

Grace United Church of Christ

307 North Plymouth Street

Culver, Indiana

Meredith J. Sprunger, Minister

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To the School Superintendents of Indiana

Dear Friends:

Enclosed is a brief article which I have written giving expression to a conviction that the Commission on General Education of the State of Indiana should approve elective courses in the high school curriculum on both psychology and philosophy (or social values).

At present a course in psychology may be taught by obtaining special approval from the State Department of Public Instruction. I am hoping that a number of you will introduce such courses so that the General Commission will raise this course to the status of an accepted elective in the high school curriculum. Would also hope that the Text Book Commission might approve other texts (see p. 96 of Courses of Study) such as Psychology for Life Adjustment - Charles R. Foster.

Then, I hope that some of you will really be brave and ask for approval to teach a philosophy or social values course. This may result in text books being selected and permission to teach such a course on an experimental basis. Eventually I would hope that such a course would be approved as a regular elective in our high schools. But these things must start some where in local schools.

After talking with various people in the State Department of Public Instruction, although they are interested in the possibilities of this addition to the curriculum, it is clear that any changes in this field must come from the interest and action of you men.

You may wonder why a minister in the United Church of Christ (a recent union between the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches) should be interested in high school education? Probably because of background interests. I majored in philosophy in college and, after receiving theological training, took a Ph. D. degree in psychology at Purdue University and taught psychology at Elmhurst College. From this experience, I am convinced that our junior and senior high school students will get more good out of these orientation courses than any thing else we can do for them.

Many of our best high school students are already fragmented, lopsided individuals. More than anything else they need to see their special interests in the frame work of the total knowledge and values of man. And they need help in working out a balanced adjustment to life situations.

Being independent of the field of education, pressures which might jeopardize a school man's career do not affect me and therefore it seems that this is a significant service which I can give at a point where I think it is crucially needed. If I can be of any help to any of you men in this matter, please contact me.

Cordially yours,

Meredith J. Sprunger
Meredith J. Sprunger

A COROLLARY TO THE EMPHASIS ON SCIENTIFIC TRAINING

Meredith J. Sprunger, Ph.D.

This brief article is written out of the conviction that the current stress on more adequate scientific training is good but brings with it a moral imperative for more adequate instruction in key courses in the humanities on the secondary level of American education. The teaching of the humanities in secondary education is even less adequate than our scientific training. Two basic courses, psychology and philosophy, generally speaking, are not even taught in our high schools.

The necessity of stepping up the quality and quantity of our courses in the field of science could have tragic consequences a generation hence unless we take immediate steps to balance our high school students with basic courses in the knowledge and motivation of the human mind and the values which undergird our civilization. Without psychological insight to help control and guide his animal desires and philosophic orientation to help determine the use of his scientific knowledge and power, man is in grave danger. This could be the greatest hidden danger of communism to our culture.

The true advances of civilization are born of the inner world of mankind. This is the creative and redemptive source of our existence. The outer world, our scientific achievement, follows the direction of our inner decision and growth. For this reason civilization will not progress when the majority of its youth devote their interests and energies almost entirely to the materialistic pursuits of life. Indeed, civilization is in danger when three fourths of its youth enter the materialistic professions and devote themselves so largely to the sensory activities of the outer world. We must increasingly find youth who will interest themselves, even while in materialistic professions, in psychology, sociology, education, eugenics, philosophy, cosmology, the fine arts, and religion.

It is difficult to understand how a modern educational system will take great pains to train its students in the knowledge and care of the body while it largely ignores the self-understanding of the human mind. Even the layman knows that our minds and emotions are much more important in both individual and collective destiny than physiological functions. Yet there has been no large scale attempt to teach psychology to high school students. Since many people end their formal education at the high school level, they never receive this basic training. A democracy can function wisely only when its people become aware of the self-deceptions and the subtle emotional motivations of the human personality. It appears that the most important discoveries of the future will be in the realm of the mind. It is entirely possible, as one of the top nuclear physicists of the country recently told me, that mind holds more significant secrets of the universe than has been found in matter. If these observations are even partially correct, a course in psychology should be taught in every high school.

Of even greater ultimate significance to society is the great need of philosophic orientation for high school juniors and seniors. What youth think about the universe in which they live and the nature and destiny of man is of paramount importance to our culture. Some of our educators in higher education consider this so crucial to education that some colleges and universities demand a basic course in philosophy as a graduation requirement.

Secondary schools have probably kept away from philosophy courses because they are afraid of becoming involved with religion. It is time that a sharp distinction is made in education between the two. Philosophy is the intellectual search for truth which helps us understand the total universe in which we live. It is an open search of the human spirit. Here, final answers are not given. Questions are asked and tentative answers are advanced. Religion concerns itself with the dedication and worship of the human personality. It tends to be a closed system, to give authoritative answers and to demand obedience and conformity.

To illustrate the need for philosophy on the high school level and point out how this need is different from religious aspirations, I should like to call attention to a survey which I made recently of eighty junior boys in one of our Indiana high schools. Practically all of these boys plan to enter college and are a fairly good sample of the kind of boy who will be in a position of leadership in the next generation.

Examination of the attached data, A Scale of Intellectual Curiosity, shows that these boys are more interested in the broad philosophic questions than the more specific fields of science or religion. It is most interesting to observe between the ten most intensive interests and the ten least intensive interests the sharp distinction between philosophic interests in the former and religious interests in the latter. These boys are not only more interested in philosophy than religion but this is the field which can and should be a part of every high school curriculum. In the end both science and religion will profit immeasurably through the teaching of philosophy in our high schools. It will save science from becoming the tool of nihilism and annihilation and religion from irrationalism, bigotry, and decadence.

The greatest single interest of these boys is personality survival. This suggests profound implications. First, the necessity of psychological self-understanding. For Otto Rank has pointed out that man's most absorbing and controlling psychological drive is the "urge to immortality." Second, if psychology is truly to help advance man it can do so only, as Dr. Ira Progoff has pointed out, by leading him to an experience which is beyond psychology - philosophy. Third, the intellectual search for truth ultimately leads to a realm beyond philosophy - religion. Here in personality dedication and worship man reaches his highest fulfillment.

The first two of these, psychology and philosophy, can, should, and must become a part of our secular secondary education curriculum. It is my deep conviction that the most important single, realistic thing that can be done to improve the future of civilization is the introduction of balanced courses on psychology and philosophy in the secondary schools of the country and the world.

I hope that principals and school boards hear and there through out the country may have the vision and courage to start experimental projects including these courses. In time such a curriculum must and will be universally adopted. When this happens we shall see a new era of creativity in the field of education!

A SCALE OF INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY

Name _____

Instructions: Below are concepts or questions about which there are a great variety of opinions. In this scale we are not interested in your specific opinions of these questions but only your interest in the question regardless of what you may believe about it. If you are not interested in the question or concept, encircle "0"; if slightly interested, encircle "1"; if moderately interested, encircle "2"; if you are more than moderately interested, encircle "3"; if you are greatly interested, encircle "4".

1. 0 1 2 3 4 The existence or nature of God.
2. 0 1 2 3 4 The mystery of life.
3. 0 1 2 3 4 What is spirit?
4. 0 1 2 3 4 What is reality?
5. 0 1 2 3 4 What is truth?
6. 0 1 2 3 4 What is the nature and destiny of man?
7. 0 1 2 3 4 Does man have free will?
8. 0 1 2 3 4 God's presence, plan, or will in your life.
9. 0 1 2 3 4 Understanding the nature and function of the human mind.
10. 0 1 2 3 4 What is passing and what is permanent in human life?
11. 0 1 2 3 4 How did our universe and world come into being?
12. 0 1 2 3 4 The origin of life on our planet.
13. 0 1 2 3 4 The creation or evolution of man.
14. 0 1 2 3 4 Is there intelligent life on other planets?
15. 0 1 2 3 4 How far do universes like ours extend out into space?
16. 0 1 2 3 4 What is energy?
17. 0 1 2 3 4 The nature of matter.
18. 0 1 2 3 4 The origin of the different races of man.
19. 0 1 2 3 4 Is there a conflict between science and religion?
20. 0 1 2 3 4 What do the other religions of the world believe?
21. 0 1 2 3 4 How does one find the best religion?
22. 0 1 2 3 4 Is there a unified explanation of the diversity of human experience?
23. 0 1 2 3 4 Is the Bible the word of God?
24. 0 1 2 3 4 Does the human personality survive after death?
25. 0 1 2 3 4 What is life after death like?
26. 0 1 2 3 4 Is there a future judgment?
27. 0 1 2 3 4 Are there celestial beings and angels?
28. 0 1 2 3 4 Were Adam and Eve the first human beings?
29. 0 1 2 3 4 What is prayer and does it work?
30. 0 1 2 3 4 Is there such a thing as miracles?
31. 0 1 2 3 4 Was Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God?
32. 0 1 2 3 4 What is the kingdom of God?
33. 0 1 2 3 4 Are there moral laws?
34. 0 1 2 3 4 How far should one be independent of the traditions and beliefs of the race?
35. Check the statement which best describes your intellectual, philosophic, or religious curiosity.
____ Not much interested in questions about the meaning of life.
____ Interested only in so far as these problems effect your practical, every-day living.
____ Vitally interested in the meaning of life, the nature and destiny of man, and the nature of reality or God.
____ You believe these questions are the most absorbing and fascinating questions of life.
36. What broad field will you probably enter for your life work:
____ Scientific-Technical, ____ Humanities-Liberal Arts, ____ Business-Commercial.

TABULATIONS

	Rank	Science (28)	Humanities (19)	Business (33)	Total (80)
1. The existence or nature of God.	0 2 1 2 2 8 3 6 4 10	2 1 2 4 13	2 1 9 8 13	4 3 19 18 36	
2. The mystery of life. - - - - -	0 1 1 6 2 7 3 6 4 8	1 1 1 5 12	4 3 9 9 8	5 10 17 20 28	
3. What is spirit? - - - - -	0 8 1 7 2 9 3 2 4 2	3 3 6 2 5	6 7 11 3 6	17 17 26 7 13	
4. What is reality? - - - - -	0 1 9 2 6 3 10 4 3	1 2 1 6 9	6 8 6 8 5	7 19 13 24 17	
5. What is truth? - - - - -	0 2 1 6 2 5 3 8 4 7	2 1 3 4 12	5 2 7 5 14	7 8 15 17 33	
6. What is the nature and - - - - destiny of man?	0 2 1 1 2 8 3 5 4 12	2 1 2 2 14	4 1 8 8 14	4 3 18 15 40	
7. Does man have free will? - - -	0 5 1 3 2 7 3 5 4 8	2 2 6 5 4	5 10 5 3 10	12 15 18 13 22	
8. God's presence, plan, or will - in your life.	0 3 1 3 2 10 3 5 4 7	1 2 4 3 9	6 3 7 8 9	10 8 21 16 25	
9. Understanding the nature and - function of the human mind.	0 2 1 4 2 6 3 5 4 11	2 2 2 3 12	4 2 15 5 12	6 10 23 13 28	
10. What is passing and what is - permanent in human life?	0 4 1 10 2 5 3 6 4 3	4 10 4 6 4	5 9 9 6 4	13 20 18 18 11	
11. How did our universe and - - world come into being?	0 3 1 6 2 3 3 3 4 13	2 2 2 6 7	2 6 5 10 10	7 14 10 19 30	
12. The origin of life on our - - planet.	0 5 1 2 2 5 3 4 4 12	2 2 5 4 6	3 6 5 8 11	10 10 15 16 29	
13. The creation or evolution - - of man.	0 2 1 7 2 5 3 7 4 7	1 3 2 4 9	1 3 10 6 10	7 13 17 17 26	
14. Is there intelligent life on other planets?	0 1 4 2 3 3 5 4 16	1 3 4 5 6	1 4 4 11 13	2 11 11 21 35	
15. How far do universes like - - ours extend out into space?	0 2 1 3 2 2 3 8 4 13	2 5 2 3 3	2 6 8 7 11	8 11 16 18 27	
16. What is energy? - - - - -	0 4 1 4 2 5 3 2 4 13	1 1 9 4 13	5 6 6 7 1	15 14 20 13 4	

QNS	Rank	Science	Humanities	Business	Total
17. The nature of matter, - - - -	0 3	6	10	19	
	1 7	3	11	20	
	2 3	3	6	16	
	3 6	3	5	14	
	4 9	1	1	11	
18. The origin of the different - races of man.	0 9	6	6	21	
	1 4	4	7	15	
	2 6	4	12	22	
	3 7	2	5	14	
	4 2	3	3	8	
19. Is there a conflict between - science and religion?	0 5	1	5	11	
	1 6	4	8	18	
	2 3	3	6	12	
	3 8	3	7	18	5
	4 6	8	7	21	2
20. What do other religions of - - the world believe?	0 10	2	9	21	20
	1 6	3	7	16	8
	2 5	3	8	16	1
	3 3	6	3	12	7
	4 4	5	6	15	9
21. How does one find the best - - religion?	0 11	5	11	27	3
	1 6	7	7	13	Not much interested
	2 2	2	4	8	Practical interest
	3 6	2	4	12	8
	4 3	10	7	20	1
22. Is there a unified explanation - of the diversity of human experience?	0 8	2	10	20	20
	1 4	1	7	12	9
	2 10	6	11	27	14
	3 5	4	5	12	7
	4 1	6	5	12	3
23. Is the Bible the word of God?	0 3	3	6	12	35
	1 7	2	3	12	12
	2 4	3	8	15	9
	3 8	5	7	20	13
	4 6	6	9	21	22
24. Does the human personality - - survive after death?	0 2	3	2	7	7
	1 3	1	3	7	5
	2 4	4	9	17	3
	3 8	3	5	16	13
	4 11	8	14	33	6
25. What is life after death like?	0 2	4	6	5	4
	1 2	1	2	5	1
	2 4	3	4	11	3
	3 7	4	5	16	4
	4 13	11	18	42	5
26. Is there a future judgment? -	0 1	2	8	11	34
	1 5	3	3	11	How far should one be independent of the traditions of the race?
	2 8	1	8	17	1
	3 5	4	6	15	4
	4 9	9	8	26	11
27. Are there celestial beings - - and angels?	0 7	4	14	25	1
	1 7	4	3	14	4
	2 5	3	7	15	5
	3 2	5	5	12	5
	4 7	3	4	14	5
28. Were Adam and Eve the first - human beings?	0 10	6	11	27	4
	1 5	3	6	14	5
	2 7	4	5	16	4
	3 5	3	3	11	9
	4 1	3	8	12	9
29. What is prayer and does it - - work?	0 4	2	7	13	9
	1 5		5	5	9
	2 7	5	10	22	9
	3 7	4	8	19	11
	4 5	8	8	21	29
30. Are there such things as - - - miracles?	0 2	4	5	11	1
	1 6	3	6	15	3
	2 8	7	7	22	4
	3 5	1	8	14	9
	4 7	4	7	18	9
31. Was Jesus of Nazareth the - - Son of God?	0 8	4	6	18	1
	1 4	1	2	7	5
	2 3	4	8	15	9
	3 5	3	6	14	11
	4 8	7	11	26	27
32. What is the kingdom of God? -	0 4	2	5	11	1
	1 4	1	6	11	3
	2 6	2	7	15	4
	3 4	6	5	15	9
	4 10	8	10	28	11
					29

RANK ORDER OF INTEREST PREFERENCE

Item No.	Item	Weight
33.	Are there moral laws? - - - - -	58
14.	Is there intelligent life on other planets? - - - - -	56
6.	What is the nature and destiny of man? - - - - -	55
1.	The existence or nature of God - - - - -	54
5.	What is truth? - - - - -	50
24.	Does the human personality survive after death? - - - - -	49
11.	How did our universe and world come into being? - - - - -	49
25.	What is life after death like? - - - - -	48
2.	The mystery of life - - - - -	48
15.	How far do universes like ours extend out into space? - - - - -	45
12.	The origin of life on our planet - - - - -	45
13.	The creation or evolution of man - - - - -	43
32.	What is the kingdom of God? - - - - -	43
9.	Understanding the nature and function of the human mind - - - - -	41
8.	God's presence, plan, or will in your life - - - - -	41
26.	Is there a future judgment? - - - - -	41
23.	Is the Bible the word of God? - - - - -	41
4.	What is reality? - - - - -	41
29.	What is prayer and does it work? - - - - -	40
31.	Was Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God? - - - - -	40
19.	Is there a conflict between science and religion? - - - - -	39
34.	How far should one be independent of the traditions of the race? - - - - -	36
7.	Does man have free will? - - - - -	35
30.	Are there such things as miracles? - - - - -	32
21.	How does one find the best religion? - - - - -	32
16.	What is energy? - - - - -	31
10.	What is passing and what is permanent in human life? - - - - -	29
20.	What do the other religions of the world believe? - - - - -	27
27.	Are there celestial beings and angels? - - - - -	26
17.	The nature of matter - - - - -	25
28.	Were Adam and Eve the first human beings? - - - - -	23
18.	The origin of the different races of man - - - - -	22
22.	Is there a unified explanation of the diversity of human experience? - - - - -	21
3.	What is spirit? - - - - -	20

TEN MOST INTENSIVE INTERESTS

25.	What is life after death like? - - - - -	42
6.	What is the nature and destiny of man? - - - - -	40
1.	The existence or nature of God - - - - -	36
14.	Is there intelligent life on other planets? - - - - -	35
5.	What is truth? - - - - -	33
24.	Does the human personality survive after death? - - - - -	33
11.	How did our universe and world come into being? - - - - -	30
12.	The origin of life on our planet - - - - -	29
33.	Are there moral laws? - - - - -	29
9.	Understanding the nature and function of the human mind - - - - -	28

TEN LEAST INTENSIVE INTERESTS

28.	Were Adam and Eve the first human beings? - - - - -	27
21.	How does one find the best religion? - - - - -	27
27.	Are there celestial beings and angels? - - - - -	25
18.	The origin of different races of man - - - - -	21
20.	What do the other religions of the world believe? - - - - -	21
22.	Is there a unified explanation of the diversity of human experience? - - - - -	20
17.	The nature of matter? - - - - -	19
31.	Was Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God? - - - - -	18
3.	What is spirit? - - - - -	17
16.	What is energy? - - - - -	15

(Where weights were the same ranking was determined by internal item pattern.)