

PERSPECTIVE

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EDITORIAL

Perspective is a magazine produced for teachers in M.S.C. schools to enable them to share ideas with one another and to be aware of developments in education both in our own schools and elsewhere. It may also help to promote a unity of purpose and a sense of identity.

All teachers, lay and religious, are welcome to contribute articles or to comment on previously published articles. It is hoped that four numbers will appear each year. Articles for publication should be forwarded to the Editor of *Perspective*, P.O. Box 84, Dickson. Articles by persons not associated with our Colleges will also be published, where they appear stimulating and relevant to our work.

In this edition, Paul Brooks shares with us his experience and convictions about boarding schools, while Harold Baker explains the Teacher-Advisor system of pastoral care, which at least deserves consideration as a method of improving our approach to guidance and counselling.

No doubt some will have reservations about the wisdom of producing another educational magazine. However, the involvement of the readers will ensure its success. This is a time of educational change; there are many interesting things happening in all States; may we hear about them.

James J. Littleton

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COVER DESIGN

Anamorphic portraits in a landscape: Charles V, Ferdinand I, Pope Paul III and Françoise I. To discover the portraits hold the page at right angles to your eye. From a woodcut by Ehrhard Schon
(c.1490-1542).

THE TEACHER-ADVISOR

BY HAROLD BAKER, MSC, B.Ed

Most of the schools I visited were independent schools, but not all — Wilde Lake High School, North Quincey High School and Luton Form VI College are important “public schools”. These are public schools that have freedom to move and are trying to solve current problems in a creative way. It was difficult to visit “public” schools in a profitable way. They were generally not interested in visitors. However, what I am setting out in this paper is what I think the independent schools and the more creative government schools in America and England have to teach us in Australia.

The 14 schools I found to have the Teacher-Advisor Scheme working well were: Archbishop Williams H.S. (Boston), Bishop Carroll H.S. (Calgary), Bishop Monogue H.S. (Sacramento), Catlin Gabel School (Portland), Lansing Central Catholic H.S. (Lansing), Luton Form VI College (Luton), Marian H.S. (Boston), North Quincey H.S. (Boston), Phillips Academy (Andover), Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter), Pius H.S. (Los Angeles), Regis H.S. (Denver), The Tatnall School (Wilmington), Wilde Lake H.S. (Columbia).

The only school to consider and decide against the introduction of a Teacher-Advisor Scheme was Mercy Academy, Louisville, Kentucky. This is a vigorous school run on the Model Schools Project lines, but does not have the Teacher-Advisor groups. The same thing is being accomplished in an unstructured way due to the small size of the school (420 students, girls, in Grades 7 - 12) and to its informal atmosphere. The girls do approach and talk with whatever member of staff they wish.

THE TEACHER ADVISOR

The most persistent idea that came through to me from all the schools I visited was the “TEACHER-ADVISOR” system. In this system each teacher is responsible for the academic guidance of some 20-25 students. To many Australians this could be a relatively new idea. A few schools in Australia have adopted this system as a somewhat innovative idea and seem to have it working well, but it is by no means the accepted Australian pattern. The “Teacher-Advisor” system is not the same as what is currently known in Australia as “Pastoral Groups” nor is it something that replaces the work of Guidance Counsellors. Australian schools are still grappling with the problem of maintaining adequate pastoral care in schools that are growing bigger and becoming more impersonal. In North America and England this seems no longer to be a problem: it was 5 - 10 years ago. The Teacher-Advisor System is now the accepted solution. Even those schools who do not have it in practice (or who are not big enough to need it) accept the fact that it is the answer to the pastoral care problem.

Of the 30 I visited 14 schools have the Teacher-Advisor System working well; one only does not have it of set purpose as it is too small to need it. Of the remaining schools many could have it firmly established but did not mention it. It was not until I had already finished visiting a number of schools that the importance of the Teacher-Advisor System on the American scene began to dawn on me. After that I began to ask about it when the subject was not brought up spontaneously. The initial reactions to my question pointed to the fact that these schools no longer regard it as a special feature worthy of mention to someone looking for new ideas. It is taken so much for granted in North American education, it is no longer innovative.

The 14 schools with whom I did discuss the Teacher-Advisor system were quite varied in nature; from the most prestigious private school, Phillips Exeter Academy, to the "newer" public schools like North Quincey High School, Boston; from the all-boy "college-prep" Jesuit Regis High School, Denver, to the more comprehensive co-ed Lansing Catholic Central High School, Michigan; also the Luton VI Form College in England.

The Teacher-Advisor concept is regarded by these schools not so much as a peripheral feature of the school as "crucial to the success of the school" (Wilde Lake High School), "one of its most important and significant aspects" (Pius X High School), "the Key to the whole programme" (Lansing Catholic High School) — "the whole school could not function without pastoral care in the tutor groups" (Luton VI Form College).

THE PRACTICE

What the "Teacher-Advisor" scheme means in practice varies in minor details from school to school. About the main issues there is considerable agreement:

1. Almost all teachers on the staff are "Teacher-Advisors" (in places they may be called "Teacher-Counsellors" or just "Tutors", but the most universally accepted name is "Teacher-Advisor" or just "T/A"). At Bishop Carroll High School new teaching staff are appointed firstly on their ability to be successful "academic advisors" and secondly on their teaching ability in a subject area.

2. Each Teacher-Advisor has a group of 20-25 students to look after. (One or two schools would go as far as 30-35 students). These have three possible forms:

- (i) All the students in the group are from the one Year (Horizontal). 20-25 students are appointed to a T/A in Year 1 of High School and the group and T/A remain intact for the 4 years of High School (as at Lansing High School).
- (ii) All the students are from the one Year but the T/A changes each year (again Horizontal). 20-25 students are appointed to a T/A each year. (Both the students and the T/A may change each year (as in Regis High School).
- (iii) The group is made up of 5 or more students from each Year of High School (Vertical). 5 or more students from each incoming Year 1 are appointed to a T/A group and stay with this group and with this T/A all through High School. This "Vertical" and "permanent" division into T/A groups is by far the most common form I met.

(The pros and cons of each of these three forms of division will be discussed later in this paper.)

3. Each T/A group meets as a group every morning for 10-15 minutes in a "home room" (or in some other such station) and also, in a few cases, for a full class period once a week. During the daily meeting the T/A attends to normal home-room duties (checks attendance, distributes the daily bulletin, makes announcements of school information, attends to any disciplinary or administrative notes handed to him/her about his advisees, checks that his/her advisees are up to date with their work, assignments, etc.).

4. The T/A meets regularly (once every 4-6 weeks) each of his/her advisees for a face to face interview for "academic advisement". Together they discuss the student's academic life of the moment and he helps the student to make wise academic decisions. In some schools teachers have one period programmed each week for this individual "conferencing". At Luton VI Form College teachers are

expected to stay late one afternoon each week for this purpose. Lansing Catholic High School requires each T/A to submit to the Principal every 6 weeks a log of individual conferences held, stating the length of each interview.

5. Apart from these group and individual meetings, the T/A acts as a "central agent" for their advisees' other teachers. Any teacher goes firstly to a student's T/A. The T/A takes the matter up at the daily morning group meeting or at an individual interview. Likewise, the T/A collects evaluative information from the teachers and hands it on to the student. The T/A initially talks to the student's parents, to a prospective employer or a College representative. The T/A writes the reports on his advisees. At Wilde Lake High School the T/A even follows up the progress of his advisees after they have left school and thus gains complete information for the school's records.

6. Teachers (at Luton and Lansing) are trained for this role of T/A by the school's professional Counsellors during some form of in-service training. Marian High School and Lansing Catholic High School produced a very complete "working handbook" for the guidance of teachers in this role.

7. T/A's are academic advisors only and do not handle personal problems for which they are not trained professionally. They refer students to the other school specialists where needed — to the Counsellor, to the Chaplain, to the Careers Advisor. For this purpose the T/A is guided by the Counsellor to be sure about what to refer on and about the symptoms of problems he should not handle. Wilde Lake High School has three "clusters" of T/A groups — 15 groups in each cluster with one school Counsellor to each cluster. The T/A consults the Counsellor assigned to his cluster for advice or help. Once a fortnight the "cluster" Counsellor meets with each of the T/A's in his cluster.

8. The T/A usually handles most disciplinary matters with his advisees and most matters usually end with this. However serious breaches and matters he cannot handle satisfactorily are handed on to the appropriate person.

9. A comprehensive list of T/A duties found in most schools is given in this extract from the Lansing Catholic High School's Handbook for Teacher-Advisors".

DUTIES OF TEACHER-ADVISORS FOR GRADES 9 - 12

Teacher-advisor shall:

Conduct routine interviews as outlined which shall:

1. Help the student to examine his abilities, personality traits, and interests as they may pertain to his present and future plans;
2. Help the student to consider other information about himself as it relates to his future vocational and educational plans;
3. Assist the student to make educational plans for himself;
4. Encourage the student to investigate the personal and educational requirements for the occupations he is considering.

Conduct interviews as necessary which shall:

- Help the student to plan and schedule studies and activities he needs and wants to pursue in school;
2. Aid the student in learning to present information about his abilities, training, characteristics, and experience to employers in a convincing manner;
 3. Determine credit status of the student. If seniors are short credit and graduation is in jeopardy notify the Assistant Principal;
 4. Help the student to plan the use of his unscheduled time;
 5. Inform the student about academic, occupational, and L.C.C. financial aid information;
 6. Serve as a follow-up person on academic progress of students especially relating to deficiency notices, deficient grades and incomplete work.

Perform other services for the student:

1. Work with the teacher and the student in planning meaningful motivational and quest projects;
2. Work with the disciplinarian in solving education-based discipline problems;
3. Aid in job placement in co-operation with the school's job placement officer;

4. Visit homes when such visits will be beneficial to the student;
5. Provide the opportunity for the parent to discuss the student's educational plans and progress;
6. Aid the student to set weekly goals;
7. Participate in case conferences;
8. Prepare college applications and turn them in to the Counselling Director;
9. Refer students to the Counselling Services Office (referral should occur immediately when the student repeatedly returns to you, has a personal or social problem, when it is not known how to advise a student);
10. Refer the student to the Counselling Services Director when it is felt an agency referral is necessary;
11. Refer student names to the Counselling Services Director for referral to the Student Development Centre;
12. Keep an updated record of student progress;
13. Refer students to the Counselling Services Director to arrange alternative educational plans.

THE RATIONALE

The Primary goal of the Model School Project is the development of a more humane school. Among the characteristics of a humane school is that every human being is cared for, known and valued by at least one other person." (Trump and Georgiades). "The Christian attitude demands the recognition of the worth and dignity of each person in striving to know the person as an individual and in helping him to gain knowledge of himself." (Lansing Catholic High School). This type of concern for the individual seems now to be paramount in the thinking of the creative schools in both North America and England.

If this is to be real, a student must be part of a group small enough for some member of the staff to be able to get to know him/her as a whole person and to be able to become interested in his academic life. To do this the teacher must be able to talk to the student frequently, to collect information from other teachers and come to know the home environment.

"Academic advising is a system which attempts to help the student to feel that his/her academic progress is a matter of interest and concern to teachers as well as parents. If a student is to feel that a teacher cares about his/her academic life, then the student must be talked with. Likewise, if a teacher is to talk with the student, then the teacher must have time to do this. To accomplish this, each teacher is assigned no more than 25 advisees." (Marian High School "Handbook" on the Advisor System).

There is "...the need for arrangements whereby every student is known by someone who doesn't have to consult a file to talk to him, his parents, a prospective employer or a College representative about his total educational picture." (Trump and Georgiades)

The student must be "constantly aware that his advisor is at his side — and on his side". (The Teacher Advisor" Trump and Georgiades.)

"It is increasingly important in our times as schools have become larger and larger that every pupil in the school be known as a total human being by someone and you can't know these people unless you have reason to know them." (from an address by Dr. Trump at Bishop Carroll High School. High School.

To develop as a human person, a student needs:

* No school I visited had a daily school or even "divisional" assembly. The business of the day (roll-call, announcements, etc.) was handled by the daily "home room" meetings. Usually each "home room" teacher or T/A was issued with a printed "daily bulletin" when he/she arrived for the day. In a few cases these came over the P.A. during the "home room" meeting and, in one case (Riordan Catholic High School) live news-type programmes came over the class room T.V. screens — all produced in their T.V. centre.

- 1 someone to help him in coming to wise academic decisions concerning the use of study time, the choice of subjects and study habits.
- 2 someone to collect information about himself from other teachers and someone to talk this over with. The student can thus come to be realistic about his abilities and achievements by accepting evaluation.
- 3 someone to help him find his talents and interests, to help him to discover strengths and weaknesses and to help him to be realistic in the choice of a career.
- 4 a trusting and permanent relationship with someone who will be there with him throughout his entire High School career, helping him all that time in natural evolution of personality, the growth of values, attitudes and self-direction.
- 5 someone to interact with other teachers, parents, prospective employers, university admissions officers and any other people who come into the student's academic life.
- 6 someone to watch over his progress and to intervene at appropriate times.
- 7 someone to motivate him to achieve of his best.
- 8 someone with whom he can talk over his academic life at the moment — attendance, class loads, grades, assignments, study methods.
- 9 someone to reason with him in the first instance when he puts a foot out of line.
- 10 someone to liaise with the Counsellor or the Chaplain and, if necessary, to prepare the ground for him when he has to be referred on to one of them.

When this "someone" is lacking, a student can easily fragment. Some students will not, but some will. Most will profit enormously when they have this "someone".

THE TECHNIQUE

Over a period of years through a good deal of trial and error, techniques have evolved for a successful Teacher-Advisor scheme. These techniques have gradually been disseminated through the "Model School Project", through educational associations and through individual educationalists, especially Dr. Lloyd Trump. What appears below is the collection I made of this accumulated wisdom. No doubt there is a good deal I missed and a good deal that is being developed by the minute. Much of what follows in brief can be pondered more fully when Dr. Trump's paper and the T/A "Handbooks" of Lansing Catholic High School and Marian High School are reproduced in full.

1. Composition of T/A Groups Most schools have a "vertical" division of students. Each group has 5 - 6 students from each of the 4 years of High School. This vertical composition has the advantage of maintaining continuity and also the side benefit of the older students helping the younger ones to adjust and to solve some of their minor problems of school life. In some cases there is even remedial work going on, older helping younger within the group. A deep loyalty has grown up over the years among these vertical groups and a very real sense of belonging is present.

An interesting situation exists at Lansing Catholic High School. The staff are divided on the issue of "vertical v. horizontal" and have argued the pros and cons of this quite often for some time. At the moment there is a slight majority for the horizontal division. 25 students from the first year of High School are allocated to a T/A who stays with this group all the way through high school. The arguments that have won the day for this horizontal division are: teachers are not trained as guidance counsellors but they can at least become somewhat expert at what is needed at any one stage of a student's academic development.

2. "Academic Advisement" (not "Counselling"). Teachers are not professionally prepared to handle deep personal problems. They should not feel that the Teacher-Advisor scheme calls on them to handle such problems in any way nor should they attempt to try. Discussion with the professional School Counsellor may be needed for them to sort out the types of problems that fall into the "grey area" between the obviously "academic" and the obviously "personal". Teachers can develop a facility for directing a student on to see a Counsellor or Chaplain or Careers Advisor. Praising the Counsellor's ability to handle this sort of problem, pointing out the Chaplain's special understanding in such cases or the vast information available through the Career Advisor, offering to make an appointment, even offering to have a preliminary discussion with the Counsellor or Chaplain to ease the way if that is what the student would like — these approaches can all help.

Regis High School points out that, in fact, although the aim is "academic advisement", the T/A indirectly does good "counselling" in other areas. This probably would not happen if they were called "Counsellors"; they would then feel threatened and not be themselves.

3. Academic Life at the moment. Any problem that occurs usually concerns the individual interview part of the T/A scheme. The daily group meeting seems to flow along with the disseminating of necessary daily school information* following up minor disciplinary matters, asking individuals about their progress, making appointments for individual interviews. This daily contact, even for "business" or "non-related-to-T/A matters", helps build up the "rapport" necessary for successful individual interviews. How the T/A comes across each day determines how the advisees accept the T/A in a face-to-face interview. To recall from a previous section: a teacher cannot help a student unless he/she knows the student personally, he cannot come to know a student personally unless he talks to the student regularly and he cannot talk to him regularly unless he has reason to talk to him.

4. The Individual Interview. The individual interview can become stalemated or pointless unless handled properly. This is not too difficult if what makes up the whole scene of the student's academic life is kept before the T/A's awareness.

The topics needing discussion at these interviews are:

- * kinds of grades the student is receiving
- * homework and learning or memory-work
- * assignments — are they on time?
 - long-term assignments — are they properly planned?
 - allocation of time
- * independent study time
- * use of free ("unscheduled") time
- * study habits
- * school activities
- * school projects
- * current school issues

At the end of one year (or semester or school term) and at the beginning of the next, there will need to be a good deal of discussion about units and subjects, about the way long-term academic and career plans are working out, about wise choices of subject, about class loads and study programs.

Handling an Interview: The student has to come to see that the interview is worthwhile. Students are human and will always respond to someone who is interested and concerned about them as persons and about their academic life. A regular face-to-face meeting is necessary for this. The arrangement for this meeting needs to be made by the T/A and not just left to the student to come along when "it's about time for us to have another talk." How often this individual interview takes place varies from school to school, within limits. One or two have these interviews as frequently as every 2 weeks, one or two others as far apart as every 6 weeks. Most schools are somewhere in between — about once a month.

The length of the interview is held as important. Too short and the student will think the T/A is not really interested. Furthermore, too short an interview indicates that the T/A's interviewing technique is faulty. An individual interview of 15 minutes seems to be regarded as an optimum. Should the student want longer, it appears better to arrange for him/her to come back later (even that same day) to pursue the matter fully. A 15 minute slot for the interview indicates to the student that at least that amount of time is his and that the T/A is concerned enough to allot that length of time and not hoping that he will be able to rush the interview through as quickly as possible and get on with something else. Furthermore any temptations the student may have at the time to shorten the interview as much as possible by being unresponsive are squashed. There are always the times when the student has something else he would rather be at at that time and wants to hurry the interview as much as possible.

* The "Model School Project" I will describe in detail in another report in another paper. Dr. Lloyd Trump was the initiator, the driving force and director of the Project.

There is usually no difficulty in maintaining a fruitful 15 minute interview — one that the student will look forward to — if the T/A makes sure to use “open questions” that generate discussion and comment. A closed question which is answered by a simple “Yes” or “No” finishes that point and moves the T/A on to the next question. Notice the difference between asking a question about a student’s long-term assignments in this way;

T/A: Did you finish that big assignment in History?

Student: Yes

(...No more to be said on that one.)

and, asking the same question in this way:

T/A: What kind of things did you do for that big assignment in History we were discussing last time?

Student: (This becomes a springboard for the student to begin talking about the way he studies.)

Again, instead of asking “Did you like it?” the T/A could ask “What did (or didn’t you like about it?”

Open questions encourage the student to talking about his own study habits and what he can do to improve them. “There is, however, no easy answer or magic formula for using proper questioning. Interviewing is a skill which can be developed and each advisor will discover, as his skills improve, how much more enjoyable an interview becomes.” (Marian High School “Handbook”)

Non-verbal communication is important. The tone of voice, sitting position, holding something while interviewing, permitting interruptions during the interview — all of these can tell the student how welcome or not he is and can create or destroy the atmosphere of real communication.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance. If it becomes known, through the efficient student grapevine, that a T/A has “leaked” information, no student will be comfortable with that teacher again. If it becomes necessary or helpful to talk about the student outside the interview, then the student’s permission must always be sought before any information from the interview is used. “Would you mind if I discussed this with.....?”

Although a T/A is an academic advisor he/she will end up sooner or later listening to personal problems that inevitably flow out when a good communicative and confidential relationship is established. At times the student has never before had anyone close enough to pour them out on. When this happens the T/A cannot usually cut the student dead without damaging the relationship. A sympathetic listening ear without probing can often be helpful and can indicate to the student that the T/A is really interested and leaves the way open for the T/A to then point out that he is really not the one to handle this sort of problem. Praising the Counsellor’s ability and skill in handling just such problems can be one way of putting the student at ease and opening the way for the student to approach the Counsellor (or Chaplain) directly or for the T/A to offer to make an appointment. Maybe the student might even want the T/A to have a preliminary discussion with the Counsellor or Chaplain. The T/A’s healthy and encouraging attitude towards the Counsellor or Chaplain will readily communicate itself to the students. Any lack of confidence or even mistrust will even more readily be communicated.

Sometimes a student does not bring up personal problems, but should nevertheless be referred to the Counsellor. This occurs when a student

- * is very shy and withdrawn
- * has consistently poor marks
- * is a perpetual disciplinary problem
- * constantly misses appointments
- * says one thing and does another
- * appears to be unusually tired most of the time
- * claims to be working hard but never has assignments in on time
- * is unusually unkempt
- * changes moods often and noticeably

(Marian High School)

The Teacher-Advisory System is working very efficiently in many of the schools I visited. The students are obviously the happier for it. However, it only works in schools where the T/A's believed in it enough to ride through the obstacles encountered in its introduction. This belief in the scheme's worth only came about by patient understanding of its aims, its need and its true value — an understanding that was slowly built up over some time by various forms of in-service programs for the T/A's during which there was time enough to discuss and assimilate. The patient and careful preparation of the "traditional" classroom teacher to be a successful T/A was the key to the success of the scheme. Once the teachers felt confident, competent and comfortable as T/A's, the scheme began to

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FURTHER REFERENCE

1. Paper "The Teacher Advisor" by William Georgiads and J. Lloyd Trump.
2. "Teacher-Advisor Guide — Lansing Catholic Central High School." — "Handbook" for Teacher-Advisors.
3. "The Advisor System" by Sheila Murphy Marian High School — "Handbook" for Teacher-Advisors

CONTEMPORARY BOARDING SCHOOLS

BY PAUL BROOKS, MSC

Almost nineteen years of association with boarding schools, in every conceivable capacity, has made its mark on me. It has convinced me of their value, of the continuing need for them. It has convinced me too that if they are to survive and continue to serve the community they need to be constantly re-invigorated.

If this is to happen the staff in particular need to be encouraged and supported. Too often they are surrounded by those who cannot imagine why anyone would want to commit himself to such a demanding way of life. Such people are inclined, if not to scoff, then at least to stand around like concerned relatives, awaiting for the demise of someone they regard as long-gone anyway.

If there is to be a regrowth of interest, then it must come firstly from those involved in the work. No one else will do it for them. One would have to suggest that such initiative has been sadly lacking. I know of only one meeting of housemasters, and I have never been able to find anything in print on the subject.

Perhaps it is not something that one can learn from books, perhaps it is too individualistic. It seems to me though that an intelligent person reads in order to be stimulated. He does not necessarily accept everything put before him; rather he evaluates, making comparisons with his own experience, accepting new ideas where they are helpful, being strengthened when he finds his own ideas and practices confirmed by others with similar experience.

This last point, that of being confirmed and strengthened by others, is probably most important. For the housemaster, involved as he is in the critical area of development and guidance of the young, can be excused for sometimes doubting whether or not he is on the right track. Surrounded by young people the housemaster can easily assume the role of God, knowing all and judge of good and evil, when too often his wisdom can be based on past practice and convenience, rather than on a realistic assessment of events.

To need to question traditions and attitudes can be as necessary for the housemaster as it is for the student. Indeed the survival of the institutions could well depend on it.

Faced as we are by almost total silence on a subject that deeply concerns the lives of thousands of students and parents, my purpose is two-fold. Firstly, to encourage all those involved in this work to take a long look at much of what they may have taken for granted, and be ever conscious of the need for improvement, and secondly to encourage debate and consideration.

It is something of a paradox that I should be taking this step right at the time when I am leaving the work; temporarily, I trust. Perhaps this is the first occasion that I have had time to give adequate consideration to it; possibly that may also be the reason why so many have done so little in the past.

I should make it plain that I am not leaving from any disillusionment or lack of interest; on the contrary, pressing needs in another area have created this situation. Perhaps I am motivated by a concern that when circumstances allow and I return to the work, that I will find it both vigorous and growing.

It is not my wish to be dogmatic in anything that follows. What is presented is simply the view of an individual, one who has received much satisfaction from his involvement in this work, and who almost despite himself has gained a measure of experience that may be helpful to others.

Part of my conviction is that to-day more than ever, it is necessary to involve the senior students in the full organisation of the boarding school. They have a most important role to play, not only for their own proper development, but also in aiding the growth of the younger students. They need to be fully involved, and they need to understand what is being attempted. Perhaps by having this paper in their hands, and taking part in discussions, they may come to a greater appreciation, and this will lead to more mature participation and cooperation.

WHY BOARDING SCHOOLS?

Statistics seem to indicate that boarding schools are losing ground. Losses in total numbers are small, but with general growth in population they would need to be showing a relative growth, in order to be seen to be in a healthy state.

The reasons for the apparent stagnation are numerous. Not the least is the improvement in facilities in country areas, and the drift from the land. A number of boarding schools were established to cater for the needs of country folk, and whilst the need remains, it is far less pressing than formerly. Rising costs have also made it difficult for boarding schools to remain within the reach of a large section of the community. Wage rises and the labour intensive nature of the activity have forced costs up at an alarming rate. Country schools in particular are very sensitive to the economic well-being of the rural community, and all of them are affected by the general movements of the economy.

In Catholic schools the question of personnel has been important. Religious congregations are not getting the numbers that they need to meet the demands, and the recently emancipated Religious are becoming increasingly aware of the heavy demands that staffing these institutions places on them. A certain disillusionment has become evident in some quarters. I would attribute this disillusionment in no small measure to the failure of those engaged in the work to put their thinking caps on and attempt to analyse the trends, the needs, the whole rationale of boarding schools. Those who believe and who are actively engaged in the work have a responsibility in this matter.

Everyone can recognise the changing patterns in enrolments. They should be able to recognise too that a new set of needs has arisen, ones that are just as real and pressing as that of serving the rural community in times past.

Great social changes have taken place and are continuing, almost before our eyes. The removal of the stigma attached to the children of unmarried mothers, the acceptance of divorce by the community, the encouragement, or even the necessity for mothers to take up careers and return to work — these are but three changes which the social reformers see as promoting the freedom of the individual. The often fail to recognise however that not everyone is well served by these changes, and that young people in particular can be put to considerable disadvantages and confusion.

The demands of academic excellence too can produce situations where the student finds it difficult to work effectively in his home environment, surrounded as he is by complexities of family life, or the distractions that are so readily available. At the same time, the development of service industries and of government has produced a large number of families constantly on the move, either within Australia or internationally. The need for stability in the education of their children is easily seen.

Many parents are finding that the difficulties of raising children, particularly adolescents, are beyond them; they cannot make the necessary adjustments and are somewhat fearful that their inability may prove disastrous to future relations. Others again, who are not suited to the parental role at all, are coming to recognise the damage they are capable of inflicting. There are others too who suffer from the stresses and strains that survival in a complex society can produce, leading one or other partner to suffer nervous or emotional breakdown, and leading to difficult family life. The list could extend considerably. The point I am making, however, is that society needs to have the option of boarding schools; and to be effective boarding schools need to be in a healthy and vigorous state.

Many people are convinced of the advantages that a boarding school environment offers to their children. Often this will flow from memories of their own experience, the gains they felt they made in their early years, and their natural desire to want their children to have the same start.

One of the advantages they see is the beneficial effect of living closely with a wide cross-section of people; there can be little doubt that this is a great preparation for life. Further there is the need to stand on one's own feet, something that success in a boarding school can cultivate. People may feel strongly that they want their children to be protected from harmful influences in society, especially in their local area, until they have sufficient maturity to deal with them. They may be concerned about religious values, and indeed this can often rate highly in their estimation. They may not be able to secure a Christian education in their own area, and many will go to great lengths to supply it.

One cannot underestimate the effort that many parents undertake to give their children the advantages they seek. Some are fortunate enough to be able to do it without much effort but I would suggest though that they are fewer than is commonly believed. The price in deprivation and sacrifice that these parents pay places a great responsibility on the schools to do their part well.

Boarding schools which endeavour to accept students from every strata of society do manage to achieve a real life environment, one that is free of prejudice, one in which status and rank seem very unimportant and where one learns to look then for the quality of the person. To live through such an experience can be very enriching indeed.

The normality of the situation makes it very suitable to supply the needs of children who are disadvantaged in one of many ways. Influences that are missing or badly applied in their lives can be compensated for. There is also great potential for social work, by supplying almost inconspicuously for the inadequacies of society at large, and thus circumventing potentially difficult behavioural problems in later life.

These institutions too have the capacity for correcting mal-adjustment in many forms, in an atmosphere of care, concern and normality. Welfare agencies find this difficult to duplicate.

Hence, those who are fortunate to be able to work in this difficult, but rewarding endeavour, should take heart that their efforts contribute much towards the development of tomorrow's generation, and towards correcting the imbalances ever present in our mixed and complex society.

SYSTEMS

I should like to deal in this section with the type of boarding arrangements that I feel is working towards the ideal.

Every housemaster brings to the house something of his own personality and character. No man can fit comfortably into another's shoes and should not attempt to. The varied approaches that are brought to the task generally enliven it and bring to it a freshness that would otherwise be missing. On the other hand one too often sees new men going through the same old mistakes, unwilling to learn from those before them. Unfortunately it is most often the students who suffer most.

Allowing for different approaches there are some basic areas where variations may occur; the most important of these is the vertical as opposed to horizontal structures. Horizontal organisation means that students are housed within distinct dormitories or areas, and associate largely with those of their own forms and age group. Vertical organization means that students are formed into houses in which a wide variety of ages is represented. Even within this system there can be areas of horizontal organisation, but generally a mixing of various ages is sought.

I have had the good fortune both to have lived with boy systems beginning with the horizontal and later setting up a vertical arrangement. There is no doubt in my mind that the vertical approach is better, and I shall endeavour to explain why.

Left to themselves students would probably choose a horizontal system. There is a sense of security when the whole form is together, the old strength in numbers bit, and the leaders feel they can best give effect to their leadership under these circumstances. Students also find that in such groups they all have similar tastes and that they tend to have similar values and to think alike. They feel too, incorrectly I would suggest, that a tangible unity exists within the form, and that dangers of factionalism and disintegration are lessened.

It seems to me that the very things students count as assets make horizontal structures less desirable. The gathering together of a large number of the one age group tends to exclude ideas and judgements which are beyond the reach of its experience. Its horizons become rather limited and there is a tendency to get carried away with what the group judge to be proper at the time. However convinced one may be that time will change their point of view, the students can be incapable of comprehending this, and problems flow therefrom. Because they tend to think alike, something which interests them at the time will tend to involve the majority, both those who are interested, and others who fear to be left out of it, or who might be thought to be swimming against the tide.

Supervision needs to be more constant and can be more difficult since even the leaders on whom one might place responsibility find it hard to go against the mass movement. From the disciplinarian's point of view, one finds that action taken against an individual can be interpreted as being a policy against the whole form. One must remember that anything one says or does will be quoted, with flourishes, and most often out of context, and in great detail. One can also become unduly suspicious of the student who associates with students from another form or age, concluding that this indicates an inability to relate to his peer group, and overlooking the probable fact that he may have found someone of similar interest and maturity level.

In the horizontal system students find themselves moving from one housemaster to another on at least a yearly basis. This is damaging to continuity, and also raises the problem that if the particular student does not relate successfully to the new housemaster, he may have to go elsewhere since there is probably one housemaster per form.

Preoccupation with the value of their own thoughts can lead one form to antagonism with other forms, something which can reach quite serious levels, and can be destructive of real community throughout the school. At the same time the alleged activities of seniors can give juniors a false set of values.

The vertical approach immediately establishes a hierarchy of authority within the house. This reduces the work of the housemaster. When one reduces the numbers in a particular age group and places them in company with others of varying ages and experience, it becomes more difficult to get the whole group or even a large section of it, to agree on a particular line of action or attitude. What seems crushingly important to some is of no interest to others, either because they have already seen past it, or because they have not yet got to the stage when those things are important. The immediate effect of this is the creation of a self-disciplining force within the house, leading to less need for intervention by the housemaster.

Another advantage is that students learn from the disinterest of others to take another look at their own ideas, to re-evaluate them, and this can have a powerful formative effect. One can tell students time and again that they will eventually change their opinions, given more experience and maturity. They will not believe you. When they see it in the daily lives of their older fellow students the statement has more effect and they can believe.

In a vertical structure sixth formers and other leaders have more opportunity to develop real qualities of leadership. Forced to rub shoulders with those whom they must direct, they find it somewhat more difficult to force the issue, especially when those under them are keenly aware of their personal shortcomings, and of the fact, hitherto largely unknown, that the seniors too are subject to discipline. The senior student soon becomes aware, rather to his distaste that respect is something that one must earn. It can be very frustrating, it is very formative, and for those who set out to come to terms with it, most beneficial.

The housemaster finds that he has more time to treat with individuals as persons. One has to keep reminding oneself which particular form a student is in, largely because it ceases to be that important. One has more freedom to deal with a person as an individual, since the other members of the house don't seem to see one's actions as directed against the whole form, but simply against a particular student. One finds too that the student can develop at his own pace, not having to measure up so closely to the performance of his classmates.

A problem that suggests itself is that of fagging, using the juniors as personal servants. I have not personally encountered any problems of bad association between senior and junior students, although I readily admit that it could occur; but watchful care should prevent such problems.

Having more than one house makes it possible for students to be placed in an environment more suited to them. They can avoid, for instance, personal conflict with a particular master. Each house soon develops its particular spirit and some are more suited to one than another. Time soon sorts this out.

The housemaster has the advantage of being able to treat with varying age levels. He can avoid the crushing effect of being bound to a particular age group. As time passes the students become aware of his changing attitude in their regard, one that takes account of their growing maturity, and this leads them to greater respect for his person. The housemaster is also able to witness at first hand, the growth of the student, and this can be very rewarding.

The vertical method more closely resembles the family, where one finds varying ages and sexes, living and growing together. Almost imperceptibly the same sort of growth occurs after the introduction of the vertical structure; one senses a family attitude developing as the students begin to take each other more for granted, learning to cope with the real difficulties that different schedules can create.

The problem of different programs can seem to be almost insurmountable. Obviously the junior students cannot follow the same schedule as the seniors. They soon learn to come to terms with the inconvenience however, and indeed it is a necessary experience for them to be taught that they must make allowance for others, that they can't simply let off steam just because they feel like it.

Major domestic problems such as theft seem to be more readily solved in the vertical arrangement. Junior students are much more ready to inform older students of what they know than they would be to tell the housemaster. It is amazing how quickly one can find something out if one goes to the right person. I am not suggesting that everything can be solved in this manner, but it is often very helpful.

One of the problems facing many institutions today is that of growth. Especially when a College is not so old, one constantly hears past students decrying how different it has become, how they used to know everyone, and now it is too big.

The problem is real; small groups are much more pleasant. But recurrent costs in small schools have become proportionately enormous. We need not conclude though, that because the total number is large, that therefore we must accept the impersonalising effect this can have. By sectioning off the school into more reasonable groups, we can seek, and I would suggest find, many of the attributes that students of yesteryear found so attractive.

Naturally enough, no home with say 100 members in the family can ever be really like an ordinary home. However it is amazing how closely it can resemble it. The housemaster must strive to establish a homely atmosphere and much will depend on his attitude, his patience and endurance. Though the task is formidable, it should not be daunting.

ORGANISATION

Having already indicated my preference for vertical structures I outline such a system. I assume there is a large number of boarders, and consequently more than one house.

- Headmaster
- Senior
- Housemaster
- Assistant Housemaster
- House Captain
- House Vice Captain
- 6th Form group leaders
- 5th Form assistants
- Junior members of the house

Senior Housemaster

The senior housemaster is directly responsible to the headmaster. In effect his position is similar to that of a deputy headmaster, except that his functions are limited to the boarding side of the College. It is important that he have ready access to the headmaster, and that he be consulted on matters of moment concerning the whole school.

His position would become untenable if decisions were made about which he is not fully informed, not only because he may have something of value to contribute, but also that he may not be embarrassed when something leaks out of which he has no knowledge. The students need to feel they are dealing with someone in real authority, one who has the confidence of the headmaster, and who feels free to act in just about all circumstances.

The senior housemaster is responsible for the other houses also, and should seek to co-ordinate, without interfering, the internal operations of the other houses. There is need for uniformity in some areas, e.g. dress, program, leave. In consultation with the other housemasters he sets these out.

Serious questions of discipline are brought to him for consultation and or action. It becomes obvious at times that a certain situation is unusual and must be passed on to a higher authority. There are times though when a situation needs to go beyond the particular housemaster, but not necessarily to the headmaster. Most often the headmaster will be fully informed by the senior housemaster, but the students need not know this, and the headmaster has much more freedom to arbitrate at a later stage, if necessary.

Housemasters

The Housemaster is responsible for everything that concerns his house. He is answerable directly to the senior housemaster and then to the headmaster. He must see to the internal organisation of the house, everything that concerns the training of students, the spirit and practice of discipline, and be personally responsible for the care and welfare of all students in his house. He may delegate particular responsibilities to others.

Assistant Housemaster

The assistant may have special areas to look after, such as a special care for the junior members, or the organization of housework. There needs to be the closest co-operation between the housemaster and the assistant, and students should see this. Then the assistant can expect and receive the fullest co-operation, when the housemaster is absent.

It is important for the students that there be at least two adults fairly readily available to them. Although the assistant must support the housemaster, this does not mean that he cannot offer a sympathetic ear to a student in trouble. Many times I have worked in this fashion with my assistant. By pre-arrangement when something nasty has to be done, I would take the role of the taskmaster and the assistant would act as the relief valve, helping the student to accept whatever decision or action has been taken.

The fact of having two is also important in maintaining perspectives. One can very readily get carried away over something; discussion with another adult can alter one's perspective.

House Captain

The house captain should be chosen by the members of the house, but must be someone with whom the housemaster can work easily. He will influence greatly the spirit of the house. The way in which he carries out his duties, his approach to problems, the respect he shows to authority, all of these will have a far reaching effect on the other students. He must be a good organiser, he must be able to correct where necessary, particularly his peers. He must be the one who cares and is concerned about his fellow students. He must not only organize activities smoothly within the house, but also sense trouble areas, take action to correct where possible, and keep the housemaster fully informed of everything of interest.

A sensitive house captain will become very quickly aware if someone is having a hard time from others; he will probably know too the cause of the problem; and he can often use his influence to solve

it. If some students are embarking on a dangerous course of action he may feel compelled either to intervene or bring it to the attention of the housemaster. He will soon find that many confused students will drop problems in his lap, unsure of just what to do; he can advise and take action.

Assistant House Captain

His duties are an extension of those of the house captain, and in many ways he will be seen to complement the captain in areas of personality and activity where he may not be strong. He may too represent a particular faction in the senior year, and this can be helpful.

Sixth Form Group Leaders

I favour the idea of having groups to perform things like housework. It helps considerably in the organisation, since they soon get to know each other, and less time is spent in sorting things out.

It also provides more outlets for the sixth formers to exercise authority and leadership. There are always those whom one might hesitate to entrust with the responsibility of being a prefect or the like, but who have real qualities of leadership, particularly in practical areas, and often in communication with junior students.

Fifth Form Assistants

It is especially in these groups that one gets the opportunity to train 5th form students in qualities of leadership and responsibility. Fifth formers often complain that they do not get enough responsibility, and this is one way in which something can be offered them.

Delegation

Although the housemaster bears the responsibility for all aspects of the house, he should seek to delegate particular responsibilities. Such things as putting the students to bed, checking dress, tidiness of dormitories, can be quite well done by seniors. It is not just a matter of making life easy for the housemaster; students should be trained, both in learning to direct and in learning to take directions from their fellow students. The housemaster needs to be constantly available to the students, and involvement with the minutiae of everyday activities will tend to prevent this. A problem the seniors face in exercising responsibility is that of penalties for non-compliance. It does not accomplish much to tell them to 'send them to me' if they don't co-operate. They get the idea that this demeans them in the eyes of their fellows and hence they would rather not. They will of course if the matter is serious, but as often as not it isn't. To report the student would be making too much of it, and they shy away from this. They need at their disposal some system of penalties which they can impose and feel confident to do so, without having to justify their position too much.

If one ignores the problem of giving them a system of penalties which are meaningful and easy to work with, then they will begin to experience frustration and will probably seek to remedy the situation in their own way. One sees things like 'kangaroo courts' springing up. In themselves these can be rather harmless, but they tend to get reported out of all context, and the results can severely damage relationships within the house.

STUDENT — STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

Two aspects concern me here. The first is the approach adopted by new house staff in establishing themselves with students and the second is the relationship between the housemaster and other members of staff.

A new member of staff must try to establish himself in the minds of students, in such fashion as to win their co-operation and respect, and thus be able to work effectively towards their formation. Mention is made under 'discipline' of the need simply to be oneself. That may seem a difficult operation, when one has to be fairly self-assured. Faced with a veritable horde of potential enemies, and influenced by such things as 'generation gap' and the allegedly non-conformist reputation of students, one's self-confidence can rapidly disappear. Early days in the encounter are critically important since first impressions are not easily forgotten, and can keep coming back to haunt a person.

One early mistake that can occur is that of trying too hard. A person can become somewhat anxious for signs of acceptance and success. The temptation to reach students at their own level can be very strong, and one can find new staff doing all sorts of odd ball things, even to wrestling, with the students. Overfamiliarity soon develops, followed by various crises in discipline, wherein one showing on the other by one's participation, that one does not really impose the same standards on oneself.

It has always seemed to me to be a mistake to assume that students expect adults to try hard to reach down to them. They are constantly trying to establish a concept of adult behaviour that they can live with. They realise too, that while they have adult pretensions, they are constrained by juvenile influences which cause them to think and act the way they do. When they see an adult taking part in something which they themselves see as juvenile, I think they are disappointed. It will be difficult for them later to approach that adult in search of mature advice, when they are not sure that he is mature. They find it difficult to comprehend how people can switch roles. Why should the person with whom they were wrestling only a few hours ago, now suddenly be standing them up in a rather formal setting, demanding respect and compliance? I'm afraid it's a little too much to expect from them.

I am not suggesting that one should never recreate with students. They need to see the lighter side of our personality if they are to have a balanced picture. One can often meet with them informally, but one should be careful not to intrude. There will be times when they just want to talk amongst themselves, to give vent to the exaggerations that characterise their age group, and the presence of an adult can put them off. To expect a ready welcome in every setting is asking too much. We can use our own experience as the best guide. There are times when we naturally seek the company of other adults, ones with whom we can relax and have more mature conversations. At these times we resent the intrusion of young people, whereas, at other times we might welcome the diversion. They feel the same way, and we must respect their right to privacy and enjoyment of their own company.

Another mistake, at the other end of the spectrum, is to adopt an attitude that is too stiff, too formal, becoming unapproachable. It is as though one was fearful of allowing students too close in case they discover some weakness and fearful that familiarity will lead to a loss of respect. Obviously this is as harmful as the first mistake.

The ideal is somewhere between the two; the dominance of one or other aspects should be an accurate reflection of the personality of the individual. As I have suggested elsewhere, if that personality is allowed to come through, things will probably work out well. It is of course helpful to have an image. If by some mysterious standard one is judged to be O.K., then problems will be small indeed. The elements of that image that seem to impress most are sincerity, a sense of fairness and of humour, flexibility, integrity, consistency, firmness and understanding.

A colleague pointed out some time ago that the students seem to associate staff with some other activity than discipline. If one measures up in that context, then one is alright. This probably means that if you can convince them you are a truly human person, then they will tolerate you as a disciplinarian, and will in fact overlook considerable shortcomings.

Another aspect I should like to discuss is co-operation with other members of staff. It is impossible to do everything oneself, and it is good to accept the assistance of others in the staff. It is a depressing experience to encounter a housemaster who jealously clusters his chicks around himself, and allows no intrusions.

Students have to live in a world where a wide variety of authorities exercise control. They must learn to accept this, together with the realisation that different people can have different standards. Housemasters must accept the rights of others to exercise authority over their students in peripheral areas, and be prepared to back them up as needed. It is a little ridiculous for a housemaster to assume that only he fully understands his students, and hence only he is able to counsel and direct them. If by some means they are able to develop a sound relationship of trust and understanding with another member of staff and are inclined to discuss their problems with him, then so much the better.

Just as the staff have a right to expect that the housemaster will pay due regard to matters that they bring to his attention, so too, the staff need to trust the judgement of the housemaster, and not always be looking for their 'pound of flesh'. There are times when he will conscientiously feel that severity is not warranted, and his judgement has to be trusted. Lack of confidence in the housemaster by

other members of the staff can be most damaging to the overall effectiveness of the work, and is worth some little effort to maintain, e.g. by welcoming comment and by explaining house policies and problems.

DISCIPLINE

For some the word "discipline" sends shudders down the spine, as their minds conjure up rigidity, harshness, perhaps even militarism. For others it is part of a well-ordered existence, a mode of living which keeps things in their proper place.

Whatever our view of discipline, I think we all accept that we must have discipline. We all know that if we seek a specific goal, then we have discipline ourselves in order to achieve it. Nobody likes disorder or confusion in every day living, least of all students; hence discipline is particularly important in the boarding school. Viewed as a means to an end discipline becomes a rather flexible tool, and should be an extension of the personality of the disciplinarian.

In a college most of the staff have attributes and qualities which would fit them for close association with students, but very few seem able to survive in disciplinary roles. The prospect of pitting themselves against a large body of students, particularly senior students, can be very off-putting. I would venture to suggest that one of the main reasons why it seems so difficult is that people feel they will have to change their manner, that they will have to become someone else; and the image does not attract them. On the contrary, it seems to me that the most successful are those who just try to be themselves, those who don't go in for 'role playing'. I am not really saying that this is a task for everybody; obviously it isn't; but many more could be quite successful if their approach was different.

We might begin by asking what particular qualities are needed in a disciplinarian. I would suggest the following, not necessarily in order of importance.

- * sound common sense
- * ability to listen
- * empathy
- * firmness and consistencey
- * confidence in ones own judgement
- * a willingness to be straight with people
- * a good memory
- * a sense of fair play
- * a readiness to acknowledge mistakes.

Common Sense

Good judgement and common sense go together. There is no hope for a housemaster whose judgement is not respected by the students. He may manage to control the situation, but there will be little real communication beyond that point. Common sense keeps things in perspective. It is a mistake to assume that young people are unable to perceive relative values in situations; they will not always be 'spot-on', but sheer instinct will tell them when a 'mole-hill' is being turned into a 'mountain'.

People involved in discipline need to have some voice in deciding its form. There are few things more difficult than trying to enforce a system that one does not really accept. Once students see that the master does not agree with what he is enforcing, it is only a matter of time before it all breaks down. There will of course always be areas about which one has some doubts, e.g. regulations regarding dress or smoking. In practice these usually involve the speeding ticket type of offence, things the students have to learn to accept, just as does the rest of society; and such restrictions can have a formative effect.

Common sense will devise penalties and punishments that fit a particular offence. Most students in my experience accept the fact that penalties are due for certain conduct; generally they will demonstrate a good deal of manliness in accepting them.

Housemaster are too often faced with a major disciplinary problem because another member of staff has tried to impose a penalty that was unreasonable. The consequent refusal to accept the penalty can transform an otherwise harmless incident into a major one very quickly. This occurs most of-

ten when there is a history of unreasonable reactions by a particular member of staff, a history which has lead the student to reject, in advance, his judgement on almost any given subject. One usually finds that the student will readily enough concede the initial fault on his part, but the problem has grown out of all proportion into a case of defiance and disrespect towards staff; one is forced to act, but one doubts whether such action really helped the cause of the particular staff member. My point is that if better judgement were exercised in the first place, the problem would not normally arise.

Common sense and judgement can be exercised in incidents which require intervention, but which have a comical aspect. I hesitate to give examples since they so often sound rather flat when related after the event, but one incident comes to mind.

Early in the year some 5th formers, in a flush of new-found and ill-placed importance, decided to descend on the hapless 4th form and demonstrate their superior position. They decided to shave one leg of anyone unfortunate enough to fall into their hands; harmless enough really, but I have always taken a dim view of groups descending on individuals. As expected, things began to get out of hand and it was at this time that the matter came to my attention. My information was rather sketchy, and I was under the impression that only a few were involved. Summoning up all my authority I demanded that the culprits present themselves. To my surprise about 25 came forward. Investigation showed that there was little difference in responsibility between any of them. I was faced with the problem of what to do with such a large number. My only real concern was to discourage this kind of rampaging, and hence I sought to make the punishment fit the crime. I decided to make them shave one leg of each other. The timing was rather helpful, since the football season was about to start, and they were aghast at the prospect of appearing on the field with one bare leg. Nevertheless they accepted the penalty; they didn't have much choice really, and without exception managed to take it in good part. They had the distinct feeling that the whole thing had back-fired on them, and didn't quite know how to react.

It would of course be a mistake to set out to do odd things, but if one is alert then situations will arise where such things can be done, and if so it helps to create a good atmosphere and to make discipline more acceptable.

Ability to Listen

Most often students attempt to justify their own actions, at least in their own minds. I suppose their conclusions can be a result of lack of maturity or poor judgement or both. It is never wise to begin an interview convinced that one knows all the facts; one rarely does. No matter what consequences one may have planned for the offenders, the least one can do is give them the chance to put their story. Quite often, when faced with the opportunity they seem to suddenly realise that they don't really have much of a case, and may decide not to pursue it. In these circumstances, both the realisation of their error, and the decision not to pursue empty argument can be very salutary for them.

Further I would suggest that one should not attempt to argue the rights and wrongs of a situation when it has just arisen. Too often students will have more answers on hand than you will have, and the whole episode can develop into a slinging match which is absolutely unproductive. It is better to summon them at a later hour. The master will have had time to consider why he objects to the particular incident, and the student will have time at least to begin to realise that he was probably in the wrong.

It is not just a case of giving the impression of listening; one ought always be listening, not only to what they say, but also to what they don't say. It can be very revealing. So much of one's effectiveness in terms of real contact comes as a result of disciplinary encounters, and it is a pity to treat them off-handedly. Too many opportunities can be lost.

Empathy

I understand empathy as the ability to feel and experience with others. It is also connected with good memory which will be discussed later.

To exercise discipline in an unfeeling way would be for me the very end. A disciplinarian has to do hard things at times and a soft heart can be a dangerous asset. Nevertheless the ability to feel the guilt, the helplessness that a student feels, will help tremendously in making truly human decisions that have the best interests of the student at heart. Once a student understands that you really appreciate the way he feels, why he acts in a certain fashion, he will much more readily accept your decis-

ions and advice. Too often one finds that students are coming to you, upset not so much by what has been done to them, but rather by the fact that they feel misunderstood, that a wrong interpretation has been put on their actions. They may not even quibble over the consequences, what matters is that they are understood.

Firmness and Consistency

The young person in a boarding school has to stand on his own feet and establish his own values and ideals. He is aware that society questions many values and the educational process encourages him to have an enquiring mind. But he will respect the adult who has a set of standards and will live by them, the person who appears to know what life is all about. Hence he looks for attributes of firmness and consistency in his housemaster, qualities not marred by unreasonableness. If the housemaster lacks consistency, students become confused, and relationships within the college begin to break down.

Whatever one may say about modern youth, they respect strength. They may object to the impositions that it places on them, but they have an acute awareness of the consequences that would befall them if those in authority failed to take definite lines. They have an idea of what an adult man is. He is someone who knows it all, has self-assurance. They picture themselves arriving one day at that happy state. When they see an adult with whom they associate closely and whom they might otherwise admire, seeming to vary with the wind and easily manipulated, they are genuinely disappointed.

They crave stability, and nowhere more so than in the area of values and policy. One can forget any idea of respect once they detect signs of weakness and inconsistency.

Confidence in One's Own Judgement

Much of what I have said above applies here also. Anyone with a real appreciation of the responsibilities of the housemaster is liable to experience doubts and insecurity about the manner in which he is performing his duty. Nevertheless it is important that these doubts be not communicated to the students. They have to feel that wisdom can be found in the housemaster, in at least reasonable measure. Preparation for the job is essential, and transition from second-in-charge to that of housemaster is ideal. Good communication with the staff and especially with the headmaster is likewise critical. Everyone must learn, and accept the fact that this will mostly come through mistakes, hopefully not too serious. The process of confidence building starts when one is an assistant, and it is an important duty of the housemaster to cultivate it.

For the housemaster it is imperative that the headmaster is seen to support him; he does not have to be proved right on every occasion, but when it becomes normal for the headmaster to take a different line, then it may be time to resign. It is neither fair nor helpful to the students to allow such a situation to continue.

A Willingness To be Straight With People

One of the more difficult tasks of a housemaster is to tell a student exactly what is in your mind. Students crave for understanding; if they suspect that one has an opinion of them different from that presented to them, they will not believe anything one says. To be able to talk straight with people one must first have their respect, and one needs more than a passing knowledge of the person one is talking to. All this can take time, but must exist.

This is not something that can be considered in isolation from the other attributes I have suggested. Students place much value on honesty, even if they don't always choose to espouse it themselves. If all things are equal, it is amazing how straight one can be without doing any real damage to the relationship, that one may have worked so painstakingly to develop. To leave the student uncertain of what one is thinking can be cruelty, most often unjustifiable.

A Good Memory

By good memory I mean not just memory for incidents, but also the ability to remember how one felt and acted when one was their age and in similar circumstances, the sorts of ridiculous things that one did at their age. It does not mean that we have to condone things. In our day we were corrected too, and we can appreciate why. However it will help us to keep things in perspective and be somewhat more tolerant.

A Sense of Fair Play

For a variety of reasons young people have a highly developed sense of justice. They expect those in authority to play it by the book and to be fair, whatever that means. The axiom of 'justice appearing to be done' is very important with them.

A housemaster needs to be flexible; he has to take account of circumstances, not just in disciplinary questions, but in the purely domestic ones, such as giving a night off after a long hard day spent in some unusual activity, giving permission for special or even doubtful reasons. The ramifications are enormous, but it is part of a total approach. If one is judged to be fair by students, they will accept almost anything from you.

A Readiness to Acknowledge Mistakes

One could be forgiven for thinking that the housemaster should be all-wise, all-knowing, the very epitome of self-assurance. Perhaps that is the ideal, but we all know how different it is to attain, and how many mistakes one makes along the way.

Our aim is to win respect, and hence the co-operation of the student in the mutual tasks we have undertaken. None of them imagine that the housemaster is infallible. They know better than anyone else how prone he is to mistakes. Their disillusionment can be complete when they find, in the face of irrefutable evidence, that their housemaster lacks the grace to admit an error.

We are constantly telling our charges that they must apologise to this or that person and for all sorts of things. How hollow it must sound when they never hear an apology from us. If one has made a mistake, accused a student wrongly or the like, then one should hasten to set things right and admit the mistake. Not to do so will destroy so much good work.

PUNISHMENTS

No treatment of discipline would be complete without consideration of the purpose of punishments.

Experts seem to lay great distress on the positive nature of rewards as opposed to the negative influence of punishments. I can understand that, in a limited way, this may be effective with younger children. With older ones however it seems to me that there are not many rewards one can offer, other than that of treating them in an adult fashion. I see the situation in this way;

One treats each individual with a respect that recognises his maturity, unless his action has proven him unworthy of it. In this case one can try to indicate the lack of maturity, and hence the absence of respect he might otherwise enjoy. Secondly, young people have to be taught that 'for every action there is a reaction'. They must be brought to realise the consequences of their actions or omissions. Very often the things they do, cause real pain and suffering to others. If they had fully appreciated this, they would generally not have acted as they did.

Probably few would disagree about the need for punishment; it is the manner of punishment that causes concern, and particularly corporal punishment. To state things plainly let me say that I believe corporal punishment has a place, even with adolescents. Personally I could not agree with administering corporal punishment for failure in academic performance; and I have serious doubts as to its effectiveness in controlling classroom misconduct, although there may be a value in its being available. But the manner in which discipline is enforced in the boarding school, outside the classroom, is another matter, and students recognise it to be so.

Students pay more heed to what we do than to what we say. News travels fast in a boarding school and housemasters must recognise the need to indicate publicly their approval or disapproval of certain actions. Inaction will be interpreted as at least tacit approval. Endless confusion can result when this principle is not recognised. No matter how well one may have communicated with the particular student, no matter how convinced one may be that repentance has been achieved, one cannot afford to forget how others will interpret one's actions, and one should never doubt that all will be quickly aware that one has knowledge of certain events. Without wishing to labour the point then I would stress the need for clearly discernable punishments, and so we might look at some of the alternatives.

Extra Study

A punishment commonly used is extra study. There are times when this is very useful, especially when a large group is involved, or when a student has dodged study. However it can be overdone. Indeed at times it can take on an aspect of cruelty. Some students find study an absolute agony; even those who are reasonable students can find it a bit much at times. For someone who has already spent between three and four hours in study the prospect of more of the same can be too much to bear, and as I say, quite cruel.

Domestic Work

Boarding houses always have 'out of the way' areas, places which seem to suffer from neglect, however well one organises the housework. Work in these areas can be readily used for punishment, but to be effective it must be supervised, and not continue longer than seems relevant to the original offence.

I know of one young lad who was assigned to sweeping a court-yard for about eight weeks, culminating in his interfering in the car of the master who had committed him to the task. When I investigated why he had been given such an extraordinary long sentence it emerged that he had sometimes failed to fulfill his task, and so had been recommitted. Probably this was a fair enough decision, but the whole thing had built up in the mind of the student into a question of persecution, and he had lost sight of the original offence.

I have stressed the need for proper supervision of set work, and this can be a major problem. One can find that by the time the work is organised and supervised, the master is being penalised as much as the student.

Deprivation of Privileges

Deprivation of privileges is another form of penalty. This can be useful, especially if related to the particular offence; e.g. if someone breaks bounds, and is consequently denied the right to leave the College at times when it would otherwise be fairly normal. One has to be careful not to use this penalty too frequently. Some students need to get out, 'just to have a break' as they say. In fact the constraints of boarding school life may have let them into their first offence. Or, it might be helpful if they spent the weekend at home with their family. Such things as not allowing a student to go to a dance or social can be a most unreasonable punishment. To us it may seem of little consequence, almost a non-event; to them however, it can be the most important thing in their lives at that moment, especially if it is something that rarely happens. The damage in denying them can far outweigh the gains.

Sent to Coventry

Some rely on 'sending them to Coventry', not playing 'speaks'. It is not something that I would favour, and I know of many cases where it has been almost entirely unproductive. It seems to me that generally, if the matter has been handled correctly, the fault should have been recognised, the penalty prescribed and then its back to business, almost as if nothing had happened. I know this works, and that it is much appreciated by the students. The sign that you are not harbouring ill feelings is most reassuring, and often much needed.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment has the singular advantage of being quick, full of intent and meaning, and of enabling the student to promptly get back to business. It is by no means appropriate in every circumstance; indeed it has many limitations; but it does have a place.

It must be used intelligently and effectively. If one decides to use it, then it should hurt. The manner in which it is given can indicate the seriousness with which one views the offence. Overuse should be avoided.

Where one is dealing with a student who is in some way maladjusted, it soon becomes apparent that corporal punishment has very little value, and indeed may be positively harmful.

If a student has indicated that it is quite beyond his powers to alter his manner of behaviour, then to use corporal punishment may very well embitter him. In practice I suppose this means that corporal punishment only works on the 'good' kids, those who have temporarily lapsed.

I feel that generally corporal punishment should not be used for students above the age of 15. In fact one tends to move away from it before this. There are exceptions however, particularly for older students whose actions have been childish. It tends to add a little more emphasis, and makes the message a little more forceful.

With punishments of any sort the best guide is good judgement and common sense, along with an ability 'to keep one's cool', and retain objectivity. What the students will accept from a housemaster is closely related to their esteem for him. If there is respect and trust, they will usually accept without demur.

Records

Accurate records and notifications to parents are absolutely necessary. Too much pain, too much confusion and anger results if parents are not regularly informed.

We all know how rapidly we form opinions about students. We can very soon discover who the real problems are, and, whether we have any hope for success with them or not. When drastic action is called for such as suspension or even expulsion, we have to present the total picture to the parents. Although we may be quite convinced about things in our own minds, the absence of telling records can make us appear very foolish indeed. Again, parents have the right to know that unless things improve, disciplinary action is being contemplated against their sons; in this way they can assist us and their children.

We used what we called the Demerit system, a method not unlike that used by the Motor Transport Department, except that it had a merit side which could be used to offset demerits. Certain offences carried a fixed number of demerits; others were left somewhat open, depending on the circumstances of the offence. When a student had gained 10 demerits he was liable to suspension for a period judged fitting. The system was not perfect, but it did provide objectivity in deciding when a student should be suspended or dismissed. The merit side of the system is important in providing perspectives, rewards and an incentive to improve. Occasional misbehaviour should be judged in the context of consistently good conduct.

Good discipline contributes much, not only to good order, but to the happiness of the students. They need a comfortable and peaceful environment if they are to do well; hence one cannot stress too much how important it is to have an approach, and a system, that is in tune with their needs, particularly a system which they understand, and can live with.

STABILITY

The formation of young people requires constant, painstaking effort. Our own experience points to that; our understanding of things grows with the length of our association; we recall how slow we were to grasp the full intent and meaning of things in our early years; probably in those years the only things we really understood were those that circumstances forced us to come to grips with. In the formation and guidance of young people then, we can hardly escape the importance of genuine understanding in our relationship. To see it otherwise is to view ourselves simply as child-minders.

I have outlined already the type of structuring that I regard as desirable in a boarding school. One of its advantages is that it allows stability. The student and the housemaster, because of their long association, over several years usually, can take each other very much for granted. Much painful dialogue can be avoided and left where it properly belongs, in the past. The housemaster is able to treat the students in a manner that befits their growing maturity. In so doing the student can perceive in his housemaster one who has a mature view of life, and an ability to relate to people of varying ages and levels of experience, and his confidence grows correspondingly. On the personal side the housemaster has the satisfaction of seeing the fruit of much effort, and this can be very rewarding. Parents too find it helpful to be able to develop an understanding of their son's housemaster, and avoid the frustration of starting all over again with someone new each year. And there is also benefit for the student. Some young people are past masters at dodging and skating around obstacles; they can spend most of their time avoiding real-life issues, conning people etc. The sooner they come to realise that they are not fooling anyone, the better for them.

The family is generally accepted as the most stable of our institutions, and if our schools are to model themselves on this concept, their stability of personnel and systems are important. Ad hoc arrangements are inadequate. In a conservative community such as ours, contrary to popular opinion, students are the most conservative group. Much and all as they will accuse the 'oldies' of being stuck in a rut, suggest a change and see what happens. No, they like to know what the expectation is, what the limitations are. This knowledge seems to give them freedom from uncertainty and worry.

MATURING

Maturity is growth — growth that is appropriate to the age of the individual, growth that is apparent, growth that never stops. It can be a little difficult to convince young people of this. Maturity is a very difficult concept for them to grasp and the idea that one should spend one's life in constant pursuit of the wisdom that is maturity appalls them. Attainment of maturity with all its ramifications is what formation and education is all about, and must be the goal of all our activities and endeavours in dealing with youth.

Maturity means different things for different people. For me the most obvious sign of maturity is a young man's ability and willingness to accept responsibility for his actions. A further extension of this is his determination to act according to his conscience. Once a young man shows that he is prepared to accept responsibility for all his actions, especially when they lead him into trouble, then the door is open for all sorts of development.

Someone once said that young people don't have a sense of humour, particularly one that allows them to laugh at themselves. This sense of humour is indispensable in life and it is our business to encourage its growth and proper development. I mention humour at this stage, firstly because it serves as a guide to measuring maturity, and secondly because it is essential in the long path to maturity. I have long held that although one is forced to adopt a rather stern approach in most disciplinary situations the funny side is only just below the surface. We should not be afraid to let this be seen in our dealings with students. I am not suggesting that we should encourage a light hearted approach to serious questions, but rather that there are occasions when students do appreciate the humour of a situation and it helps them towards maturity and trust if they see that we too have appreciated the humour.

Very mundane activities can help develop maturity, even such things as housework. The training aspect of this is more important than the expediency of getting things done. Communal living also raises problems with regard to 'dobbing' in serious questions of discipline and morality. One would not wish to develop an attitude wherein each one was 'spilling the beans' on the other, but it is possible, through intelligent use of incidents, to assist the mental anguish that the young go through, and thereby educate them towards responsibility and maturity of judgements and actions.

For a long time I held the view that this was an impossible barrier to break. In recent times, however, I have seen how painstaking efforts and the establishment of an atmosphere of trust, confidence and concern within the house can enable students to overcome their innate fear of independent actions and bring matters of importance to the housemaster's attentions.

Peer group pressure and the tendency to "herd" together for security is another problem. But the boarding school does also provide the environment in which the student can develop true independence, and the housemaster must be alert to encourage this. This independence should have been reached, for good or bad, by 6th form.

A Discipline system established a relationship between housemaster and student/ the contacts that this provides are part of the training towards maturity.

One does not have to engage in lengthy debates and arguments on each and every misdemeanour, but the student must always understand, within the limits of his appreciation, the reasons for our actions. He may not agree but he must understand; often he will agree, and this is a measure of his respect. Mindless bludgeoning of the student on all sorts of questions has the opposite effect, and he merely seeks to find a tolerable "modus vivendi".

Real training in maturity must lead to the development of an enlightened conscience, towards the establishment of perspectives; hence one will not seek to develop a sense of guilt and shame that is inappropriate to the actions of the young person. To maintain these perspectives contact has to be fairly

frequent, and the young man must be able to identify with your value judgements, and find consistency in actions and values.

SPECIAL CASES

Having already indicated the wide variety of needs found amongst boarding students, it seems desirable to give special attention to specific areas. Some of these are...

- * socially maladjusted
- * psychologically maladjusted
- * one parent children
- * orphans
- * children whose parents are constantly on the move or overseas.

Socially Maladjusted

This group includes those who are unable to relate socially with others. They demonstrate this in their dress, their manners, their lack of respect for both the person and property of others, their apparent contempt for regulations, lack of hygiene, and generally disruptive behaviour. They are in genuine need and the number that one can tolerate in a boarding school is limited, in view of the burden they place on both staff and students.

Students show amazing tolerance and patience with such individuals; if they sense good-will. In fact, the student body is the most powerful corrective force available. They will be quick to point out where offences occur, and do devise their own means to correct them. I am reminded of an address by a new House Captain on the occasion of his appointment. He spoke of how they needed to create the 'family spirit', but that this could only be done with difficulty, if some member of the family was literally 'on the nose'.

This type of student presents all sorts of problems to the disciplinarian; punishments quickly lose any real meaning, and one finds they are being applied more to maintain standards and to show fairness, then to correct the student. One has to watch for signs of improvement and offer appropriate encouragement.

Psychologically Maladjusted

This group includes the kleptomaniac, the bully, the student who "flies off the handle" and sometimes the sexual deviate. It takes a little time to recognize these students; often a succession of incidents indicates an underlying problem. Student reactions will not necessarily be helpful, for here student patience can be very short. One often finds that one must bear the burden alone.

The first task is to get the student to accept the fact that he has a problem. They will try to argue the merits or otherwise of particular incidents, and usually their recollections are better than ours. The use of a psychologist is essential in these cases. First it helps the student to recognise the problem, and secondly it removes the question from the level of personalities, and thirdly it can create an atmosphere of trust in which the student can come to terms with his difficulty. The fact that he knows you are aware of his problem, and still accept him, gives him greater confidence. He appreciates that you will suffer his difficulty provided he gives continuing evidence of his willingness to come to terms with it.

One Parent Children

Causes vary, from the death of one or other parent to separation with dominant custody or abandonment by one or other or unmarried mothers.

When the missing partner is the father, the course of action can be fairly clear cut. The earliest manifestation of trouble is the "mummy's boy" syndrome. The youngster will look constantly for reasons to be at home. He may want to be a weekly boarder; ostensibly the reason will be that he wants to help his mother, and the case can have all the appearances of genuine concern. This is particularly apparent in the 14-15 age group. The mothers too are little help at this stage. They seem to have a sense of guilt, which they seek to assuage by constant attention and wanting to have the boy near.

The student soon learns that he can manipulate this situation as a means of satisfying other, less noble wants. One finds that while the student will seek permission to help his mother, she often sees little of him and can come to be used as a base from which to operate. She may become increasingly alarmed at just what the boy is doing. If not corrected these students will quickly strive to acquire a concept of what manhood is all about, often from dubious sources, and will seek impatiently to give expression to it. They often seek the company of older youths whose influence can be less than helpful. The majority of mothers in these cases are full of genuine concern. Close contact, reassurance and co-operation is needed if success is to be obtained.

Somehow, one has to get the student to appreciate that he has a difficulty in terms of his better development. On the surface it may appear to him that everything is rather rosy. He feels he is able to handle the situation rather well; in reality he is doing pretty much what he pleases. Often the only way to get the student to a proper understanding of his problem is by following up out of school activities, making him see the danger of his apparent 'freedom'. This can take much patient effort, and one must be prepared to be persistent, and be willing to allow mistakes to be made.

A man-to-man relationship has to be established; by that I mean that the student must be made to feel that he does exhibit manly qualities of firmness and strength of character. He must perceive their further development in the way in which one deals with him. Sympathetic understanding, but absolute firmness which does not allow manipulation is required and will be accepted. One finds oneself having to be more definite in dealing with these students than might otherwise be needed.

As the young man grows into the 17-18 years age bracket the mother can become almost frantic, increasingly aware of her inability to cope. She will read too much into youthful reactions and impatience. One finds oneself having to calm her fears, and at times interceding for a fair go for the student. As the student perceives this genuine concern and understanding, so his confidence and trust will grow, and one finds oneself able to give more help.

When the missing partner is the mother the housemaster has to supply something of the mother's role, which for the young is very important. All young people expect and need understanding, interest and affection. Mothers interest themselves in the minutiae of our lives, and while this can be a little annoying at times, youngsters miss it when it is not present. Genuine fear, fear of making mistakes, of correction, of punishment, will be all the more real when there is no mother to lean on.

The course of action then becomes apparent. The housemaster will need to demonstrate more interest in the little things that concern the student, his possessions, his friends, etc. While insisting on discipline, the housemaster must be aware of the devastating effect stern discipline can have, and so he should look for a modified approach, less stern, less dominating, more understanding, ever conscious of the fear which may have no outlet, just below the surface. The housemaster won't find himself so involved in the out of school activities since these are usually fairly well catered for by the father. The problems then are of lesser magnitude, but call for greater sensitivity.

No Parents

We take parental influence so much for granted that it is hard for us to conceive what life would be like without it. Fortunately orphans are comparatively rare in boarding schools, but their difficulties are so real that one must be more than usually careful.

Insecurity is probably the most obvious sign. This will sometimes express itself in an almost pestiferous manner, the seeking of unnecessary permissions, feigned illness, etc. Orphans seem to be always looking for interest and reassurance. Having had their foundations shattered once already, their interest in checking that the temporary measures taken are holding up is understandable. Bothersome as this can be, the alternative of introversion and withdrawal into self-pity must be avoided at all costs.

Hence, particularly when the parental loss is traumatic, and at an early age, definite steps need to be taken to reach out to the young person. He must become aware of you, aware that you are interested in him, as a person and not just in his conduct. All that I have said about interest in the little things coupled with manly firmness, understanding, reassurance and recognition must apply. One has to keep reminding oneself of the tender nature of the plant, and be prepared for greater patience and effort, because there is no parent to compensate for our impatience or over-reaction.

The orphan can often cling very jealously to what he does have, in the form of older brothers or sisters, and these can be very understanding and concerned. Unfortunately they can sometimes be insensitive to his needs, either through over-committment and too many responsibilities, or just lack of preparation for the difficult task thrust upon them. The student must be led gradually to greater self-reliance and self-assurance, and taught also, not to read too much into things that happen to him.

Children Whose Parents Are Absent

The fact that I have left this problem till last is no indication of the importance I attach to it. I am convinced that this is one of the most important and difficult situations in which a housemaster can find himself. With Australia's growing involvement in international affairs, the number of students whose parents are serving overseas has increased considerably. Parents feel, quite rightly, that their children need stability for effective study, and it is worth noting that these same parents, probably because of their own success, have unreasonably high expectations of their children.

So much of life is learnt at the breakfast table so to speak, that when one removes this educative environment a great gap can occur. One only teaches so much in serious discussion. Much more is learnt when the young person flies various 'kites' and judges and evaluates adult responses; and this can only happen in informal situations. Children in this category are not those who are seen as deprived in the normal sense. Most often their parents are very loving and concerned and will go to great lengths to demonstrate their interest. But they are deprived in the lack of intimacy and informal and relaxed relationships, where so much real living and learning occurs. Often parents will make every effort to arrange holidays or weekends with relatives, but this does not provide the stability of the family and the home.

It is not enough for a student to know that someone is interested in him and loves him. That affection must be available, fairly often, fairly casually and in tangible form. Hence the young man can become involved in intimate associations with girls, not necessarily in any harmful sense, rather in an excessive, possessive and unbalanced fashion, too often leading to entanglement and heart break.

I don't know of any real solution to the problem except that the housemaster must be aware of it, and strive to make the student aware of his special circumstances, and dangers that are associated. He must encourage a degree of informality and understanding that might not otherwise be needed. Just the fact that the student knows you understand his needs, and his situation will often act as a check on excesses. Such students need to be chased along with more than usual zeal. Too often the year slips away with nothing but distraction as a monument, and then comes the lovingly inspired, but crushing, pressure from parents who feel they have been let down.

Counselling, in the accepted sense, has no place here. Informality is the key; being available, and known to be understanding will be most helpful. Attempts at probing too deeply are unwise. Everyone has his secrets, especially at home, and for this student, somehow the boarding house must become his home.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

For a Christian school the development of proper values and attitudes, of moral convictions and of a genuine spiritual life, must be a matter of great concern.

In large measure the school education program supplies all the information that is needed, and this covers a rather wide area. The problem then is not one of instruction; rather it resembles the supportive role that one expects to find in the home. The student needs to find Christian values and ideals present in his new domestic surroundings. If he finds that Christian principles have little relevance, if he cannot witness Christ-like love, compassion and understanding, then what he learns in class will have little affect on his spiritual development.

Young people today do not appear to accept conformity in religious observance as readily as in the past. It is easy to read into this, a lack of religious spirit, and to despair of making any progress, especially in those areas where we tend to 'judge' others. However I have been repeatedly edified by brief insights into their spirit of prayer, the strength of conviction that does emerge. Perhaps we need a new measuring stick. It is not unusual to find a real attachment to Christ, a well informed appreciation of what life is all about, and a genuine desire to base their lives on Christian principles.

The most public forum for putting forward Christian principles is the regular meeting of the house. Many occasions arise in which one can introduce the emphasis that is needed. Eventually the message gets across, if they see the message being lived out in their actual experience. Martin Luther is reputed to have had difficulty in saying the 'Our Father', due in a large measure to an unsatisfactory relationship with a domineering father. Rightly or wrongly, especially when we try to portray our relationship with God in human terms such as father, the young man must call upon his personal experience of life. When his past experience has been unsatisfactory, it is important that the relationship he now forms with the housemaster leaves little to be desired. He will be conscious of the dedication that is evident in those in charge of him, he must come to see the reason for this in the personal commitment of these people to Christian service.

We are told that young people read into the way in which we organize things, where our real values lie. Hence they must see that we attach much importance to certain values and practices. If our religious program is scheduled on expediency alone, they will soon learn to relegate it to a matter of convenience also, and no amount of preaching will alter this. Sunday Masses and Services must be given their proper priority. Optional devotions must likewise be programmed in a way that indicates our belief in their value, ahead even of such questions as study.

In counselling too, one can be tempted to push the question too far in human terms, feeling almost inadequate if one cannot come up with a human solution. There often comes a time when the only answer lies in prayer and resignation to God's will. One should not be frightened to say so. The student will not be put out; he expects you to point this out to him, and I would suggest that he may be disappointed if you do not do so. One should not be afraid either to prod a student on his religious practice and performance. Parents rightly do this in the home; when the student sees it to be a sincere reflection of one's convictions, it will do nothing but good. I am not suggesting continual harping, but the tendency to avoid the question all together can be most damaging.

Generally one does not see failure in religious observance as a matter for disciplinary penalty. There are times however when it may become so. A Christian school has a right to expect that those who attend should accept the system. But it is wrong to assume that because a student absents himself from a compulsory religious exercise, that this necessarily indicates an irreligious attitude. Very often it results from thoughtlessness or group pressure.

Requests for prayers, particularly in times of grief, will also help to get the message across; likewise helping others to share the grief of their mates, not trying to rationalise everything, but letting them see God's hand wherever it moves.

The whole question seems to come down to that of attitude. We have a belief in God; we have convictions that inspire our lives, and it is our duty to pass this on to those in our care. For them we will often be the personification of Christ. They will make allowance for imperfection, but we must never forget the burden we carry, and the effect that remissness can have on their lives and values.

SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not my intention here to attempt a study of human sexuality, but rather to expand on personal experience. Sexual development is an integral part of human growth and maturation, and nowhere is it more intense than during adolescence. It seems generally accepted that the proper place for information and education is the family setting. But since this duty is sometimes neglected by parents, educators have to fill in for them.

From the boarding point of view then, the housemaster must accept that the sexual development of students in his charge must concern him. Though information will be supplied in the classroom, the housemaster has to be aware of areas of tension and be ready to supply advice and assistance, without feeling any necessity to educate in all the ramifications of sexuality.

When balance is lost in this question, interviews with housemasters can degenerate into a farce. The students talk rather freely amongst themselves, and they invariably swap notes, so that they are simply waiting for the housemaster to bring up the matter quite determined to give nothing away, simply humouring the housemaster in what they have come to regard as a slightly depraved interest. Clearly such a situation would be most undesirable, and destructive of real communication.

Just as in the properly balanced home, so in the boarding house, sexuality will be just another area of concern, and when it is seen to be so, and where the student has developed a good relationship of trust and openness with his housemaster, problems will surface and will be discussed openly.

Early Years

The 'average' first form student is almost non-sexual, he is aware of the differences, he is curious, but to a large degree his interest is academic. Pressure around him may make him anxious to know, even if he really doesn't understand. The knowledge that is imparted to him goes right over his head very often, but he will not want you to know that. The trouble can really begin here. Some can assume that because all the facts have been presented, the students will understand. But they don't really appreciate what their experience enables them to understand, and this can take some considerable time. It is a mistake to take too much for granted in this area, and much anguish can be witnessed in young people who are confronted with problems that have sprung from a basic misunderstanding, based on slanted and dubiously gained information.

In 2nd form the more precocious can begin to take a deeper interest. This is probably due to their faster physical development, but can also be the result of local pressure from mates. This type can become inordinately interested in dating, petting, etc., not having any real understanding of what it is all about, but enjoying the short term thrills, and basking in the glory and interest that their apparent success generates. It is at this point that troubles can begin to arise for the average student. Peer group pressure builds up which lead him to believe that he is in danger of being left behind, that there is something wrong with him. The more insecure the student, the greater the problem. The attitudes of housemasters and those in authority at this stage are most important. Any tendency to give recognition to the more mature will create confusion for the less mature, who fear to be left behind. The precociousness of the more mature should be curbed, and dances and socials be kept to a minimum.

The problem flows into 3rd form, but with greater intensity. Differences in levels of maturity become wider and somewhat more difficult to draw together, particularly when one has a strong group at the lower level of 4th form.

Homosexuality

There is no doubt that sexuality is a topic of interest to all dolescents. Each one is aware of physical changes, and at the same time conscious of the world of sex around him. In a boarding school the young man finds himself in an almost total male environment; in his encounters with females he is constrained by an innate awkwardness and shyness, which may often over-ride many ambitions of sexual conquests.

The young man is conscious of the 'homo' connotations that are unfortunately attached to boys boarding schools; he is aware too of the extravagant boasting of some of his peers. He may either fear, or have no real interest in girls, and yet be aware of sexual consciousness and fantasies in his own personality; he is unable to put into perspective the sexual attractions that beset him, probably because no one has told him how normal they are. If he is insecure, he can begin to think that he may be homosexual, and he doesn't want that.

From this there can develop an anxiety to prove that he is a 'normal' person, one with heterosexual drives and capacity. I know of many instances where young men have engaged in sexual intercourse at the end of 3rd form, without any apparent reason other than that of proving they are normal. It is a pity that pressures forced them to this point. Counselling such a student is not all that difficult, but it would be impossible if one over-reacted and made too much of the 'fall'. They need to be brought to see what a meaningless exercise it was, and how little dignity and respect they won either for themselves or their partner, who incidentally, is usually of no importance to them.

I mentioned earlier that there are connotations of homosexuality attached to boarding schools. In my experience it is largely a non-event. There is an extraordinarily high consciousness of the problem, and to a large degree this probably prevents the question from arising. It can of course lead to difficulties, and the housemaster has a responsibility to see that it does not lead to extremes of behaviour or attitudes. So keen are some to cast off the image, that even usually thoughtful ones can join in tagging some unfortunate creature, who seems to fit the picture. His life can be made unbearable, and the time will come when the housemaster may need to take public action to save the young man from further embarrassment.

Genuine cases of homosexuality are fairly rare, and are usually fairly apparent; the danger lies in not distinguishing between sex-play and homosexual drives. Proper counselling is needed in such cases.

To some degree in 3rd form, but particularly in 4th form, sex letters are exchanged, which for sheer depths of degradation would take some beating. These are usually found among the less bright students, and confrontation with the evidence of the depravity of their efforts will usually be enough to set them right. They need to be taught how offensive their actions and talk are, and the danger of committing to writing the worst side of their character. Repetition is not usually a problem. Girls are usually as much at fault here as the boys, and if somehow they can be introduced to better types they soon adjust their approach. Co-operation with parents is usually very helpful, since most of the problem results from casual contacts in the home scene.

Later Years

I was associated with co-education in 5th and 6th forms and found generally speaking girls at the 5th form level do have a sense of purpose, and this can help to form proper attitudes in the boys. The first encounter can be very confusing on the male side, and awkwardness is common. Once boys and girls begin to appreciate each other as personalities, much good can be accomplished.

For some young men co-education provides an opportunity to display their prowess, and they soon make fools of themselves. Others shy away attempting to hide their awkwardness in apparent disinterest, but time usually breaks that down. Difficulties arise when those who find in this close encounter with the formerly misunderstood female personality, the answer to many of their personal needs. In itself this would not be bad, if it did not lead them into excesses and exclusivism.

Infatuations are common. One is tempted to dismiss them as such but that is over-simplifying the issue. It is something very real to those involved, not only real, but everything they seek in life. Insensitivity is simply not on; patience and understanding are required, even when staff who perceive the problem, persist in proposing simple solutions. There is no simple solution. One endeavours to counsel moderation and restraint, to show understanding, particularly of the needs of the student, and to point out the dangers of exclusive relationships, and the damage that it can be doing to the performance and attitude of the student. One cannot help recalling the acts of folly that have been committed in the name of love, even to the point of suicide. It must be remembered that one is dealing with young people who are now finding the love and interest that may have been denied them in the past, and they will cling to it ferociously.