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With or Without Purpose

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CD, to make the Valley Forge experience with George Washington a fully developed experience in the lives of the students. Nor is CD scientifically or historically precise. CD uses, for instance, only a few of the essential facts of the Valley Forge history, then creates a situation that includes those facts, and in the "playing out" of the situation adds whatever seems natural. No one knows, for instance, how each individual soldier felt during the long winter at Valley Forge, or how he felt at a specific moment. But in the CD reconstruction, the extreme cold and the lack of food will prompt imaginative, but very natural, responses in the children involved.

Creative Dramatics is not all "playing out" of a situation. If four hours were required during a unit in American History to work out the experience of Valley Forge, a total of an hour would probably be spent in reading and research, one hour in playing the situation, and two hours in discussing the progress and development of the experience.

There are about eighty students taking

Creative Dramatics this year at Dordt, most of them elementary education students. The class meets three times a week. The first meeting deals with the theories and principles of CD, the second is a lab session in which the college students participate in CD, and the third session is used for demonstration. Field experiences will take the college students as far out as Pease, Minnesota and New Holland, South Dakota. Invitations to the students have been extended by teachers in public schools, and both Catholic and Reformed Christian schools. Once a student accepts an invitation, he or she is responsible for making arrangements with that teacher and for transportation. Invitations were initially solicited by the instructor of the course in Creative Dramatics. Solicitations were made to 280 teachers. About 115 teachers returned invitations, of which eighty were accepted. Except where long distances are involved, students are expected to conduct two sessions in the field, with the same group of children, sometime in October or November.

With or Without Purpose

Faculty members at Dordt College move about on three legs. Take away any of the three legs and he or she becomes a cripple. These three legs are knowledge, communication, and the Word of God. Coordinating these legs so as to walk and talk a straight line is no easy task, particularly when someone comes behind you and mumbles, "You're not using your legs properly," or "Hey, you've lost your third leg." Imagine a two-legged stool teaching in a Christian college!

This is a homely way of introducing a series of reports which we plan to publish in subsequent issues of Pro Rege.

In 1971 the president of Dordt College called for the formation of a special committee to get at some basic issues. Informal discussions had deteriorated, or even disappeared, over a question that had never really been formulated well. Some of us, for lack of knowledge, others for lack of discretion in communication, were really walking like two-legged stools, but the issue seemed to center upon the question of what is the Word of God.

That sounds quite serious, but maybe it is a compliment to our faculty, for it might well speak to the sincere desire on our part to be certain that God's Word is relevant to us in

our work, and that we will not relinquish our faith in the covenanting infallibility of that Word. From the seriousness which characterized the members of the Purposes Committee, and from the reception given their work by other faculty members, I am inclined to see the earlier informal discussions as evidence of vital concern. Everyone wanted to make sure that the third leg of the teacher-stool was really what it was supposed to be.

So, the newly formed Purposes Committee began its meetings--ten meetings, to be exact, in the 1971-72 academic year. But the first discussions showed the committee that the question about the Word of God was broader than just that, for it touched on other related questions. As a result, the chairman divided the larger committee into subcommittees and gave each a specific area of study. Each subcommittee began its work immediately, but kept their thinking tentative until a report could be formulated by the first subcommittee. That subcommittee had the awesome task of spelling out what is meant by the Word of God. By midwinter, after several sessions of revision and discussion by the entire committee, the subcommittee on the Word of God was able to present a unified and complete report on their work. This document was received by the faculty and discussed in a regular faculty meeting. Questions were raised and answered, and some revision followed for the sake of clarification.

As the subcommittee assignments will indicate, there are a variety of related questions that come up when an academic faculty, wishing to be faithful to their Lord and Redeemer, begin their task of teaching. The subcommittees are: I. The Word of God; II. Sphere Sovereignty; III. The Bible, Science, and Scientific Thought; and IV. Authority.

The subcommittee on Science has also completed its work. Its report has been submitted to the faculty for discussion, and like the document on the Word of God, has been accepted by the faculty as a tentative statement of principle from which to work. The subcommittee on Sphere Sovereignty has also submitted material, but only to the Purposes Committee, which will begin its work again this fall.

Each of these reports will be printed in Pro Rege, for the faculty feels that these state-

ments of principle really speak to the unity of the Dordt faculty in carrying out their task faithfully before God.

The December issue of Pro Rege will contain the working statement on the Word of God. By way of introduction to that report and statement of principle, it might be worthwhile to articulate some questions that the Purposes Committee had to face in order to make its statement:

(1) What does the Scripture say and mean by the Word of God?

(2) If Logos, which means Word, implies first of all revelation (making something clear which is veiled), in how many ways does that Logos reveal Himself?

(3) If one of the ways by which the Logos makes Himself known is through the creation, can one refer to the creation as the Word of God?

(4) How does the Inscripturated (written) Word relate to man's activities, and how may or may not that Inscripturated Word be used?

(5) How is the Inscripturated Word, the Holy Bible, uniquely different from other Revelations of the Logos?

These questions are of vital concern to a faculty of a Christian liberal arts college because a liberal arts college is engaged in exploring the creation. Whether it is the study of literature, or language, or biology, or music, or any other subject, it was God's power of creating order and maintaining that order that makes that study possible. Is there a revelation of God, then, of the Logos in whatever area a faculty member teaches? Can a botany teacher really depend on a prediction that an apple seed will grow an apple tree and not a rose bush? Yes, he will say. And when he says "yes," he asserts his faith in something greater than himself. Hopefully, that simple assertion of faith rests in the dependability of the Word which God spoke ages ago. Turn it around then and ask the question, Is an apple seed a dependable revelation of God (insignificant as it may seem)? Is an apple seed, in a sense, the Word of God?

In concluding this introduction, the final paragraph is quoted from the report which will appear in the next issue of Pro Rege. It will show only one conclusion reached by the Purposes Committee and the faculty of Dordt Col-

lege.

"It should be clearly understood then that although the writings of Moses, of the psalmists, wisemen and prophets, the apostles and Luke, yes the prophetic messages, the gospels of the evangelists and the apostolic deliverances are spoken of collectively as the Word of God, these are not to be identified with the Logos-Word Himself. The Logos-Word is made known to mankind directly, by the communicable words, the intelligible statements in the written Word.¹ And is it necessary to state that this written Word which communicates so much about the Logos-Word is very different in character, in method of presentation and actual content from what is exhibited in the cosmos, both within the cosmos as it has been made and how it is governed? And need it be stated that one would never come to know

who the Creator and Upholder is or of the incarnation of the Logos-Word were it not made known to man in the written Word?

"From all this then, it seems quite obvious that the Scriptures can be spoken of as the Word of God, as the Scriptures in fact do themselves, simply because the Scriptures refer to lingual communication as the Word of the Lord. The Scriptures as the key to all of God's self-unveiling comes to us directly in intelligible words--spoken and written so that men can hear, read, believe, and comprehend, to an extent, what a wonderful Creator, Upholder, Redeemer the Logos-Word really is, what He does and what He means to all that exists and happens. This also means that the Scriptures only are the ultimate and only reliable authoritative revelation of the Logos-Word available to men today."²

1. Cf. J. Frame: "Thoughts on the Purposes Revision of the N.U.C.S. Basis."

2. The statements of truth in the written Word are not to be considered as factual propositions formulated and carefully systematized by men, as one finds these in Theological treatises. However, the Biblical statements, varying as they do, e.g., historical, journalistic, legal, poetic, descriptive, prophetic, etc., are nevertheless statements which convey factual material concerning God's person, character and attitudes as well as His acts which men can read and comprehend.