CURRICULUM: IMPLEMENTATION IN THREE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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Editorial Instruction

This publication is one more of a continuing series of monographs emanating from Calvin College, under the editorship of Dr. Donald Oppewal, Professor of Education. Each of them has examined a given aspect of educational theory and practice, usually from a Reformed and Calvinistic perspective. Each has been designed to be used in teacher education classes as a supplement to other texts, but also can stand alone as an encouragement for inservice teachers and school board members to think Christianly about the schools in which they are involved.

Some of the previous monographs in the series have been written by educational philosophers and historians; others by those whose specialty is science or literature or religion in the curriculum.

This monograph is authored by Dr. Harro Van Brummelen, presently Associate Professor and Chair, Education Division, Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia, Canada. His career began as a secondary school mathematics teacher. He has also served as principal and curriculum coordinator in Edmonton, Alberta, and as education coordinator of the Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia. He has published extensively, editing with Geraldine Steensma *Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View* (1977), and writing *Telling the Next Generation: Educational Development in North American Calvinist Christian School* (1986) and *Walking with God in the Classroom: Christian Approaches to Learning and Teaching* (1988).

In this publication Van Brummelen describes three school systems, dramatizing the differences in perspectives that shape various aspects of each of them, and notes changes that have taken place as their school's philosophy was clarified. These case studies provide prospective and inservice teachers with insights about present tensions within the Christian community over the shape of Christian schooling, as well as enable all to discover to which of them Christ calls them to serve.

Donald Oppewal
August, 1989

Other monographs in the series available from the Calvin College bookstore, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506:

1. *Roots of the Calvinistic Day School Movement*, Donald Oppewal, 1963.
2. *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Literature*, Merle Meeter and Stanley Wiersma, 1970.
3. *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Science*, Bissell Maatman and Gerald Bakker. 1971.
4. *Christian Education Through Religious Studies*, Dennis Hoekstra, 1985.
5. *Shifts in Curricular Theory for Christian Education*, Peter P. DeBoer, 1983.
6. *Biblical Knowing and Teaching*, Donald Oppewal, 1985.
7. *Conflicting Christian Conceptions of Truth: Implications for the Curriculum*, Tony Vanden Ende, 1985.

Growth and Diversity in Christian Schooling

Between 1970 and 1985, while public school enrolment in Canada decreased eighteen percent, non-public school enrolment reached 234,000, an increase of sixty-four percent.[1] In the United States, enrolment in non-Catholic religious schools increased from 562,000 to 1,330,000 in the decade between 1970 and 1980.[2] Much of this expansion in both nations was due to growth in evangelical Protestant "Christian" day schools. Almost every town of any size in North America today has at least one evangelical Christian school.

Nineteenth century educational leaders believed that compulsory education would solve social ills such as crime and poverty. Ever since, most North Americans, including evangelical Christians, have had an unrealistic faith in the ability of public schooling to accomplish almost anything.[3] During the last twenty years, however, many evangelicals, including a large number of Baptistic and Pentecostal/charismatic backgrounds, have joined Catholic, Lutheran, Christian Reformed, Seventh Day Adventist and Jewish adherents in operating non-public schools. They now believe that society and its public schools have rejected traditional values and no longer serve their children's needs. They have transferred their faith in the power of education to a new institution: the Christian day school.

Some of the new Christian schools are operated by church congregations, others by school associations. and still others by self-perpetuating boards. The enrolment in some schools consists of students mainly from one denomination, in others, from several like-minded ones; and in still others, from a broad spectrum of Protestant churches. Some schools restrict enrolment to members of their own congregation, others to children of parents who are professing Christians, and still others welcome anyone, believing that the school should be an evangelical outreach. Some schools began mainly to protect children from secular influences, others to maintain high academic standards and strict discipline, and still others to prepare children to be ambassadors for Christ in today's culture--with the vast majority of parents paying lip service to all of these but interpreting them quite differently. As a result, a wide diversity of Christian schools exists in North America today.

In the Canadian province of British Colombia, of the estimated 11,500 students in 150 such Christian schools, independent associations of parents administer about thirty schools with 5,000 students, with churches operating the remainder, most often in their church buildings.[4] Although the growth of the schools appears to be slowing, more than two percent of BC's pupils now receive such schooling "in the training and instruction of the Lord."[5] Two large groupings of Christian schools exist in British Columbia: the Association of Independent Church Schools and the Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia. The former consists mainly of very small church-based schools using the Texas-based Accelerated Christian Education [ACE] workbook materials. The Society of Christian Schools [SCS], with more than 40 schools and almost 6,000 students, is unique in North America in that while the majority (but far from all) of its schools also belong to the Calvinistic Christian Schools International, the group has become an umbrella organization for non-ACE Christian schools of various evangelical backgrounds.

This study investigates the programs of three Christian schools which, during the course of the study, were members of the SCS. I was familiar with them in my role as Education

Coordinator of the SCS, and studied them more formally after I left its employ some years ago. My research was framed by two clusters of questions. First, how and why do Christian school programs differ? More specifically, are their curricula affected by the way their supporters view the role of Christians in contemporary society, and, if so, in what ways? Second, what factors cause Christian schools--schools that are locally autonomous and have few or no external support systems-- to revise their programs and approaches? Who are the key change agents in successful implementation of curriculum change and how do they bring it about? Answers to such questions will help Christian school educators and supporters identify the curricular framework that stems from their intents and hopes for the local school, and determine how best to implement the resulting curriculum more effectively in their own loosely-coupled school situation.

Previous Studies of Christian Schooling

The mid-1980s saw the publication of a number of descriptive studies about the "new" American Christian schools. For instance, Bernice Seifert early in 1985 described the ACE and several other fundamentalist Christian school programs in *The High School Journal*.[6] William Reese in the Spring 1985 issue of *Educational Theory* analyzes the origins and character of Christian schools as institutions that prepare youth to be "soldiers for Christ in the army of God."[7] Seifert and Reese start with the assumption that "public schools should be the standard by which all schools are judged."[8] An account that is more appreciative of Christian schools as institutions in their own right is the one in Carper and Hunt's *Religious Schooling in America*.[9]

Other studies relating to Christian schools have focused more on public policy with respect to non-public schools: on the relationship between Christian schools and the state, and especially on disputes about government regulations.[10] More recently, journalism professor Paul Parsons in his book *Inside America's Christian Schools* describes the mission of Christian schools and what happens inside their classrooms.[11] He recounts numerous short anecdotes that illustrate how Christian schools differ and are distinctive, but his descriptive mode does not analyze in depth why this is so.

Two non-evangelical authors have taken us inside Christian schools in a fresh way using ethnographic research. Alan Peshkin immersed himself for eighteen months in the lifeworld of the fundamentalist Bethany Christian Academy and its supporting community.[12] His vivid descriptions help us sense how an all-encompassing vision drives this school, but he says relatively little about program content. Further, his book's strength-the in-depth look at one particular school -- becomes a weakness when we try to find reasons for the dissimilarities among Christian schools.

Sociologist Susan Rose provides perceptive descriptions of two very different Christian schools in *Keeping Them out of the Hands of Satan*: *Evangelical Schooling in America*.[13] The first school, operated by a charismatic fellowship, emphasized analytical abilities, flexibility, creativity, and cooperative group work. The other, an ACE school operated by a fundamentalist Baptist church, stressed routinization, rote learning, strict rules, and individual work. To her credit, Rose begins to explain the differences between the two schools in terms of the religious perspective of the two groups. More important for Rose, however, is her assumption that schools inevitably reflect and reproduce the social class structures of their clients.

Baptists, Rose claims, in emphasizing original sin, privatism, individual responsibility, and strict external control of acceptable behavior perpetuate working class conformity in their schools. Charismatics, on the other hand, she says, believe that sin is caused by the environment, and therefore desire a cooperative community, reflecting and encouraging middle and upper middle class autonomy. Rose's explanation, however, is too simplistic. Contrary to what her analysis would lead us to expect, more ACE schools in British Columbia are operated by charismatic churches than by Baptist ones. Rose's differences between Baptists and charismatics are far from universal. While it is true that class backgrounds influence all schools, including Christian ones, Rose underrates how the diverse worldview motives of evangelicals result in different kinds of Christian schools. At the beginning of her book, Rose mentions H. Richard Niebuhr's categorization of the ways Christians look at culture.[14] Niebuhr's interpretative tool would have served her well had she used it consistently arnd more extensively.

This study uses Niebuhr's categorization to interpret its findings. I have described three schools in a medium-sized, socioeconomically homogeneous community; the parents in all three were mainly of small business or other middle class backgrounds. Yet the schools differed as much as did Rose's schools. I will show that this resulted mainly from contrasting views of the Christian's calling in society-at-large. Indeed, the greatest curricular change in the study, in a charismatic school that dispensed with the ACE program, can, to a large extent, be ascribed to a church and school leadership shift from a "Christ above culture" to a "Christ the transformer of culture" position.

Several recent Christian school studies have made use of Niebuhr's categorization. My own historical study of the history of Calvinist Christian schools used it to explain the tensions that have existed within that movement.[15] Paul Scotchmer gave a historical overview of the two "Christ against culture" and "Christ the transformer of culture" positions as they have affected Christian schooling since the Reformation.[16] Every educational practice is rooted in a concept of persons and their role vis-a-vis culture, whether explicitly stated or implicitly held. We cannot understand Christian schools and their programs by looking solely at their doctrinal differences or at their socioeconomic contexts.

Researching Three Christian Schools

Most Christian schools are clear about their basic goal: to help children become obedient followers of Jesus Christ. But what does that mean in practice? This study focuses on the programs taught in three locally-controlled Christian schools with elementary grades in a medium-sized British Columbia community of 70,000. Specific questions framed the research. Which Christian and non-Christian resources were used in each school? In what ways did the teachers implement and adapt the "official" school curriculum? How did government recommendations for public and non-public schools influence what happened in the classrooms? How did the explicit and the "hidden" curricula complement each other? What kind of assignments were the pupils expected to do? What kind of work did they produce? What type of products were rewarded and/or frowned upon? How closely did the schools' programs resemble that of their public school counterparts? Such specific questions laid a foundation for broader ones: How did the programs of the three schools compare with each other and what caused the differences? What worldview and views of culture did the schools attempt to inculcate through

their programs? What did the students actually learn from the content and corresponding pedagogy used in each school?

Early in the study it became apparent that certain factors and types of change agents influenced in what ways and how effectively the schools changed their program. During the three-year study, all three schools implemented curriculum programs or practices new to the users. Two conditions existed that, according to research, favored such implementation. First, the schools were free to (and did) make all decisions about altering practices at the local level. The schools themselves decided to incorporate revised beliefs about the goals of the school, introduce new teaching strategies, and adopt and use new resource materials. Second, each school's supporting community shared the contours of a common vision and purpose.

Case studies of just three schools do not lead to broad generalizations. However, the results of this study reiterate and add depth and dimension to the existing theory of curriculum implementation and change. I used Hord and Hall's threefold categorization of change facilitators into responders ("let it happen"), managers ("helps it happen"), and initiators ("makes it happen") to ask: Who made decisions about curriculum and instruction? Who were the key players in the implementation process? How did they interact and facilitate change? To what extent were the changes implemented? Effective and lasting program change and implementation remains one of the most problematic areas in the curriculum field.[17]

This study, then, looks at the curriculum-in-use in three neighboring Christian schools that represent a diversity of client backgrounds and educational approaches. The first school, operated by a charismatic church, gradually replaced its initial programmed learning ACE program. The second school, an interdenominational parent controlled one, started five years ago with right wing, skill-oriented American resources that it found more and more unacceptable. The third and largest school, founded by members of the Dutch Calvinist Christian Reformed Church in 1953, incorporated Christian themes in a curriculum that in many ways resembled that of neighboring public schools.

I spent five or six full days in each school between February 1985 and May 1988. Each day, I visited classes while they were in session, and discussed the school's program with the principal, several teachers, and some students. Further, I asked open-ended questions of parents and board members, both during planned interviews and while attending school-sponsored events. The schools gave me full access to curriculum-related documents, including teacher-prepared course outlines and student notebooks. The study's length of time was perhaps too short to determine the long-term success of curriculum change. At the same time, the three-year period yielded much more than a static snapshot. It was long enough to analyze why and how curriculum changes were brought about, and how these were affected by unexpected events such as a fire, a change in principals, and an internal power struggle.

Agape Academy: Shifting Perspectives and Practices

Ten years ago, Agape Christian Fellowship, a Pentecostal church, began a small school in its church building. On the recommendation of a respected American pastor, the school adopted the Texas-based Accelerated Christian Education (ACE] programmed learning curriculum.[18] Today, the school has 125 students from kindergarten to grade 12. It has abandoned ACE arid

has developed its own, pedagogically and curricularly more varied program, one that meets the criteria of British Columbia's "core curriculum." The school's program continues to champion the moral, economic and political views of the American conservative New Religious Right. Influenced by the thinking of Rousas Rushdoony, however, it now stresses much more God's call for Christians to be engaged in transforming the world for Christ through the application of Biblical principles.

When assistant church pastor Anderson became principal in 1982, the school's curriculum consisted of "PACES" (packets of Accelerated Christian Education]. Each PACE contained about thirty pages of descriptive materials followed by factual "fill-in-the-blank" questions. Most of BC's church schools founded between 1975 and 1985 used ACE -- it was a read-made systems approach that could be used with a handful of students of differing ages. The central bureaucracy set out and enforced specific procedures and regulations about, for instance, uniforms, discipline, room arrangement, and curriculum and its implementation. ACE provided an instant, complete, regimented world of education.

During its first eight years, Agape Academy used PACES in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies almost exclusively, providing little other instruction except during physical education and chapel services. To finish a grade level, students completed twelve PACES in each subject, repeating those on which they scored less than 80% on concluding knowledge-recall tests. Since students worked at their own rates, grade level progress differed greatly among students and from one subject to the next.

For most of the day, the students worked on PACES at individual carrels ("offices") arranged around the perimeter of a large room ("learning center"). The students did not make a sound: teachers ("supervisors" who were seldom qualified teachers since PACES were intended to be self-teaching) penalized students for unnecessary noise such as talking to other students. The three walls of their "offices" surrounded them with silence. The school broke the monotony by scheduling frequent short breaks, dismissing the school on Wednesday afternoons, and rewarding students with time off if they worked at a better-than-average rate. Many students liked the school because of its small size and caring attitude. However, almost all became weary of the never-ending individual PACE tasks. That very few rebelled may be attributed to three factors: the constant emphasis on obedience in PACE content and chapel services, the detailed system of demerits and punishments, and parental support.

What did students learn? Some students who had mastered reading basics and enjoyed reading made good progress in reading skills. However, even for them, PACES demanded only factual recall and rote learning. Some students became experts at determining the "right" answers from the lengths of the blanks. Having knowledge, PACES constantly taught, meant being able to regurgitate facts. Further, the ACE program was an unbalanced one: the PACES involved no composition, no listening or speaking activities, no research projects, and no opportunities to develop social skills or creative abilities. The students were processed as identical, de-personalized cogs that could rotate at their own rate but must all go through exactly the same motions. Throughout, students were exhorted and pressured to accept traditional Christian virtues and unthinking loyalty to American democracy and free enterprise. Blind acceptance was more important than interpretation, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.

Gradually Principal Anderson began to see shortcomings in the ACE program. While he continued to appreciate its emphasis on personal morality, he came to realize that the program failed to develop some of the abilities that his students needed to become active, responsible agents of Christ in today's society. Mr. Anderson himself began to supplement ACE at senior levels with lectures on how Christians must act in distinctive ways in the political and economic spheres of life. He suggested to British Columbia's ACE leaders that "standards should be brought up to BC public school ones without loss of Christian distinctness." He proposed that BC's ACE schools develop materials that met the needs of different types of learners and that helped students relate to the Canadian context. His fellow ACE principals, however, feared that changes would dilute their schools' Christian character. Besides, they asked, was it economically and educationally possible to operate any other program with, say, only thirty students at ten different grade levels?

After more than a year of futile attempts for joint action, Mr. Anderson struck out on his own. First, he consciously rejected the provincial ACE leadership's position that Christian schools, as ministries of the church, should refuse to have anything to do with governments, whether that be with respect to regulations to maintain adequate standards, or accepting government funding. He requested a government evaluation team to visit the school to determine whether the school qualified for Group 2 funding under BC's School Support (Independent) Act.[19] The team examined and assessed the school's program in March 1985. As expected, the team stated that the school did not meet the Group 2 criteria, but Mr. Anderson used its detailed analysis of ACE shortcomings to begin to improve the school's program. He sought help and direction from Christian and public school consultants. He made himself aware of the various program in existence for Christian schools, flying as far as Bob Jones University in South Carolina to look at its Christian school curriculum materials.

Mr. Anderson recognized that he had to overcome many barriers as he turned around the school's lifeworld. The church needed to fund subdividing the large learning center into smaller classrooms. Some parents would object to moving away from the law-and-order strictness of ACE. His teachers had to become aware of public school curriculum expectations, but not pay them blind obeisance. They would need in-service training for a program that would demand far more preparation time: the metamorphosis to split-grade group teaching would have to come to grips with adapting programs to help students become effective ambassadors of Christ in a secular society. The school had to employ more and better qualified teachers, at greater expense. Students had to be weaned from parroting short answers to much more open-ended and thought-provoking activities. They would enjoy the variety, but not necessarily the greater demands. For them, ACE was dull but had become safe.

Mr. Anderson believed that the keys to successful change were to "keep the teachers fully cognizant and involved," and to make decisions by consensus as much as possible. What helped him was that the teachers believed they were doing God's work in the school: they worked, for instance, for a fraction of regular wages. The school's gradually increasing size and normal staff changeover allowed him to hire certificated teachers who agreed with his move away from ACE.

Mr. Anderson was a model and catalyst for curriculum change, an exemplar of Hord and Hall's change initiator. He himself wrote a senior secondary history course intended to enable students to sift the perceived leftist chaff in most textbooks from more wholesome conservative wheat. He asked teachers to assess which Christian curriculum materials the school should adapt

at their level and in their subject. One teacher, with his support, wrote a detailed analysis of the government's biology textbook from a creationist perspective. She also developed the school's first writing and composition program for grades 4-6, enabling students to make rapid, visible strides in their writing, and simultaneously convincing parents of the value of approaches other than ACE.

Mr. Anderson did not abandon ACE all at once. Rather, he did so gradually aver a three-year period, in close consultation with his staff. Concurrently, the teachers introduced a greater diversity of teaching and *learning strategies*. By September 1987, only one class still used programmed learning material -- social studies workbooks to supplement class work in Canadian geography. Also, the only two teachers lacking public school certification, including Mr. Anderson himself, had begun to upgrade themselves. Early in 1987 the school was approved for Group 2 provincial funding, indicating that the government was satisfied that the school's standards were at least equal to those in public schools.

Mr. Anderson developed a school philosophy that clarified the school's direction for its supporters. He spelled out three priorities: spiritual, moral and academic excellence. The latter involved the mastery of knowledge that prepared young people for work while maintaining "Christian convictions and standards."[20] On this basis the staff developed descriptions for all courses which were published in the parent-student handbook. Mr. Anderson defended the school's participation in grade 12 government examinations with the use of the biblical account of Daniel and his friends who "chose not to compromise their faith and standards demanded of the Lord," yet "were found to be ten times better than anyone else who was examined."[21] Mr. Anderson did recognize, however, some negative effects of this decision. In his grade 12 history class, for instance, he no longer had sufficient time both to present his Christian perspective of history and to cover the material adequately for the grade 12 government history examination.

Moral training continued to permeate the school's curriculum. The school's chapel services detailed how its discipline policy was based on such virtues as diligence, perseverance, sexual purity, godliness/piety, kindness and obedience. Already in kindergarten Bible verses and stories stressed such character traits. Similarly, a study of the book of Proverbs emphasized "godly conduct" and warned "against the base temptations of life." In literature, the students were asked to "write a paragraph about a Bible character who had a weakness but was used by the Lord in His service. Include the human weakness and tell how the Lord enabled that character to do his job." The introduction to a measurement unit in a mathematics textbook went to great lengths in its attempts to draw moral conclusions. It used "equations" such as "plants + waterer + God = increase" to conclude that students must "practice these Biblical equations and inequalities, and you will build a house that can withstand any fire."[22]

The curriculum also reiterated time and again that students were called to responsible discipleship, proclaiming that our world is God's world and must be used to serve Him. A primary science textbook added that "God has a special plan for everything that He made. He has a very special plan for me."[23] As Christians, they were to put their faith in God, not in themselves nor in science or technology: "God has given Canadians many things to be thankful for.… We must not waste God's creation."[24] In their notes, students answered the question, "Explain how science is not able to answer all the questions facing mankind." The grade 11 chemistry book stated that scientific laws "may be used to describe but not to completely explain behavior. These

laws help [the chemist] to master ('subdue') nature and make it work for the benefit of man, as God commanded in Genesis 1:28."[25]

The curriculum emphasized "God's sovereign dealings with our forefathers." Much more than the other two schools in this study, however, it was also stridently anti-communist. The grade 5 social studies textbook explained that Russian communists jail parents "for teaching the Bible to their children," that the communist dream has become a "nightmare," and that the United Nations is "a propaganda base for Communist activities." Unlike Americans, the book continued, Russians have no free speech and press, live in poverty, and have turned to laziness, drunkenness and despair. Their only hope is to escape to America. In America, "even prisoners eat better food and live in better housing than most Russians."[26] The Canadian history course similarly stressed the communist threat in sources such as "The Battle for Canada" and "The Naked Communist."

At the same time, as the school moved away from ACE, it introduced varied instructional approaches. The school's handbook now stated that young children learn best through doing, exploring and trying. For the first time, creative writing and project work became a regular part of the curriculum. Teachers introduced audiovisual aids, manipulative materials in primary mathematics, and laboratory activities in science. For the school's agriculture course the students built an experimental hydroponic greenhouse and kept a weed-free garden. The school also expanded its home economics program and began to offer courses in art, consumer education, Spanish, and computer science. The emphasis on memorization was gradually replaced with more active learning modes as the school became convinced that its children ought to be prepared to become society's movers and shakers, for Christ's sake.

Despite its detailed philosophy and careful introduction of Christian textbooks, however, in some ways the school still did not have a clear educational focus. It had introduced writing-as-process (e.g., "we write to find out what we think"), but also used many grammar workbooks in the essentialist tradition, with extensive drill on topics such as adjectives, sentence parts, and punctuation. The reading program lacked a consistent approach, with phonetic workbooks, workbooks stressing interpretation, and Spalding's "A Writing Road to Reading" all being used at times. The purported emphasis on analysis and reasoning skills was sometimes undermined with workbooks that emphasized factual recall only. Creative, problem-oriented mathematics books contrasted with traditional skill-oriented workbooks at higher grades.[27] Whenever available, the school used textbooks from Christian sources (e.g., Christian School International's Science 3-6 series and Bob Jones' readers). Because of their differing approaches, these sometimes helped but sometimes also hindered consistent implementation of the school's redefined philosophy.

Mr. Anderson, nevertheless, in three years completely turned around Agape's curriculum and instruction. While doing so, he preserved the confidence of his supporting community and his staff. The school almost doubled in size. Principals from other charismatic ACE schools visited Agape and at least some were convinced that schools could move away from ACE without losing their Christian character -- and, in some instances, began to follow his example. Agape continued to induce children into a way of life that promoted obedience to a strict moral code and a faith in right-wing laissez-faire capitalism. This was now accompanied, however, with much more student responsibility and creativity than that tolerated under the ACE system, and with much greater emphasis on demonstrating how Biblical principles ought to affect all aspects of life.

Bethel Christian School: Banning Evidence of Sin

The founders of Bethel Christian School, mainly members of Mennonite, Baptist and Missionary Alliance churches, in the early 1980s concluded that public schools undermined Christian faith. Their lack of influence on public school curriculum committees and PTA's as well as instances such as a severe reprimand of a teacher explaining a Bible passage in class had convinced them that their children needed a school with a thorough Christian emphasis. Agape Academy, however, was unacceptable because of its ACE curriculum and its charismatic leanings. Covenant's supporting community, on the other hand, took a too liberal view of smoking and social drinking. Thus, in September 1983, after the founders had failed to find a non-charismatic evangelical church willing to sponsor the school, a parent-elected board opened the doors of a rented church facility to 38 students and four qualified teachers. The school's "superior academics in a small class atmosphere" were intended to "train the student to know and lovingly respond to God, deal creatively with life's challenges and learn to love and serve others for now and eternity."[28] By the fall of 1987 the school had 225 students in four church locations, with Mr. Brown, a former public school principal, as administrator.

Throughout its first five years of operation, board president Mrs. Blue had a firm hand in instituting and maintaining Bethel's program. Before the school started, she toured half a dozen Christian schools. As a "non-educator" she felt unable to judge the educational effectiveness of ACE. She did not approve, however, of its obsessive fear of government contact, its tight, centralized control, and its unwillingness to allow a school to choose and adapt materials to meet local needs. At the same time, the anti-Christian bias of public school textbooks, she felt precluded their use. She convinced the board to adopt the textbooks published by A Beka in Florida, "the largest distributor of Christian curriculum in North America built on a traditional philosophy of education."[29] These books promoted traditional Christian morals, suitable values in literature, and a creational perspective in science. Their use, the board believed, would offset the teachers' one-sided public school training and experience.

However, the teachers soon ran into difficulties. The “superior academic" material advanced too quickly for most children. Moreover, teachers objected to the material's extreme anti-Catholic and anti-communist stance. Some Mennonite parents -- a sizable group in the school -- resisted the program's strident patriotism and its uncritical promotion of the American way of life. With the head teacher having neither time nor inclinations to give curriculum leadership, the board appointed an education committee in the fall of 1985 to recommend changes to overcome these concerns.

The school board appointed Mrs. Black to the committee. Mrs. Black, a former teacher at Covenant Christian school, had sent her child to Bethel for three reasons: the school's emphasis on personal conversion and "fruits of the Spirit" such as meekness; the warm' loving atmosphere; and the A Beka reading program in kindergarten. Soon, however, Mrs. Black became disenchanted with the A Beka program. She began to question the program since its pedagogy resulted in frustrated children who were unable to cope. Her own daughter, for instance, was forced to print in kindergarten before she had the necessary fine motor skills to do so. The program failed to take into account children's developmental levels. Mrs. Black also questioned the lack of Canadian content, and wondered what problems children would face when transferring to other schools.

Mrs. Black conducted a thorough review of the A Beka as well as four other up-to-date reading program. She also attended workshops on current language arts approaches. Her report to the board in January 1986 minced no words:

> The A Beka program is drill, drill, memory, memory, line upon line, precept upon precept. The children are treated like machines. There is no room for individual response. Early on it's purely phonetic, with meaningless words and nonsense syllables. Later readers . . . misapply Scripture; a lot of the "Christian" stuff is not very good quality. Children do need to see the Christian perspective on any issue of the day. We do need Christian textbooks but it's difficult to find good ones.[30]

With teacher input and consultation, Mrs. Black's committee recommended a new language arts program and began to review other subjects areas. The committee reluctantly concluded that no suitable Christian reading program existed. It recommended and the board agreed that the school adopt the Gage *Expressways* series as its main reading program, supplemented with the Christian readers published by Bob Jones. The *Expressways* content was "least offensive"; it contained little defiance of authority, did not promote the occult, included traditional family settings, and was Canadian. Further, it incorporated up-to-date "whole language" approaches. Mrs. Black worked closely with the newly-appointed Mr. Brown to implement this new program. Mrs. Black was the change initiator; Mr. Brown, the manager.

The school required teachers to show in their yearly course outlines how they incorporated Biblical principles throughout their program, with both the education committee and Mr. Brown examining all outlines. The grade 1 teacher, for instance, taught a Biblical studies unit on "how people responded to Jesus," including activities to help children "respond in obedience to the Bible." Mathematics stressed that "the rules and principles of math help us learn about the order that God has placed in the world." At another level, a unit on weather emphasized that God created the weather and seasons: "rain is useful though we do not always like it."

Language goals included "to identify language as a gift God gave," and "to use it to encourage someone." Similarly, "God's gift of poetry provides learning and enjoyment," and pupils would read and write poetry "in praise of God." Teachers used *Expressways* content selectively to teach explicitly Christian themes: "God instituted the family at creation. It remains the basic unit in our society, and each family should live in obedience to God and His Word." In a unit on "Getting Along with Others," the teacher discussed with the student God-given guidelines: be a servant, love one another, and pray for each other.

In all grades, the teachers continually reminded students of God's care and providence and the need to serve Him in obedience. The students accepted discussions relating to these themes as a natural part of their learning. While teaching, during daily chapel, and while monitoring playground behavior, the teachers promoted character traits and good manners as an important part of a Christian life. The story of David and Goliath was added to the reader selections in the unit "Trying New Things" to illustrate that "Jesus gave us strength and courage to try new and sometimes hard things." The teachers modeled the lifestyle they wanted the children to adopt, and the children generally responded positively.

The board's appointment of a library committee to read and review all books had a controversial impact on the school's curriculum. The committee approved or rejected all

classroom and library books, placing small red stickers on the spines of many approved ones that nevertheless contained material considered objectionable. "Red dotted" books contained two labels with warnings: "STOP, Read and Think! Ask yourself these questions: Is the author glorifying God with these statements? Does the author believe that God created the heavens and the earth?", and, "Warning! The use of this book for reference or study does not mean that [Bethel] Christian School accepts the philosophy and the conclusions of the author. The book is solely used for the purposes of factual information and for comparative study with the truth of the Word of God..." In such books, the committee also placed red dots besides unacceptable excerpts and selections. One classroom reader, for instance, had red dots besides phrases such as "gosh" and "the ugly old woman," behavior such as "Mrs. Archer barged in and started shouting," feelings such as "When I opened my eyes this morning, the day belonged to me," and selections involving magic and fantasy.

With parents and teachers from diverse backgrounds, this policy caused considerable controversy. Teachers asked. "Doesn't the board trust our judgement?", and, "Why aren't the dots placed in teachers' copies only so that we don't stifle the students' own critical thinking and discernment?" They also wondered whether the committee didn't miss the forest for the trees in its emphasis on detail. One teacher believed, for instance, that an outstanding selection in her class reader was a story about an Old Order Mennonite boy whose disobedience had grave consequences. Yet the committee had red-dotted the selection: the father in the story said that the deifel (devil) was in the river. Some students, as could be expected, made a special point of reading red-dotted passages. The teachers believed that they could teach sensitivity to "worldly things" better through library units focusing on discernment and evaluation. The policy became a bone of contention between teachers and the board.

At the basis of this controversy, however, lay deeper problems. Who was responsible for the daily operation of the school? Was it the library committee which could decide how books were to be used? Was it the education committee which, together with staff input, recommended and helped to implement major curriculum changes? Was it the board which made decisions about all policies and practices, large and small? Was it pastor Beige who, supported by Mrs. Blue, wielded a powerful influence as pastoral advisor to the board? Was it Mr. Brown, the newly-appointed administrator, appreciated by the teachers for his educational insight but suspected by some board members because of his public school background? Was it the parents who, in the relatively small situation, were quite vocal about their wishes and demands?

A lack of clarity about overlapping responsibilities led to friction and pain. In the spring of 1988 the fabric that bound the program of Bethel Christian School unraveled. The teachers no longer felt like stakeholders with the board seemingly rejecting their input. The board believed that the teachers and administrator, with their public school backgrounds, were not discerning enough about spirituality and too easily influenced by secular textbooks and approaches. Education committee members interpreted the board's decision to appoint a separate hiring committee headed by Mrs. Blue as a lack of trust in them. Mr. Brown asked why the school needed a professional educator of his calibre when the board strictly limited his role to the execution of detailed board-set policies.

In an attempt to overcome the friction, Mrs. Blue resigned as board president -- but kept other key positions. Mrs. Black applied to have her children enrolled in the Covenant Christian School and withdrew from the education committee. The administrator resigned, as did six

teachers. For September 1988, the curriculum was in place on paper. However, the curriculum-in-use underwent major changes. Its main curriculum analyst and catalyst, Mrs. Black, was no longer on the scene. New teachers were unfamiliar with the framework and Christian basis of the revised program, and no one was able to familiarize or help them with its intended implementation. The two regular classroom teachers who had stayed on for the sake of the children found the situation difficult and left at the end of the following year.

Although the teachers and board members could all agree with the school's mission as delineated on paper, in practice a different emphasis on what it meant to prepare pupils for life in society, combined with conflicting views among the potential change agents of their respective roles, caused the school's program to fall apart. A new start had to be made. People develop programs for people in specific circumstances. When the people or the circumstances change, or are perceived to change, it is inevitable that the program change also.

Covenant Christian School: Revitalizing Instruction

Covenant Christian School, operated by an autonomous association, nevertheless drew three-quarters of its clientele from Dutch-Canadian Calvinists. Since its 1953 start, the school tried to meet or exceed government standards for public schools, and it quickly obtained Group 2 government funding when first made available in 1977. Mr. Campbell, principal for almost thirty years, sailed the K-7 school calmly, stirring the waters as little as possible. Most teachers were qualified Christian college graduates. Mr. Campbell made few demands on them as long as their classrooms functioned smoothly.

The school taught "basics" competently but tediously. Students had few complaints but showed little excitement.[31] Worksheets characterized the curriculum, with creative activities taking a distant back seat to "fill-in-the-blanks" drill and practice. Students had few opportunities for open-ended response. Also, except in Biblical studies the school used mainly textbooks published for public schools. The library was an aging, unweeded collection where students habitually went once a week to choose a book. Teachers would sometimes suggest that the staff investigate a new approach or program. Mr. Campbell would not oppose such suggestions, but he would not take initiatives himself; he was a responder to change rather than an initiator or manager. He left it to the staff to decide what action, if any, to take. The school drifted along without a clear sense of mission. The school's curriculum was flagging if not moribund. As a "stand-pat" school, it gained little support -- outside of its traditional support community, and school enrolment declined from more than 350 at one time to just over 200 in 1984.

Two events transformed the school. First, early in 1985 an external evaluation team of the Society of Christian Schools in BC recommended systematic curriculum renewal and the transfer of Mr. Campbell to a non-educational assignment. A second, more cataclysmic event was a fire two months later that destroyed most of the school. The fire unified the supporting community behind the school. It generated enthusiasm for a new, larger building. The teachers had to rebuild their files and outlines and resources while teaching in three temporary locations.

The school board appointed a new, young principal, Mr. Cuter, to begin his duties in September 1986. While some senior teachers were skeptical of his appointment, Mr. Cuter arrived at a generally opportune time. The board and parents were enthusiastic about new

facilities and new leadership, and gave him full support. The teachers were thankful to resume their teaching in a normal, brand new setting. Most were ready to tackle new projects: while the school was being rebuilt they had already jointly analyzed the school's shortcomings and suggested possible action on no fewer than twenty-five short- and long-term goals. They reorganized the school's major curricular and instructional shortcomings. They pointed out, for instance, the need for course outlines with detailed objectives and "Christian perspective" and for an up-to-date, unified language arts program. They wanted to implement more project and art work as well as creative writing, and correspondingly decrease their use of worksheets. Moreover, they wanted the library to become an effective resource center.

Mr. Carter quickly established himself as the school's educational leader. Teachers appreciated his enthusiasm, his well-defined vision for the school, and his organizational abilities. Two or three did feel that they did not have as much independence as in the past, and that the school was run "too professionally." Two teachers who did not fit the "team" that Mr. Cuter was developing resigned at the end of his first year: one more retired at the end of his second. On the whole, however, Mr. Carter's leadership was welcomed by staff and parents. The school's enrollment jumped to 325 in 1987 and a projected 375 in 1988. Mr. Carter worked hard to
attract new teachers who shared his educational views and could contribute to the school's aims and needs.

How did Mr. Carter begin to implement his vision? He wanted the school, first of all, to be a community school with good parental liaison. Parents must feel ownership in the school's program and activities. The school sent out regular school and individual classroom newsletters. Mr. Carter kept in close contact with parents. He helped his teachers write meaningful comments on report cards, and usually added a personal note to each one. He developed comprehensive information packages for prospective parents. Also, the school printed a calendar with one art work from each class on the theme "God's Peace Throughout the Year."

Mr. Carter set out to make the school a vibrant learning community. He showed interest in and support for classroom learning. He encouraged less dependence on worksheets and out-of-class remediation. Displays of student work began to brighten classrooms and hallways. On one particular day, hallway collages highlighted the new "annual" science fair, with recognition for participation rather than winning; the school-wide political elections conducted by the grade 5's; a student-written and produced play, "Arab meets Jew"; grade l's reading to grade 6's and 7's; the 200 km runners' club; the school's "Canadian Touch of Brass"; and the school's participation in regional music festivals. By recognizing students' learning in various ways, Mr. Carter fostered a sense of excitement about learning and, at the saw time, engendered general pride in the school.

Further, Mr. Cuter wanted his school to be at the cutting edge of instructional pedagogy. With the staff wanting to revamp the language arts program, he made this subject area his first concern. His guided discussions led the teachers to conclude that they should become more knowledgeable in the "whole language" approach. Almost all teachers attended a course on this approach the next summer -- and Mr. Carter hired the course instructor as one of his teachers for the subsequent year. He also encouraged teachers to use a greater variety of learning activities to meet the needs of children with different learning styles and abilities. Monthly photocopying costs showed a steady and significant decline.

In language arts, a personalized reading program replaced basal readers and their lock-step skill exercises. Each day, the students selected their own reading materials and independent follow-up tasks while teachers held individual conferences as well as group skill building activities. The library, renewed after the fire, now circulated four books per student per week. Further, frequent "writing-as-process " involved sharing, brainstorming, encoding and editing about topics related to the students' learning. The teachers ensured that student authors had audiences. Students read their work to each other and displayed it. They wrote letters to politicians: one class wrote the premier of Prince Edward Island about the pros and cons of constructing a causeway to the mainland, receiving a personal reply and a PEI flag.

Not that the school abandoned its previous "basic skills" emphasis completely. In kindergarten, the teacher still used the somewhat artificial "letter of the week" rather than "emergent reading and writing" favored by whole language enthusiasts. The primary teachers systematically used McCracken's "Spelling through Phonics" for compulsory daily skill development. Grade 4 to 7 teachers still taught basic grammar and punctuation from skill-oriented textbooks, although they no longer used them to structure their complete language program. The teachers tried to balance a more natural, open-ended approach without losing sight of the skills they believed needed to be taught explicitly.

Such a balancing act had its potential pitfalls. "I look at whole language as a different and better approach to teaching and learning," said Mr. Carter, "but much depends on individual teachers. It can be taught very poorly." The "whole language" specialist now on staff added. "A strength of 'whole language' is the sense of community it can build as children share and help each other, no matter what their reading level. But this is being done only very gradually, since few teachers yet use themes to unify what children are reading and learning." Several teachers worried that the program was so individualized that group interaction and class discussion focusing on Christian response was lacking, except that which took place when the whole class studied the same novel in higher grades.

Did Covenant attain its goal of being "integrally Christian"? Its program resembled that of a public school more closely than those of Agape and Bethel. Few reading materials were explicitly Christian. The school used Christian textbooks only in Biblical studies, grades 3 to 6 science, and grade 7 social studies. Published by Christian Schools International, these were less isolationistic and less conservative than Bob Jones and A Beka ones. One teacher said that "Christian perspective comes about informally through our attitude and discussions on how we as Christian view issues." Another explained that she would not artificially mention God or Jesus, but tried to engender "an attitude of excitement and wonder as well as responsibility."

The teachers did use many classroom units developed by the provincial association of Christian schools. Units such as "I Am Special," "The Use and Abuse of Drugs." and "Communities of Living Things" all emphasized that God gave us special abilities and responsibilities that we must use to enhance the world. In such units, teachers impressed on students that God the Creator has given us Biblical guidelines, for instance, for our attitude to government. Furthermore, the students' own writing often included religious motifs.

Nevertheless, Covenant's program was not as distinctive as Agape's or Bethel's. Course outlines ignored a Christian basis or purpose, listing topic headings without comment. An

experienced teacher new to the school observed that "a sense of common vision aid its consistent working out through curriculum units is lacking among many teachers." The curriculum did not wholly reflect the motto of 20th century Dutch Calvinists that "every square inch of life should be claimed for Christ." In less than two years, Mr. Carter had brought about major curricular and instructional changes. The question that remained was whether the community and staff, as the initial excitement of current improvements wore off, could also reach a consensus on the Christian nature of the school's curriculum and the desirable resulting changes.

Influences of School Environments On Their Programs

Three major frame factors affect implementation of change in education: a school's external milieu; the characteristics and behavior of change facilitators (and, possibly, of change inhibitors); and the nature of old and new programs. This section highlights how the environments of each school influenced its curriculum, while the next two sections focus on the other major frame factors.

Several preliminary points need to be noted. First of all, parents interested in Christian schooling could choose among three schools. Each school thus attracted and fashioned a distinctive and fairly homogeneous group of supporters. While this diminished problems about philosophy and direction that have plagued some Christian schools, it may also have led, especially in Covenant's case, to an implicit acceptance of the legitimacy of the programs rather than vigorous discussions that might have encouraged needed change.

Second, no easily discernible differences in socioeconomic background appeared to exist between the schools. Many parents owned or were involved in small local business enterprises, and included a few professionals and a handful of farmers in each case. Economically, the community was almost uniformly middle class, and. politically, small-c conservative. Therefore, milieu differences between the schools appeared to be due mainly to the religious and ethnic backgrounds of leaders and supporters.

The church that sponsored Agape Academy had embraced the American New Religious Right [NRR]. It was instrumental, for instance, in bringing American NRR leaders such as Rousas Rushdoony and Dennis Peacocke to BC as keynote speakers at conferences on politics, economics, and education. As common for the NRR, the family, television and schools were key instruments Agape used to help its adherents locate and interpret their existence.[32] The church had active family-based educational and social programs. It produced a regular program on local cable television. It operated Agape Academy to induct its children into an NRR way of life. After rejecting ACE, principal Anderson, an American himself, looked first to the conservative A Beka and Bob Jones materials produced in the American south. Fundamentalists in British Columbia often have more affinity with their counterparts in the United States than with eastern Canada and do not hesitate to use US-based programs.

The parents trusted their church leaders who provided pure and straightforward answers to life's problems, and they accepted the teaching of NRR views in the school. Theological differences notwithstanding, the NRR has been unified on personal morality and its importance in public life, and instruction in moral precepts and behavior was a keystone of Agape's curriculum. Agape, like the NRR, still believed in the American dream, and especially in the

possibility of continued progress through the power of technology and personal initiative, if applied in Biblical ways. Government regulations and marketing boards caused world food shortages: Agape's greenhouse proved that individuals could capitalize on advanced hydroponic food technology to provide food for the world. Economic problems were the result of government overspending and deficit budgeting. Agape taught and modeled the need for paying your way without going into debt, both personally and institutionally. Environmental problems, the school taught, were overblown and could be overcome with an extra dose of Western technology. All this depended, of course, on Christians taking the initiative and applying both Old and New Testament injunctions to turn around corrupt society. The school gave clear-cut if simplistic answers to difficult problems.

Covenant's teachers used many units developed by teachers in schools belonging to the Society of Christian Schools in BC. These units helped them base their teaching on Christian themes while using resources that were not explicitly Christian. Covenant's leaders also wanted the school to emphasize a Christian worldview that looked beyond legalistic personal morality, as they believed to be done by many fundamentalist Christians. The story of Jacob and Esau, which in Agape might have emphasized the evil and consequences of lying and deceit, at Covenant showed that God is faithful to his people despite their sinfulness. At Agape it was a given that God created the world in seven days; Covenant's science classes held that God was the Creator but that the first chapters of Genesis were open to various interpretations. Covenant taught a unit on drugs and drug abuse but left it up to the students to decide whether it was right to participate in social drinking. Covenant's parents were, in general, not as convinced as Agape's that their Christian faith had unequivocal answers to society's problems.

The church backgrounds of Bethel's parents meant that, as in Agape, traditional Christian morality pervaded its program. Unlike in Agape's case, however, many parents did not accept all tenets of the NRR. The Mennonite parents, in particular, opposed the NRR's approval of the US "defense" policies and its belief that Christians should become fully involved in the political scene. The placing of "red dots" in books also showed Mennonite influence: dots appeared besides actions of people involved in violence, even if in self-defense.

However, the parent community and hence the school was not as unified as in the other two schools. One specific church congregation controlled Agape. Covenant had a long history that had established its direction and, by and large, the leaders were still Christian Reformed Calvinists. But Bethel's more mixed religious background, its emphasis on parent control, and its rapid growth raised concerns in the minds of board members about its long-term ability to maintain a clear educational course. Did new parents share the original vision? The board hoped that a number of appointed "board advisors" who would become cognizant of the school's direction and operation, and would thus be trained to become full-fledged board members. Legitimate fears remained, however, that shifts in the parental group mix might result in demands for change not in harmony with the school's original goals.[33]

By the end of the study, all three schools received Group 2 government funding. They now met minimum time stipulations in core subject areas. Moreover, the government's core curriculum, a 33-page document with major learning outcomes from K-12, affected their curricula more directly than before. Agape, for instance, introduced a writing program and put more emphasis on Canadian studies. Also, the grade 12 government exam cart pulled Agape's grade 12 curriculum horse (as it did, but much more reluctantly, in Covenant's high school

counterpart located elsewhere in the same town). Agape used the Bible narrative of Daniel to defend its involvement with these exams, although the story could also have been interpreted to say that Christian schools should pay no attention whatever to public school curricula.

Only Covenant, however, made extensive use of government-supplied textbooks. The Dutch-Canadian Calvinists that founded Covenant had a long history of operating Christian schools under government supervision and financial support. For them, separation of state and church meant that the government should not interfere with a school's philosophy and methodology. The government was quite right, however, in wanting to ensure that all schools maintain responsible standards.[34] Covenant's parents had no qualms about the school using public school guidelines and materials, as long as teachers used them within a Christian framework. Agape and Bethel used such resources only sparingly and critically even after government funding. Indeed, Bethel's board vowed to drop government funding if its curriculum was ever bound by restrictive guidelines or resources. Significantly, however, Bethel had not made major changes in its program to obtain funding, indicating that it already shared many of its learning outcomes with those of public schools. As in the other two schools, its religious and philosophical differences had not prevented the school from adopting the general organizational and curriculum patterns of existing public education.

The Agents of Change In the Schools

The three schools in this study shared a number of characteristics desirable for successful curriculum change.[35] The boards and parents supported and sometimes initiated the changes made in each school. Their extensive time and financial input gave them a sense of ownership and pride in the school. In turn, the principals actively and successfully fostered such support. While the schools had no permanent external support staff, they all availed themselves of consultants when needed. Further, the students were ready for change: Agape's students were bored with PACE work.; Bethel's students were frustrated with A Beka's overestimation of their abilities: Covenant's students were weary of worksheets and drills.

Change, however, needs impetus from a catalyst. At Covenant, the community and the staff were ready for change, but principal Campbell was a responder who left change to the initiatives of individual teachers. Principal Carter, on the other hand, quickly and deliberately became the primary change facilitator, an initiator who made things happen. He used staff meetings to discuss needed program changes. He conferred with individual and groups of teachers, asking probing questions and monitoring what was happening in the school. When he had confirmed some of the staff's earlier identification of needed changes, he arranged for the staff to attend in-service training courses that would help them implement innovations. He quickly became a concerned principal who set direction, clarified the school's curriculum goals, and frequently encouraged his teachers as they implemented change.

Principal Carter also intuitively recognized that with the size of his school he needed secondary change facilitators to complement his work. Soon he appointed his assistant principal as grade 4-7 chairperson who, among other things, would monitor and help with program planning and implementation in those grades. He hired a teacher who was a specialist in the new whole language approach. He chose to be chairperson of the primary (K-3) division himself. He

wanted to familiarize himself with those grades but thereby also forestalled one teacher from continuing an independent and potentially counterproductive leadership role.

At Agape, principal Anderson was the initiator for change. He sought out and evaluated a great deal of instructional resources available for Christian schools. He convinced the church to renovate the school and he designed timetables to make new programs feasible. While he did not spend much time formally supervising his teachers, he kept a close pulse on the school by talking to teachers and coming into classrooms for short periods of time on a regular basis. He hired new teachers who favored the shift from ACE to classroom-based approaches. He modeled curriculum development through the detailed planning of his own courses, and encouraged other staff members to become involved in adapting and supplementing materials to suit the school's goals. He provided all the student and teacher resources necessary for introducing new programs. Agape did not have a readily identifiable second change agent who complemented Mr. Anderson. This was due in part to the small size of the school and in part because Mr. Anderson's strong leadership overshadowed that of other teachers.

A key to understanding the change process, according to Hord and Hall, is an analysis of the configuration of the change facilitator team.[36] That was certainly true for Bethel Christian School, whose unique configuration of change agents worked for a time but then faltered. The primary though unobtrusive change facilitator was education committee member Mrs. Black who conducted the evaluation of present and potential programs. She attended workshops and sought advice from various consultants. She worked closely with the staff in making recommendations to the board and in helping teachers implement the programs once approved.

Board president Blue and administrator Brown were strong secondary change facilitators. Mrs. Blue carefully monitored, and sometimes revised, Mrs. Black's recommendations before passing them on to the board. As board chairperson, she maintained a high profile with both teachers and parents, emphasizing the importance of any planned changes. Mr. Brown, new to the situation, defined his role as a manager who would support Mrs. Black in implementing recommended program changes, but not to initiate them. He worked with the teachers daily, visiting classrooms and giving concrete help and suggestions. This configuration worked well for a time until, as already indicated, a lack of trust among the change facilitators, kindled and aggravated by Mrs. Blue's tendency to pre-empt the primary change facilitator's role, resulted in a complete breakdown. This example illustrates that while the principal is not necessarily the primary change agent, the change facilitator team must work in tandem, accept their respective roles, and believe that its members are working towards the same goals.

Teachers, of course, are the final gatekeepers and interpreters of change.[37] In these schools, a high degree of actual classroom implementation took place. Most teachers were clear about the purpose, nature and practical benefits of changes as they were proposed. They were actively involved in the decision-making process, and were convinced that the changes would enhance the school's program, making teaching more rewarding if not always easier. Their commitment to change was a strong contributing factor to their successful implementation, even though the caliber and the extent of the implementation understandably varied a great deal from teacher to teacher, and was not always consistent even within one classroom.

The Nature and Basis Of Curriculum Change

A number of characteristics were common to program changes in the three schools. A clear, consistent, philosophically-grounded rationale guided the changes. Also, the program innovations were realistic and practical. Not only were sufficient student and teacher resources made available, but the schools recognized the incremental nature of successful curriculum change. At Agape, the ACE program was phased out over a three-year period. Both Bethel and Covenant studied new language arts approaches for a year and expected to make adjustments and improvements for several years after initial implementation. Powell's conclusion that private schools "seem sluggish when the word education comes up" was not borne out in this study. None of the three schools was satisfied with being part of mainstream American education; all actively pursued avenues of improvement.[38]

The schools chose program that fit their leaders' general approach to life. Agape originally used ACE: its behavioristic approaches would cast students into pre-determined molds. Memorizing and being able to state what is right and wrong was crucial for living a wholesome Christian life. Once the school realized that children were not pieces of machinery that could be processed identically and efficiently, it introduced more flexible approaches that enabled children to be subjects rather than objects. However, its curriculum content still saw the world in terms of black and white: American democracy vs. the Evil Communist Empire; Christian morality vs. hell-bound iniquity; and Biblical creationism vs. ungodly evolutionism. The leaders gradually became more convinced, however, that Christians should and could influence what was happening in society. The consistent application of Biblical truth would help bring about a better, more Christian world, not only morally but also politically, socially, and economically.

In Bethel's curriculum, Christian morality and individual upright living were more important than a Christian transformation of politics or economics. Textbook selections that did not explicitly promote a Christian lifestyle were banned or, at least, red flagged. Serving in God's Kingdom meant doing church or missionary work much more so than being engaged as a Christian in the marketplaces of life. Like Agape, Bethel put a heavy emphasis on developing the "right" character traits through direct instruction, modeling, and consistent reinforcement. Bethel stressed individual morality, piety and good manners in chapel, in class, and on the playground

Covenant Christian School took a somewhat different route in preparing children to be "God's children." Its Biblical studies program put more emphasis on general themes than on individual character traits. Christians were to optimize their God-given abilities, and since these abilities varied a great deal, a personalized whole language approach would do so best. Without apology, the school used many secular books, helping its students discern underlying worldviews and values and their consequences from a Christian point of view. The school's curriculum was less explicitly spiritual than that of the other two schools. Its Christian focus was evident most in its devotions, Biblical studies program, and informal discussions of issues as they arose. Covenant was similar to its Alberta counterparts which, according to one study, followed the "prescribed program of studies with some adaptations to reflect religious beliefs in science and social studies."[39]

Christian Schools and Their Views of Culture

The rapid growth of evangelical Protestant Christian schools has been called "the most important development in American education in the last three decades."[40] The schools' supporters have re-assigned ultimate responsibility for the control of education from the government to parents or churches. The schools induct children into a worldview shared by a (substantial) minority of North America's population. They expound the preeminence of the religious dimension of life. They teach that the Bible is the supreme Word of God and that personal salvation can come about only through faith in Jesus Christ. They infuse traditional virtues and the moral imperative of living according to the Ten Commandments. They regularly reinforce that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, although the interpretation of Genesis 1 varies from school to school and teacher to teacher. Teachers model commitment to a Christian way of life and a willingness to work hard for relatively law wages.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that all Christian schools resemble each other closely. Some are hostile to public education, labeling it as atheistic, humanistic, leftist or immoral. Others appreciate what goes on in public education but believe that such schools cannot be all things to all people in a pluralistic society. Some give dogmatic, absolutist answers to social issues. Others let the students search for answers on the basis of some general guidelines. Some administer strict discipline ("Spare the rod and spoil the child"); others stress the importance of Christian love in the classroom and school. Some use a fact-oriented textbook approach; others emphasize teacher-made units and critical thinking. Some use American-based fundamentalist textbooks and programs that promote patriotism and laissez-faire capitalism. Others use public school resources to help children become discerning about the role of Christians in a post-Christian age.

A basic reason for these differences is the diverse views of supporters about the interaction of Christians with their surrounding culture. ("Culture" here refers to the total body of belief, behavior, knowledge, values, customs, and goals that mark one's way of life.) Christians believe they are called to live in our present culture according to the purposes of God.[41] But what are those purposes and, after the fall, to what extent is it possible to mold it according to Biblical principles? Four of Niebuhr's five models of the stance of Christians with respect to culture are relevant to this study.[42]

The "Christ against culture" or separational model sees Christ and Christian beliefs as opposed to human achievements and the customs of society. Proponents live apart from "the world" as much as possible, even if they must be in the world. Their central concern is how they can best lead individual lives not tainted by sin: regeneration and the fruit of the Spirit sets them apart from the world.

The "Christ the transformer of culture" position holds that Christ is not only our personal Redeemer but also the transformer of human culture and society. Therefore we must be engaged in changing the sin-permeated structures of society through the application of the principles of the gospel in all areas of life.

Third, the "Christ of culture" or identificational model suggests that we can work within our present culture since through His common grace in Christ. God works in society through

many institutions beside the church and individuals other than Christians. After all, the life and teachings of Jesus have put a deep imprint on Western civilization.

Fourth, the "Christ above culture" position is that we cannot reach true culture unless, beyond all natural achievement, Christ relates people to a supernatural society and a new value center. We can and should work with God-given reason in God-given reality and thus develop worldly culture. Christ, however, far surpasses anything in our culture: He is of a different, supernatural, divine law order. We must expend a great deal of effort to lead moral, disciplined individual lives since that points us away from the temporal to the spiritual world.

None of the three schools can be pigeonholed precisely into one of Niebuhr's models. But all of them tend to emphasize one or two of the models much more than the others. This, to a large extent, lies at the basis for the differences in curricular approaches.

Bethel Christian School exemplified best the "Christ against culture" position. The Bethel leadership saw Christ and Christian beliefs as opposed to human achievements and the customs of society. Therefore children must be isolated as much as possible from "worldly" things monastic view of Christian education. Bethel sheltered students as much as possible from secular influences, and prepared them for a moral, upright life for now and eternity. Bethel banned unacceptable behavior and ideas from the classroom, even when presented in books. The Christian life was important, but it was a personal life of righteousness and of winning souls. We had little choice but to live in society, but since it was beyond hope, it should be shunned as much as possible.

During the last decade, many Pentecostal churches such as the one supporting Agape have moved from a "Christ above culture" position to a "Christ the transformer of culture" one. The dualistic "Christ above culture" view meant that these groups could use public schools to learn about worldly culture. The special anointing of the Spirit would bring people into communion with Christ and thus bridge the gap between worldly and heavenly culture. That left life in society relatively unaffected, however, except that Christians should practice moral uprightness. Public schools also were useful missionary fields to bring people into the fold.

Gradually many charismatics have become convinced, however, that public schools promote a culture without Christ. And that has made it difficult for children to see the relevance of Christianity. Christian schools became necessary to help children reach beyond the natural to the spiritual realm. At the same time, some communities like Agape were influenced by conservative Christian reconstructionists like Rousas Rushdoony. Rushdoony and his followers believe that by applying Scriptural injunctions quite literally to our modern society, we may transform humans and their culture and work towards the Biblical "millennium." Therefore we need Christian schools: children must know the Bible thoroughly and begin to transform society by applying its teachings to morality, business, politics, science and technology, and all other fields of human endeavor.

Agape thus has moved from a "Christ above culture" to a "Christ the transformer of culture" position. The original ACE program provided the Christian icing on the secular cake that harmonized with the "Christ above culture" model. Moral training continued to be emphasized as the school shifted from one model to another, but the school took a much more activist stance with respect to social issues. The courses of study began to emphasize the need for Christians to

be actively engaged in society and apply Scriptural norms to life in this world. Students were urged to become involved in political and economic issues.

Covenant Christian School's philosophy and goals officially take the traditional Calvinist "Christ the transformer of culture" position. People must work conscientiously and prophetically at transforming culture in and through Christ, even though they will succeed only partially until Christ returns. The school's program emphasizes the Christian's calling to be good stewards of God's creation. Covenant is also influenced, however, by the "Christ of culture" position, in which common grace and the life and teachings of Jesus are held to have greatly and positively influenced Western civilization. The school therefore values developments in "secular" knowledge and is more open than the others in taking up-to-date public school educational approaches and applying and adapting them to a Christian setting. Transforming the world for Christ, the school's curriculum practices proclaim somewhat paradoxically, can be achieved only by partial conformity to the general educational environment.

Research Involving Christian Schools

Future research about Christian schools needs to explore how the lives of Christian school graduates differ from their public school counterparts. Such research needs to distinguish the schools according to their curricular and instructional approaches; otherwise, the results may just provide "averages" that mean little. Both Canada and the U.S. have sizeable groups of schools in each of the three categories described above, as well as schools that continue to use the ACE program. Another question that arises is whether the schools will continue to accentuate their individuality, or whether their programs will coalesce as associations of Christian schools give common advice, as governments impose or suggest new policies and guidelines, and as new leaders replace the original founding ones. Finally, the interaction of primary and secondary curriculum change agents needs more study, as does the degree to which primary change facilitators am able to alter their roles.

Peshkin concluded that the extent to which Christian schools flourish indicates the health of our pluralistic society. He added that they undermined such pluralism, however, by their monolithic doctrinal commitment.[43] While that may be true in instances where a school teaches that it has the only and all answers necessary for the survival and growth of Western democracy, only one of the programs in this study might be accused of such rigidity. The Christian school movement itself is far from monolithic, and general conclusions must be made with great care because of the great diversity among the schools.

Finally, the Christian schools considered in this monograph were all interested in renewing themselves through innovation -- although only within predetermined religious frameworks. Despite limited financial resources and educational expertise, the leaders of these schools displayed a notable commitment to improvement and charge. Whether such change will, in the long term, make Christian schools more distinct or bring them closer to the mainstream of educational praxis will remain unanswered for some time. One encouraging aspect, certainly, is that thinking about the aims and practices of Christian schools and their curricula is increasing.[44] Christian educational leaders must know where they and their communities stand, and become effective change agents to implement their vision.

End Notes

[1] Statistics Canada, *Educational Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. 8. No. 8, January 1987.

[2] National Center for Education Statistics, as reported in Paul F. Parsons, *Inside America's Christian Schools* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1977).

[3] See, for instance, Herbart Kliebard in "Fads, Fashions, and Rituals: The Instability of Curriculum Change," in Laurel N. Tamer, *Critical Issues in Curriculum: Eighty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, Part I (Chicago: NSSE. 1988), pp. 21, 26-27.

[4] I estimated these totals from the figures supplied by the Ministry of Education, the Federation of Independent School Associations, and the Society of Christian Schools in BC, as well as from estimates made by educators familiar with ACE and other unreported church schools. Until 1989, British Columbia private schools did not have to register. As a result, these figures are approximations, especially since the ACE leadership is unwilling to release any statistics. Currently in BC about 80 ACE schools may have a total enrollment of 2,500 to 3,000.

[5] An oft-quoted phrase within Christian schools taken from Ephesians 6:4.

[6] Bernice B. Seifert. "The New:Christian Schools." *The High School Journal*. 68 (Dec. 1984-Jan. 1985): 70-74.

[7] William J. Reese, "Soldiers for Christ in the Army of God: The Christian School Movement in America," *Educational Theory* 35, no. 2 (1985): 175-94.

[8] Bernice B. Seifert. "The New Christian Schools," *Education Digest*, Oct. 1985, p. 35.

[9] James Carper and Thomas Hunt, eds. *Religious Schooling in America* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1984). pp.110-29.

[10] See, for instance, Patricia M. Lines, "The New Private Schools and Their Historic Purpose," in *Phi Delta Kappan*, Jan. 1986. pp. 373-79, and Daniel C. Levy, ed., *Private Education: Studies in Choice and Public Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[11] Paul F. Parsons, *Inside America's Christian Schools* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987).

[12] Alan Peshkin, *An Outsider's Look at a Fundamentalist Christian Academy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[13] Susan D. Rose, *Keeping Them Out of the Hands of Satan: Evangelical Schooling in America* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1988).

[14] Rose, p. 4.

[15] Harro, Van Brummelen, *Telling the Next Generation: Educational Developwnt in North American Calvinist Christian Schools* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986).

[16] Paul F. Scotchmer, "Christian Schools: Anabaptist or Reformist?" in *Christian Scholar's Review* 15, no. 4(1986): 331-342.

[17] The book that has quickly become a classic in this field is S. B. Sarason's *The Culture of the Classroom and the Problem of Change* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2nd ed., 1982). John Goodlad also pointed out that the rhetoric and the reality of curriculum often are poles apart in his *A Place Called School* (Highstown, NJ: McGraw-Hill. 1984). Numerous journal articles on curriculum implementation and change have appeared during the past decade, with the best-known book being Michael Fullan's *The Meaning of Education Change* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1982). Indeed, how to bring about effective implementation has been a major focus of curriculum research in the 1980s. For a discussion of the case study approach and the nature of curriculum change agents see Shirley M. Hord and Gene E. Hall. "Three Images: What Principals Do in Curriculum Implementation," and Robert Donmoyer, "Dialogue: Why Case Studies? Reflections on Hord and Hall's Three Images," *Curriculum Inquiry* 17, no. 1 (1987): 55-89 and 91-102. See also Note 35.

[18] For critiques of the ACE program see Alberta Education, *An Audit of Selected Private School Programs* (Edmonton: 1985) and the unpublished master's theses by Neil Bramble (Regent College, Vancouver, 1985) and Gordon Calvert (University of British Columbia, 1988). ACE schools are in a state of flux. I have identified ten schools in British Columbia that have moved away from the ACE program during the past five years, and know others that now use ACE materials for only part of their curriculum. When larger ACE schools become dissatisfied with their program, they either implement a different program or reduce and supplement the ACE component of the program.

[19] This 1977 Act currently makes available 10% funding to "Group 1" schools meeting only facilities and anti-discrimination criteria. "Group 2" schools receive up to 50% of public school per pupil costs and must also meet certain administrative, curriculum, teacher certification and student evaluation criteria. The ACE leadership has vigorously opposed its schools applying for funding because of possible government interference in the operation of the schools.

[20] Agape Student-Parent Handbook, p. 8.

[21] Ibid. pp. 74-75.

[22] Bob Jones University Press. *Geometry for Christian Schools* (Greenville, SC, 1984).

[23] *Enjoying God's World* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka. 1986). p. 3.

[24] Sylvia Tymos, *Social Studies Workpac 302* (Vancouver: Academic Distribution Services, n.d.), p. 7.

[25] Verne Biddle. *Chemistry: Precision and Design* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka, 1986), p. 5.

[26] *Old World History and Geography: A Christian Perspective* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka, 1981), pp. 170-74.

[27] *Basic Math I: Traditional Math Work-Text* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka. 1983).

[28] Valley Christian School promotional brochure, n.d.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Oral recounting of the report Mrs. Black made to the board, Feb. 12, 1988.

[31]Government science assessment tests, for instance, in 1986 showed that Covenant's students had average scientific knowledge, but that their attitudes towards science were significantly below the provincial average.

[32] Edwin Johnston, "Social Scientists Examine The New Right," in *Teaching Political Science* 12 (Fall 1984):7.

[33] Cf. Fullan, p. 47.

[34] Van Brummelen, p. 254-55.

[35] Cf. Fullan. *The Meaning of Educational Change*: Michael Fullan and Paul Park, *Curriculum Implementation: A Resource Booklet* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, 1981): and Walt Werner, ed., *Program Implementation Ebperiences: Cases from British Columbia* (Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, University of British Columbia, 1983).

[36] Hord and Hall, p. 55.

[37] Walter Werner, "Training for Curriculum Implementation," in *Pacific Education*, 1, no. 1(1987):41.

[38] Arthur G. Powell. "Private School Responsibilities: Are They as Important as Private School Rights?", an occasional paper of the Associates for Research on Private Education, 1987.

[39] Woods Gordon Management Consultants, *A Study of Private Schools in Alberta* (Edmonton, Alberta: Alberta Education, 1984), p. 15.

[40] Bruce S. Cooper, "An Outsider's Look at a Fundamentalist Christian Academy," *Independent School*. Winter 1987, p. 78.

[41]Rober E. Webber, *The Secular Saint: The Role of the Christian in the Secular World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979). Webber melds Niebuhr's five categories into three models: the separational, identificational, and tranformational ones.

[42] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

[43] Peshkin, p. 293.

[44] See, for example. Steven Vryhof et al., Twelve Affirmations: Christian Schooling in the 21st Century(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, forthcoming); Harro Van Brummelen, Walking with God in the Classroom: Christian Approaches to Learning and Teaching (Burlington, Ont.: Welch, 1988). and Kenneth Gangel and Howard Hendricks, eds., The

Christian Educator's Handbook on Teaching (Scripture Press. 1988).