

SHIFTS IN  
CURRICULAR THEORY  
FOR  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*Peter P. De Boer*  
*Professor of Education, Calvin College*

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## *Foreword*

This is another in a series of monographs published over the years under the editorship of Dr. Donald Oppewal, Professor of Education at Calvin College. Each of them makes available to prospective and inservice teachers an aspect of the Reformed Calvinist perspective on the Christian day school. They have been authored by scientists, literary professors, and theologians, as well as by professional educators.

This one is written by an historian of education. Peter P. De Boer, holder of a doctorate in history of education from the University of Chicago, has been a member of the Calvin Education Department since 1962, and teaches both undergraduate philosophy of education and graduate history of education. In these pages he has drawn together the writings of a previous generation of Reformed thinkers, and rescued for the present generation ideas and documents either unpublished, or out of print, or not readily available to the Christian educator. In addition he has made interpretations of the writings of his contemporaries, offering the reader numerous insights into what they have sought to accomplish and how they have related to the past.

His patient historical research is evident in the extensive and explanatory End Notes which make available to the scholar the sources of his generalizations. This allows the manuscript to maintain a running commentary on the various tensions within the academic community over the goal and curriculum of the Christian day school, and the contribution each thinker has made.

As an historian his catalogue and critique of these thinkers, focusing on but not limited to curriculum matters, provides the professional educator and interested layperson with a quick overview of a tradition that has always taken Christian education as a serious project of the entire Christian community.

Donald Oppewal  
August, 1993

Others in the series are:

- *Roots of the Calvinistic Day School Movement*, by Donald Oppewal. 1963
- *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Literature*, by Stanley Wiersma and Merle Meeter. 1971
- *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching the Sciences*, by Russell Maatman and Gerald Bakker. 1971
- *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Religion and Biblical Studies*, by Dennis Hoekstra and Arnold H. DeGraaff. 1973

## *Shifts in Curricular Theory for Reformed Christian Education*

North American Calvinists associated with the Christian Reformed Church have always taken education seriously. One can point to a tradition of educated clergy, and a theological school begun in earnest in 1976 in Grand Rapids, Michigan; or a publishing house that for years has supplied not only the Christian Reformed Church but other orthodox evangelical churches with biblical study materials of high quality; or varieties of scholarly and semi-scholarly journals of Reformed comment and opinion, and the like. But the crowning educational glory of the North American Calvinist has been the schools -- Christian schools and Christian colleges -- where in increasing numbers believers and their children could learn more fully that not only they but the whole creation must "in Christ" or "enchristicly" <sup>1</sup> be reconciled to God.

From simple beginnings in the late nineteenth century, those schools reached an early age of maturity by the 1920's. Calvin College granted the bachelor of arts degree for the first time in 1921. About the same time the Calvinist Day Schools in the United States formed a National Union of Christian Schools with its own organ, the *Christian School Magazine*, and with II Timothy 3:17 on the masthead: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

To ground education for schools and colleges, North American Calvinists went to the Bible, especially for the concept of covenant. They looked to their theological tradition and its major creeds: Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dort. They looked to the Netherlands for the insights of Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, and Dutch schoolmasters who applied Bavinck's pedagogical principles to the classroom.

In spite of this rich tradition of insight and inspiration, by the 1940's and early 1950's there were Reformed Christian voices calling for a comprehensive philosophy of Christian education for college and the schools.<sup>2</sup> Spurred in part by that internal need, in part by what historians of the forties and fifties were to call the "Great Debate" in American education,<sup>3</sup> North American Calvinists spoke rather forcefully, albeit without total consensus, on a variety of educational issues including curricular theory.

From that period to the present, roughly some thirty years, others have joined the early protagonists in articulating a Reformed Christian perspective on curriculum for Christian education. My thesis is that the curricular principles developed in the give and take of the fifties have been transformed over time, with some toned down and others sharpened, and all together made much more concrete and useful for the sake of vital Reformed Christian education.

The study is divided into three parts. First, we will consider in detail some of the leading ideas proposed chiefly, though not exclusively, by W. Harry Jellema and Henry Zylstra. Second, we will examine the relevant thought of Cornelius Jaarsma, a contemporary of Jellema and Zylstra, whose ideas clash with theirs at several points. Finally, we will appraise the efforts of Nicholas Wolterstorff, Henry Beversluis, Geraldine Steensma, Harro Van Brummelen and others who have built on their predecessors, and who have reacted to those ideas and thereby enriched the tradition. Labels are always treacherous, though sometimes helpful. Jellema and Zylstra tend to fit a "Christian-traditionalist" mold; Jaarsma that of a "Christian-progressive." The others I shall call "Revisionists."

## *Christian Traditionalism*

One of the architects of a Christian philosophy of education was W. Harry Jellema. A product of the preparatory school of Calvin, Jellema joined the Calvin faculty in 1920. After a decade of teaching at Indiana University from the mid-thirties to the forties, Jellema rejoined the Calvin faculty in 1947 and played a dominant role there until his retirement in 1963.

In an essay entitled "Calvinism and Higher Education,"<sup>4</sup> Jellema argued that at the heart of modern educational theory for higher education in its secular as well as Protestant Christian forms were the assumptions that nature differs from culture and that the essence or moral choice is the choice for culture over against nature. Thus the general aim of modern higher education is "to raise the individual to the full measure of articulated rationality... and to arouse within the individual the will to culture."<sup>5</sup> Within such a framework, morality is cut loose from theology. Religion, merely a cultural product, though an expression of the most noble moral aspirations, becomes "a matter of a man's private attitudes and feelings on the questions that take us outside this life, questions of God and the hereafter."<sup>6</sup> Within those assumptions, the secular university had no quarrel with the churches for it welcomed their reinforcement of the will to culture and Protestant Christians offended no one with their denominational colleges as long as they comfortably expressed a common will to culture.

For Christian higher education, Jellema declared such a set of assumptions, such a mind, or *civitas* ("the articulation in human life of man's definition of the God he glorifies") in error.<sup>7</sup> Affirming that citizenship in some *civitas* is inescapable, Jellema posited the reality of the *civitas dei*, the kingdom of God.

For Jellema, the central aim of formal education in the *civitas dei* was not first of all developing skill at handling and modifying nature, nor in the willing of culture by expanding the content of human knowledge, nor even in the expansion of the pupil's knowledge of the cultural product, though all three of these were indispensable. At the heart of Christian higher education lay "the maturing, by all this of (the pupils) insight into the meaning and structure of the city as glorifying God, and in the deepening of his allegiance to it."<sup>8</sup>

Beyond understanding, then, was commitment. At the core of Christian education, for Jellema, there lay the education of the heart. Nonetheless, the chief activity that characterized Christian formal education was that of articulating clarifying, or distinguishing the *civitas dei* from the other kingdoms. Thus, if the gospel is to mean that God is glorified in all of life, then Christianity cannot be satisfied with the mere willing of culture. Instead, Christian colleges and universities are needed where "a company of loyal and capable citizens of the kingdom" exist who make it their business as scholars to discriminate between "the *civitas dei* as concretely articulated and projectible culturally and the kingdoms of the world ..."<sup>9</sup> In fact, said Jellema, unless such articulation were being done at the top, Christian formal education at any other level would make little sense.

Jellema specifically noted that discussion of applications to curricula and teaching were beyond the confines of his paper.<sup>10</sup> Yet implicit in his argument are at least these clues: the curriculum must contain the cultural products of rival kingdoms and Christian critique of those products.

In that regard, implicit also is a problem unresolved by the essay. For Jellema describes the "cultural activity" associated with any *civitas* as "eating and drinking, cobbling and carpentry, work and play, science and education, law and government, love and worship...." He added: "nothing human but enters

into the city."<sup>11</sup> Such scope might have suggested a curriculum for the schools of extraordinary breadth. Jellema meant no such thing.

He clarified the matter -- for the Christian college -- some few years later.<sup>12</sup> He charged that Calvin College at the outset had simply borrowed the curricular pattern of the state university and thereby unwittingly affirmed that education is for wisdom, wisdom being defined as "the ability so to use nature as to achieve position in society devoted to mastery over nature."<sup>13</sup> In the process Calvin achieved a curricular pattern neither general nor liberal; neither did it reflect "Reformed convictions."<sup>14</sup> Jellema wanted revision: "in the measure that we do not *curricularly* insure *liberal* education," he affirmed, "we withhold from the student the medium indispensable to *Christian* education."<sup>15</sup>

To amplify his claim, Jellema noted first that liberal education is defined by its aim; it aims at the human in each individual, at the intellectual and moral. Ultimately, said Jellema, at the intellectual for the sake of the moral. Jellema affirmed general agreement at Calvin College on the fundamental issue of aim, one which usually invoked II Timothy 3:17. He contended, however, that Calvin's problem was not agreement on aim, but translating such statement into curricular terms on which all could agree.<sup>16</sup>

Second, Jellema noted that in the name of liberal education, recent advocates of general education had protested curricular fragmentation and over specialization. Jellema found that remedy insufficient, since the drive for an education that was general tended to result in a mere cross-section of all modern knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Third, Jellema happily found in the old classical education the idea of another mind besides the modern. "What the classical tradition...contributed to the notion of liberal education," he maintained, "is most importantly the thesis that the modern mind is not the only significant and respectable objective mind, and that there is no a priori reason whatever for supposing the modern mind intrinsically superior."<sup>18</sup> Jellema could thus argue that since the Renaissance it is increasingly important to recognize the existence of a third major objective mind, the Christian; and it was not to be confused with either of the others, not assimilated to either.<sup>19</sup>

If a liberal education aimed at developing the man, and the intellect in man for the sake of the moral, for the sake of judgment, then Jellema averred, "to the development of the individual mind, intimate acquaintance with the major objective minds is indispensable."<sup>20</sup>

To get "inside" such minds -- all of them "modern" in the sense that they are actively at work in the twentieth century -- the liberally educated student must read the works of Lucretius, Homer, Cicero, Thucydides, Aeschylus, Plato, and others for the ancient; must know Paul, Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Thomas, Luther, Calvin, Dante, Newman, Kuyper, Bavinck and others for the medieval-Reformation-Christian mind; and know Hobbes, Mill, Fichte, Goethe, Nietzsche, Machievelli, Locke, Dewey, Spinoza and others for the modern. Such reading became truly "liberal" for Jellema only when the student learned "what it means to think, and to choose, and to define God and man, and right and wrong, and reality and appearance, and state and society, and justice and mercy, and the ends of science and business, and all the rest" with, say, a pre-Christian mind.<sup>21</sup> For only by coming to know how pagan, or modern, or Christian man did his thinking, living, believing and hoping -- an activity ultimately religious in character -- could one ever hope that the Christian student would be able to understand and operate within the Christian mind and be as religiously committed to as Plato or Dewey were committed to theirs.

Jellema also applied his theory to the Christian high school. As a member of the Educational Committee of the Grand Rapids Christian High School, Jellema reacted to a decision by the school

society to create a long-range planning committee (which tended to mean bricks and mortar and finances) by noting the equally urgent need to address internal academic matters which, he claimed, had been neglected or ignored for decades.<sup>22</sup>

Jellema argued that Christian secondary education is the education of covenant youth who are already "citizens of the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus." These youth are to be educated in the meaning of such citizenship "so that they may...live as citizens of that Kingdom, and may gradually come to know their responsibilities and to discharge them as a mature citizen ought."<sup>23</sup>

He maintained that, formally, all education seeks the same end: by and through the subject matter to mature the pupil as citizen of some kingdom; if not the Kingdom of God then some other.<sup>24</sup> All education in at least the West has the same curricular materials (the literatures, mathematics, history, and the like) at its disposal. The essential difference between Christian education and the others lay, he claimed, not with the materials for study but "in the kingdom."<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, to mature covenant youth in the meaning of their citizenship in the Kingdom of God, Jellema insisted that they must become familiar with the major forms of the alternative kingdoms "in their concreteness," familiar "with these as they take on substance and content by their use" of the curriculum.<sup>26</sup> Precisely how this would be done pedagogically Jellema did not say. He did warn that neither doses of moralizing, pious homilies, nor proscriptions of non-Christian authors were substitutes for a thorough exposure to elements (largely prescribed, with rigorously high standards) of a liberal education "for teaching what Christianity means, involves, implies."<sup>27</sup>

To maintain the highest standards of excellence and rigor, Jellema, the Christian traditionalist, made a significant curricular concession. He proposed a Christian high school curriculum differentiated into five divisions: the Liberal, the General, the Commercial, Industrial, and Domestic, the differences based on recognition of differing gifts.<sup>28</sup> The Liberal curriculum, not intended primarily as college preparatory, aimed at providing the student with the best introduction to the "objective patterns of reality" or "form" (the system of logos inherent in creation), and the meaning of special revelation.<sup>29</sup> However, since other students would find this too rigorous, Jellema devised four others: the General for those with fewer academic gifts whose future vocation was undecided, and the other three for students who wished very direct preparation for vocation.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, even these vocationally slanted courses of study -- over the four years of secondary education -- would demand at least two-thirds general education versus one-third time for the immediately vocational.

Jellema's ideas echoed in the writings of several of his associates. Henry Stob, a colleague in the philosophy department, argued<sup>31</sup> that the Christian is not only formed by God through His Word, and by the Church through her creeds, but by man and nature. In both man and nature God implanted structures, laws, patterns.

"These basic structures the school must disclose and with them form and patternize the student's mind, so that it takes on cosmic and universal proportions." Only then, argued Stob, would the student reach full Christian stature and be "enabled to press the full claims of Christ upon the world" as the student helped create a Christian society and culture.<sup>32</sup> Only such a liberal education would produce the complete man who, because formed and fashioned by every dimension of reality, would be whole and universal.<sup>33</sup>

Lambert Flokstra, in the education department, expressed similar thoughts.<sup>34</sup> Flokstra was fearful that the Christian school movement, now that it had entered its mature phase, would fall prey to forces within Christian education that might weaken the Reformed Christian's commitment to a curriculum

reflective of the whole of created reality (nature) and culture and the evaluation of both by Christian man who is "ineradicably religious."<sup>35</sup>

Flokstra acknowledged that the fall of man had tremendously complicated the cultural problem, yet he resolutely affirmed that

any concept of Christian education which neglects the world of nature as an educational medium must of necessity lead to asceticism and any view of Christian education which drives a wedge between religion and culture and which refuses to use the totality of culture in the educative process can no longer truly be called education.<sup>36</sup>

Broad as that mandate for curriculum making was, Folkstra, like Jellema and Stob, narrowed the curriculum by narrowing the aim of formal education. For Flokstra, Christian education must aim primarily at developing the individual in a person, by which he meant "man as connoted by his intellectual and spiritual qualities -the essentially human by which man is defined in the Christian sense and which differentiates him from other creatures." The other meanings of man were to be strictly subordinated to the rational-moral qualities. Hence, for Flokstra, Christian education must be liberal education through whose patterned program of studies one could develop a "cultivated intelligence" for the sake of "effective judgment."<sup>37</sup>

The junior member of this quartet of Christian traditionalist voices was Henry Zylstra, professor of English at Calvin for fifteen years before his death in 1956 while he was in his late forties. In an address at the Christian School Principals' Convention in 1950,<sup>38</sup> Zylstra asked: what is traditionalism in education really like (in contrast to the "cartoon" that a "nettled progressivist" might draw of traditionalism)? More than an assembly of physical, biological, and psychological phenomena, Zylstra maintained that traditional education rightly insisted that "man is an horizon in which two worlds meet, the natural and the spiritual." More importantly, traditional education held, wrote Zylstra, "that it is in his spiritual character that man's characteristically human nature consists. This is his uniqueness." Hence man lives "in two orders; he can penetrate phenomenal reality, sense experience, get behind them to universals laws, principles, causes, and ends." Consequently knowledge, science, philosophy are possible for man. "In fact," wrote Zylstra, "he seeks his freedom, his fulfillment as a human being, precisely in such progressively realized knowledge of reality." Then, identifying himself with traditionalism in education, Zylstra wrote

It is this uniqueness of the human being in the created order that we Christians know as man's lordship, or sovereignty, owing to the endowment, at creation, of the image of God. Such human freedom is the thing that gives culture its large importance, it being only mind that can make culture.<sup>39</sup>

The central idea of traditional education, "the idea of the free human mind by education progressively realizing the truth of reality" tended to clash with the "New Education" of John Dewey, Zylstra argued, because the New Education no longer made that assumption regarding man.<sup>40</sup> Clashing there, it clashed elsewhere, too: on the traditional idea that knowledge is more important than ability; on the traditional insistence that books, humane letters, the classics had educational value; on the importance of the three R's, foreign languages, and the like.

Regarding teacher education, Zylstra highlighted the traditional insistence that "the object of education is more important than the subject." He meant: because the teacher ought to be educated in the truth before he is trained in teaching, knowing history is more important than knowing Johnny. Zylstra resisted the "tendency...in our time" of instructing teachers in "psychology limited to empirically



observed data about pupils..." This, plus methods courses, conferred no "authority of mind, for it is the object of knowledge, rather than the pupil, the teacher, or the method, that must do the education." <sup>41</sup>

In a subsequent address before a Christian teachers' convention, <sup>42</sup> Zylstra urged that Christian schools be just that: schools, not churches, because they have their own reason for being. To that end he argued that schools must discipline the student in the "natural, cultural, historical, and spiritual life of man." To be Christian is to be human <sup>43</sup> and involved in the whole of reality. He held that

unawareness of any part of it, the failure to appropriate any part of it, to know it, and to judge it, and to refer it to a spiritual kingdom for justification, this by so much impoverishes our human expression of our Christian choice. <sup>44</sup>

Having boldly declared for the whole of reality, Christian education for Zylstra was still centrally liberal education, not vocational-technical education. Zylstra had no objection to including vocational technical studies in the curriculum of the Christian school so long as they were not regarded as adequate substitutes for the humanities, sciences, and social studies. <sup>45</sup> Vocational-technical studies were inferior to liberal studies because they did not as clearly as the arts and sciences express man's faith.

Consequently for curriculum, Zylstra argued that Christian schools must engage in liberal education. The liberal education would be Christian when teachers and pupils engaged mainly in the hard work of "proving or testing or trying" the ultimate loyalties and allegiances of whole cultures and the religio-moral choices of the men who made those cultures what they are. The student must learn to discern the "God behind the culture," the "dogma beneath the action, the soul in the body of the thing ...." Rather than get into the curriculum "everything...that has cropped up on the face of the earth," the schools must choose materials which exhibit "alternative gods, alternative moral choices." Then, by the activity of judging ("strengthening the moral sinews"), the student's choice for Christ, made before he came to school, would be reinforced and made "anew and always more consciously and more maturely." <sup>46</sup>

For Zylstra as well as for the others, the curriculum for colleges and schools must be limited largely to liberal studies, not because every student would be going on to college and university but because a liberal education was the best preparation for responsible citizenship in the kingdom of God. The curriculum must be truth-centered, which readily became identified with subject matter or the disciplines. The process of education was, most importantly though not exclusively, rational moral: truth had to be disclosed to the student so that in the light of such comprehensive knowledge of created reality the student would be led to judge the adequacy of the truth disclosed and to keep on choosing for God. In that process the teacher and student are active, but the activity is limited. The major accent falls on cultivating the "life of the mind," though mind was never to be understood as mere intellect. Behind the meaning of mind lay the education of the heart, though that point tended to get obscured. The actual curricular suggestions, with the exception of Jellema's, are never very specific. All four of these writers tend to survey Christian education from the top down. Hence, the curriculum principles suggested seem applicable at best to college and secondary education, and only by rather remote implication to the elementary levels.

### *Christian Progressivism*

In 1947, the same year that saw the return of W. Harry Jellema to Calvin from Indiana University, Cornelius Jaarsma joined the Calvin faculty as professor of education. No stranger to Calvin, Jaarsma had attended the preparatory school before becoming a Christian elementary school teacher and

principal. He taught at Montclair State Teachers College in New Jersey, was Dean of Instruction at Slippery Rock State Teachers College in Pennsylvania, and taught at Wheaton College before being invited to Calvin to supervise the secondary education program and teach psychology of education. Before joining the Calvin faculty he had published several articles and book reviews in the *Calvin Forum*, a monthly Calvin faculty publication begun in the mid -thirties.

Within a few years of his arrival, Jaarsma published in one volume some forty addresses and essays on Christian education, including several of his own, reflecting Reformed Christian thought over the previous thirty-five years. It was not a comprehensive philosophy of education, yet it gathered together some of the best that had been said on the subject.<sup>47</sup> A reviewer perceptively noted that though the ideas found in the first sections of the book -- on basis and aim of Christian education -- were familiar, material in the third section dealing with program and curriculum (much of it written by Jaarsma) was not as well known. There, wrote the reviewer, the authors "grapple with the findings and experiments of progressive education and of psychology believing that they have insights and implications" for Christian education.<sup>48</sup>

These views were indeed not as well known. Among many of the older leaders of the Christian school movement in America there was an acquaintance with the work of the eminent Dutch theologian and philosopher Herman Bavinck, including his *Pedagogical Principles* (1904), partly because many of these leaders were either educated in the Netherlands or could read Dutch.<sup>49</sup> To keep alive that tradition, in the wake of Americanization, several members of the Calvin faculty (including W. Harry Jellema) translated the book *Distinctive Features of the Christian School* by T. Van Der Kooy, principal of the Christian school in Vlaardingem, Holland.

In the book Van Der Kooy explains and then extends to the classroom the implications of Bavinck's principles of education. Van Der Kooy noted that the purpose of Christian education is

the fashioning of the whole man...heart, intellect, and will, with an eye to the whole of a man's life. Education is concerned with more than mere knowledge; the heart, too has its rights. ...The heart above all must be won for God and his service; the ultimate purpose in all education must be true piety.<sup>50</sup>

Further, since the child is created in the image of God, the end of education is not merely piety, but knowledge and culture, with no one-sided emphasis on any of these permissible. In methodology Van Der Kooy urged that educators discover the laws of child psychology, for to "rear the child the way he should go" demanded that the way of the child must first be known.<sup>51</sup> This meant that the child must be "spurred on to self-activity...his soul must be in action and ...completely engaged in the learning process." Concluded Van Der Kooy, "the Christian school cannot possibly ignore the need for self -activity" because "the pupil is just as much an active being as a receptive being." Therefore Christians should avoid the extreme of receptivity where the teacher does all the talking, and the extreme of "self -initiative" learning where seeking knowledge is more important than finding it.<sup>52</sup>

Three years later two members of the Calvin faculty translated a book in the same series as the Van Der Kooy volume, this one entitled *Christian Education: A Summary and Critical Discussion of Bavinck's Pedagogical Principles*, by J. Bredeveld. In his discussion of the child Bredeveld noted that though Herman Bavinck had little use for experimental psychology, he did not deny the value of psychology.<sup>53</sup> It was Bavinck's inadequate understanding of psychology, argued Bredeveld, that caused him, in speaking of "aim" in education, to take into consideration inadequately the "different stages in youthful development." If he had, Bredeveld concluded, "psychology would naturally have received more appreciative attention than it did."<sup>54</sup>

"I have been urging the psychological study of the child in the process of being educated," wrote Bredeveld in the 1920's.<sup>55</sup> It was Professor Jan Waterink, of the Free University of Amsterdam, who took up that task on behalf of Christian education.<sup>56</sup> It was, in part, this Reformed Christian tradition -- begun with Bavinck and the Dutch schoolmasters on through Waterink -- that Cornelius Jaarsma attempted to revive in the 1950's.<sup>57</sup>

Jaarsma argued<sup>58</sup> that, concurrent with the rise of Christian schools in the Netherlands and the United States, secular educational theory and practice began to launch out independent of both theology and philosophy, a trend best seen in John Dewey "who reduced all philosophy to educational theory and dismissed all theology as an obstructive influence in education."<sup>59</sup> It was Herman Bavinck who recognized that Christian education "could not remain indifferent to ... the contributions of psychological research to education." Consequently, wrote Jaarsma, Bavinck, near the end of his life, "set himself ... to give the maturing science (of education) the guidance...it needed." Jan Waterink built on the foundation of Bavinck, suggested Jaarsma, bringing Christian education to the point where it "is a field of research and practice which must be allowed the privilege of maturity if it is going to do for our Christian schools what needs to be done."<sup>60</sup>

What had to be done was point the way out of a dilemma. As Jaarsma saw it

In our country we, in our Christian schools, have been caught between an intellectual tradition and pragmatic revolution in education, not ready to renounce the former, and surely not ready to adopt the latter. Our classrooms are today predominantly the former toned down by the influence of the latter with an earnest desire to have Christian education, which is neither of the two.<sup>61</sup>

Reflecting on both European and American educational history, Jaarsma saw a traditional ideal of acquiring and assimilating ideas. He saw a more recent activist ideal associated with John Dewey and progressive education. He suggested that if the Christian had no choice, he must choose the traditional ideal, for the modern ideal was fraught with "license and chaos." But Christian educators have a choice, he said, one which integrates respect for subject matter or truth with psychologically sound insights about child growth and development.<sup>62</sup>

This integration-transformation can occur for Christian education, Jaarsma argued, if we first admit that education is a normative science, one which legitimately draws on the insights of psychology and sociology as well as philosophy and theology. Drawing on those sciences, from secular as well as Christian sources, Jaarsma sought to develop a science of Christian education that had neither "knowledge-getting" nor "discipline of the mind" as its ideals (though they were not excluded), nor adjustment to the environment as an ideal (though that too was "necessary when understood rightly"). The alternative ideal, said Jaarsma, is "personal in character."<sup>63</sup>

Jaarsma developed a scriptural anthropology which affirmed that man is a religious being, and therefore also rational, moral, social, esthetic, free, and responsible. As religious being, man is a two-fold organic unity: in person and personality. In terms of "person" man is a unity of body and soul whose life principle is "spirit" (or "the breath of God in man".) As person man is the "Self-expression of God on a creaturely level." But the unity of "person" was not to be considered apart from "personality," that is, from the unity of person or organism in the context of its environment, society, or life. "A child is a person at birth." said Jaarsma "and develops into a personality as he in the process of living identifies himself with certain areas of activity."<sup>64</sup>

Man, prior to the fall, was a perfect two-fold unity. God created the perfect man in a perfect creation. Though, due to sin, the two-fold unity of person-personality was "badly distorted," the principle of unity has been maintained, said Jaarsma. God continues to call each of us to perfection, to holiness, and wholeness. Thus the goal of education for Jaarsma was clear: we must form or nurture the "perfect personality." In this sense, Christian education was personal in character.<sup>65</sup>

Jaarsma's anthropology permitted him to drink from the wells of both traditional and modern education as long as the water was properly filtered. Christian education could cultivate self-expression, as long as the Christian understood this as man's task to be the Self-expression of God. Christian education could appreciate Dewey's insight into the relation of psychologically organized learning for the elementary school and more logically organized learning for the secondary school, because now the Christian better understood human development and the meaning of the text, "when I was a child, I spake as a child...." Christian education could now appropriate Dewey's notion that there existed an organic relation between education and experience, because Christian education aimed at restoring the two -fold unity of person ("the whole person") and personality ("the whole -person-in-life").<sup>66</sup>

This unity also meant that the older tradition which spoke of man in terms of distinct functions such as knowing, willing, and loving, may have been helpful for theological discussion, said Jaarsma, but furnished "no ground for psychological and educational thinking." In education, he maintained, "we are always forming the whole person into a personality. We are never training the intellect or the mind, so to speak."<sup>67</sup>

The two-fold unity also meant that man is "a self-determining being who learns by acceptance." For Jaarsma, learning was a process in which a person, who had "felt" or internalized needs (both inherent and acquired), would learn if and when his needs were satisfied and thereby accepted. But the need had to be felt or recognized, or there would be no "learning as acceptance." When felt, the need would motivate the child to "self-determining action." Thus Jaarsma appropriated the modern law of readiness, the doctrine of interest, and other theories of motivation, for he believed that "the Bible clearly teaches us that truth understood and accepted" forms man into what he should be.<sup>68</sup>

Unlike the Jellema-Zylstra approach, with its emphasis on the rational -moral, Jaarsma never tired of stressing that education is concerned with "man as a whole."<sup>69</sup> The whole person in all his resources is created to be patterned after the excellences of his Creator. This was man's supreme task before the fall. In spite of man's voluntary act of disobedience, man can again be patterned after his Creator's excellence because God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. But Jaarsma's understanding of the theology of reconciliation led him to this conclusion:

Education must be now be redemptive. It must cultivate the individual in all his resources in keeping with the awful reality of sin and all its tragic consequences and the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus that delivers him from the human tragedy to be made responsive to the truth and to be formed...after it.<sup>70</sup>

Man's primary need -- the child's primary need -- was, for Jaarsma, redemption. Hence, he judged, education's primary aim must be redemption.

Unfortunately Jaarsma tended to speak of redemption in fairly narrow, soteriological terms. In an essay entitled "Teaching According to the Ways of Child Life" he advised that Reformed Christians not abuse the doctrine of the covenant by being lulled into a false sense of security. "Covenant youth too must be converted. The 'repent ye' comes to them too."<sup>71</sup> Such language, though not common among Reformed Christians associated with the Christian Reformed Church,<sup>72</sup> might have been acceptable as

long as the speaker directed such a task primarily to home and church. Jaarsma saw no need to limit the narrow redemptive thrust of education to home and church:

To lead (covenant youth) to a decision for Christ is the goal of Christian education...in the school as well as in the home and the church. To underestimate the magnitude of this great task by excluding it from the school as a major objective is to undermine the very foundation of Christian education.<sup>73</sup>

Jaarsma's penchant for thinking about Christian education in such a unitary manner along narrowly redemptive lines might still have been somewhat more acceptable had he a broader vision of the "cultural medium" which he assigned to the schools. Instead, he seems to drive a wedge between piety and culture. He argued that available to Christian schools are organized bodies of knowledge arranged in the familiar patterns of subject matter. The disciplines are the "fruit of cultural and spiritual activity through the ages."<sup>74</sup> That is, over time secular man, reacting to nature, produced culture and organized the results into the curricula of the schools. Yet Christian man, Jaarsma said, in his pursuit of a Christian approach to subject matter, must realize that his response to God is not merely confined to cultural activity alone but to "spiritual activity, in distinction from...cultural activity." Man acts spiritually when he responds to "God himself as he comes to us in his Word, in Jesus Christ...and in the Holy Spirit...." He added, "And it is precisely his spiritual activity that gives direction to his cultural activity."<sup>75</sup>

The distinction is indispensable for comprehending Jaarsma's cautious approach to curriculum. It reflects Jaarsma's understanding of a theme that appears in Christ's prayer as found in John 17, especially verses 15-19, a favorite theme in Christian education: that one is to be in the world, though not of it. For Jaarsma, to be in the world was to be involved constantly in a "mixed" culture - - in a world full of enmity to Christ. Nonetheless the Christian must "fill his place in this world in keeping with God's will for him and abide God's time for his deliverance." Therefore always in tension, in struggle, while longing to be delivered, the Christian must work at "making the claim of Christ upon his life effective." To guarantee victory in this cultural struggle, the Christian must act spiritually, must "cultivate a personal fellowship with God in Christ."<sup>76</sup>

So, Jaarsma reasoned, in education we are concerned with the whole man, in all his resources, whose primary need since the fall of man is "his personal restoration of fellowship with God. He must be saved." He said:

To achieve that aim the media (curriculum) at our disposal must be employed to realize the meaning of a saved life for this world and the world to come. ...To be subjects of Christ in this world, this is our citizenship. Our curriculum materials must be selected to cultivate this citizenship.<sup>77</sup>

To reinforce the narrow purview of the selection process, Jaarsma offered these criteria for inclusion of subject matter from the fields of religion, language arts, philosophy, historical sciences, social sciences, natural sciences, and creative arts: (1) the materials selected are to "cause the learner to face God" so that the learner "may come consciously to submit" to God's demands upon his life. "Heart attitude" or "heart acceptance," said Jaarsma, is the primary objective; (2) the materials selected must help insure "victory over the evil in our cultural activity...;" and (3), the curriculum must offer guidance to the pupil so he can be of service as a worker in this world.<sup>78</sup>

To reinforce his notion that learning from a scriptural point of view meant acceptance in the heart,<sup>79</sup> Jaarsma advocated a unified curriculum, or a curriculum composed of "unified areas of learning."<sup>80</sup> He

justified this integrated, or multidisciplinary form of curricular organization on the basis of his theories of learning and child development:

Acceptance in the heart ... can come only when life is seen coherently. Facts can be memorized in isolation, skills and ideas can be acquired in compartments, and logical thinking can be developed in academic areas of study, but to surrender to and take possession of (for this is what acceptance really means) requires a grasp of coherent relationships of life in its wholeness.<sup>81</sup>

Much of this found ready acceptance among Christian school leaders. Jaarsma was secretary of the denomination's Committee on the Principles of Education where his thinking is clearly reflected.<sup>82</sup> He played a prominent role at the National Union convention in 1956, with its theme of "Balanced Emphasis in Education." His report of a sectional meeting at the convention on "Balance in Principle and Objective" is vintage Jaarsma. In the midst of a growing Holland Christian High controversy and a maturing "Great Debate" over the anti-intellectual afflictions of modern education, Jaarsma affirmed that "Intellectual training centers" failed to operate according to the ways of child life and development.<sup>83</sup> When a Christian high school principal sought to defend the introduction of industrial arts, he appealed to the authority of Jaarsma.<sup>84</sup>

But at the college, much of Jaarsma's thought must have been distressing, especially to those traditionalists who addressed the issues of Christian philosophy of education in a liberal arts context. Jaarsma's respect for the sciences of psychology and sociology as major sources for a science of Christian education probably appeared to short-circuit theology and philosophy. His emphasis on the unity of the person, the education of the whole man, and the primacy of love, probably sounded anti-intellectual.<sup>85</sup> His insistence that Christian education was redemptive probably appeared to short-change the creational, cultural, this-worldly emphasis long associated with Calvinism. Hence, to some, he probably sounded like a pseudo-Calvinist, pietist, or even a Fundamentalist. His efforts to coin or adapt language for describing a science of Christian education probably sounded like the jargon of an educationist. His interest in the laws of child growth and development<sup>86</sup> made his efforts seem too child centered.<sup>87</sup>

In an era of wholesale criticism of American education and the search, among Reformed Christians, for distinctively Christian approaches to education, Jaarsma's effort to resurrect some old and previously respected ideals in Christian education, to reconstruct, reshape, and thereby appropriate some modern American concepts, and to build thereupon a biblical normative science of Christian education met, at best, with mixed reaction. The differences between Christian traditionalism and Jaarsma's Christian-progressivism begged for resolution.

### *Christian Revisionism*

#### **Wolterstorff**

During the past twenty years Nicholas Wolterstorff, professor of philosophy at Calvin College, has had a strong influence on the educational thought of Reformed Christians. Not only has he staked out much of the territory, he has platted some of the major sub-divisions. Wolterstorff, as we shall see, did none of this single-handedly, and much of his work represents a refinement of themes found in the work of writers already described. But among those I choose to call Revisionists, he has been a major figure in pointing the way.

It all began in 1961 when a youthful Wolterstorff, not yet thirty years old, suggested<sup>88</sup> that in the Reformed higher educational community -- now enlarged to include Dorcht College in Iowa and Trinity Christian College in Illinois -- though there was agreement that Christian education centrally involved making the Reformed Christian faith articulate, nonetheless a strong feeling persisted that such a goal was not being met.

For symptoms of dysfunction Wolterstorff noted that some students complained they were being catechized instead of taught; that the problems considered in the schools were not contemporary but arose from out of the confines of the Reformed tradition; that the old answers proffered did not fit the present world. Teachers complained that the students were passive: they merely memorized their lessons; real thought was alien to them. Supporters of the schools complained that the Reformed Christian educational system was unproductive, "yielding neither any fresh understanding of the past, nor any creative contributions for the future."<sup>89</sup>

Wolterstorff argued that the symptoms were consequences of the then predominant Reformed Christian approach to education. He called this the "Understanding approach."

He alleged that in the Reformed community the belief existed that to understand ourselves we must understand our culture, especially our past: "We must go to history. For we are not weightless beings. The pull of history belongs to us."<sup>90</sup> Hence, to unravel a piece of his inheritance the Reformed Christian had been encouraged to study, say, the Greeks. He was urged to learn "what it means to think and choose as a Greek, what it means to define right and wrong, and state and society, and love and justice, and the ends of science and art, when one thinks as a Greek."<sup>91</sup> And the Reformed Christian was to do the same with the thought of the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the modern era, and his own Calvinist tradition. In all this activity, this getting "inside" the thought or mind of whole peoples, cultures, and traditions, intellectual history played a dominant role. In fact, according to Wolterstorff, the Understanding approach regarded intellectual history as the "foundation of learning."<sup>92</sup>

According to Wolterstorff, this approach affirmed that beyond understanding lay commitment. From out of a survey of such minds, by pitting, say, the "mind" of Plato against the Christian "mind", the Understanding approach hoped that the Reformed Christian student would come to see that Plato's "mind" and the Reformed Christian "mind" were not only different, but would come to choose the Christian mind. In this sense, Christian education was an "interplay of understanding and commitment," to the end that the student would come to understand himself.<sup>93</sup>

Wolterstorff spoke of the Understanding approach as excellent and inspiring, but he felt it was "not quite" the correct view. In addition to the aim that the student get to understand himself, Wolterstorff wanted education to help make him "creative."<sup>94</sup> This he called the "Creative approach."

All Reformed Christian education, said Wolterstorff, must be refocused. It must now be aimed at the end of plunging in and contributing to the historical process. All Reformed Christian education must help "get our Christian community, as a whole, to make creative contributions to the culture of the twentieth century," thereby implementing the Reformed Christian vision.<sup>95</sup> Education, he insisted, must not be a passive, absorbent process; the student "must be forced into activity and creativity." To reinforce his point he used these telling similes: "Education should not be like filling a kettle with water. It should be like lighting a fire under the kettle."<sup>96</sup>

Wolterstorff's essay clearly pointed to new horizons. And the new horizons put some distance between Wolterstorff and the Understanding approach of which he was critical, an approach which one can closely identify with Jellema, more loosely identify with ZyIstra and the other Christian

traditionalists. For Reformed Christian education, ultimately there had to be commitment. Wolterstorff acknowledged that the Understanding approach intended commitment. Yet he seems to have sensed that commitment itself, in the Understanding approach, was vaguely defined, and would be reached ineffectively if Christian education continued to emphasize chiefly the rational -moral dimensions of curriculum. For the moment, Wolterstorff now called "Creative" whatever lay beyond understanding. His use of the term seemed to entail a combination of the Aristotelian notions of the practical and the productive, aimed at choosing to "do" the Christian life in the twentieth century in a more theoretically active, involved, and productive manner.

Wolterstorff continued to light fires. In 1963 Calvin College commissioned a Curriculum Study Committee, chaired by Wolterstorff, to reform the college's curriculum. On the way to affirming a so-called "Disciplinary view of Christian liberal arts education," the Committee rejected two views said to be "current" in both the Reformed Christian community and the evangelical Christian community generally.

The first was called a "Pragmatist view" of Christian liberal arts education, a view, said the Committee, "structured in terms of the practical problems facing contemporary men" in which the logically organized disciplines had to be "unpacked, reorganized, and brought to bear on the solution of significant life problems."<sup>97</sup> The Committee rejected the Pragmatist view, though they conceded that the knowledge that a liberal arts education provides should be of "some use" in solving practical problems. Yet such was not, in their estimation, the most legitimate reason for acquiring knowledge.<sup>98</sup>

In like manner the Committee rejected the "Classicist view" of Christian liberal arts education whose aim, they said, is the development of a "wise and cultured man" by virtue of his being "patterned and disciplined by objective reality." So disciplined, according to this view, the student would be "ready for anything whatsoever."<sup>99</sup> The Committee found the Classicist view "enormously attractive," containing "many emphases" the Committee wished to adopt. Yet, "as a whole" the Committee rejected this view, too.<sup>100</sup>

Among the reasons the Committee gave for rejecting this view is its passivity. The Committee judged that the Classicist view put all its emphasis on understanding and judging culture rather than on contributing to culture. According to the Committee the Reformed Christian community was called to "build a culture," which meant, in part, that the college faculty itself must "develop the various disciplines" and, as corollary, "educate new generations for productive and creative work in the various disciplines."<sup>101</sup>

Against that background, the Committee maintained that the primary focus of a Christian liberal arts education should be "on teachers and students together engaging in the various scholarly disciplines, directed and enlightened in their inquiries by the Word of God."<sup>102</sup> This they called the "Disciplinary view" of the Christian liberal arts. By "disciplinary" they meant the theoretical study of some aspect of reality. To avoid falling into the "Pragmatist" camp they called for "disinterested" theoretical study, that is, study neither primarily nor restrictively aimed at concrete, practical issues.<sup>103</sup>

In their defense of the Disciplinary view, in their justification for the legitimacy of disinterested inquiry, the Committee appealed to the doctrine of creation, and specifically to the cultural mandate of Genesis 1 and 2, and Psalm 8 which commands, they said, that man must not only put creation but himself in God's service.<sup>104</sup> This cultural task, a general call to build a Christian culture, especially asks of Christian higher education to develop the various disciplines<sup>105</sup>



To justify so restrictive a view of Christian liberal arts education, the Committee argued that such an education would instill in students "habits of reasoning and attitudes of mind" that represent intellectual competence. Also, a Christian liberal arts education would likely produce leaders and perceptive followers in the task of building a Christian culture "by training 'them' to make informed Christian evaluations and to pass solid judgments on...society and culture...." Further, the Committee argued that to prevent the Reformed Christian community from being victimized by its ignorance, as many people as possible in the community must be enabled to understand the results of theoretical thought, especially the religious presuppositions of all culture producers. Finally, the Committee argued that their approach would form and deepen the Reformed Christian's appreciation of "man's and God's artistic creations."<sup>106</sup>

This disinterested theoretical inquiry, done extensively by way of a core of liberal studies, and intensively by programs of concentration (majors), according to the Committee would be "the best way to prepare a wide range of young people for living the Christian life in contemporary society."<sup>107</sup> For both core and concentration, the means (disinterested theoretical study) and the goal (living the Christian life) were identical.

Wolterstorff, chairman of the Committee, is acknowledged to be the "chief architect" of the study committee's report.<sup>108</sup> Though the Report is not his alone, it seems to represent an elaboration of the Creative approach which Wolterstorff had affirmed earlier, perhaps muted somewhat by the "formative" influence which the Christian traditionalist thought of both Jellema and ZyIstra is said to have had on the final shape of the Report.<sup>109</sup>

Wolterstorff continued to grow as did the scope of his Creative approach. In 1966 he was asked to deliver a major address at the annual convention of the Association of Christian School Administrators. Wolterstorff entitled his address, "Curriculum: By What Standard?"<sup>110</sup> Here, free to speak to the whole range of curriculum, not just Christian higher education, Wolterstorff boldly steered a course that on the one side both embraced Christian traditionalism and sharply attacked it, and on the other, whether consciously intended or not, showed remarkable appreciation for some of the major themes in the Christian progressivism of Cornelius Jaarsma.

By way of introduction, and before speaking about Christian man, or Reformed Christian man, Wolterstorff spoke of man in general. He described man in general as both a creature of consciousness who must learn "what is the case" and a creature of action, of "free, reasonable action." In both senses, of learning what, and learning how, man learns many things unavoidably. Yet because man is a free agent, he can also choose to learn. Choosing to learn, man must express preference, must select what it is he will learn.<sup>111</sup>

In an astonishing passage, because so at odds with Christian traditionalism, Wolterstorff suggested that teaching in the schools "must always have its face toward the student. It must answer to his needs.... The curriculum of a school must be set by reference to what it is aiming at with respect to the student."<sup>112</sup> More specifically, Wolterstorff argued that because the student is also a person, education in the schools must be of worth and significance to him "outside the school as well as inside." Schooling is not an end in itself. "It must be undertaken for the sake of life as a whole." Hence Wolterstorff called for a curriculum that provided a "deliberately aimed-at carry over, from life in the classroom to life outside the classroom."<sup>113</sup> Curriculum, then, must address the needs of the learner and equip him for life -- "for life outside the school as well as inside, in the future as well as the present."<sup>114</sup>

Against that background, Wolterstorff narrowed his focus by addressing a curriculum aimed at equipping the learner to live the Christian life as understood by Reformed Christians. He sketched out

five overlapping concepts by which one may conceive of the Christian life: the life of man, a human being; the life of faith; the life of someone who is member of the Christian community; the life to be lived in the midst of ordinary human society; and the life engaged in helping carry out man's task of cultural dominion. It is by at least these standards or perspectives, Wolterstorff implied, that one must choose curriculum for Reformed Christian education.

The new directions, which Wolterstorff signaled earlier for Christian higher education, are now expressed with greater clarity and certainty.

In "the life of a man, a human being," Wolterstorff rejected the view that the Christian life is the life of a "mind, a rational-moral principle" somehow imprisoned in flesh. Rather, he stressed man's unity, his wholeness. He therefore affirmed that Christian education must not aim merely at the development of rational-moral capacities as if these were the only genuinely worthy capacities. Instead, he said, we must educate for the full life of man, including his physical well-being.<sup>115</sup>

In "the life of faith," Wolterstorff rejected the view that faith in God is to be identified with believing propositions about God. Rather, faith is believing in a person, entailing confidence, trust, obedience, and service. He therefore argued that Christian education failed its true end if it aimed at passive contemplation rather than active service.<sup>116</sup>

In "the life of someone who is a member of the Christian community," Wolterstorff rejected the individualistic notion that the Christian life is to be lived by isolated, self-sufficient persons. Instead, man as disciple must live as "an organic member of the community of believers," a community whose bond is not psychological or social, but "the bond of sharing a common faith and the bond of depending on each other for the performance of a common task." So he argued that Christian education must aim at preparing its young citizens for membership in such a community "so that the community may perform its full-orbed task on earth." As a consequence, he urged that the Christian community cease seeking to "turn out every student from a common mold." Rejecting conformity, respecting freedom, the community must "prize that which is unique in each student." He also warned that Christian schools beware of becoming merely college preparatory schools. "The curriculum of the Christian school must equip its students for their future lives no matter what occupations they eventually choose."<sup>117</sup>

In both the "life...to be lived in the midst of ordinary human society" and the "life engaged in helping to carry out man's task of cultural dominion," Wolterstorff is fully expressive of the confident Calvinist tradition of affirming the need to understand and to judge the "ultimate loyalties and allegiances" of contemporary thinkers in all their cultural manifestations. Echoing Zylstra, Wolterstorff stated that "the life of the redeemed is a life of serving God in the whole range of cultural tasks. Not Christ or culture. Not even Christ and culture. Christ *through* culture is what we must seek."<sup>118</sup> But here, as he did already in 1961, he called for a "heavy stress on creativity." The task of building a Christian culture, for Wolterstorff, entailed such "creative" pedagogical means as encouraging students to discuss rather than relying on lecture and drill, encouraging them to think matters through rather than giving them pat answers. Students must "think and speak out for themselves, as Christians," he wrote. "It is nothing...but a grossly unwarranted hope that students trained to be passive and non-creative in school will suddenly, upon graduation, actively contribute to the formation of Christian culture."<sup>119</sup>

Wolterstorff, in the speech, clearly seems intent on staking out a middle way, drawing on the best of both Christian traditionalism and Christian progressivism. The cutting edge of the speech is practical and productive, calling for all the careful choices that go into a Christian life worth living, and for products or signs that a kingdom is being built.

Undoubtedly the speech was enormously stimulating for curriculum making, but it does have a serious fault. Except for the parameter that the curriculum be expressive, for Reformed Christians, of the Christian life as lived by Reformed Christians, it knows no bounds. Its principles of selection are so general, so all-inclusive, as not to serve a teacher or administrator with advice about what is more or less basic, more or less significant, more or less relevant within any of the five "windows" on the Christian life.

The problem of priorities the Christian traditionalists had solved, in a sense, by positing the importance of a liberal arts curriculum. Thus someone like Henry Zylstra could affirm on the one hand that for the Reformed Christian there are no bounds for his investigative mind. The whole created universe was there for the taking, as it were, because God the Creator planted all of it. But the curricular means to tilling and harvesting all that acreage, for Zylstra, was restricted for the most part to the liberal arts and sciences. Through the rational-moral activity of knowing and judging, the liberal arts and sciences would yield quality fruit. Any other kind of curriculum would be less rewarding.

For Jaarsma, the Christian progressive, the problem of priorities was solved by the limited nature of the vision. His principles of curricular selection were sufficiently constrictive as to instruct the Christian educator in the way he should go. One does not need a full, rich, curriculum to cause the learner to face God. If victory over the evil in a mixed culture is one's aim, then Christian educators had better be cautious.

But Wolterstorff clearly rejected Jaarsma's curricular caution. He also seems to reject the Christian traditionalist's predilection for liberal arts. In doing so, he seems to have left the door open for a broad curriculum aimed at helping the student live the Christian life in contemporary society. But how broad is not clear.

## **Beverluis**

At this point, Nicholas Henry Beverluis<sup>120</sup> entered the camp of the Revisionists. In 1971 he published, under the auspices of the National Union of Christian Schools (now Christian Schools International), *Christian Philosophy of Education*.<sup>121</sup>

Beverluis intended consensus for Reformed Christian thought about education. The little book is a remarkable effort to achieve agreement among the differing views on education that we have presented thus far, by taking the best of Christian traditionalism and grafting it to the best of Christian progressivism. His approach was to draw from both the "most basic, most strategic, and most generative" aims and strategies. Leaving to other educators the details of procedures and implementing practices (or the how and when questions), Beverluis went after what he called "first order" questions, the what and why of Christian education. These, he declared, were the following: (1) What should be the school's religious vision? (2) What should be its major learning goals? (3) What should be its core of required studies?<sup>122</sup>

In a move which counteracted the openness that Wolterstorff seemed to suggest, Beverluis urged a curricular commitment to a pattern of studies ultimately to be adjusted to the readiness of the learner, organized for grade levels, and required of all students (not just the ablest and talented) in elementary and high schools. The pattern included: general developmental studies (the three R's, music, art, speech, physical education); natural science and mathematics; social sciences; history; literature and the arts; and religious studies.<sup>123</sup> But he was not willing to restrict the scope of the curriculum to this core. Beyond the required core he urged schools to offer a variety of electives,<sup>124</sup> though he warned that a "doctrine of

priorities" entailed a conceptual distinction between subject matter that was more or less directly productive of learning goals that he felt held priority for Christian education.<sup>125</sup>

The required core, or priority curriculum, Beversluis justified on the basis of two fundamental criteria. The core curriculum should be those studies and only those studies that (1) most directly take account of the range, variety, and complexity of the world God created for many and (2) most directly and suitably promote what Beversluis called major learning goals.<sup>126</sup>

Just as he sought priorities within curriculum, so Beversluis sought priorities in learning goals. Of all the limitless kinds of learning that a Christian school could promote, he asked, what should Christian education mainly aim at? His answer is: intellectual, moral, and creative growth. As goals they are interrelated, ought to be seen whole, and when seen whole be understood fundamentally as religious growth. On the other hand, they are conceptually distinguishable from one another and ought to be used self-consciously by educators planning unit studies, semester-long courses, and the like.<sup>127</sup> And just as Beversluis' priority curriculum does not exhaust the possibilities for what can be taught, so his major learning goals do not limit what the Christian school can aim at in regard to the learner. But in both respects they are offered as priorities.

The learning goals so important to Beversluis reflect cognitive, affective, and activity dimensions. They are intended to help young Christians grow in their ability and inclination to understand the Christian life, to choose it, and to live it. Learners will grow in their ability to *understand* it, says Beversluis, if teachers-by way of carefully chosen curriculum -- "foster in the learners a growing insight into the natural, social, cultural, [and] historical ... conditions of human existence within whose complexities and opportunities they must seek out the truth about things and live the Christian life." Learners will grow in their ability to *choose* it if teachers help them more clearly discriminate between right and wrong, if teachers can more sensitively nurture the learner's awareness of the complexity and variety of moral obligations, ambiguities, tensions, allegiances, and the need to make responsible moral choices. Learners will grow in their ability to *live* the Christian life if teachers help them participate and thereby develop their freedom, spontaneity, and innovativeness.<sup>128</sup> Creative growth, or growth through participation, will stimulate self-expression; self-expression will nurture self-acceptance. Creative growth, then, is not so much one more kind of growth, as it is the "end product" of the educative process, that which gives "substance and expression" to the student's intellectual and moral growth. Therefore intellectual growth, though identifiable, exists not for its own sake but for the sake of moral growth. And moral growth, enriched by intellectual growth, exists not for its own sake but for the sake of creative growth.

Beversluis justified his choice of major or priority learning goals on the basis of the "religious vision" that he endorsed for Christian education and the view of man presupposed therein. The religious vision is a restatement, with some refinements, of the five ways of conceiving of the Christian life to be lived, as earlier described by Wolterstorff.<sup>129</sup> But the outworking of the view of man presupposed by the vision is Beversluis' and it provides an ingenious bridge to or "door" into the educational "rooms" (to use one of his favorite metaphors) that we have been exploring.

Beversluis creates that bridge by developing the implications of an insight regarding man first laid down by Wolterstorff. It was Wolterstorff who argued that what makes man unique among created creatures is not some capacity in man, such as reason, or art, or language. Rather, in the biblical conception of man it is the task assigned to man that makes him unique: the task of "putting all creation at (God's) service in living a life of fellowship with God and neighbor." "Of course," Wolterstorff continued, "what is thereby presupposed is the presence in man of various capacities which make

possible the carrying out of this task,"<sup>130</sup> Beversluis, endorsing the same notion of man's uniqueness, went on to translate these capacities into the priority or major learning goals of the school.<sup>131</sup>

He did so in the following context: man is a whole physical-spiritual person, undivided and unseparated; in that wholeness man has been given "unique endowments for thinking, choosing, and creating"; with these endowments man is called to live in community and do the world's work; in such activity he is to hallow himself and his endowments "by offering them to God in obedience and worship."<sup>132</sup>

On the basis, then, of an encompassing religious vision that includes a holistic view of man who is uniquely endowed with three major capacities, Beversluis decided that the curriculum of the school, given the school's own unique calling and competence in distinction from home or church, ought mainly to aim at the learner's intellectual, moral, and creative growth so that the learner can understand, accept, and respond to the call of discipleship.

We noted earlier that Beversluis sought to blend into his curricular theory the best of Christian traditionalism and the best of Christian progressivism. He does that explicitly by acknowledging W. Harry Jellema (and by implication Christian traditionalism) to be the source for his insistence that the learner in the Christian schools must *encounter* not everything under the sun but the right things, the most "educationally rewarding" things, a "required curriculum whose well-taught content disciplines young Christians for living the full-orbed Christian life."<sup>133</sup> He also acknowledges Cornelius Jaarsma to be the source for his insistence that the schools must aim at *response* to the curriculum encounter, deep down in the "heart" of the learner, where, by intellectually moral, and creative growth there will be a melding or "closure" between the curriculum and the child.

But there are subtle blendings; all along the argument. In Beversluis' religious vision for Christian education, Jaarsma's tenet that man is a unity comes through, as well as his belief that, by faith, God confronts man in "personal engagement." But by far the religious vision is redolent of the positive Christian mind associated with Jellema, ZyIstra, Henry Stob, and the like, a mind which affirms that this is my Father's world, with none of it set off-limits, as it were, but all of it to be known and judged and restored back to the God who made it right in the first place. The *encounter* with curriculum is a clear acknowledgment of Christian traditionalism, though the elective system suggests that Beversluis is not wholly tied to the liberal arts. Even the notion of *response*, while generally in the Christian progressive camp, nonetheless incorporates the rational-moral activity identified with Christian traditionalism. It is with creative growth, as Beversluis defines it, that Jaarsma's sometimes awkwardly stated concern for the "whole-person-in-life" comes to ingenious expression. And, by having the *means* of curriculum serve the *end* of the child's religious growth, Beversluis continued an emphasis in Christian education that Wolterstorff had helped begin in 1966 when he declared that teaching in the schools must always have its "face toward the student," and to "answer to his needs" there must be a conscious effort by teachers to make the life of the student in the classroom relevant to the life of the student outside the classroom.<sup>134</sup>

The curriculum, then, must in some important ways imitate life. If the aim of Christian education is living the Christian life, then the curriculum in the schools must provide opportunity for the learner to engage in some life-like living while yet in school in anticipation of life outside the school. If living the Christian life means discipleship outside the school, then the curriculum must provide signs of discipleship in embryonic form, matched, of course, to the developing growth of the child.

Wolterstorff was aware of this central issue, and addressed it. In explaining "comprehensive faith" he noted that Christian education must educate for the "active service" of God rather than for "passive contemplation." In that context he put forth this idea: "In so far as (Christian education) confines its

Christian content to separate courses in the curriculum rather than putting everything in Christian perspective, it fails of its true end. It is not faith added to understanding that we are after. It is not faith seeking understanding that we are after. Rather, it is faith realized in life."<sup>135</sup> He did not elaborate on the concept in 1966, but "putting everything in Christian perspective" seems to have contained the seed of a curriculum which, in part at least, would play down the walls of separation between the disciplines, play up the problems common to at least related disciplines such as the social studies.<sup>136</sup>

Near the end of his 1966 address Wolterstorff made several fairly concrete applications of a "creative" approach to curriculum that might induce life-like Christian living. He urged that students be faced with materials which would motivate them to discuss; that to avoid pat answers to social problems educators urge them to think matters through, and express their feelings about the gospel and life "with the media of the artist." In the spirit of a deliberately aimed -at carryover he noted, "It is nothing but a pious wish...that students trained to be...non creative in school will suddenly, upon graduation, actively contribute to the formation of Christian culture."<sup>137</sup>

Beverluis also provides an array of suggestions for stimulating embryonic forms of discipleship. Defining creative growth fundamentally as the "growth of a disposition, a spirit, a creative intent." he noted that it was first a disposition "to be and then to act."<sup>138</sup> So he suggested that the disposition to self-acceptance could be stimulated in all areas of the curriculum through the encouragement of "spontaneity and originality."<sup>139</sup> More specifically, he noted that creative expression could be achieved through writing a poem or paragraph, making a sculpture or painting, playing games with numbers, experimenting with mice, reconstructing historical settings, participating in group discussions, in bands, choirs, contests, and none of this as substitute for intellectual and moral education, but as "culmination."<sup>140</sup>

A year after Beverluis' *Christian Philosophy of Education* appeared, a group of Reformed Christian intellectuals published a provocative book entitled *To Prod the Slumbering Giant*.<sup>141</sup> The slumbering giant needing prodding was the Reformed Christian community in North America, specifically the Christian Reformed Church. The Canadian authors address a variety of issues in the life of the church, including education.

## Van Brummelen

One of the authors, Harro Van Brummelen, is a Christian educational leader in Canada.<sup>142</sup> In a chapter entitled "Towards a Radical Break with the Public School Curriculum," Van Brummelen criticized the humanistic curriculum of public education, which he claims has swayed back and forth between a discipline-centered approach and child-centered approach. Declaring that Christian educators ought to develop in the learner a "Christian mind" whereby students are nurtured to "think Christianly" about the issues of life, Van Brummelen set out to develop a perspective on the whole of education so that the curriculum would conform to the overall view.<sup>143</sup>

What is new in Van Brummelen is an application to curriculum of some of the thought of the Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd. Van Brummelen talks about how the Word structures all creation and that therefore the curriculum must direct our thoughts to the works of God in creation.<sup>144</sup> Since knowledge cannot be neutral, all learning takes place within a religious framework. Hence the curriculum must point out to the student that "man has received freedom to fulfill his calling in the service of God, his neighbor, creation, and himself within the law structures that He has laid down in creation."<sup>145</sup>

Given that perspective, Van Brummelen finds the present curriculum too disparate, segmented, mainly concerned with skills, techniques, and the like. What it ought to do is "provide (students) with a sense of unity and purpose, a sense of their many-sided calling, a sense of their responsibility to God, to the Christian community, to the world." To reinforce the breadth of this many-sided calling, Van Brummelen emphasized that schools do not exist to create specialists.<sup>146</sup>

To overcome the disorder of the modern curriculum, Van Brummelen would have it focus on providing students with an "understanding of the biblical norms for life as well as of the underlying religious motives of our culture."<sup>147</sup> To achieve that aim he calls for an "integrated" or biblically based multi-disciplinary approach to the curriculum for Christian elementary and secondary schools. At the elementary level, Van Brummelen would have all of the elementary level studies unified under the broad theme "that God has given one task to all people; that the one task has many parts (or "sides"); that man has spoiled the creation; but that God has given man a new start in Christ."<sup>148</sup>

To carry forward that creation-fall-redemption theme at the secondary level Van Brummelen offers an integrated core of studies aimed at "exploring and determining the concrete biblical norms that govern our lives."<sup>149</sup> In a separate course in history, included in the core, the learner would study redemptive, biblical history as well as Church History<sup>150</sup>. In addition, Van Brummelen would have all students take courses in mathematics, science, foreign and native languages and literature. But rather than stress skills (though basic skills must be mastered), he would insist that these mandatory courses be taught to help students come to know "the basic, structures of the disciplines...the place of the discipline within the structure of creation, how it developed through history, and how it is used and misused in today's society."<sup>151</sup>

Like the other Revisionists treated thus far, Van Brummelen says much about response. He notes, for example, that the ultimate goal of Christian education is to equip the student for living a Christian life in today's culture "so that by God's grace he will be ready to respond to God's calling."<sup>152</sup> Response, for Van Brummelen as well as his Canadian associates, is a hard-hitting, tough-minded transformational stance with strong social activist, social reformist overtones. They enjoy underscoring the power of the Word. Not surprising, then, Van Brummelen sees the Christian school as a "culture-forming force" in society.<sup>153</sup> But Van Brummelen's adherence to what he calls "analytical functioning"<sup>154</sup> seems to push his curricular theory back somewhat from the in-school, involved, acting -- doing phase to which Wolterstorff and Beversluis have pushed it, pushes it back into the more limited rational-moral activity associated with Christian traditionalism. Response, for Van Brummelen, tended to be something the learner would get ready for, rather than something he would already be doing.

If such be correct, then theoretically that direction was changed when, in 1977, Van Brummelen and Geraldine Steensma combined to write and edit a set of essays aimed at helping classroom teachers implement a biblically-directed framework for school curriculum.<sup>155</sup>

### **Van Brummelen and Steensma**

In an essay entitled "Directives for a Biblically Grounded Curriculum," co-authored by Steensma and Van Brummelen, a commitment to a curriculum which ultimately leads to service, loving deeds, action, or to what Beversluis called creative growth, is strikingly present. For example, in a sub-section on the goal of education, we read that educators ought to structure the curriculum "so that all creation proclaims its Creator" and to "implore students to respond with their whole lives." We read that students, through their studies, need not only a deeper understanding of "how" to live a life rooted in Christ, but also "abilities" by which they can "respond ... at every level of their development."<sup>156</sup>

Directing the goal of education to the secondary school, the authors write that teenagers must be helped to analyze Western, secular culture and to offer "fundamental critiques" of secular institutions. The stance of the Christian in the midst of his culture, they insist, is that of dissenter and reformer. But analysis and critique, important as they are, must lead the student to multiple forms of action: in relation to other people, in developing a Christian life style, in serving society within present institutions "where this is possible without compromising service to God," and in reforming present structures in Western culture where necessary.<sup>157</sup>

Surely much of this emphasis on response is directed to the future, to living the Christian life once the student gets beyond the secondary school. But it is not now limited to that, as seemed to be the case with Van Brummelen's earlier work. Here the authors note, in relation to man's function as "steward serving the Lord with created things" that the curriculum must help the student respond "in righteous obedience...." To achieve that, they write the "implications of the prophetic, priestly, and kingly aspects of the office (of steward) need to be understood, explored, and *experienced in school*."<sup>158</sup> All this will be personally meaningful to the student, they note, if he is "nurtured in living according to that which he 'knows.'"<sup>159</sup>

The reason for enclosing the word "knows" in quotation marks is clarified by an essay entitled "The Scriptural View of Knowledge and Truth." Here Steensma analyzes the meaning of knowledge or knowing and truth, from out of both testaments. She writes that to know, or to have knowledge, in the Old Testament sense, meant not only having some information, but a personal relationship which committed the Israelite to act in accord with that information. Knowledge of God's commands was to be "an affair of the heart, not just a mental exercise of memory." As such, the commands were intended to act formatively. They were "to direct all of life's activities."<sup>160</sup> Knowing in the New Testament sense is similar, writes Steensma, except that "knowing" now requires acknowledgment of Christ as son of the living God. And awareness of that personal relationship was to express itself in "loving action toward others in everyday, concrete experiences." Philippians 1:9-10 speaks of abounding in "knowledge and all discernment...." Steensma notes that discernment requires that "all reflective inquiry must be grounded in love if it is to yield loving action."<sup>161</sup>

Likewise "truth." In the Old Testament truth meant faithfulness, or that which is worthy of trust. Hence, to the Israelite truth was God's commitment to His covenant promise to make the Israelites His possession; in response to this truth they were to walk in "truth" by keeping troth with Him. With the incarnation of Jesus the fullness of God's revelation was revealed. And in commitment to Christ the New Testament believer comes to know the "truth" that can set him free. Standing in the fullness of truth, the Christian is free to do the truth. Truth, then, is more than words; it is words supported by loving deeds.<sup>162</sup>

On this theoretical foundation, Steensma and Van Brummelen not only provide a general design for elementary and secondary curriculum, but bring together a series of essays by a variety of authors who reflect "Christianly" on the disciplines. The book also contains directions for constructing and implementing integrated units, and illustrations of units, to be used within specific courses or on a cross-disciplinary basis.<sup>163</sup>

## *Conclusion*

Reformed Christians in North America still do not have, in a single volume, a definitively expressed and officially endorsed philosophy of Christian education.<sup>164</sup> But if this thirty-year history of curriculum



theory within that community is reasonably accurate, Reformed Christians seem to be fairly well agreed on where they are going.

What has been achieved, I believe, is a rather remarkable synthesis. The shifts in theory to which the title alludes have called for some new arrangements within an existing marriage, so to speak, rather than for divorce and re-marriage. Among a people solidly committed to the Word, and because of that, committed to the task of establishing the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all areas of life, there has been a faithful concern for understanding the nature of the learner and his needs. From out of that biblical perspective has arisen wise consensus regarding aims in education, both ultimate and proximate, which can inform and pattern practices in the schools,<sup>165</sup> including the curriculum.

Concern, expressed in the fifties, for discriminating between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God and the rival claims of parties or minds contending for allegiance has not been lost. It may occur, however, as much in a class on nutrition as it may in the study of Plato's *Republic*. The schools will be schools, where the youth are disciplined by the study of history, culture, art, and science. But within all that rational-moral activity the youth will be faced with concrete biblical norms which compel obedient discipleship within a whole range of cultural tasks, for those moved by the Holy Spirit. There will be encounter with the best that has been said and thought, accompanied by loving guidance toward response from the heart. There must be receptivity and self-expression, preparation for the future as well as fulfillment in the present, achieved by intelligent, sensitive, informed insight regarding child growth and development.

All this provides a full, rich, theoretical base for a Reformed Christian curriculum aimed ultimately at living the Christian life.

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## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> For the term "enchristicly" see John M. Zinkand, "The Use and Implications of the Phrase 'In Christ' in the Writings of Paul." in James A. DeJong and Louis Y. Van Dyke (eds.) *Building the House* (Sioux Center, IA: Dorcht College, 1981), p. 94: "The nature and range of relationships, privileges, blessings and obligations predicated of those in Christ' indicate that this position is both all encompassing and revolutionary. The totality of the believer's life is 'in Christ' and is to be lived 'in Christly.' To capture this concept in a word we propose 'enchristic' or 'enchristicly.'" For the soteriological and cosmological implications of II Corinthians 5:17-19 see Zinkand, *op. cit.*, and Lewis B. Smedes, *All Things Made New* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> See Walter A. DeJong, *Calvin Forum* 8 (1942):39, "This all points...to the imperative need of organizing our own philosophy of education with its concomitant methodology." DeJong was referring to a discussion of "democratic method" in the Christian schools, stimulated by Cornelius Bontekoe in *Calvin Forum* 7 (1942): 136-140, and fueled by the negative criticism of N. J. Monsma in *Calvin Forum* 7 (1942): 215-216. See also Mark Fakkema who, to resolve the Bontekoe-Monsma disagreement, encouraged the development of a "Christian theistic educational philosophy," in *Calvin Forum* 8 (1942): 37.

See Lambert J. Flokstra's review of Edwin H. Rian's *Christianity and American Education*. Rian claimed that Missouri Synod Lutherans and the National Union of Christian Schools had not developed a thoroughly unified philosophy of their own. Flokstra agreed: "our first and major concern should be that of developing...an intelligent scholarly all-inclusive Christian philosophy of education." In *Calvin Forum* 15 (1950): 221. See also Henry Schultze, "Desperately Needed -- A Philosophy of Education," *Calvin Forum* 15 (1950): 238-240. Schultze noted that deliberate study by Calvin College and the National Union had revealed "variances" in thought. "We are not even agreed," he wrote, "as to the exact bearing that a Calvinistic conception of the Covenant has upon the principles, methods, and purposes of education..." p. 239; and H. Schultze, "At the Shrine of Method," *Calvin Forum* 17 (1952): 96-99. See also John H. Kromminga, "American Religious Characteristics -- II," *Reformed Journal* 5

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(Sept. 1955): 5, "We ourselves have yet to cover a great deal of ground in getting a well-rounded philosophy of Christian education...."

<sup>3</sup> There was a torrential volley of criticism of public education, begun about 1950. For an overview of the period see Robert L. Church, "The Reaction Against Progressivism, 1941-1960," in *Education in the United States* (New York: Free Press, 1976). Mortimer Smith published *And Madly Teach* in 1949; Bernard Iddings Bell's *Crisis in Education* appeared the same year. In 1953 a group of books summarized several years of journal criticism: Albert Lynd's *Quackery in the Public Schools*, Arthur Bestor's *Educational Wastelands*, and Robert Hutchins' *The Conflict of Education*. A year later Smith published *The Diminished Mind*, while Hyman G. Rickover's *Education and Freedom* appeared in 1959. The gentlest of the critics was James Bryant Conant, whose *American High School Today* (1958) and *The Education of American Teachers* (1963) chided both the educational profession and some of its liberal arts critics.

At the same time a controversy at Holland Michigan Christian High School drew North American Calvinists into the national debate. See *Saturday Evening Post* 230 (March 29, 1958): 10; *National Review* 5 (March 22, 1958): 281; *Life* 44 (March 31, 1958): 32; *Time* 71 (March 31, 1958): 44. The North Central Association at its spring meeting in 1957 decided to drop Holland Christian High from its list of accredited schools because the school board would not introduce industrial arts and homemaking into the curriculum. The board could not do so because a majority of the school society of supporters would not allow it. Those in favor of the additional courses argued that the school program be broadened to meet the needs of all Holland Christian youth, not just the 35 to 40 percent who were college-bound; that Christian education called for the developing of the "whole man"; that God's image was not limited to intellect, etc. Opponents argued that the "teaching of manual skills could make no contribution for service in God's kingdom"; that such courses would not train students to solve major ethical and moral problems, and the like. See Bert Block Jr., "Holland Christian High School and its Accrediting Difficulties" (unpublished paper, History 391, Calvin College, January, 1965).

The controversy at Holland Christian High spilled over into the larger Christian school movement. In 1956 the National Union chose for its annual summer convention the theme "Balanced Emphasis in Christian Education." To those committed to academic excellence the theme of "balance" seemed prejudicial toward the "non-academic." A teacher at Holland Christian High complained that the "Idea that a Christian school should be entirely an academic institution received little or no consideration" at the convention. See Hero Bratt, "Curriculum: Academic or Vocational," *Christian Home and School* 35 (Nov. 1956): 18-19. Bratt's complaint produced replies defending home economics and industrial arts. See *Christian Home and School* 35 (Jan. 1957): 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> See *God Centered Living* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1951).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> (There was no reference listed for this end note in the original manuscript.)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>12</sup> See W. Harry Jellema, *The Curriculum in a Liberal Arts College A Study More Immediately in the Context of Calvin College* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Calvin College, 1958).

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13, Emphasis in the original.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> See W. H. Jellerna, "Statement of Academic Needs to be presented to the Long Range Study Committee," unpublished report to the Educational Committee of the Board, September 19, 1950, 21 pp.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3. Anticipating the sort of objection that a Cornelius Jaarsma might have raised, Jellerna noted: "Nor am I to be dissuaded from this view by such as hold that by emphasizing the covenant status of the child we of necessity deny the universal need of conversion, etc... (T)he point is rather that we Reformed people believe that by education the covenant child is to be brought to realization of his need of conversion; by education in home, in church, and also in school" (*ibid.*).

<sup>24</sup> In this proposal Jellema listed as alternative kingdoms (1) the classic pagan, idealistic or "humanistic," (2) the "modern" (introduced historically by the Renaissance) and (3) the materialistic or naturalistic (*ibid.*).

<sup>25</sup> Hence he criticized contemporary American public education for its commitment to the "kingdom of Modernity" with its ideal of freedom achieved by surrender to "scientific method" by which the student can make up his mind "freely (scientifically; without any prior commitment or beliefs of 'faith') on all human problems, including that of religious decision" (*ibid.*).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> See p. 5: "Barring the psychologically abnormal, [no students] are without academic gifts; but some are more gifted academically, some otherwise. A Christian High school can give a Christian education, and a Christian education to all."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* He intended Commercial education for boys and girls who expect to go into office work; Industrial education for boys who intended to learn a trade or go into industry; and Domestic education for girls who plan to become "maids" or "housewives" (*ibid.*, p. 6). Apparently Jellema intended for the Industrial course not large outlays of funds for expensive machinery but a director who could enlist the cooperation of existing trades and industries in the training of the boys; for the Domestic course he was aiming at "intelligent workers" with a concrete sense of "Kingdom responsibilities" a course patterned, he noted, after the Dutch "Christelijke Huishoudingsschool." To achieve this end he was inclined to import a director from the Netherlands! *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

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<sup>31</sup> See "Our People and Their School," *Reformed Journal 1* (April, 1951): 3-5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Lambert J. Flokstra, *Christian Education: Tradition or Conviction?*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Calvin College, 1958).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>38</sup> See "Modern Philosophy of Education," in *Testament of Vision* (Grand Rapids, Mich.. Eerdmans, 1958).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-35.

<sup>42</sup> See "Christian Education," *op. cit.*, pp. 138-49.

<sup>43</sup> "To be human is to be scientific...practical...rational...moral...social, and artistic, but to be human...is to be religious also." The religious is not one more facet, said Zylstra, but "the condition of all the rest and the justification of all the rest." *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 146-148 *passim*.

<sup>47</sup> Cornelius Jaarsma (ed.), *Fundamentals in Christian Education*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1953).

<sup>48</sup> Cornelius Bontekoe, "Source Book in Christian Education," *Calvin Forum* 19 (1954): 186.

<sup>49</sup> The *Principles* was used as text in the preparatory school at Calvin in the early years of this century, when the students could still read Dutch.

<sup>50</sup> *Distinctive Features of the Christian School*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1925), p. 39.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61 *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> Grand Rapids, Mich.: Smitter, 1928, p. 80.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

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<sup>56</sup> Waterink spent part of the school year 1953-1954 lecturing at Calvin and throughout the Christian Reformed Church. He also published *Basic Concepts in Christian Pedagogy* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1954).

<sup>57</sup> Jaarsma knew the work of Bavinck. His doctoral dissertation, done at New York University, was published as *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1953). He had first hand acquaintance with Waterink's work, having visited the Netherlands in 1950.

<sup>58</sup> See "Must we Rethink Christian Education?" *Calvin Forum* 21 (1955): Part 1, 36-40; Part 11, 54-59. ,

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 58.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II pp. 58-59.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 58.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 36-37.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 38-40.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, pp. 54-55. Jaarsma argued that all education is personal in character, not just Christian education. All men are religious; therefore even the "two-fold" unity of the non-Christian can be realized to a degree.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 39.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, pp. 54-55.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 55.

<sup>69</sup> "The Christian View of the School Curriculum," in *Fundamentals*, p. 232.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 232-33.

<sup>71</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p. 293.

<sup>72</sup> The Baptismal Formulary then in use in the Christian Reformed Church expressed the issue in question form: "Do you (parents presenting a child for baptism] acknowledge that our children, though conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to all manner of misery, yea to condemnation itself, are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of His Church ought to be baptized...?" (Emphasis added). The Dutch schoolmaster Van Der Kooy spoke of the matter this way: "... the distinctive feature...of Christian discipline is that the child is not reared in an atmosphere of a choice that is still to be made, but rather of a choice...already...made; he is already included in the ranks of King Jesus, whose insignia he bears." *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* Jaarsma did not argue that the purpose of Christian education was "evangelism." Jaarsma summed up the matter this way: "The parents have the God-given mandate of nurturing their children in the 'new obedience.' The school as extension of the home assumes part of this task for the parents insofar as it can supplement the home in a cultural medium. The church as the mother of saints of God aids parents in their task of maturing their children in the life hid with God in Christ. Together they accomplish a major task in the kingdom of God on earth. And the task is one." *Op. cit.*, p. 344.

<sup>74</sup> "The Christian View of the School Curriculum," *op. cit.*, pp. 238-241.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237-38. See also his essay, "Improvement of the Curriculum," *op. cit.*, p. 253: "To be sure the cultural product is our medium for education, but it is in the appraisal of it for the new life that we find our curriculum."

<sup>78</sup> "The Christian View of the School Curriculum," *op. cit.*, pp. 238-241.

<sup>79</sup> "Improvement of the Curriculum," *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237,239.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259. For more detail, see pp. 260-262. Jaarsma's ideas on integrated, coherent, psychologically organized studies for the child as contrasted to the more logically organized studies for more mature students who can perform the necessary integration on their own, is remarkably similar to Dewey's theory as advanced in *The Child and the Curriculum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902).

<sup>82</sup> *Acts of Synod*, 1955, Supplement 15. See p. 195: "The true goal 'of education' is the forming of personality as image of God"; p. 197: "Education is the nurture...of the whole man.... The human intellect cannot be parceled out for instruction...."

<sup>83</sup> *Christian Home and School* 35 (Oct. 1956): 18.

<sup>84</sup> *Christian Home and School* 35 (Jan. 1957): 13.

<sup>85</sup> See Cornelius Jaarsma, "The Temptation of Knowledge," *Calvin Forum* 18 (1952): 61-63, a chapel talk based on I Corinthians 8.

<sup>86</sup> Cornelius Jaarsma, *Human Development, Learning and Teaching: a Christian Approach to Educational Psychology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1961).

<sup>87</sup> For an extensive discussion of some of the principal differences between the thought of Jaarsma and W. Harry Jellema, see Nicholas Henry Beversluis *A Biblical Approach to Educational Philosophy for the Christian Reformed Church* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), especially pp. 176-299.

<sup>88</sup> See "The Weight of History," *Reformed Journal* 11 (February, 1961): 5-9.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Wolterstorff elaborated on aim this way: "...our final aim should be the production of philosophers, and not merely of historians of philosophy. And our final aim should be the production of theologians ... contributing to the advancement of their science.... And our...aim should be the production of creative writers and artists.... The

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fundamental justification for studying history is not simply to understand ourselves; rather, it is to find aid in solving the problems that confront us in our own work." *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* Wolterstorff, in his eagerness to emphasize creativity, tended to make a disjunction between passivity and activity, between filling kettles and lighting fires, and therefore between "understanding" and "creating." A critic noted this tendency (see William M. Wiebenga, "Understanding and Creating," *Reformed Journal* 11 'June, 1961:21-24) and insisted that "Education is only possible...where understanding and creating are thoroughly integrated" (p. 24)

<sup>97</sup> *Christian Liberal Arts Education: Report of the Calvin College Curriculum Study Committee*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Calvin

College and Eerdmans, 1970), p. 41. The Committee would have served readers of the Report if it had identified the author(s) of such a view. Cornelius Jaarsma, whom we have called a Christian progressive, called for an integrated curriculum for Christian elementary schools and junior high schools, but can hardly be considered an articulate spokesman for the "Pragmatist view" as described here. A more likely representative spokesman for that view is Lester De Koster. See "Education for Freedom," *Reformed Journal* 8 (February, 1958): 4-9.

<sup>98</sup> *Christian Liberal Arts Education* (hereinafter CLAE), p. 43.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 45.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 67.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>108</sup> See the "Preface" to CLAE, p.ii.

<sup>109</sup> See the "Introduction" to CLAE, p. xii.

<sup>110</sup> By that title the address was subsequently published by Christian Schools International, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. Contrast Zylstra's insistence that, in the education of the teacher, knowing history is more important than knowing Johnny since "it is the object of knowledge, rather than the pupil, the teacher, or the method, that must do the education" (from *Testament of Vision*, pp. 134-35). Jaarsma, by contrast, repeatedly emphasized the needs of the pupil. See "Must We Re-think Christian Education?" *Calvin Forum* 21 (1955): Part II, 59.

<sup>113</sup> *Curriculum: By What Standard?*, p. 5.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>120</sup> Nicholas Henry Beversluis, at the time, was professor of education at Calvin College. He had been a Christian school teacher and administrator in the Eastern Christian School Association in New Jersey, and had published several articles on Christian philosophy of education in the *Reformed Journal*.

<sup>121</sup> According the "Foreword" the Union intended the book to serve as a platform for a collection of writings by Christian Schools International consultants applying Christian perspectives to specific curriculum areas. With some modification, Beversluis' thought has served that purpose. See *Principles to Practice* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian Schools International, 1973, 1979).

<sup>122</sup> *Christian Philosophy of Education*, pp. 14, 15.

<sup>123</sup> He has, more recently, added "language" to the literature and arts category, and renamed religious studies "Biblical and Church History studies." See "In Their Father's House: a Handbook of Christian Educational Philosophy" (Grand Rapids, Mich.: CSI), February, 1982.

<sup>124</sup> *Christian Philosophy of Education*, p. 43. He suggested, off-hand' practical courses in typing and office practice, courses in domestic and manual arts, even automotive repair and hair-styling.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40,65.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18. The note makes clear that this fusion was done at the request of the CSI philosophy committee.

<sup>130</sup> *Curriculum: By What Standard?*, p. 15.

<sup>131</sup> Beversluis, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 36.

<sup>134</sup> *Curriculum: By What Standard?* p. 5.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> The concept of inter-disciplinary courses has grown on Wolterstorff. In a CSI address in 1975 he urged "inter-disciplinary, topically-organized courses...on the pattern of American foreign policy...wealth distribution...advertising (and) transportation" in order to equip the student to share in the call to be "a witnessing,



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discipling, serving, exemplary presence in the world." See *Movement Founded--Vision for the Future* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian Schools International, 1975), pp. 24, 25.

<sup>137</sup> *Curriculum: By What Standard?* p. 16. In 1975 he elaborated on the same theme this way: "Once having analyzed and presented a Christian assessment of North American institutions, and once having considered how the Christian community itself ought to be organized, the school should then assist in training the student to live a Christian style of life within North American society." See *Movement Founded--Vision for the Future*, p. 26.

<sup>138</sup> Beversluis, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>141</sup> John Vriend, ed. (Toronto: Wedge, 1972).

<sup>142</sup> In 1972 Van Brummelen was still curriculum coordinator for the Edmonton, Alberta, Christian schools. Shortly thereafter he was appointed Education Coordinator of the British Columbia Society of Christian Schools.

<sup>143</sup> *To Prod the Slumbering Giant*, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77. Emphasis added.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>150</sup> "History must be included in the curriculum as a core course because students cannot understand the forces at work in today's society without coming to grips with the historic roots of our culture. Human ideals and values have been positive or negative responses to our creation mandate, and the student must learn to discern the development of Humanism from the Greeks to the Renaissance to the present day." *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87. He went on to explain: "In short, the mandatory courses would develop some basic skills that the students would need to live in today's society; show them the effect of the subject on culture and vice versa; enable them to see the unity of reality within the many diverse but related aspects; and show them how they must use reality to unfold and enrich our lives in relation to man's cultural mandate." *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

<sup>154</sup> His verbs, Describing the activity of the students in school, are the key. He speaks of their having an "understanding," learning to "discern," learning to "see," studying to "gain respect for," coming to "realize," and the like.

<sup>155</sup> See *Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View* (Terre Haute, Ind.: Signal, 1977). Geraldine Steensma conducts workshops for Christian teachers throughout North America. She has been Direct of Teacher Education at Covenant

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College, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, as well as teacher and administrator for the Eastern Christian School Association in New Jersey. She is a daughter of Cornelius Jaarsma.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. Emphasis added.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6,7.

<sup>163</sup> At Calvin College a strong proponent of the integrated curriculum attuned to the Steensma-Van Brummelen model is Donald Oppewal, as reflected in his more recent writings. See D. Oppewal, "Organizing Literature By Theme: A Defense," *Christian Educators Journal*, 5 (April, 1966): 22-26, and "Palaces and Cabins: Building Materials," *Christian Home and School*, 59 (July-August, 1980): 10-11 where he broadens the idea of thematic arrangement of curriculum to include all curriculum and not just literature. He further argues that an integrated curricular concept is applicable to the college core curriculum. See "Calvin's Core Curriculum: The Rhetoric and the Reality," in Calvin College *Dialogue*, January, 1975, pp. 19-20.

<sup>164</sup> Henry Beversluis' unpublished document, *In Their Father's House: A Handbook of Christian Educational Philosophy* (March, 1982, 30 pp.), prepared for the Christian Schools International Task Force on The Future of Christian Education, represents the most recent effort to supply such a need. Thus far it has served as a discussion starter, however, and lacks official endorsement.

<sup>165</sup> See Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Educating for Responsible Action* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian Schools International and Eerdmans, 1980). Within a "responsibility theory of education," Wolterstorff concentrates not on curriculum but on methodology or pedagogy for developing "tendency learning" whereby, through such strategies as discipline, modeling, and casuistry, one can help students internalize dispositions to action. Obviously a pedagogy that aims to inculcate not only knowledge and ability but the formation of right tendencies coheres with the curriculum theory of revisionism as we have described it, though Wolterstorff's interest in an education aimed at shaping human tendencies to act now seems to rely more heavily on the entire school situation as causative agent rather than curriculum as such.