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Public Knowledge and Christian Education (Book Review)

Charles Veenstra
Dordt College

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the state to be totally value free? Is religion basically individual and private or is it communal and public?

Gaustad asserts that there were seven perspectives which guided people in formulating answers during the years 1776-1826. The majority, including Anglicans and Congregationalists, believed that religion had to act in partnership with the state in order to preserve society. A vocal minority, in the tradition of Roger Williams, William Penn, and Lord Baltimore, maintained that religion was primarily a matter of the heart rather than of the state. Others believed in a variation of the first position in that they wanted a religious community, but its hallmark was to be a civil religion. This group raised up heroes such as Franklin and Washington as their icons. Still others argued over the relationship between civil and religious liberty and how much of one or the other should be granted or tolerated. Enlightenment figures, including Jefferson and Madison, wanted to use Reason to purify religion that had been "corrupted" by the instituted church over the centuries. Another group pointed to the excesses of the French Revolution as proof of what happens when Reason becomes god. They preferred instead a national reaffirmation of a sovereign god. Finally, there were those who exhibited some of all of the above. This rather amorphous group of evangelists believed that America "could still be very much shaped by, if not governed by, the 'evangelical mind'" (119). It was their

vitality and energy which was responsible for the Second Great Awakening, only to be shattered on the rocks of the slavery controversy. In sum, according to Gaustad, "What those decades do reveal is a strong bond between religion and the new nation. But the strength of that bond depended not so much upon the power of the government as upon the faithfulness of the people" (133).

The book is amply footnoted, contains a useful bibliography, and includes documents of materials pertinent to the religious history of the era. There are some minor typographical errors. The author has John Adams engaged in correspondence twelve years before that worthy was born, for example. I found the chapter on the *Philosophes* to be the least successful. It is not clear to me just what the impact of their ideas was upon the religious history of the early republic. Further questions remain regarding civil religion. Was civil religion rooted in Christianity or in the Enlightenment or in both? Did all Christians accept a civil religion? A helpful article at this juncture is Gerald Rober McDermott, "Civil Religion in the American Revolutionary Period: An Historiographic Analysis," *Christian Scholar's Review*, XVIII:4, June 1989, 346-362.

Nevertheless, this is a valuable book! For the scholar it serves as a reminder that religious history must not be neglected. For the general reader it sketches a segment of American history that unfortunately is all too often omitted.

Public Knowledge and Christian Education, Theodore Plantinga (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988). 121 pp. Reviewed by Charles Veenstra, Professor of Communication.

A good place to begin reading this book is the "Postscript" in which Plantinga indicates his purposes in writing this essay. His first concern is that some supporters of Christian schools talk as if their schools are "public," which would mean that they do not have a distinctive character that would justify their existence. The second concern "is the tendency of Christian teachers—especially on the higher levels of learning—to manifest solidarity with the secular world of learning" (119).

Plantinga begins the book by arguing that we should think of knowledge as *oral*, that is, to regard it as highly addressed and highly focused language. Teaching, he says, is "telling"—a creative activity of personally addressing students. Instead of simply transferring information, the teacher guides and advises children as they seek orientation in the world. In contrast, science is a set of statements made by a group and is essentially anonymous. Hence, science belongs to the realm of "public knowledge" rather than "local knowledge." Today's science is heavily influenced by Descartes' philosophical method of doubt and "the science student is supposed to walk in Descartes' footsteps" (29). The need for loyalty is important because science is ultimate-

ly a search for consensus and the science teacher is often more loyal than independent. The method of science becomes a "Trojan horse" in the camp of Christian education.

In chapter five, the author describes several approaches to the question of the relation of Christianity and culture: anti-cultural, secular Protestantism, cultural Protestantism, and post-Enlightenment Protestantism (his position). "Post-Enlightenment Protestants propose to use the plurality of cultural discourses in the world today to guard against the threat of an exclusive totalitarian discourse (including scientific discourse) claiming the right to speak the final word on all questions of concern to man. They recognize that the very plurality of discourses has the effect of relativizing them. At the same time, this plurality opens a place for revealed discourse and the extension of revealed discourse that the Christian tradition calls preaching" (59). This position gives the Christian teacher the opportunity not only to recognize the different discourses but also to exercise the responsibility to choose between the many available. This selection problem is a key consideration that the Christian teacher faces.

The author's criticism of science is strong: "Today's

science, with its complexity and sophistication, is quite some distance removed from the shapes and sounds of everyday experience. As a result, the truthfulness of science is also remote from the truthfulness of everyday experience" (92). Yet, he is not so much opposed to science as he is critical of our almost uncritical acceptance of scientific discourse as the ultimate word and our failure to see it as one discourse among many.

Although one gets the impression at the beginning of the book that it is addressed to Christian school teachers at all levels, the thrust of the book seems aimed more at

Performer as Prophet and Priest, Judith Rock and Norman Mealy (New York: Harper and Row, 1988). 156 pp. \$13.95. Reviewed by Verne Meyer, Professor of Theatre Arts.

In *Performer As Prophet and Priest*, dancer/choreographer, Judith Rock, and musicologist/liturgist, Norman Mealy, describe how their arts should function within the liturgy of a worship service. In the introduction, "Lighting the Shadow Side," Rock asserts that "the import of the women's movement on the church has set the stage for a new meeting of the church and the arts" (xi). Women and the arts, she says, "have historically been forced to occupy the shadow side of the sphere of human experience and understanding: less valued, less well 'understood'" (xi). Only in recent years has intuitive knowing (associated with the arts and the "feminine" in males and females) been given the validity it deserves in relation to rational knowing (associated with masculinity and cause-and-effect reasoning). The women's movement, observes Mealy, has demonstrated the need for reintegrating our rational and intuitive capacities not only in life outside the church, but also in the liturgy of worship.

As we turn toward and learn from our collective feminine shadow side, we have an unprecedented opportunity to reclaim the arts as inexhaustible wells of intuition and image, because the arts, in their form and function, depend on and elicit intuitive response. (xii)

The authors' purpose for writing, contends Mealy, is to demonstrate how music and dance uniquely elicit the intuitive in worship so that the worship might be complete.

Early in the text the authors argue that worship consists of "theological" statements rooted in individual participants' "spirituality." Spirituality "has to do with practices which help us make a space in our being and life in and through which our response to God is deepened." Theology, on the other hand, "has to do with formally crafted communications to other people about what God might be like, on the basis of what goes on in that space" (xiv). The act of worship, then, entails "doing theology." That is, leaders of worship use what they know about their individual "space" or "spirituality" to do theology within

Christian high school and Christian college teachers than at Christian elementary teachers. The book is thought-provoking and should be read by Christian college instructors in all disciplines. It forces one to think hard about what it means to give a Christian perspective on the subject matter we teach.

The book suffers from excessive rhetorical questions and parenthetical statements. This seems to be a set of lectures which need to be woven more tightly. A clearer focus would have helped tie the author's insights into a more coherent argument to give greater guidance to Christian teachers.

the service: "to present formally crafted communications to other people about what God might be like."

The intuitive, feminine knowing associated with dance and music complements and completes the analytical, masculine knowing that constitutes the didactic discourse of nearly all spoken elements in liturgy. Liturgical language, other than poetry, contend the authors, communicates theological truth in a linear manner (moving from the known to the known in a rational argument); on the other hand, music and dance communicate theological truth in a manner unique to the two arts (leaping from the known to the unknown).

The arts direct us from system and answer toward a relational theological process. The only way to know an art work is to wait: to wait with, wait for, wait on the intuitive truth it has to tell. This process of waiting, watching, listening creates in one who waits in empty space into which some new perception of the truth can come. (44)

In chapter three Rock and Mealy describe the creative processes used by the choreographer and composer, and in chapter four they explain how those processes are the artists' efforts to fulfill the performer/believer's responsibilities as priest and prophet. The performer as priest "consolidates, guards, and sanctions, reminding the community of its history, traditions, and achievements"; whereas the performer as prophet "judges and challenges, reminding the same community of its failures and calling for a more righteous future" (81).

Finally, in the fifth chapter, "Art as Pentecost," Rock and Mealy suggest that dance and music are pentecostal paradigms in the sense that Pentecost represents "new life in the Spirit creating new relationships" (119). Liturgical music and dance, say the authors, enable worshippers to make new associations and fresh insights regarding the nature of God and the nature of Christian living.

Unlike classical systematic theology, music and