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appeared. Whether or not that was a real danger, it is *perceived* to be a danger by folk in Kenya and their actions are limited accordingly.

The negative criticisms of Muge and others must be seen against the background of the positive features of Kenya, as he freely acknowledged. He did however warn that the situation was getting worse and that stability and prosperity could not be taken for granted. There was the danger that increasing corruption and injustice would give rise to an explosion which could destroy all that has been built. Hard though now it is to believe, it used to be Uganda that was called the pearl of Africa, a title now often awarded to Kenya. The example of Uganda shows the danger that could face Kenya. Muge's words, spoken in the interview at the end of 1989, have proved to be prophetic given the unrest of 1990 with its attendant dangers.

Muge died shortly after appearing before the Kanu Review Committee. This committee reported to a special delegates' conference of Kanu at the beginning of December 1990.¹⁰ The report recommended the abolition of queuing, of the 70% rule and of the use of expulsion as a method of party discipline, the three matters that the committee had been set up to consider. At the conference the delegates' speeches were predominantly against making any such changes, but president Moi surprised everyone by speaking at the end strongly in favour of them, in the interests of national unity. His wishes prevailed and the conference voted to accept the report in full. (7:12:90, 4–21)

Prior to the conference the president had also asked parliament to restore the security of tenure of the auditor-general, the attorney-general and the judges (7:12:90, 5, 7). Thus almost all of the constitutional changes opposed by Muge have been or are being reversed. At this stage it is hard to estimate the full significance of these events. Many politicians will see them as the end of a process, while others will hope that they are just the beginning of a more far-reaching process. Only time will tell. Either way, the constitutional changes are relatively easy to make, the elimination of corruption, Muge's other complaint, will be much harder.

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Educational Responses to Modern Pluralism

Brian V. Hill

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This important article demands careful reflection. It is adapted from the author's keynote address delivered at an annual conference of the Australian Teachers Christian Fellowship. The author argues the case for recognising modern pluralism in society as a day of

¹⁰ The full text of the report is found in *Weekly Review* 7:12:90, 37–60.

opportunity for Christian educationalists, while not ignoring its dangers. He sees pluralism as a state of mind as well as a social reality. He argues his case on the basis of our Lord's dictum 'to be in the world but not of it' and examines four options being pursued by Christians today. Two he finds totally unacceptable, a third is compatible with Scripture but his preference is clearly with the fourth—that of modifying structures from within. He believes that only a gospel which is transcultural will withstand the shocks of pluralism. Education is more than schooling.

Editor

To coin a phrase: 'some mothers do have em', i.e. those children who always seem to be 'in another world'. Their hold on life in this world appears, at best, to be spasmodic. Given instructions about what bus to catch, what to do when the oven chimer rings in the kitchen, what to buy at the food shop, they listen pleasantly and with apparent attention but remember not a thing. The bus they board will bear them to a place not of their devising, the kitchen will burn down, and they will buy pet-food for the Sunday roast. Their time-sense diverges from that of ordinary mortals, especially if they happen to be holding either a tea-towel or a telephone. Their thoughts move in different realms, and in the midst of family conversations they will suddenly and with great animation make statements that are totally out of context, very much in the style of characters in a Chekhov play. Many parents hold the belief, reasonable in the circumstances, that if the life-support systems of the home were to be taken away, such children would be [p.83](#) quite unable to fend for themselves and would infallibly expire, without even being aware of their own demise.

LIVING IN ANOTHER WORLD

It must be said however, that from the point of view of God, the heavenly parent of us all, many of *us* are living in another world, at a time when we ought to be about our business—or *his* business—in this one. But the reasons for *our* behaviour may not be as innocent as the reasons which account for our children's behaviour. Beginning with a desire to grasp spiritual realities more fully, we find the reinforcing effect of fellowship and devotional practice so enjoyable, as compared with the tedium of daily duty and the pressures of the work-place, that we turn inward. Superspirituality becomes a 'cop-out,' especially if we feel threatened by what is customarily described as the 'real' world.

Sadly, this is true at a more general level as well. Most Western Christians today are so dismayed by the present world-order that they are displaying withdrawal symptoms. They are shell-shocked by the speed with which the pluralistic society has come upon them, and defensive reactions predominate.

This is understandable. For many centuries, Western civilisation operated under the unified value-canopy of Christendom, which was culturally potent even into the middle of the present century. Many readers born before the Second World War can probably still remember what it was like to live in a society where the Christian ethic was generally endorsed and expectations of life-style were relatively uniform.

By contrast, today's Western societies are profoundly pluralistic. Older Christians have been slow to come to terms with this fact, and their reactions, especially in education, have tended to be defensive, and even escapist; rearguard actions in the face of *offensives* mounted by radical minorities. This is far removed from the spirit of Charles Wesley's indomitable call 'to serve the *present* age, my calling to fulfil.' The present article will advance the thesis that pluralism, far from being an unpalatable option, is a social given which can be turned to advantage by Christian educators and evangelists. I will be

working not just for more positive feelings towards our task, but a more clear-sighted acknowledgement of present-day social realities.

The argument will proceed in five stages. Firstly, we will study the fact of pluralism, leading on, secondly, to a biblical critique of the range of possible responses to this fact. We will then study the implications of this analysis for educational policy at two levels: p. 84 curriculum theory and institutional provision. Fifthly and finally, some specific and concrete directions for Christian activism in education will be proposed, in order that we may the more effectively fulfil our calling in the present age.

THE FACT OF PLURALISM

There is a pluralism in definitions of pluralism. At one level, the term is applied to societies in which no one world-view or unified value-stance exercises a monopoly over the minds of its citizens: hence personal convictions and life-styles differ, while a middle ground of civic and economic cooperation is maintained by pragmatic negotiation at the level of procedural values. But this definition implies that societies in which governments are striving to enforce a unitary worldview—notably under some Islamic and Marxist regimes—escape the net cast by the definition.

But pluralism is more than a social state of affairs. It is an individual state of mind, whereby one is sensitive to the problematic status of all systems of belief and value, given the plurality of options now presented to human consciousness in the global village. To be aware of pluralism in this sense is not necessarily to become a relativist; one may continue to affirm that one world-view in particular is the true one, but such an affirmation will be understood to depend on acceptance of arguments for that belief which fall short of indisputable proof. It is no longer possible to assume that every right thinking person will be in agreement with oneself. The pluralised mind accepts the fact that a burden of proof rests on every believer. In this sense, even under the most totalitarian regimes of today, the mind of the average citizen is well on the way to being pluralised. This invites *four* further comments on the fact of pluralism.

First, it is *ubiquitous*, that is, it is a world-wide phenomenon which affects all aspects of our thought and practice. Only by disposing of our radios, television sets, newspapers and all books published since about 1840, and by developing a self-sufficient form of life which dispenses with all externally manufactured consumables and machines, might we block out its effects. And even then, we would be subject to laws about such things as property ownership and social discrimination which have been affected by the fact of pluralism. We are not talking about an optional form of life, but a social given in today's world.

Secondly, it is *irreversible*. Pluralism is not a temporary condition preceding a new intellectual monopoly. Short of imposing thought p. 85 control by methods of Orwellian magnitude which even China's Cultural Revolution failed to achieve, pluralism is with us to stay. From a Christian point of view, it is not only immature but unscriptural to hope for a return to any kind of Christian monopoly of thought such as existed in European Christendom, albeit adulterated even then by other pagan values. Biblically speaking, the wheat and the tares will grow together until the end of our aeon.¹ Sociologically speaking, human consciousness has turned a corner and the act involved in adopting a faith to live by is now more generally understood to be the existential wager which Pascal long ago perceived it to be.

¹ [Matthew 13:24–30](#).

Thirdly, pluralism is *morally ambiguous*. Acknowledging that pluralism is a fact does not commit us to liking it. Our first definition—referring to pluralism as the state of a society—pre-supposes nothing about the desirability, nor even the viability of such a state. It is a *present* fact. Its future is another question which it is not the place of a definition to predetermine. Nevertheless it has been suggested that, simply as a matter of fact, pluralism in the second sense—of a state of consciousness—is irreversible. Its viability is not at issue, therefore, but its desirability is. Should we regard it as a good or bad thing? The truth is that it is a morally ambiguous fact; that is, it is both.

On the one hand, it threatens social unity by opening the door to communal rivalry and fragmentation; and it jeopardises *mental* integration by suggesting that all beliefs and values are culturally relative. On the other hand, it creates a bias towards negotiation and tolerance between groups, in preference to monopoly by the faith community with the most political power; and intellectually it fosters the habit of giving a reason for the faith that is in one.² Calling pluralism a fact does not mean that there is nothing we can do about it. There are, as we shall see in a moment, several options. But we do not have the option of pretending that pluralism as such can be ignored or banished.

Fourthly, pluralism is *politically unstable*. Even though the human consciousness is pluralised, that is no guarantee that people will accept the logical implication that therefore no-one has a moral right to impose a particular world-view on other persons by means of political coercion. Human ingenuity finds many ways to oppress one's fellows, and ideological monopoly has often been used as a convenient excuse for economic and other forms of exploitation.

Several factors have led to the pluralistic state of mind. These include cross-cultural migration, industrial revolution, and the access of the p. 86 masses to global communications. Not the least important of such factors, however, has been the development of civil liberties which have made it possible for different belief systems to co-exist in modernised societies. This development has been largely the product of Christianised civilisation. Freedoms of speech and assembly, equality in law, the right to own property and so on, have been fruits of a biblical view of persons and the dissenting tradition in the history of Christendom. They are not necessarily guaranteed by other world-views.

Yet it is neither realistic nor proper to expect that such values, essential to the operation of a pluralistic society, will be legitimated in that society by agreement with the Christian world-view. Hence they must be defended on more pragmatic and generally acknowledged grounds, as, to a large extent, they can be. Thus, for example, the Constitution of India borrows directly from the human rights tradition of Christianised Europe to describe its principles of secular democracy, with the result that its political rationale is, in some important respects, more just than the Hindu and Muslim world-views dominant in that country. Would that the Afrikaner approach to justice issues was as biblical as the preamble to India's secular constitution!

In a pluralistic society, individual rights and liberties are always vulnerable and call for continuous negotiation. Many Christians today are discovering that they cannot assume that the Christianised pre-war consensus still holds. It follows that they must vigilantly and continuously re-negotiate community acceptance of such values as equality, justice and compassion, appealing not to divine fiat but to secular democratic theory. All too often however, Christians either react negatively by scolding their neighbours for departing from biblical teaching (without any genuine expectation that this will win people back to the faith—it is just a petulant way of lashing out) or they quit the field and

² [1 Peter 3:15](#).

wash their hands of responsibility for the health of society. Except that they cannot quit the field for there are no desert islands left. And God *does* hold them responsible for the health of society.³

INADEQUATE RESPONSE TO PLURALISM

Let us then attempt to categorise the possible responses Christians may make to pluralism. A framework is provided by the great and familiar prayer of Jesus for his disciples in [John 17](#). On the face of it, the prayer [p. 87](#) multiplies paradoxes. Jesus thanks the Father for giving him the disciples *out* of the world (v. [6](#)) but later says he is not asking for them to be taken out of the world (v. [15](#)). He describes them as still *in* the world (v. [11](#)), and says that he is in fact sending them into the world (v. [18](#)). Yet he also prays for them to be 'in us' (v. [21](#)), that is, domiciled in the Godhead.

The paradoxes are resolved by the Lord's statement that the disciples are not *of* the world' (vv. [14](#), [16](#)), given that the apostle's use of the word 'world' is in reference to the cultural reality developed by the human race independent of allegiance to God. Those who become friends of God cease to be captives of this reality, not by being bodily removed from it, but by staying 'in, but not of' it. When Jesus sends them back into the world, their steps are to echo his. They are to identify with their fellows, in order to mediate effectively to them the higher reality of identification with Christ.

How are we to operationalise this concept, in terms of Christian responses to pluralism? The reaction of some Christians is to *deny* the pluralism which now characterises the present world order; to pretend it is not a fact, but a temporary aberration or else the final apostasy. Either way we need not take it seriously. Some will work to win back political power for the Christian constituency, so that pluralism can be outlawed by decree. Others will ignore a world order they believe to be collapsing, and focus on a narrowly individualistic form of personal evangelism, coupled with superspiritual preparations for the Rapture back in the church fellowship. The key to both strategies is a refusal to face the reality that pluralism is a fact of the present world order. In responding to Christ's command to go into this world, they elect, as Jonah did, to flee to a different and simpler reality. For all practical purposes, they are out of this world.

Secondly, there are some other Christians to whom the fact of pluralism has become so obvious and central that they have elected to *embrace* it as the cornerstone of a revision of Christian belief. The first step is to see in religious pluralism proof that all world-views are after all but fumbling attempts to express the inexpressible. There are many paths up the mountain; many ways to please God, or the Buddha within each of us. The embarrassingly particularist prayer of [John 17](#) is to be softened by focusing out of context on one verse, the twenty first, where Jesus prays 'That all of them may be one.' This is the universalist terminal point to which we are led by the axioms of liberal Christianity. The erstwhile Christian is now back in, *and of*, the world, a captive to the humanism which denies the historical intervention of God in Christ. [p. 88](#)

Neither of these responses is in harmony with Christ's prayer. In the first case, there has been an acceptance of Christ at the expense of acceptance of the reality in which we are to fulfil his mission. In the second case, there has been acceptance of the reality of pluralism at the expense of acceptance of Christ and his mission. The prayer requires

³ To the voices of such Old Testament prophets as Elijah, Isaiah, Amos and Micah may be added Paul's in [Romans 13](#), [James 1:27](#) and Jesus's call to be savouring salt in society ([Matt. 23:13-16](#)), to work for social justice ([Matt. 23:23](#)), and to liberate the needy ([Matt. 25:31-46](#)).

recognition of the two realities in their proper contexts: the reality of this present age *and* the reality of Christ's ultimate lordship. We are to be in, but not of the world.

VIALE RESPONSES TO HUMANISM

We may now identify a range of Christian responses which attempt to represent this dialectical perspective. Over-simplifying, they group into responses which set out to *compete* with alternative social options and structures, and those which attempt to *modify* those options and structures from within. Both strategies recognise the realities of valuepluralism and the secular democratic process. Both would consider that they were trying to savour society by presenting a persuasive, rather than a coercive Christian presence. The first strategy, however, emphasises the creation of distinctively Christian agencies and structures, whereas the second emphasises participation, as far as conscience permits, in the agencies and structures of the general community. These distinctions are conceptual, but not necessarily exclusive in operation. The individual Christian may be operating on both levels at once in his or her total life-style.

The competitor stance seeks to avoid compromise with the world's disregard of God by maintaining agencies parallel to those of the secular society, but operating within a distinctively biblical rationale. Such agencies may range from the Christian home to the Christian hospital, welfare agency, school, business, social club and political party. Typically, Catholic and Reformed minority groups have favoured this strategy. It achieves clarity of purpose but at the cost of some social division and possible loss of identification and communication with the world.

The modifier stance seeks to overcome these problems by seeding Christians in the agencies of the secular state, where they may interact more authentically with non-believers, and commend their otherworldly perspective by the fruits it bears in this world. Typically, Christians in countries which still have state churches—Catholic or Lutheran, in the main—have favoured this stance, though their justifications tend to look back to the Constantinian settlement rather than the present fact of pluralism. More in tune with modern realities [p. 89](#) are those non-conformist traditions which, because of their own history, are already predisposed to embrace the safeguards to individual liberty which pluralism offers. The modifier strategy, but at the cost, potentially, of compromising its goals and having its influence negated by weight of numbers.

It is not possible to judge between these two stances purely on the basis of biblical imperatives. They represent two kinds of social theory compatible with Scripture though not with each other. It is probably desirable that we preserve a dialectical tension between them by honouring Christian activism of both kinds, rather than by insisting that only one can be right. For either can go bad. The competitor stance can be pressed so hard that it results in our opting out of the mainstream of community life to the point where it becomes that denial of pluralism which I described earlier. The modifier stance can become so conforming to the systems of this world that its servanthood to Caesar extinguishes the higher claims of the Lord God, and it lapses into that uncritical embrace of pluralism which was also described earlier.

CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

The four kinds of response I have analysed above translate fairly easily into contemporary educational strategies. Those for example who strive to keep the state education system Christian and to exclude the study of other value stances (as does the Queensland Fundamentalist lobby) are attempting to deny the fact of Pluralism. An example of the

converse is those British and Australian theorists who argue that religious studies in state schools should accord no more than equal time to Christianity alongside other religious traditions. They are embracing pluralism too completely. The other two groups of strategies are exemplified by policies of Christian school development on the one hand as against policies of involvement in state education on the other.

If the author's own preference, at the level of theory, runs in the direction of the latter, it is, no doubt, influenced partly by a nonconformist and financially straitened upbringing. But it is also influenced by the conviction that most current moves to multiply Christian school alternatives are defensive and tend to reflect a desire to repudiate pluralism rather than to work through it redemptively. This becomes apparent not only in their policy of institutional segregation, but also in their principles of curriculum selection. I am also convinced that Christians are relinquishing too easily their spheres of influence in state structures, almost as it were out of pique because they are not p. 90 automatically listened to as they were in the past. Yet, numerically, they are a far more substantial interest group than any of the radical minorities who are attempting to swing the curriculum towards value stances unacceptable to Christians.

As I have argued on previous occasions,⁴ this is not a time to cry 'foul' and to quit the field. Non-Christian trends do not add up to a unified and well-orchestrated secular humanist conspiracy. The opposition is even more pluralised than the Christian church! We should be looking for allies, not pre-judging as enemies those non-Christians with whom we could reasonably expect to find much common ground at the levels of community concern and education policy.

In short, there are good grounds for regarding pluralism, with all its risks and ambiguities, as presenting us with a day of opportunity. Avenues are open for dialogue with people of other persuasions in ways which monopolistic societies of the past discouraged. In the pluralistic society, there are not only people who believe in other gods, but people who have seized the opportunity to believe in nothing, only to find that there is an emptiness at the core of their existence and attempts at enjoyment. Our goodwill and positive services, as we interact with them on the secular middle ground of the pluralistic society, can return a hundred-fold harvest, in terms not only of personal evangelism but of improvement in the general health of society. But what does all this imply for curriculum selection and institutional provision in the world education?

CURRICULUM SELECTION

In the broadest terms, what curriculum components are needed to equip our children to fulfil their calling in the present age? Let us try to breathe life into a debate which has become platitudinous (though not for that reason, less important) by considering a special case. In November 1984, it was the author's privilege to be invited to speak in Manila on the education of the children of missionaries.

The question to be addressed was: What is an appropriate curriculum for such children, suspended, as it were, between the culture of which their parents were native, and the culture indigenous to the location of missionary service? p. 91

It seemed that four elements were important, given that for most the parental culture (PC) was western and the indigenous culture (IC) was of the Two-Thirds World. First, missionary children *did* need to achieve an adequate adjustment to the PC. This was their

⁴ E.g. Brian V. Hill, 'Going Into All the World ... of Education,' *Journal of Christian Education*. Papers 77, July 1983, pp. 1-2 and 'Free, Compulsory and Secular: A Slogan Revisited,' *op. cit.*, Papers 78, Nov. 1983, pp. 70-71.

racial background, and they might well fail to obtain citizenship or workpermits in the country of service when they grew up, supposing that they did want to stay on.

Nevertheless, for the time being at least, they were residents of this country, growing up in the IC. It would be psychologically stunting to act as if this culture did not exist or was not worthy of serious study, in areas such as language, literature, history and religion.⁵ Thus far, we get a picture of a curriculum with two discrete strands of study, possibly subjecting one strand—the IC—to many unfavourable comparisons because of ethnocentric bias. Therefore it was needful to adopt a more consciously multicultural approach, whereby the validity of differences in ethnicity and cultural tradition would be more generously acknowledged.

It could be objected that this concession would not be necessary for children who would ultimately be reentering the parental culture. Such a reply however, would not only be regrettably ethnocentric but also unrealistic, given that western cultures like the U.S.A., Britain and Australia are themselves currently in the throes of accommodating to multiculturalism (MC) within their respective borders. This is precisely one of the concomitants of that fact of pluralism which we have been analysing.

But it is possible for MC to be interpreted in a very descriptive, socially adjustive way, without reflection on the comparative worth of the traditions studied. This is often seen as the safest course to pursue in state schools because of its supposed neutrality. But even if it were possible to achieve complete impartiality in the descriptive study of cultural differences, the result would not be neutral but an encouragement to relativism and conformity to the status quo.

There is, therefore, an additional need for what we shall call transcultural studies (TC). By these are meant studies which develop in students a critical awareness of culture as such and a capacity to choose consciously what values and beliefs they themselves will embrace. One component of such studies would be the study of Christian apologetics. This implies not just a knowledge of what p.92 Christians believe—or, more particularly, what Christians in one's own sect or denomination believe, passed on as unchallengeable truth—but how these truth claims stand up to challenge from other faiths, and how the biblical gospel stands over against all cultures including the Christianised sub-culture to which one belongs.

There is a risk in such a TC approach that the child may not conform to the particular model of Christian living exemplified by the parents, but the important thing is not to follow man but to follow God.⁶ Only a gospel which is TC in this sense will be proof against the shocks of pluralism.

This, then is our special case-study, oriented to the survival needs—both psychological and spiritual—of the missionary child. Has it anything to suggest concerning children reared entirely in the parents' homeland? It assuredly has, for by analogy, every child of Christian parents is an expatriate. The parents' sub-culture is Christian, a minority group living within a larger indigenous culture where pluralistic value-diversity prevails. The two strands are already implicit.

Furthermore, as has already been said, that larger culture is now multicultural, and an adequate education requires that one be able to understand, tolerate, and appreciate

⁵ Even on these criteria alone, certain patterns of western enclave boarding school sponsored by some missionary societies fall seriously short, to the detriment of their students' development.

⁶ There is a poignant demonstration of this tension in Jim Wallis's discussion of his protracted struggle towards independent personal faith, freed from the inadequate theology of the Great American Dream to which his early upbringing had conditioned him. See Jim Wallis, *The New Radical*, Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1983.

difference without automatically branding it as evil or inferior. So MC is a necessary component. But further than this, the child needs to acquire a critical awareness of cultural mechanisms—even of its own Christian sub-cultural conditioning—in order to attain a robust personal faith capable of withstanding the pressures of a pluralised consciousness. Therefore TC studies are just as necessary in this case as in that of the missionary child.

Since TC studies are the keystone of the curriculum model we are propounding, more needs to be said about their Christian content.⁷ Factual understanding of the biblical story of God's dealings with Israel and the young church is a necessary underpinning. Exposure to the teachings of Christ and the prophets will itself pull away many cultural blinkers and provoke questions about current beliefs and practices. Discussion and problem-solving will be methods at least as important in this as didactic teaching.

It then becomes appropriate to make the student aware of other faiths, religious and secularist, in order to develop an appreciation of [p. 93](#) the way humans have responded to their situation, some pursuing the religious quest with admirable singleness of heart, though not Christians. Beyond the evidence of pluralism however, lies the application of Christian apologetic—the genuine attempt to enter into the thought forms of those who oppose us in order to defend the reality claims of Christianity in relevant terms.

For many centuries we have enjoyed teaching the Christian worldview as fact, and ridiculing those who questioned it. We must now raise up young people who recognise its status as faith, and who have a confident capacity to demonstrate its reasonableness and adequacy to friends who believe differently.

The odd thing in all this is that we get more clues about how to reach this goal from the New Testament than from any subsequent era, ranging from the mediaeval synthesis to the present day. For society in the time of Christ was truly pluralist. There was no favoured treatment for the gospel. Christ and Paul dialogued with people wherever they were in their thinking. And it was Peter who saw value in always being ready to give reasons for our faith.

Ultimately then, the curriculum for life we offer our children must provide genuine initiation into four dimensions of awareness: the subculture of the home and the Christian fellowship; the dominant cultural patterns of our society; more generally, the multicultural riches of that society; and, standing over against all three, transcultural studies, including the gospel of Christ as both proclamation and apologia. The next question is: what organised learning environments are required to enable our children to benefit from such a curriculum?

EDUCATION IS MORE THAN SCHOOLING

It is important to begin this section by emphasising that education is more than schooling. All our educational objectives may not be achievable in the specialised, professionalised environment of school. Indeed, as the author has said elsewhere, voluntary learning environments such as youth groups should be viewed not just as a supplementary to schooling but as complementary. The voluntary sector, because of its untidy diversity and informality is vastly underrated by governments and educational theorists. Hence the point needs to be made that the curriculum components which we have been describing, though relevant to planning school curriculum, have implications beyond education by schooling.

⁷ And more is said about their other than Christian content in 'Part 2. A suggested Rationale'.

This point emerged in a particularly poignant way when the author was studying the education of the children of missionaries. A choice p. 94 that many missionary parents feel obliged to make is to send their children away to boarding schools: either those run by expatriates in the country of service or those available in the country of origin. Such practices arouse a number of misgivings about the way many schools of this kind see their function. Some operate as tightly knit western enclaves, minimising student contact with the local culture and confining religious studies to authoritative Christian teaching. The completeness of their control over the learning environment of the students is something many Christian day schools envy. But should they?

Studies pioneered by Goffman in the 'sixties gave rise to a term widely used today in sociological circles.⁸ It is the term 'total institution.' It refers to those kinds of organisation which accommodate clients in whole-day, highly regulated environments where the individual's areas of choice, responsibility, free activity and outside contact are minimised. Examples are psychiatric hospitals, children's and old people's homes, prisons, and boarding schools. Even day schools reflect many of these features. The interesting thing is that, regardless of the particular reason for which the institution may have been set up, its effects on the inmates tend to be similar. Characteristic psychological problems can develop, including the stunting of the powers of inmates to make choices, take responsibility, and experience natural relationships.

The moral of this story for boarding schools is the need to extend their students' areas of freedom and voluntary relationships as much as possible, especially by interacting with the adjacent community. The hot-house effect is in any case anti-educational, for it prevents students from learning, under guidance, what the pluralistic society is really like.

These reservations about the boarding school option prompted a new look at other learning environments which might possibly be available to the missionary child. There has been a growth in the development of correspondence courses, for example, and some enthusiasm for the home school movement. The home, again, *is* underrated as a learning environment and, in terms of our curriculum model, has much to contribute directly to learning about the parental culture and the transcultural gospel of Christ. We should feel uneasiness, however, about the tendency to extend the *schooling* model to the home. Placing the quasi-professional role of schoolteacher on parents can reduce their credibility as parents and friends who love their children regardless of their academic levels. p. 95

Given the importance of home nurture and community life it seemed valuable to question the frequency with which the boarding school solution was preferred. Sometimes it is the missionary parent's only real option, in which case our hints about reform in the boarding school model itself are relevant. Often, however, a preparedness to suffer the academic imperfections of local indigenous schooling can in any case lead to a more all round fulfilment of our curriculum objectives. Thus the indigenous culture is taken more seriously. Parents can guide and monitor the multicultural sensitivity of the child, and they and the local church can lay foundations for a transcultural awareness of Christianity and other faiths. Deficiencies in the more academic aspects of education in the parental culture can be made up by correspondence courses, intensive schools in local vacation time, correspondence coaching by the home church and support group in the country of parental origin, and so on. Keener transcultural consciousness can be developed by, for example, itinerant teaching teams moving through missionary regions and simultaneously helping older youth and adult church members in this regard.

⁸ Erving Goffman, *Asylums*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961.

Again our specialised case-study has helped to illuminate the general issue, in this case that of how to provide for the education of our children. Hopefully it has reduced our western tendency to treat the school as the universal solvent. It is as necessary for ordinary parents as it is for expatriates to regain their confidence in the educational role of the home, to exercise their responsibility to be involved as the community in school policies and to encourage and direct their children towards worthy voluntary groups and activities. The task of the local church has also been highlighted in respect of providing studies which not only tell the gospel story but develop the capacity of members to present a credible Christian apologetic to their neighbours.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

But such comments carry us to into the final phase of this analysis, which is to derive some concrete and specific Christian responses in education to the fact of pluralism in our time. It will be sufficient to list them.

1. We must foster greater mutual respect and continuing dialogue between Christians working in the public and private sectors of education, thus reducing the tendency of members of the body of Christ to question each other's spirituality and veer to extreme positions. [p. 96](#)
2. We must enhance the status of parents within the educational processes affecting their children, while at the same time avoiding over-formalisation of their teaching role.
3. We must work politically to reduce the power of centralised departments and teachers' unions to override the wishes of communities of parents with regard to the treatment of students and the representation of value-stances in the school curriculum.
4. We must encourage Christians to become involved in the schools, private or public, which their children attend, and to work for greater recognition by schools and governments of the complementary contributions of voluntary organisations and community services to the education of children.
5. We must foster trends which make school curricula more truly and fairly multicultural in emphasis, while at the same time welcoming attempts to help students become more critically aware of the processes by which they themselves are being acculturated.
6. We must support moves to acquaint students with the religious traditions influential in their environment, and to encourage them to ask appropriate questions about their values and truth claims.
7. We must encourage more attention in the teaching programmes of churches to raising the consciousness of our people with respect to the fact and challenge of pluralism and the mechanisms of religious and cultural conditioning, and to developing the ability to offer rational and relevant defence of the faith.
8. We must draw more on missionaries and other Christians with expatriate experience to enhance the transcultural awareness of church members, while conversely seeking to be of more help to them in their efforts to obtain a balanced education for their children.
9. The Australian Teachers' Christian Fellowship and other similar national organisations should sponsor curriculum projects to provide resources for the raising of transcultural awareness and the development of apologetic skills in both older school students and adult church members.

The reader will no doubt see ways of refining and extending this agenda, but our aim in providing it has been not to exhaust the possibilities but to illustrate them. The prospect of tackling such tasks is surely exciting, because the needs they represent bring us at one and the same time closer to the milieu of the New Testament and closer to our non-Christian neighbours in the present age. We have been retreating for too long. Trumpeter, sound the advance!

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The Use of Comics for Evangelism Among Female Factory Workers

Elena Chen

Reprinted with permission from Case Studies in Christian Communication in an Asian Context ed. by Ross W. James (Abridged)

Ross W. James writes, 'In 1986–87 the Communication and Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship co-sponsored a Master of Theology in Communications degree programme under the auspices of the Asian Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines. The primary aim of the programme was to provide communications training for Christian leaders and theological educators, so they, in turn, could offer training and communications courses in their various institutions. Seventeen students from six Asian countries undertook the programme which consisted of coursework and a major field project.

A secondary aim of the programme was to develop and provide resources to promote the study of communications in theological seminaries and Bible schools in Asia. The resources would also assist curriculum planners of programmes similar to the THM or academic administrators planning communication courses to be integrated into existing seminary programmes at various academic levels. Hence this book which provides a Reader of case studies of communication theory and practice in an Asian context. The case studies were prepared by graduate students to meet the requirements of the major field project.'

Of the six case studies I am including excerpts from one, the use of comics in evangelism as a contribution to the witness of the Gospel in the market place of the lower working class. Female factory workers are a neglected 'peoples group' that need special focus. The author of this case study, Elena Chen states, 'Today the comic is the most influential mass medium among the semi-literate Filipinos'. This is sufficient justification for including this study in this issue of ERT.

Editor

INTRODUCTION

Every generation has the responsibility to reach its own for Christ. Among the neglected members of our society are innumerable factory p. 98 workers who have as much right to hear the Gospel as anyone else, having been created by God. Since most factory workers