

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THROUGH RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Editorial introduction

This essay is a reprint of part of a monograph published originally in 1973 under the title of *Contrasting Christian Approaches To Teaching Religion and Biblical Studies*. The author, Dr. Dennis Hoekstra, then President of Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois, holds advanced degrees in both theology and educational theory. He is now the Director of the Barnabas Foundation, which seeks through wills and other means to raise money for educational and other charitable institutions.

The continuing vitality of this document is suggested by the adoption of this theory for the guidance of the Revelation-Response Series published by Christian Schools International, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Its use in teacher education classes and elsewhere has exhausted the original printing of 2,000 copies, and continued demand for it prompts this reprinting after over a decade of use and dissemination.

May this monograph continue to provide material for many a teachers' institute discussion, many a teaching staff dialogue, and even many a curriculum committee recommendation. Finally, may the prospective teacher of religious studies find here a responsible induction into this important curriculum area for Christian education

Donald Oppewal
Monograph Series Editor
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Christian education through religious studies

In this paper we shall deal specifically with religious studies in elementary and secondary level education in the Christian day schools. At these levels, religious studies usually mean Bible, Church history, doctrine, personal and social ethics, and sometimes a course in sects and cults or world religions. Perhaps religious studies is a misnomer. For in the Christian school, as I understand it, these subjects are no more and no less religious than any other part of the curriculum. Religious studies, like all other subjects in the curriculum, deal with God, man, revelation, and men's response to God and His revelation as they live their lives in human society. Religious studies may focus more directly on God's incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, and on His inscripturated Word, the Bible, than do other subjects which deal more directly with God's revelation in creation and history. But, I do not believe that the distinction between religious studies and other studies in the curriculum should be too sharply distinguished in Christian education at the elementary and secondary levels.

As noted in the preceding paragraph, a Christian's view of the goals, curriculum, and methodology of education is always closely related to his view of God, man, truth, and salvation. In Part I, I shall briefly outline and evaluate the views on these topics which have dominated educational thinking in the Christian tradition of the Western world. Part II will present a view on the same topics which I consider to be more Biblical than the view outlined in Part I. Part III will deal with problems of moralism, intellectualism and life -- relatedness in the teaching of religious studies. Part IV contains a description of priority goals and curriculum emphases. Part V contains illustrations curriculum materials based on the differing views presented in Parts I and II

I. Christian Tradition in the Western World

A. Doctrines in the Christian Tradition

My major thesis here is that the Western Christian tradition up to the middle of the twentieth century has been excessively dependent upon rationalistic Greek philosophical thought in its view of God, man, truth, and salvation. To trace in detail this relationship would require far more space than I am allowed in this brief article. I must be satisfied, therefore, with brief quotations from pagan antiquity and mid-twentieth century Christian writings which will, I believe, illustrate the basic similarity. One of the clearest statements of Greek philosophy's position on the nature of God, man, truth, and salvation is contained in Book X of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. There Aristotle argues at length that perfect happiness is some form of contemplative activity, which the gods possess in its highest possible form. He rejects as absurd any attempt to attribute to the gods any sort of action other than contemplation. He concludes with these words:

It follows that the activity of God, which is transcendent in blessedness, is the activity of contemplation; and therefore among human activities that which is most akin to the divine activity of contemplation will be the greatest source of happiness.

A further confirmation is that the lower animals cannot partake of happiness, because they are completely devoid of the contemplative activity. The whole of the life of the gods is

blessed and that of man is so insofar as it contains some likeness to the divine activity but none of the other animals possess happiness because they are entirely incapable of contemplation. Happiness therefore is co-extensive in its range with contemplation: the more a class of beings possesses the faculty of contemplation, the more it enjoys happiness, not as an accidental concomitant of contemplation but as inherent in it, since contemplation is valuable in itself. It follows that happiness is some form of contemplation. (*Nichomachean Ethics*, Book X, Section VIII.)

Note the similarity in the writings of a twentieth century Christian educator: ". . . there is such a thing as a Christian view of life. According to this view, God is rational, His world is a *universe*, and the mind of man is capable of order." (Zylstra, *Testament of Vision*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951 p. 165.) This mid-twentieth-century Graeco-Christian view of God and man is explicated further in this author's description of Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh, as presented in the first chapter of the Gospel of John:

It is a view simply which insists on the integrity of *Logos* (*Logos* means Jesus Christ according to John I). *Logos* is only half translated *word* (language), the other half being *reason* (thought). It is the key word to the rational nature. It is the key word also to the human being. This is to be human, to be spirit speaking, to be expressive mind. Language therefore distinguishes man: it proves him rational, free. Compare man as a speaking creature with Carlisle's definition of man as a tool-using animal! Note the collapse of dignity. It does not define a man that he can manipulate techniques. What defines him is that he can express thought. *Ratio* and *oratio*, the Romans said, following in the wake of Aristotle, reason and speech, these complement each other and are consonant with each other. (Zylstra, *Testament of Vision*, p. 169).

This definition of the highest and unique human quality of Jesus Christ and of all men is based on a view of God which rejects action in defining God in much the same way as did Aristotle: "Well before Dewey, the German Goethe had set the pace for the modern activism. He put his Faust to work translating the prologue to the Gospel of St. John. That meant finding an equivalent for the Greek work *Logos*. Faust experimented with several possibilities. He tried *Thought*, and concluded it would not do. He tried *Word*, and he rejected it as inadequate. He tried *Energy*, felt he was getting closer, but remained unsatisfied. Then he hit on it, and ushered in modernity: *In the beginning*, he wrote, *in the beginning was the Act*. The creature had taken over, and God was in exile from His world. ." (Zylstra, *Testament of Vision*, p. 185-186.)

The parallels in the above quotations speak for themselves. In this view, which has dominated Western Christian thought until the middle of the twentieth century, the highest and most unique quality which defines God and man is rationality or intellect. Truth is well reasoned, verbal, theoretical thought, and the goal toward which education must strive is the development of intellect and rationality through escaping the world of concrete historical action and rising to the level of unchanging, abstract, theoretical, a-historical thought as expressed in a logically consistent system of closely reasoned verbal propositions.

B. Implications for Religious Studies

Religious studies based on the view described above would think of God primarily as someone who reveals *verbal information* about himself. It would not stress a God whose primary revelation is of his own person through historical, concrete actions and events in the world and in men's lives.

Man's primary task in religious studies in this view would be the mastery of this verbal information about God, and theoretical reflection aimed at organizing and transmitting this verbal information through a logically defensible system of doctrine. Such religious studies would not stress expectation of and guided practice in concrete decision making and obedient action in life as the major factor in a proper human response to God and His revelation.

Religious studies based on this view of God and man would define truth primarily as a logically consistent system of doctrine which must be verbally mastered, reproduced verbatim, and transmitted and defended in some verbatim classical formulation against all who would state it differently or hold different views. Truth as concrete historical decision making and action in real life would not be stressed, because this is at best a second-rate activity and results in "collapse of dignity" for both God and man.

The major objective in religious studies in this position would be achieved through stressing theoretical analysis, system building, principles. It would emphasize transmission and verbal mastery of logically organized systems of truth that have been distilled and "purified" from the flux and ambiguity of historical circumstances. The goal is to get students to master theoretical, tradition to an emphasis on defining man from logically organized generalizations that are true everywhere and always regardless of time, place, and peculiar historical or personal circumstances. Because mastery of such a-historical systems of truth is the main religious objective, there is little need to help students relate this material to their own lives and times. Participation and guided practice in hearing God's address to them in their lives, and in deciding and acting in their own lives and times in accordance with what God has revealed to them, are largely redundant in this view. This is the case because this view assumes that generalized, a-historical, logically organized truth systems, when mastered and reproduced verbally, will automatically be applied by students in every time and place, no matter how great the differences in historical and personal characteristics and circumstances.

The above view, necessarily and intentionally overdrawn for purposes of identification and analysis in the brief confines of this article, has strongly influenced the religious studies material used in Christian schools up to the present time. In a later section of this article, I shall illustrate this generalization from religious studies material widely used up to this time. At that time, these presently used materials will be compared with some that have just been produced. That comparison will show that some recent revisions in the view of God, man, truth and salvation do have significant consequences for religious studies in Christian schools at the elementary and secondary levels. But first we must present an outline of these recently revised views, a brief description of why these changes were made, and an implicit evaluation and criticism which these new views make of the more traditional views described above in Part I

II. A Biblical Perspective on Christian Tradition

A. Doctrines in Biblical Perspective

Most historians would agree that the twentieth century has brought the following shifts of emphasis:

1. From systematic theology to Biblical theology.
2. From a rationalistic approach in philosophy and literature to a more existential-experiential approach.
3. From dividing man into faculties (intellect, will, emotions) to an emphasis on the unity of man as a decision making, action oriented, historically conditioned person.
4. From an other-worldly to this-worldly view of man's Christian calling.
5. From an assumption of automatic formal transfer to life of theoretical learning to experimentally based views on how transfer from school learning to life can best be expedited.
6. From an acceptance of the Greek view of man in the Western Christian tradition to an emphasis on defining man from a more Biblical perspective.

The above shifts of emphasis and the educational and social consequences of these changes are too numerous to describe here. Many of the influences and consequences are not desirable and need to be rejected by Biblical christianity. But in spite of these qualifications, it is my view that Christian education through these many forces has reevaluated its views of God, man, truth, and salvation, and in the process has come somewhat closer to a Biblical perspective than was realized within the previously held views which came from the Western Christian tradition.

In Biblical perspective there is no reason to downgrade the particular historical action of God. In contrast to the view outlined in Part I, the Bible speaks pervasively of a God who acts in concrete historical ways in the events of specific men's lives at particular times and places. It may be possible and legitimate to arrive at some theoretical generalizations about God's inherent attributes of love, justice, mercy, holiness, etc. But any use of these generalizations which obscures God's specific historical action in this world seems illegitimate in Biblical perspective. For example, the generalization "God is love" is a Biblical quotation (I John 4:8). But note the whole Biblical context in which this generalization has meaning and validity. Note the specific, active, historically particular description of God which is the context and provides the Biblical meaning "God is love": "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world that we might live through him" (I John 4:9). Biblically, "God is love" points directly to His specific historical action at a particular time and place. Note also how the Biblical generalization of this specific historical action is not allowed to remain a theoretical abstraction:

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love remains in death. Any one who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does

God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth. (I John 3:14-18)

The above Biblical example, I believe, is a valid representation of the central Biblical perspective on the nature of God. God reveals himself not as someone who engages primarily in rational contemplation and reflection, but rather as the mighty personal creator, sustainer, redeemer, father, and judge of this world and of all men in it. He reveals himself and is known *primarily*, and perhaps it is not too strong to *say only*, through his specific, concrete, historical actions in this world.

The Bible passage quoted above, even though taken from what has often been considered to be one of the more philosophical writings in the Bible, is clearly action and this-world oriented in its view of the nature of God. It also shows clearly the Biblical view of man's nature and task. Clearly what is unique about man in Biblical perspective is not his rationality and speech, but rather his unique relationship to God. Man is to receive and to respond to God's historical acts of revelation in this world. Man is not called primarily to contemplate the general nature of God's love. Rather he is called to specific decisions and actions in his own world and time as a response to God's specific this-worldly historical address to man. Note the parallelism in the quotation of I John 3:16 above: just as God showed his love in a concrete historical action for us, so we must show our response of love in an equally historical, concrete way in love for our human brothers.

In addition to a doctrine of the nature of God and man, a doctrine of the nature of truth and knowledge is necessary to an understanding of this perspective.

In the Biblical perspective truth is defined first of all as a person. Jesus states it this way, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life..." (John 14:6b). It is personal knowledge of this God as revealed in the historical person and actions of Jesus Christ which is the truth which must be known according to the Scriptures: "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32). In all religious studies, this intimate, growing, personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, rather than any system of propositional truths must be the central goal of instruction. But here a difficulty arises, for our knowledge of Jesus Christ comes to us through printed verbal documents, whether that be in the divinely inspired Holy Scriptures or in the history, creeds, and testimony of the Christian church. How then shall we handle the study of this verbal material while still keeping at the center of our instruction the person and work and demands of God in Jesus Christ rather than systematic verbal propositions?

Here again the answer can be found in the Biblical mode. The Bible speaks pervasively of a God who confronts men in the particular circumstances of their lives and seeks a response of decision and obedient action. This model stretches from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures. We see it when God addresses Adam and Eve, telling them to till the ground, be fruitful and multiply, and to keep their hands off one particular tree in the garden. We see it when God appears at Abraham's door and tells him to pack his belongings and go on a journey to an unknown land. We see it as Jesus calls his disciples with the curt demand "follow me." We see it when Jesus refuses to be sidetracked by the theoretical discussion of the rich young ruler and abruptly says "go sell all that you have and give it to the poor and follow me." We see it in the

classic chapter on the heroes of faith, Hebrews 11, where we are told that what immortalized certain men as heroes of faith were such things as building a big boat called the Ark, of being willing to go on a journey to an unknown land, in having a baby under unusual circumstances, in leaving the riches of an Egyptian prince behind to lead a ragtag group of refugees out into the desert. The list goes on and on. The conclusion of it all is that we, like this crowd of witnesses, must strive to be obedient disciples of Christ in this world as we "look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2a) Thus the task of religious studies in the Christian schools, whose students we generally assume already have an initial saving relationship to the Truth in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is to help these young people to hear more clearly God's ever present address to men and to respond more fully in repentance, faith, and obedience through decision making and action in this world. This instruction in truth is, in Biblical language, the process of aiding children and young people to develop increasingly for themselves, "this mind which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5)

B. Implications for Religious Studies

The major educational objective for religious studies, according to this view, would be the progressive realization by students for themselves of the reality of this exhortation: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1, 2) Such progress transformation, will require sensitizing students to hear God's address to them everywhere and always in their lives and to give them practice in making decisions in obedient discipleship to Christ and his life-style. Note that this discipleship life-style according to Romans 12 does not define "renewing of your mind" in terms of contemplative activities and systematic mastery of systems of truth. It rather features a catalog of very this-worldly virtues and actions: Don't think you're better than the other guy; find out what particular talents God has given you, and then exercise them in obedient discipleship with joy and gusto; don't be slothful in business; give unto people in need; be sure to be hospitable, with this hospitality extending to even such specifics as feeding and giving drink to your enemy.

Thus religious studies in this view become an integral part of the total task of Christian education at the elementary and secondary levels. This single central task is simply participation, guided practice in, and preparation for Christian life. This includes increasing sensitivity to hearing God's address to us always and everywhere in our everyday lives as He calls us to decision. And the genuineness and effectiveness of the whole educational process is to be determined, according to the Bible, by the growth in discipleship, as demonstrated in increasing conformity to the life-style of Jesus in the concrete actions of our everyday lives.

This view, which might be called a revelation-response view, I have briefly described above is summarized neatly by a contemporary Christian education in this way

God's disclosure of Himself is (1) to a person, (2) in a situation, (3) about events (4) directing action toward God's purpose for his people. It is difficult to think of an exception to

this pattern of God's relation to man. (C. Ellis Nelson, "Toward Better Methods of Communication the Christian Faith," Page 1, mimeographed).

The major goal of Christian education based on the revelation-response view summarized about is well stated in these words:

Christian education is for Christian life. It is not for the training of theological sophisticates, not for the continuation of the evangelical church, not for the preservation of Christian enclaves, not for getting to heaven, not for the service to the state, not for defeating the Communist, not for preserving United States or Canada, not for life adjustment, not for cultivating the life of the mind, not for producing learned and cultured gentlemen. Christian education is for Christian life. (Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Curriculum -- By what standard?* Grand Rapids, Mich.: National Union of Christian Schools, p. 16)

Here is a short description of the basic content, sequence and form of religious studies may be in order. Religious studies in Biblical perspective will always assume as their basic core content the mighty, redemptive acts of God. God's call to obedience to his people must always occur in the context of the redemption which he already accomplished and is continuing to work out in the future. This Biblical model is illustrated in the Decalogue in Exodus 20. In verse 2 God says "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, God's call to repentance, and obedience in the lives of his people has cogency and power because of what He has already graciously done for his people. Some have described this Biblical sequence by stating that God's indicative, his description of what he has already done, always precedes his imperative, his demands upon the lives of his people.

We should not conclude, however, that some exhaustive coverage of God's redemptive acts must precede the emphasis on concrete, life-related faith and obedience in religious studies. There are many different patterns of emphasis in the Bible. Saint Paul in his Epistles typically uses a few verses to tell God's redemptive acts, and then immediately moves on to discuss how the people reading the Epistle have responded to them (e.g. I Cor. 1, whereby verse 10 the topic is the divisiveness among the Corinthian Christians). But then the writer intermingles with these "response" passages a soaring doxology celebration God's redeeming activity. Thus, no pattern is prescribed for the relative emphases on God's acts and man's response, other than that there is a constant intermingling of them.

I have already suggested that the Biblical pattern does not indicate that God's mighty acts must always be recited in the same way regardless of time, place and circumstances of the students. The specific experience of particular people must be honored as God's redemptive acts are communicated and call for an appropriate response of repentance, faith and obedience. For example, in the early life of Old Testament people God's acts are recalled frequently by the words "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Later the Exodus from Egypt is often cited to bring to mind His mighty redemptive acts. Still later the conquest of the land of Canaan and the delivery from exile become the vehicles to carry experientially to specific people the power and claims of God's redemptive acts upon their lives in specific circumstances. Since New Testament times the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the focal point for the

declaration of the redemptive acts of God. But here too the life and experience of the people addressed largely determines the form of the communication. For example, in Acts 2 and 7 the largely Jewish audience hears from Peter and Stephen rapid, selective recitals of God's redemptive acts in the lives of his Old Testament Jewish people as the context in which repentance, faith, and obedience are demanded at that point in their lives. But in Acts 17 Paul, proclaiming the same redemptive action of God (see vs. 32), places it in the context of the life and experience of the philosophically oriented Athenians (see Acts 17:22-32).

Thus to remain Biblical and to avoid legalism, moralism, and irrelevance, religious studies must always honor these two principles:

1. The Spirit-inspired Biblical record of the gracious redemptive acts of God which he has already accomplished and will continue to work out in the present and the future in the lives of his people must always be the context in which his call to repentance, faith, and obedience is pedagogically translated into the lives of students.
2. The times, circumstances, and experiences of any particular school class will largely determine the kind, amount, and form, but not the Biblical content, of the way in which God's redemptive acts will be recited, recalled, or assumed as the context of teaching for growth in discipleship for these students in their specific lives and times in the world in which they live.

Having outlined briefly how God and his revelation are viewed in religious studies based on this perspective, we turn now to the human response which it seeks to encourage. Man's primary task in religious studies in this view is to respond positively to God's address. This positive response will always include repentance, faith, and obedience as these are demonstrated in concrete decision making and action in the actual life situations of the learners. This task and goal is progressive, and will never be fully realized in the process of education or in our present lives. Yet students must actively participate and receive guided practice in this process if religious studies are to reveal rather than obscure the way in which God has worked with men throughout the Scriptures.

This does not mean that there is no place for theoretical studies and careful, hardheaded analysis of the verbal text of Scripture. In fact, this approach demands careful, detailed, scholarly attention to the history and culture in which the Biblical characters lived. Further, it demands a careful, detailed reading and analysis of the text of Holy Scripture itself. For only in this way can it be clearly determined what God's address to men was, what it meant at the time in which he gave it to them, and what God's evaluation of their response was – whether it was considered an obedient or disobedient response. From such careful study of Scripture and of the history of God's people, students will also find out what the long-range effects of man's obedience or disobedience are in his own life and times, as evaluated authoritatively by God in the Scriptures.

In religious studies based on this perspective, students will also have to study with great care the specific interaction between God and man in a great variety of circumstances before they will be able to come up with valid generalizations about God, man, truth, and salvation. But if this approach is carefully followed, I dare say that both careful reading of Scripture and formulation

and retention of valid Biblical generalizations will be more fully realized than is presently achieved by demanding verbal mastery of prepackaged theoretical generalizations and doctrinal systems. In addition, this approach has the advantage of illuminating rather than obscuring the radical historical particularity of divine revelation and human response which is the pattern for God-man interaction throughout the Scriptures. Religious studies based on such a foundation create much improved chances for the transfer of school learning in religious studies to the real life situation of the students in the present day. But more on this as we turn now to the views of truth and educational objectives in this perspective.

Religious studies built on the revelation-response model would stress in their view of truth the Biblical motif of "doing the truth", and "walking in the truth" (John 3:21, I John 1:6, III John 4). Viewing truth as something to be lived rather than first of all as an intellectual-theoretical system or set of verbal propositions helps to cut through perennial problems *which today* plague religious studies based on a theoretical information and knowledge-systematizing model.

III. Analysis of Teaching Problems

A. Intellectualism

The first problem significantly ameliorated in the revelation-response view is the very prevalent student reaction to religious studies today. This reaction is that God, the Bible, and religious studies deal almost exclusively with something long ago and far away which has almost no continuity with and significance for the experience and problems of contemporary people and times. This reaction is understandable since the intellectual-theoretical model is based almost exclusively on formulating and transmitting a logically organized body of verbal knowledge which has been "purified" from the dynamic decision making and action of life in the world as it is lived and experienced. It is, therefore, not surprising that students presently think religious studies are boring and irrelevant since their very organization, content, and methodology based on an intellectual-theoretical model, tend toward an almost exclusive stress on verbatim mastery and reproduction of Biblical facts and doctrinal formulations which do in fact come prepackaged by theologians from a distant past much different from our life and world today. The dynamic life-relatedness built into the revelation-response approach to religious studies should help significantly to overcome the boredom and irrelevance which students presently claim to experience in religious studies based on an intellectual-theoretical model.

This does not mean that there will be no stress on a Biblical faith that includes knowledge and affirmation of Biblical, creedal, and doctrinal content. But it does mean that obedient decision making and action in life must always be an integral dimension of study of Biblical doctrine. The following quotation provides a helpful insight into the revelation-response view of religious studies as to the relationship of faith or content to action or obedience: (Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, pp. 54, 55)

The following two propositions hold good and are equally true: only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes.

It is quite unbiblical to hold the first proposition without the second, We think we understand when we hear that obedience is possible only where there is faith. Does not obedience follow faith as good fruit grows on a good tree? First, faith, then obedience. If by that we mean that it is faith which justifies, and not the act of obedience, all well and good, for that is the essential and unexceptionable presupposition of all that follows. If however we make a chronological distinction between faith and obedience, and make obedience subsequent to faith, we are divorcing the one from the other – and then we get the practical question, when must obedience begin? Obedience remains separated from faith. From the view of justification it is necessary thus to separate them, but we must never lose sight of their essential unity. For faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience.

Since, then, we cannot adequately speak of obedience as the consequence of faith, and since we must never forget the indissoluble unity of the two, we must place the one proposition that only he who believes is obedient alongside the other, that only he who is obedient believes. In the one case faith is the condition of obedience, and in the other obedience the condition of faith. In exactly the same way in which obedience is called the consequence of faith, it must also be called the presupposition of faith.

Only the obedient believe. If we are to believe, we must obey a concrete command. Without this preliminary step of obedience, our faith will only be pious humbug, and lead us to the grace which is not costly. Everything depends on the first step. It has a unique quality of its own. The first step of obedience makes Peter leave his nets, and later get out of the ship; it calls upon the young man to leave his riches. Only this new existence, created through obedience, can make faith possible.

B. Life-relatedness

The above quotation introduces the second major problem of intellectual/theoretical religious studies today. This is the problem of transfer of school learning to life outside the classroom. Here too the revelation-response model holds promise for improvement. The traditional view assumed that theoretical reflection, contemplation, and systematizing was the best or only way to arrive at truth, including Biblical truth. As an integral part of this view was the assumption that any abstract doctrinal system which had once been mastered would be valid and be applied in every time, place, and circumstance. This assumption of transfer of training was based on a rationalistic definition of man and truth which held that theoretical systems were the only way to arrive at timeless truth. Such truth would automatically apply everywhere and always because it had been distilled and purified from among the flux and ambiguity of the decision making and concrete actions of human experience. Thus the traditional intellectual/theoretical approach assumed universal transfer of school learning to life, often through a generalized notion of mental discipline, and could not take seriously the increasingly impressive experiments on transfer of learning. The experiments on transfer of learning from the classroom to life outside the classroom (initiated between 1900 and 1910 and done with increasing regularity up to the present) increasingly showed that the application of verbal concepts learned in the school situation did not normally transfer very well to life outside of the classroom. Improvement of

such transfer became a reality only when the learning of those verbal concepts was accompanied by frequent guided practice in the application of these concepts to life situations in the classroom itself.

In contrast to the more traditional position outlined in Part I, the revelation-response approach to religious studies stresses the Biblical motif of "doing the truth." Thus in this approach it should not be too difficult to avoid many aspects of the two problem areas of traditional intellectualistic education described above. For the major educational goal in religious studies in this revised position would stress the learning of discipleship as the children and young people prepare to live their lives in this world. Sensitivity to hearing God's revelation to men everywhere and always, emphasis on decision making in terms of realities of one's own personal social and moral life in his own time and place, and living out these decisions in concrete action in everyday life would be stressed rather than theoretical analysis, system building, and mastery of logically organized systems of truth. Careful, detailed, scholarly study of the Bible itself, of Biblical history, and of human society and culture of the past will be stressed. There also will be a place for carefully built generalizations based on the many cases of interaction between God and man which are recorded in the divinely inspired Scriptures. But the same detailed attention will be given to our times and our society and our lives today as these generalizations are then brought to bear on our lives today in the process of listening for God's address to us in our times and in our circumstances. But such theoretical analysis and general principles should always in this perspective be subservient to the major goal of Christian education. And this single primary goal is the learning of Christian discipleship in the present world, both within the school and within the society in which the student now lives and will be living as an adult.

My quarrel with religious studies defined primarily as theoretical-informational-analytical activity aimed at producing "junior theologians" arises precisely at this point. For organizing and implementing religious studies as a theoretical-informational-analytical enterprise at the elementary and secondary school levels will almost surely obscure the radically historical and existential character of Biblical revelation and will desensitize rather than sensitize students to the hearing of and positive response to God's address in the everyday events and circumstances of life in the contemporary world.

I would grant, however, that the emphasis in all subject fields, including religious studies, will become increasingly theoretical as students move through the educational system, with a great deal of emphasis on the theoretical and analytical approach in specialized college and university level work in religious studies. But by that time religious studies at the elementary and secondary levels will have thoroughly imbued students with the radically historical and existential character of Biblical revelation. With this foundation, a more theoretical study at the college level can be understood for what it is: a specific, limited kind of useful and necessary response to God's revelation for the purpose of increasing theoretical insight and understanding. Even this specialized theoretical study may not be seen wholly as an end in itself, but must also be actively utilized in the on-going process of improving our living of Christian truth in life. But to approach all school learning of religious studies at every level as a theoretical analytic activity would, I fear, create a continuation of the view explicated in Part I of this paper and negate any significant revision along the lines of the position outlined in Part II.

The attempt at explicating a Biblical perspective in Part II has, like the traditional position in Part I, been overdrawn for purposes of identification and explication. In this form I believe the difference between it and the traditional position in Part I is sufficiently clear so that no specific section is required as a critique of the traditional view from the perspective of the view outlined in Part II. As indicated earlier, the preferred perspective of Part II is no doubt open to abuse and criticism, especially in the light of some of the theological, educational, and social emphases in the contemporary world. Furthermore, the condensed, overdrawn outline form required by the limits of this monograph make some of the ramifications and implications of this position even more vulnerable to criticism. While I regret that these matters cannot be discussed here, I sincerely hope that the ramifications, implications, and weaknesses of the view which I have put forward for consideration will be seriously discussed within the Christian school community. I do, however, want to face in this paper a few of the major problems with which this position must grapple. I suspect, for example, that some readers may interpret this position as supportive of a moralistic approach to teaching of religious studies. Since I believe that such a moralistic approach must be avoided, I shall try to show in the next section that moralistic teaching of religious studies should not follow from a proper understanding of this position. In addition, I shall discuss some of the ramifications for curriculum and teaching that are inherent in this position and indicate why I think that here too it is superior to a theoretical-analytical approach to religious studies.

C. Moralism

Teaching of religious studies is presently receiving severe criticism for being overly moralistic. Much of this criticism is legitimate and necessary, for there has been too much moralistic teaching in religious studies. I suspect that we all know some well meaning Christian teacher whose major point in teaching the Cain and Abel episode is that her students should be kind to their brothers and sisters. From the Achan story such a teacher makes the major point that the student should be honest and not steal; from David the shepherd the emphasis is on the obvious conclusion that we should work hard and be brave for God, etc., etc. This approach almost inevitably obscures the unique historical character and meaning of the Biblical stories, makes Christian faith a set of moralistic rules rather than living in a dynamic faith relation with a gracious personal God, and teaches the student to exegete and apply Scripture in a forced and distorted way.

Unfortunately, perversion of Scripture through moralism seems almost as prevalent among evangelical Christians who claim to take Scripture with the utmost seriousness as it is among those who do not have a very high view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. For example, I remember a lesson in an evangelical religious studies publication which used as its Biblical material the gory: sexy Herodias-Salome-Herod-John the Baptist incident from Mark 6. But because it had difficulty teaching this story honestly to young children as a set of historical events, the heading and the major point of the lesson was "A Good Mother is a Great Blessing." Or note again the middle class moralistic obscuring of the ritualistic and typological meaning and significance of Old Testament religious practices in these instructions for developing a lesson on

the necessity of the Christian being cleansed by Christ in a conservative evangelical religious studies teacher's manual:

DEVELOPMENT OF LESSON

1. Kinds of cleansing.

It is important that we keep our bodies and our clothes clean. We are a poor advertisement for Christ if we Christians are dirty and careless about our appearance! It is interesting to notice that when a careless person accepts Christ, he soon cleans up. This is as it should be. The Bible tells us: Be clean, and change your garments (Genesis 35:2); let them wash their clothes (Numbers 8:7); wash thyself (Ruth 3:3); wash thy face (Matthew 6:17).

John Wesley, a great preacher of the eighteenth century, went so far as to say, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness."

Cleanliness and Christianity should go together for know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19, A.R.V.)

Moralism is obviously a danger which religious studies must avoid. The critical question for the position I have presented in Part II of this paper is whether its emphasis on concrete decision making and historical action in this world provides sufficient protection against moralistic abuse by teachers. In the paragraphs that follow I shall attempt to show why I believe this position provides adequate protection against moralistic teaching while escaping most of the deadly effects of intellectualism.

This position takes man in his Biblical, historical setting with utmost seriousness. This means that students cannot escape as a major Biblical motif the fact that they with all men, both in Bible times and today, are pervasively sinful creatures. Thus when God reveals himself to man, including his constant revelational relationship with his redeemed people, we men are always caught in the tension of giving God less than full obedience in the decisions and actions to which God calls us. Recognition of our basic sinful human nature will create an awareness that decision and action in response to God's revelation always involve us in repentance, faith, and obedience. Furthermore, there is a constant humble awareness that even our decisions and actions of obedience under grace are always partial and filled with blind spots and imperfections. Thus we expect God's continuing address to us to illuminate the imperfections of even our obedient responses and to call us to new decisions and actions in these same areas of life.

The above perspective will allow us for the first time to deal honestly with the sinful side of the Biblical characters and stories. This approach will help us to avoid self-righteous moralism of the kind which has in the past been forced to use primarily the "saintly" material from the Bible. Such selectivity and distortion can be overcome in this approach because it will always stress honestly also the painful, sinful, half-hearted responses of men and women in the Bible, not for the sake of moralizing about what to avoid, but as an insight into our own sinful nature. This Biblical insight into the God-man interaction will help today's student hear God's call to humble self-examination and repentance, and provide powerful motivation for renewed joyful service because we live out of gratitude to God for his forgiving and freeing grace and not under moralistic prescription.

Thus the very historical continuity of God-man interaction between men in the Scriptures and us today will provide tremendous anti-moralistic insight into ourselves as God's redeemed people. For when this continuity is a major theme, we shall see ourselves and our students as joyful redeemed pilgrims who nevertheless are constantly plagued by our continuing sinful nature. It is in this light that this perspective deals always with the historical drama of responding to a gracious God whose call is not just to obedience, but to repentance, faith, and obedience in the historical decisions and actions required when God reveals himself and his will to man. This is not the stuff out of which self-righteous moralistic teaching is made, and this motif simply cannot be obscured when the Biblical text is read carefully in the perspective which I have outlined above. In fact, it seems to me that any theoretical-analytical perspective is far more likely to create a comfortable self-righteousness. I believe this is the case because in a religious studies program defined as theoretical-analytical, the great difficulty comes in avoiding the impression that Christian faith is primarily a matter of theoretical analysis and verbal knowledge which is not really tied to traumatic, concrete decision making and historical action either in Bible times or today. Thus, if we are convinced that religious studies in the Christian school must become historically incarnate in the lives and times of the students taking these religious studies courses, we must accept, I believe, the historical action-oriented revelation-response model rather than a theoretical-analytic model.

IV. The Revelation-Response Model

A. School and Life Style Outside of the School

Man as we know him is primarily a learner. He comes into the world a helpless, totally dependent human being. At the end of secondary school about eighteen years later he is an independent interacting adult individual who functions smoothly in an almost infinite variety of relationships and functions in an immensely complex technological society. In that process of learning from birth to age eighteen, the elementary and secondary schools in our society have a major institutional role. Our laws now require students to spend at least ten years of their lives attending these schools as a full-time vocation. Christians, along with all other citizens, have willingly paid the billions of dollars required annually for such free, universal, public education because they recognize its major influence in shaping our citizenry and society. In addition, many Christians are so convinced of the determinative formative influence of elementary and secondary schools in the lives of their children that they spend additional millions for Christian day school education as an alternative to public school education. It is self-evident, therefore, that we do believe that schools, and especially the Christian schools, at the elementary and secondary levels do have a determinative influence in the perception of reality and in the life style of students who attend those schools for ten to thirteen years

I must add here a note about the relative influence of the family in relationship to the influence of the school. I personally believe that the Christian family may in some cases and should in all cases be the most important single factor determining a Christian life style (or lack of it) in the lives of each new generation. For it is in the effective, practicing Christian family that

the child sees parents involved in concrete decisions and actions in their everyday lives in relation to all of the most important things in life. These include such areas as husband/wife and parent-child relationships, decisions as to vocation, residence, moral and ethical standards, etc. It is a fortunate Christian child who sees his parent humbly seeking and sometimes agonizing to know and do the will of God joyfully and willingly in these important areas of life within the family. Using consistently the major thrust of this paper, it must be admitted that family life can indeed be more influential than school learning because it is likely to be more powerfully experiential and less theoretical than school studies. Yet in spite of the importance of home and family, it is the Christian school system in our society, more than any other institution or individual, that provides the formal education in religious studies for children and young people. Thus the major goal of religious studies in the Christian school, the content and organization of the curriculum, and the approach and methodology in teaching will profoundly influence the perceptions of each new generation as to what the Christian faith is all about.

The above generalization means that if the approach to religious studies in the schools year after year is primarily the mastery of Biblical data, the child will come to believe that the Christian faith consists primarily in the mastery of facts and curiosities from the Bible. If the religious studies curriculum in the Christian schools is built on a historical-chronological model year after year, with the child required to learn names and dates as the primary emphasis, he will come to believe that the Christian faith consists primarily of being able to place Biblical characters in the proper place on a chronological time line. If the religious studies curriculum in the schools deals primarily year after year with theoretical, doctrinal formulations, then the child will almost certainly begin to think of the Christian faith as consisting of theoretical generalizations with little or no connection to historical events, circumstances, decisions, and action in his life.

For these reasons I regard as dangerous religious studies in elementary and secondary schools based on a theoretical-analytical model. I cannot see how such a reductionistic position can do justice to the many faceted nature of man and his experience and can avoid obscuring the very structure of the divine revelation and human response which is the major subject matter in religious studies. Such a one-sided intellectual-theoretical approach fails to do justice to the unity within complexity which is man's nature. How, for example, does an intellectual approach to religious studies provide for the involvement and exercise of the will and emotions, the spontaneity, the enthusiasm, the joy, the sorrow, the awe, the tensions and the existential problems that go with Christian decision making and acts of obedience to God in the contemporary world? Furthermore, the intellectual mode tends very easily to deal primarily with non-historical, theoretical generalizations. When this occurs, there is little chance that the view of Christian faith learned from the content and methodology of religious studies based on such a theoretical-analytical model will help young people recognize God's revelation in their every day lives. And if they are not sensitized to hear God's Word in terms of their own lives and times, how will they be able to respond to his demand that they make decisions which are to be demonstrated in repentance, faith, and obedience through concrete actions in the world?

In the preceding paragraph I have noted that man is a unified, complex, active being who cannot be reached and guided and influenced in his life as he experiences it primarily through an

appeal to his rational-intellectual-theoretical capacity. A brief elaboration of this point will provide additional insight into how the decision making-action model for religious studies is able to escape the dangers of moralism and intellectualism.

B. School and Unity and Complexity In Man

Earlier I asserted that the task of Christian education, including religious studies, is a single unified task. It is simply an education in and for Christian life. Another way of stating this is that Christian education is for a life of discipleship to Christ. I have also stated that this unified goal of Christian education cannot be adequately defined and implemented if the school is defined as dealing primarily with the theoretical and analytical, Biblical and educational studies were cited to show that if the student's task is primarily development of the intellect, such a theoretical-intellectual view at the level of the elementary and secondary school is one sided and inadequate both Biblically and educationally. A leading contemporary Biblical scholar sums up the major goal of all Christian education in these words:

It is not law or power, knowledge or dignity, but service which is the basis of discipleship. The model for the disciples in their following of Christ is therefore not the secular ruler and not the learned scribe ... the only valid model is that of the man who serves at table: 'But I am among you as one who serves (at table)'. (Luke 22:27) This attitude must be correctly understood. It is not just a question of a voluntary external selfabasement, as practiced on certain days of the year by the leaders of some religious communities, but a total existence in a life and death service of Jesus Himself (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28) and as demanded by Jesus Himself of those who would serve him. (Hans Kung, *The Church*, p. 392.)

The task of Christian education in the schools therefore is to help students internalize the above service-discipleship motif so that around this service to God and man their personality is unified and their total experience and action demonstrate integrity. But immediately there are two sets of complexities which at first glance seem to frustrate such integral unity. The first set of complexities is the multi-faceted nature of human experience and functions. The second set of complexities deals with the many subject matter areas which of necessity are a part of the school curriculum in a complex world such as ours. Through taking seriously both the unity and complexity described above, the danger of moralism in the Biblical perspective outlined earlier becomes even more remote.

Because human experience is tremendously complex in today's world, the concrete decision making and action as a response to God's revelation which I insisted upon earlier must be understood as very broadly based. The range of human response to God and His address to men in the Scriptures is almost infinite. Sometimes the response is highly aesthetic, as when David wrote his Psalms. At other times the response is almost ecstatic physical activity, as when David danced before the Lord. (II Sam. 6) Sometimes the proper response is to be still and know that God is God (Job 38 and 42; Psalm 46). Sometimes the proper response is fear and trembling when God speaks in some magnificent mighty way, as at Mt. Sinai. Sometimes the response is bold ecclesiastical or social action, as when the Synod of Jerusalem (Acts 15) accepted on an

equal basis as Christians the formerly despised Gentiles, or as when Paul withstood Peter to his face because he failed in his Christian social responsibility when he refused to eat with the Gentiles (Galatians 2). Sometimes the proper response is a philosophical discourse as in Ecclesiastics or as when Paul preached on Mars Hill (Acts 17) and sometimes it is a declaration of knowing nothing other than Jesus Christ and him crucified, as when Paul wrote to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 2). And so it goes on and on. It appears that the range of legitimate human response to God's address to men is as broad and as deep as human life itself. Thus to confine it in religious studies in the school primarily to a theoretical-analytic response seems to partake of a kind of unbiblical reductionism. This is not to say that there is no room in religious studies for units based primarily on theoretical-analytic analysis with logical organization and mastery of materials as a major objective. Rejecting the use of any theoretical approach would in itself be an unbiblical reductionism, just as confining school learning in religious studies primarily to the theoretical-analytical is also unbiblical reductionism.

But through all of the complexity in the Bible as described above, there runs this unifying strain: Man is a creature who must be sensitized to hear clearly God's address in everyday life in this world and to respond obediently by concrete actions in his own life and time, with the expectation that this activity expresses praise and obedience to God and service to his fellowman. It is around this unifying theme and experience that the child learns that his whole being and all his functions, physical, intellectual, social, moral, aesthetic, etc. must all be actively involved in responding to God's address to men. This multiple response approach to religious studies in Christian education seems ideally suited to avoid a narrowly moralistic approach to historical decision making and action. Such a broadly based multiple response approach does full justice to both the unity and complexity of man and his experience and functions, and seems entirely justifiable in the light of Scripture. It also provides an excellent bridge to a discussion of how the unified theme of Christian discipleship in religious studies can be related to and implemented in the complexity of subject matter in the elementary and secondary school curriculum.

To prepare children and young people for life in our complex, technological, educated society, elementary and secondary Christian education have progressively had to include more subjects in the curriculum and demand greater sophistication and mastery within those subject areas. I suspect that two related problems have been created by this good and necessary increase in the quality of Christian education. The first problem is the very real possibility of a lack of unity and integration in the life and thought and experience of the student as a result of taking an ever increasing number of separate subjects. A second problem is the increasing uneasiness of some Christian educators with the absence of any uniquely Christian emphasis in the teaching of many of these subjects. I believe that both of these problems could be ameliorated significantly if religious studies based on the revelation-response perspective I have been recommending were more closely interrelated with the various other subjects in the curriculum. At this point also the revelation-response perspective in religious studies holds more promise than religious studies taught as a separate theoretical subject at a specific time and place in the curriculum.

For example, a topical study of the Scriptures on the marvels of God's creation in conjunction with an elementary level science course would develop significant skills in finding the various books of the Bible, in using a concordance, and in seeing that the Scriptures do speak in

marvelous ways about the physical universe. Or again, the range of legitimate responses on the part of students could be very broad, including the production of visual and plastic art as response to some marvel of the created universe, or the writing of a poem expressing the marvels of God's creation, making a display on what environmental pollution does to mar and damage God's creation, or in making a cross-section diagram of the nervous system, the blood circulation system, or some other aspect of man showing the scientific intricacies of God's creation. So, also, in the study of history a new dimension is always present if the human response at any time by any group of people is analyzed not only in terms of historical events and historical cause and effect, but also in terms of the evidences of obedience and disobedience to God's revelation found in the shape and effect of the life style of each society studied. Social studies also could be vitalized and saved from a good deal of irrelevance by an analysis of the conformity or lack of conformity of any policy, past and especially present, to the will of God as it affects that society. Finally, the possibilities of relating human response to God's revelation in literature and the fine arts are also almost infinite and have already been illustrated earlier in the example of the possibilities in the studies of science.

This "interrelationship approach" does not mean that religious studies should never have a separate time and place of their own in the curriculum; nor does it mean that every other subject becomes primarily a study of what does the Bible say about it. But surely when one sees the total structure of divine revelation being God's address to man to which all men must inevitably respond with a greater or lesser degree of obedience or disobedience, then the possibilities of a Christian approach to every subject in the curriculum and an interaction of religious studies with every subject in the curriculum are greatly enhanced. In fact, when I see all of the challenges and possibilities of the broadly based revelation-response approach to religious studies in the elementary and secondary schools, I am surprised that there are those who maintain that religious studies should be basically junior theology and approached primarily as an analytic-theoretical enterprise. For this intellectualist approach to religious studies as a separate discipline would confine such studies almost exclusively to a particular time and place within the curriculum, the school day, and the student's lives.

C. Summary of the Major Arguments

I believe the above paragraphs have shown that the revelation -- response emphasis, which is directed toward hearing God's revelation and acting upon it in this world, can escape a moralistic approach in its implementation. No doubt there are blind spots, partial insights, eccentricities, weaknesses, and temptations for abuse in the position which I have delineated. Consistent application of my own position requires that I affirm unequivocally that this is true because of sin in myself, in the products of other men which I read, and in my world as I view it as a Christian at this time in history. Greater sensitivity to hearing God's address and responding obediently in Christian education will no doubt create revisions, improvements, and changes in the position which I have presented. In fact, it is quite likely that at some time in the future Christian educators will be as critical of this position as I have been of the intellectualist tradition of Western Christendom. But the very expectation of such revision is entirely compatible with the revelation -- response structure which I am presenting for discussion in this paper.

Some initial comparative evaluation of materials based on the two major perspectives outlined in this paper will be possible through the two sets of religious studies curriculum materials used as examples in Part V of this paper. But in closing Part IV, I want to restate the two major reasons why I hold as firmly as I do to the revelation-response structure which I have been explicating in this paper.

The first reason is that the radically historical, personal, pervasive address of God to men, in which he asks for decision making and action of obedience in men's everyday lives, seems clearly to be the method which God used in dealing with men throughout the period covered by the Holy Scriptures. Thus if God's method throughout the Scriptures was to graciously reveal himself and his will to sinful men, and to seek their repentance, faith, and obedience in terms of the everyday circumstances, events, and actions of their lives, I see no evidence to indicate that he would deal differently with us in our lives today. Therefore, any rejection of the revelation-response model will need to bring cogent evidence showing why God deals with us, his sinful, redeemed people today, in a different way than he did with his people throughout the historical period covered by the Scriptures.

The second reason is of a historical-religio-philosophical nature. Biblical Christian faith seems to me to be quite unique among the major philosophies and religions of the world in that it deals with man redemptively precisely his radically historical, everyday existence in this world. In contrast to this, the major philosophically oriented religions of the West have insisted that man must escape the particularity of human experience and existence in order to arrive at truth and salvation through some kind of abstract, theoretical reasoning. So too, the major non-Christian religions of the East hold that man must escape his historical particularity and this world in order to achieve salvation.

In reaction to this overly intellectualized philosophical Christianity, modern philosophies such as Pragmatism, Empiricism, and Materialism have become strong and attractive philosophical options to the contemporary world. But these philosophical options are also inadequate, because in them there is no place for a personal God who creates, sustains, and redeems this world even while He also transcends it. Unfortunately, Christianity has through history muted its unique and radically historical character by partaking too much of philosophical idealism with its one-sided emphasis on intellect and rationality. As a result, such uniquely Christian emphases as the goodness of the material world and of the body of man as created by God, the authenticity, integrity and worth of human life and experience in this physical world, the resurrection of the body, and the purification of this World as the future and eternal home of redeemed man, have not received adequate emphasis in the Christian faith which we affirm and practice. Thus, even if the view of religious studies which I am espousing in this paper is also plagued by partial insight and abuses in application, this seems hardly to be the greater danger at present, since the radical, historical particularity of Christian revelation and Christian life have been seriously obscured in the Christian tradition in which we stand.

We turn now to examples of traditional and newly produced religious studies curriculum materials aimed at illustrating the difference in the two perspectives presented in Parts I and II of this paper.

V. Reproductions of Current Curriculum Materials

The examples below are verbatim reproductions of complete parallel lessons from two different sets of religious studies curriculum materials published by the National Union of Christian Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Both sets of illustrative material are from curriculum materials for grade 4 of the elementary school. Both sets of material are presently available and are being used in Christian schools. The first materials below were first published in 1960, the second in 1971.

These two lessons from material first published in 1960 reflect the theoretic-analytic approach.

Lesson I in the Teacher's Manual **THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD**

In this lesson it is essential that the books of the Old Testament are memorized. The pupil's manual classifies these books. Explain the terms *major* and *minor* prophets. These designations do not measure the significance of the prophets; the major prophets are those whose messages are most lengthy.

The teacher should use a few devices to assist pupils in finding the books quickly. For example, the teacher may write *Genesis 8:22* on the board and ask the first pupil finding the text to begin reading it. If one pupil has been first for a number of times he should be asked to drop from the game, temporarily so that the slower pupils will try to compete.

Another device is that of asking a question and telling the class in which chapter the answer can be found. An example is, "What bird is mentioned in the first part of Ezekiel 1?"

The American Bible Society *Record* supplies information about the translation of the Bible. It contains stories about colporteurs and about the work done for the blind. The society also has a number of films and filmstrips about its work.

Teachers should set an example in handling the Bible respectfully. It should not become buried beneath the pile of books and papers that accumulates on the teacher's desk during the course of a day.

Suggested songs:

How Shall the Young Direct Their Way?
How Firm a Foundation
Thy Word Have I Hid in My Heart
Great God, with Wonder and with Praise

Answers for Lesson I

Page 8. *How Much Do You Know?*

1. God guided the writers so that they wrote exactly what He wanted them to write.
2. 36 people.
3. 1600 years.
4. Old Testament, New Testament.
5. Dealings between two or more persons.
6. 39,27,66.
7. It tells of creation, the fall of man, and God's dealings with His special people. It points to the coming of the Saviour.

Lesson 2 in the Teacher's Manual
THE CREATION (Genesis 1-2)

The first chapter of Genesis reveals God as Creator, as the One who was before all things and through whom all things exist.

In presenting this lesson the emphasis must not be placed on the things created but on the Creator. Creation reached its climax when God created man -- the crown of creation God's masterpiece.

Call attention to the fact that the first man was the head and the representative of the entire human race. Whether righteousness and life or sin and death would prevail depended on him. As such there was only one like him, the Second Adam, Christ.

After six days of creating, God rested. This does not mean that God was weary, or that God would no longer concern Himself with His creation. Jesus said, "My Father worketh even until now" (John 5:17). The resting of God means that He ceased creating. On the seventh day He viewed His completed work with satisfaction (Ex. 31:17). For us the day of rest is the first day of the week instead of the seventh. We commemorate the resurrection of Jesus, which took place on the first day of the week. This practice conforms to that of the Apostolic church (Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 16:1-2). Emphasize the need to observe that day in a way pleasing to God.

Throughout the year there will be many opportunities to call attention to the greatness of God's creation. It can be seen in the infinite variety in plant life, the marvelous way in which animals are guided through instinct, the beauty of a snowflake, and the metamorphosis of a butterfly or moth. Present day achievements in conquering space make one stand "in awesome wonder."

Though they do not deal with the story of creation, the group of films entitled "God's Wonder" help the child appreciate the handiwork of God. These films are all available from the Church and School Film Library, 865 Twenty-eighth Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508. Your school has a Film Library catalog.

Suggested songs:

All Things Bright and Beautiful
 O Come and to Jehovah Sing
 O Lord, How Manifold Thy Ways
 This Is My Father's World
 All Creatures of Our God and King

Answers for Lesson 2

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. beginning | 3. dust |
| 2. light | 4. image |
| firmament | 5. garden, dress |
| earth, seas, plants | 6. good, evil, die |
| sun, moon, stars | 7. rib |
| fish, birds | |
| animals, man | |
| rested | |

Lesson 1 in the Student's Manual
THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD

Have you ever received a long, newsy letter? Did you read it only once? Oh, no, you read it over and over again. Someone has sent each of us a long letter which we should read every day. We want to learn all we can from its pages. Can you guess what this letter is? Yes, it is the Bible. It is a letter from God.

Let us now learn something about this wonderful letter, our Bible.

What We Should Know

In writing the Bible, God used men. Because it was God who caused men to write the Bible we say that the Bible is inspired and written by God. Inspiration means that the writers were so guided by God the Holy Spirit that they wrote exactly what He wanted them to write.

The writing of the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, took many, many, hundreds of years. Think of it, about sixteen hundred years! The Bible was written by about thirty-six people. These people lived hundreds of years apart. And yet their writings agree perfectly. This clearly shows that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

Many times people have tried to destroy the Bible. But God has always taken care of it. It will never be destroyed. In Mark 13:31 we read, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."

The Bible shows us how to live in this life and tells us about the life to come. For the child of God the Bible is like a road map which shows how one should travel. It is like the compass which the sailor uses to find the harbor, or the light upon the road. The Bible tells us of God's plan of salvation. The Bible is the only source from which we can learn about Jesus, the Savior.

Our Bible is made up of two parts -- the Old Testament and the New Testament. A testament explains the arrangement, or dealings, between two or more persons. In the Bible we read of God's dealings with men. The Old Testament has thirty-nine books and the New Testament has twenty-seven books. This makes a total of sixty-six books.

The Old Testament begins with the story of creation and the fall of man. It tells many stories about God's special people and points to the coming of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Our lessons will begin with the creation story.

Let us memorize the names of the Old Testament books listed on the next page. They are divided into five groups.

The Books of Moses: Genesis (Gen.), Exodus (Ex.), Leviticus (Lev.), Numbers (Num.), Deuteronomy (Deut.)

The Books of History: Joshua (Josh.), Judges (Judg.) Ruth, I and II Samuel (Sam.), I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles (Chron.), Ezra, Nehemiah (Neh.), Esther

The Books of Poetry: Job, Psalms (Ps.), Proverbs (Prov.), Ecclesiastes (Eccles.) Song of Solomon (Song)

The Books of the Major Prophets: Isaiah (Isa.), Jeremiah (Jer.), Lamentations (Lam.), Ezekiel (Ezek.), Daniel (Dan.)

The Books of the Minor Prophets: Hosea (Hos.), Joel, Amos, Obadiah (Obad.), Jonah, Micah (Mic.), Nahum (Nah.), Habakkuk (Hab.), Zephaniah (Zeph.), Haggai (Hag.), Zechariah (Zech.), Malachi (Mal.)

How much do you know?

1. What do we mean when we say that the Bible is inspired by God?
2. How many people wrote the Bible?
3. How many hundred of years did it take to write the Bible?
4. Into which two parts is the Bible divided?
5. What does the word testament mean?
6. How many books are in the Old Testament? In the New Testament? In the whole Bible?
7. What does the Old Testament tell us about?

Memory Text

Since the Bible is a wonderful book, what should we pray when we read and study it?

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold

Wondrous things out of thy law.

Ps. 119:18

Extra Things to Do

1. Draw a bookcase eight inches long and six inches wide with three shelves. Divide the two upper shelves. Now you have five sections, one for each division of the books of the Old Testament. Draw as many books in each section as there are books in that division. Print the names neatly on the backs of the books.
2. Learn to write the names of the Old Testament books from memory. How well can you spell them?
3. Learn the names of the New Testament books.

Lesson 2 in the Student's Manual

THE CREATION (Genesis 1-2)

Did you ever stop to think how wonderfully man is made? Have you ever watched a flower unfold or a colony of bees at work? The world is full of these wonders. We cannot understand how they are possible.

How did this world begin? The world could not make itself. Someone had to make it. That Someone had to be the Almighty One.

To create is to make a thing which was not made before. Genesis 1:1 tells us: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God only spoke the word, and suddenly heaven and earth appeared.

We see steps in God's creation. First came light. Then the waters appeared. Next the water and the land were separated. The sun, moon, and stars were created. Then plants, birds, fish, and animals were formed. Last of all God made man, the highest of all His creation.

How wonderful God's handiwork is! How beautiful are the carpets of green grass, the plants, the flowers, the trees! How sweet is the melody of the songbirds!

We cannot understand how all this came about, but we believe that God made the world. God gives us faith to believe it. In Hebrews 11:3 we read, "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God."

Vocabulary Helps

Genesis - beginning	firmament - the sky
created - made a thing which was not made before; cause to be	sea monsters - large sea animals
birds - everything that flies, tiny insects as well as birds	image - likeness
	dress - to cultivate, trim

Spelling Words

Jehovah	Created	image
Beginning	Adam	Eve
Eden	Garden	paradise

Filling in Blanks

- God created all things "in the _____"
- An outline of the creation week:
 First day: _____ Gen. 1:3-5. Second day: _____ Gen. 1:6-8.
 Third day: _____, _____, and _____ Gen. 1:9-13.
 Fourth day: _____, _____, and _____ Gen. 1:14-19
 Fifth day: _____ and _____ Gen. 1:20-21.
 Sixth day: _____ and _____ Gen. 1:24-27.
 Seventh day: God _____ from all His work. Gen. 2:2.
- God made man, Adam, out of the _____ of the ground. Gen. 2:7.
- God made man in His own _____. Gen. 1:27.
- God placed Adam in the beautiful _____ of Eden to _____ it and keep it. Gen. 2:15.
- God told Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge of _____ and of _____. If he disobeyed he would surely _____ Gen. 2:16-17.
- God made woman, Eve, out of a _____ of Adam. Gen. 2:21-22.

Memory Text

What did God see when He looked at what He had created?

*And God saw everything that he had made,
and, behold, it was very good*

-Genesis 1:31 a

Extra things to do

1. Try to find out who wrote Genesis.
2. Memorize Psalm 146:4-6.
3. The page for boys and girls in the *Christian Home and School* magazine tells about the Bible Readers' League which offers certificates for daily reading of the Bible. You may wish to join this group.

Same material as the two previous lessons but from a revelation-response approach

Lesson I in the Teacher's Manual **INTRODUCTION**

Objectives

1. The children will, by means of dramatization, learn the meaning of response.
2. The children will broaden their concept of response to God's Revelation of Himself by finding pictures which depict this response.
3. After observation of and discussion about the symbols on the cover of the workbook, the children will each write a short paragraph about the relationship of a Christian child to his God. (revelation-response)

Direct Experience

Tell the children that they are going to play a game. Send three students (Student A, Student B, and Student C) out of the room. Ask Student A to return and listen to a fourth student (Student D). Student D will stand at the front of the room and will make a statement or ask a question. Student A must then respond to whatever Student D has said. Repeat with Students B and C.

Several possible statements or questions Student D could give are:

1. "Will you please tell me the color and the eating habits of the cobra snake?"
2. "I am planning an experiment for which I need your cooperation. Will you please stand in the corner on one leg and put your hands behind your back?"
3. Have Student D and a fifth student (Student E) carry on the following discussion:
 - Student D: You know what Mrs. Buddle just told me?
 - Student E: No, what?
 - Student D: Jimmy broke his leg and has to be flat on his back in bed for a week. She said he's not very happy.
4. Another way to elicit response is to turn off the lights in the classroom when Student A enters.

You can see that many different responses are possible. Elicit from the class a discussion about the various responses observed. Compare the various responses. Let

them suggest any other possible responses. Finally, use the word "respond." "These children responded in different ways but each one did make a response." Discuss whether some responses were better than others and ask why this is so. Ask the students if there is one right response that their classmates should have made.

Bridge Building

Instruct the students to turn to the cover of the Student Activity Book. Let children try to explain the meanings of the pictures.

Fish - is the Christian symbol for Christ. The five Greek letters which represent the first letters of the Greek words for the initials of "Jesus Christ, God's Son Savior" spell out the word for fish. The fish symbol also stands for the followers of Christ.

Pen - symbolizes the written word, the Bible, which is preached, taught and studied.

Flower - symbolizes nature.

Man - symbolizes us, God's children.

Use the word "revelation" in pointing out the pictures at the top of the cover. Explain that these pictures are examples of the ways God shows, makes Himself known, or reveals Himself to us.

Concept

The children must be led to see that God communicates to man and in response to this communication, man communicates to God. God is the Initiator, the Beginner. When God reveals Himself, man must respond. The responses are to His action in history.

Read together Exodus 24:3-8 as an illustration of revelation-response. "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." The children should see that this expresses Israel's covenantal relationship to God, as well as their own relationship to God. Other illustrations of revelation-response are found in Hebrews 11.

Bridge Building

Ask the students to find pictures in magazines of people doing things which could be responses to God's revelation. Have a discussion about the variety of responses possible. (This could be done in the classroom if magazines are available. It could also be given as a homework assignment.) Paste the pictures on a *large* cardboard cut-out of a man. They can be pasted in collage form. This project can be worked on throughout the unit.

Direct Experience

Have the children write one or two short paragraphs in their Activity Books explaining the cover of the book. They should use the words *revelation and* response at least once in their writing (Activity 1).

Lesson 2 in the Teacher's Manual
INTRODUCTION

Objectives

- 1 . The children will discover and list (from their knowledge of Bible stories) ways God revealed Himself in the Bible.
2. The children will name ways in which Biblical people respond to God. These will include disobedient and obedient responses.
3. The children will recognize the difficulty and challenge of responding to God in faith and will sing a prayer-song asking for God's help in doing this for the school year.

Direct Experience

This lesson can begin with a reference to and discussion about the pictures the children have found in magazines, always letting the child explain why he thought his picture depicted a response to God.

Bridge Building

Show some pictures of responses that Biblical characters made to God. If large pictures are not available, smaller ones can be used from Bible story books. Examples: Peter walking on the water, Israelites crossing the Red Sea, the blind man healed, Mary anointing Jesus' feet.

Concept

The Bible serves as a guide to the kinds of responses we should make. Through our study we will see many different responses and will often observe God's judgment of these responses. Emphasize that not only is the Bible itself God's revelation to us, but that it contains examples of how people responded to His revelation to them.

Have the students list different ways in which God revealed Himself to His people. List these suggestions in a column on the blackboard.

Revelation

God reveals Himself through the Bible.

God reveals Himself through nature.

God reveals Himself through the preaching in our churches.

Bridge Building

Now have the students suggest ways in which God's people may have responded to the revelations listed on the board. List the suggested responses in a second column on the blackboard. The examples should include vertical responses (those which are made directly to God) and horizontal responses (those which are made to other people but in service and obedience to God).

Explain to the children that their Bible work this year will be patterned after their revelation-response idea. After each study of the Bible, they should make response,

Direct Experience

The children will probably sense that even "no response" is a response. They should also be led to see that responding in faith and obedience is not easy. They will need God's help.

Use a prayer-song, such as "Jesus, Son of God Most High" (CH, 170). Let children all sing verses 1, 2, and 7. For verses 3, 4, and 5 (omit 6) it is effective to have the teacher (or student) speak the first three lines while the piano is playing the music softly. Children will all join in on the phrase "Hear us, Holy Jesus." These words should be sung prayerfully and with folded hands. Instruct the children to copy the words of this song in their Activity Books (Activity 2).

Lesson 3 in the Teacher's Manual *CREATION OF THE WORLD*

Objectives

1. The students will comprehend God's greatness as Creator by seeing the bulletin board stripped of all its nature pictures.
2. Each student will write a thank you prayer for one item in God's creation which he is personally glad exists.

Direct Experience

Prior to beginning this unit, cover a section of bulletin board with black construction paper. Ask the students to bring magazine pictures or snapshots illustrating an the various things God created.

Bridge Building

Have the students place these pictures on the black background. If any of them brings pictures of man-made things, point this out and place these in a separate folder for the time being. (Use them for Lesson Two.)

Concept

The teaching procedure suggested below assumes that the children are already familiar with the Creation story (Gen. 1:1-25).

Emphasize that God created His world in an orderly fashion. He didn't just blob things on it at random. (If any students question the length of creation days, tell them the Bible doesn't explicitly reveal the time span covered.)

Let's tell the Creation story in a different way. Let's start with Day Seven and work back to the first day of creation. As the children recall what was created on each day, have one child remove any pictures of that item from the bulletin board. When the bulletin board is bare, read Genesis 1:1, 2a with the children. The earth was waste and void. Discuss what this means. Aren't you glad that you have a Creative God? Name an item you're especially glad God included in his creation plan. Encourage them to name pets, places they vacation, etc.

Put the pictures back on the bulletin board or have a student do this some time during the day.

Direct Experience

Have each student write a thank you prayer for one item in God's creation which he is personally glad exists (Activity 2). You might wish to have the children pray these Thank You's aloud in a group prayer time. Or you may want to list all their Thank You's on a poster next to the creation pictures on the bulletin board.

Any songs to be sung in conjunction with this unit are left to the individual teacher's choice. You might examine the lines of songs which your children frequently sing for their possible connection with this unit.

Lesson 4 in the Teachers Manual *CREATION OF MAN*

Objectives

1. Each student will realize that man is made in God's image by seeing how his own work is like God's.
2. Each student will become aware of man's initial, basic relationships through discussion.

Direct Experience

Display some student work in art and arithmetic on a section of the bulletin board. Also place any pictures the students brought of man-made items on this bulletin board. Talk with them about the fact that they are made in God's image. They can be creative. They can think.

Concept

God created other things first to get the world ready for man. Man was special. God came to the garden to walk and talk with him. Ask the children what they think Adam and Eve did in the garden.

1. They worked. Point out man's relationship to the rest of God's creation (cultural mandate).
2. They kept each other company. Point out man's communal nature and that God said it was not good for man to be alone.
3. They walked with God.

Discuss the above three relationships with the children and be sure that they understand that these relationships are as much a part of man's uniqueness as is the fact that he was created in God's image. Define paradise in terms of perfect relationships.

Bridge Building

Have the children do Activity 3.

Begin learning the core passage, Psalm 8. Choice of version, explanation of unfamiliar words, and method of evaluation is left to the discretion of the individual teacher.

Typical suggestions from the Student Activity Book to accompany the above four lessons.

Activity 1. Write a paragraph or two explaining the pictures on the cover of your Activity Book. Try to use the words *revelation* or *reveal* and *response* or *respond*. They are important to you in Bible study and Christian life.

Activity 2 Your teacher will help you choose verses from the prayer song you have sung. Write them here so you can use them to sing this song throughout the year.

Activity 3. Your eyes tell you about the world around you. Can you think of five things that your eyes informed you about today? There are four other ways in addition to eyes in which your bodies learn about the world around you. What are they?

Activity 4. Do you have a pet? Did you ever have a secret hiding place outside? Such as a tree or hut? Did you build any sand castles this summer, or did you swim instead during the time that you were at the beach? Think of the difference between the world when it was "waste and void" and the way it is today. Can you name something that you are especially glad for? Write a short thank you prayer to God for creating this thing. You may wish to draw a picture of it.