

## A Column of Reader Opinion

### Thought-provoking Editorial

You've done it again! Congratulations on a well-written, timely, and thought-provoking editorial in the GC Special edition (Summer, 1985). We need more of that kind. I also found the whole edition a worthwhile contribution.

Arthur O. Coetzee  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, Michigan

### Readers Respond to "An Open Letter to Academy Principals" (April-May, 1985)

#### A Plea for Balance

While I agree with the main thrust of this letter, I feel that additional facts must be considered when looking at National Merit Scholarship scores. If my understanding is correct, these tests are optional in public schools, yet all of our students take them. Also, when you look at the total numbers from both populations, I really don't think things are as bad as they might appear at first glance.

In looking over the list of activities mentioned as potential problems, many are weekend activities. One must keep in mind that some of our activities contribute greatly to school spirit. Sometimes out-of-classroom education can be of great value in student/teacher relationships. While they don't necessarily prepare for college, these activities certainly help us provide a climate where other learning can be more effective. We need balance, not total elimination. As administrators, we have the responsibility to make sure our goals are clear and our activities productive in meeting these goals.

M. L. Whiting  
Principal  
Sacramento Union Academy  
Carmichael, California

• *The percentage of students taking the National Merit Scholarship tests varies, depending on how well students perform on TSAT tests. In some areas only about 10 to 15 percent of academy juniors take the National Merit tests. —Editors.*

### A College Teacher's View

I find myself in basic agreement with "An Open Letter to Academy Principals." As a former junior academy teacher and presently a college history professor, I have observed from both sides of the academic fence the weak preparation some of our students receive for college work. Especially lacking in our academy curricula is training in essay writing and conceptual thinking.

We are told that "the work of true education" is "to train the youth to be *thinkers*, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought" (*Education*, p. 17). Yet too often we are satisfied if they can match up, fill in the blank, or multiple guess their way through our exams in grades 9-12. Many teachers give small chapter tests that do not challenge breadth or depth of thought, or cause the students to see a subject as part of a continuum with cause-and-effect relationships.

As the author of "An Open Letter" suggests, maybe our academy students are "over-played" and their teachers "over-worked" by too many extracurricular activities. If we are to pursue "excellence in education," perhaps we need to reorient our academic priorities. Adventist parents pay extremely high tuition, board, and room expenses for their youth to *study* at our schools.

Perhaps it's past time we had a new look at the blueprint of how to prepare thinkers rather than memorizing reflectors in our classrooms.

Brian E. Strayer  
Assistant Professor of History  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, Michigan

#### Quick Fix?

It was such a joy to find the simple solution to problems of academic excellence.

The author, hiding behind a title or two, obviously feels that

1. A quick perusal of his local newspapers' reports on one scholarship competition reflects the academic standing of the academy as compared to public schools.

2. High school students should be required to participate in a format of education equivalent to that of college students.

3. Learning activities outside the classroom are necessarily frivolous.

Thank you so much for this heartening quick fix in this area of concern to all of us "fellow educators."

Kelly Bock  
Principal  
Mile High Academy  
Denver, Colorado

### Gross Exaggeration

Congratulations! You put together another excellent issue of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION for April-May, 1985.

I regret that the author of "An Open Letter to Academy Principals" was not willing to put his name to the article, as I would like to share directly with him my reaction to my thoughts.

I have spent the major portion of my life on or around an academy campus as a student, teacher, principal, or superintendent. The fact that we have entire student bodies achieving in the top ten percent of nationally standardized tests certainly does not support the author's position of low academic priorities in Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools. Rather than looking at the number, perhaps the percentage of students qualifying for national merit scholarships would be a better comparison.

There will always be room for improvement in all schools. However, I firmly believe that the picture presented in the article "35 to 50 days are lost to instruction" is gross exaggeration. I would also be opposed to extracurricular activities or planning sessions that would needlessly take students out of classes; however, when it is done after school hours and involves students with good grade-point averages, these functions not only add enjoyment to their school experience, but also give opportunities for creativity and organizational growth.

When I see many of our academy teachers working 60 to 80 hours per week to give their students a complete education (spiritual, physical, social, and academic) I hate to see someone so removed from the front

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8. Parents and children get along well together, rarely arguing and fighting.

9. Parents actively teach their religious principles to their children.

These conclusions are certainly in harmony with the findings of this study. Furthermore, they are of importance to teachers for at least two reasons. First, teachers have the opportunity to help parents learn the attitudes and behaviors that will maximize the transmission of religious values. The process of Christian education

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cannot begin and end with children if it is to accomplish its mission. It must also include parents.

Secondly, Christian educators also have the privilege of applying these principles in their task of encouraging the development of values. Translated into the classroom setting and employed in cooperation with the Christian home, there is a high possibility that the new generation will come to cherish those religious beliefs that have given such great meaning to their parents' and teachers' lives. □

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1952), p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen G. Wieting, "An Examination of Intergenerational Patterns of Religious Belief and Practice," *Sociological Analysis* 36:137 (1975).

<sup>3</sup> Alan C. Acock and Vern L. Bengtson, "On the Relative Influence of Mothers and Fathers: A Covariance Analysis of Political and Religious Socialization," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 40:519-530 (1978); \_\_\_\_\_, "Socialization and Attribution Processes: Actual Versus Perceived Similarity Among Parents and Youth,"

*Journal of Marriage and the Family* 42:501-515 (1980).

<sup>4</sup> Norman T. Feather, "Generation and Family Effects in Value Socialization," *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1980), pp. 247-294.

<sup>5</sup> Sam Payne, David A. Summers, and Thomas R. Stewart, "Value Differences Across Three Generations," *Sociometry* 36:20-30 (1973).

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin J. Keeley, "Generations in Tension: Intergenerational Differences and Continuities in Religion and Religion-related Behavior," *Review of Religious Research* 17:221-231 (1976).

<sup>7</sup> Theodore Newcomb and George Svehla, "Intra-family Relationships in Attitude," *Sociometry* 1:180-205 (1937).

<sup>8</sup> Wieting, pp. 137-149.

<sup>9</sup> Vern L. Bengtson, "Generation and Family Effects in Value Socialization," *American Sociological Review* 40:358-371 (1975); Martin A. Johnson, "Family Life and Religious Commitment," *Review of Religious Research* 14:144-150 (1973); William C. McCready, "Faith of Our Fathers: A Study of the Process of Religious Socialization," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, 1972; Hart M. Nelsen, "Gender Differences in the Effects of Parental Discord on Preadolescent Religiousness," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20:351-360 (1981); Darwin L. Thomas, Viktor Gecas, Andrew Weigert, and Elizabeth Rooney, *Family Socialization and the Adolescent* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1974); Lillian E. Troll, Bernice L. Neugarten, and Ruth J. Kraines, "Similarities in Values and Other Personality Characteristics in College Students and Their Parents," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* 15:323-336 (1969); Andrew J. Weigert and Darwin L. Thomas, "Socialization and Religiosity: A Cross-National Analysis of Catholic Adolescents," *Sociometry* 33:305-326 (1970).

<sup>10</sup> Dean R. Hoge, Gregory H. Petrillo, and Ella I. Smith, "Transmission of Religious and Social Values From Parents to Teenage Children," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 44:569-580 (1982).

<sup>11</sup> Those readers interested in the technical details of the study will find complete statistical methodology, including tables in Margaret G. Dudley, "A Study of the Transmission of Religious Values From Parents to Adolescents." Unpublished manuscript, 1984, Heritage Room, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

<sup>12</sup> Hoge, et al.

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## Teacher Reaction

*(Continued from page 19)*

lines take pot shots in such a manner at them.

James Clizbe  
Superintendent of Schools  
Texas Conference of SDA  
Alvarado, Texas

• *The author responds: "Hiding"?* No—I merely thought that to name myself and my location would be unfair to the nearest academy, though I have observed several. "Removed from the front lines"? Hardly—I taught at the academy level, as did my spouse, for more than a decade.

*I am still profoundly convinced that, though some activities do provide "fond memories" and foster a caring teacher-student relationship, to have fun and games interrupt family and study time three and four times every week is unfair to both faculty and students. The sarcastic tone of*

*one respondent only underlines my fear that our students are not being taught to respect academic pursuits.*

## Enjoys Computer Column

I recently completed several classes in computer science. I wish I knew more. There are so many ways that computers can be used today and in the future. As a teacher, I feel that they can become a most valuable tool to increase and enhance instruction.

When I recently reread the entire 1984-1985 volume of the JOURNAL I saved the articles in "Computing With Class" for future reference. The suggestions and advice could help many teachers and schools to make wiser choices in the area of computers. I think that the points are well made, and I hope that the author will continue to write informative materials in this area.

Keith Ellsworth  
Sylacauga, Alabama

## New Insights

I just finished reading "Financing Church Colleges" (December, 1984-January, 1985, issue). I discovered some new insights into the financial making of a college!

This is a creative scholarly thesis, and the points are well taken. I liked, in particular the proposal to re-educate donors to focus more on faculty enrichment programs rather than buildings. Of course, it would not hurt if they did the one without leaving the other undone!

Laurice K. Durrant  
Chairman, Department of Nursing  
Southwestern Adventist College  
Keene, Texas □

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## Did I Do All I Could?

*(Continued from page 7)*

### Calling for Decisions

Teachers and others who work with youth can call for decisions in two ways—on an individual (one-on-one) basis or in a group situation. The first technique has the advantage of avoiding peer influence that often causes young people to ignore their true feelings.