

Perspectives

IN COVENANT EDUCATION

Joy and Beauty

Perspectives

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Statement of Purpose

Perspectives in Covenant Education is a journal regulated and published quarterly, in November, February, May, and August by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute. The purpose of this magazine, in most general terms, is to advance the cause of distinctively Christian education as it is conceived in the Protestant Reformed community. More specifically, the magazine is intended to serve as an encouragement and an inducement toward individual scholarship, and a medium for the development of distinctive principles and methods of teaching. The journal is meant to be a vehicle of communication, not only within the profession, but within the Protestant Reformed community and within the Christian community in general.

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Perspectives in Covenant Education will publish any article written by a teacher, parent, or friend of Protestant Reformed education, provided the article is in harmony with the stated purpose of the magazine. The journal will publish articles whether theoretical or practical. All manuscripts must be signed and all authors are solely responsible for the contents of their articles.

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Contents

Editorial

Benefits of Squirrel Hunting **4**

by Tom Bergman

Feature

God Gives Wisdom and
Knowledge...and Joy **8**

by Rev. Cory Griess

The Eye of the Beholder **18**

by Dan Van Uffelen

Contribution

Principals, Change, and
Collaborative Learning **25**

by Jim Regnerus

Book Reviews

Children and Youth Literature **28**

reviewed by Brenda Dykstra

Benefits of Squirrel Hunting

Tom Bergman

Shifty Powers came in from an OP to report to 1st Sergeant Lipton. “Sergeant,” he said, “there’s a tree up there toward Noville that wasn’t there yesterday.” Powers had no binoculars, but Lipton did. Looking through them, Lipton could not see anything unusual, even after Powers pinpointed the spot for him.

One reason Lipton had trouble was that the object was not an isolated tree; there were a number of trees along the road in that area. Lipton expressed some doubts, but Powers insisted it had not been there the previous day. Lipton studied the spot with his binoculars. He saw some movement near the tree and then more movement under the trees around it. Then he saw gun barrels—88s by their appearance, as they were elevated and 88s were the basic German antiaircraft weapon as well as ground artillery piece. Lipton realized that the Germans were putting in an antiaircraft battery in among the trees, and had put up the tree Powers spotted as part of their camouflage.

Lipton put in a call for a forward artillery observer. When he arrived, he saw what Powers and Lipton had seen. He got on the radio, talking to a battery of 105 mm back in Bastogne. When he described the target he had no trouble getting approval for full battery fire, despite the short supply of artillery ammunition.

To zero in on the target, the observer called for a round on a position he could locate on his map, about 300 meters to the right of the trees. One gun fired and hit the target. Then he shifted the aim 300 meters to the left and called for all the battery’s guns to lay in on the same azimuth and range. When he got a report that all was ready, he had his guns fire for effect, several rounds from each gun.

Shells started exploding all around the German position. Lipton watched through his binoculars as the Germans scrambled to get out of there, salvaging what they could of their guns, helping wounded to the

rear. Within an hour, the place was deserted.

“It all happened,” Lipton summed up, “because Shifty saw a tree almost a mile away that hadn’t been there the day before.”¹

That one soldier’s eyes were so well trained and so perceptive, he saw what others did not notice even with binoculars. In the middle of winter, he was able to discern one tree among many trees from a mile away.

Private Powers’ feat was no fluke. He had never been to that forest in Europe before; Shifty grew up in Virginia. He had not grown up tracking Germans through the woods; Shifty “spent countless hours as a youth hunting squirrels.”² But—without him realizing it back then—hunting squirrels in Virginia prepared him to be an excellent sentry during World War II.

This should make us stop to think before we claim that “we’re never going to use this.” Do we really need to practice division of fractions? Do we need to know about the Missouri Compromise? Do we need to know what a participial phrase is? What is the point of penmanship? Why do we require American Literature? How does reading Mark Twain or Edgar Allan Poe serve my Christian education?

The answer has to do with a liberal arts education. That is, we study a wide variety of courses from many different subject areas to become more well-rounded. Literature courses are simply part of an effort to learn to read, write, and think at certain levels. In a course like American Literature, students get plenty of practice learning to read a wide array of choices. We train them to read with discretion. As they come to the “years of discretion” that are mentioned in the baptism vow, they must be able to read a piece understandingly and determine its value. They must be able to measure it against Scripture and the confessions. Is it good? Is it useful? Is it valid?

Try to discern the intent of the statements below. The following are two descriptions in the margin notes of a KJV Bible published by Moody Press. Someone at my church’s Bible study mentioned these during a discussion on Ephesians 1.

Election—God’s choice of some individuals who would believe—occurred before creation

1 Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 192.

2 *Ibid.*, 188.

Predestination—God has determined beforehand that those who believe in Christ will be adopted into His family and conformed to His son.³

Although these comments are printed in the margins of a Bible, they are seriously flawed. It is not too difficult to recognize these statements for what they are. Try a more difficult one:

That God, by an eternal, unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined, out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake, and through Christ, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on this his Son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even to the end; and, on the other hand, to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath, and to condemn them as alienate from Christ, according to the word of the gospel in John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," and according to other passages of Scripture also. 4

Does that sound orthodox? Actually, it is the first article of the Remonstrants, the followers of Jacob Arminius. This teaching was rejected at the Synod of Dordt because it asserts that God chooses those who will believe (conditional election).

So why take American Literature? Why study Twain and Poe and the others? One reason is that, like Pvt. Powers, one does not know when a skill is going to come in handy. Consider sports. Why do coaches run so many drills? Real game situations don't happen like the drills. But the drills are designed to develop a skill that can later be applied to a wide variety of game situations.

Sports, however, are not a life-or-death matter. For Pvt. Powers it was. His squirrel hunting may have saved the lives of the men in his company. For the delegates to the Synod of Dordt, it was a matter of spiritual life or death in the churches. In American Literature or second-grade math or fourth-grade spelling or seventh-grade science, it is not a matter of life or death yet—for now the students are simply squirrel hunting. But the time will come when their ability to read critically and discerningly will need to be applied to very serious circumstances. Twain and Poe and the others are like reading drills and exercises that

3 Study notes for Ephesians 1 in the Moody Press' *Ryrie Study Bible*, 1994.

4 The Five Arminian Articles, Art. 1, *The Creeds of Christendom*, ed. Philip Schaff (1931, reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 3:545, 546.

will sharpen their discerning skills for the more serious business later.

Exactly how is Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* going to help? Granted, it is impossible to foretell precisely how God will employ a person's skills in the future. But one thing is certain: whatever comes will not be easy. Enemy soldiers will try very hard to disguise themselves and their weapons. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). It might be a tree to hide a tank. It might be a sheepskin to hide a wolf. It might be a smile to disguise malice. It might be Scripture verses and quasi-scriptural phrases to cloak a false teaching. Beware. Be aware.

The following two pieces were presented at the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Convention at Trinity Christian High School in Hull, Iowa in October 2010. Rev. Cory Griess, minister at Calvary Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, gave the keynote speech. With all due respect to Rev. Griess and his excellent speech, it is the richness of a Scripture passage such as Ecclesiastes 2:26 and the truths within it that make our keynotes and the conventions themselves so memorable. Mr. Dan Van Uffelen, teacher at Heritage Christian High School in Dyer, Indiana, presented his "Eye of the Beholder" as one of the sectionals later in the day. As soon as they had ended, neither of these two speeches saw the space of five minutes pass before several colleagues endorsed them as prime material to publish to a wider audience in the Perspectives. Enjoy!

FEATURE

God Gives Wisdom and Knowledge...and Joy

Rev. Cory Griess

"For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy" (Ecclesiastes 2:26).

Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes 1:13 that he has undertaken a study of all the things that are done under heaven. "And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith." In the rest of the book, by inspiration, Solomon shares with us the conclusions he has come to from this study of life in this world. Therefore when we open the book of Eccle-

siastes we immediately enter the realm of the great questions of life: why are we here, how are we supposed to live, and what—if any—is the joy of living?

Solomon in giving us his inspired conclusions presents us with two worldviews. They are first, the worldview of life under the *sun*, and alternatively, the worldview of life under the *Son*. These worldviews are strictly antithetical to one another, as black is to white.

Life under the Sun

There is a worldview that views life as strictly under the sun. It is the worldview that considers life as a materialist of today. This is the view that, as one grows up in this world, all that exists is what is under the sun. There is nothing above the sun. Reality is limited to what we can sense and perceive ourselves. There is no God above the sun. There is therefore no real purpose to life.

It is the worldview of modern Western society. Solomon could just as well have been writing about Immanuel Kant and Western thought since the Enlightenment. Kant taught that all that a human being can know is under the sun, in the realm of what he called the phenomenal. A human can know only as he perceives causes and effects in the world by his senses and understands them with his mind. And since God cannot be perceived, if there is a God he cannot be known. According to Kant, God cannot reveal himself, because if he could be known he would not be God any longer, but a being limited by our own perception. He would become a God under the sun, who is therefore not God. Kant therefore left Western thought with a worldview that could not get above the sun. There was no access to God. There was only what we could do and sense and discover with reason here, and that was the end of the matter.

This worldview is very much alive in Western society today. Even the post-modernism of today is rooted in Kant's modernism. Kant's thought effectively cut the Western world off from the God who is above the sun. The logical conclusion of this is that there can be no right and wrong, only the various perspectives of those under the sun. This worldview leads our society into exactly what it led Solomon into when he made his study: vanity and vexation of spirit.

Life under the Son

The second worldview that Solomon presents us with is the worldview of life under the Son. This is the worldview produced by the revealed Word of Jehovah God. It is the worldview that says that God has pierced into the world he created and declared himself and all reality to us in his Word so that we have access to

the Divine mind. The second person of the Trinity has pierced our world and entered time and space as the full revelation of the Father. We are not limited to what is under the sun, but rather by Word and Spirit we are brought to know the God who is above the sun.

By this revelation we know who we are; we know why we are here; we know where this world is going. We know how to take what we learn under the sun and relate it to the God who is above the sun. This revelation by faith we put on as a pair of spectacles that we may take in life and the creation in a way that is not vain, but is rather purposeful before the God that created life and this world. We see that the heavens declare the glory of God, and as we discover those heavens we join them in shouts of exaltation. As a result we have purpose, fellowship, and joy.

Solomon's Experience of Both Worldviews

Solomon lived and worked under the first worldview (under the sun) in an attempt to find joy and satisfaction in this life. He describes that in chapter 2:1-23. What he describes is exactly the way the world seeks peace and joy under the sun.

In verses 1-3 Solomon, living under the sun, first looks to pleasure for satisfaction and peace and joy. This was ultimately vain, purposeless, and unsatisfying. Without a God above the sun there was no ultimate meaning to any of it. *“It is mad... What doeth it?”*

In verses 4-11 Solomon seeks joy in great works that can last throughout the ages: gathering wealth and making a name for himself. This too was vanity in the end. It did not satisfy. His conclusion in verse 11 is that there was no profit under the sun. It was vexation of Spirit; literally *grasping at the wind*.

Finally, Solomon turns himself to something a bit more noble in verses 12-16. Perhaps in understanding the difference between wisdom and folly, he would find some true and lasting joy and satisfaction in life under the sun and apart from God. In verse 13 he discovered that certainly in life under the sun, wisdom is better than folly. But, as he says in verses 14-16, in the end the wise and the foolish both die and that's the end of it under the sun. There is still no ultimate meaning and purpose.

Then in verses 17-23 Solomon gives us the inspired conclusion he has come to about a worldview apart from God and his Son Jesus Christ; the worldview that is limited to what is under the sun. Verse 17 is enough to get the point, *“Therefore*

I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

In verses 24-26 Solomon shifts to the second worldview, the worldview of life under the Son. And for the first time thus far in the book of Ecclesiastes there is true hope and joy. Luther called these three verses the entire point of the book. *“There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I? For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy.”* The only hope, Solomon says, is to know the God who is above the sun, and to view life in this world as a gift from God to his people. This gives life purpose, perspective, a goal, meaning, weight, and joy. Solomon recognizes God in that phrase in verse 24, “I saw that it was from the hand of God.” And in verse 26, *“God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy.”*

And it is because, by God’s grace, Protestant Reformed Christian school teachers recognize that as well, parents give thousands of dollars so that they can educate their children—so that by the grace of God and by the power of his promises established in Jesus Christ, their children might also know the God who is above the sun, and by God’s grace, know wisdom, knowledge, and joy in this life.

Wisdom and Knowledge

Ecclesiastes 2:26 speaks of wisdom and knowledge as gifts of God to the individual believer and the covenant community. In verse 26 there is no real distinction between wisdom and knowledge. Both words refer to propositional truth. But they also refer to the ability to discern. They are the ability to take propositional truths, and indeed all of life, and interpret it properly within the framework of the revelation of God, redemptive history, and the covenant of grace. *Wisdom and knowledge are the ability to know and use truth, experiences, and the good gifts of God, in a right way before the face of God.*

The Source of this knowledge and wisdom lies above the sun. It is in God himself. Solomon in verse 26 says, *“For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge...”* Apart from God this wisdom and knowledge is closed to man. Man does not think of himself that way, but it is truth nonetheless. Erroneously, man believes that he can gain wisdom and knowledge apart from God. He views himself as a kerosene lamp that carries its own supply of knowledge and wisdom. But Solomon says here, that man is like a light bulb that

needs the current of God's revelatory electricity to run through it so that the bulb lights up. He needs God's revelation in order to take bare facts and determine the "fact behind the facts," the reason and purpose of the facts.¹ He knows certain facts and experiences certain experiences, but he cannot know the facts and experiences and the good gifts of God as they relate to God the giver. Only with divine aid from the maker of life can we understand how to build and interpret and use our lives properly. Natural man has no ability to interpret his own life. He has no ability to place himself on the timeline of God's history and see where he is and where he is going. He has no ability to take life and the good gifts of life and use them properly as God intended. The non-Christian cannot know the fact behind the facts, and he is therefore doomed to vanity and grasping at the wind for purpose and joy. This is why we have Christian schools that not only impart facts, but also the proper interpretation of those facts.

Wisdom and knowledge are given by God through the Holy Scriptures—the revelation of God. At the center of the Word is Jesus Christ "*in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Colossians 2:3). Christ makes known the purpose of life. Christ as God come to redeem his own stands at the center of not only human history, but of all human knowledge. Nothing can be truly known apart from knowing Jesus Christ. In the scriptures, with Christ at their center, the student understands his own place in the history of God's redemptive work in this world. The student who is taught all subjects under the covenantal framework given by scriptures, understands the meaning of the history of this world and can place himself properly in it. And no matter if he ends up a farmer or a carpenter or a biophysicist or a scholar, he has and knows how to gain and use knowledge. He knows how to use his gifts. He knows how to enjoy the good gifts of God in a proper way.

The calling of the Protestant Reformed Christian school teacher, along with the home and church, is to grant this wisdom by God's Spirit *from the Scriptures*. Here is Bavinck in his *Educational Principles*, "He who is instructed in the scriptures rises to a height from which he surveys the great totality of things; his horizon extends itself to the ends of the earth; he knows his position as human being, because he views himself and all things primarily in his relation to God of

1 Berkhof, Louis, and Cornelius Van Til. *Foundations of Christian Education: Addresses to Christian Teachers*. ed. Dennis E. Johnson (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1990), 16.

Whom, through Whom, and to Whom all things are.”² It is the job of the Christian school teacher to teach students to do this by God’s grace.

This does not mean that the only class that needs to be taught is Bible class. All courses are taught under the framework of life in the covenant. For as Hoeksema said, “The truth about every aspect of this creation, including man and his doings, is its relationship to God, the Creator, Ruler, and Judge of the World.”³ That means that never is the Christian teacher’s job to simply impart facts—even in first and second grade. Never is the teacher’s job simply to ensure that a child can pass a test. It includes that, but that is not all. It is his job to teach children how to live in God’s covenant and use all of life before his face. For as Solomon says here, wisdom and knowledge are *gifts* to be used and enjoyed. The use of words and strings of words in literature, the use of the wonderful mysteries of God’s world in science, the use of the glorious depths of numbers in math, is a personal gift of God to his covenant people. And the ability to use those things in a proper way as they relate to Jehovah God is a gift. It is a gift to us sent out of love that we might find purpose and joy in all of life before God’s face.

Solomon says this is reserved for the believer whom God loves. When Solomon says that “*God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge*” he is referring first to the good of imputed righteousness. The believer is declared good and righteous based on the righteousness of another. But Solomon is also talking about the actual life lived out of that position of justification. The phrase “*good in his sight,*” is literally, “*those pleasing before his eyes.*” That is the child of God as he lives out of his justification before God’s face. God looks down on his covenantal people living life before him, and he delights to share himself and the knowledge of his works and world with his people. He gives them wisdom and knowledge as a gift of love. He delights in his children knowing what all of life is for and about.

And he uses teachers to pour this delight out upon his children. It is imperative that Christian school teachers know that by God’s grace they stand in a position where they are lips whereby God whispers into the ears of his children

2 Bavinck, Herman. *Paedagogische Beginselen*. (N.p.: Kok), 1904. 60. *Google Books*. Web. 3 Nov. 2010. <<http://books.google.com/books?id=PLIrAAAAYAAJ&dq=inauthor%3A%22Herman%20Bavinck%22&pg=PA5#v=onepage&q&f=false>>. (not my translation)

3 Hoeksema, Herman. “The Christian School: Why?” Hope Protestant Reformed Church (N.p., n.d.) Web. 2 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.hopeprc.org/pamphlets/school.htm>>.

the glorious secrets of his world. Whereby he tells them, “All this is a gift for you to understand and use to your and its fullest potential for my glory.” When you stand in that classroom and teach, you are not simply getting through a lesson, or imparting facts; you are sharing the love gifts of a covenant God to his children. Let them know that what you are teaching them about God’s world are gifts of God to his people. Teach them how to use the gifts of God correctly and how to interpret the reality in which they live. Teach them how to use the gifts of this earth not as ends in themselves, not merely to find employment, or to get a deployment, or because the law requires it, but as gifts from a God above the sun to whom all praise is due.

That’s the gift of wisdom. It is using all knowledge and all life in such a way that the gifts do not become the God. They do not become the end in which a person tries to find fulfillment. But they are a means used to enjoy the God who alone grants fulfillment. Teach them to use the gifts of all spheres of human knowledge and experience in a proper way before the face of the God who gave them.

Joy

Teach this way because knowing how to use all of life in the proper way, as God’s gifts of personal love from himself to his children, produces joy. The joy of Ecclesiastes 2:26 comes as a result of the knowledge and the wisdom given by God. Joy comes from using all knowledge and all of life as a covenantal member enjoying life properly before the face of God. This is the goal of our teaching and our learning: that our sons and daughters might have true joy before the face of God. And it is the goal, because this joy is no superficial happiness; it is the joy that is a life of *worship*, bringing glory to God.

It is interesting that Solomon, at the end of chapter 1, uses the same words he uses here in 2:26 (wisdom and knowledge), but that there they have such a different effect. Ecclesiastes 1:18, “*For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*” There Solomon is speaking of the attempt to find knowledge and wisdom under the sun, apart from God in Christ. This only produces sorrow and grief. How could it not? As Solomon makes clear here in chapter 2, apart from access to the God above the sun, life just sort of moves in a circular pattern of causes and effects but with no purpose in view. Once one figures out the causes and effects, there is nothing left. There is no meaning and no joy to be had. The pursuit of knowledge only gives one a heightened awareness of

how vain and fruitless and pointless it all is in the end. In verse 17 Solomon says, “*I hated life.*” There is only the pursuit of whatever can give me a temporary high, and then it all ends, and there is no real point to any of it. That’s why Nietzsche and Freud along with many others went mad toward the end of their lives. For them, life was grasping at the wind.

But do you see what God has given us in the covenant of grace? People want to teach and learn for different reasons. For some it’s pride. For some it’s power. For some it’s fame. Whatever it is there is no ultimate purpose to it. But for you and me the ultimate purpose of our teaching and learning must be the joy of a life of worship. And I don’t mean simply on Sunday, in corporate worship, although that too. And I do not mean only the singing of Psalms in school and praying before class, although that too. But I mean in all of life as lives lived before the face of God. In the classroom itself as the students learn and as you teach, worship must characterize the experience of the classroom. That is what this joy is. Delighting in God and his gifts is to live a life of worship. And this life of worship is the most joyful life possible. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says famously that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. In all of life, this is man’s chief end. And the “glorify God” and “enjoy God” are not two separate things. For we glorify God the most when we enjoy him and what he has given. This brings him glory, that we receive his world all its knowledge, all its gifts, and use them properly with joy to his glory. For this we were created. For this we were predestined: “*Having predestinated us...to the praise of the glory of his grace*” (Eph. 1:5-6).

It has been said that good teachers are passionate about their material. But to be good Christian school teacher, you must be passionate about the God of your material. Our own experience of learning God’s world and gifts of wisdom and knowledge as teachers must lead us personally into joy and worship of the God who gives all these things as gifts to his covenant children. And then we will be passionate about our material, and that for the right reasons. Our classroom will then take on the flavor of joyful worship and celebration as we pursue the knowledge of God and his world. We will take joy in God and in leading students to delight in God and in his gifts. There will be a covenantal experience that takes place in the classroom—a substantial aura created by the awareness of the fact that God is delighting in his children by giving them what we are studying.

There will be the joy of covenantal life there in the classroom. Teaching and learning are covenantal experiences. They are relational exercises. And that

relationship is not only between the teacher and the student, but between *God* and the teacher and the student. God is personally delighting in our children by giving them the gifts of wisdom and knowledge through our teachers. And the children and teachers are delighting and joying in the God who gives gifts. That relationship must take place in the classroom. There must be reflected in the teaching the delight of the teacher at the reality of what is taking place there. He will realize that in my classroom, in second grade math, in fifth grade social studies, what God is giving us to reach our chief end. Redeemed by Christ we are delighting in him and his works, that we might live a life of service, joy, and worship before him.

God's charge here to teachers is, "Teach my joy!" Pray, and allow the material you are teaching to fuel your own worship of God in prayer. This will spill over into your classroom. When we teach it is not at all inappropriate to follow the example of the apostle Paul, who after expounding the doctrines of grace and the mystery of the Gentiles being brought into the church, cries out "*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*" (Rom. 11:33). I can imagine a teacher, after teaching a particularly beautiful point in math class, exclaiming to his class, "O, the majesty of God found in the order of his creation!" I can imagine a history teacher, after expounding how the inclement weather sent at just the right moment allowed the Americans to escape the British in the battle of New York, exclaiming to his class, "O, the providence of God and how he controls all things for the good of his church!" I can imagine a second grade teacher, after teaching vocabulary stopping and exclaiming, "O, the gift of God in allowing us to communicate of him and to him with such varied expression!" *Teaching is not merely the transmission of facts; it is a celebration of the divine giver of all good and perfect gifts.*

The Antithesis and Joy

When we teach this way, we will teach the antithesis. For teaching the antithesis is not only teaching, "Do this; don't do that." The antithesis is also this: there is true joy to be found in this, and there is no joy to be found in that. Teaching this way, we will be teaching the antithetical worldview of Ecclesiastes 2:24-26. Solomon sought fulfillment, satisfaction, and joy in the things of this life under the sun. He used them as gods and not as gifts from the God in whom all joy and satisfaction is to be found. He came to realize that this was vanity; there was no meaning and no purpose. There might have been animalistic pleasure in

these things, but not joy. Only in living, in all aspects of life, in the covenant of grace under the Son is there joy. Teaching that is a celebration of the God of the covenant and the good gifts he gives—teaching that is worship—will teach the students that here is to be found true joy and fulfillment and peace. Here there is stability, purpose, meaning. There is no joy in the misuse of God’s gifts. There is only vanity and vexation of spirit.

Sixty or seventy years ago, one could take it for granted that people in Grand Rapids, Dutch Chicago, Northwest Iowa, and other places, would say that the Bible is the Word of God, the source of wisdom and knowledge. That is not necessarily so any longer. This makes the teacher’s calling that much more serious. By grace, the student must see that in Christ is the more abundant life. In the world of the materialist worldview, and the life of ungodliness that comes with it, is only vanity and vexation of spirit. Then he will be able to stand in a godless world, and he will be able to endure life’s trials and difficulties, yet with the smile of one who enjoys life in the covenant of grace.

Voltaire, who lived a godless life under the sun, wrote a letter to a friend at the end of his life. In it he said “I hate life, and yet am afraid to die.” I wonder if he knew he was echoing Solomon’s response to the life under the sun in Ecclesiastes 2:17. By contrast, John Calvin, who lived life under the Son, and delighted in the sovereign God of the covenant in every sphere of human endeavor, in a moment of intense suffering, cried out in the hearing of those aiding him, “Thou bruise me, O Lord, but it amply sufficeth me, that it is Thy hand.”⁴ For Calvin all of life—even suffering—had purpose in relation to the God above the sun. And in all of life—even in suffering—Calvin could worship.

May God grant us the grace to teach wisdom and knowledge as gifts from God, and the fruit of joy upon our labors.

4 Both quoted in: Bridges, Charles. *A Commentary On Ecclesiastes*. 1961. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1981. 41. Print.

The Eye of the Beholder

Dan Van Uffelen

It is my conviction that one of the most important things we can do as teachers is to train our children to appreciate beauty.

The first time I taught British literature, I asked my students to write book reviews. They were terrible. I read comments like, “I liked *Beowulf*,” “*The Pilgrim’s Progress* is a good book,” and “*Robinson Crusoe* is well-written.” While I was thrilled to find that these classics had made a positive impression, I was disappointed with the shallow analysis. *Why* did they like it? *What* makes it a good book? *How* is it well-written? When it came to these questions, my students were at a loss. They knew that there is something worthwhile in these books, but they did not know how to express it.

Since those days, I have taught my students to evaluate books in three ways: spiritually (evaluating truth), morally (evaluating behavior), and artistically (evaluating beauty). I have found that students need clear guidelines regarding each of these categories. Before they can evaluate truth, goodness, and beauty, they must understand that these three things are absolutes. Truth, goodness, and beauty have their source in God and in his Word.

TRUTH, GOODNESS, AND BEAUTY

We live in an age of relativism where truth, goodness, and beauty are treated like outdated ideals from the past. They are not outdated. They are timeless. In Psalm 27:4, 13, David identifies truth, goodness, and beauty as God’s attributes and he expresses his desire to enjoy these virtues:

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple...I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

As the inspired Psalmist experiences fellowship with God, he desires to behold

God's beauty, to inquire after God's truth, and to see God's goodness. Like David, we too must pursue these three absolutes, striving to love truth, to do good, and to appreciate beauty all the days of our lives.

CULTIVATING OUR TASTES

An excellent work of art (book, song, painting, etc.) is one that is spiritually true, morally good, and artistically beautiful. But we are sinners and we must learn the difference between the truth and the lie, the good and the evil, the beautiful and the ugly. Christians must grow in their appreciation for truth, goodness, and beauty.

In his excellent book *Reading Between the Lines*, Gene Edward Veith emphasizes the importance of what he calls "the cultivation of taste." He defines the cultivation of taste as the "process of learning how to enjoy (subjectively) what is admirable (objectively)."¹ God commands this very thing in Philippians 4:8, where he directs us to cultivate our tastes with six criteria: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are *of good report*; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Clearly, God's people must be taught to cultivate their tastes. When we're infants, we're happy with a bottle of milk and a can of Gerber turkey and rice; when we're kids we're satisfied with a juice box and Kraft macaroni and cheese; when we're teenagers we crave Mountain Dew and Domino's pizza; but when we're adults we want a calamari appetizer, a spicy Italian dish, and a glass of aged Merlot. Over the course of our lives, most of us learn through education and experience to cultivate our culinary tastes. However, the cultivation of taste is no guarantee. Some people develop their tastes when they are young, and others never advance beyond the simple food stage.

This same phenomenon applies to art in all of its varied forms. Many people do not enjoy classical music, visual art, and great literature because they do not understand it. No one ever taught them how to appreciate these art forms. Their tastes have not been cultivated! Once they are taught how to listen to classical music, how to look at fine art, and how to read old books, they come to enjoy them.

¹ Gene Edward Veith, Jr. *Reading Between the Lines: A Christian Guide to Literature* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), 46.

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

When I am teaching my students to evaluate literature by grounding themselves in absolutes, I start with absolute truth. No one objects. I move on to absolute goodness. No one objects. I finally bring up absolute beauty. One student says, “But isn’t beauty in the eye of the beholder?” No! Some things are moral; others immoral. Some things are truth; others heresy. Some things are beautiful; others ugly. And we don’t decide. Theology, morality, and beauty have their source in God. Beauty is not determined by man and it is not in the eye of the beholder. It is in the eye of *the* Beholder!

Because God himself, the Beholder, is an artist with a great love for beauty, we must look to the Bible for a proper understanding of artistic beauty. In his insightful book *Art for God’s Sake*, Philip Graham Ryken points out that “the very first thing God does in the Bible is to produce creative works of art.” He explains:

First he gathers his materials—in this case, miraculously, by making matter out of nothing. Next he gives structure and shape to what was previously “formless and empty” (Gen. 1:2). Over the course of six creation days, he orders the universe into its basic elements. Then, like a painter adding watercolors to a sketch, or like a composer developing variations on a melodic theme, God takes the forms of creation and adds content. He fills the water with sea creatures, the sky with birds, and the land with wild animals. Finally, he renders his artistic judgment on everything he has made, declaring that it meets the standards of his divine aesthetic: “God saw all that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31).²

God reveals the essence of artistic beauty in the Genesis creation account and in several other places in Scripture, most strikingly in the plans for the tabernacle. God designed the tabernacle himself and gave Moses divine blueprints for its construction in approximately fifty Bible chapters. God tells us in Exodus 28:2, 40 that the Tabernacle (including the furnishings, decorations and priests’ clothing) was designed “for glory and for beauty.”

Furthermore, as the divine Artist, God clearly delights in many different forms of art. He painted (the heavens), wrote literature (the Scriptures), composed music (the Psalms), sculpted pottery (the elect and the reprobate), drafted architecture (the tabernacle blueprints), and designed visual art (the tabernacle

² Philip Graham Ryken, *Art for God’s Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2006), 22, 23.

furnishings). He clearly has a high regard for art. His art demonstrates aesthetic absolutes. By studying what Scripture deems beautiful, we can discern the marks of artistic beauty.

Our artistic productions must be fashioned after God's artistic standards. Augustine understood this and wrote of it in his *Confessions*: "Those beautiful patterns, which through the medium of men's souls are conveyed into their artistic hands, emanate from that Beauty which is above our souls, which my soul sigheth after day and night."³

MARKS OF GOOD ART

Let's notice especially four aesthetic marks shared by the things that the Bible identifies as beautiful.

1. Unity and Diversity: *The work of art exhibits simplicity and complexity.*

This is the most basic and essential hallmark of Christian aesthetics. The Trinity demonstrates the beautiful harmony of unity (one God) and diversity (three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). The Bible demonstrates the beautiful harmony of unity (one Book written by one Author with one message—the Gospel of Jesus Christ) and diversity (66 books written by many human authors over many hundreds of years). The creation demonstrates the beautiful harmony of unity (everything works together and serves the one purpose of his glory) and diversity (the created world is overwhelmingly complex). Finally, the church demonstrates the beautiful harmony of unity (one Body of Christ) and diversity (many people from every nation, tribe, and tongue).

2. Meaningful Progression: *The work of art has something important to say.*

God is an Author who has produced a perfect work of art, the Bible. But God's craft as a divine Storyteller can be seen in all of history (His Story) as well. History is beautiful because its Author is beautiful. When we look at history, we cannot help but see its progression with a definite beginning, middle, and end. The exposition (Creation), inciting moment (the Fall), rising action (Old Testament history), climax (incarnation of Jesus Christ), falling action (church history), and resolution (Christ's Second Coming) establish the standard for plot and structure in literature. God's story reveals an essential characteristic of beauty—meaningful progression. Every detail of God's carefully constructed story points

³ Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. J. G. Pilkington, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1956), 157.

toward his central message—the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ. God’s story has eternal importance.

3. Form and Content: *The work of art harmonizes its form with its content.*

The Old Testament tabernacle was a shadow of things that were to come. All of the designs, furnishings, and decorations of the tabernacle pointed to the work of Jesus Christ, who would “tabernacle” among his people. In God’s tabernacle, every form teaches us something about Christ’s work. Consider the brazen altar (Christ sacrificed for us), brass laver (Christ purifies us), golden candlestick (Christ is the Light of the World), table of showbread (Christ is the Bread of Life), altar of incense (Christ prays for us), and torn veil to the Holy of Holies (Christ gives us access to God). Notice how the very forms of water, light, bread, and incense say something meaningful to us about Christ’s work. The form complements the meaning. In fact, without these forms, the meaning is diminished.

4. Mastery of Technique: *The work of art is an example of exceptional skill.*

David stands in awe of God’s skill and technique as a Painter. He exclaims, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:3-4). God’s exceptional skill as an Artist is abundantly evident in creation and it is breathtaking. His emphasis on skill is evident in his tabernacle directions to Moses as well. Note God’s concern for beauty and artistic excellence in Exodus 31:1-11. The finest materials were to be used (gold, silver, and brass). The most skilled artisans were to be employed (Bezaleel and Aholiab). Everything was to be made exactly according to God’s specifications (artists were instructed “to devise cunning works”). God clearly wanted the tabernacle to be constructed skillfully.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD ART

The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that certain aesthetic principles are beautiful. The Trinity reveals the beauty of unity in diversity. History demonstrates the beauty of meaningful progression. The tabernacle shows the beauty of harmonizing form and content. The creation portrays the exceptional skill of its Creator. But how do these four principles of Christian aesthetics help us appreciate the manifold forms of man-made art? To answer this question, I will briefly examine a few paragons from the artistic arenas of painting, literature and music.

PAINTING

Rembrandt's paintings are masterpieces of visual art. For example, look at *The Mill* and see the complex details that come together in visual unity. Stand back and see a simple picture of a windmill on a hill. Get close and see the complex brushstrokes and details that make this picture impressive. As a child, I remember staring at the picture in our giant family Bible of his *The Angel Stopping Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac to God*. Rembrandt illustrates so much emotion by depicting one biblical moment. Look at the meaningful progression communicated through the hands of Abraham and the angel. One determined and obedient hand holds down Isaac's face! But wait, the other drops the knife in surprise and relief! Why? Because the angel's authoritative hands have intervened. Look at how form contributes to meaning in *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Rembrandt knew how to use the contrast between light and darkness symbolically. The father's loving act of forgiveness is illuminated while the disappointed brother stands in darkness. Also, notice the function of the scarlet robe—it focuses our attention on the father and serves as a symbol of love. Finally, look at *Rembrandt's Mother*. Rembrandt's mastery of technique and attention to detail have always impressed viewers. It is the old woman's realistic, wrinkled hand that usually draws attention here. To study Rembrandt is to study the principles of Christian aesthetics.

LITERATURE

When I teach literature, I like to show my students the unity and diversity in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. He weaves all of his diverse characters together to drive home a profoundly moving message about self-sacrificing love. My students almost all get bewildered early on but end up agreeing with me that this is the greatest novel of all time. I like to show my students how meaningful progression contributes to Lord Byron's "The Destruction of Sennacherib." Look at how Byron moves from the power of the Assyrians in the first line to the power of God in the last. I like to show them how form contributes to meaning in Anne Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband." Why does the poetess use iambic couplet? Because the rising iambic meter and the rhyming couplets reinforce her uplifting subject of a married couple's love. And I like to show them how John Milton's mastery of technique makes "On the Late Massacre at Piedmont" the ultimate sonnet. A 14-line poem of rhyming iambic pentameter divided into a meaningful octave and sestet is one thing, but to express such

emotion and truth in this way is absolutely incredible. He uses assonance (repeated long *o*, *oo*, and *or* sounds) to suggest the groans of the martyrs. His language echoes the Scriptures from beginning to end. Every word is essential! This is the essence of art.

MUSIC

Handel's *Messiah* is the ultimate musical masterpiece. In this piece, every instrument plays a different musical part, yet all of the unique instruments and parts weave together into a majestic unity. The oratorio celebrates salvation in Jesus Christ and progresses meaningfully from Part I (prophecy) to Part II (redemption) to Part III (thanksgiving). The form and style of the music perfectly complements the biblical lyrics. Consider, for example, the appropriateness of a choir of countless voices singing together words of praise. Furthermore, the exceptional skill with which the vocal and instrumental parts are played is truly breathtaking. To enjoy the *Messiah* is to think about these artistic marks and to experience the thrill of recognizing beauty in harmony with goodness and truth.

CONCLUSION

Philip Graham Ryken summarizes things nicely in *Art for God's Sake* when he writes: "To serve such a God, in such a world, the arts must flourish in all their variety. And they should be measured against objective standards of goodness, truth, and beauty. These are God's standards because they are essential attributes of his being. He is a good, true, and beautiful God, as we see in the radiance of his eternal Son."⁴ As God's people, we must desire theological truth, moral goodness, and artistic beauty. As teachers, we must teach our students the importance of understanding these biblical absolutes.

The teaching of beauty should be an important part of our lessons in school. Our world wallows in the muck of artistic, moral, and spiritual relativism. It celebrates ugliness. It offers us mud in the place of masterpiece. But we must remember that our filth and ugliness have been washed away and we have been made clean—and beautiful. Because our students have been made beautiful through Jesus Christ, we must teach them to avoid ugliness and to celebrate beauty in art and in all of life.

Furthermore, our lessons themselves should be beautiful. They should have unity in diversity (using many examples to serve one objective), meaningful

⁴ Ryken, *Art for God's Sake*, 54.

progression (working from known information to unknown information), a harmony of form and content (picking the right method of instruction to suit the material), and mastery of technique (implementing effective organization, rhetoric, discipline, and evaluation).

Agur was a great teacher. In Proverbs 30:18-19, he writes, “There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.” I leave it to you to see why the inspired writer found such beauty in them.

Contribution

Principals, Change, and Collaborative Learning

Jim Regnerus

Schools, we are taught, must always be changing. It is the duty of the principal to be the agent of change, leading the staff to continually be putting away the old and implementing the new. New textbooks, new technology, new theories, new methodologies and so on must characterize the school. Change, change, change is the order for the day. And here's where sometimes it borders on the ridiculous. We are even taught to call it change when it is hardly a change at all—calling it a “first-order change,” and then reserving the lingo “second-order change” for real changes. Just make sure you're always going through your change.

The universities recognize that change can lessen school performance, with test scores and student success actually dropping when change is implemented.

Pay no heed to this, we are taught, as this is only a little “implementation dip.” Once we’re through the implementation dip the performance will soar to new heights. So we are taught.

My reaction to having change preached at me is not always positive. First of all, my ilk is a little more like the Amish where being stuck in old ways doesn’t really bother me too much. And secondly, doesn’t Scripture itself, in a passage such as Jeremiah 6:16, herald the blessings of staying on the old paths?

Yet, I do believe there is a place for change. While I don’t advocate schools changing with every whim of new theory that comes breezing along, I am convinced that schools must at least be vigilant and be trying the new materials by the Spirit, discerning what is of benefit to the covenant school and what is merely Satan trying the same old lie again with different language. Teachers must be current in their field and ready to adapt, both in content and in application in the classroom. The principal should be a leader for this.

However, I am also convinced that the extreme, excessive change-at-all-cost mentality is Satan’s paving of the way for The Lie to be more easily swallowed. The principal also has the role of guarding that a school doesn’t fall into that ditch either.

Consider collaborative learning (CL). The basic idea of CL is that the classroom setting is one where learning happens by students working together, or collaborating. Observing a CL classroom, one would not find the traditional setting of a teacher giving instruction to a class of individual learners, but rather the teacher facilitating several small groups. The theory behind CL is the assumption that most students learn best that way—in teams or groups.

CL is pushed at the colleges and universities these days. In my graduate classes at the University of Sioux Falls, CL is not only preached, but put into practice. At seemingly random times during class, the professor will quit lecturing and put us in groups to discuss an issue or solve a problem. Even when they hire in some high-priced guest lecturer from New York or Washington, D.C., it is not uncommon for the lecturer to interrupt lecturing and tell us to discuss the topic with those around us for a while. Apparently that helps it sink in better with us.

My reaction to CL is that, like change, there may be a place for it but people are going far overboard with it. Is it true that in some situations scientists have made great discoveries by working in a group setting? Of course. Are there times in the classroom when the best educational practice would be to let the students work together? Absolutely! But should we always be pushing the concept,

minimizing actual instruction and elevating group discovery? No. I offer three reasons why CL should not be over-emphasized.

My first objection is that CL assumes students are all virtually equal and are going to equally benefit from the group setting. I don't hold that to be necessarily true. Students learn at all kinds of different rates and styles. Continually putting them in groups where they are all supposed to learn the same concept together, will yield three different results. The quickest ones often gain hardly a thing since they have the concept figured out already, the middle ones might actually learn something, and the slowest learners will learn almost nothing other than to say whatever the rest of the group is saying when the teacher asks what answer they arrived at.

My second objection is that you get a diminishing return the more you overuse CL. When we do it in class at USE, the first time it might go fairly well. However, by the second time everyone in the group has figured out who the smartest person is. We all just listen to what he or she says, decide that answer is good enough for us, and the balance of our CL time is spent with the women showing each other baby pictures and the men discussing the Minnesota Twins' latest trade. By the third time we don't even care to listen to what Smarty Pants is going to say, just so an answer is ready when our time is up. CL does not work if it's overused.

My final objection to the overuse of CL is that in some way I believe this could pave the way for the Evil One to more easily gain access to our children's minds. What is seemingly a noble way to enhance student learning could quite actually (again, by its *overuse*) be a way for squelching independent thought and de-emphasizing the need to try things by the Spirit, and instead replacing these with a mind-numbing "go with the group" mentality. Satan flourishes most easily in idle minds.

Collaborative learning. It has some potential when used with discretion. And it is the duty of the principal to lead the staff in handling such matters of principle and educational philosophy—how much change is right for the school.

Children and Youth Literature

Brenda Dykstra

Flat Stanley, by Jeff Brown; illustrated by Scott Nash. Harper Collins Publishing, 2006. Recommended ages: 5-8 years.

Meet school-age lad Stanley Lambchop, his brother Arthur, and Mom and Dad. A bulletin board falls on Stanley during the night and flattens the poor boy to a half an inch thick. Stanley has lots of fun being thin—he can fly like a kite, travel in an envelope to visit a cousin in California, and squeeze under doors. Stanley is even hired to help capture thieves because he is just so little he can hide anywhere. But will Stanley capture those stealing men? Will staying flat always remain fun for him? Will Stanley ever return to a normal kid's life?

Response: This book is very kid-friendly, and the plot line is fun. It's easy to see why this book is a top seller as well as the impetus for many other chapter books featuring Stanley Lambchop and his brother Arthur. The illustrations are fun and add to the joy of sharing Stanley's adventures as he has an exciting life. One key issue I had to deal with as I read it aloud to children is several expletives or just plain bad taste in language use; this ought to be noted prior to reading. Once edited, the story line is enjoyable and a fun ride for the imagination. But be aware!

Early chapter books about *Flat Stanley's Worldwide Adventures* are also available based on Jeff Brown's series, but written by other authors, for ages 7-10. I read two of them and am quite sure kids will enjoy them. The plot is extremely fun because Stanley can perform amazing feats, and the geography and social studies concepts intertwined are really a great learning bonus. They are no literary works of art, but at the same time would be a good impetus to early readers needing a boost to find fun in reading.

Duck and Goose books, by Tad Hills. Recommended ages: 2-5 years.

They are the best of friends; the odd couple Duck and Goose bring board books

to life for toddlers and children. Join them as they, together with Thistle and Bluebird, another duck and bird friend, share in adventures and learning such concepts as numbers, opposites, feelings, friendship, and more.

Response: The fun characters and illustrations of these *New York Times* bestsellers are sure to bring smiles, laughter, and joy to toddlers and preschoolers. The innocence and simplicity is inviting for children and truly hard to resist. I found very few issues in the various books. The plots seemed very similar to other kids' books and not all that exciting to me, but so many kids seem to appreciate the characters so... Enjoy!

Caldecott Award Winner

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus, by Mo Willems. Hyperion Books, 2003.

Recommended ages: 2-6 years.

“Can I PLEASE drive the bus? Please?! Oh, please?! C'mon.”

Pigeon is left watching the bus per the driver's request. He knows he's not supposed to drive it, yet his imagination begs for a chance. Would YOU let him drive that bus?

Response: Caldecott awards are for artistry and illustrations. This book is definitely different than the award-winning illustrations of other Caldecotts, but the simple cartoon sketches also work to tell the story while Willems' word bubbles share poor Pigeon's emotional pleas to drive that bus.

Again, this is a fun book that kids seem to really relate to very well, but I don't know if it is even in a slight way literary genius. The text is all word bubbles so reading aloud means immediately putting on different voices—enjoyable or not—for meaning. Get ready for that fun! And the pigeon seems to be quite manipulative, greedy, and whiny in his tactics to make the readers want him to drive that bus, too. These, too, are open book discussion topics for a parent and the child(ren) of the King.

Mo Willems is the popular five-time Emmy Award winning writer and animator for *Sesame Street* and creator of Cartoon Network's *Sheep in the City*. His artistic talent apparently specifically reaches to children. He authors two other Caldecott honor books as well. His books are *very* popular. May we be aware of these, and use Christ-centered discernment in these too.

Join me in next *Perspectives* issue as we review Mo Willems, the author—his *Elephant and Piggy* series, *Knuffle Bunny*, and several other of his 30+ books.

Newberry Honor Award winner, 1993

On My Honor, by Marion Dane Bauer. Publisher-suggested grade level: 5th grade; 100 pages.

Two bored best buddies Joel and Tony from Vermillion, IL are set to go on a 8-9 mile bike tour to Starved Rock Bluffs. Joel, competent yet passive, and Tony, stouter, less athletic but more daring, set out on their journey. The two friends get sidetracked by the rushing Vermillion River and want to go in it. Joel is “on his honor” that he won’t go anywhere but Starved Rock; Tony, already lying for parental permission for this trip, is also a poor swimmer. The boys give in to their desire for thrills. Tony disappears underneath. Will he ever reappear? Will Joel ever deal with death? How will he deal with the guilt and the unknown?

Response: Easy reading tale, but this Newberry award winner is very thought-provoking and deep, even for a fifth grader. The plot, characters, and setting share a powerful story, and the literary elements are very good.

This story leaves endless issues for teaching and learning for children and early adolescents, e.g. what does “On my honor” mean? How does disobedience play out? What would the child of God have done in the place of Joel or Tony? These deeper issues are such excellent open doors for instruction by parent or teacher. As an adult I was left in contemplation of these very heart-touching issues posed by this piece of literature.

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