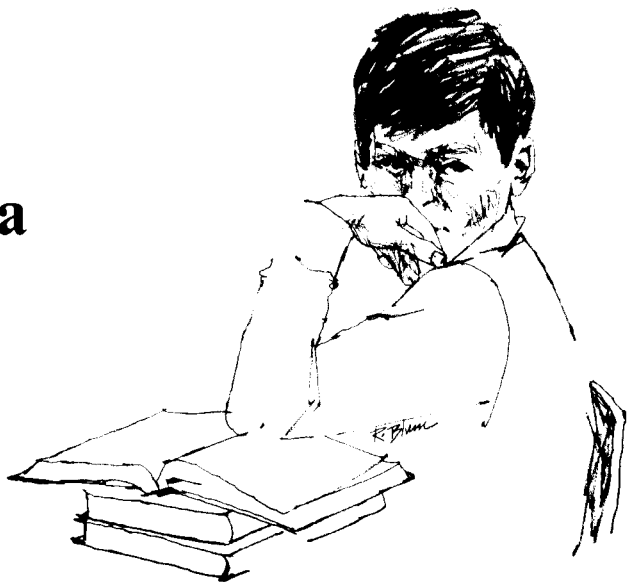


A Bruised Reed and a Smoking Flax

By Clyde Newmyer



The hands of the wall clock in the office were raised as if to signal only thirty minutes until faculty meeting. Mr. Nelson sat at his desk attempting to read, but his thoughts were far from the words on the page. One of his students, with a history of wrongdoing, had just broken the rules again.

The question of how to deal with the student had prompted several opinions from his staff. As he had listened to their remarks, he knew that Edmond had exhausted the patience of most of the teachers. Some were certain that expulsion was the answer; others felt that a two-week suspension was a possible answer; while still others felt that someone should try to get through to the boy. But who of them could do that?

Edmond came from a tragic situation. His father had been killed in a violent automobile accident. His mother, an office secretary, often worked overtime to provide a Christian education for her son.

Edmond was a bright student, although his records indicated low scholastic achievement. His rebellious

behavior often spilled out into the classroom, causing disruption to the learning process of other students. Previous suspensions had brought little or no positive response. Expulsion would no doubt have to be considered.

Picking up his Bible, Mr. Nelson turned to a text that had often impressed him as he counseled problem students.

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory” (Matthew 12:20).

The writer, Matthew, lived and walked with the Son of God. He observed Jesus as He mingled and associated with the people in the land of Palestine. He knew how Jesus dealt with the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the sick and the whole, the Sadducees, Pharisees, rabbis, and His own disciples. As Matthew observed these attributes of Christ, he was reminded of Isaiah’s prophecy, recorded in chapter 41:1-3:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

“A bruised reed . . . and . . . smoking flax”—what do they mean?

“A bruised reed”: a broken plant, the stem of a flower that is bent or twisted; a plant that is about to be cast out.

“Smoking flax”: a candle with just a little flame left; a wick still smoldering, but about to go out.

As Jesus ministered to the needs of the people of His day, He came in touch with the bruised reed and smoking flax, but not once in His association with them did He break or quench their spirits. Jesus, according to Luke, came to bind up the brokenhearted:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised (Luke 4:18).

Now a young man’s future was about to be discussed, and Mr. Nelson knew what had to be done. Students whose influence becomes detrimental to the spiritual lives of others must find a new school home.

But we must try once more to reach him. “A bruised reed shall he not break,” he thought

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2. The assistant principalship should be recognized as the best pool of candidates for the principalship.

3. The decreasing tenure in office of academy principals deserves the immediate attention of denominational education officials.

4. Local conferences should establish K-12 school systems with centralized administrative control vested in the superintendent of schools.

5. The Association of SDA Educators should be developed into a viable professional organization that could benefit principals as well as other professional educators in the SDA school system.

6. The junior-academy principalship deserves further study.

Careers by Proxy

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difficult day . . .

As an executive secretary, Finnie has traveled around the world to monetary conferences in assisting her employers with their duties. I could have been a secretary. Instead I became a teacher and taught office procedures to Finnie in college. Her efficiency, demonstrated even in school days, is a cause of satisfaction to me, her former teacher.

Bob, at age ten, was enthusiastic and eager to share with his class the news about impending motherhood for his cat. His interest in life and its preservation has continued, as he has chosen medicine as his career. I remember a relative strongly urging me to become a doctor. I could have done so. Instead I have helped several doctors on the road to usefulness. My choice was better, for me.

As the guest of a former student, I was impressed with her talent in homemaking. In addition to being a good cook,

Louise is artistic and skilled with a needle—even tailoring suits for her husband. In the course of our visit, she told me I was the one who first taught her how to use a purchased pattern, back in seventh grade. Moreover, I had convinced her that school was fun, so she had not dropped out when the going was rough. Her ability in home economics far outshines mine. I marvel now that I dared to teach sewing at all.

Reading in the *Review* of workers answering mission calls, Jim's name caught my eye. He was leaving to be business manager of an important overseas college. He will be a good one—responsible, accurate, honest, caring. Could I fill an office like that? Hardly! But I taught Jim his first bookkeeping lesson, back in high school. Having earned my way in school by working in the college business office, there were times when I was tempted to make that work my goal rather than a means to the goal of teaching. I could not do both. I chose teaching. But Jim fulfills that other dream.

"You know," said my piano teacher long ago, "you could become a music teacher. Have you ever thought of that?" Whatever spark of talent she observed in me never became a flame. Although I have taught a little simple music to children in the classroom, Stella, another of my students, did go on to become a music teacher. Her talent was more than a stray spark, and it has made me glad.

Sometimes, when teaching newswriting in college, I wondered what it would be like to make a career of writing. But the classroom took so much time, Harrison had to do it for me. From our amateur efforts at editing the college paper, he has gone on to earn a professional degree in journalism and now makes his living as an editor. I am proud of him.

Many of my students have become teachers, too, since it is in teacher-training that most of my recent years have been spent. One, Shirani, recently earned her doctoral degree in education. I am so glad she could build on the training we gave and go far beyond—fulfilling another dream for me.

And what of Dilani, Pervaiz, Akhtar, and others who are currently students? Only the coming years can tell what rewards of satisfaction their careers may bring to the teachers who work with them now. Truly, teaching can fulfill *all* your dreams!

A Bruised Rod and a Smoking Flax

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to himself. And Edmond was only one of many who must find the care and concern that they deserve from Christian teachers.

Mr. Nelson walked into the conference room and faced his staff. After several teachers prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the discussion began. Some of Edmond's teachers felt very strongly that his influence was most detrimental and that he must leave. Others felt that he needed more understanding and wanted to help him somehow.

Dismissing himself from the meeting, Mr. Nelson went to his office and telephoned his wife. After some discussion, he returned to the meeting. A decision had been made—Edmond would stay—on probation. However, he would leave the dormitory and would have a home with Mr. and Mrs. Nelson. The boy needed a father image.

When considering troubled students, it is important to remember the story Jesus told of the prodigal son. This young man chose to leave his father's home. He voluntarily went to a far country, but his father

never ceased to watch for his return. Our heavenly Father watches with tender pity the young person who is confused and depressed. During the years Jesus ministered to the people on this earth, He showed compassion to the miserable and the unfortunate.

An erring student often displays undesirable deportment just to get attention. He wants someone to "notice me; I can do things too." This student needs a teacher to take an interest in him and gain his confidence, finding a common denominator on which to build a friendship.

Students often need more than routine discipline. An effective solution to many problems is an understanding friend on the staff; someone who is willing to understand the home situation, and from there, build confidence between the student and teacher, and finally, the school.

Troubled students are infuriated with discipline that is not worthy of the name. It is unwise to punish a student by requiring him to do free labor that is not going to better himself or the school in some way. Administrators and teachers can expect rebellion when the work assigned is degrading, that is, if it does nothing to better any portion of the school plant or the surroundings. It would be far better to assign the necessary work and have the job supervised by a member of the staff, preferably a person the young offender respects.

Students often respond favorably when the principal requests them to visit his office once or twice a week for several weeks. These visits give the principal an opportunity to get acquainted with the student and to discover common ground on which to build friendship with and confidence in the administration.

When possible, the student's pastor should be invited to be

present when the case is discussed. The student will thus be assured that the school really cares about him and that they want to be fair in dealing with his situation.

Discipline problems are greatly reduced in schools where teachers display a caring attitude toward their students. The youth need to know that their teachers are interested in them as individuals as well as in the importance of getting the subject matter across successfully.

As educators, we must blend firmness with gentleness; always encouraging and protecting the faithful student who observes and upholds the standards from those who tear down and destroy. But in so doing, we must ever remember that Jesus Christ dealt in love with the wayward.

Finally, when students must be separated from the Christian school, we should make absolutely certain that everything was done to save the "bruised reed . . . and . . . smoking flax."

The Classroom Teacher and the Silent Epidemic

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and the way it works so that she can check to be sure the aid is worn as well as turned on to the appropriate volume.

Signal Intensity. Consideration also must be given to the integrity of the signal. Spoken sounds reflect the precision of the lip and tongue movements. Although every teacher cannot be as precisely articulate as a network newscaster, he or she can work to produce clearer speech signals. For example, downward movement of the jaw with the production of each syllable will improve the level of the signal, result is more forceful movement of the tongue and lips, and provide better consonant cues. Students can also be encouraged to

employ the above strategies.

Noise in the listening environment serves as an interference signal. Since selecting a message signal from a noise background is especially difficult for the hearing impaired child, noise should be minimized.

Auditory Attention. Because speech is near the threshold of audibility for the hearing impaired, it is often processed as background. When the listener's attention is directed toward the stimulus, its symbolic significance is then recognized and processed. For these reasons, measures must be taken to gain the attention of the hearing-impaired listener and to direct it toward speech messages. Calling a child by name or using visual cues are valuable approaches.

Visual Listening

Hearing-impaired children develop superior ability to utilize the visual components of communication. Movement of the jaw gives important information regarding the syllable and rhythm patterns of an utterance. Movements of the lips, and what can be seen of tongue movement, provide important clues about the way consonant sounds are produced. These cues are particularly valuable to the hearing impaired who have difficulty in discriminating consonants. Many hard-of-hearing people complain that speakers play hide and seek with them by moving their jaws and lips as little as possible. Conscious jaw movement in syllable production can improve the visual information provided.

Only those elements of speech production that are visible to the observer can be utilized in speech reading (lip reading). The movements are visible for about one-third of the sounds we use. Of this small group of speech sounds, visual information alone does not permit the observer to differenti-