of my Subject' assemblies have demonstrated this term, as each teacher has explored how his/her subject sheds light upon God, God's provision, God's mercy, God creativity and so on.

There are three areas in particular which RE investigates that are part of the religious dimension.

Humankind has always struggled with the ultimate issues. RE investigates these philosophical questions.

Where do we come from?

What is the meaning of our existence?

What happens when we die?

RE tries to give the space and stimulus for students to think through these issues. Every man and woman is a philosopher and exercises choices about these questions. To choose not to exercise that choice is of course a choice in itself.

Humankind has always wanted to know what is right and wrong. RE investigates ethical issues of personal, social and international importance. Every man and woman exercises moral choices. RE tries to give the space and stimulus for students to think through their moral stance.

Humankind has always displayed a need to worship. There would appear to be a God-shaped vacuum inside each person. The question is not whether you're going to worship but who or what are you worshipping now? And is that person, thing or God worthy of worship? Is it the true God? Or a surrogate used to cobble together some sort of peace of mind?

As the veneer of our civilised, material existence increasingly convinces us of our self-sufficiency, questions of ultimate reality which remind us of our fragility and impotence are often hedged. It has become embarrassing in polite company to talk of death, God or our own meaning and purpose in life. Part of the purpose of RE is to convert students not to a particular religious stance but away from a shallow and unreflective attitude to life so that they may exercise informed choices about the ultimate questions."

*Head of RE, Birkdale School, Sheffield*

### ▶ Links with history

There are many links which can be made with history and some of these are highlighted in the section on history in this pack. One popular resource, published by the Stapleford Project, has been *Faith in History* which links history and RE. This is a resource book for primary schools covering the Romans, Saxons, Vikings, Tudors, Victorians, and Britain since 1930. A book of photocopiable worksheets is also available. *Drawing on the Past* is another resource book for secondary schools containing 33 topics and includes background information and practical activities. Both are published by Eagle.

## ► Links with drama and English

*Ten-minute Miracle Plays* and *Ten-minute Miracle Play for Easter* (published by the Bible Society) are two books of plays by Margaret Cooling, of the Stapleford Project, which have been adapted from the early miracle plays for use in schools. These include background notes, music and poetry, and follow up ideas for RE. In 1996, these plays were performed to great acclaim by groups of school children in a festival held in Durham Cathedral.

### Resources and further reading

R. Clements “Can Tolerance Become the Enemy of Christian Freedom?” Part I and II, *The Cambridge Papers* 1(1) & 1(2) (March/June 1992)

These papers discuss the idea of pluralism in religious belief.

E. D. Cook *Hick and the Myth of Christian Uniqueness* Cambridge, Tyndale House (1991)

This provides a Christian response to Hick’s book (see below).

Trevor Cooling *Concept Cracking: Exploring Christian Beliefs in School*, Stapleford Project. Available from Stapleford House Education Centre, Wesley Place, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 8DP (1994)

Offers a method for teaching Christian beliefs to children which avoids the dangers of information-based and child-centred approaches while building on their strengths.

J. Hick *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (1989)

Janet King and Deborah Helme (eds.) *Teaching RE in Secondary Schools* Crowborough: Monarch/Association of Christian Teachers 310pp (1994)

A collection of essays with a practical focus ranging from important background issues to specific ideas for the classroom. Topics include: Religious Education and the National Curriculum, Spiritual Development, Using Games in RE, Motivating 14-16 Year Olds, Assessment in RE and many others.

T. H. McLaughlin “Parental Rights and the Religious Upbringing of Children” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 18(1), p75-83 (1984)

Mark Roques *Curriculum Unmasked* Eastbourne, Monarch (1989)

This book provides an analysis of popular textbooks and course materials. It also gives brief descriptions of possible Christian approaches to those subject areas.

Mark Roques *The Good, the Bad and the Misled* Eastbourne, Monarch (1991)

This book provides a variety of ideas for identifying and analysing world views.

Arthur Rowe ‘Must R.E. be a Game of Trivial Pursuits?’, in *Spectrum* 24:1 (Spring 1992) p47-51

Helen Thacker *The Haffertee Handbook*

An innovative and comprehensive pack for teaching Christianity at Key Stage 1. Available from Stapleford House Education Centre, Wesley Place, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 8DP. (£30.00)

Harro van Brummelen, *Stepping Stones to Curriculum - A Biblical Path*, Seattle: Alta Vista College Press, (1994)

A helpful book for developing Christian curricula, not just in RE but right across the curriculum.

The Stapleford Project: for a list of current publications and other initiatives, write to Stapleford House Education Centre, Wesley Place, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 8DP. Tel: 0115 939 6270 Fax: 0115 939 2076

The Christian Schools' Trust, Christian Fellowship School, 1 Princes Road, Liverpool, L8 1TG. Tel: 0151 709 1642



# Modern languages

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# Modern languages

## Introduction

Modern Languages is often regarded as a neutral discipline - French is French, German is German and there is little more to be said. However, there is a long history of involvement by Christians in the formation of the discipline. The most famous is John Amos Comenius, whose attempts in the 17th century to apply his Christian thinking to language teaching bore fruit which is still discernible in today's practices. In the past four or five years there has been a growing interest in Christian approaches to the discipline. Since 1991 over 75 articles have been published on the subject. (Some of these are listed at the end of this chapter).

*A constant struggle to subdue all things to Christ will be as characteristic of a Christian's approach to language as of his approach to life in its entirety*

*Colin Yallop*

## 1 Aims

For the Christian, language is a gift which is used in the context of our responsibility to God. Accordingly, the aims of language teaching cannot be left at the mechanical or even the social or cultural level, but will encompass moral and spiritual dimensions. In this section three different attempts to outline Christian aims for language teaching are discussed. The first example includes comments which give us an insight into the thought processes of a group of teachers as they sought to work out in greater detail the Christian reasoning behind these aims. This is an example of what teachers need to do in all areas of the curriculum.

### ► The Christian Schools Trust working party

This set of aims was put together by the Christian Schools Trust working party in 1992. Some of the aims relate to the specifically Christian educational context. Others could be pursued in any school. Comments on each aim are included:

#### **i) Giving pupils linguistic skills to equip them for various callings in the world of work. Educating them to use linguistic skills *responsibly* and with *integrity* in this context.**

God will call many of our pupils to serve him in various walks of life in the world of work - a calling different from but not inferior to so-called 'full-time' Christian callings. This aim receives the main focus in many non-Christian schools, and often seems to reflect an idolatrous view of work which sees economic usefulness as the chief end of man and of education. It can be presented in a way which appeals to selfish motives - 'learn languages now - earn more later'. It is inadequate, taken alone, to justify compulsory language instruction for all - many will have little or no opportunity to use language skills in their work. Nevertheless, language skills are increasingly important in various branches of industry, and may be seen as something which many pupils will need in order to follow their calling. For those who will later need different languages from those taught in schools, the school experience could be seen as an 'apprenticeship' in language learning. We should seek to train pupils towards using their linguistic skills with integrity and not merely for personal gain. Do we, for example, encourage them to make untrue statements in oral examinations if they will lose out otherwise because they have forgotten a word?

#### **ii) Developing in pupils the motivation, skills and confidence needed to engage in language study on their own initiative, now or in response to future needs.**

In view of the uncertainty of future needs, language learning in school can be seen in part as a kind of 'apprenticeship', a foundation for future language learning. Pupils can also be encouraged to take initiative in and responsibility for their learning - c.f. *Proverbs 15:14*.

*As Christian educators we will seek to teach the truth, rooted in God's word, believing that through the work of the Holy Spirit God will use it to change the hearts of those who are his and, by his common grace, restrain sin in unbelievers.*

**iii) Combating any prejudice, racism or cultural arrogance by exposing children to linguistic and cultural diversity, viewed within the context of God's love for all peoples.**

Rejection of the unfamiliar is characteristic of adolescence. We share with humanistic educators the conviction that racism and the arrogant assertion of the innate superiority of one's own culture are sinful, though for different reasons. We hold that all men, though fallen, were created in the image of God and that his love and offer of salvation reach out to all, and that all cultures, including our own, have been affected in different ways by sin and need redeeming, and that no race or language is inherently superior to others in the sight of God. Humanistic educators see ignorance as a fundamental source of sin, and more information and education as the solution. We reject this view, knowing that man is fallen and that sin, while ignorance may foster it, is rooted in the heart, which must be radically changed. As Christian educators we will seek to teach the truth, rooted in God's word, believing that through the work of the Holy Spirit God will use it to change the hearts of those who are his and, by his common grace, restrain sin in unbelievers.

**iv) Developing awareness of language, understanding of language, and sensitivity to language.**

Courses on Language Awareness have highlighted the need for greater understanding of language itself, alongside growth in the skill of manipulating language. The courses have emphasised the usefulness of foreign language study beyond the walls of the classroom, to increase pupils' sensitivity to language in general, including their own language.

**v) In connection with this, developing children's responsiveness to God as they come to appreciate language as a part of his creation and as something to be used to his glory and in his service.**

Since we view language as something created as part of us and as a gift from a gracious God we have every reason to want to teach pupils about language as well as teaching them to use it, in order to develop in them a sense of grateful wonder at its flexibility and complexity. Responsiveness to God thus becomes an issue. As we use our linguistic ability we respond to something which God has put in creation - are pupils aware of this? Is there opportunity for them to learn to respond to God both directly in the foreign language (whether creatively or devotionally) and by coming to appreciate the goodness of what he has made? Is language simply taken for granted in our classrooms? We should aim to open the hearts and minds of pupils to the riches which God has placed at our disposal.

**vi. Encouraging a more intelligent approach to our translated Scriptures by showing pupils something of the differences between languages and the frequent lack of precise equivalence**

To seriously engage the Scriptures is to attempt to come to grips with something not only in three languages in its original form but in places twice translated. Sensitivity to language can play a significant role in enhancing or impeding understanding. The study of the mother tongue is clearly of considerable importance here. There are ways in which this understanding can be further enhanced by the experience of learning a second language, even if this language is not Greek or Hebrew. In the modern languages classroom pupils can be taught that translation is not a mere matter of substituting words, but of rethinking a message in a new medium. This issue is encountered at most elementary stages of foreign language learning. The beginner in German soon finds that there is no adequate equivalent in English of words such as 'Geschwister' or 'gern'. The inexperienced French student can easily assume, for example, that the three

elements of 'Je m'appelle' correspond to those of 'I am called'. An awareness that languages are not reducible to parallel lists, and that most literal may not mean most accurate, may help us to read our translations more intelligently, allowing for their weaknesses. Foreign language studies and biblical studies could both gain if such issues were addressed in a co-ordinated and integrated way.

vii) **Equipping pupils to carry the word of God to those of other language groups (whether locally or abroad) in these people's own languages and developing an understanding of and commitment to mission.**

Obedience to the command to make disciples of all nations has always been at the forefront of Christian aims in foreign language learning. Some of the pupils from our classrooms, whether in Christian or state schools, whether Christians at present or not, may be called to missionary service abroad in the future. Either the language or the language learning skills learnt at school could prove invaluable. For some, the learning of the foreign language may itself become the channel of such a calling, as the country of the language studied gains a place in their hearts. This is especially likely to be the case if prayer for the country concerned and information on its needs are included.

Pupils in Christian schools can be given the opportunity to put their language skills to work in short-term missionary work in the country concerned. One Christian school managed to organise evangelistic work in Spanish state schools as part of an exchange visit during which pupils stayed with members of Spanish churches.

Community languages, spoken by large numbers of people in our cities, may provide many more immediate openings for service and mission than European languages. Much, if not all, of the vocabulary needed is already present in GCSE syllabuses in different contexts. The church has in the past often brought the Gospel to people in a foreign language and wrapped in a foreign culture. When the lesson of *Acts 2:6, 12* has been missed, missionary endeavour has often seen little fruit. The teaching of modern languages in the way outlined above could help to shape the pupil's (and the future church's) understanding of mission in its broadest sense.

For this to happen, it is important that this aspect of the curriculum should not be an isolated and undervalued specialist sideline, but rather an integrated part of the curriculum which is seen to be valued. Other subjects, perhaps especially history, have a role to play in developing an understanding of linguistic issues. If there is the willingness, there is the possibility for the whole school community to be enriched by the work of the language department. In one school a group of learners at an introductory Russian course at lunchtimes consisted of about fifteen children and eight teachers. It can only be healthy for both parties if staff and pupils can truly become fellow learners, growing together. Staff gain fresh insight into the pupil's role, pupils gain fresh awareness of the value of their studies and their efforts, and both gain new skills. Staff should be prepared to put these skills to fruitful use if they wish to teach the pupils to do so.

viii) **Giving pupils skills with which to serve others and encouraging them to do so.**

Linguistic ability brings ample opportunity for serving others. Such service could be translating personal letters, interpreting for foreign visitors to a church or a conference. Christian modern language teaching should aim to equip for service, giving pupils a fresh way in which to serve others, inside or outside the church. If possible, this goal should not be deferred until the future, but rather made part of the learning process. Inside the classroom, modern language teaching activities, with their emphasis on pair work, group work and information gap exercises, call on pupils to assist in each other's learning, and so pupils can help each other. Outside the classroom, a community language may open up more immediate opportunities for

*If there is the willingness, there is the possibility for the whole school community to be enriched by the work of the language department.*

serving others than a continental European language, particularly in an inner-city context. Another kind of service, reaching further afield, could be moves towards righting linguistic injustice - letters to the leaders of countries which are oppressing speakers of minority languages, as Turkey has done with the Kurdish language. In one school a Spanish class cooked a Spanish meal for a lonely Spanish lady living nearby.

**ix) Developing an awareness and understanding of different cultures and ways of thinking and encouraging pupils to be critical of their own and not to make it absolute. Challenging British aversion to learning the languages and ways of others as sub-Christian and unbiblical.**

A language is, among other things, a vehicle for the transmission, articulation, and perpetuation of a world view and a culture. Words can be very revealing of the values and priorities of the cultures in which they are embedded. The study of a foreign language inevitably entails some sort of interaction with another culture, and a comparison with our own. If this point of comparison is exploited (and this will mean the development of new kinds of resources), it could become valuable with advanced learners in developing critical insight into our own culture, freeing us from the blinkers which can operate when we assume that what is normal for us is normative.

The contrast is likely to become more useful the more distant the foreign language is from our own - Gujarati or Japanese are likely to be more helpful here than French or German. However, any language is likely to yield useful little insights if such are sought. The literature, history, forms of government, educational practices, practice of Christianity etc. of the country whose language is being learnt should be approached with the aim of biblical evaluation but also with enough humility to be able to learn from as well as learn about. Contacts with Christians in the foreign country may help to broaden our understanding. The different perspectives of Christians working out their commitment in other settings could be very valuable. This kind of study invites cross-curricular cooperation, as it touches on a variety of subject areas.

**x) Equipping certain pupils for academic study.**

Some of our pupils will be called to further academic study, some even to full-time research. Language skills are very useful for many areas of study. A curriculum for all pupils cannot be wholly geared to or justified by the needs of these few, but nor should those needs be forgotten.

**xi) Providing enjoyment and intellectual stimulation in the classroom and enriching pupils' leisure time.**

Reading or speaking with others in another language and visiting a foreign country with some knowledge of its language and culture can be enjoyable and enriching experiences in their own right, so can the process of learning a foreign language. The language classroom can be made a place where pupils are stimulated on various levels - intellect, imagination, humour, feeling, etc.

**xii) Learning in a foreign language context skills relevant to the broader curriculum (e.g. analysis, memorising, drawing of inferences), and in other ways making modern language teaching a well-integrated part of an overall Christian education, not a loosely related appendage.**

If modern language teaching is seen merely as the teaching of a skill for certain practical ends, it can easily become divorced from the rest of the curriculum, like extra lessons in a musical instrument. Modern language learning has a broad contribution to make to the Christian curriculum, and also that it should form a closely integrated part of that curriculum. The Christian modern language teacher is aiming to teach a skill for communicative ends which lie beyond the classroom (mission, service, employment), and also to develop an appreciation and understanding of language itself and of issues connected with it, in a

way which will enrich the pupil and enhance his or her obedience and responsiveness to God.

The child is to be encouraged to think and act with regard to languages in the light of a biblical understanding of life and of the world. This will both contribute to work in other subject areas and require an approach in other subject areas which is informed by the same understanding whenever they touch on such matters. The aims of the modern languages department and the overall aims of the school should be consciously and specifically related.

### ► Aims of one Christian language teacher

Another writer expressed the basic aims of the Christian language teacher as follows:

#### **I suggest that one goal of foreign language education is:**

- to form and prepare our students to become 'good' foreigners in the target culture.
- to become foreigners who can be a blessing to the indigenous people by being able to speak their tongue, by being able to hear their stories, by asking good questions.

In short, by using the special freedom an educated foreigner has in the guest country and by being a loving presence.

#### **To prepare the students for being good foreigners also means:**

- to prepare them for the experience of being without cultural power, helpless, vulnerable, without the security of their native tongue and their cultural community which provides a safety net of familiar meaning.

#### **The other goal of foreign language education is:**

- to educate the students to become good hosts to the foreigner, the stranger, or the alien in their own land,
- to receive the representative of that culture graciously and with love, and
- to practice a kind of hospitality which is a blessing both to the guest and to the host.

I mean this concretely and also metaphorically. That is to say, to invite the foreign culture, foreign ways of perceiving and acting into your own inner space and interact with it respectfully and lovingly.

To offer hospitality to the alien, to be a blessing as a stranger, these are old Christian virtues which go to the core of our life before God ... I want each [student] to understand that foreign language study prepares him or her linguistically and culturally for two life-callings, both of which have a very long Christian tradition:

- to be a blessing as a visitor and alien in a foreign culture and
- to practice hospitality to strangers in their own homeland.

I hope that the appeal to these very concrete personal callings will help the student understand that ultimately, studying a foreign language and culture calls for a moral and spiritual commitment to the members of the foreign culture studied.



*To what extent is it possible for the Christian language teacher to make these aims their own in the various contexts in which they work?*

*Barbara Carvill, Foreign languages lecturer, USA*

## ▶ The Charis Project: aims for modern foreign languages

The Charis Project was set up to produce units of work for pupils aged 14 to 16+ which promote moral and spiritual development across the curriculum. The following set of aims are those set for the units being written in French and German. It is written primarily for teachers within the maintained sector.

These units of work seek to:

- Promote a sense of meaningfulness and the wholeness of life.
- Challenge materialism and self-interest as a basis for life. Explore moral aspects of relationships, including truthfulness and the role of language.
- Encourage pupils to look positively and critically at foreign culture and to question narrow stereotypes.
- Help pupils to identify with the experiences and perspectives of people in other countries and communities.
- Encourage an understanding of diversity in values, beliefs and customs.
- Generate appreciation of the foreign culture by exploring aspects such as spirituality, faith, self-sacrifice, wonder, worship, freedom and responsibility, suffering, forgiveness, hope, love, compassion and received truth.

### *Charis Français* includes units on the following:

**Martin de Tours:**

Lifestyles past and present

**Le Pain:**

Bread as a spiritual symbol, a fresh look at priorities in life

**L'Arche:**

Appreciating the role in the community of people with disabilities

**Le Paysage:**

Reflections on the beauty of the natural environment

**La Vérité:**

An exploration of honesty and betrayal through interviews with French teenagers

### *Charis Deutsch* includes these units:

**Jugend gegen Hitler:**

The story of a student resistance group in Hitler's Germany

**Küssen:**

What's in a kiss?

**Frau Kelbert:**

One person's experience of joy and suffering in 20th Century Eastern Europe

**Glauben:**

How beliefs affect all aspects of life, starting with school

**Die Landschaft:**

Reflections on the beauty of the natural environment



## 2 The implementation of aims

Concerned not to postpone the benefits of language learning to some future time, Christian language teachers have sought ways of beginning to integrate values into the process of teaching. One important aim is that of moving beyond self-centred motivations and justifications for language learning (improved ability to compete with others whether academically or economically) to the idea of developing gifts with which to serve others. One writer has commented: “The non-Christian teacher points out what a foreign language can do for the student, the Christian teacher points out what the student can do for others”.

*Takalo (1994) p4*

The following examples provide ideas on opportunities to serve, build relationships, and value the culture. Although these ideas are separated out and placed in particular categories, more than one value or aim may appear in each example.

“*The non-Christian teacher points out what a foreign language can do for the student, the Christian teacher points out what the student can do for others*”

*Ronald Takalo*

### 2.1 Service

#### ▶ Practising hospitality

*“Serving can only be learnt through practice”.*

On several occasions one teacher invited French and Spanish women into her classroom. She encouraged the pupils to suggest ways of serving those whose native cultures were French and Spanish and whose experience of being in an alien culture was one of loneliness. One class suggested making a Spanish ‘paella’ for a lonely and apparently distraught Spanish lady living near the school. They organised it themselves. Each pupil brought in a different ingredient for the meal or a paper tablecloth, plate or serviette etc. Discreet guidance was needed at this stage to make sure, for example, that the ingredient required was best suited to the economic situation of each family - in other words, the pupil from a one parent family was not asked to bring in the prawns! They moved from the modern languages classroom to the school kitchen for that particular lesson. While pupils took it in turns to cook the meal, the visitor talked to the rest of the class about her home town in Spain. One or two other teachers were also invited to share the meal with the class when it was finally prepared.

Commenting afterwards, the teacher said, “I am sure that as foreign language teachers most of us have introduced foreign food in the classroom, and rightly so. However, this occasion was no ordinary meal, but one with a purpose. The pupils themselves were delighted when they saw just how much the occasion meant to the visitor. Hopefully it has reinforced to them the importance of serving.”

*Bellew (1992) p7*

#### ▶ Visiting prisoners

“A recent visit to a prison provided another opportunity to teach our pupils to serve in the foreign language classroom.

A group from our church have been invited on several occasions to take a service in Spanish for Spanish speaking prisoners - mainly drug-traffickers from Colombia. The two language teachers in the group asked ourselves how we could involve the pupils in this and we talked to them about it. They came up with lots of ideas to bless these prisoners who might be lonely and homesick with little to read in their own

language. Year 10 pupils wrote some letters. Years 7 and 8 made cards and bookmarks, drawing pictures etc. with Bible verses or their own special little messages. Each pupil did something different and they were very creative. I shall never forget the delight and even tears of those prisoners as I handed out the pupils' work. It reminded me once again that children can touch people and soften their hearts in a way that we adults can never do. As language teachers we must be continually seeking outlets such as these for our pupils."

*Bellew (1993) p6*

## 2.2 Building relationships

As well as encouraging service, it is also possible to explore quality of relationship in a more general way while learning a foreign language. Language learning focuses on communication, on the way in which

language is used as a bridge between people. Relationships, with God, each other and the world, intact or broken, lie at the heart of the Christian understanding of life. This understanding can be allowed to shape the kind of relationships which are promoted through language learning. Even small details, such as teaching 'I forgive you' in addition to the usual 'I'm sorry (I'm late, I haven't done my homework etc.)' can teach about ways of conducting and repairing relationships. Such a focus on relationships also carries us beyond the classroom - in addition to teacher-student and student-student relationships, language learning activities give opportunities to focus on relationships in the home and relationships with those in the culture of the new language.

*Language learning focuses on communication, on the way in which language is used as a bridge between people.*

### Strengthening parent-child and home-school relationships

"After spending the major part of the day in school, children can easily be robbed of further time spent interacting with their family by a heavy burden of homework. I have begun to experiment with kinds of homework which require time spent with parents instead of taking it away.

The simplest of these involves the child teaching some of what they have learned to a parent who does not speak the relevant language (those with polyglot parents have to seek out another relative). The child takes home a certificate and the parent fills in the pupil's name at the top, ticks the boxes, and signs at the bottom. This piece of work has a number of benefits:

- the pupil has to make certain she really knows the item of language if she is to teach it to someone else - this reinforces existing motivations to master the phrases. The disadvantage here is that there is no check on pronunciation at home this will have to be monitored in the classroom.
- the pupil is encouraged by the realisation that she is acquiring a skill which many adults do not possess, and can even use it to enrich others.
- time is spent meaningfully with the parent, who is drawn in this small way into the educational process and learns something into the bargain.

It may be possible to make this type of exercise a regular feature of the course, in which case all of these benefits would be maximised.

A second kind of homework could involve an interview with the parent, which would then be used as a basis for written work, classroom oral work, or reading comprehension. For example, during a topic on schools, the pupils could:

- interview their parents about their favourite and least favourite subjects when they were at school
- write a short paragraph about their findings (practising vocabulary to do with preference and third person reporting)
- report orally while the teacher compiles a class survey (which could lead to further written work)
- use their information to fill in a questionnaire in the target language.

Similar activities could be done with other topics. This kind of work will vary basic language practice (being one way of avoiding endless repetition of the pupil's own preferences in language drill) and may help some pupils know their parents better.

A variation emphasising reading comprehension skills might involve giving out a set of statements describing someone's personality or likes/dislikes in the foreign language and asking pupils to find out whether each statement would be true or false if applied to their parents. This could give an extra sense of purpose to reading practice.

*Smith (1991) p5-6*

## 2.3 Valuing the culture

As with the following example, *Der Panther*, literature in the foreign language can provide an opportunity for exploring a wide range of issues. This will mostly occur at A-level, but may also be introduced lower down the school. The issues here will be very similar to those involved in teaching English literature.

The materials required for this lesson are a copy of Rainer Maria Rilke: **Der Panther** *Im Jardin des Plantes, Paris*, a video of the film 'Awakenings' starring Robin Williams (easily available for hire from video shops) and a worksheet.

Students are given a copy of the poem and the worksheet on which they have to work out a translation and complete a vocabulary list, to establish comprehension of the poem (help is given on the worksheet with phrases and vocabulary in English and German - see over).

Once this is done, you can ask simple questions in German. *Was für ein Tier beschreibt Rilke? Wo ist der Panther? Ist er glücklich? Warum (nicht)? Kann er die Leute sehen?*

Next comes a brief discussion in English: Why describe the panther? Is this just about a panther or is there something more? The panther is separated from the world, from other animals, from its own heart - are any people like this panther?

Then show a brief extract from 'Awakenings'. In the film, Robin Williams plays a doctor working with people suffering from a peculiar illness which has left them in a catatonic state, unable to interact with the outside world. The doctor tries every way he can find to reach the person inside the shell. In a dramatic scene he tries to get one patient, Leonard, to spell his name using a pointer. He is disappointed when Leonard picks out a seemingly random sequence of letters, until he realises that Leonard is spelling some-

thing else: 'Rilkes panther'. At the library he discovers that this is a poem. We hear the poem in English over pictures of the doctor at the zoo watching a caged panther. This begins a partial rehabilitation for Leonard.

After the clip, another brief discussion in English appropriate to class and context: What did the poem mean in the film? Can you think of any other kinds of people who have their own 'cages', who might be said to suffer from the kinds of separation described in the poem, from the world, from others (e.g. family), from their own hearts? If working in a Christian context, you may wish to refer to sin as separation.

*Carvill and Smith (1995) p6-7*

### Der Panther

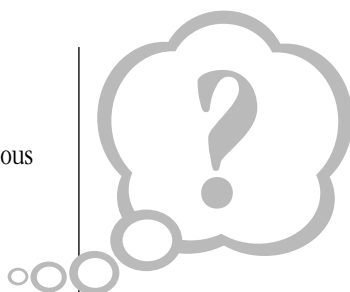
**A Bring die Zeilen der englischen Version in die richtige Reihenfolge!**

... and behind a thousand bars no world.  
 ... and in his heart ceases to be.  
 ... goes though the silence of tensed limbs  
 ... has grown so weary that it holds nothing.  
 ... his glance, from the passing of the bars,  
 ... in which a great will stands numbed.  
 ... is like a dance of power around a centre,  
 ... is soundlessly raised, then an image enters in,  
 ... it seems to him as if there are a thousand bars,  
 ... only occasionally the curtain of his pupil  
 ... the soft gait of supple, strong strides,  
 ... which turns in the tiniest circle,

**B. Vokabel (Füll die Lücken aus!)**

der	.....	=	glance
müde		=	.....
die	.....	=	the world
weich		=	.....
.....		=	supple
stark		=	.....
der	.....	=	stride
der	.....	=	circle
der Tanz		=	.....
die	.....	=	power
betäubt		=	.....
der Vorhang		=	.....
.....		=	soundlessly
geht hinein		=	.....
die	.....	=	limbs
die Stille		=	.....
im Herzen		=	.....

What was the consequence of this lesson? College students and year 10 pupils alike found it a memorable learning experience. It made a brief and interesting interlude for GCSE pupils, offering a stimulating first contact with German poetry. Second, it showed German poetry playing a significant role in the world - providing a central metaphor for a popular American film, providing a means of self-understanding and communication for Leonard, offering an insight into life. Maybe German literature is worth reading. Third, pupils retained the vocabulary well, possibly because of novelty and interest as well as linguistic activity. Overall, here is one small way of promoting spiritual development alongside linguistic and cultural goals.



### 3 Methods

The methodology chosen from the array available can greatly assist or inhibit attempts to integrate Christian concerns such as those shown above with language teaching. Teachers need to ask some serious questions:

- Do our teaching methods treat pupils as bearers of God’s image, with imaginations and moral and spiritual dimensions as well as speech habits and communicative needs?
- Can accuracy be seen as a way of honouring the language of the other person?
- Do we choose authentic materials which are edifying?
- Does our approach to differentiation and variety honour the differences in the way God has made each individual learner?
- Do teaching methods foster competition more than co-operation?
- Or do they devalue the foreign language and human interaction by blurring the distinctions between role-play and truthful communication?

These are two examples where teachers have sought to answer some of these questions.

#### ► Fostering co-operation

Ronald Takalo favours the use of co-operative tests.

“When I announce a co-operative test, I assign three to four students at random per group. The test is given, and the students are told that they can talk about the test among themselves. They are also told that I will select one paper from the group, and the grade on that paper will represent the grade for all the members of the group. As predicted, I have noticed, as I walked among the groups, that the students not only shared answers, but more importantly, shared why they thought their answers were the correct ones. Many animated discussions have arisen using this technique.”

*Takalo (1994) p8*

#### ► Truth telling

Encouraging pupils to respond to personal questions in a way that demonstrates accuracy even it that means saying something that isn’t true, is a common practice. When interviewed students usually assume that personalised questions are merely language practice. What value does this place on the language, on the person, on honesty and truth and on the development of relationships in the classroom and in the target culture?

Perhaps other activities and questioning techniques which might create a greater facility in language, and which do not use personalised questions, need to be devised. But how does a teacher establish a climate in which truth-telling is the norm rather than the exception?

Patricia Myhren suggests eight ways:

1. Tell the students that you want the truth during specific activities, and accept and challenge their answers accordingly. Remember that ‘I don’t know’ can be a legitimate answer. If possible, relate the new information to that learned in previous activities, and use it throughout the class.

2. Use other kinds of activities that practice vocabulary and structures not generally applicable to the students. Do most of your correction of grammar and vocabulary in these activities rather than in the communicative activities.
3. Use a more mechanical activity or extremely easy questions as a warm-up before using personalised questions. This is especially true if you use personalised questions at or near the beginning of the class period.
4. Be sure students have a variety of likely responses.
5. Avoid questions likely to embarrass your students. Allow students to refuse - in the target language - to answer a question that they consider it too personal or let them warn you in advance that a given topic could prove embarrassing for them. I've done this in the past, but no-one has yet declined to answer a question for that reason. I asked two students this winter if they would take advantage of such an offer. They both said they wouldn't, one explaining that he wouldn't want to answer questions about his silence. I still think this should be an option for students if nothing else, it is a clear signal that you are interested in true responses.
6. Focus correction on potential problems in communication. Treat these as you would if in a normal conversation.
7. Ask follow-up questions, and don't require complete sentence answers. Don't restrict those follow-up questions to reports on what other students said. Follow up the content of the answers.
8. Let students know you'd rather they continued an interesting line of discussion than complete an interview just for the sake of getting it done. Be sure students can choose what they want to report back from their conversations. This will mean that they can choose something interesting to share with the class as the basis for a follow-up question."

*Mybren (1994) p3*

### ► **Honesty**

The Charis modern languages materials include a variety of units based either on biographical material relating to individuals whose lives facilitate an exploration of moral and spiritual concerns, or on thematic treatments of similar issues.

A French unit in the Charis modern languages materials, *La Vérité*, includes a range of activities which help pupils to explore issues of truth-telling, reconciliation and the effects of dishonesty within a Christian perspective.

## **4 Using the Bible as a source**

What about the content of the language course? One obvious approach for Christians is to consider whether any passages from the Bible might be appropriate for use in language learning. Given the enormous influence of the Bible on most of the cultures whose languages are learnt in our schools, there need be no great embarrassment about using passages from it when they are appropriate to topics being studied. The danger to be avoided is that of using the Bible as arbitrary raw material in a way which does not genuinely integrate the purpose of the Scripture passage with the purpose of the lesson.

## ► The Great Banquet

The following lesson was used with a fourth year senior Spanish class (year 10) who had been learning Spanish for approximately two years.

Lesson plan using the parable of the great banquet, *Luke 14:15-24*

### Objectives:

1. To use the word of God as our text book, since God is the source of all knowledge (*Proverbs 2:6*).
2. To stimulate pupils' interest and provide an opportunity for reading practice in a role play situation.
3. To provide a challenging listening comprehension.
4. To learn new vocabulary.
5. To consolidate certain grammar points and to teach new ones where appropriate.

### Structure:

- The parable was read in Spanish and the pupils asked to guess which parable they had heard. They recognised enough vocabulary to do this.
- As a natural progression from there we looked at the text together in our Spanish Bibles (popular version available from the Bible Society) and picked out new words, guessing the meaning where possible. The pupils made a note of these in their exercise books.
- When they were sufficiently familiar with the passage we read it through as a role play using the following parts: Narrator, Jesus, Servant, three men, Master. This could be developed into a sketch with pupils who enjoy acting.
- Finally, we looked at some of the grammar points in order to consolidate recent teaching. As the pupils were in the process of learning the preterite tense (tense expressing past action or state), it was very helpful to have so many examples in the passage and they were asked to pick out as many as they could find including the irregular ones. In addition to this, the frequent repetition of 'Acabo de' was an excellent consolidation for the pupils of an idiomatic expression which they had just learnt.

Other points brought to the attention of the pupils were the use of 'al plus the infinitive' as exemplified at the beginning with 'al oír', which equates to the English 'on hearing', and also a new radical changing verb 'rogar'. In the parable 'te ruego' is used several times. ('I beg you')

### Conclusion:

This was an enjoyable lesson which the pupils learnt with enthusiasm.

*Carter (1992) p12*

## 5 One further thought

This is not, however, all that there is to be said from a Christian perspective about content in modern languages. The content of existing courses is often lacking in spiritual and moral dimensions. It frequently centres around superficial transactions (often financial) and so gives a two-dimensional view of the people who inhabit the foreign culture. When do we see them as responsible image-bearers, with beliefs and

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commitments which shape their lives, with hopes, fears and hurts, with courage and failures? These aspects of human existence in other cultures need not be reserved for advanced learners. Through stories, poems, parables, proverbs, biography and the like they can be made quite concrete and accessible. They can also enhance understanding of foreign cultures, which have been shaped by the beliefs and values of those who have participated in their history. In such ways existing course materials can be developed and added to.

*“If modern language teaching is to make any contribution to spiritual development, then course content must focus on the independent reality of the lives of others at least as much as on the existing interests of learners. This may include finding ways of generating interest in topics which learners would never have chosen, left to themselves...If we are to bring pupils to understand how the beliefs and values of others affect their decisions and consequently their lives, surely the modern languages classroom, which focuses on another culture, where different beliefs and values may well have led to different decisions and life patterns, is an ideal place to contribute to such a goal. It will only do so, as we have noted above, if there is a radical shift in our approach to the target culture from the consumer abroad model to one which recognises faith commitments as fundamental formers of life patterns and explores the beliefs, values, commitments and decisions of human beings in another culture.*

*To be more specific, pupils should be meeting real human beings in their course materials, people who believe and choose as well as shop and own. Areas of study should include things such as human responsibility, responses to social strife (broken families, bullying, dishonesty, crime), moral decisions, family life, friendship and loyalty, commitment and self-sacrifice.”*

*Smith et. al. (1994) p38*

### **Resources and further reading**

*Charis Project*; French and German resource books for use with 14-16+ containing photocopiable student sheets and full teachers’ notes. Available from: Stapleford House Education Centre, Wesley Place, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 7BR

*Language in God’s World* is a quarterly newsletter by and for Christians teaching Modern Languages. It contains news, teaching ideas and substantial articles on questions of approaches and methods. Details of how to subscribe can be obtained from ‘Language in God’s World’, St Andrews Church Hall Flat, Market Place, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 3HT.

Caroline Bellow (January 1992)

Caroline Bellew (January 1993)

Janet Carter (January 1992)

Barbara Carvill and David Smith (July 1995)

Patricia Myhren (October 1994)

David Smith (September 1991)

Ronald Takalo (May 1994) (also in NAACFLF Proceedings Journal 1991 Vol 1 p154-172)

David Smith, “Can Modern Language Teaching be Christian?” in *Spectrum 25:1* (January 1993) p25-38  
This article discusses aims, content and methodology in relation to the question posed in its title.



David Smith et. al., *Teaching Modern Languages - A Fresh Approach to the National Curriculum*, St Albans: ACT (1994) 59pp. (Available from the Association of Christian Teachers)

This booklet offers a detailed discussion of how Christian beliefs and values relate to language teaching with particular reference to the National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages.

David Smith "Rediscovering a Heritage: Lull, Bacon and the Aims of Language Teaching", *Spectrum* 28:1 (Spring 1996)

This article explores the lessons which can be learnt from two Christian pioneers of language teaching.



# Geography

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# Geography

## Introduction

The geography curriculum has gone through many changes over recent years. Currently the focus is not just on a knowledge of places and geographical terms, but on understanding and applying concepts and ideas, and understanding various values and attitudes. It is a naturally integrated subject looking at land, people and the environment, and at the interaction and interrelationships between them. It offers teachers the opportunity to study the diversity of societies, cultures and environments, to explore ideas and issues to relate these and beliefs and values. Many teachers do not have this opportunity in other subjects.

Geographers are fortunate in that their subject matter, our planet, is in itself a wonderful testament to a creator God. Children are naturally in awe and wonder of our world and a study of it is a natural way to reveal God as creator, God as beauty and God as order. In the early years we can do a lot to draw out basic Christian values of stewardship of natural resources, respect for others and harmony with our natural environment. As students progress through secondary school the subject will become more ‘values and issues’ based. It is impossible to talk of inner city deprivation, famine in developing nations or global warming without moving into emotive areas of justice, equality of opportunity and global responsibilities. As a consequence a Geographer should focus not only on the syllabus content but also on the method of delivery. The nature of the subject means that we will constantly encounter issues and events which will generate a variety of viewpoints.

Beliefs about the world and people will influence the content, concepts and skills as well as the values and attitudes promoted in the geography curriculum. The Christian teacher’s task is to make sure that the Christian viewpoint is clearly represented. This chapter shows various ways in which schools and teachers have attempted to apply biblical beliefs, values and attitudes in the geography curriculum.

## 1 A biblical rationale for studying geography

After discussions and interviews with geography specialist and primary school teachers in a variety of school situations, it is clear that there are certain basic assumptions which underlie a view of geography from a Christian perspective. The following summarises these assumptions:

### ■ The world was created by and belongs to God

The world, with both amazing diversity and coherence, was created by God and belongs to Him. There are many scriptures supporting this belief, but perhaps the all-encompassing one is found in *Colossians 1: 16-17*:

*“For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers of authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” (NIV)*

As one Christian school geography curriculum states:

*“God has given us a beautiful creation, and we can learn much about it from our experience with, and observation of concrete things, of plants and animals, of people and of how these interact and interrelate.”*

*Trinity School, Stalybridge*

### ■ The purpose of humanity is to develop and care for creation

*“The Bible is not the story of God and His people only. It is the story of God, His people and the land. Land, both as ‘actual earthly turf’ and as a symbol of rootedness or ‘historical belonging’.”*

Walter Brueggemann (1977)

*“God made humankind in order to fill and care for the earth: it is how and why we were made, it is built into who we are.*

P. Marshall (1988)

The world was created for human beings to live in. The responsibility of humankind is to develop creation. This is often referred to as the “cultural” or “creation mandate”. (Genesis 1: 26, 28).

We are called to be stewards of the earth; mandated to shape, form and care for creation in accordance with the principles of righteousness and justice. We have the ability and the freedom to shape the environment and culture, but with this freedom comes an accountability to God and a responsibility to others for our actions.

Thus, the creation has been adapted, modified and transformed by human activity, and societies and cultures have developed in a variety of ways.

### ■ What went wrong

Injustice, immorality, selfishness and brokenness are evident, because of sin and disobedience towards God and His created order. Problems, pain and suffering have developed in all kinds of ways, through evil, dishonesty, greed, intolerance, misuse of the earth’s resources and so on.

*“The structure of the earliest chapters of Genesis is centred around an account of human beings as the shapers of history: they tell us what those who have been called to fill and subdue the earth actually have done in response to their mandate, whether sinfully, as with Cain, or obediently, as with Noah.”*

P. Marshall (ibid)

### ■ Putting it right

It is only through Christ’s death and resurrection that redemption and reconciliation are made possible and only at His return will the restoration of all of creation be complete. We will be redeemed and the earth will be renewed.

*“In Jesus Christ the ‘Cultural Mandate’ is renewed, is being redeemed and will be perfected ... the full significance of this restoration (is) that it is a promise to the creation itself; ‘the creation itself will be set free’ (Romans 8:19-20) as, and because, the children of God are set free ...*

*Human stewardship of the earth is made perfect at the coming of Christ. The flow of human history, the outworking of God’s act of creation, is redeemed and is taken up in the creation of the new heavens and earth. ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ’ (Revelation 11:15)”*

P. Marshall (ibid)

The cultural mandate has not been withdrawn and to see justice and righteousness, or the values and principles of the Kingdom of God developed in people, society and culture today is still part of the Christian’s purpose.

The basic rationale for studying geography which follows from these biblical assumptions is that of stewardship of God's creation, involving personal and community responsibility, locally, nationally and global.

## ► A biblical rationale for geography curriculum planning

One Christian school attempted to highlight these assumptions when, as part of their planning, the Dolphin School staff sought to discover the biblical basis for each subject area.

### Elements of a Christian world view

- God created a vast Universe and it bears His imprint (*Genesis 1; Romans 1:19-20*).
- The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it for He founded it and established it (*Psalms 24:1-2*).
- God placed Man on the Earth to fill it and subdue it (*Genesis 1-2*).
- God continues to uphold the Universe and is intimately concerned and involved in what happens on the Earth (*Hebrews 1,2; Chronicles 16:9*).
- God made the nations and every nation is different, reflecting God's love of variety (*Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 17:26*).
- God's love extends to all nations and His desire is for a family drawn from "every tribe, language and people and nation" (*Revelation 5:9*).
- Human behaviour affects the Earth and all living things (*Hosea 1:1-4*).
- Unfaithfulness to God and His laws of justice, stewardship, love and righteousness will bring a terrible curse upon the face of the Earth (*Isaiah 24:4-6*).
- Jesus commands us to "Go and make disciples of all nations" in the power of the Holy Spirit and we will be witnesses in London, the UK, Europe and to the ends of the Earth (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8*).

The overall aims which were devised based on the above biblical assumptions can be found in 3 below.

## ► Spiritual and moral development in the geography curriculum

In state schools, OFSTED inspectors now examine and report on spiritual and moral development of pupils in all subjects of the National Curriculum. Many schools are now reviewing their departmental policies in the light of this. For a Christian school this creates a real opportunity to apply a biblical understanding of spiritual and moral development in geography. The following extracts are the initial thoughts concerning the inclusion of biblical spirituality in the geography curriculum consequent upon an in-service training day at a Church of England secondary school where the development of the spiritual dimension across the curriculum was discussed.



*What basic assumptions underlie your geography syllabus and are these clearly articulated?*

*How does your view of the world and of the future, shape your planning and teaching of the geography curriculum?*

## The spiritual dimension in the geography curriculum

### A. The pursuit of excellence for every pupil in all respects of the syllabus.

- High personal expectations are fostered by encouragement, positive criticism and a sympathetic approach on the part of each member of the team.
- Tasks appropriate to the ability of individual pupils are set and extension work is available.

### B. Respect for other people, view points and beliefs.

- The study of individual peoples and cultures within the framework of the opportunities and limitations of their natural environments.
- Urban decline, including a geographical perspective on the formation of “rich” and “poor” sectors within modern cities. This would include:
  - i) a comparative study of homelessness in London, New York and Calcutta ... identifying common causes, problems and solutions.
  - ii) looking at the work of voluntary organisations and government policy, critiquing both from a Christian point of view.
- Local community issues and social deprivation.
- Global and regional migration patterns and the place of ethnic minorities in British cities today.

### C. Sensitivity to the feelings of the community in which we live.

### D. Detection of bias inside and outside the school - and eliminating it as far as possible within the school.

- Bias is readily detectable in pupils' responses to questions.
- Elimination may be possible through clear explanation of the facts regarding differing lifestyles and cultures.

- Aim to light “fires of empathy” in pupils.

### E. Enable a personal search for faith by which to live.

This is not exclusive to church schools as one of the fundamental aims of many schools is a search for the truth (i.e. an understanding of the values and principles by which one is guided).

### F. Engender a sense of awe and a developing awareness of the self in relation to creation.

- Human beings are stewards of the earth and sensible management of the biosphere is impossible without a genuine sense of awe at the power, complexity, beauty and tight interdependence of the natural systems which make up the world around us.
- An invaluable sense of personal perspective can be achieved by examining ourselves and the fragility of our societies in relation to such powerful and destructive events as earth quakes, hurricanes and volcanic eruptions.
- With the huge time-scales involved in geological events such as mountain building and plate tectonic theory, the full period of human history (and personal existence) may be put into a more realistic and healthy context.

*St Peter's, Wolverhampton*



*Are any of these statements exclusive to Christianity, or are the values inherent in them shared by those who hold different belief systems?*

*Is there any way in which a biblical interpretation of these statements make them qualitatively different?*

*How restrictive a biblical perspective is this given the constraints of the National Curriculum?*



## 2 Mission statements, aims and objectives

### ► Mission statement and aims for a geography department in a county secondary school

The first example in this section is a mission statement which was developed by a geography department for use in a state school. The assumptions in the department's mission statement are intended to be compatible with Christianity. This is followed by their statement of aims developed from the departmental mission statement.

#### ► Mission statement:

- The world is a fascinating place with a vast amount of diversity. It can be studied in a number of ways. We believe it is the geographer's task to seek to find order, pattern and structure in this diversity and as a department to pass this ability on to our students.
- We have to be selective in the areas, themes and methods that are used. They must be accessible to each student and allow progression as their abilities develop. They should be chosen to cover as broad a range as possible while at the same time allowing in-depth study where appropriate. Topicality, relevance and statutory requirements will affect choices.
- Geography touches upon a number of areas of study in school. As a department we should seek to recognise and build up such links so that our students will be able to use and transfer relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. We can also make a significant contribution to such cross-curricular themes as *Education for Citizenship* and *Economic and Industrial Understanding*.
- We all depend on, and are influenced by, other people. Similarly we can influence others. As a department we should seek to teach our students that they have to accept increasing responsibility for their actions. This will affect their behaviour both now and in the future. Our task, with others, is to develop their understanding of the world sufficiently to allow them to make informed decisions and to realise the consequences of their actions. There is only one world.

*Robert Tapp, Priestnall School, Stockport*



*To what extent do you think the assumptions behind this mission statement are compatible with Christian belief?*

#### ► Statement of aims

Within the context of the overall school aims, the Geography Department will enable students to:

- a. acquire geographical knowledge of the world, selected to cover as broad a range as possible while allowing in-depth study where appropriate. Topicality, relevance to the students and other areas of study in school, and statutory requirements will affect choice.
- b. develop understanding of a range of key concepts so that they will be able to seek to find order, pattern and structure in the diversity of the world and be able to transfer this to other areas of study in school.
- c. master a range of skills and techniques which are accessible to each student and allow progression as their abilities develop. The skills and techniques should be linked with other areas of study in school.
- d. develop an appreciation of their own values, attitudes, identity and worth and develop an appreciation and sympathy for the values, attitudes, identity and worth of others.

*Robert Tapp, Priestnall School, Stockport*

## ▶ Aims and objectives for geography in a Christian school

This example describes the overall aim of a geography curriculum in a Christian school, the objectives, and the aim of an introductory unit in a geography syllabus.

### ▶ Overall aim

Our aim is to inform our pupils and to teach them that they have a responsibility to take care of the earth, by looking at examples of how societies have adapted successfully or otherwise to their environmental setting. Within this overall approach we will look at the physical, economic and political factors.

### ▶ Detailed Aims

1. To help pupils develop their understanding of their surroundings and extend their interest in and knowledge of, other places.
2. To help pupils get a perspective within which they can place local, national and international events.
3. To help pupils to learn about the variety of physical and human conditions on the earth's surface, and the ways in which people react to, modify and shape the environment; and how the environment influences the human factor.
4. To help pupils understand the spatial organisation of human activities.
5. To help pupils to understand the processes which produce pattern and variety on the earth's surfaces and which cause change.
6. To help pupils to be sensitive to the constraints and opportunities facing different peoples in different places under different economic, social, political and physical conditions.
7. To help pupils to understand other cultural and ethnic societies and to be aware of prejudice and injustice.
8. To help pupils to be aware of controversial social, political, economic and environmental issues, and their responsibility to arrive at informed judgements and obedient God-honouring actions.
9. To help pupils develop the skills and competence to carry out a geographical enquiry.
10. To help students to be able to develop the necessary study skills to be able to work individually, in groups and with or without supervision and able to go on to study geography, or bring their geographical perspective to bear on the issues of the day.

### ▶ Aims of an introductory unit for Year 7

The aims statement of the unit introducing geography in the first year in secondary school (year 7) lays the foundation for all further study in geography.

“The aim of this introductory unit is to explain to the pupils what we mean by geography and what they might learn from it. They will have studied some aspect of geography in infant/junior school, but now we aim to help them to see how it all fits together - how it is integrated. God created the world, both physical and human and as geographers we study the interrelationships that occur between the two. We study place. We have a unique opportunity to widen the understanding of our students, to develop that experience of awe

and wonder at the marvellous aspects of our world and also bring them face to face with the ‘downside’ - with the effects of the ‘fall’. This is seen in physical geography and human activities. This latter aspect, that we have spoiled our world, is highlighted today by the growing awareness of environmental issues.”

*Trinity School, Stalybridge*

### ► Aims for the Dolphin School geography curriculum

The following aims were formulated following staff discussion on the biblical assumptions of the geography curriculum set out in 1 above.

1. The children should understand that because the Universe bears God’s imprint, in studying it they will know more about the nature and character of God.
2. The children should understand that most of the textbooks are written from a Humanist philosophy of life and give an impoverished view of geography.
3. The children should understand that Man’s lack of good stewardship of the Earth has caused many of the physical/natural/environmental problems that occur today; i.e. acid rain, the hole in the ozone layer, deforestation/deserts.
4. The children should recognise that not all the problems can be solved by greater efficiency and control of nature. The ultimate answer is to turn away from a Humanist world view and rediscover Biblical themes of stewardship and servanthood.
5. The children should understand that the death and resurrection of Jesus offers Man a way of turning from idolatry and living in this world in ways that please God. This should result in Man delighting in the preservation of the land, his fellow Man and obedience to God’s ways. In this way, science and technology would be unfolded as a stewardly response to God, not a means of salvation.
6. The children should develop a deep sense of the interconnectedness of life and the many inter-relationships of the world around them.
7. By raising questions of responsibility the children should be guided towards the paths of wisdom that God longs for us to follow.

*Dolphin School, London*



*How far do you agree with these aims?*

*How might you apply any of them in your own situation?*

## 3 Content and methods for the geography curriculum

Geography teachers are not just interested in people and places but in the mutual interactions that occur between humankind and the rest of creation. The beliefs and values of different groups of people, and the ethical and moral issues which arise from these, are an essential part of the Christian geography curriculum.

A geography curriculum might include in its content:

- an understanding and appreciation of the diversity and differences in land and people.

- the interaction of humanity with the natural world.
- the adaptation, modification, or transformation of the environment, and the uses made of the available resources.
- the responses individuals, whole nations and cultures have made to God through social, political and economic decisions, in obedience (i.e. righteously and with justice), or in disobedience (i.e. sinfully).
- the world views and values which have influenced choices and developments.
- a critical analysis of the nature of our own society and personal and corporate responsibility for decisions and choices made.

*“Into this forum the issues of servanthood and stewardship in God’s world become central to our concern.”*

*Tom Dalton, Former Teacher Trainer  
(Geography)*

The range of topics required by the National Curriculum and examination syllabi is potentially stimulating and can provide good and exciting teaching opportunities. These topics offer studies of global issues and international relations related to industry, employment, communication, transport, environment, resources, pollution, population. They also raise sensitive and controversial issues and questions. Encouraging the development of an understanding of a range of attitudes and values can be consciously integrated into examples such as those which follow.

*Growth of industrial cities:* Living in cities; appalling living conditions; development of urban parks and town planning by Christian businessmen e.g. Port Sunlight, Welwyn Garden City; Churches’ responsibility - Faith in the City.

*Industry:* Decline of heavy industrial regions. How do you revitalise these areas, are retailing, leisure and tourism development the solution? Are we creating wealth or simply pushing it around? Pollution.

*Modern farming methods:* Famine. Can food aid solve the problem, is aid tackling a consequence rather than the cause of the problem?

*Trade and aid:* Can well intentioned aid undermine the economy of the recipient nation?

*Population:* Population growth; population control policies.

*Leisure and tourism:* Increased leisure time; long haul tourism. What real benefits do tourists bring to exotic destinations? What about the environmental cost in increasing air travel?

*Superdams:* Is the environmental destruction caused by large scale reservoir schemes justified by the potential economic benefits that it brings?

*Roads and by-passes:* Is the M25 really a ‘Road to Hell’? What do we need these roads for? Do we have a right to travel wherever we want, whenever we want at 70 mph?

Many geography teachers use role play, group discussion, workshops, investigations and project approaches. These are all valid methods to explore the subject, some of which spark off useful discussions and are a starting point from which the geography teacher can easily introduce Christian perspectives to the students’ work. Thus there is a wealth of opportunity to put over a Christian perspective together with other world views of a particular issue.

There are a number of excellent and stimulating textbooks for the study of geography many of which cover the above topics and include a focus on values. Christian teachers find that Christian points of view as well as other views can be incorporated through the use of these texts.

The next sections look at specific curricular ideas and examples which present Christian perspectives in the curriculum.

## 4 Stewardship

Humanity's task is the stewardship of the earth, a directive in the creation (or cultural) mandate in Genesis. The responsibility is to care for the earth and develop social and cultural patterns according to the values and norms God laid down at creation. The pervasiveness of the fall in the spoiling of creation, and in the arrogance of humanity in making choices which are often in defiance of, or contrary to, God's order, need to be taken into account. It is only in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross that the transformation of the whole of creation can be achieved. The responsibility of Christians is to bring the Gospel of Peace and the Kingdom of God into human lives and activities. This involves the reconciliation of relationships between God, people and creation, and just and righteous development.

The Christian geography teacher will encourage pupils to develop the ability to reflect critically on the beliefs, values and attitudes of different individuals and peoples, including their own. The topics chosen for study demand that we look at human and physical influences and Christian responsibility. One quickly runs into controversial political and economic priorities and wise decision making, based on an understanding of beliefs, values and attitudes in any situation, is a crucial aspect which geography teachers cannot avoid.

### 4.1 The land, people and the environment

Many teachers state that in order to understand how and why different people and cultures developed as they did, we need to understand the landforms, climate, vegetation and wildlife. We also need to understand the effects of different world views on development. Thus we begin to understand the diversity there is in the world. Links between geography, modern languages, RE and history are possible when studying the development of settlements and civilisations, agricultural and urban communities.

The following example for infants, looks at the effect of the environment on people as well as the effect of people on the environment.

*“Small children enjoy learning about the people and the animals and birds of habitats of extreme heat and cold. It begins to give an early appreciation of the concept of environment and habitat and their effect on people and animals and the dangerous effect man is having on the whole earth, especially through misuse of these contrasting environments.”*

*Trinity School, Stalybridge*

The following statement introduces a unit on settlements. Different kinds of settlements in various places, and their development over time, are studied.



*In what ways might you, as a Christian geography teacher, explain to your class, why you believe it is important to care for the earth?*

“This topic seeks to open up the concepts of location and change concerning settlement and land use patterns within towns. An attempt will be made to investigate the consequences of urbanisation on different groups of people.”

*Trinity School, Stalybridge*

Questions discussed include “What is community?” The Bible is used to look at why, when for centuries the majority of people had been farmers, by Genesis 4 some people had become ‘city’ dwellers. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon why the Bible story begins with a garden and ends with a city, the new “city of God”.

## 4.2 Environmental concern

Most primary and secondary schools have developed courses which focus on environmental themes. These usually take the form of cross-curricular integrated topics involving science and history as well as geography. Schools with a Christian foundation put environmental concern in a biblical context. Many Christians want to establish an understanding of the diversity, interrelationship and mutual interdependency of creation, as well as establishing an understanding of humanity’s responsibility to care for and develop creation, with an accountability to God. Many also make a link between the destruction of the environment and the ensuing problems for its inhabitants, with disobedience to God in physical, social and cultural development.

The following association of ideas provides the religious education foundation for the theme of responsible action.

### Biblical basis for environmental concern

#### Caring for the world

- Christians believe that God created a good world (*Gen 1*).  
Write a paragraph explaining in what ways you think the world is good.
- “The Lord God placed man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it” (*Gen 2 Good News Version*)  
Do you think that humankind has a responsibility to look after the world (the environment)? Give reasons for your answer.
- Do you have any responsibility to look after the environment? Give reasons.
- List ways in which human beings spoil the world.
- Which of these concern or anger you the most? Why?
- Do you think that humankind is the highest or best of all creatures? Give reasons.
- List some of the ways in which humans mistreat animals.
- Which of these concern or anger you most? Why?”

*St Peter’s Collegiate School, Wolverhampton*

## ▶ The Kielder Water Scheme

The Kielder Water Scheme (KWS) is an environmental issue taken from the non-statutory guidance of the National Curriculum. It provides a useful model for curriculum planning and, as well as knowledge, skills and activities, values and attitudes are consciously integrated into the scheme.

### The scheme provides key ideas which include:

- environments can be changed by human activity;
- the choice of a site for the activity is influenced by natural and human factors;
- change in the environment can result in gains and losses; and
- managing resources provides people with choice”.

### Some of the questions include:

- How has the landscape been changed?
- Why was the reservoir needed?
- Whose job is it to supply water?
- Where is the reservoir and why was it built there?
- What effect has the KWS has on people, the economy and the environment?
- How can water authorities ensure that water supply meets water demand?

### Attitudes and values highlighted in the scheme of work include:

- personal response to landscape;
- appreciate that different people see change in different ways;
- appreciate that change can cause conflict and compromise;
- increasing standard of living can be sustained by increasing resource consumption;
- identify personal actions that could reduce water use in the home, and at school, and consider why suppliers might not wish to reduce consumption.



*In what ways might a teacher include aspects which, among other viewpoints raised by pupils, make a distinctive Christian contribution?*

## 4.3 Economic activities

The following example is taken from a series of units on ‘economic activity’. The units are based on the following ideas:

### ▶ Primary industry

The first responsibility given to Adam and Eve was to rule over the rest of the created world. It was a delegated authority with responsibility. They had to look after the environment. Initially they were farmers. The fast development of skills meant that metal ores for tools were discovered and extracted (*Genesis 4:22*), and stones used for buildings. They are defined as primary tasks.

This unit introduces children to one aspect of primary industry in more detail, that of farming. Physical and human factors influence the type and pattern of farming and farm size.

### Secondary industry

We have looked at primary industry and have seen that such activities as farming/fishing were mentioned in *Genesis 2 & 3*. As early as *Genesis 4* human beings were involved in more complex tasks including building cities and making musical instruments ... they were making things from primary products, an activity

which has been commonplace for human beings down through history. The industrial revolution saw the change to the factory system which we now associate with manufacturing industry.

The aim of this unit is to show how industries find sites in different locations, sometimes creating recognisable patterns. It also looks at industries facing change in location and industries that misuse the environment.

*Trinity School, Stalybridge*

## 4.4 Quality of life

### ▶ Understanding cultures

In this lesson the class discussed stereotypes by comparing photos and descriptions of Africa and Britain. The idea was to show how wrong ideas and intolerant attitudes are developed by the media, through knowledge or ignorance.

The main aim of the lesson was to shake pupils out of stereotyped ideas, but it was also to help pupils better understand their own culture and that of others.

#### Worksheet

1. Title: "Quality of Life"
2. Copy the following: "Quality of life is about what you have got and what services are available (this can also be called standard of living) but it also includes how you feel about things, the people who are important to you and the value you place on things like family life and a pleasant environment."
3. Read the descriptions of the two places on the Resource Sheet [see below], describing the feelings of two visitors to two new places. From the descriptions, would you prefer to visit place A or Place B? Explain your answer in as much detail as you can.
4. One of the places is London, the other is Boro in the Gambia in Africa. Decide which is which and give reasons for your answer.
5. Think about the description of Place B (Boro) and the photos of Africa which we looked at a few weeks ago. Our ideas about other countries are often wrong. Write down five "ideas" which you had about Africa which you now think may be wrong. Try to explain where you got these ideas from.
6. Quality of life is to do with feelings as well as belongings. Make a list of ten things which you consider to be important for everyone whether they are rich or poor.
7. Everyone has "wrong" ideas about places. Suggest five things which someone living in a developing country may think are "wrong" about everyday life in Britain.
8. Quality of life varies within countries as well as between countries. Read the 9 statements in the list on the Resource Sheet. Copy them out into two lists: "Statements I agree with" and "Statements I disagree with".



## Resource sheet

### Place A

“The welcome was particularly cold. The place was grey, smoky and looked uninhabited by humans. It reminded Adah of the train sheds her Pa had once worked in. But if, as the people said, there was plenty of money here, why then did the locals give their visitors this poor, cold welcome? There were hundreds of people rushing around clutching their luggage and pulling their children. People looked remote and determined to keep their distance. They didn’t want to have anything to do with other people.”

### Place B

“The small houses were a warm brown colour. The one Francis was looking at had few pieces of furniture, but was neat and tidy. It had just been swept. The smell of dust was still in the air. A tall woman came out of the house and greeted him with a smile. She took the new visitor to the councillor of the village. The councillor insisted that Francis shared his small meal.

Then the children came, eager to show him round their village. They laughed and giggled as they pointed out this and that. But, having rested, it was time for Francis to be on his way along the tree lined road until the children disappeared from sight”.

## Variations in the quality of life in the United Kingdom

Discuss each of the statements below. ✓ those you agree with, ✗ those you disagree with.

1. If you live in Scotland, you’ll probably have a good quality of life.
2. The best quality of life can be found in the south-east of England.
3. In London, the inner city offers a better quality of life than the suburbs.
4. People living in Northern Ireland have a poorer quality of life when compared to people living in SE England.
5. In England, cities seem to offer a poorer quality of life than rural areas.
6. All of Britain is developed.
7. Some parts of Britain are more developed than others.
8. The quality of life is poor in areas where communications are difficult e.g. Scotland, Mid Wales.
9. When we say one country is more developed than another we average out the quality of life for the whole country. We don’t take into account regional differences within a country.

*St Peter’s, Wolverhampton*

## ▶ Inner city development

Some years ago, the Schools Council Project, 'History, Geography, Social Science', designed a number of themes which offer interesting ideas for the geography teacher. One entitled "Moving Home" (for 11 year olds) focuses on the concept of 'community' through the study of the development of an inner-city area. Information is gathered, using a number of different methods, in order to look at the growth of the community, and reasons for change. It looks at who has the power to make important decisions, how far the people involved have control over events, at how the alternatives are communicated, whether or not these are real alternatives and at the values which guide the planners and others in deciding what is best. Life in the inner city is compared with life in the proposed new town, with the various options for the inhabitants the focus of study and discussion.

Through the historical and geographical study of the local neighbourhood, the nature of society is explored. The notion of 'sharing', for example, is discussed and at how this can apply to the various community groups such as family, school, neighbourhood, city, new town and so on. The study also looks at how far various groups are communities, and at the advantages and disadvantages of living in a community.

Finally, the class designs its ideal area including housing, shopping area, work places, school and recreational facilities.

In all of this the teacher has to look carefully at the subject matter and ask the following questions:

*What are the reactions to the subject matter and methodology suggested?*

*Is this area too political, too sensitive; is it the concern of geographers?*

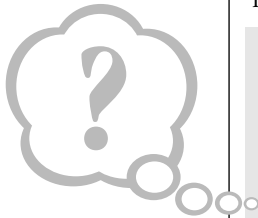
*In what ways could Christian ideas of equality of opportunity, social justice, responsibility for the under privileged be integrated into our approach?*

This and other themes can be found in Themes in Outline: Place, Time and Society 8-13, Collins ESL.

## ▶ A new bypass

In a role play exercise, developed in the Avery Hill 14-16 Geography Project on the Plympton residents' views on a new bypass, six residents offer their views of the results. One resident and her two children were hit by a car and obviously feel safer with the new bypass; another is a shopkeeper who now wants a pedestrian precinct and likes the new bypass as shoppers previously avoided the area; a truck driver says he will continue to use the old road as it is easier for him than going all the way round the edge of town; the owner of the nurseries has lost much in the way of business as the National Trust fought to change the route away from their own properties; an old people's home has changed dramatically from a clean quiet residence to a noisy, dirty one; another lorry driver will also go on using the old road, particularly as it will now be quieter!

In the fun of role play, there are opportunities to include a Christian view point. In this case, role play might focus on ways in which we should respect the needs of others. A Christian perspective does not necessarily offer an easy solution.



## 5 Development education

International aid programmes, third world debt and colonisation are often examined in geography as part of the GCSE syllabus.

The task becomes more difficult, however, when as a Christian teacher you seek to use materials that counter preponderant world perspectives. So much of the resource material on developing nations still focuses on the ‘mud huts and starvation’ syndrome and many pupils have no appreciation of the achievements of developing nations because of this deluge of negative imagery. A Christian should work at developing positive images and statements, looking for materials on economic success, urban developments, appropriate technology, agricultural innovations etc. Many aid agencies offer positive image resource materials that attempt to bring out the fact that developing nations are not backward but simply under resourced. There is a national network of resource centres, operating under a variety of names such as “Development Education Centre” or “World Education Centre” that can offer a rich source of accurate materials on developing nations. These centres can be found in most large cities. The work of organisations such as Christian Aid and TEAR Fund are also often examined in discussion of Christian development programmes.

Many of the agencies have very useful resources for geography teaching. Some of the resources available are clearly underpinned by Christian belief, others may not be, but will inevitably demonstrate compassion and argue for justice in a way which can be helpful for the Christian teacher. For a class to become engrossed in a development game, and begin to realise the consequences of choices and decisions that they and others make, can be life changing for them - particularly for the ones who consequently go hungry!

Resource catalogues usually include books, posters, videos, games and lesson packs. Some produced for use with youth groups can usefully be adapted for the classroom. A list of such agencies who have resource catalogues can be found in the ‘Resources and further reading’ section of this chapter.

Such centres may also carry materials about colonialism, and we must be ready to recognise the damage done by global exploitation. As Christians we cannot expect to make Christ more prominent in our work and then ignore some of the misguided things that have been done in the past, and which may still be continuing. Could we perhaps start by dispensing with the offensive term ‘Third World’, which often implies third class, third in some global race that has been run? We need to ask, can we as Christians presume to impose a rank order on our brothers and sisters in other countries? Was it fair to swap governmental systems for natural resources?

“This unit is about development - about making life better for people. It is about improving living standards and quality of life. It leads us into value judgements as we look at the contrasts between the rich world and the poor. It leads us into questions of aid and the effectiveness of aid and aid agencies. What is our responsibility as Christians? How much do we need to improve lifestyle when present situations may be a manifestation of God’s judgement, shown as a consequence of our misuse of the planet or as a withholding of His promised blessing if we are disobedient?”

*Trinity School, Stalybridge*



*What values should underpin our approach to development?*



*How might we help pupils to discern necessary conditions for positive development outcomes?*

## 6 The Christian teacher as model

The following paragraphs were presented by a secondary school geography teacher concerning the importance of modelling what we are teaching:

“Once we set out to teach from a Christian perspective we will also start to encounter problems of a personal and political nature. If we teach stewardship of the world’s resources and then throw our aluminium drinks can in the rubbish bin at break, how will students cope with the dichotomy between our teaching and our life style? All sorts of issues can start to impinge on your personal life, for example, will you still be able to drive the two miles to school once you have talked about the global inequality of energy resources?

If you choose to move further into applying biblical principles to your teaching you may find yourself at odds with activities that Christians often praise. Will you still be able to support the 24 hour famine with its symbolic, high profile, public fast, if it conflicts with “giving in secret”? (*Matthew 6:3-4*) Or should you rather be working towards educating pupils into sacrificing aspects of their standard of living so that a start can be made on releasing resources for others more in need? (*Isaiah 58:6*) To get your pupils to walk to school, forgo those new trainers, turn the heating at home down by 2 degrees may not be as popular as the high profile fund raiser but if it establishes a habit or perspective that lasts a lifetime is this not more beneficial to those in need?

To teach Geography successfully from a Christian perspective means accepting that your lifestyle must match the message you give in your lessons. This may mean uncomfortable changes in your personal lifestyle. Out goes the new car and the transcontinental holiday. In comes positive action such as establishing a can recycling project, making links over the Internet with schools in developing countries, tackling the consumerist attitudes of our pupils.



*In what ways do you model what you teach?*

There may also be a political price to pay, how will your teaching change once you find out that one of the governors is employed by a multinational company with an appalling human rights record? If you set out to create students who are more questioning of our global family and planetary resources you may well find that the edges of what you originally considered to be geography can become very vague and that you are wandering into a political minefield. Will you tackle the question of tobacco companies deliberately campaigning to boost cigarette sales in nations such as China, or of leading Japanese companies ignoring government policies to fell timber in South East Asia?”

*Malcolm Holmes*

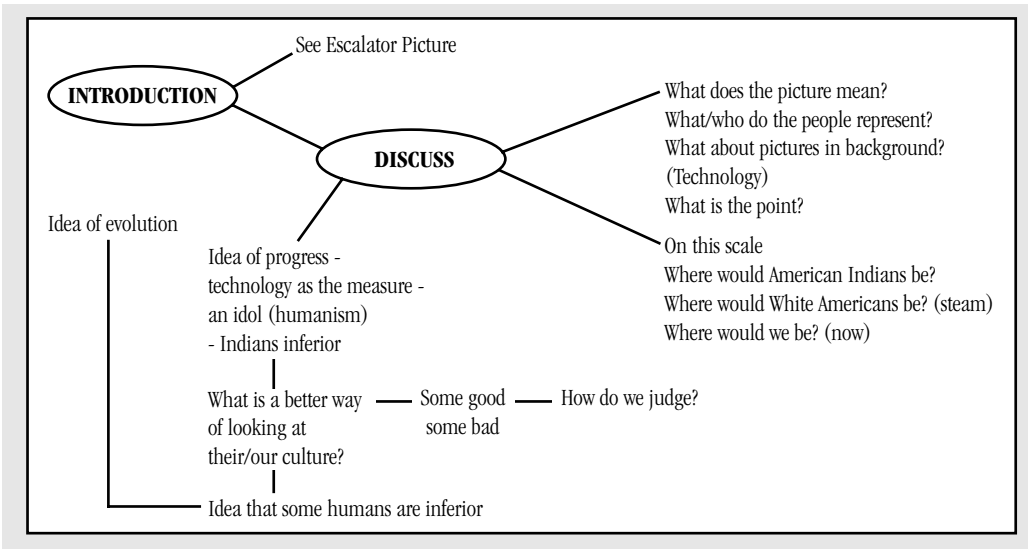
## 7 Analysing world views and detecting bias

World views can be analysed, detecting bias and prejudice. The extracted models from a detailed course on the idea of progress, the quality of life and bias in texts expose the attitudes we often carry in relation to other cultures. They scrutinise the origin of these attitudes and ask whether these are right or wrong. (NB. These lessons are extracts from a more detailed course).

### The “idea of progress”

The “idea of progress” is a Western concept which developed with the growth of technology, and is related to the idea of evolution; that is, things improve. From this notion we often regard less technologically

advanced cultures as primitive, ignorant, inferior, and therefore of less value. The following is a page from a teacher's notes on the idea of progress, intended to expose some of these prejudices. The Escalator Picture, referred to in the diagram below, shows a stairway with "primitive man" on the bottom step, travelling upwards towards "technological man".



Among the follow-up ideas was the suggestion that pupils look at a series of pictures of the past and of today, and decide what kind of progress has been made. Pictures of the following were collected:

Kitchens	Transport
Beggars and poor people	Factories (women and children)
Hygiene	Machines
Farming methods	Weapons

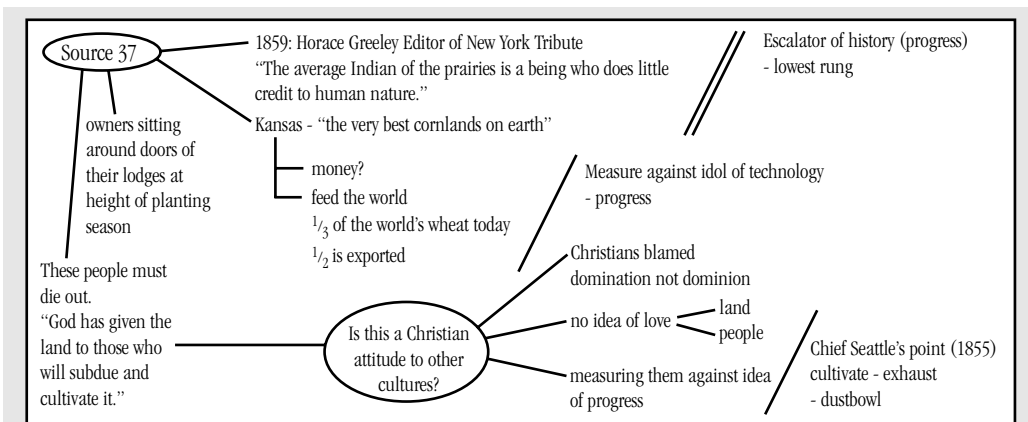
Oakhill School

?

*What is your "idea of progress"? How does it relate to Jesus's teaching about the kingdom of God?*

## ► Bias in texts

The following page from a teacher's notes compared the attitudes arising out of two different descriptions of the North American Indians. Source 37 in the diagram is an extract from a page from the New York Tribune. The Escalator of History is the same picture as used in the example above.



Oakhill School

## 8 Integrated courses

The development of links across the curriculum is an essential aspect of promoting coherent and consistent values throughout the school. As stated in the introduction, geography is an ideal subject for developing these links, naturally integrating various subjects and areas of knowledge. Geography is also an important subject area in the cross-curricular themes as per the National Curriculum.

Several schools have developed courses which unite different areas of the curriculum. A few are suggested here, highlighting their geographical components. Others can be found in the section on the humanities.

### ► World Project

This is a four year course, designed by the Shepherd School, Lewisham, in which different areas of the world are studied in relation to physical, social and cultural factors. A particular people group or nation is the focus in each of the following areas: Europe, the Far East, the Middle East, Africa, North and Latin America, the Indian Subcontinent and the former Soviet Union. The topics covered in each include the dominant world view, the economic status, related geographical and historical components, heroes, and cultural aspects. So, for example, when studying the Ukrainians of the former Soviet Union, the world views examined would include communism, Christianity and Islam. The Ukraine would be defined as a developing economy in terms of status, and the tundra and forests might be the land focus. The historical components might include the Scythians, the Golden Age of Kiev, Peter the Great and the Russian Revolution, and art might include egg painting. Christian heroes are also discussed.

#### ► The rationale for developing the “World Project” is as follows:

1. People in Britain are so often insular in their thinking and attitudes, but to adapt the poet John Donne, we are no longer an island entire of itself - we are a part of the Continent, indeed a part of the whole world. No pupil can be said to be adequately educated if s(he) does not have something of a global perspective.
2. The world is present in London ... If children are to relate successfully to those who have originally come from overseas, some understanding of cultural diversity will be invaluable.
3. Decisions that we make as individuals can often have global implications, especially in relation to ecological issues. An understanding of the world and its peoples will help in this area of decision making.
4. Properly taught, an understanding of the world and its peoples will incline children to a greater appreciation of the Creator ... and will be more likely to become ‘world changers’.

*The Shepherd School, Lewisham*

### ► Links with PSE

One teacher in a primary school did “An Experiment with Prejudice”, the idea originated after hearing a black child use the term black in a negative and derogatory way to another child. Although the teacher said that this experiment could have been conducted by any teacher in any school as it is based on “general moral values”, she felt these were compatible with, if not rooted in, Christian values. She spent a whole week on the topic and invited Christian friends from Tibet and Palestine, besides those of other ethnic cultures

resident in Britain, to come into the school to encourage a world-wide perspective on prejudice.

At one point during the week, she split the class into two groups. One group had to wear green badges while the other group had yellow badges. She ‘picked on’ one group all morning and didn’t tell them why until lunch time. She reversed the procedure in the afternoon and at the end of the day the children wrote down their feelings in poetry. They then developed a class policy based on how the pupils wanted to be treated - i.e. with respect and dignity, justice and fairness. Through dance the class expressed emotions of hate and breakdown opposite those of peace and reconciliation. The children, in pairs, put three aggressive tableaux and three peaceful tableaux into a dance sequence.

They read the story of the Good Samaritan, studying the history of the Samaritans to show how and why they were despised. They considered how prejudice often comes from misunderstanding, and studied the UN Declaration of Human/Children’s Rights. They learned that freedom in life is about the ability to make choices which need to be conscious, responsible decisions, and that we are responsible for the consequences of those choices and actions.

### ► Links with science

As some aspects of geography are dependent to a large extent on science, similar ideas as those found in the science section arise. One teacher stated that

“in all things pertaining to evolution and dating of rocks etc., we point out that much is theory; you either go along the science track where there are lots and lots of chunks missing that can’t be proved, or you interpret Genesis ... and there’s quite a lot of faith in which ever you choose” (Ross Evans, Secondary School Head).

### ► An integrated unit: weather and climate

As an example of the cross-curricular links which occur in most areas of geography, a unit on weather and climate can have links with science (observation and recording), mathematics (collating, and presenting data), English (descriptions) and RE, where looking at weather in the Bible will teach us about God and the creation. Van Brummelen suggests that

*“Christians who have worked out the implications of a Biblical view of knowledge ... would teach the physical aspect of weather, but would do so in a much broader context than most science textbooks. They would emphasise that weather is not part of a closed-off, autonomous world of cause and effect, but that ... weather affects our environment and therefore also plants, animals and human life. It gives rise to different feelings which are not just a subjective addition to physical factors but an integral part of weather. Weather must be taken into account in transportation, human survival, agriculture, as well as in students’ planning of their daily and seasonal lives. True knowledge does not neglect physical reality but teaches it in a context that makes it personally meaningful and relevant”.*

*van Brummelen (1977)*



*Can Genesis be interpreted in such a way that it agrees with the scientific principles intimated in this teacher’s statement?*

Geraldine J. Steensma and Harro van Brummelen, *Shaping School Curriculum: a Biblical View*, Terre Haute Ind. (1977). ©Harro van Brummelen. Used by permission.

### Resources and further reading

S. Bishop and C. Droop *The Earth is the Lord's* (1990) Bristol, Regius Press  
Contains a chapter on resources for environmental concern.

Walter Brueggemann (1977) *The Land* Philadelphia, Fortress Press

Paul Marshall (1988) "Calling, Work and Rest" in M. Noll and D. Wells (eds) *Christian Faith and Practice in the Modern World: Theology from an Evangelical Point of View*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans (1988)

Chris Seaton (1992) *Whose Earth?* Crossways Books  
Biblical foundation for responsible action with ideas and resources.

Geraldine J. Steensma and Harro van Brummelen (1977) *Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View*  
Terre Haute, Ind: Signal Publishing.  
This has a useful chapter on geography.

Nicholas Wolterstorff (1980) *Educating for Responsible Action* Ann Arbor, Eerdmans  
This book looks at the goals of education in the context of the creation mandate.

Christian Schools' Trust Geography Working Group -  
Ross Evans, Trinity School, Birbeck Street, STALYBRIDGE, Greater Manchester SK16 1SH

The following agencies are amongst those which have developed resources for schools:

CAFOD, Romero Close, Stockwell Road, London SW9 9TY Tel: 0171 733 7900

Christian Aid, PO BOX 100, London SE1 7RT Tel: 0171 620 4444

Intermediate Technology, Myson House, Railway Terrace, Rugby CV21 3HT

Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ Fax: 01865 313925

Save the Children, 17, Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD Tel: 0171 703 5400

Tear Fund, 100, Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 8QE Tel: 0181 977 9144

Traidcraft, Kingsway, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE11 0NE Tel: 0191 4910591

Unicef, 55, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2a 3NB Tel: 0171 4055592

Wateraid, Prince Consort House, 27-29 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UB Tel: 0171 793 4550

Worldaware (DfID - Department for International Development) 31-35 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TE



# History

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# History

All too often the focus of history lessons in schools has been the study of events and periods where significance is given mainly to chronology as the coherent structure. An unspoken assumption of human progress often underlies this approach to history.

In some syllabuses, the choice of topics lends weight to the view that the idea of structure itself is being ignored. Such an approach conveys a view of life that everything rests on chance, and that events have no particular meaning. This fragmented view of the past can result in the notion that existence is meaningless. Even when studying history from a Christian point of view there is a tendency to look at certain events such as the Reformation, or at individual Christians and groups who have influenced social and political events at a particular period. Again these are often dealt with in isolation from the whole; and the foundations of historical study are not examined.

The following section looks first at the need for a framework for selection and interpretation of data, and at the need for history teachers to maintain integrity in these areas. It then looks at various rationales and aims which have been given for the teaching of history within a Christian framework of beliefs.

## 1 The selection and interpretation of data

In the selection and interpretation of historical data, the following three aspects exert a major influence in the development of a history curriculum.

### 1:1 A framework for selection and interpretation

Past events can have no meaning unless there is a coherent framework by which to interpret them. Several interpretations of events can be offered, including secular, marxist, neo-marxist, women's and black perspectives. Although as Christians we may be able to learn from these, the Christian faith also provides a framework. As Christians "we have an insight, based on our familiarity with the biblical understanding of history" which "we are under obligation to carry out ... we cannot honestly remain amoral and uncommitted about it" (I. Howard Marshall quoted in Edgington and Light).

### 1.2 Personal beliefs

*"Professional historians no longer accept that it is possible for a historian to be divorced completely from his or her personal beliefs while writing history; thus a Christian response to the issues of content and method ... is both appropriate and necessary."*

*Edgington and Light (1995)*

Every historian has a point of view and a purpose, and personal beliefs influence both the selection and interpretation of events, so some partisan selection and interpretation is inevitable. We need to be honest about our own bias and aware of that of others, and continually "compensate for such tendencies with a degree of detachment ... and present a balanced account of what happened even if it does not readily fit (our) preconceptions or prejudices ..." (G Marsden, 1975). The problem of distorting history to "exalt (one's) own tradition" is ever present (ibid) and integrity is a prerequisite for any historian. Christian teachers will want to take the opportunity to enable their students to question the past and to test the conclusions of others by understanding the spiritual, moral and political considerations which motivate them.

*We seem to be back again,  
after two centuries of  
scepticism to an  
acknowledgement that history  
only makes sense when  
there is an underlying  
philosophy ...*

*Edgington and Light (1995)*

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George Marsden, "A Christian Perspective for the Teaching of History", from *A Christian View of History?* Edited by George Marsden and Frank Roberts, ©(1975) Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Used by permission.

### 1.3 Integrity in interpretation

The store of historical facts and information is basically the same for both the Christian and the non-Christian, and both must be honest in determining what the actual facts might be. Such facts will be of very little value on their own. Differing value systems and differing purposes for studying history mean that each will be interested in different facts.

*"... an historian whose value-system leads him to adopt an economic interpretation of history will emphasise many facts that will be neglected by his fellow historian disposed to see intellectual factors as primary ... The Christian historian will talk about some facts that will be missing in courses taught by Marxist historians ..."*

G. Marsden (1975)

The Christian teacher, for example, might spend time focusing on the religious treatises of Newton which he considers fundamental to the understanding of his mathematical work, whereas a non-Christian teacher will emphasise those facts about Newton that pertain only to mathematics. The approach of the latter over time is what has led to the view that his religious treatise are less historically significant than his mathematical work. Such an approach leads to the all-pervading assumption that the religious is to be marginalised.

*"A good example of how such a Christian perspective might work can be found in a Christian's interpretation of the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the one hand, he may laud the great achievements of man's intellect and ingenuity during that era. Surely there was general improvement and benefit to man in the increased understanding of the principles that governed the physical world, and in the ending of many of the erroneous and sometimes superstitious beliefs that were common in the pre-scientific era. Surely also there was genuine improvement and benefit in the technological achievements of that era that relieved men of some of their physical burdens. Certainly many men of the oppressed classes benefited greatly by the effective attacks during that era on unwarranted privilege and unjust custom. Yet, while many false beliefs and practices were discarded, these same laudable achievements led many men to adopt new false religions.... Men began to act as though they could retire God to the edge of creation as a sort of impersonal first cause. In many respects, Enlightenment men were de-Christianising thought, giving little attention to God's personal and active participation in the affairs of the world."*

G. Marsden (1975) p41

*"If interpretation is the central aspect of our task, then it is clear that our Christian values are going to make an immense difference in the interpretations we offer."*

G. Marsden (1975)

## 2 A Christian basis for the selection and interpretation of data

The following looks at how a history curriculum might be influenced by a Christian world view and perspective. It looks at the basic beliefs of a biblical world view, as the basic framework for interpretation, at the influence of personal beliefs in giving meaning and at the need for discovering truth and handling data with integrity.

### 2.1 Basic beliefs

Both Marsden (op cit) and Dever (1993) suggests that there are some aspects of interpretation to which Christians can be committed:

■ **God acts in history which will come to an end:** He is a personal God who entered into and changed human history, He will continue his redemptive work through His Holy Spirit and human history will end in judgement. The events of our lives and the lives of nations, while significant and meaningful, are passing and what we experience now is “only a faint indicator of what is to come”. Those who have experienced the saving power of Christ, for example, see blessing as a gift from God and adversity as the discipline of God, or the effects of the fall (which grieves God). It is through this process that God brings each of us to our goal (*Romans 8:28; Hebrews 12:1-11*).

*“No amount of incomprehension of how God can use events should shake us from the clear statements of Scripture ... God created all things and by his power, all things are continuously sustained.”*

Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 1:3, *Dever (1993)*

Even though we don’t understand why God acts as He does now, this does not mean that God is unjust. He will vindicate himself and evil will be punished. Good will ultimately triumph.

■ **The nature of humanity:** Human beings are made in the image of God, with a responsibility and capability to develop and care for the earth; and fallen, prone to be independent and think too highly of themselves.

■ **Motivation:** In the light of a biblical understanding of the character of humanity, and of its complexity, causal explanations are possible, although they must be tentative. Human motivations are not naturally benevolent or selfless, but driven by “sinful self-interest ... The Christian historian accordingly could not consistently adopt a mode of interpretation that was basically optimistic about men’s potential outside the work of God’s grace” (Marsden, op cit).

■ **Values and morality:** These are always implicit in selection and interpretation, and in judging human achievements and cultural developments. Relationships and ideologies will be evaluated by the Christian teacher against biblical norms and values. However, this need not be done in a spirit of condemnation, but with a spirit of humility, in sympathy and understanding for others and with a sense of humour concerning ourselves.

## 2.2 Faith and understanding

Through the study of history, we can gain a greater understanding of the character of God and of His dealings with individuals and nations. If interpretation depends on underlying beliefs, what is authentically meaningful to one person will not be evident to another. Mark Dever (op cit) provides an example of different interpretations of the same event:

*“The clearest example of this is found, of course, in the cross. In the death of Jesus God’s judgement on sin and his gracious love meet in the most mysterious providential happening of human history. And yet, even that event - central to God’s plan for the world - has not ‘meaning’ self-evident to those who witnessed it, or to those who have heard of it since - beyond the simple fact of the crucifixion itself. The meaning of this event is only understood as God himself explains it to us through the testimony of his Spirit via witnesses and the Word.”*

*Dever (op cit)*

*“The best and worst of times lie in the future”*  
Dever (1993)

©Mark Dever, “Reflection on Providence: Can We ‘Read’ Events?” *Cambridge Papers Ltd., Vol 2 (2)* (June, 1993). Used by permission.

?

*How can the idea that human beings are responsible for their actions be equated with the belief that God is sovereign over human actions (e.g. Romans 9; Proverbs 16:9; 21:1)?*

*“... although Christians claim that God acts specifically in history, the key to such action is not to be found in history but in an understanding of God”*  
Edgington and Light

*Understanding belongs to the work of faith, not historical scholarship.*

*E. H. Carr (undated)*

The study of history is sometimes referred to as “His Story”, but as Marsden (1975) points out the “job of historians is not to write the history of God, but the history of (humanity)” (p40). Theology is the study of God and while theology may underpin the interpretation of history (as described above), the relationship between theology and history may look something like this:

THEOLOGY	HISTORY
GOD’S STORY	HUMAN STORY
REVELATION OF HIS NATURE	CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION
PLAN FOR HUMANITY	HUMAN RESPONSES TO GOD

### 2.3 Truth: approaching history with humility

While God’s revelation provides us with some certainty on some aspects, we are finite beings and see things imperfectly. Because our interpretation will reflect our limitations, to be dogmatic about our interpretation is to be dishonest and we need to be tentative about claiming too much insight into how God has been at work. Even though there is some “scepticism about establishing “truth” and we cannot exactly recreate past events, this does not mean they did not happen. This is especially important when it comes to establishing the truth of the resurrection; ... asserting that the past is not completely unknowable is of great importance for the church today.” (*Light, correspondence*)

Mindful of the above, part of our responsibility as Christians living in the world today is to declare God’s concern for the world by analysing and understanding, in the light of the gospel, people, cultures, and the decisions and direction taken by the nations.

## 3 Christian perspectives on the teaching of history

Several individuals and school groups have looked at history from a Christian perspective. The following are some examples of a Christian rationale and aims for the history curriculum.

*God has good purposes and plans to fulfil for his world from the international to the personal level and he uses individuals to fulfil these purposes*

*John Ellwood, The King’s School, Witney*

### History viewed as an “unfolding process”

Van Brummelen (1994) suggests that the central focus of history should be “the unfolding process, that is, (humanity’s) progressive control over the creation and the accompanying formation of his cultural institutions”.

The special focus of history as a discipline is concerned with the particular aspect of man’s role as a dominion-possessing steward. The Bible implies that man’s dominion is a progressive thing, that man is to unfold, to bring forth the potentials of created reality and that this work includes the forms of his own social organisation.

*van Brummelen (ibid)*

Thus, history is seen as the telling of the human story; the story of humanity's role in the creation mandate, and the responses to God within that role.

The choices and decisions individuals, communities and nations have made in the past have determined the directions taken in world history. Individuals, communities and nations may be either obedient or disobedient, and their decisions may either resist, or be in line with God's standards.

History deals with all aspects of human life, from the cultural ideal, that is, the set of beliefs and values to which the majority of its members (unselfconsciously) adhere and which direct their life patterns, to its social structures and institutions.

*"History seeks to elucidate the way the various aspects of life have been opened up and how each interacted with the others to make each culture what it is."*

*van Brummelen (1994)*

The following study has been used to help form a Christian view of the purposes for studying history:

*"We must always have in mind that we are telling the story of beings God created, to live in the world God made, in the way God intended"*

*Edgington and Light, (1995)*

### ▶ A biblical understanding of God in history

- God has directed that written records be kept

*Exodus 17:14; Exodus 34:27-28; Jeremiah 30:2*

- God wants us to know history

*Deuteronomy 1-4; Joshua 24:1-3*

- God expects us to learn from a knowledge of history

*Deuteronomy 7:17-19; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Romans 15:4*

- History records the progress of God's plan

*Genesis 12:2; Jeremiah 32:37-44; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; Ephesians 3:10*

- God's dealings in history show us his attributes

*Amos 3:7; Genesis 6:8; Psalm 107; Jeremiah 44:20-23*

- God is sovereign; no-one can over-rule him

*Psalm 22:28; Job 12:23*

- God is never taken by surprise

*Genesis 45:4-11*

- God plans the history of nations

*Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Daniel 9:22-27*

- God controls the rise and fall of nations

*1 Samuel 16:12; Daniel 2:44-45*

- God leads rulers when they look to him for guidance

*1 Samuel 23:2; Psalm 78*



*How does this compare with the stated aims of your history syllabus?*

- God uses even the heathen nations for his purposes

*Judges 2:14-15; Jeremiah 5:15-17*

- God deals with individuals as well as with nations

*John 1:12*

- God reveals future events to his servants

*Genesis 18:17-18*

- All nations are responsible to God

*Isaiah 13:19-22; Matthew 25:32*

- The history of nations depends on their response to God

*Matthew 28:18; Proverbs 14:34*

- God has a special place for Israel

*Psalms 135:4*

- Satan and his opposition has affected history

*Genesis 3:14-24; Job 1:7-12*

- All nations will ultimately worship God

*Revelation 15:4*

*The King's School, Witney*



### The Christian purpose in teaching history

On the basis that in the Christian world view the past has profound significance, Marsden's (1975) rationale for teaching history includes the following points:

1. Biblical history contributes the foundation and the most crucial perspective necessary for understanding ourselves and others. Thus we need first to gain a Christian understanding of ourselves which depends on learning about certain historical events revealed in the Bible, centring on the death and resurrection of Christ.

***"The historical documents collected in the Bible provide the record of God's acting in history, and it is in the context of those acts ... that we must view ourselves ..."***

2. The rest of history also helps in understanding both ourselves and others. We need to understand and love those who differ from us but who may equally have a great deal to offer us.

***"We study cultural values because we want to understand those who hold them, and in order to understand how these very ideas and assumptions have influenced us".***

We also need to "be able to view our own accomplishments and follies in a perspective that will help destroy the illusion that we stand at the centre of the universe".

*The basic reason why we who are Christians should teach and learn history is so that we may better understand ourselves and our fellow men in relation to our own culture and to the world. Since the Christian's task is to live in this world and to witness to the love of God as manifested in Christ ... understanding (both of ourselves and others) is an essential ingredient.*

*G. Marsden (1975)*



***“If we better understand what other men and other cultures have done, we can contribute something toward reinforcing a perspective that will help destroy our self-made, self-centred worlds.”***

3. The values of our own culture, seen in the light of others, will appear to be of a less enduring nature.

***“History is of major importance in alerting us to the transitory character of many of the values of our own age and culture. Rather than unknowingly allowing our values to be conformed to passing contemporary standards, we can strive to evaluate current cultural norms intelligently and to apply to them the transforming values of Christ.”***

4. Society requires a past, or what Marsden (ibid) calls a ‘memory’, in order to function. The past provides us with an identity. The past has influenced our social, cultural, political and spiritual development and direction. This memory is not like a ‘computer’; a compilation of facts. It is a selective process, which focuses on those aspects which are meaningful and important to us as individuals and as a culture. (See note 1 in the chapter on Religious Education). This past must also be seen in terms of point 3 above.

George Marsden, “A Christian Perspective for the Teaching of History”, from *A Christian View of History?* Edited by George Marsden and Frank Roberts, © (1975) Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Used by permission.



*As a history teacher, how prepared are you to use the biblical record as part of your evidence of what is happening at a particular juncture in history?*

## ► Some Biblical principles underpinning history teaching

The following principles were developed by the history department of a Christian school in Witney.

- History records the unfolding of God’s eternal purposes towards their final culmination when all things will be brought under Christ’s rule

*Ephesians 1:9-10; Revelation 15:4*

- God is a Father who becomes actively involved in the lives of His children

*John 1:12; Ephesians 1:4-6*

- In judging the actions of men and women in the past, we should do so against the dual criteria of their obedience to God’s word, and the effect of their lives on others.

*2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 7:16*

- God is sovereign and retains ultimate control in the affairs of nations and their rulers

*Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Job 12:23; Romans 13:1*

- God has ordained every person’s historical and geographical setting

*Acts 17:26-27*

- In recording the history of Israel, the writers had a concern for truth and were dependent on the Holy Spirit (Many chroniclers were prophets or seers)

*Chronicles 29:29-30; 2 Timothy 3:16*

- History provides us with many lessons for the present and the future

*Psalms 78:2-8; Hebrews 11*

- God’s dealings in history show us what He is like.

*E.g. Psalm 107:1, 15, 45*

- God's involvement in the history of nations is to ultimately guide their people back to Him

*Ezekial 25:7,11,14,17*

- The actions of one generation are affected by previous generations, and themselves influence the lives of succeeding generations
- Just as the history of Israel embraces the whole range of human experience (social, political, economic, cultural, spiritual) so history teaching should touch all areas of life

*The King's School, Witney*

## 4 Aims

The first example is a set of aims developed by the history departments of a Christian secondary school. The second example was developed by the Christian Schools' Trust History Working Group.

### ▶ The King's School, Southampton

- To stimulate interest in and enthusiasm for the past
- To promote the acquisition of knowledge about the past
- To develop understanding of people and events in the past
- To promote an understanding of the concepts of cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference
- To examine Christian and other values, which pupils can see in various societies of the past
- To develop study skills such as the ability to locate and extract information from sources; to detect bias; to analyse this information, and to construct a logical argument
- To provide a sound basis for further study, and the pursuit of personal interest
- To attempt to detect God's hand in the events of the past

*The King's School, Southampton*

?

*When divorced from interpretation and evaluation (opinion), does a knowledge of the 'facts' have any value?*

### ▶ Suggested aims for the teaching of history in Christian schools devised by the Christian Schools Trust History Working Group

- To present history as the linear unfolding of God's purposes on earth
- Ephesians 1:3-12, especially 9-10*
- To encourage children to look for signs of God's providence in history
  - To help students make judgements on events and individuals on the basis of the truth of God's word and on the consequence of men's (and women's) actions
  - To emphasise the importance of cause and effect in the study of history and how men's decisions always affect others

- To study the actions of individuals (both Christian and non-Christian) against the background of their historical setting
- To inspire students to correctly respond to and seek to change their own culture for the Kingdom's sake
- To encourage children to have a concern for the truth through the thorough investigation of primary and secondary source material
- To clearly affirm that wise men and women learn from the past
- To stimulate interest in and enthusiasm for the study of the past and to provide a sound basis for further study and the pursuit of personal interest
- To make the study of history a well integrated part of an overall Christian education
- To promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding concerning human activity in the past



*How do these statements alter the way in which you might approach the National Curriculum History Orders?*

*The Christian Schools' Trust History Working Group (1996)*

## 5 Constructing a syllabus

What to include and what to omit when constructing a curriculum is always a debatable consideration for teachers. The National Curriculum may restrict the choices, but even then, how the areas which are included are taught, is vitally significant. How they are shown to fit into the whole, and the emphasis and interpretation put on the various aspects, will result in the particular direction of the syllabus.

▶ Edgington and Light (op cit) provide statements for teachers to consider when constructing a syllabus. They include:

### **Content**

- Christians will not wish to glorify the State or any one political ideology, nor idealise a political leader
- God loves the world, and societies different from their own should be studied
- Societies should be studied in a way which questions underlying (Western) values
- Evil cannot be ignored, but the context in which issues relating to evil are taught is important. Integrity and honesty in dealing with issues is essential

### **Skills**

- Helping children to respond, encourage a 'sympathetic understanding for humanity and the human condition': imagining and empathising requires an historical basis, understanding of the social customs of the time
- Using the tools of the discipline including comprehension, analysis, extrapolation, synthesis etc.

### **Values**

- Values determine human actions and decisions
- Individuals and communities have opportunity for choice, but also limitations in various ways
- Accepting certain values and acting on them has certain consequences

*Edgington and Light (1995)*

## 6 Understanding the world and its structures

Some schools provide a biblical foundation for studying nations and cultures. Others use Jewish, Roman and Greek cultures for understanding both our own and the cultures of the past, and while the study of various cultures in history can be fascinating, at school level it is often superficial and trivial. Questions about what the basic religious vision, the values and beliefs which shaped the culture were, would create a better understanding of why things were as they were, and provide a better understanding of what it would be like to live at that time.

The following examples offer first, a Biblical basis for understanding the place of rulers and nations under God, secondly, a Biblical view of race and nations, and thirdly, an example of lessons using whole cultures as a response to God.

### ▶ The place of rulers and nations

#### GOVERNMENT

- Human government was established by God

*Genesis 9:5-6*

- The powers that be are ordained by God

*Revelation 13:1-4*

- Civil authorities are a deterrent to evil

*1 Peter 2:13-14*

- The basis of good government and political stability is a personal integrity and strong family life

*Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 14:34*

- The actions of even a few believers can change the direction of government

*Dan 2:46-49*

- God holds nations accountable for their actions

*Jeremiah 49:1-6*

- When men refuse his rule, God lets them rule themselves

*Numbers 22:4-20, Romans 1:21-28*

- When a godly city or nation turns from God, her sins are often more serious than a heathen one and her condemnation greater

*Matthew 11:20-24, Matthew 10:15*

- God has often used war to accomplish his purposes

*Numbers 31:1-20, Deuteronomy 2:24-26*

- Governments and their officials are to be respected for their position and obeyed

*Exodus 22:28, Matthew 17:24-27*

- God expects submission to God-ordained leaders

*Romans 13:1-7*



*How fully does this represent a biblical view of government?*

- He condemns rebellion and rioting  
*Jude 6:7*
- Obedience to God comes before obedience to men where the two conflict  
*Acts 4:18-20*
- Love of country and concern for her welfare is natural and encouraged  
*Psalms 137:1-6, Nehemiah 1:2-11*
- Believers are responsible to pay their share for the support of the government  
*Romans 13:6-8, Matthew 17:24-27*
- Believers must pray for their leaders in order that there may be peaceful living  
*Jeremiah 29:7, 1 Timothy 2:1-3*

Source unknown

?

*What biblical insights would you choose to illuminate styles of government at particular periods of history?*

▶ **A Biblical view of race and culture**

Honesty and truthfulness are essential characteristics of the Christian history teacher. It may well hurt to look honestly and from different points of view at a situation. It also demands more than mere tokenism.

*An honest attempt to incorporate units of Third World History must offer a proper sequence and not limit goblets of history to the periods in which Europe was involved. But racism in history is not just about which chunks we decide we want to teach; it is also to do with how we handle certain movements in history when Europe's record is far from untarnished. How do we teach slavery, for example? Or 19th century imperialism? When we consider some of the arrogance we took in our imperialist baggage to the Indian sub-continent or to Africa, shouldn't there be some sense of remorse in our teaching of this topic?*

*A narrow English-dominated syllabus can promote a distorted view of human history and promote an unhealthy nationalism.*

*We believe that God is concerned for the whole earth, he is as concerned for the people of Calcutta as for those in Caterham, for Ghanaians as well as Glaswegians.*

*The Shepherd School, Lewisham*

Thus not only do we need a proper view of Indian, or African history, but also of those races which are represented in our multi-cultural society.

For further discussion of similar issues see chapters on modern languages and geography.

?

*Given the diversity of people living in Britain and our greater awareness of other cultures through the media, how is this to be reflected in the content and approach to the teaching of history in our schools?*

▶ **Reviewing a whole culture as a response to God**

The following aims, plans, lessons and worksheets for key stage 2 were taken from a term's work at the King's School, Witney. The study focuses on the development of a whole culture (human empire/kingdom of God) and its response to God. The study of the Roman Empire is contrasted with the Kingdom of God showing how even the impressive Roman Empire fell because Jesus Christ was not recognised as Lord of all;



*To what extent does colluding with a non-Christian view of history undermine our integrity?*

whilst the Kingdom of God is eternal. Human responses to God are examined as well as the intervention of God in human affairs and the interaction between God and humanity. Whilst many teachers in state maintained schools may not be able to use such directly Christian material, it is worthwhile considering how the beliefs, values and norms of a biblical world view can be helpful in the interpretation of historical events.

## **Aims, plans, lessons and worksheets for Key Stage 2**

### ***Aims for the term***

1. To introduce history as God's plan for the world, emphasising his sovereignty.
2. To compare and contrast the establishment, development and effect of the (Roman) Empire and the Kingdom of God.
3. To enable the children to experience life in a Roman school through an afternoon's activities.
4. To gather information and order it in written, pictorial or spoken form.
5. To visit a Roman villa and the Corinium Museum to observe Roman artefacts.

### ***Plan for the term***

#### **1. Introduction to history** - History = His story

- God wants us to learn from history  
*1 Corinthians 10:11*
- God is sovereign  
*Matthew 28:18*
- The history of people and nations depends on their response to God  
*Proverbs 14:34*
- God controls the rise and fall of rulers  
*1 Samuel 16:12b*
- Role of prophets

#### **2. The World into which Jesus was born**

- *Luke 2*
- Map of Roman Empire
- God's perfect timing in sending Jesus to earth
- Time-line showing AD. and BC.

#### **3. Establishing the Roman Empire**

- Roman invasion of Britain
- Rome as a village, country, continent, empire

- Contrast establishment of the Kingdom of God  
*Mark 1:15*

#### **4. Development of the Empire**

- Romans build roads, towns, forts, aqueducts, Hadrian's Wall
- Roads enabled spread of Christianity
- Kingdom forts and walls  
*Psalms 18:2, Isaiah 60:18, Revelation 21:10-14*
- Roman villas, mosaics, baths

#### **5. Life in the Empire**

- Roman schools
- Transport in the Empire
- Industries and occupations
- Food, clothes, leisure
- Worship in the Empire/Kingdom

### 6. Ruling the Empire

- Emperors
- Roman army
- Contrast Jesus as ruler
- Roman armour

*Ephesians 6*

### 7. Fall of the Empire

- Reasons for its collapse
- Contrast with the eternal Kingdom

The following examples are lesson outlines from the above overall plan.

#### ▶ The world into which Jesus was born

**Objective:** To look at the way in which the Roman Empire began and subsequently grew, comparing it with the birth of Jesus and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

##### Steps

1. Locate Bethlehem and Rome on a large map. Show extent of Empire on the map. Discuss why these places are significant.
2. Relate how the Empire began. Most books on the Romans relate the account of how Rome grew from a village to an Empire in which about 60 million people lived.
3. Compare with establishment of the Kingdom of God when Jesus was born into the world as a baby
4. Complete first worksheet
5. Roman invasion of Britain
6. Time-line worksheet

#### ▶ Worship in the Empire and the Kingdom

The objective here is to compare worship in the Roman Empire with worship in the Kingdom of God.

##### Steps

1. Who, how, where did Christians worship?
2. Read Bible verses referring to worship  
*Exodus 20:3; Acts 17:16,22-30; Romans 1:20-23*
3. Compare worship in the pagan Roman Empire. ('Fact cards')
4. Compile lists of comparison (\* see worksheet below)
5. Talk about Nero and Constantine
6. Show pictures of temples
7. Freedom to worship





debate over the authenticity of Asser's work, outlined in a book published in 1995 by Professor Alf Smith of the University of Kent, the idea behind the focus of the following extract is one which might be helpful:

*"A king's raw material and instruments of rule are a well-peopled land, and he must have praying men, fighting men and working men. Without these tools he cannot perform any of the tasks entrusted to him"* - King Alfred in his translation of Boethius' *'Consolation of Philosophy'*.

Alfred the Great has gone down in history as the man who burnt the cakes. In fact this story which only appears in chronicles two hundred years later is probably untrue, while much that is true about this extraordinary Christian ruler is not widely known...

Born in 849, Alfred was the youngest son of King Aethelwulf by his first wife ... His family was known for good works and links with the Church ...

In the years following 865 the Viking army was active all over the country ... A crisis was reached in 870 ... and the Vikings established permanent settlements around York - the northern Danelaw.

Alfred seems to have considered the Viking invasion as a judgement of God sent because of the decline in the church and of learning in the land. He did drive back the Vikings and it was said that

*"Alfred could have wreaked a terrible vengeance on Guthrum and his followers for the devastation they had brought on the kingdom and the humiliation they had inflicted on the king. Instead he defeated and converted ... He was brave, a good warrior, a fine general. He was also wise, patient, intelligent, a good Christian who practised as well as preached reconciliation"*

Thus Alfred's ... policy of not taking revenge (cf. *Luke 6:27* etc.) proved successful in defeating the invading pagan armies<sup>1</sup>.

But Alfred knew that the church and education were vital for England's future. The church had seriously declined in the 9th century; Latin was the language in which books were written and church service conducted, yet Alfred wrote that on his accession to the throne there were very few men north of the Humber (traditional home of learning) who could understand Latin, and none south of the Thames! He writes:

*"Therefore it seems better to me ... that we too should turn into the language that we can all understand certain books which are the most necessary for all men to know, and accomplish this, as with God's help we may very easily do provided we have peace enough, so that all the free-born young men now in England who have the means to apply themselves to it, may be set to learning (as long as they are not useful for some other employment) until the time that they can read English writings properly"* (preface to Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care*).

So Alfred embarked on a remarkable programme of translation of important books into Anglo-Saxon. He gathered scholars at his court (some from Mercia, Grimbold from Flanders, John from Saxony and Asser from Saint David's), each with a different intellectual heritage to bring to the work. Alfred himself is thought to be primarily responsible for four of the chosen texts, which included the first fifty Psalms, books on spiritual authority, the immortality of the soul and church history.

Alfred also established a school attached to the royal household to train future leaders of the country in the pursuit of divine wisdom; and he carried out penal reforms, writing a set of laws to expand and apply the laws of God to the situation at that time. For this he gathered the best decrees made by kings and synods in England and Wales, not presuming, as he says, to write many himself lest they should prove to have been unwise in later generations.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Alf Smith states that while Alfred may have had some success against Guthrum, other Danish armies attacked him later despite his policy of not taking revenge.



*How often in schools do we hear of the motivating beliefs of King Alfred?*

Alfred was a man of faith and action, humble yet bold, a wise leader and always a learner. Not surprisingly many legends have grown up about him ... Yet Alfred's significance in God's purposes for our land cannot be measured in cakes, or books, or victories. Let us thank God that He did not allow England to turn pagan in the 9th century, and that He raised up Alfred in the hour of need.

*J. Smith (1991)*

### ▶ Wesley

The following extracts were taken from Wesley's Journal and used in The King's School, Witney to show that even great men of God had prejudices and traditions which needed to be upset.

Preaching outdoors horrified Wesley at first:

*Saturday 31 March 1739 - In the evening I reached Bristol and met Mr Whitefield. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday: having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.*

*Sunday 2 April 1739 - At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people. The scripture on which I spoke was 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor'. ... and so began Wesley's lifelong practice of preaching outdoors.*

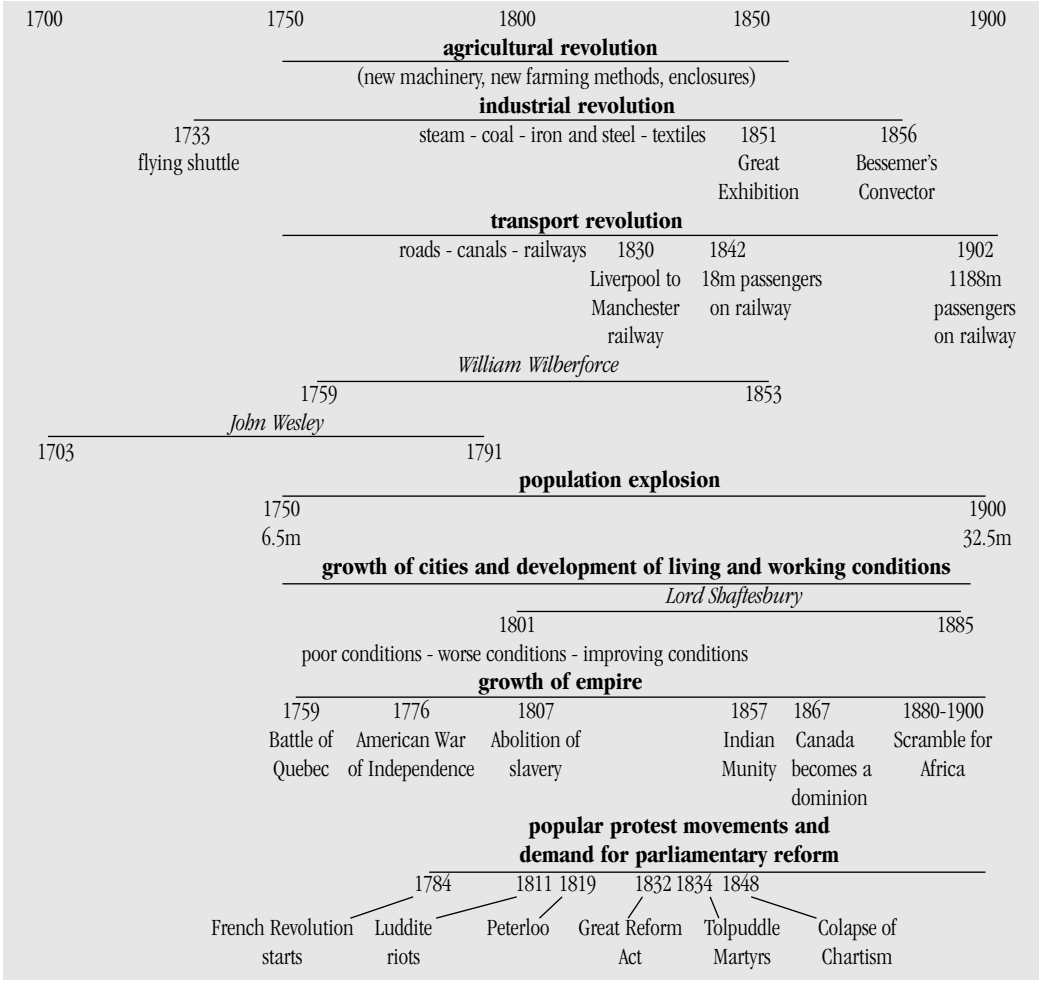
Other biographies can be found in the science chapter of this handbook.

### ▶ Biographies written by Christians

Biographies often leave out the Christian motivations of individuals who have operated in spheres of public life such as Florence Nightingale, Wilberforce and others. Biographies written by Christians may well reveal a different view of the lives of these characters. One teacher, for example, always encourages his 6th form students to read David Bebbington's book on Gladstone. Not only is it brief (which they appreciate), but it gets to the heart of understanding Gladstone's motivation. The students are also aware that this biography is written by a Christian.

### ▶ Social and political influence of Christians

The following diagram provides an overview of the cultural developments which took place during the period 1750-1900. Added to it are some of those Christians who have influenced social directions and political structures. The lives of these individuals are studied at the appropriate times. Others who are not as well known could also be added.



*King's School, Witney*

**► Resources from the local community**

People, places and artefacts who or which are part of the local community are always a welcome addition to any curriculum or syllabus. It helps the subject of study come to life and is close to the experience of the pupils.

In Tooting, in London, a church group found a cupboard full of information about the origins and work of the Shaftesbury Centre in that area. Christine Leonard, a local author, was asked to research and write a booklet focusing on these findings. Her work has since been used in local schools. The following are a few extracts taken from her presentation (which includes a set of slides made from some of the newly discovered photographs):

She used newspaper cuttings to reveal the state of living conditions:

**Tooting Gazette: 3rd April 1911**

**KILLER DISEASE EPIDEMIC IN TOOTING**

In the past three weeks, 32 children died of measles in just four streets in the poorest part of ...

▶ **Daily Herald Newspaper: 23rd March 1927**

### **BLACK SPOTS IN TOOTING**

“I was in one tiny house in Tooting; 28 people live in it. There are no baths of course and all 28 people share one toilet. It is outside the house in the back yard. In just one small room in that house live six people - a whole family. They eat there and sleep there, but it is so damp the wallpaper is peeling off and food goes mouldy in a day.”

Christine also found a government report from 1911 on schoolchildren:

There are 6 million school children in Great Britain  
63% have something quite badly wrong with them  
20% are malnourished

She then asks the question, “How did things change in Tooting?”, and looks at the life of one young man Leonard Shepherd. Leonard Shepherd and his friends had no money themselves, but trusting in God to supply the needs, they began clubs for boys and girls in the area. The girls were taught to sew, which enabled them to make warm clothes for themselves and their families. The young men befriended the families and helped fathers find jobs. They also did a lot for children with disabilities. Eventually they were able to build a hall and the lives of many were changed for the better because Christians cared.

“Before children had no fun, no hope of anything but cold and hunger.  
Now the children had somewhere to go and play.  
They knew that some people cared ... because they loved Jesus ... and believed  
that every person was important.”

Christine Leonard compares this to today’s world, and shows the difference individuals can make in alleviating poverty and injustice. She finishes off with a poem written by a young girl in the East End of London living on a high rise housing estate. Disposable nappies cover the grass. There is nowhere to play. No-one wants to be there. Muggings, shops with bars at the windows, balconies from which children can fall, fear, loneliness, problems, nothing to do but set fire to rubbish are all everyday experiences. The author of the poem, who chooses to work in this area, finds it hard and wonders how the Psalms, which speak of the earth and everything in it being the Lord’s, can apply. Her conversation with God is expressed through this poem:

Walked across the grass the other day  
 Looked at all the paper and nappies,  
 can't even see the grass!  
 You said, 'Love this place, I'm here.'  
 I said, 'It's impossible, no way.'  
 Gazed across London  
 through a window that wasn't there.  
 You said, 'Love this place, I'm here.'  
 It's impossible, no way.  
 Stopped and knocked.  
 Watched the curtain lift,  
 heard the bolts slam shut.  
 You said, 'Love this place, I'm here.'  
 It's impossible, no way.  
 No need to travel the world, just walk along the balconies.  
 See the lonely faces, the barred windows, the broken glass.  
 Feel the isolation, the fear.  
 No need to go to prison,  
 you're already there!  
 Walked across the grass the other day.  
 Saw a world created by you,  
 damaged by me.  
 Said, 'OK, if you're here, show me.  
 Teach me to love this place.'

*Kim Gooding*

## 8 The effect of culture on Christianity

The impact of culture on Christianity has, in some instances, been greater than the impact of Christianity on culture. In order to discern what does and does not match biblical norms and values in various cultures in the past, some schools have developed series of studies where world views of the past and of the present are examined.

***Western culture has been heavily influenced by Greek thinking ...***



### ▶ A way of life

The King's School in Witney suggests the following as a way of thinking about the effects of culture on Christianity, remembering that God required Israel to live its religion:

When Christianity left Israel it was a way of life ...

In Greece it became a philosophy

In Rome it became a system


*Christianity moved from  
 being something you lived  
 out in reality to something  
 theoretical and intellectual*


*The King's School, Witney*

In Europe it became a culture  
 In Germany it became a theology  
 In America it became an enterprise

### ▶ Comparing and contrasting world views

One school studies Greek and Hebrew cultures in order to compare and contrast the two world views. The outline with objectives, some of the relevant steps, and the goals are shown here, with a lesson plan and the resulting chart which compares Hebrew and Greek thinking.

### ▶ Greeks and Hebrews

#### **Objectives:**

1. To impart a Godly system of values as a plumbline so pupils discern for themselves the things that God treasures
2. To study Greek and Hebrew cultures in order that pupils discover not only the contrasting values of each but also the many good points in both

#### **Steps:**

1. To study the geography of Greece and Israel
2. To consider religion as the key to a nation's culture
3. To expose pupils to the writings, language, festivals and legacy of each culture

#### **Goals:**

1. That pupils discover for themselves from a study of each culture which values dominated and shaped the people
2. That pupils:
  - a) perceive what values dominate and shape our culture
  - b) are clear which attributes God values
  - c) know that only if we value what God values will we be blessed as a nation

### ▶ Greek religion

#### **Objectives:**

1. To consider Greek religion as a key to their culture
2. To compare their gods to the God revealed in the Bible

#### **Steps:**

1. Study of Greek religion, their gods, ceremonies and belief in oracles
2. Study God's character, His nature as revealed in Scripture and by prophecy

e.g. God the Father, *Isaiah 64:8*, *Matthew 6:9*

Ruler of heaven and earth, *Genesis 1*, *Psalms 24*

God's wisdom, *Psalms 111:10*, *Ephesians 1:17*, *James 3:17*

Scriptural prophecy and its fulfilment, *Isaiah 9:6-7*, *Isaiah 53:5*

3. Discuss *Ecclesiastes 3:10 and 11*. (Every age searches for God)
4. Read story of the Athenians and the unknown god. (*Eternity in their Hearts* by Don Richardson p9-16)
5. Look at Paul's visit to Athens in *Acts 17*

*King's School, Witney*

Finally, after studying both the Greek and Hebrew cultures students compile a chart in order to make a comparison with details similar to those shown below.

### ▶ Hebrew Thinking

#### **General approach to life:**

Earthly, practical, concrete, "life is for living"  
(E.g. wisdom literature essentially practical)

School is the place for training in wisdom through knowledge of God's word

#### **Understanding of man:**

Man is a corporate, relational being  
His natural home is in a family/tribe

Responsible

Psychosomatic whole

(Cf. justice determined by elders in the gate - relational)

#### **Understanding of world:**

World is good

Prosperity is a blessing

Health is God's purpose

#### **God: - one God:**

Is known by his deeds

Is proved experientially

#### **Generally:**

Majors in verbs/reality. Focuses on character.

Action - *James 2:17-26*

Character and heart

Made for God's pleasure

Dependent on God

### Greek Thinking

#### **General approach to life:**

Esoteric/reflective/philosophical, life cannot be lived without proper understanding (philosophy essentially conceptual and theoretical)

School is for the transfer of intellectual knowledge and for physical training

#### **Understanding of man:**

Man is an individual whose natural environment is the city/state

Determined

Dualistic

(Justice essentially a legal process and non-relational)

#### **Understanding of world:**

Matter is secondary - there is a higher level

Poverty is a blessing

Suffering is good for you

#### **God: - many gods, idolatry:**

Is known for his attributes, is proved theoretically

He "coheres" logically in Himself

#### **Generally:**

Majors in nouns/philosophy

Looks for performance

Argument, debate, theory

Body & mind

Own pleasure

Dependent on flesh

*King's School, Witney*

**Resources and further reading:**

David Bebbington (1990) *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought* Apollos

David Bebbington *Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* Grand Rapids, Eerdmans

E. H. Carr *What is History?* MacMillan

Mark Dever "Reflections on Providence: Can We 'Read' Events?" *Cambridge Papers Ltd Vol 2 (2)* (June 1993)

Edgington and Light (1995) *Teaching History: A Christian Perspective on the National Curriculum* Association of Christian Teachers, 2 St Alban's Place, St Albans

Robert Eric Frykenberg *History and belief: the foundations of historical understanding* Eerdmans (1996) 0802280 7399

The Christian School's Trust History Working Group: The King's School, New Yatt Road, Witney, Oxon

H R Loyn (ed) (1995), *Alfred the Great* Clarendon Biographies

George Marsden "A Christian Perspective for the Teaching of History" in *A Christian View of History?* Eds: George Marsden and Frank Roberts, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans (1975)

Geraldine J. Steensma and Harro van Brummelen (1977) *Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View* Terre Haute, Ind: Signal Publishing

Harro van Brummelen (1994) *Stepping Stones to the Curriculum*, Seattle, Alta Vista College Press

Cecil Woodham-Smith (undated) *Florence Nightingale* London: Constable



# The arts

## Introduction

### 1 The aims of art teaching

- ▶ Aims and objectives of an art department
- ▶ Goals
- ▶ The aims of a Christian school of art

### 2 The place of art in the curriculum

- 2.1 Helping pupils to understand the place of the aesthetic in life
- 2.2 Art as a means of communication
  - ▶ Using art to communicate the gospel
  - ▶ Understanding the nature of God
- 2.3 Creativity and wholeness
- 2.4 Encouraging critical discernment

### 3 Art and culture

- ▶ Using art to understand history
- ▶ Understanding the world view of the artist

### 4 Music and religion

### 5 Art as an action of love to God and neighbour

- ▶ Looking outward
- ▶ Art as an expression of the heart of God

### 6 Assessment and achievement

## Resources and further reading



# The arts

Following discussions with teachers of art, drama and music, this chapter has been divided into several sections where it was felt that a Christian world view could have a positive input into the teaching of the expressive arts. However, only a few details relating to actual lessons have emerged, and the authors of this handbook would be grateful for any comments, or examples for the categories included here, or indeed, any further categories which might be included.

## Introduction

Since the creation of humankind the arts have been practised. Poetry (*Genesis 2:23*), dance (*Exodus 15:20*), architecture and sculpture (*Exodus 25:9-40*), silversmiths (*Exodus 31:1-11*), songs (*Psalms*), craftsmen (*2 Chronicles 2:7-8, 13; 1 Kings 7:13*), musicians (*11 Chronicles 5:11-14*), as well as story telling (e.g. *Luke 10:30-37; 16:19-31*) are mentioned in scripture.

*Art plays and is meant to play an enormous diversity of roles in human life ... Works of art equip us for action. And the range of actions for which they equip us is very nearly as broad as the range of human action itself. The purposes of art are the purposes of life. To envisage human existence without art is not to envisage human existence. Art - so often thought of as a way of getting out of the world - is man's way of acting in the world.*

Nicholas Wolterstorff (1980) p240

Thus, the aesthetic dimensions of life and human creativity are not something esoteric and limited to the artistically gifted; they confront us and influence us in the whole of our daily lives. We are surrounded by the products of human design and creativity. Some are a glorious witness to a creativity expressed in response to the Creator; others reflect a dominance of falsehood and sin. Some glorify God and encourage us to become more fully human and develop a responsiveness to God and His world, others tend in the opposite direction. They are therefore an important part of what it is to be human, to be made in the image of God.

*".. the arts are skilful and thoughtful man-made objects characterised by allusiveness. All the arts - music and sculpture as well as drama and poetry - present an artist's religious perspective in ambiguity ... It is both normal and normative for the arts to be oblique and symbolical in the way they bring things to our attention as spectators, readers, or audience."*

Calvin Seerveld (1980)

Art is part of human life, and the focus of Christian art will not merely be the "religious", evangelistic or escapist. Nor will it ignore the historical and continuing role of faith in artistic creativity. Artistic creations express values and understandings of life, and can bring us a distinct kind of knowledge and insight, not greater than that accessible through other types of study, but not intrinsically lesser either. In a society dominated by economics and technology, and in a tradition which has tended to identify (scientific) 'facts' with knowledge and (aesthetic, moral, religious) 'values' with the ephemeral, art is often either under-valued as serving no utilitarian purpose or over-valued as an autonomous and intrinsically spiritual domain into which to retreat. Christian educators will seek to oppose these trends with a better understanding of the place of the aesthetic in God's coherent and meaningful creation.

While the majority of the examples and ideas in this chapter refer to the teaching of art itself, the principles can be transferred to other areas of the arts.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic*, © (1980) Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Used by permission.

©Calvin Seerveld, "Relating Christianity to the Arts", *Christianity Today*, (November 1980). Used by permission.

*The point is not whether followers of Jesus Christ should be busy in art or not. Since the very creation of the world the problem has been whether these arts have been fashioned and used by men and women as vehicles of praise to the Lord, or whether they have been conceived and executed as expression of human vanity.*

Calvin Seerveld (1980)

## 1 The aims of art teaching

The following sets of aims, developed by Christian teachers, while differing in detail, reflect a number of common concerns, such as

- a suspicion of individualism and of a primary focus on the inner world of the artist,
- a concern to locate art within a context (historical, cultural, spiritual) and a tradition as a necessary step to understanding and practising it,
- a belief that structure and order are not enemies of artistic self-expression and can be taught, and
- an understanding of art as a way of interacting responsibly and responsively with the world in which we live.

### ▶ Aims and objectives

1. Helping the children to understand and use the language of aesthetics - and to comprehend the nature and function of art forms within the context of their own work, their own environment/culture and in a historical context.
2. Helping to develop the perceptual skills necessary to comprehend and respond to art and design forms and to the visual environment.
3. Teaching the necessary skills involved in the use and manipulation of materials, while encouraging experimentation.
4. Heightening and improving the children's personal perception and awareness of the world and their reactions and responses to it, encouraging them to observe, analyse, think, make decisions and solve problems in the exploration of individual expression.

*Daphne Honey*

### ▶ Goals

“In the curriculum, the arts have at least three goals. First, they make students critically aware of the role of aesthetics in society, both past and present. Second, they help students enjoy and appreciate aesthetic products through experience and performance. Third, they unfold students' aesthetic potential through composing works of art.”

*Harro van Brummelen (1994) p157*

### ▶ The aims of a Christian school of art

The activities of the Leith School of Art grew out of a belief that critical elements of art and design can and must be taught in order for there to be substantial individual development. Underlying this is the belief that there is a living visual language which expresses itself in particular historical art forms, but which also transcends style and time. The founders of this school suggest that it is these elements of structure, form, colour and expression that need to be studied in depth. The authority behind these values grows from the practical study of art and artists, their work, their cultural, political and spiritual context and technical skills.

The teaching of art itself is seen as a creative process and not only a commitment to art, but a commitment to teaching is required.

The following aims were devised, by the founders, for this school of art.

### Artistic aims

- To create a school with a vital artistic life where both tradition and innovation work together to produce work of distinctive quality and character.
- The fundamental importance of drawing as a tool of enquiry, a means of seeing and a basis for work in all forms of art and design.
- The building of a tradition of craftsmanship in the limited range of disciplines we are able to offer. We would aim to develop this range as time goes on.
- To create a working environment that encourages the working process in organisation of materials, equipment, space and display.
- In an individualistic fine art culture we feel it is important to develop a corporate dimension to the work of the school through group work of various kinds, including group criticism and group projects.
- To create a balance between an awareness of the inner and outer dimensions of creative life; and a response to the external visual environment through providing varied creative visual stimulation, and opportunities for study beyond the school. And finally the development of inner visual resources of expression and design.

### Spiritual aims

- To further the exploration of the relationships between art and faith through practical work and debate.
- To create an environment that grows from a Christian world view, in its organisation, relationships with students, quality and focus of work produced. This should be reflected in all aspects of the school including the decoration/display, fabric of the building and publicity as well as in larger concerns.
- To provide an art education that emphasises the whole person, in curriculum and pastoral care.
- To question the role of art in society, to look for new contexts in which art can be made. To celebrate, explore and debate the visual relationship we have with our world.
- To stimulate churches into an awareness of the role of the visual arts in spiritual life, including worship, communication of the gospel and imaginative exploration of the Bible.
- We would like to see the work of the Leith School of Art to be in a broad sense that of mission. While it is not an aim to proselytise students it is important that students are given the opportunity to explore the dimensions of the Christian faith, both personal and corporate, as expressed through the life of the school.
- To build the above from a strong spiritual base, rooted in prayer with the support of the church community.



*What do you discern to be the integrating factors between the artistic, spiritual and charitable aims?*

### Charitable aims

- To access people to art education who otherwise would not be eligible for entry, including the unemployed, unqualified or disabled or students seeking entry into a career late in life.
- To enable those with special needs to develop their visual abilities to a high level.
- To break down barriers between types, ages, abilities, in our intake of students seeking in every respect to be open to a cross-section of the community.
- To enable those who for one reason or another have missed out in the school system, yet have real abilities that have as yet not been realised or developed.

*Leith School of Art*

## 2 The place of art in the curriculum

When the intrinsic value of art is taken for granted (as in the National Curriculum), questions are not asked about its place, value and point. There is therefore no acknowledgement of the source, or foundation by which a view of art may be formulated. But for the Christian teacher, the purpose of art is not accidental. Some teachers, thus, make a point of discussing the place of art in life. The questions asked might include:

***What is art?***

***What is the point of art?***

***What do arts in general give to society?***

***What are the problems of contemporary art?***



Questioning, teaching children to think for themselves, is seen as important. However, it is understood that they need to make informed choices. In order to gain this freedom they need technical skills and a wide ranging imagination. The teacher is there to stimulate creativity and to facilitate the development of skills and understanding.

### 2.1 Helping pupils to understand the place of the aesthetic in life.

*“A positive Christian view of art will make children sensitive to the rich aesthetic surprises of God’s world and this in turn will help them to love God, each other and themselves. They will experience something of God’s shalom. They will appreciate that God made the rainbow because he liked it.”*

*Mark Roques (1989) p145*

Art is being aware of the richness of the environment, appreciating the world around through the senses. This may include exploring the pervasiveness of artistic response, particularly in the variety of cultures past and present, to help the individual understand self, culture and one’s place within a culture. It will also look at the ways in which the aesthetic is reflected in other areas of the curriculum. The first example makes links with religious education.

## 2.2 Art as a means of communication

The expressive arts (art, drama and music), can be used to communicate, to search for truth and to understand the world and our place in it.

As a means of communication the arts go beyond words. They have an immediacy and universality inherent in the languages they use. It is an area which is not often a focus of education due, perhaps, to the fear of the unknown and a lack of certainty of “right” answers and to the idea that this does not have much to do with “education”; it cannot be measured. The importance of the arts in the area of communicating and understanding feelings, emotions and atmosphere is discussed in R W Watkins *The Intelligence of Feeling* (Heinemann Educational Books, 1974).

Art itself is the visual language God has created through line, form, texture, surface, tone, harmony, balance, clarity and so on. The teacher should help the student discover this language and pass it on, to enable the student to use the tools, and to understand how visual things work in order to communicate.

### ► Using art to communicate the gospel

#### 1 Michaelangelo's 'Creation of Adam':

- (a) Discussion of painting in lesson - a hand reaching out and touching God's hand - life coming into Adam's body.
- (b) Other pictures of hands reaching out and almost touching - including a surgeon and ET's.
- (c) Homework task:
  - i) Who is represented in this picture?
  - ii) How was the picture painted (techniques used)?
  - iii) How does the picture communicate the Good News?
- (d) To understand the technique of pencil work each child drew own hand with finger pointing out.
- (e) How God brought life to humanity: mural, using grey, black and white paper and cutouts of people.

#### 2 Leonardo Da Vinci's 'The Last Supper'

- (a) Visited an exhibition in London.
- (b) Looked at figurative drawings to see how people actually sat and moved. Each pupil did a life pencil study.
- (c) Listened to a piece of music (Schmetiner's Voltanva - which tells the story of the life of a river from its source until it flows out into the gushing waterways and off into the distant sea) followed by water painting. The result was more of a sea-scape than a river painting - but there was no direct influence on what a child should specifically do. Brush techniques and the effect of the waves was worked on. Leonardo Da Vinci's pencil drawings of storms and waterways were a source of inspiration.

*The King's School, Witney*

something  
to do

## Understanding the nature of God

Through art pupils can be challenged in their perception of things and develop an understanding of the nature and character of God both as Creator and Person.

- God as Creator: our experience and understanding of God will alter the way we experience visually, the created world. For example, when looking at colour and how it is in the world, our appreciation of the Source will determine what we understand the use, the symbolism and the meaning of colour to be.
- God as Person: visual representations which bring Jesus down to “real people” are powerful expressions of the incarnation. They range from cribs at Christmas, to representations of Christ on the Cross, to the wounded victim in the story of the Good Samaritan.

Contrast this with the Islamic view which forbids the representation of God in human form.

### 2.3 Creativity and wholeness

*“Individuals can come to terms with themselves and develop their relationships with others, gaining an understanding of their world. In my experience, pupils who have struggled through the creative process have grown in maturity and personal confidence”.*

*Chris Idle, Head of Music, Bury Church of England High School*

If creativity is part of being human, then Christian art teaching will not be over-focused on the unusual gifts of the few. The skill of appreciation will receive emphasis. Moreover, the artist will not be viewed as a person set apart, with privileged access to reality.

Several Christian art teachers felt that since we are made in the image of God we all have creative ability; we are all able and most of us want to be creative. However, at around the ages of 8 and again at 13, pupils realise their lack of ability: “I can’t draw and therefore I am useless at art”. Teachers thus need to create an atmosphere in the art room which overcomes this problem. They may seek ways to create “sparks” to stimulate imagination and facilitate responses, to support, accept and challenge. Being helped by an adult to achieve can be satisfying to the child and encourage change and personal development. As a result a child may learn to draw, or find an alternative means of expression.

This can also happen in reverse. An adult helping in a primary art class has since taken up painting after realising her own creative ability and has, after years of negative thinking, developed her creative potential.

Art can be a way of relaxing and of restoring wholeness to the individual, particularly where a teacher builds a positive relationship with a child. Art can also be used to give insights into the nature and character of a child which can help the teacher to pray and to bring the word of God into a situation.

### 2.4 Encouraging critical discernment

A Christian approach to art encourages a critical awareness both of views of art and artistic creation which have been shaped by other views of life and of the varying understandings of life expressed in particular works of art. Pupils will have opportunities to explore the perspectives of others and be challenged to clarify their own world view as they seek to express it creatively. This may of course include study of artistic expressions of Christian faith, but will also provide opportunities to contrast this with other artistically expressed world views.



### 3 Art and culture

#### ► Using art to understand history

In looking at the history of art we look at world view and culture, using religious and other sources. This means not just telling the story behind the picture, but looking at the reasons for the picture.

*Why was it painted?*

*Why was it important to paint it?*

When discussing a painting of the crucifixion the following questions might be asked:

*Why was the cross put where it was?*

*Why did they want those images (of death)?*

*Why did they need a reminder?*

*Daphne Honey, Head of Art, Secondary School*

After having looked at two of Constable's paintings, teachers/students are asked to discuss the following questions:

*What do they tell us about beauty?*

*What might they show about injustice?*

*Adrian Thatcher, Seminar at Sarum College, Salisbury*

(An understanding of the era, particularly in relation to rural life, and of Constable's position and commissions (by the rich) are necessary. Answers might include: they reinforce romantic images of pastoral England which may not tell the whole truth about rural hardships).

Through a study of the various media and methods, students may learn what has been considered to be valuable through history or in a particular culture. They may also be helped to understand the way they see the world themselves, to make choices about what is important and to express and communicate those values and ideas, through artistic media, in and to our own culture.

#### ► Understanding the world view of the artist

A teacher might talk positively about the artistic and technical qualities of, for example, Matisse, encouraging pupils to understand that the artist is saying something about the way they see the world. A painting such as Matisse's "Joie de Vive" may be seen as vital, full of fun and life, while at the same time be seen as shallow and unprofound.

## 4 Music and religion

Mike Crow suggests that music can make a positive contribution to religious education through an exploration of how composers have established metaphorical likenesses between their music and the religious themes which they seek to express. For example, Haydn's 'Creation':

*"The instrumental movement which is the introduction to the Creation opens with a vehement thrust by the bulk of the orchestra in an unharmonized C, the most chaotic element in the movement. Musically speaking we might expect an unharmonized tone at the beginning of a classical composition to be a tonic or dominant, but this tone opens a designated representation of chaos so we might bear it as raw material: not yet intelligible, not yet even music. After this opening force attack there is a gradual fading to black ... Tonal harmony eventually evolves from unharmonized tones. From chaos a new created world emerges."*

*Mike Crow, Music's Contribution to Religious Education - An Enabling Interpretation, paper presented at Stapleford House (January 1995) p4-5*

## 5 Art as an action of love to God and neighbour

Rather than simply expressing whatever they find inside, pupils working in a Christian context will be encouraged to evaluate their own work and whether what it expresses makes a positive contribution to a shared world, enriches a community. This does not mean that all art must have a utilitarian justification - it may simply provide a source of delight - or that it can only portray the positive - it may contribute an insight into brokenness. It does mean that art will be viewed as part of life, a way of acting which affects our world and our neighbours and which can either glorify or dishonour God. Life for the Christian is more to do with giving and receiving than with autonomous self-expression. This giving and receiving will include gratitude and worship towards God, for which the arts are a potent means of expression.

*"The artist's work can have meaning for the society God put him in... He has to make art while thinking of his neighbours in love, helping them and using his talents on their behalf."*

*Hans Rookmaaker, p.119*

*I have ... found myself questioning the primacy of the artist's subjectivity on which so much philosophy of art has come to depend, arguing that the richest sources of artistic creativity are to be found not so much within the interior recesses of the artist's soul, as in his dynamic interaction with the created world, society, fellow artists both past and present, and (for the Christian) fellow believers and the supreme Artist, who fashioned all things out of nothing through His Son ... An attentiveness and fidelity to what is beyond ourselves ... should take precedence over a desire to mould the world according to our own wishes.*

*Jeremy Begbie (1991) p229, 257*

Jeremy Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise - Towards a Theology of the Arts* ©T & T Clarke, Edinburgh (1991). Used by permission.

### ▶ Looking outward

"By looking outward at God's created world we can find structures and languages visual, musical, verbal, mathematical... which we can use to communicate our own innermost thoughts and feelings. At tertiary level so much artistic education is mainly inward looking. Once at art school you are expected to be already an artist in your own right and to know what your work is about. This encourages a lot of inward searching which has the potential to be good or bad. I would question whether most young people of 18-21 have sufficient visual knowledge gained from looking outwards to the created world and to artistic traditions to be able to balance this with the need to produce "your own work". Together with child-centred ideas which

have been a strong current in C20th primary/secondary art education in this country this inwardness needs a fresh outwardness to redress the balance and to enable effective learning and expression to occur.”

*Daphne Honey, Head of Art, Secondary School*

## ► Art as an expression of the heart of God

A group of Christian art teachers expressed the following ideas:

Art is often about the darker side of life. Some would call this “strong art”. Modern art itself often portrays negative images. 14 - 18 year olds are often very aware of brokenness; they see life as a failure and look negatively at the world. Children need, however, to develop an understanding of both positive and negative aspects of life, and to see that not all is black and white. For the Christian, too, art is not just about peace and beauty; there is value in tragedy, in ugly things. But even in brokenness there is a sense of hope. Art can be an expression of the heart of God in sadness and joy. An artist who is open to God’s Spirit, may be expressing God’s heart in the pain and suffering of brokenness and will encourage compassion and understanding. Art therefore, expresses something of humanity and is part of what God has put in. Studying art is looking at how people respond to and express their experience of brokenness. Hope in art is an expression of the redemptive process, a desire to redeem.

Since we live in a broken world we need to reconcile God’s intention for us, the reality of the world and our (fallen and redeemed) nature. Art can express that redeemed potential; living out salvation.

## 6 Assessment and achievement

There are different areas in which children have gifts and abilities and different ways in which they can achieve. This is why many Christian teachers feel that children should not be comparing themselves to others.

One teacher used many different pictures of a bowl of fruit to show the different ways that still life can be represented. Children were then asked to create a picture of a bowl of fruit themselves. Since they were all different representations, comparisons about the artistic and technical quality could not be made.

The former head of a very large and successful art department in a school in England felt that one factor in the success of the department was the degree to which every child was valued. He believed that all children should be treated with respect and as individuals. Staff were not permitted to criticise a child by calling him or her lazy, or to treat a child as a failure. In assessing art he was emphatic about not using a grading system which boxed pupils into a particular mould from which it was extremely difficult to escape:

*“In art you can talk about the good parts in all the different works. You cannot talk about a major deficiency in the totally illiterate person, you actually talk about that which is essentially interesting. So instead of that person being downed, they think ‘be talked about mine just as he talked about the others’. For the person who should be better, if they are resting on their laurels, you can be positive, but also say, this is not very thoughtful, this needs adjusting here ...”*

*Robin Childs, former Head of Art, Malborough*

### Resources and further reading

Jeremy S. Begbie *Voicing Creation's Praise - Towards a Theology of the Arts* T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh (1991)

Discusses the strengths and weaknesses of some theological interpretations of the arts, and makes suggestions for an alternative. A more technical read.

Hans Rookmaaker, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*, Leicester: IVP (1970) 256pp

A renowned Christian analysis of the worldview of modern art and the steps which led to its formation.

Hans Rookmaaker *The Creative Gift*, IVP

Calvin Seerveld, *Rainbows for a fallen world: Aesthetic life and Artistic Task* Tuppence Press, Ontario (1980)

This book has chapters on aesthetics, and the relation of art to education. It looks at the meaning art and the imagination have for Christian life.

Harro van Brummelen, *Stepping Stones to Curriculum* (1994) Seattle Alta Vista College Press

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action - Toward a Christian Aesthetic*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1980) 240pp

An introduction to the theory of art which approaches the subject from a biblically grounded position.

Wolterstorff takes issue with the notion which pervades Western thinking, that art exists mainly for the purpose of contemplation. He suggests that art is essential in the home, the street, the factory and the shop as well as the gallery and the theatre. An aesthetic needs to be developed which is sensitive to the human need for beauty and which broadens and enriches our every day lives.

Some of the above literature is available from the The Christian Studies Unit, Widcombe Vicarage, 65 Prior Park Road, Bath BA2 4NL.

They also produce a reading list on art, music and literature.

Some articles which are of use to the study of art and Christianity include:

Mike Riddell, "Man shall not live by prose alone" in *Third Way* (September 1996)

Richard Russell, "Art and Religion" in *The Church of England Newspaper* (July 17 1992)

Calvin Seerveld, "Relating Christianity to the Arts" in *Christianity Today* (November 7, 1980)

# Education for personal development

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# Education for personal development

## Introduction

Personal, social and moral education (PSME) has often been seen as a ‘Cinderella’ subject and, if it is introduced into the curriculum at all, has been done so in a number of different guises. Some schools have developed interesting courses which pupils find both enjoyable and stimulating and PSME is given a place of its own on the curriculum. In other schools, issues of PSME are dealt with in RE lessons. This occurs particularly at the upper secondary level where ethical issues and dimensions are part of GCSE and A level examination courses. Some schools tack it onto tutorial times, while others do not address issues of PSME in any formal way at all. If PSME is given a proper status, is done properly and has relevance to young people, it is generally a popular subject. If it is not treated as a worthy entity, PSME often becomes devalued and can be dismissed as irrelevant by pupils and teachers alike.

In reality PSME cannot be confined to a specific time in the week. Aspects of it are dealt with implicitly or explicitly in all areas of the curriculum and through the total ethos of the school. Recent developments in legislation, focusing on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, have given fresh impetus to the idea that areas such as moral, social and spiritual development should not be identified with a particular slot on the school timetable, but should be consciously promoted across the whole curriculum. This is the explicit view expressed in current guidelines for the inspection of schools and promoted in conjunction with the National Curriculum. However, current debate within Schools’ Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) focuses on where in the National Curriculum PSME will be placed (Consultation Document No.6). Discussions are tending towards PSME being a separate subject with National Curriculum status, probably within the basic curriculum.

However, current anxiety about potential moral breakdown has led to a new debate initiated by SCAA. A forum of 150 people representing a wide range of interests has been charged to come up with a statement of spiritual and moral values over which there is broad consensus.

The following table of ‘values’ and ‘principles for action’ is the summary document of January 1997, which Dr. Nicholas Tate will present to the Secretary of State for Education later in 1997.

► ‘SCAA hopes that schools and individual teachers will have confidence in the knowledge that these are our values, and that in basing their teaching and school values upon these values, they will have the support of society in general.

## The values

### *Society*

We value truth, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort for the common good. In particular we value families as sources of love and support for all their members and as the basis of a society in which people care for others.

On the basis of these values, we should:

- understand and carry out our responsibilities as citizens;
- refuse to support values or actions that may be harmful to individuals or communities;
- support families in raising children and caring for dependants;
- support the institution of marriage;

- recognise that the love and commitment required for a secure and happy childhood can be found in families of different kinds;
- help people to know about the law and legal processes;
- respect the law and encourage others to do so;
- respect religious and cultural differences;
- promote opportunities for all;
- support those who cannot, by themselves, sustain a dignified lifestyle;
- promote participation in the democratic process;
- contribute to, as well as benefit fairly from, economic and cultural resources;
- make truth, goodwill and integrity priorities in public life.

### ***Relationships***

We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us. We value relationships as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others and to the good of the community.

On the basis of these values, we should:

- respect values;
- care for others and exercise goodwill in our dealings with them;
- show others they are valued;
- work co-operatively with others;
- earn loyalty, trust and confidence;
- respect the privacy and property of others;
- resolve disputes peacefully.

### ***The Self***

We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.

On the basis of these values, we should:

- try to understand our own character, strengths and weaknesses;
- develop a sense of self-esteem;
- try to discover meaning and purpose in our lives and decide, on the basis of this, how we believe that our lives should be lived;



- make responsible use of our talents, rights and opportunities;
- strive, throughout life, for knowledge, wisdom and understanding;
- take responsibility, within our capabilities, for our own lives.

### ***The Environment***

We value both the natural world and the man-made environment as the basis of life and a source of wonder and inspiration.

On the basis of these values we should:

- understand the place of human beings within nature;
- understand our duties to other species;
- ensure that development can be justified in the light of our responsibility to maintain a sustainable environment for future generations;
- preserve balance and diversity in nature wherever possible;
- preserve areas of beauty and interest for future generations;
- repair, wherever possible, habitats damaged by human development.’

*The National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, SCAA (1997)*

The intention is that this ‘charter’ of values would form the basis for the development of Programmes of Study to be used in schools.

The public consultation on the above statement has raised questions about its authority and about how it will be used. There is widespread concern that it simply papers over the cracks on real issues, as was illustrated by the fierce disagreements during the consultation process about the nature of the family.

Christians commenting on the SCAA ‘Values and Actions’ statement are clear that while they do not disagree with the statements, as they are compatible with Christian belief, they essentially represent a humanist world view.

Christians question whether societal consensus is the fundamental or even alternative basis for determining morals and reiterate that belief in God is central to the Christian moral code. There is also concern that if these values are seen as having the stamp of approval by our society, the teaching of a Christian teacher, teaching morality based on Christian belief, will be relegated to a personal view, relative to the commonly held values of society.

At the time of going to print, the final SCAA recommendation and the Secretary of State’s decision are not known. The outcome may well impinge on PSME teaching in England and Wales in the immediate future.

In the rest of this chapter we address issues related to PSME which crop up in a variety of guises such as in the areas of religious education, health education, sex education, assemblies and so on. This is illustrative of what a hotch potch area this currently is, but it is likely that, following the SCAA discussions, PSME will be time-tabled in secondary schools and that there will be an A level in moral philosophy. None of these

developments denies that PSME goes on across the curriculum. NO area of life, and therefore of learning, is value-free.

## 1 Definitions of PSME

PSME has been defined as:

*“those aspects of school life which contribute to the process of growing up, getting on with other people, the formation of values and the preparation of the child for responsibility in adult life. This includes helping pupils to understand themselves, their behaviour, health and development, and to understand our society. It includes helping children to understand their school and to learn effectively. We teach our children to make decisions and moral judgements, we encourage them to be sensitive to their environment and to the beliefs and behaviour of others and we try to foster an awareness of the major problems of mankind.”*

*Wakeman (1984) p19*

Notions of what kind of people we should become as we mature, of how relationships should be understood and conducted, of moral values and principles, of how we should contribute to society and of the problems of human life are all matters of intimate concern to Christians. They are also areas where Christian understandings are often clearly distinguished from alternative views. Views which assume a basically optimistic view of unfettered human nature, which promote free, autonomous choice as the most valid basis for values, which see values as always relative and reject authority, tradition and an objective dimension to values, or which see moral development as a basically cognitive affair have all been reflected in PSME materials. These are all problematic for the evangelical Christian.

In addition to such general matters of approach, there are a variety of specific issues concerning whether there is a specific Christian moral standpoint. Christian values such as love, compassion, honesty, forgiveness, self-control and justice can be made the basis for approaches to PSME. If they are not, then some other set of values will necessarily fill the vacuum.

A further important strand of a Christian approach will be an acknowledgement of imperfection. Rather than setting perfectionist demands, teachers must help students to deal with failure in the right way. Reconciliation and forgiveness will be of as much concern as right behaviour.

The context of beliefs and values within which PSME is taught makes a difference and it is important that the starting points are articulated. Therefore, in a Christian context, the presuppositions of a Christian world view such as being “made in the image of God”; about the kind of persons the Creator desires; about principles of social life; about morality, virtue, sin and the nature of the “good life”, should be clearly explained.

The rest of this chapter explores various attempts which have been made to express Christian values in PSME work.

*“All approaches to PSME have value assumptions built into both the theoretical and practical aspects of the work, or they have values underlying the use of the teaching method and materials.”*

*Wakeman (1984) p28*

## 2 Guiding principles and approaches

### 2.1 Approaches to PSME

Maintained schools in England and Wales must provide aspects of PSME to fulfil teachers' statutory obligations, and to implement the relevant legislation since 1988. They must satisfy OFSTED requirements for arrangements for pastoral care, and for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

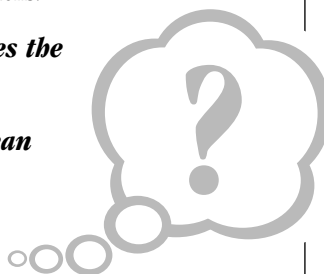
A whole-school policy is now needed. Schools need to lay out guiding principles and procedures, and a summary of content and teaching methodology so that the staff are clear about what should be happening and their part in it. Teachers are accountable to parents, to the children themselves, and to other people who have a legitimate interest in PSME in the school.

Secondly, clarity about aims and purposes is important. The school governors' vision and mission statement, the school's values and curriculum philosophy and the particular ethos desired will be the foundations stones on which arrangements for PSME should be built. Consider these questions:

***What do we mean by 'personal'? What kind of persons does the school wish to develop?***

***What vision of a good society do we have? What do we mean by social development?***

***What do we mean by 'moral'? What constitutes a good or virtuous life?***



Teachers involved need to be clear about the aims and purposes (whether in tutorial programmes, a pastoral curriculum, special PSME or sex and health education courses, cross-curricula themes and issues, or a whole curriculum approach). What are we trying to do? Complete agreement, particularly in county schools, may be impossible and even unhealthy. A broad consensus is needed. If the aims and purposes of PSME arrangements in a school clash with the broader school values, we have a recipe for conflict and confusion.

The third proposition is that careful curriculum planning is more likely to lead to effective learning than random or 'seat-of-the-pants' teaching. Here are some prompting questions:

***What is taking place? Where are the various aspects of PSME being taught?***

***Who co-ordinates all this?***

***Are there schemes of work, programmes of study which lay out the concepts, skills and abilities, the factual content and the personal qualities pupils are to learn and develop?***

***What curriculum packages, textbooks, worksheets, videos, and pupil activities will be used? What teaching methods will be used?***

***How will the learning tasks be differentiated, and assessed? Are the teachers participating committed and competent?***



Often form teachers are required to participate without adequate interest or training. Effective planning aids good quality teaching and learning.

Even with good planning, PSME courses can be dull and mechanical, failing to motivate and engage young minds. Death by a thousand worksheets needs to be avoided. Some commercial tutorial or PSME packages are low in intellectual demand, insulting to intelligent young minds. Others trespass on privacy. At worst in some schools both the teachers and pupils dread or dislike the PSME period. Lively, demanding, relevant and active learning tasks are needed. Good teachers breathe the spirit of life into valleys of dry bones. The quality of learning and their approach justifies PSME on the curriculum. We need quality of learning process and identifiable outcomes.

## 2.2 How is it resourced?

Staff, time-tabling, learning materials and the pupils themselves are the main learning resources. We may not live in an ideal world of specialist, committed and enthusiastic PSME teachers in our schools, but is it not as foolish to have PSME taught by the unskilled and resentful as it would be in the cases of swimming, chemistry or technology?

If a school believes in the importance of this dimension of the curriculum, it needs timetable space or curriculum coverage in some form. Further, funding for goods and services is necessary. A subject can have low status with staff and pupils through poor funding, accommodation, staffing and learning materials.

PSME needs learning materials and activities. There are many books, curriculum packages, videos, photocopiable worksheets, classroom activities and even CD's available commercially by leading publishers. Examples may be seen at teachers' centres, resource and curriculum development centres.

Suitability of purpose, match of learning materials to desired objectives is one helpful principle for selection. Another is teacher-appeal. Would you be happy to use it? Practicality would be a third: would it actually work with your pupils? For activities to be taken seriously by youngsters they need to be properly resourced with some street credibility.

Finally, should schools press on where resources are scarce? When a teacher feels alone in their desire to develop pupils' PSME is it worth swimming against the current? Isn't it better to light a few candles rather than curse the darkness like a tabloid journalist?

## 2.3 Questions to ask

PSME materials, learning packages, books and activities come from many different sources and the following are some questions which could be used when choosing what to include in the curriculum.

***Where is it coming from, and where does it lead? Do not reject "best practice" in PSME, nor accept it uncritically.***

***Is there anything which is clearly condemned or contrary to the Word of God, the Church's teaching or the Spirit's prompting?***

***How far is this material or activity consistent with a Christian understanding? How does it need to be adjusted, supplemented, or qualified?***



One area where the guiding principles will be discussed is at the level of policy. Sex education is one example. This is one area where the above three questions could be applied.

## ► A whole school policy for sex education

### Sex Education Policy 1993, St. Peter's Collegiate School

#### Philosophy

It is the school's view that pupils are entitled to clear, accurate information about sexual matters. Their questions must be answered honestly and directly, at a level appropriate to their age and maturity, in an atmosphere of trust and openness without fear and embarrassment.

Factual knowledge cannot be separated from the moral context in which it is imparted, nor should the emotional and spiritual dimensions of sexual relationships be understated. In dealing with these aspects the school is unequivocal about its religious stance.

In the climate of today's society it is important to give our pupils a grounding in Christian moral values from which informed choices can be made. We hope that as a result of such teaching they will be able to develop responsible, caring relationships based on mutual respect, love and a commitment to stable family life.

#### Aims

- To develop in the pupils a Christian attitude to sexual relationships, promoting
  - a. the sanctity of marriage
  - b. the sanctity of human life
  - c. the dignity of the human body
- To increase factual knowledge about the human body so that they can understand and feel comfortable with their own bodies and their sexual nature.
- To provide opportunities for the development of skills which will enable them to use such knowledge when making choices and decisions about relationships.
- To engender in the students a feeling of confidence when talking about these issues, their personal values and their moral stance.
- To present the Sex Education course in a manner which encourages pupils to use the opportunities for counselling individuals or groups of pupils offered within the Pastoral System.

*St. Peter's Collegiate School, Wolverhampton*

## 3 Where does it occur?

Some schools introduce aspects of PSME through special courses, tutorial programmes or co-ordinated approaches. Some work through the cross-curricular themes introduced with the National Curriculum which explore citizenship, economy and industry, health education, careers and guidance, environmental issues etc. Some of these aspects can also be incorporated into areas of the core curriculum and into foundation subjects such as geography, technology and RE.

Many schools invite Schools' Workers and other Christian groups who provide support and resources particularly for PSME and RE teachers and help to enrich their course. The focus of these groups is usually secondary school although there are a few groups now who work with primary aged children.

### 3.1 Christian schools workers

#### ▶ The aims of "The YMCA Schools' Team" (1995, Guildford)

The following example of the aims of one group could equally be placed in the chapter on RE. The department in which they are involved will depend on the issues under consideration.

- We help them to understand what Christianity is all about.
- We challenge negative, unhelpful stereotypes of Christianity and promote positive, attractive ones in their place.
- We give them a Christian perspective on social, moral and ethical issues.

The intention is to develop understanding, change attitudes and challenge pupils to investigate Christianity for themselves.

#### ▶ Local church schools' teams

Schools' teams often work out of local churches, responding to specific invitations from local schools to teach one or a series of lessons on a particular issue such as *Investigating Belief, Signs and Symbols, Self Worth, Suffering, Rules for Life, What is Worship?, Understanding the Media, Life after Death, Science and Belief, Sex and Sexuality, The Church*. Some teams have developed a whole week of activities including a teaching programme, assemblies, lunch time "road shows" and evening events in order to provide an understanding of Christianity and of Christian views on various issues closely related to the lives of students.

None of these teams operates a "hit and run" approach, but each one is committed to supporting the schools they work in throughout the year. As one teacher commented:

*"The Xchange Schools Team has provided consistent support to the school for a number of years, contributing to both the life and ethos of our community. All activities have grown out of consultations identifying needs within the school. Their presentations are highly relevant, creative and professional, encouraging students to adopt a questioning approach about life, faith and any belief in God."*

*B. Cole, Heathside School, Weybridge, Surrey*

### 3.2 Pastoral care

Pastoral care is one area in which Christian beliefs and values make a great difference to the advice and probable outcome of any counselling or pupil/teacher support which takes place. Some schools, particularly Church of England and independent schools with a Christian foundation, have a "resident" Chaplain. A few county schools have created space for a similar presence by requesting a local church or churches to support either one or a number of representatives who operate as part of the whole school staff.

Schools Outreach is a group who support and train such individuals.

Pastoral care and discipline are often closely linked, discipline being seen as one way of caring for the personal well-being of the individual pupil (see also chapter on Policies).

“Christian love goes beyond ‘respect for persons’, or what loco parentis may reasonably demand. Agape seeks the pupils’ welfare, their ultimate good, even when it costs. The pupil’s disobedience, or demanding behaviour may threaten our personal convenience or comfort. It may call for a second ‘long mile’ of patience, but this is the distinctive contribution of Christ to pastoral care.” (Wakeman, 1984, p.40)

### 3.3 Careers education

Careers education is often identified as a separate subject, but even where it is, it is often modular allowing for series of lessons such as the following. This particular series was developed as a sixth form *Christian Living Course* (a development from PSME).

#### ▶ Christian Living Course

##### FAITH AND ETHICS IN INDUSTRY

Each session begins with an initial presentation and the 6th form then divide into groups to discuss a number of questions. The session closes with a plenary discussion.

##### SESSION I: Christians with clean hands

1. Is it possible to place these jobs in order of Christian concern and responsibility?
 

a. Party Politician	c. Car Salesman
b. Shop Assistant	d. Nurse
2. What jobs would an individual who trusts God and who is an active member of his or her local church definitely NOT undertake?
3. Is it wrong to be determined to achieve promotion above your colleagues and friends?
4. Is money the main reason for choosing a particular job?

##### SESSION II: A thief in the office

1. What items of petty theft have you ever indulged in?
2. How would you deal with a friend or colleague who was obviously stealing from, or cheating, the company (or school) out of money?
3. If a member of the local church was selling his car, how much should he point out the faults to members of the public interested in buying?
4. Try and put all, or any of these into an order of evil (give reasons):
  - a. removing a chocolate bar from your friend’s bag;
  - b. omitting to tell the tax man that you unexpectedly earned an extra £700 last year;

- c. taking a £5 note from your father's wallet;
- d. pocketing gladly an extra £5 note accidentally given you by a busy bank clerk handing you £50 over the counter.

### **SESSION III: Out of sight out of mind**

1. Some people “moonlight” with two main jobs. How would you explain to an unemployed person why it was right for you to have two jobs?
2. Make suggestions how your local church could do something to help those who are unemployed and fed-up.
3. Put in order of effectiveness, by group discussion, these “solutions” to unemployment:
  - a. compulsory retirement at 50
  - b. cutting state benefit by half
  - c. work-sharing (half-time jobs for all)
  - d. government paying for new jobs by printing more money.
4. What would happen in a country like the UK if the rule became: GET A JOB OR STARVE?

### **SESSION IV: Fingers across the globe**

1. Would you like to be employed by a huge international company (e.g. ESSO, ICI)? What are the
  - a. advantages
  - b. disadvantages?
2. You are a share holding member of the AGM. Which might you vote for:
  - a. fair wages for your employees in different countries;
  - b. compensation to those badly hurt by using your product;
  - c. a request by the Chairman to close down a factory in the West Midlands?
3. You are Prime Minister of a small country. What would you say to large companies operating factories sales in your country? Would you welcome these companies?



*Into what other areas of the curriculum might you introduce such questions?*

### **SESSION V: Worlds apart**

1. Decide where you would draw the boundary in the UK for the so-called “North-South Divide”.
2. Think of some ways in which this division shows itself - (the rate of unemployment is an obvious example).
3. If the world's population was divided in two, where do you assume you would come between rich and poor? What if it was divided into four?
4. Some people say the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. What exactly do they mean?
5. Does one person grow well-off at the expense of others, and does a rich man spending money on untold luxury matter as far as the poor are concerned? It all depends. On what?



6. Cain asked God if he was his brother's keeper. Christians are told to love their neighbour as themselves. In practice, how might you or I actually do this, e.g. as far as an "outcast" (the homeless drunk who stands at the school gate) is concerned?
7. In what way, for our part
- as a wealthy country
  - as an individual school or church can we receive help from others, and be seen to gain something from those who we might otherwise help?

*Fr. M. Weymont, St. Peter's Collegiate School Sixth Form PSME Committee*

### 3.4 Assemblies

Wendy Sharp, a teacher at a Comprehensive school in Nottingham, developed a series of four short assemblies (about 12 minutes each) on sex. She emphasised that "the success of the assemblies depends (in addition to the grace of God) on the nature of the relationship between myself and the students. "In order to be able to be humorous without embarrassment in the first assembly, and reverent for the last assembly, and to maintain the fine balance between authority and compassion for human weakness, there must be a depth of respect that will not shatter in the face of either ridicule or aggression. She also emphasised the need to remain within the school's policy and under the authority of the Head. By acting with integrity, further opportunities for taking assemblies are more than likely to be given. This is her account of her own assemblies:

*"The idea which I try to get across in teaching about sex is that we are responsible for our actions and that our actions have consequences.*

*Wendy Sharp*

## ► Sex and personal relationships

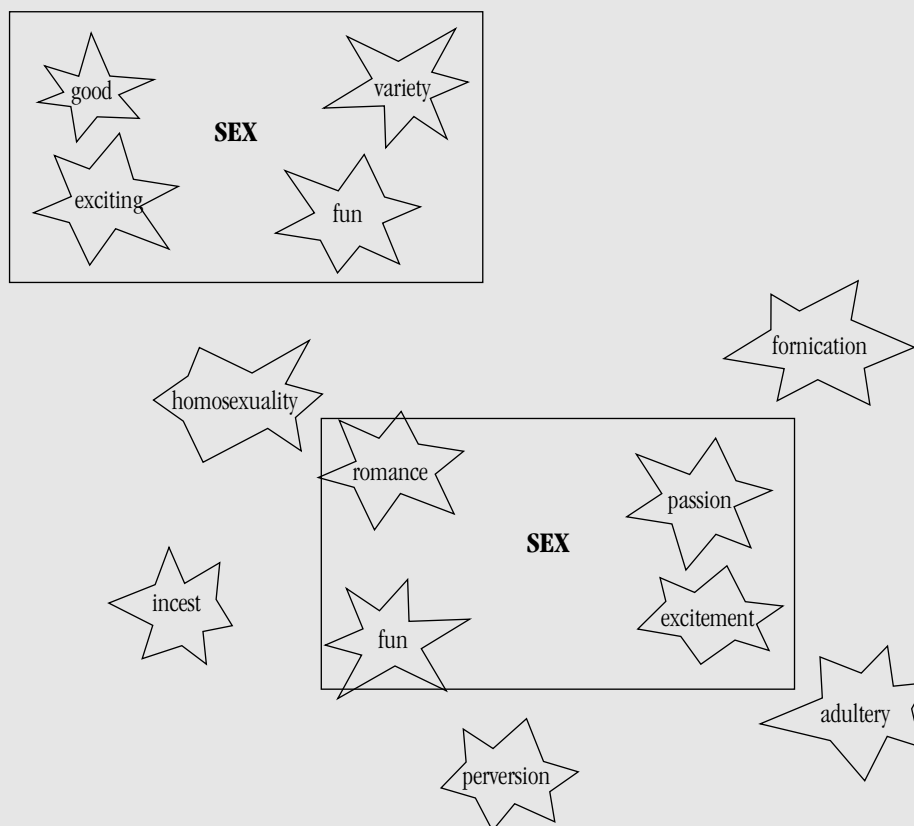
### Assembly 1

A large poster is placed in the hall, blank except for a thin "frame" and the bold letters "SEX". Introductions typically include an apology for the church being unwilling to give honest, open advice and teaching on this area. I point out that there's really no need for embarrassment today, not even with God listening; actually He's honoured - because God invented it! The Bible does NOT say "and God made everything good except sex"; it says "God made everything good" - and that includes sex. God invented sex to help male and female be "complete" even as God is complete; for us to enjoy it and for us to reproduce.

I then come up with words to do with sex that endorse the very positive aspects of sex; adding them to the poster in bright, zany shaped pieces of card. E.g.: Variety (sex doesn't have to be in bed, in the dark ... ); Passion (read Solomon's song ... ); Excitement (Jesus says have life in abundance); Romance (God gave us emotions); ... it isn't immediately obvious but all these cards (about 8) are placed inside the frame. I say some wild things - like if you both enjoy it, do it!

I then explain that the framework in which the words rest is God's boundary for keeping us safe. Safe from unnecessary emotional havoc, safe from pregnancy without a stable home base, safe from the worry of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The frame is MARRIAGE. Other sexual activities fall outside this framework; fornication (needs explaining), adultery, homosexual behaviour etc. ... I emphasise God's decision to endow us with free will and that we are able to choose whether or not to do these things. However, the fact remains, whether we believe the Bible or not, that sex outside the framework does indeed leave us open to the likelihood of grief in one form or another.

I liken the purchase of a stereo with manufacturer's guideline for its use. If we use it in an inappropriate way the stereo will not give us good service and the guarantee will be null and void. If we choose to misuse our bodies, we must accept that illness, physical, mental and emotional, will almost always befall it.



**Assembly 2**

This assembly looks at how we begin to build close personal relationships with members of the opposite sex. The poster is blank save for an irregular shape mildly resembling an amoeba. I talk about aspects of relationships that are important: loyalty (I point out that this must matter, otherwise they would not make a fuss when someone started to flirt with their boy/girlfriend); commitment (to bring stability and trust into a relationship); romance, humour excitement etc. These are put onto the shape as pieces of a jigsaw.

I spend some time talking about the exciting, glamorous sex lives of film and pop stars, reminding them that few find fulfilment and many turn to drugs or even commit suicide. So what hope is there for us with little glamour, or excitement? I go on to fill in the remainder of the jigsaw, adding pieces of reality; trauma (coping with bereavement or redundancy); pain or disability, boredom (after all what do you do for variety when you've tried all the positions in the book?) I talk about "Love Mark I", the love that is OK while the positives are in evidence and point out that this sort of love rarely endures the harsh realities of everyday humdrum life. It is centred on what you can get out of a relationship rather than what you put in. As I talk about "Love Mark II" that stands the test of time and harshness that life often brings, I put "SEX" into the centre of the jigsaw, locking it all together. Sex IS important. I do not trivialise it, but emphasise its rightful place in a relationship that is built to endure. (I close with the heartfelt comment that I am aware that many of them are already experiencing the consequences of broken relationships, accepting that they could teach me a thing or two).

### Assembly 3

This assembly deals in an essentially practical way with contraception and explores the morals behind the methods ... an assembly is an appropriate place to share the values which as a Christian, I believe in and feel are worth sharing. The pupils are under no compulsion to accept them, but it is good for them to know that, contrary to the dominant media message, there are substantial numbers of people subscribing to these (or similar) values.

After going through the various methods of birth control, I encourage students to realise that acceptance or rejection of certain methods is not “ad hoc” or “neurotic”, rather people have genuine reasons for how they use contraception. Many young people ridicule others if their values are not the popular ones currently in the media. I suggest that they be brave enough to formulate their own ideas based on evidence they are able to collect. I talk about teenage pregnancy and the trauma it can cause, and acknowledge that society can still hold prejudiced views of children born out of wedlock despite the fact that the child had nothing to do with it. I ask them what they think the Christian’s response should be. I read the passage from *John 8: 3-11* about the woman caught in the act of adultery. I present the following points:

- Jesus did not pretend it didn’t matter. He did NOT endorse the woman’s actions (or the man’s!).
- Jesus, unlike the “religious people”, did NOT condemn her.
- Jesus had compassion and forgave her.
- Jesus gave some useful instruction - “Don’t do it again”.

### Assembly 4

The final assembly focuses on abortion, and at the end I close by saying, “You choose. You choose the standards you will base your life on. You choose what priority life and death have. You choose if a life should end before it has been lived. You choose if you have the right to rid yourself of the responsibility of an inconvenient baby. And I’m talking to you lads as well. Every baby has a father. Father may be too cowardly to show up, but that does not make the baby fatherless. Your actions have consequences. What you do with your life, what you do with your body, has consequences ... and you will live with those for the rest of your life”.

*Wendy Sharp*

## 4 Examples of activities relating to some issues commonly covered in PSME

### School rules

The following is an account of one teacher’s activity which was used in the context of secondary school tutorial work about school rules and standards of conduct. Its aim was to reveal inconsistencies in pupils’ value systems and to give them an opportunity to reconsider their scale of values. The materials were three sets of cards bearing the words and phrases below:

**Set 1 (18 cards)**

Breaking a chair or table in a classroom on purpose

Breaking another pupil's calculator by messing about with it

Calling someone a name which they find hurtful

Bullying another person

Writing on a desk

Deliberately breaking up a friendship

Vandalising part of the school

Hitting a teacher

Breaking a window on purpose

Writing on a text book

Hitting another pupil

Continually calling someone names

Hitting a pupil who is much younger and smaller than you

Swearing at a teacher

Doing things to annoy someone else

Using God's name as a swear word

Seriously injuring someone on purpose

Ripping someone's new blazer on purpose

**Set 2 (12 cards)**

Detention

Sent out of classroom

Extra work

A telling off

Kept in at break

Paying a fine

Letter to parents

Lunch time detention

Sent to head teacher

Lines

Sent to head of year

Suspended

**Set 3** (9 cards)

Teacher	Animal	Another pupil
Furniture	Books	Another person's possessions
God	A popular and gifted person	An unpopular, less gifted person

Pupils work in small groups. They are first given the first set of cards and asked to put them in a line with the worst offence at one end and the most benign at the other. Once this is done, it is left on the desk. The pupils are asked to focus now on the second task, which is to make a line with the second set of cards with the most serious punishment at one end and the least serious at the other. After this they are asked to make a third line with the remaining set of cards placing the most important/valuable entity at one end and the least important/valuable at the other (it is permissible to put cards alongside each other to show equal value).

After the three lines have been constructed the results of each group's work is compared and class discussion focuses on potential anomalies. For example, for most pupils breaking a window was perceived as more serious than name-calling, yet people were seen as more valuable than furniture. Many pupils had rated God as most important, yet using God's name as a swear-word was seen as the most trivial offence, meriting little or no punishment. Many pupils are surprised to discover inconsistencies in their values relating to wrong-doing.

*David Smith, Secondary school teacher*



*A common underlying assumption when teaching moral and ethical issues today is that the autonomous right to choose is more important than the choice you make. Are there any limitations which Christian teachers would want to put on the notion of autonomy?*

*How do we present the range of response to moral issues without sliding into moral relativism?*

**Decision making**

"My tutor group were working on a module on decision making prior to taking their options in year 9. The unit in the PSME course materials which we were using seemed to be aiming to convey the message that you should be sure to take your own decision and not be influenced by anyone else. This seemed to me to be both naive and unchristian in its assumption that any outside influence is negative simply because it infringes on autonomy. So we tackled the unit differently.

We began by brainstorming all of the possible influences on our behaviour and observed that whether we like it or not, we are being influenced by all sorts of people and things all the time. We then considered how you might be able to tell whether you or another person were being influenced by another person or thing - how it might show in your behaviour.

Finally we discussed how we might be able to decide what are good influences (e.g. for many, though perhaps not all, parental advice will be a good influence!) and what are less helpful influences (e.g. being drunk!), and reflected on the necessity for choosing which influences to

go with and which to resist. The aim was to leave pupils with the idea that there is good reason to be wary of much of what comes their way, but that there is also wisdom outside of themselves and their own agendas and that authority can be something positive.”

*David Smith*

### ▶ **Sex education: Make Love Last**

Discussing sex and personal relationships will not be easy for everyone, even where the context is supportive and educational. The content must be responsibly designed, the materials used must be carefully selected and the teacher must be able to address the issues sensitively and skilfully to ensure that pupils are free to talk, that the course reflects the cultural background and that offence is not caused.

CARE has produced a video and course materials entitled “Make Love Last” which is designed to help teenagers understand the pressures to be sexually active and to present sexual abstinence as a valid option.<sup>1</sup> An example of the course materials, which include teacher’s notes and activities from which lessons can be selected, include the following:

### ▶ **The emotional and psychological effects of broken relationships**

This is something which is difficult to quantify, but most of us know what it feels like to be used or hurt by friends, and how disappointing this can be. It is worth taking time to be very sure of the person you decide to give yourself to physically, because this can be a very vulnerable and special interaction. Sexual interaction can leave us feeling more dejected if the relationship subsequently breaks up.

People have thought the contraceptive pill would prevent unwanted pregnancies, that medicine could cure any infections, and that sex is acceptable as long as two people “love” each other. There has been an increasing emphasis upon the rights of the individual to instant gratification and fulfilment: the common answer now give to any situation requiring a sexual decision is that it is “up to the individual”. Members of society together pay the price for these individual decisions and the price is high in terms of human welfare and the financial costs. One only has to consider the number of abortions, infertility treatments, STDs, divorce rates and child benefits to realise that these individual decisions have very serious consequences both for individuals and for communities.

This lesson should convey the burden of these costs and help young people to know why some young people will want to wait. The lesson explores practical ways to help them achieve self-control. ... A possible introduction might be, “Imagine that you believe that sex should be kept for a special relationship like marriage. In this exercise we will consider how such a person might cope with today’s pressures.

### ▶ **Sheet 16: Reasons to wait**

- Not wanting to risk a pregnancy.
- Wanting to be very sure that sex is nothing to be sorry about later.
- Wanting to be sure that I understand fully what could happen and am prepared to face the adult responsibilities.
- Wanting to keep myself for someone who has also waited.

<sup>1</sup>Teachers’ notes written by Angela Flux. For details of this and other resources see *State of Flux*, in Resources and further reading.

- Wanting to increase my chance of a successful marriage.
- Wanting my wedding night to be a real celebration of our “becoming one”.
- Wanting to understand more about loving someone and what it means to make a commitment.
- Not wanting to risk getting infected with STDs.
- Thinking that sex is special and not just to be had for fun with whoever I fancy.
- Wanting to make sure I can handle the emotional side of sex before getting involved.
- Wanting my first lover to be my last one and to know that the relationship is unique.
- Wanting to make sure I do not lose the ability to have children.
- Wanting to do what I believe is right.
- Wanting to be the “only one” and to know that that’s mutual.
- Not wanting to be compared with others and become a name on a list.
- Wanting to be different from some of my friends who have already lost their virginity and who are trying to encourage me to do the same.
- Not wanting to feel used or abused afterwards if the relationship breaks up.

The statements on the sheet can be used in role plays to allow young people the opportunity to practice using some of the reasons for waiting and reflect on possible benefits. Ask the students for three positive reasons for waiting before becoming sexually involved. Ask them to work in pairs or small groups to develop a role play which incorporates these reasons. The teacher needs to be aware that some of the young people may have already had sexual relationships. Stress that this does not mean that they no longer have a choice. For some of the group the reasons to wait will not outweigh what they consider the benefits of sexual activity. It will require skilled handling by the teacher to ensure that these young people are able to participate constructively. Some students may also be in sexual relationships and want to change the situation: these young people need to know that it is not too late to change and that the loss of one’s virginity does not mean that they have to continue in sexual relationships.

### ► How to wait cards

The following statements can be put onto four sets of cards and the class can work in small discussion groups to establish which ideas they consider to be helpful for those who have decided to wait before being sexually involved.

- Make knowing your partner as a friend very important.
- Just don’t go all the way.
- Discuss your feelings and share your opinions, talk about what you think is important.
- Keep your clothes on.
- Consider the emotional side of a sexual relationship, i.e. “How will I feel if he/she leaves me?”
- Do things - rather than always talking about your relationship.

©CARE, *Make Love Last*, 1994.  
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*Does the fact that on occasions we do not attain a particular standard abrogate the need to teach the standard?*

*In what ways does your personal development curriculum help pupils come to terms with failure?*

- Decide to set personal limits and stick to them.
- Go off for a weekend together to discuss it.
- Don't give up if on one occasion you go beyond your personal boundaries.
- When spending time with your partner - go out with friends.
- Talk about sex with your girl/boy friend, agree the limits.
- Learn new things to do with your boy/girl friend, hobbies, a sport ...
- Talk to people that you respect and who care about you.
- Avoid long periods of time alone together.
- Do what seems right at the time.
- Think of interesting places to go/things to do with your partner.
- Decide how to stay away from "risky" situations.
- Treat your boy/girl friend like a brother or sister.
- Be well informed about pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Diseases etc.

- Set your standards and limits and know your values.
- Avoid sexually "teasing" your boy/girl friend.
- Do what your partner wants.
- Only go out with people who respect you.
- Choose friends who don't put pressure on you.
- Avoid situations where you feel at risk or weak.
- Decide what you think about sex before you are in a sexual relationship.
- Plan ways to get emotionally close to your girl/boy friend.
- Know how to respond to any pressures about sex/drugs/alcohol.

©Make Love Last, Care for Education

### ▶ Health education: "Growing up Together"

In 1994, CARE produced the secondary school sex education resource "Make Love Last", which promoted the idea that it was a good thing to wait until marriage for sexual relations. This resource is based on the biblical belief that sex is a good thing, created by God to be enjoyed within the context of heterosexual marriage. However, there was little overt biblical teaching contained in the resource, and by mid 1996 it had been purchased by 40% of schools in the UK and was being widely used by youth groups.

CARE for Education believe that it is important to promote resources that either are positively Christian, or are compatible with Christian belief, rather than just criticising less acceptable ones. So in 1996, as a



development of their provision of sex education resources, they entered a partnership with Nelson Educational Publisher's interactive media section, YITM, to produce a CD ROM for Primary schools on health education: "Growing up Together".

It's content complies with the National Curriculum guidance paper on Health Education, and all the health (including sex) education is set within the context of the family, sexual relationships being firmly placed within the context of heterosexual marriage. The two discs, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, deal with a wide variety of health education issues, set within various family situations.

Details are available from CARE, 53 Romney Street, London SW1P 3RE, or from YITM's sales department, 01264 342992.

## ► Money

The following are extracts from Year 11 *Christian Living Course* at St Peter's Collegiate, Wolverhampton. This series focuses on money.

### Week one

A. Briefly introduce session on money along following lines:

- i) Money can be earned at work, but some have more than others.
- ii) Do we have a duty to anyone but ourselves in the way we spend our money?
- iii) Can money become the "be all and end all" of life?

B. Fill in questionnaire (see below).

C. Watch video - The Rich Fool.

This is based on the parable of the rich fool told by Jesus.

D. Questionnaire - see if they have changed their minds, and then have a plenary session to discuss the various responses.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE: THE RICH FOOL

- a. It is often a goal in life to "make it".  
What does this mean? Money; Power; Property; Fame; Happiness?  
Can you have them all?
- b. Which of these people have "made it":  
nurse, bus driver, pop star, doctor, mother, miner?  
If so, why?  
If not, why not?
- c. What kinds of wealth exist apart from financial wealth?
- d. Is life a game?  
Are there winners and losers?  
What makes a winner?  
What makes a loser?  
Does death finish the game?  
Are there any rewards?



*How far is it possible to use biblically based material in a county school?*

*If you were more courageous in using the Bible cross-curricularly, in what ways would this enhance its relevance to the life of pupils?*

**Week two:** (Students need Bibles)

- A. Worksheet on biblical teaching on money. Read aloud the four passages, students then summarise the stories and answer the quiz questions on the back.
- B. Discuss the results.

**BIBLE TEACHING ON MONEY**

The New Testament has a lot to say on how people use money.

Read the following four passages from the Gospels:

*Luke 18: 18-30* The rich young man

*Luke 19: 1-10* Zachaeus

*Luke 16:19-31* The Rich Man and Lazarus

*Mark 12: 41-44* The Widow's mite

Summarise Jesus' teaching on each story.

The Rich Young Man

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Zachaeus

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The Rich Man and Lazarus

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The Widow's Mite

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Jesus does not attack money for its own sake, but what we as individuals do with our money. He emphasises giving, but in secret. He says that the love of money can get in the way of our love of God. He encourages us not to put money first in our lives.

Look at the questions below. Answer them twice ... once without thinking deeply about the question and secondly applying Christian teaching.

RESPONSE	1st	2nd
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Money is to be used ... we should spend all we get.</li> <li>2. Getting money is the most important thing in life.</li> <li>3. Money is the root of all evil.</li> <li>4. More money means more happiness.</li> <li>5. Money only takes on values in the way it is used.</li> <li>6. Hire purchase is good because one can have things now even though one doesn't have the money to pay for them.</li> <li>7. Gambling is mishandling money.</li> <li>8. Every family should make out a budget.</li> <li>9. Every family should contribute to a charity.</li> <li>10. Part of a pay packet should be saved.</li> <li>11. How we spend our own money is our own business.</li> <li>12. People should be paid wages according to their need.</li> <li>13. Pop singers, tennis stars, footballers etc. are paid too much.</li> </ol>		

*St. Peter's Collegiate School, Wolverhampton*

## Values

A team from Guildford YMCA were invited into local schools to lead discussions in general studies lesson. The following extracts are taken from a report on how each session builds developmentally on the previous one by setting the agenda for the next. They are all around the topic of conflict resolution.

1. The class was divided into three groups. Members of the group introduced themselves to each other by explaining the subjects they were studying, their interests, their family and where they lived.

Each group was given cards with possible topics for future discussions written on them and they were told to prioritise them. The list included *Group Dynamics*, *How we form our opinions*, *the Media*, *Northern Ireland*, *Advertising*, *Homelessness* and *Third World Street Children*. They were also given a blank card to add an extra topic if they wanted to.

Discussion followed on how they arrived on their final order. Had all three agreed on it? How had they resolved any differences? The need to respect other people's opinions was stressed.

They were then given a further topic - Why is there Suffering? - to put in their lists. This time they had to come to a unanimous agreement about its position in their list. They then talked about how one resolved differences of opinion. Can a group agree if members have totally opposed opinions?

2. Northern Ireland was the next week's topic. It was introduced as an area where extreme, opposite opinions are found. A video called "The Dividing Wall" was shown where two people who had previously worn the labels Protestant and Catholic shared something of their background and influences, and about the reconciliation which occurred as a result of becoming Christians. The factors which had made them so adamantly sure they were right to be opposed to each other and what might have happened when once their Christian faith had become real were discussed. Personal belief in God was requested as a subject for the next session.

*YMCA, Guildford*

## Searching Questions

The questionnaire below is used by the same schools' team as a discussion starter. This helpful tool enables individual youngsters to reflect and gather together their own thoughts on some of life's basic questions before entering into a wider discussion. It provides an opportunity for pupils to get in touch with their own thinking before they have to react to anybody else's.

Try to be as honest as you can - you won't be asked to share what you've written unless you want to!

1. Write down anything good in your life which you have done which deeply satisfies you.
2. Is there anything you are ashamed of?
3. Do you enjoy looking at a sunset, or a scenic view?
4. Have you ever had moments in your life when you felt strangely moved or deeply disturbed?
5. Are there any universal principles which you try to live by and would recommend to others?



*What is more important to a society: to arrive at consensus, or respect difference?*

6. Do you ask yourself questions like “What’s the point of life?” and “What am I trying to achieve?” What conclusions have you come to so far?
7. Who are the people whose lives and values you most admire?
8. Death is a fact of life. Have you worked out your views on it?
9. Would you say that you’re still looking for something or someone to believe in - a faith of your own?
10. Where are you looking?
11. Can you think of any areas in your life which can’t be analysed in terms of science or logic?
12. Many people want “proof” of the existence of God: what sort of proof would you find helpful?

*YMCA Guildford*

## ► Worth and value

Values clarification exercises, of which the following are some examples, have come in for much criticism. The main reason for criticism is that guidance about right and wrong is not given; all positions are affirmed. Open discussion is also high risk. Good teacher control and clear boundaries for free and frank discussion, where harmful things about others could be said, are needed.

Although in the real world judgements and decisions similar to those outlined in these exercises have to be made, albeit, not individually, the question of whether human beings should be making these kind of decisions at all is asked by some. Thus, as users of values clarification exercises, we need to be critical of the exercise as well as of the values within the exercise.

The following exercises have been used to explore questions of the worth and value of individuals.

### **A. You have to decide which of these patients will be treated on your only kidney machine. All are in the same medical condition and will die without treatment.**

Kidney Machine needed for:-

1. A crippled boy, paralysed since birth. The boy cannot use his hands, must be fed by others because he can do nothing for himself. Age 8.
2. A doctor, a general practitioner. He is nervous because he is a drug addict. Age 60.
3. A married man who is a building worker. He drinks a lot and has a wife, aged 23, and two children at home. Age 27.
4. A black minister, Protestant. Age 27.

### **B. The following people are all in a life boat. It is too full and some need to get off. Which of the following people would you choose to remain behind?**

1. A prostitute, no parents. She has already saved a drowning child and is an excellent nurse. Age 36.
2. A teacher, considered one of the best teachers in his city. Married, age 32.

3. A criminal, male, charged with murder. He is the only one capable of navigating the boat. Age 37.
4. A Catholic nun, head teacher in a girl's school. Age 46.
5. A man, mentally disturbed, who carries important government secrets in his head. Age 41.
6. A Jewish restaurant owner, married with three children at home. Age 43.
7. A beggar, formerly professor of literature. He has a great sense of humour, showed courage in the last war, and was in a concentration camp for three years. Age 73.
8. A salesman, age 51. Sells automatic washers and is a member of the British Legion.
9. A young married couple, deeply in love, but with no children yet. They are both citizens of China.
  - a) man studying to be a pharmacist, age 24
  - b) woman, housewife, helps with a kindergarten, age 21.

### ▶ Biblical benchmarks

For one secondary school, PSME has to do with exploring the feelings, doubts, fears, and hopes of students. Students, it is felt, are often unable to articulate these feelings and ideas which may be due to embarrassment or simply the inability to find the language. One school used the story of the stoning of Stephen from the book of Acts as a starting point for consideration of peer group pressure and standing out from the crowd. Other stories used included David and Bathsheba, the Temptation of Jesus, the visitation of Mary, the Magi, the minor prophets Amos and Hosea (care of the poor), the beatitudes, and David pouring out the water obtained from behind enemy lines. To relate these ideas to the Bible provides students with examples, enabling them to interpret their own lives through the experiences of others. The Biblical principles also provide a benchmark by which they can measure and to which they can refer. Awareness that perfection is not on the agenda helps the adolescent to come to terms with failure, and a seeming lack of understanding by parents, teachers, adults, friends and themselves.

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*Bury Church of England High School*

*You cannot add 'values' to a curriculum that teaches a view of what is the case and which provides no grounds for thinking that 'value' talk has anything to do with the 'facts'. The Church exists as witness to certain beliefs about what is the case, about facts not values ... The authority for the Church's witness is God's revelation with its central point in Jesus Christ.*

*Leslie Newbigin (1990) p98*

## 5 Right from wrong

In a recent study in the US<sup>2</sup>, it was revealed that a majority of churched youth can no longer determine right from wrong. Josh McDowell and Bob Hosteller have written an important new book reminding us that stating moral precepts on their own is neither enough nor the mature thing to do when it comes to teaching adolescents. "We must provide them with a truth apologetic - a ready defence of truth.

***The reason we think that there are such things as 'fair' and 'unfair' is because our Maker is a just God.***

***The reason love is a virtue and hatred a vice is because the God who formed us is a God of love.***

<sup>2</sup> Churched Youth Survey (1994)

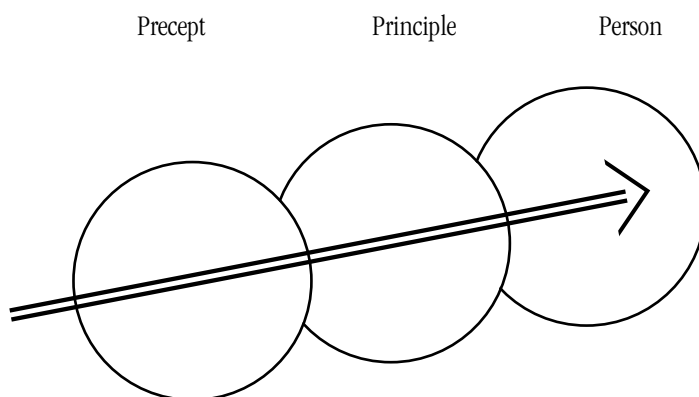
***The reason honesty is right and deceit is wrong is because God is true.***

***The reason chastity is moral and promiscuity is immoral is because God is pure.***

And the reason so many of our youth can't distinguish between the real and the counterfeit, between truth and error, between what's moral and what's immoral is because many parents (and teachers) have stopped measuring against the original. We have all been influenced by the cultural shift away from God as the centre of all things. Our culture has rejected the source of Truth and has tried (as in the SCAA exercise) to come up with its own ideas about right and wrong ... It is God and God alone who determines absolute truth. Truth is objective because God exists outside ourselves; it is universal because God is above all; it is constant because God is eternal. Absolute truth is absolute because it originates from the original".

*McDowell (1996) p95-6*

### The Test of Truth



God's Word is filled with PRECEPTS - commands put there for our good. PRINCIPLES are the 'whys' behind the precepts and the PERSON behind the principles is God Himself. As we move from PRECEPT to PRINCIPLE, it leads to the very PERSON of God. It is through the Test of Truth that we compare our attitudes and actions of God's character and nature." Ibid p113

When we teach the truth, there are three essential supporting pillars. We must:

1. Build a relationship. That is what biblical morality is all about: our relationships with God and with others.
2. Be an example. The things we model powerfully communicate our convictions about right and wrong, about morality and immorality.
3. Share the truth. Teaching the truth requires commitment. The apologetic of truth must be taught to our children consistently, repeatedly, at every opportunity - at home and at school!

*Adapted from Josh McDowell (1996) p143-152*

?

*In what ways should Christian values be advocated in a plural society?*

Josh McDowell and Bob Hosketler  
*Right from Wrong - What you need to know to help youth make right choices* © (1996)  
 Nelson Word Ltd. Used by permission.

### Resources and further reading

Brian Wakeman *Personal, Social and Moral Education - A Source Book*, Tring: Lion (1984) 80pp  
Offers a Christian commentary on the rise, aims and philosophy of PSME as well as practical suggestions for the classroom.

*The Seduction ... The Lie About Sex* and *The Seduction ... The Lie about Drugs*: are projects directed at teenagers which seek to examine the subjects of sex and sexuality and drugs. They are fast-moving multi-media presentations which are designed for half-day conferences for 4th, 5th and 6th formers. For further information contact: Going Public, Glenwood Centre, Circle Way, Llanedeyrn, Cardiff CF2 6UW.

Paul Francis *The Seduction: Teenage Sexuality - Who's Pulling the Strings?* Marshall Pickering (1995)  
A book for parents and youth workers about the influences and sexual pressures on teenagers today, focusing on the themes of self worth, love and companionship, freedom and forgiveness.

*Make Love Last*: A Video and course materials for 14 and 15 year old students on developing relationships and the value of avoiding premature sexual encounter. For more details write to Make Love Last, CARE, 53, Romney Street, London SW1P 3RF.

Josh McDowell with Bob Hostetler *Right from Wrong: What you need to know to help you make right choices*, Milton Keynes, Word (1995)

Lesslie Newbiggin, "Religion, science and truth in the school curriculum", in Leslie Francis and Adrian Thatcher (eds.) *Christian Perspectives for Education*, Leominster: Gracewing (1990) p98

*State of Flux*: Angela Flux, author of the Teachers' Notes in *Make Love Last*, has produced other resources for school use. *State of Flux* can be contacted at 34, Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2QG

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Responsible Action*, Grand Rapids: CSI/Eerdmans (1980) 150pp  
A clear Christian discussion of moral education, including a critique of values clarification strategies.

Schools Curriculum Assessment Authority, "Education for Adult Life: the spiritual and moral development of young people" Discussion Paper No.6

Professor Richard Whitfield (ed) *Life Foundations* NES Arnold (1992)  
A structured collection of teaching resources based on Judeo-Christian ethics for use in PSME.



# Appendices

## Beyond the school model: challenges to the schooling paradigm

These appendices are personal reflections on alternatives to the most commonly accepted model of schooling. It is recognised that others may have a different perspective on some of the issues presented here. However, they have been written to challenge the perception that formal schooling is the only or most effective model for education.

- i. **Cyberschool** by Steve Richards
- ii. **Home education** by Lynn and Steve Richards
- iii. **All-age learning** by David Pott

Steve Richards is Project Manager for Care for Education. He is interested in developing interactive multi-media aspects of curriculum development in education.

Lynn and Steve Richards have been involved in home education for over 10 years. They have home educated their four children, and have been co-ordinating support for many other Christian parents who educate their children at home.

David Pott, of YWAM was formerly headteacher of The Shepherd School, Lewisham. This appendix is extracted from work which has yet to be published in a book.



## Appendix i: Cyberschool

### New technology and its impact on learning

Steve Richards

*Imagine the scene: you decide to pay a visit to John Smith, a teacher at the local Christian secondary school. You know he's working today, so you go along to his home and knock on the door. He's in, and cheerfully invites you to come in to see his class at work. This must be a small school, you think! John leads you into his study, and introduces you to Jake, Suzy and Carol, three students on John's modern world history course. They're currently studying European International Affairs in the 1930s. What immediately strikes you is that John's three students aren't actually there. All three are visible on John's computer screen, and thanks to a small video camera sitting on John's monitor, you're assured that they can each see you as well as hear you when you send your greetings. John spends the next ten minutes bringing the seminar to an end, and then you sit down to discuss what you have just witnessed. John explains:*

*"Jake lives in Toronto, Carol lives in London and Suzy lives in a small village in southern Germany. They're all studying history with High Peaks Christian Secondary School. Once a week we have an on-line discussion, where we discuss issues relating to the course. At other times, I run computer mediated conferences for the students. I set a question for discussion, with some texts, video, photos etc. to study. I also give them a list of web sites to look at to explore the topic further. Students e-mail their responses to the conference for all the other students to see. Others comment and a discussion develops. I am able to monitor the discussion and see who says what. I can also see who isn't logging on and whose logging on but not taking part. I can privately e-mail students who seem to have problems. In this way, I monitor progress and help when necessary, without being intrusive. Drawing in students from different countries makes for some very interesting discussions!"*

*High Peaks Christian Secondary School is an on-line school providing education for young people aged 12-18 years. The students live in twenty different countries. Some have parents who are working as missionaries, and will be returning to the UK in the future. Others live permanently in their home country, but wish to study via an on-line school. High Peaks has a staff of ten tutors and three administrators. The school has a small central office, where two of the administrative staff and the Senior teacher are based. The other administrator lives in Lerwick on the Shetland Islands. Six of the staff live in the UK with the remaining staff living in the USA, Italy, South Africa and Australia.*

High Peaks Christian Secondary School is, of course, imaginary. However, everything that John Smith did with his students is currently being undertaken in schools in various parts of the world. What is more, it is all relatively inexpensive. John Smith would have been using a standard PC or Macintosh; with a modem and digital video camera the total cost would be less than £1500. John and his students would only have been paying local telephone call rates.

There can be little doubt that the late twentieth century is witnessing profound technological change. Society is moving from an industrial to an information base, as digitisation and fibre optics drive us on to the information society. There are those who suggest that this change is as profound as the first industrial revolution or even the coming of the printing press.<sup>1</sup> In the midst of this revolution, formal education faces its own challenge to change and to keep pace not only with new technology but also with the demands and requirements of its students who face a very different world from that in which their teachers grew up. The story of High Peaks may be imaginary, however, it is probably nearer to the truth than many of us are aware.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Tiffin, J. & Rajasingham, L., (1995), *In Search of the Virtual Class*, (London); Harnad, S., *The post-gutenberg galaxy: the fourth revolution in the means of production of knowledge*, in Mason R. D. (ed) (1993), *Computer Conferencing: The Last Word*, (Victoria, Canada).

The purpose of this appendix is to explore briefly some of the new technologies which are developing, and to consider some of the ways in which information technologies are provoking change within the educational world.

### **Wish you were here - new technologies and communications**

As we saw earlier, it has never been easier to communicate with people all over the world. Telephone and even fax have become mundane as a raft of new technologies has not only made it easy to contact people on the other side of the world, but has also dramatically cut the cost. Using electronic mail, e-mail, it is now possible to send as many copies of a letter or note, anywhere in the world for the cost of a local telephone call. Generally the e-mail will be available for collection within minutes of being sent. Considering the fact that one can also add documents of any sort, including photographs and diagrams, to e-mail, which can be edited by an associate on the other side of the world before being e-mailed back to you for further work, the educational potential begins to become apparent.

The asynchronous nature of e-mail has led to the development of computer mediated conferencing (cmc). Using conferencing software such as *First Class* or *Lotus Notes*, it is possible to lead a discussion via e-mail. Members of the discussion group log on to collect e-mail at a time convenient for them. Having read - off-line - previous submissions to the discussion, they would draft their responses and e-mail them to the group. While losing some aspects of spontaneity, this form of discussion does permit reflection and research has shown that it encourages those students who are quiet in class based discussions to take part<sup>2</sup>

Synchronous discussions are also possible, involving almost any number of participants. In this method, each participant sees on their monitor what the others are typing, as it is typed. Students and tutors could be anywhere in the world.

An enhanced form of synchronous discussion called 'video conferencing', has grown in popularity in recent years as the cost of small video cameras has fallen well below £200. Video conferencing permits a number of participants to see each other in real time, as well as being able to talk with one another. It is also possible to type and draw on other parts of the screen.

The educational impact of these innovations has already been enormous. On-line courses, the name often given to learning experiences involving cmc, are becoming increasingly common in higher education. The Open University uses these methods on its PGCE course, while the new University of the Highlands in Scotland and the proposed virtual University of Suffolk plan to use cmc as part of the institution's teaching/learning methods. In recent years, however, there have been a growing number of projects working with children of school age. One of the most innovative is the Topilot Project, funded jointly by the European Union and Philips, the Dutch electronics company. Topilot is a three year project to deliver educational provision to traveller children during the summer months while they are travelling. The project is running in six EU countries. E-mail is used to maintain contact between pupils and teachers and content is delivered via multimedia CD-ROM. Teachers control access to areas of the CD-ROM via e-mail.

Multimedia is perhaps the most exciting of the new developments currently taking place. CD-ROM and the World Wide Web are little more than the delivery methods; it is multimedia which is exciting many educationalists around the world. Multimedia refers to a range of conventional media coming together - text, images, sound, video and animation. By making use of all these media, it is possible to deliver information and skills in innovative ways. High Peaks was one example of how that *might* be done and Topilot is an example of how it *is* being done. Many traditional schools are making increasing use of multimedia, both via CD-ROM and the World Wide Web.

<sup>2</sup> Harasim, L. *Online education as a new domain*, in Mason R. D. & Kaye, A. R., (eds), (1989) *Mindweave: Communication, Computers and Distance Education*, (Oxford).

The World Wide Web (WWW) is rapidly becoming the largest repository of information ever known to humankind. Not only does information exist in every area of human study, but the amount of information is growing at an enormous rate. News agencies, news papers, universities, libraries, government agencies and commercial organisations are all rapidly developing web pages. If one requires the most up-to-date stock prices, or a weather forecast for the Cayman Islands, the information can be found on the WWW. If one wishes to see street plans of ancient Pompeii or images from NASA space probes, it can all be found in the WWW. Images taken by the space probe Voyager were placed on the WWW by NASA within 40 minutes of reception. The WWW is becoming the primary publishing medium for a growing number of organisations.

Even greater changes are on the horizon, and are likely to affect us in the next five to ten years. Telecommunications will become even more globalised as a network of satellites is established around the world to permit wireless telecommunications from anywhere on the globe. It is significant, given his previous success, that one of the prime movers in this area is Microsoft's CEO, Bill Gates. The greatest problem facing multimedia over the WWW is that conventional telephone lines can only carry limited quantities of data. As ISDN lines become widely available, and less expensive, this problem will substantially reduce. Perhaps the most significant development currently on the horizon is virtual reality. (VR) As computers become more powerful, it will be possible, probably in the next five years, to experience VR by wearing a suit which permits the wearer to see and feel in 360°. Some educationalists have not been slow to appreciate the educational impact of this technology.

We are on the threshold of changes of such magnitude that our world is about to be transformed around us. There can be no doubt that these changes will have a substantial impact on education systems around the world. What is unclear is just what that impact will be. A number of tentative conclusions can be made;

- the role of the teacher will be re-defined. The concept of the teacher as an imparter of knowledge may become redundant;
- the pre-eminence of the school as the learning environment for children, especially during the secondary phase, may come to an end;
- small schools will no longer be disadvantaged in comparison with large schools;
- learning will become more informal;
- life-long learning will become at least as important as school-aged learning;
- linked with the previous point, the concept of just-in-time learning will develop as the skill of acquiring knowledge when you need it, rather than just in case you need it, grows in importance;
- information handling and processing skills will become as important as numeracy and literacy skills;
- education systems around the world will become more parent and student driven;
- as telecommunications infrastructure improves in developing nations, these countries will have the opportunity to develop educational structures which reflect their own cultural and societal contexts, rather than importing western models of learning.

## Conclusion

For Christians, this brave new world presents us with opportunities and challenges. Opportunities exist to look at the whole of education afresh. Schools and the role of teachers will change. What they will turn out to be in the future is yet to be defined. Christians have the opportunity to bring Biblical and spiritual dimen-

sions to these discussions. For the first time in human history, the opportunity exists for a world-wide community of Christian thinkers to enter into dialogue on a global scale. Where previously, groups of Christians had been working, each inventing their own wheel, it will not only be possible to find out what wheels are being invented elsewhere, but much more excitingly, it will be possible to pool resources and input at the design stage. There will be no excuse for the failure of Christian thinkers to work together, whether they be in Europe, Australia or the USA.

Indeed, it will be imperative that Christians do work together, because there are also enormous challenges which we will have to face. We are already at a stage of our human development where we are suffering from information glut of monumental proportions. We are drowning in information; it comes at us from all directions. But we are already losing the capacity to filter or sift it. To make matters worse, the links between information and action have been broken. Information is rootless and purposeless. It is now little more than a commodity. And although it can be bought and sold, we don't actually know what to do with it. We have lost any notion of relevance.<sup>3</sup>

There will be losers in this new world. In an information age those without the capacity, whether that is due to intellectual, social or financial disadvantages, to acquire information are disenfranchised. They must be defended and supported.

There are a host of epistemological dangers in substituting virtual reality for real reality, and these dangers must not be underestimated. As Christians, who believe in the objectivity of reality, this is perhaps the biggest challenge facing us as we move into the next millennium.

While technology may have an apparent moral neutrality, the uses to which these new technologies are put are rarely if ever neutral. Technological advance is always a trade-off; benefits and damage intermingle with each other. Gutenberg, a good Catholic, would have been horrified to have thought that his new technology permitted the rapid spread of Protestantism, and led to the demise of medieval Christendom in Europe. The challenge for us as Christians is to discern the good from the bad, and then to develop and build upon the good.

<sup>3</sup> For further discussion of these issues, please see Postman, Neil, *Informing Ourselves to Death*, a paper presented to the German Informatics Society in October 1990. Available at <http://world.std.com/~jimf/informing.html>

## Appendix ii: Home education

Lynn and Steve Richards

### Introduction

In recent years a growing number of families have turned away from the school system and chosen to educate their children at home. This is a trend which has been noticeable in a number of countries, including the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Recent figures from the USA indicate that over 500,000 children are being taught by their parents outside the school system. Accurate figures for the number of families engaged in home education in the UK do not exist. However, there is general agreement amongst Local Education Authorities and the Department for Education and Employment that numbers are growing steadily. While many of these come from Christian families, this trend is by no means limited to the Christian community. Christians who do educate their children at home often base their reasons on a biblical rationale.

### 1. The case for home education

#### Biblical arguments

Throughout the Old Testament, we find that parents are given the principal responsibility for nurturing their children.<sup>1</sup> The only educational experiences which children received were within the community, in the main, alongside their parents. No mention is made of children attending schools. Indeed, removing children from the direct influence of their parents and the community, and placing them in institutions was quite alien to the Old Testament. Schools were essentially Hellenistic in origin and had no place in Hebrew culture.<sup>2</sup> It was only during the inter-testamental period after a lengthy period of conflict between Hellenistic and Hebrew culture that schools began to appear, attached to synagogues. However, these synagogue schools were only for boys over the age of eleven.

Clear patterns of child rearing are laid down in the Old Testament. We read, for example,

*“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”*<sup>3</sup>

Parents, and particularly fathers were given the responsibility for training their children in the Lord. They had the responsibility for providing their children with a biblical world and life view.<sup>4</sup> We also read,

*“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”*<sup>5</sup>

There was no advice to children to learn from a teacher. There is no teaching in the New Testament that would reduce parental responsibilities towards their children. Schools for children are not mentioned in the New Testament. Paul’s teaching in *Ephesians 6* is simply a confirmation of the Old Testament emphasis on the role of the parents.

A growing number of parents have thus come to the conclusion that they cannot delegate the education of their children to schools. They may make use of specialist teachers for such things as music, foreign languages or sport, but for these parents school as an institution represents a fundamentally different environment to the tutoring model of specialists working with one or two children in a domestic setting.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In considering what the Bible says about the education of children, it should be recognised that in the main we are considering pre-teens, since, in Hebrew culture, a boy was recognised as an adult at the age of thirteen

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Castle E.B. *Ancient Education and Today*; Harmondsworth (1961)

<sup>3</sup> *Deuteronomy 6:6-7* (New King James Version)

<sup>4</sup> *Deuteronomy 4:9-14; 6:20-25 and 11:19*

<sup>5</sup> *Proverbs 1:8*

<sup>6</sup> The domestic, used in this context, can refer to an environment outside the home, but which is still, essentially non-institutional in its nature.

Although this rationale for home education is growing in importance in the UK, for many families their reason for choosing home education is very different. It may be the lack of a local Christian school, a personal educational ideology which excludes school, or simply the perception, for positive or negative reasons, that the local school is wholly unsuitable which lead families towards home education. Home educators are a disparate group and it is, therefore, very difficult to classify them in terms of motivation.

Diversity is also a factor when one considers the educational methods of home educating families. Some will adopt a highly schooled approach, starting work promptly at 9.00am, working solidly using school text books, perhaps at desks until 3.30pm with mid-morning and lunch breaks just like school. In these cases the work is often very academic, with an emphasis on traditional teaching methods. At the other extreme, some families take a very child-centred approach to learning. These families will allow their children to choose whether or not to work, when to work and what to study.

### The Deuteronomic model

On a number of occasions in *Deuteronomy*, the Lord makes certain statements regarding educational methods. We saw earlier in the chapter that the Lord instructed the children of Israel,

*“...you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”*<sup>7</sup>

God had earlier charged Moses with the responsibility to teach God’s commandments to the Israelites.<sup>8</sup> Long life and prosperity would be theirs if successive generations remained faithful to God and his commandments. It was therefore critical that the educational methods adopted to achieve this would have the greatest potential for success. In this context, parents were employed to teach their children.

There is a great deal that we can learn by considering these verses:

#### i) Diligence

The content - what was to be learnt - was so important that simply going over it once or twice was inadequate. The need was to teach diligently. It demanded effort, and parents and children were to work at it. By implication, this would exclude the modern practice of placing the child at the centre of the educational process. Clearly methods should be used which took account of children’s abilities and aptitudes, but the content was also critical and diligence demanded that effort be put in whether one felt like it or not!

#### ii) The domestic context

Given the importance of the content, it would have been easy for Moses to establish a teaching hierarchy. Moses would teach the priests, who in turn would teach tribal leaders, and so on down to the children. After all, what we have here is the first national curriculum! It is surely significant that Moses, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cut out all of the institutional hierarchies, and gave responsibility directly to parents.

We find that the context of education for the Israelites was domestic. Its focus was the family; but the family within community. The removal of children from the ‘everyday’ world and their placement in institutions was quite alien to this culture. Learning needed to be earthed in the reality of family and community.

#### iii) The domestic method

What is perhaps most striking, however, is that the imparting of this information was to take place during the course of normal and everyday events.<sup>9</sup> Whereas time was to be set aside for family and community worship, it was not necessary to set time aside to teach the family’s children.<sup>10</sup> Teaching was to take place when the family arose, when the family were at work, when the family ate, and when the family travelled.

<sup>7</sup>*Deuteronomy* 6:7, but see also 11:19

<sup>8</sup>*Deuteronomy* 5:31

<sup>9</sup>The word information is not ideal in this context, since it has Hellenistic overtones. The Greek (or Post-Enlightenment with Greek roots) and Hebrew notions of knowing are fundamentally different. It is the Greek notion of knowing which permeates our culture, and which often underpins the use of the word information.

<sup>10</sup>The word teach is not a neutral term, either. One only needs to look at how Jesus taught to see that with the possible exception of the Sermon on the Mount, his teaching method was also domestic and community based, rather than institutional.



The picture here is of a family learning together. It is also a picture of a family being together. While this is very difficult in our culture, it should nevertheless be a goal for families to aim at when they are together.

This domestic method represents a fundamentally different model of learning and family life. Not only has the institutional school gone but so too has the professional teacher. In their place one finds learning families, who talk to one another, whose learning, though informal, is directed by parents and is diligently pursued.

### **Artificiality of schooling**

In comparison with the domestic model of learning outlined above, there can be no doubt that schools are very artificial learning institutions. The methods of learning are often detached from reality and the content often addresses questions which children are not asking. Infant children learn to use money with toy coins, they learn to weigh kilos and grams using sand, not flour or sugar, and they learn to tell the time with pretend clocks! These may appear to be trivial examples, but they are indicative of the artificiality of schools.

At the heart of the biblical model are children growing up within the community. At the centre of the school model of learning are children growing up with thirty other children of their own age largely detached from the community.

## **2. Legal position in the UK**

Home education is quite legal in the UK. The Education Act of 1944 states that children of school age must receive education according to their age ability and aptitude by attending school or otherwise.<sup>11</sup> Parents, therefore, have the legal right to take upon themselves the education of their children. None of the Education Acts passed since 1944 have altered this right.

One factor that does complicate the situation are the School Attendance Regulations (1956). If a child already attends a county or voluntary school, but not an independent school, then she is registered to attend that school. It is an offence for that child to fail to attend without good cause.

The legal situation can be summarised in this way. If a child is nearing her fifth birthday and parents do not wish her to attend school, then they have every right to teach her themselves. Legally, the parents are not obliged to inform the Local Education Authority, although it is probably better for parents to tell the LEA, rather than have the LEA find out in some other way. If the child is over five and already attends a county or voluntary school, then legally her name needs to be removed from the register before home education can begin. Often this can be achieved simply by asking the headteacher; sometimes, however, the LEA will request that it is told what alternative provision is to be made for the child's education. The LEA has the legal responsibility to retain a child's name on the school's register until it is satisfied that adequate alternative provision is made. Usually this is not a difficult process and many LEAs take a very helpful attitude towards home educating families.

## **3. Curriculum for the home educator**

### **UK resources**

A wide range of resources is available for the home educating family. Virtually all of the educational suppliers who supply schools are willing to supply individual families. Which curriculum a family chooses to use is often a reflection of their underlying philosophy of education. Many families use materials produced by secular UK publishers. They may then modify this material to better reflect a Christian world

<sup>11</sup> Education Act (1944) Section 37

view. A list of contact addresses for the main UK publishers can be found in the Resources below.

### **US resources**

In recent years, many families have turned to curriculum produced by American Christian publishers. Much of it is of an excellent quality, and the size of the American home education market virtually guarantees that a curriculum exists which reflects just about every conceivable educational philosophy. Examples of US publishers are given in the resources section below.

### **GCSEs**

Many home educators are intimidated by GCSE examinations. However, they need not be, since help is at hand. A growing number of Christian schools offer GCSE and are willing to work alongside Christian home educators. Tertiary and Further Education colleges have also become more accessible in recent years. Home educated pupils are now able to attend many of these colleges to study for GCSE. A number of Open Learning Centres have also been established around the country. Similar to Correspondence Colleges, they provide distance learning materials in an enormous range of subjects. A list of colleges are given in the resources below, all of which are members of the Council for the Accreditation of Correspondence Colleges.

## **4. Experiments in home education**

As home education has grown within the Christian community, so, too have experiments to bridge the gap between traditional schooling and home education.

### **Co-operatives**

The idea of families working together cooperatively has appealed to quite a few groups around the country. Groups have varied in size from two or three families to groups consisting of forty or fifty children. Groups have met for varying amounts of time in a week - sometimes every morning or afternoon, sometimes for a few mornings each week. Groups have also varied in the sorts of activities which they have undertaken together. Sometimes a whole group will do the same activity, sometimes children will divide into groups so that parents can teach a subject in which they have strengths. Occasionally cooperatives have employed a specialist teacher for part of a week. The variations on the theme of cooperative education seem endless!

### **Flexi-schooling**

Some families, especially those with children of secondary school age, may not wish to break all ties with schools. Flexi-schooling may be an option which these families might wish to consider. Flexi-schooling refers to a style of education where children spend some of their learning time in a school context, perhaps one or two days a week, for example, and the remaining time learning elsewhere. Elsewhere would include the home, but it might also include the wider community; libraries, museums, work experience, etc. Obviously, one needs to find a school which is prepared to cooperate in this way. A small number of Christian schools are considering the issues involved in flexible attendance. Flexi-schooling is still in its infancy, however, it is a concept that is very much in harmony with biblical patterns of education.

## **5. Home education in practice**

In the following section three families who have home-schooled their children explain how they came to this decision.

## Mary Hardy

My interest in Christian education began in 1982 through involvement in Covenant Christian School with our two oldest children. As our family grew and my own thinking developed, several local families organized meetings to investigate Christian education. The outcome was that we joined with another family to teach our children co-operatively, working together on areas of the curriculum most suited to group work.

We began with three children for one morning a week. Next came a foundation year, trying to relate topics familiar to the children, back to God as the source of everything. We also did art and craft, singing, games and went on outings together.

By the time the children were five, we felt they were ready to make a start on the project material used at Covenant Christian School, so we increased our weekly sessions to two, adapted the material to our own situation and shared out the teaching between us. We also had an afternoon session for more relaxed activities. We have worked together for six years now.

Over the years both of us have had another baby and we have managed to keep going with the work for the older ones. As these babies got older and turned into “pupils” themselves, this made us realise that we needed to teach the original children to work on their own more, in order to give quality time and attention to their younger siblings.

We also tried to get time together to pray and discuss plans. From the beginning we worked on the understanding that maths, English and other “basics” would be taught separately by each family. Obviously we discussed progress in these areas and shared resources, but our commitment to one another’s children’s learning was for the shared sessions only.

We were not legally required to inform the local education authority of our activities, but we decided to tell them anyway. They were fairly tolerant and sent an inspector along a couple of times. Since then we have heard no more.

## Jane Spackman

The Lord led us to home educate our four children, now aged between five and ten years. through revelation from Scripture concerning parenting, personal experience of teaching in a state school and the witness of other home educating families.

Our aim is that each child should reach his or her full potential spiritually and academically and be equipped with a Christian world view to live the life God asks of them.

Discipline is based on the scriptural idea of consistently nurturing. The atmosphere this creates has helped us grow together in various situations: from working at mathematics and seeing how God is reflected in number, to coping with the death of friends and relatives and reminding each other of Biblical promises. We follow our own curriculum, based on a biblical world view, which is a broad one embracing the expected topics of grammar, science, geography and music and some, maybe not so expected such as the history of western art, Spanish, lives of great composers and Shakespeare’s plays. Add to this the activities of cycling, swimming, rock climbing, needlework, cooking, looking after assorted pets - to mention but a few - and you might ask where we draw the line between education and family life. Well, we don’t. We have come to realise how education is a continuous process. When the children were young, every activity from cooking to shopping provided an opportunity to share, discuss and learn. As they’ve grown in understanding, they have done more formal bookwork - beginning at about the age of seven, but depending on individual ability - but times of discussion have in no way diminished.

The children learnt while still young, to glean knowledge in all circumstances. Books are constant companions, access to a computer opens up further possibilities, visits to museums, other people's homes - all provide opportunities for them to learn simultaneously but at different cognitive levels.

From their questions, comments and behaviour we can assess how each child is progressing, identify gifts and abilities, areas where they struggle and then respond accordingly.

Yes, it is hard work. Yes, we have days when things go badly - but even these we learn from. At the outset we couldn't have guessed at the benefits and blessings of home education for all of us - not just the children. In this it is the testimony of our family that God honours those who seek to honour Him.

### **Lyn Richards**

Home education was not a topic that we came to easily. My husband is a trained teacher, and for many years our area of concern was Christian schooling. Indeed, we were involved in establishing a Christian school. Not only did our eldest daughter attend this school for a year, but my husband was the Senior Teacher! At the end of that year we left the Christian school, and turned to home education for our family. The school had not failed our children, my husband was not disillusioned with Christian schooling, and we were still on very amicable terms with those at the school. What led us to leave was a sense of calling from God: we felt that God was calling us towards home education because it conformed to biblical patterns of child rearing even more than Christian schooling. Christian schooling was not wrong - it was simply that home education was better for us.

These events took place eight years ago. Our children are now aged 14, 12, 11 and 2. We continue with home education, and are rapidly approaching GCSEs. We even have a toddler in the family who brings his own distinctive perspective on formal education! The years have passed very quickly, and we have certainly failed on many occasions - particularly in the area of developing a distinctively Christian curriculum. However, we have seen our three eldest children develop and learn so much.

We were greatly influenced by the work of Susan Macauley and Raymond Moore and took the decision that we would not begin formal work until the children were at least 7 years old. This did not apply so much with our eldest daughter who had attended Christian school for a year, but it was certainly a principle that we worked to with the others. Indeed, we extended this further and took the decision that up to the age of 11, the only critical skills which children needed to learn were in the areas of literacy, numeracy, general knowledge of the world and basic study skills. This has in no way impeded our children's development - indeed, we feel that in many ways it assisted them, and certainly our eldest daughter who is 14 is preparing to take some GCSE's this year.

Now that the children are older, we make use of some specialist tuition. Friends come to teach the girls art and Latin, and they are involved with a gymnastics club. We don't feel that we have to do it all. We do feel however, that the children benefit enormously from having their centre of gravity firmly within the home. This is perhaps the biggest advantage of home education.

### **Further reading and resources**

The following books explore, at a popular level, some of the issues raised in this chapter.

*A Survivor's Guide to Home Schooling* by Luanne Shackelford and Susan White.

*For the Children's Sake* by Susan Macauley; this book is now out of print in the UK, but is available from the L'Abri Bookshop, The Manor House, Liss, Hampshire.

*Home Education* by Steve Richards; this leaflet, published by CARE is a good introduction to the subject. Obtainable from CARE for Education, 53 Romney Street, London, SW1P 3RF.

*Schoolproof* by Mary Pride.

*Successful Home Schooling* by Richard Fugate.

*The Christian Home School* by Gregg Harris.

*Towards a Christ Centred Education* by Steve Sherwood, available from the Cedar Education Trust, (see below)

*What is a Family?* by Edith Schaeffer published by Highway Books.

*What the Bible Says About Child Training* by Richard Fugate.

**All Books, unless stated otherwise, are obtainable from Transplant Christian Educational Aids, Otterhill Farm, Rowtown, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 1HD, Tel 01932 855918.**

For a more academic analysis, the following are recommended,

*Home School Researcher*, published quarterly by National Home Education Research Institute, Western Baptist College, 5000 Deer Park Drive, SE, Salem, Oregon, 97301, USA.

*Home Schooling: Parents as Educators*, by Dr M. Mayberry, Dr G. Knowles, Dr B. Ray, & Dr S. Marlow, (1995)

*Home Schooling: Political, Historical, and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. by Dr J. A. Van Galen & Dr M. A. Pitman, (1991)

Both available from NHERI (see above)

### UK Publishers

Catalogues of their publications are a useful resource for the home educator.

Cambridge University Press address is, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 1BR, Tel 01223-325970, Fax 01223-325959.

Collins Educational (part of the Harper-Collins group) address is Collins Educational, HarperCollins Publisher, FREEPOST, Glasgow, G4 0YX, Tel 0141-772-3200, Fax 0141-306-3119.

Dorling Kindersley Family Library produce a huge range of mainly non-fiction books, videos and CD-ROMs. There are many local distributors around the country. Alternatively, please contact, Interface, 37 Balmoral Crescent, Dronfield Woodhouse, Sheffield, S18 5ZY, Tel/Fax 01246-410122.

Ginn and Co. Ltd address is Prebendal House, Parson's Fee, Aylesbury, HP20 2QZ, Tel 01296-88411, Fax 01296-25487.

Heinemann Educational, address is Freepost, PO Box 380, Oxford, OX2 8BR, Tel 01865-314333, Fax 01865-314091.

Hodder, address is Mill Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2YA, Tel 01732-450111, Fax 01732-461321.

Lion Publishing, address is, Peter's way, Sandy Lane West, Oxford, OX4 5HG, Tel 01865-747550, Fax 01865-747568.

Longmans Education, address is Longman Education, Longman House, Burns Mill, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1BR, Tel 01279-623921, Fax 01279-414130.

Thomas Nelson & Sons (including Macmillan), address is Nelson House, Mayfield Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 5PL, Tel 01932-252211, Fax 01932-246109.

Oxford University Press, address is OUP, Education Department, Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP, Tel 01865-56767, Fax 01536-746337.

Schofield & Sims Ltd, address is Dogley Mill, Fenay Bridge, Huddersfield, HD8 0NW, Tel 01484-607080, Fax 01484-606815.

Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd, address is Ellenborough House, Wellington Street, Cheltenham, GL50 1YD, Tel 01242-228888, Fax 01242-221914.

Usborne Publishing Ltd, address is Usborne House, 83/85 Safron Hill, London, EC1N 8RT, Tel 0171-430-2800, Fax 0171-430-1562.

Wayland, address is 61 Western Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 1JD, Tel. 01273-722561, Fax. 01273-723526.

### **US Publishers**

A Beka Book Home School, Pensacola, Florida, 32523-9160, USA. Tel 00-1-904-478-8933. Publish a curriculum centred upon textbooks.

Alpha Omega Publications, 300 North McKerny Avenue, Chandler, Arizona, 85226-2618, USA, Tel 00-1-800-622-3070. Produces a curriculum based upon workbooks.

Bob Jones University Press, Greenville, South Carolina, 29614-0001, USA, Tel 00-1-803-242-5100 Ext 3300. Curriculum based upon textbooks.

Calvert School, Tuscany Road, Baltimore, Maryland, 21210, USA, Tel. 00-1-301-243-6030. Not a Christian organisation, but its curriculum is very sympathetic towards a Christian world view. Calvert provides a full curriculum package, even down to the pens and paper!

Christ-Centred Curriculum, Intended for 4-6 year olds. Mary Pride has actually said, "This may be the most serious attempt yet at a truly Christ-centred pre-school and foundational school programme." It is available in the UK from Home Life Ministries, see below under UK suppliers.

Konos, PO Box 1534, Richardson, Texas, 75083, USA, Tel 00-1-214-669-8337. Project based curriculum.

Rod and Staff Publishers Inc., Highway 172, Crockett, Kentucky, 41413-0003, USA, Tel 00-1-606-522-4348. Mennonite publishers of textbooks, workbooks and teacher's materials.

The Weaver Curriculum, 2752 Scarborough, Riverside, California, 92503, USA, Tel 00-1-909-688-3126. Project based curriculum.

More information about American resources can be obtained by looking at Mary Pride's *The Big Book of Home Learning*, and *The NEW Big Book of Home Learning*, which are available from Transplant, Otterhill Farm, Rowtown, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 1HD. Tel 01932-855918. Also, look at *The Teaching Home*, a bi-monthly magazine for Christian home educators at PO Box 20219, Portland, Oregon, 97220, USA, Tel 00-1-503-253-9633, Fax 00-1-503-253-7345.

### **COLLEGES for accreditation**

Mercers College, Ware, Herts, SG12 9BU. Tel 01920-465927, Fax 01920-484909.

National Extension College, 18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, CB2 2HN. Tel 01223-316644, Fax 01223-313586.

The Open Learning Centre, 24 King Street, Carmarthen, Dyfed, SA31 1BS. Tel 01267-235268, Fax 01267-238179.

The Rapid Results College, Tuition House, 27/37 St George's Road, London, SW19 4DS. Tel 0181-947-2211, Fax 0181-946-7584.

### **SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS**

A number of Christian support organisations exist. Some are specifically local in their concern, others have a national interest.

Cedar Educational Trust - it is difficult to know exactly where to place Cedar, since its work covers so many areas but it includes support for home educators, production of curriculum material and guides for parents who want to consider seriously the Biblical teaching on parenthood. The contact address is, 5-7 Stafford Road, Forest Gate, London, E7 8NL.

The Home Service - a national support organisation, specifically for Christians. The contact address is, The Hawthorns, 48 Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, SK4 4NX, Tel 061-432-3782. The Home Service has a mailing list of contacts. It has established the first national UK telephone support service for Christian home educators. It also jointly sponsored Home Ed '93, a national weekend conference specifically for Christians.

The Christian Home-Schools Contact List - has organised a number of successful day conferences, and produces Home Time, the first UK newsletter for Christian home educators. Contact address is 234B Cricklewood Lane, London, NW2 2PU.

Kids Abroad - address is Kenilworth Baptist Church, 2 Spring Lane, Kenilworth, CV8 2HB, Tel 01926-52117. Kids Abroad is run by Tracey Williams, and is focused on supporting missionary families who wish to educate their own children. Tracey works closely with Home Service.





## Appendix iii: Education in the context of all-age learning communities

Extracts from the work of David Pott, Youth With A Mission (YWAM)

### Education: What are we talking about?

Education could be defined as a process of transmission with an eye to the future. It is a process whereby a culture passes on what it considers to be of value and worth, from one generation to another. There is a type of education as transmission which is static rather than dynamic, and this is no help at all. So, for example, to learn history dates parrot-fashion is destructive: you don't just learn the past - you learn from the past. As John Hull comments, "*It is not the job of the living past to prevent the birth of the creative future*"<sup>1</sup>

The definition I have just given is a very generalised one which I think would be acceptable for people from differing faith perspectives. If we were to reformulate a definition specifically for Christian education, we would need to take into account scriptures like *Luke 6:40, Romans 8:29 and 12:1, 2* and *2 Corinthians 3:18*, and say that Christian education is a process of transmission for transformation into the likeness of Christ.

Up until the present century, most cultures have had a fairly coherent idea of the values and skills they have wanted to pass on, but one of the major challenges today in the world of education, especially in the west, is that we no longer have a consensus about values. Inevitably the cultural flow is confused and incoherent.

Education as a process of transmission is very much to the fore in *Psalms 78: 1-8*:

*O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things from of old - what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God, and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their forefathers - a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.*

Notice that this Psalm was an encouragement to all the people of God (not just to parents or teachers) to be concerned with education, and remember that the "children" of Israel included all ages!

As we near the end of the twentieth century, we can say that there are many aspects of our situation that are good. We stand at the threshold of an information revolution which is paving the way for new creative approaches in the field of education. For those who desire to learn, resources are infinite.

However, there is something seriously wrong with the basic cultural flow. Scott Peck begins his book *A World Waiting to be Born* with the simple sentence: "*There is an illness abroad in the land.*"<sup>2</sup> That illness is caused by the fact that along with the increased flow of information we have a flow of values like materialism and individualism which are counter-productive. We have an obsession with a narrow concept of productivity, but we are not seeing an increase in truly productive people.

We need a new vision for education to match the new era in which we are living. The classroom-based model of education which may have served us well for a rather brief period of human history, is increasingly unsuitable in our day. Several titles of Christian books on education still assume the predominance of the

<sup>1</sup>John M. Hull: *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?* SCM (1985) p23

<sup>2</sup>M. Scott Peck: *A World Waiting to be Born* Arrow (1994) p3

classroom model. Harro Van Brummelen's book *Walking with God in the Classroom*<sup>3</sup> has many excellent insights, but I suspect we need to be walking with God out of the classroom and shaping a vision which is more flexible and trans-cultural - after all walking is not easy within the confines of a classroom!

We may also need a flexible learning community, with young and old learning together. In a book called *The Third Millennium - A History of the World for 2000 to 3000 AD*, the authors Brian Stapleford and David Langford forecast that the idea of one educational phase in childhood and youth will become completely obsolete.<sup>4</sup> There will be educational institutions for people of all ages to be visited continuously or periodically. If we are to be relevant in the 21st century, we need to recover this Biblical emphasis on lifelong learning.

In the next section we will look a little more closely at the concept of all-age learning communities.

## All-Age Learning Communities

### 1. Illustrations from the Bible

#### 1.1 The Establishment of Israel as a learning community

At Sinai, God established his people as a community of learners. Before He gave the ten commandments, He said to them: "*Hear O Israel the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. **Learn** them and be sure to follow them.*" (*Deuteronomy 5:2*)

After God had given the ten commandments he commanded Moses: "*Stay here with me so that I may give you all the commands, decrees and laws that you are to teach them to follow.*" (*Deuteronomy 5:31*) God taught Moses not only the ten commandments, but also additional instructions, many of which are recorded in *Leviticus*. God taught Moses, then in chapter 6 we read about Moses teaching the people, who in their turn are instructed to teach the next generation.

It's a flow of teaching involving the whole community. Notice that Moses does not say: "*Hear O fathers and mothers*", when he gives instructions about the kind of education which is best for transmitting God's ways, but rather, "*Hear O Israel*". The whole community is responsible for the process of transmission.

Of course parents have a very particular responsibility which is stressed in other places in scripture, most especially in the book of *Proverbs*, but at this very important place in the Biblical narrative it is significant that the whole community has this vital responsibility. It's a responsibility we need to recover in our own day. The process of transmission does not belong only to parents. Where the family of God is functioning properly, the elderly will have a very special place in passing on the wisdom they have gained from walking with God over the years, but there will also be times when we will be amazed at the understanding of the young (remember Jesus teaching the teachers in *Luke 2:46, 47!*)

Before God told the people, through Moses, how to educate, he told them something absolutely crucial, "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts*" (*Deuteronomy 6:5,6*). The implication is that it is utter hypocrisy to teach the ways of God if you are not living God's way first yourself. There was to be a consistent flow of the life of God pouring out through teachers with transparent lives, totally dedicated to loving God with every fibre of their being. It is only then that the process of effective transmission can take place through the non-formal methods described in *Deuteronomy 6:7*, "*Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*"

<sup>3</sup>Harro van Brummelen: *Walking with God in the Classroom* Alta Vista College Press (1992)

<sup>4</sup>Brian Stapleford and David Langford: *The Third Millennium - A History of The World for 2000 - 3000 AD* Grafton (1988)

Laurence Richards in his excellent article on teaching in the “*Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*” underlines these factors in this way: “*Teaching as envisioned in the Old Testament does not presuppose a classroom. Rather, the Old Testament presupposes a **distinctive community and a distinctive interpersonal setting** for teaching and learning.*”<sup>5</sup>

Although the responsibility for education belonged to all the Israelites, one particular tribe was given a major teaching responsibility. In *Leviticus 10:11*, the Levites are told that they must teach the Israelites all the decrees the Lord has given them through Moses. This special teaching function was confirmed again by Moses before his death, when He declared of the tribe of Levi, “*He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel*” (*Deuteronomy 33:10*).

## 1.2 Development of education in Israel at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah

Let us consider *Nehemiah* chapter 8. Imagine the scene ... The walls of Jerusalem have recently been rebuilt, and crowds of people of all ages have crowded into Water Gate Square. Ezra has been told to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses and he’s standing with the scroll on a special platform built for the occasion, so that everyone can see him. There is a mood of expectancy which increases as Ezra opens the scroll and praises the Lord, the Great God! Everyone raises their hands and responds with loud “Amen”s. Then they all get down on their knees and bow down in worship with their faces to the ground.

They stand up and Ezra starts to read. As he reads, puzzled expressions spread across many of the faces in the crowd - they are not used to hearing the words of the law. But Ezra is ready for this: he has his Levite teachers at his side and he sends them out into the crowds. Groups form around Jeshua, Bani, Sherebaiah, Jamin and the other teachers. They re-read sections of the law and then explain it all carefully to their groups. Understanding gradually comes and with it weeping too, for the people realise how far they have fallen far short of God’s holy standards.

The weeping does not last for long because Ezra and the Levites, along with Nehemiah, encourage the people. They say, “*This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.*” (*Nehemiah 8:9*) “*Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*” (*Nehemiah 8:10*). The weeping ceases, the people calm down and slowly walk away to prepare their feasts.

That night there were the most amazing celebrations all over Jerusalem. An atmosphere of great joy swept the city and the main reason was because they now understood the words that had been made known to them (verse 12).

This particular event turned out to be one of the most important in the history of the Jews, because as a result of it, something quite unique was established. A pattern developed in Jerusalem whereby the law was read and taught to the community over a three year period.

This school for the people took place on market days (Mondays and Thursdays). As the day’s trading drew to a close, the rams’ horns would blow and everyone would assemble for the reading and teaching of the law.

It has been described as “the first large scale programme of adult education in history.”<sup>6</sup> However, it is important to realise that this was in fact all-age learning, as we are told it included men, women and all who were able to understand (verse 2). This probably means that all children as young as twelve would have been there, and it is quite likely that children as young as six may have been there too at their parents’ discretion.

<sup>5</sup>Laurence O. Richards: *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* - article on teaching, Marshall Pickering (1982) p589

<sup>6</sup>In *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* - article on Education, Vol 12 p31

Why am I stressing this point? Simply because education in our experience is so often an alienating experience, dividing people into different age groups for their learning, whereas here we see an example of community education, drawing people together not only to learn, but also to celebrate the goodness of God.

### 1.3 The School of Jesus - Learning that transforms

The school of Jesus was so different from our concept of school today that we may ask whether we are justified in even calling it a school. The idea of school suggests something intentional as far as education is concerned; it suggests organisation. In the case of Jesus, He definitely had a plan to spread His teachings worldwide, and that plan necessitated training people. Under Jesus, there was definitely teaching and learning taking place, and certainly there was “transmission for transformation.” Jesus had aims and goals, and was expecting definite outcomes as a result of his educational programme. For these reasons I believe we can justifiably talk about “the school of Jesus.”

The key word which explains almost all we need to know about the school of Jesus is unquestionably *mathetes*, which means disciple or learner. This word is used 269 times in the New Testament. There are two associated verbs: *manthano* means to learn, and *mathetuo* means to make a disciple or a learner.<sup>7</sup>

What would it have been like to become a learner in the School of Jesus?

Imagine that you are going about your daily business in a Galilean town when Jesus comes by and calls out to you to come and follow and learn from Him. How will you react? You’ve heard about Him; you know He is a great teacher and a worker of miracles, but you have your job, your relatives, your reputation to think about. But there was something in those eyes, a love and a ‘knowing’ of you that draws you to Him. Was it just an invitation, or was it a command? You act on impulse, dash home, grab a few things in a knapsack and catch up with the mobile school of Jesus. You’re welcomed warmly and you’ve enrolled!

For a start it’s not static. It’s constantly on the move. It’s as if the whole world is Jesus’ classroom and Jesus is waking you up! You never knew that the flowers, the birds, the mountains, the fields and rivers were there to take delight in and to learn from. You never felt such deep compassion for the hungry, the sick, the demonized until you saw the compassion and the power flowing out from Jesus.

Then the people in His school are so different. For a start there are women around. That’s a real shock to the system! There they are on the road, always looking for ways they can serve the Master, and they have a way of thinking so deeply about what He says ... in fact those women are teaching you quite a lot!

You stop in a small town and a bunch of children want to come and listen to Jesus, but He’s in the middle of explaining something difficult to a scribe, so you try to shoo them off, but Jesus overhears you and comes striding over and tears you off a strip! “Don’t you dare stop the children from coming to me! The kingdom of God belongs to them and they’re welcome to join my school.” They clamber onto Jesus’ knee and he blesses them and they love his stories. One of the stories seems to sort out the scribe’s problem very easily!

It’s not just women and children in what, in normal circumstances, would be a Jewish men-only affair. There are all sorts of society’s rejects who are getting their equal opportunities to learn here - even prostitutes and drunkards and tax collectors get a look in. And there are even foreigners on the fringes, too.

<sup>7</sup>*Youngs analytical concordance to the Holy Bible*. Lutterworth Press. 8th Rev. Ed. (1939) Index lexicon, p79.

Classes are a bit unusual. Just occasionally you have a quiet, relaxed lesson with Jesus - He shares some deep things about His relationship with His Father or tells parables about the kingdom, or holds some question and answer sessions - but more often than not He gets into His stride and then something happens like the time the paralysed man was lowered down through the roof or the time that demonized guy suddenly started crying out. To you it seems like an interruption, but for Jesus it's as if it's still part of the lesson. He's healing the paralytic, but really it's all about forgiveness; He casts out demons, but it's about something bigger - the kingdom is advancing against the forces of evil. You notice that people even say after this: "What is this? A new *teaching* - and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey Him!"

You notice a sort of rhythm about Jesus' life - it's teaching and doing, doing and teaching. It's amazing watching carefully all that Jesus is up to, and yet it's not like watching a super-hero from a distance - *He's your friend!* He likes to have you *with* Him. His company is so refreshing!

You realise you are changing. His personality, His teaching is getting under your skin, and yet you don't feel He's violating your personality. You are becoming the person you were meant to be and you wish it was happening even faster! One day he says to you: *You know a student is going to become like his teacher.*

Your final memories are of Jesus as the suffering servant teacher. Other rabbis expected you to serve them, but He was always serving you. You remember Him, stripped to the waist, washing your sweaty feet, and the stunning conclusion to that lesson: *Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

You remember Him, stripped again, dying in agony on the cross and yet still teaching forgiveness and compassion.

You remember that last lesson on the beach, where He served you a breakfast of bread and fish.<sup>8</sup>

This brief glimpse into the school of Jesus shows some of the processes involved in the making of a disciple. It involved responding to a call, and leaving home to be with Jesus all the time. The object was to become like Him, and then to reproduce Him.

The adverb *with* is crucial. In his helpful study *Mentoring for Missions*, Gunter Krallman coins the term "witness" to describe the most essential element in the discipling process.<sup>9</sup> When Jesus chose the twelve apostles it was primarily that they might be with Him and secondarily that He might send them out (*Mark 3:14*). We could say that witness is the necessary prelude to witness.

The same vital adverb is there in *Acts 4:13*. The Sanhedrin had witnessed the confidence and the courage of Peter and John, who, though they were clearly unschooled, ordinary people, knew how to conduct themselves in this situation. It was beyond their understanding; they were astounded, and yet they took special note of the fact that these men had been *with* Jesus.

They may not have had the schooling that the Sanhedrin would consider normal, but they had experienced the school of Jesus, and that had equipped them in a way that no other school could have done. That hands-on, practical training with Jesus had prepared the disciples to relate to a wide variety of people and to all kinds of situations with bold confidence. In the school of Jesus, the poor and disadvantaged had been transformed and empowered.

<sup>8</sup>Much of this section has been in the form of imaginative reconstruction. The scriptures underlying it, include parts of:

*Matthew* chapters 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 21

*Mark* chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10

*Luke* chapters 5, 8, 10, 14, 23

*John* chapters 13, 18, 21

<sup>9</sup>Gunter Krallman: *Mentoring for Missions* Jenco, Hong Kong, GEM (1992)

#### 1.4 The school of Jesus - Learning that refreshes

Can you imagine a sign over a school gate or above a church door with the words “Come and learn here and you will be refreshed”? Most passers by would look at the words and think “Huh, that wasn’t my experience of school or church - it was BORING.” A few others might think to themselves “I thought school should be a place of hard work - weekends and holidays are the time for rest and refreshment.”

Yet this was essentially how Jesus advertised his school in his great invitation in *Matthew 11: 28, 29* “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*”

What is it that Jesus offers to the weary and burdened? Appropriately it is the most natural thing that a weary and burdened person would desire - rest. However, it is important that we understand the full meaning of this word, because it does not mean that those who come to Christ sit on deckchairs by the seaside for the rest of their lives!

The Greek word used to translate ‘rest’ here has at least three elements to it. Firstly it has the sense of ease. It relates directly to Jesus stating that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. If you have been backpacking you will know the marvellous experience of taking the backpack off, and how you suddenly feel so light that you could float off and walk another five miles! Once, when Jesus was giving the Pharisees a hard time, he said “*You experts in the law, woe to you because you load people down with burdens that they can hardly carry.*” (*Luke 11:46*) That’s the mark of the Pharisee teacher - lots of heavy expectations, dos and don’ts, demands and deadlines. How different with Jesus - he eases the burden from the shoulder. He takes away the tightness, the tension and the striving, for he knows we learn best when we feel relaxed and at ease with God, with each other and with ourselves.

A second element of the word ‘rest’ is that of refreshment. Peter was so right when he said that when we turn to God we are in for “times of refreshing” from the Lord. (*Acts 3:19*). When we come to learn from Jesus it’s like having a cool shower after a long, hot, sweaty journey. His teaching has a cleansing effect on our lives (see *John 15:3*) and after time in his classroom we know we have indeed been made fresh again.

A final element in the word ‘rest’ is that of *comfort*. Jesus draws alongside the weary and burdened in all their brokenness and pain and brings his comfort. Much has been said about the growing number of insecure and unhappy children in our classrooms and there is no doubt that this has an adverse affect on their ability to learn. They are often crying out for some expression of love from their teacher and the giving of some loving comfort will often give some children the motivation to overcome their frustrations and begin to learn.

The word comfort does not only imply the arm around the shoulder and the sympathetic word, but it literally means “with strength”, so true comfort gives that renewed motivation to continue to learn and to live.

Notice that when Jesus repeats his invitation in *Matthew 11:29* he adds the phrase “for your souls”. Christ centred teaching will always be for the whole personality and will reach the parts that other teaching methods cannot reach.

#### 1.5 Education: What are we talking about? - A possible conclusion

This study of education in the context of scripture highlights two contrasting approaches to education. One majors on the transmission of information and the other majors on transmission for transformation. If we are to follow the way of Jesus, we must choose the latter.

The transmission of information has its place, but it should be within the primary context of encouraging the transformation of people into the likeness of Christ.

In his book on Christian education, Lawrence Richards shows that the classroom model is totally inadequate for this sort of education.<sup>10</sup> He insists that it has to take place in an interpersonal context, because when likeness is the basic goal, the model or models are absolutely vital. Referring to *Luke 6:40*, he claims that “Christian education is concerned with helping people become what their teachers are.” For effective modelling to take place there must be, as there was in the school of Jesus, a variety of real life contexts where the teacher and learner are involved together.

## 2. Some examples of recent, non-formal, all-age education

### 2.1 The Offa’s Dyke Torch March

In the summer of 1989, I led a ten day walk which was called the Offa’s Dyke Torch March. The core team of six consisted of my wife, my father (aged 70), my son Joel (then aged 12), two other friends and myself. It was a wonderful experience to walk the 189 miles from Chepstow to Prestatyn. Our main focus was to pray for Wales and for reconciliation between England and Wales.

However, one of my lasting impressions is that it was a powerful learning experience for us all. As you might expect we learnt a lot about prayer and spiritual warfare, but we also learnt much about the character of God and the wonder of His creation. We learnt a great deal about ourselves as we faced personal and team challenges. We learnt a great deal from people we met and talked with along the way, and from those who gave us hospitality. It was fascinating to learn about the history and geography of the borderlands as we walked along.

I am convinced that we all learnt more in those ten days than we could have learnt in ten days in a classroom setting.

### 2.2 The Shepherd’s Community School field trip to Ireland

This field trip took place in July 1994. Forty nine people, representing fourteen nationalities and including children, teachers, parents, grandparents and other friends, had a week near Dublin when, in effect, they became an all-age learning community.

The purposes of the field trip were to increase in participants a sense of wonder and thankfulness for God’s creation; to appreciate that all of life belongs to God; to grow in the area of friendship; and to learn about Ireland.

In the feedback comments, people mentioned the joy of learning together. Exploring rock pools was especially popular! The success of the trip was enhanced through the build-up, creating a sense of anticipation and expectancy, and through follow-up, which included encouraging people to complete photo-journals. There was also a get-together, two months afterwards, during which we shared our memories and gave prizes for the photo-journals.

<sup>10</sup> Laurence O. Richards: *Christian Education* Zondervan (1975) p30

### 3. All-age Christian learning communities today

#### 3.1 Definition and goals

Christian community education may be defined as a process designed to help people in a community to relate to God, to themselves, to other people and to the world God has made by providing a range of learning, reflection and action opportunities.

The result of such a process should be people who therefore:

- love God with all their heart, soul and mind (*Matthew 22:37*)
- love others as they love themselves (*Matthew 22:39*)
- know how to be responsible stewards of creation (*Genesis 1:28*)
- seek to fulfil the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:20*)

and in so doing change communities and bring in the Kingdom of God. The concept is a flexible one which can be adapted cross-culturally and in the light of rapid social change.

#### 3.2 Historical precedents

There are some historical precedents for this model, the most striking of which is the all-age circulating schools of Griffith Jones in eighteenth century Wales. These schools, designed to teach the people to read and write in Welsh, raised the literacy rate from 20% to 80% in 40 years. The first Welsh Revival commenced four years after Griffith Jones opened his first school, and it is significant that chapel building invariably followed soon after one of his schools was established.

#### 3.3 Some features of an all-age learning community

An all-age learning community will be characterised by some of the following features.

- A resource centre with a varied selection of educational materials to suit different learning styles and age groups.
- The supported self-study concept, whereby students are taught how to learn for themselves.
- The use of computer-assisted learning.
- The community as a resource for learning.
- Teachers as tutors or mentors who guide students to the resources most appropriate for them.
- Tutors and students as disciples together, the tutors themselves model how to learn and how to be taught.
- Making use of experts for intensive focused learning weeks.
- Work experience and field trip weeks.
- Small businesses as part of the learning community.
- A strong emphasis on relationships and on the idea that learning is for life and life is for learning.



### 3.4 Contexts in which Christian learning communities might be established

Today, Christian learning communities might be established in some of the following contexts.

- In inner city churches as an extension and broadening of existing discipleship programmes.
- In rural churches, to bring communities together.
- In Christian language schools.
- In refugee camps.
- In countries with poor educational infrastructure and high unemployment.

## 4 The Shepherd's Community Education Project

The Shepherd's Community Education Project was set up in September 1992, with the object of establishing Christian all-age learning communities in a variety of situations. The purpose of each community, as outlined in section 3.1, would be to provide a context in which people would be helped to relate appropriately to God, to themselves, to other people and to the world God has made.

### 4.1 Strategy

The goal was to be achieved by:

- Recruiting a team
- Training the team (training missionary educators to fulfil the Great Commission)
- Establishing a model all-age learning community in S E London
- Sending out trained community educators to plant new learning communities

### 4.2 Factors affecting the project

In establishing the project, it would be necessary to bear in mind the following factors which seem likely to continue to affect education into the 21st century:

- The breakdown of relationships
- The influence of the media
- Ethnic diversity
- Rapid change
- Recession

### 4.3 The aims of the model

The model aimed to be:

- Thoroughly biblical

- Centred on relationships and community
- Transcultural
- Flexible
- Well organised

#### **4.4 Influences on the model**

Influences on this model included the following:

- The Levites as all-age community educators
- Jesus as a teacher of people of all ages
- Concepts of lifelong learning from the Czech educator John Amos Comenius (1592-1670)
- The all-age circulating schools of Griffith Jones of Llanndowrer (1683-1761)
- The village college concept of Henry Morris (1889 - 1961)

#### **4.5 The plans for the pilot all-age learning community in SE London**

The team's intention in establishing the all-age learning community in South East London was to extend the existing activities of the Shepherd's Community School, which catered for 3-11 year olds, by:

- attracting such groups as home educating families, unemployed and retired people to use school resources and to participate in certain courses with our pupils.
- encouraging a deeper level of involvement in varied learning activities by parents, grandparents and friends of existing families in the school (eg all-age drama productions).
- welcoming into the school adults who had not acquired basic literacy or mathematical skills, and encouraging them to learn alongside pupils, thus providing learning role models for younger children.
- setting up one or more small businesses to resource the project, train pupils and employ some single parents.
- setting up some after-school or Saturday learning activities to enable pupils from other schools, and those in regular employment, to experience some aspects of the all-age learning community.

#### **4.6 The development of the project**

The pilot project was launched early in 1994 with a four month course in Christian Community Education. The initial group was small, just six students enrolled, one of whom was subsequently able to stay in London.

A further part of the strategy was realised when a Family Learning Centre was launched successfully in September 1994. This consisted of two teachers and six families, four of whom were single parent families. However, without a bigger team, it was not possible to launch the all-age learning community as originally conceived.

The parents were pleased with their children's progress and they came in weekly to join in learning activities. A learning community with an even broader spread of ages was set up when some local home educating families agreed to join the group for a 'History of London' course. This course used the city as its classroom and made regular visits to relevant sites as it followed a historical sequence from Roman times to the present day.

In July 1996, it was decided that the Shepherd's Community School would have to close, chiefly because of staff shortages and major problems with the school building itself. As a consequence, the pilot all-age learning community project also came to an end.

It was encouraging to know that some of the students who joined the initial Christian Community Education course were able to apply principles of Christian community education in their own situations when they returned to their homes in Germany, and the Czech and Slovak Republics. In that way, the pilot project in S.E. London acted as a catalyst for these developments in other parts of Europe, even though it could not be established in its entirety in London.

It is hoped that there may be opportunities in the future for others to apply the key principles outlined in this section in a variety of contexts and so to establish Christian all-age learning communities in the UK and elsewhere as opportunities arise.



# Postlude

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.

The commandments of the Lord are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring for ever.

The ordinances of the Lord are sure  
and altogether righteous.

*Psalm 19: 7 - 9*

If you have any comments or contributions towards *Entry points - for Christian reflection within education* please write to:

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Details about *Entry points - for Christian reflection within education* can be found on CARE's web site: <http://www.care.org.uk/>