

Order, Diligence, and a Ticket to Heaven

by Sandy Nelson,
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“True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements, but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character. The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character” (Education p. 225).

God tells us here that it is not true education to merely stuff a child’s head with knowledge. More importantly, we must help our children and youth to build noble characters.

“Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings, and never before was its diligent study so important as now. Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today” (Education, p. 225).

For over twenty years, I’ve had the God-entrusted privilege of helping students build godly characters. And, in the process, God is building His character in me, too. I’d like to give you an inside look at my classroom to watch God at work.

It’s math time. My students scurry to find their folders, rulers, pencils, erasers, and water bottles. It’s a daily routine; but today, once again, Tim cannot find his necessary items. Tim would probably care less about being organized except for the fact that he wants his reward—a sticker.

When Tim can’t find his items in the required amount of time, he throws a fit—blaming others and showing signs of discouragement. I’m firm, but encouraging. I explain to the students how important it is to be organized—not just in the classroom but in all of life.

Why is organization so important? Our God is a God of order. One place this is clearly shown is in the camp of the Israelites. Each tent was placed in a particular place. “The education of the Israelites included all their habits of life” (Education, p. 38).

It is my job to teach the students how important it is to be organized—to teach it, encourage it, and reward it! It is the student’s job to practice it and learn it.

Back to my classroom the following day: Tim is sitting at the table with his folder, ruler, eraser, pencil, and water bottle. He smiles big when the box of stickers is handed to him. Being organized will soon be his habit!

It’s math time again, and the work pages are being handed out. Some smile as they see a page with “easy” work on it, and some sigh when they see the addition problems that await them. But one student in particular will be especially challenged today. Michelle has a page she needs to fix—a page completed but not all correctly done. Immediately, the happy face turns sour, Michelle’s body stiffens, and the pencil is knocked off the table. “I hate math,” I hear, mumbled under the girl’s breath. My work—not now of a math teacher but as a cheerleader—has begun. “Michelle, you can do this! Just take one problem at a time. Don’t start with the easy problems; just begin at the top. You give me your best, and I’ll help you get done.”

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In mock obedience, she scribbles some numbers underneath the problem and says grumpily, "There! I did it!"

I continue my training: "Michelle, this is not acceptable. Please take this paper to the other room, do these two problems, and bring it back done correctly." I remind her that we can't climb a mountain all at once but must make small steps toward our big goals. I encourage her outwardly and pray inwardly—praying for patience for myself and understanding for her.



"The true object of reproof is gained only when the wrongdoer himself is led to see his fault and his will is enlisted for its correction. When this is accomplished, point him to the source of pardon and power" (Education, p. 291).

"The teacher must expect to meet perverse dispositions and obdurate hearts. But in dealing with them, he should never forget that he himself was once a child, in need of discipline" (Education, p. 292).

After some minutes, Michelle returns to the classroom. Two of her problems have been completed correctly. May God help her to keep going until she is fully successful!

"... such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature—the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man" (Education, p. 57).

"The great principles of education are unchanged. 'They stand fast for ever and ever' (Psalm 111:8); for they are the principles of the character of God. To aid the student in comprehending these principles, and in entering into that relation with Christ which will make them a controlling power in the life, should be the teacher's first effort and his constant aim. The teacher who accepts this aim is in truth a co-worker with Christ, a laborer together with God" (Education, p. 30).

I have given just two examples of the many opportunities to teach the character of God to our children. May God help us to be faithful parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors, aunts, and uncles! May God help our church to establish schools in which character building is the chief aim! May God help us all to develop characters ready for Heaven! ■

Small Cloud Christian School Anniversary

by Margie Seely

[Small Cloud Christian School](#), located in northern California (USA), is the result of impossible dreams made possible through faith. During the summer of 1995, a dream was planted in the hearts of Sr. Sandy Nelson and myself. We had recently graduated from our respective universities. Sandy had earned her degree in Education and I had received mine in Human Development. We both loved children and wanted to share God's love with them. But where should we begin?

Realizing we were at an important crossroads in our lives, we asked God for direction.

It didn't take Him long to answer and soon we were making plans to start a school. We didn't know how we would do it. We didn't know where we would have it. We didn't even know if anyone would trust us enough to enroll their children. But we believed that if this is what God wanted, He would open the doors and provide.

By faith we scheduled our start date for January 22, 1996. We would begin on that day with whatever children God sent us and whatever materials we had in our possession. We firmly believed that if God could make a path through the Red Sea for the Israelites, He could certainly open a little school for us. The place God chose for us was a barn. One side we converted into a small classroom with a wood-burning stove to keep out the chill. The other half housed a small herd of cows!

Most classrooms aren't interrupted by the sounds of livestock, but ours wasn't an ordinary classroom. In spite of our humble beginnings, we felt honored to start our school in a barn. After all, God's own Son had entered the world in a similar place.

On our first day of school we had a grand total of six students, but it wasn't long before our one-room school was quickly outgrown. Unfortunately, our budget did not grow quite as quickly. Nevertheless, by the end of our second year, a new classroom was a definite necessity. We solved the problem temporarily by screening in the front porch of the barn and arranging desks to create an outdoor classroom.

But, this "classroom" also had a few drawbacks. Migrating flocks of geese landed on the grass next to the desks. Their presence and honking distracted our students. Insects buzzed through the large screen openings. Weather was also a problem. It's difficult to learn when the temperature cannot be controlled, when raindrops splash against the desks, or when the wind blows the students' papers away. A new schoolroom simply had to be built. But how? Did I mention, we had very little money?



The history of Small Cloud is a story of miracles. God has opened doors and closed doors at precisely the right time. He has touched hearts and moved mountains in mysterious ways. Just when we felt we couldn't continue another day without adding another classroom, God provided. Knowledgeable volunteers arrived to assist with construction. Donations trickled in, and low-interest credit cards helped purchase the most necessary building materials.

Other supplies were either donated or purchased at reduced prices. The work inched forward while daily classes continued on schedule. We teachers rose early each morning to transport students to school, teach a full day, return the students to their homes, and then come back to school to help with construction until late into the evening.

All through that school year and on into the long, hot days of summer we framed, installed plumbing, stained cabinets, painted, pulled out the old floor covering, then put in new carpet. We worked, we sweated, we laughed, and we prayed until, at last, everything was done. The new school building was finished. We could finally rest! Well, not quite!

The construction was complete, but we needed legal permission (a use-permit) to continue using it as a school. For understandable reasons, the neighbors weren't too excited about the whole idea. Once again, we appealed to our heavenly Father to intervene. In June 2003, after we had worked out the particulars with our neighbors, a permanent use-permit was granted.

Each new year seems to usher in its own peculiar challenges, trials, blessings—and activities! From maintaining files to writing lesson plans, from licensing a new school-bus driver to grading papers, from teaching classes to planning fundraising events, Small Cloud is a continuous bustle of activity. It's been twenty-two years already. Twenty-two years of answered prayers, miracles, and growth. But, really, it's only the beginning...

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Although I no longer teach at Small Cloud, I was privileged to attend its anniversary program on the evening of January 20. As I sat in the second row of that first classroom, I marveled at how much it had changed. The cows have long since disappeared. Carpet, central heating and air, computers with internet, and so much more have transformed this classroom from a primitive shell of a room into a thriving learning center.

When the anniversary program began, Sr. Sandy Nelson stepped to the front and told the story of Small Cloud Christian School, much like the account you have read in the previous paragraphs. Tears came to my eyes as her words brought to life the special memories God has blessed us with. To work hand-in-hand with God is truly a humbling and exhilarating experience. He has proved beyond measure that "with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26.

Note: If you are interested in learning more about Small Cloud Christian School, visit their website at www.smallcloud.org or visit their Facebook page. ■

2018 – 2019 Education Department Calendar

*All dates are subject to change

March 22 - April 9: Tour of schools in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala	June 14-17: Orion Christian Academy Field trip to Battle Creek, Michigan	July: Internship program begins	August 1: Release of the book <i>Amazing Missionary Stories, Vol. 1</i>	August 3-4: Visit to the Canadian Field Conference August 7-21: Tour of schools in Columbia and Peru	December: Week of Prayer for Children
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How teaching became my life

by Diana Beets

I grew up in a family that has worked in education. Both my father and mother, and also my stepfather and stepmother, have various jobs in education. Even my younger sister ended up working as an elementary schoolteacher. From the moment my parents got divorced, I knew for sure I wanted to study law. After high school, I first went to college and then on to a university to study law. After I got both my degrees, I wanted to work for the court. Therefore, I applied for a job with the Amsterdam court as a judicial clerk. I think that was the moment I first came into contact with God. I did not realize it then, but I do now. During the final round of my application, I had to pass an assessment. While doing the assessment I realized that being a judicial clerk was not the right job for me and that I did not want to take this direction. Panic-stricken, I called a friend of mine. She told me about a job opening at the Amsterdam higher vocational college for studying law. A lecturer was needed.

The same night I wrote an application letter, and a week later I had an interview. Immediately after my interview, while waiting by the elevator, I was called back and told I was hired. I had graduated in July 2007 and in August of the same year I opened the door of my first classroom to teach second-year students all about criminal law. I already told you that I had not accepted God in my life or even knew him, but the job He gave me has been and still is my dream job for eleven years now. Although I transferred to the management team of this college four years ago, teaching is still my biggest passion. I love teaching young people things about themselves, watching them grow, seeing them become sensible professionals and most of all making a difference with them. During the eleven years that I have worked in this college, the students have voted me “teacher of the year” four times. Students always tell me in their feedback that I notice them, that they feel safe in the classroom, and that they can dare to learn. I am also a study coach and stay in contact with many students even after their graduation. I prefer nothing better

than thinking along with and supporting young people who are in difficult situations. And in those coaching sessions I can show them Jesus. I regularly have the opportunity to pray with them and to talk about faith. Pregnant students call me and want to discuss whether they should have an abortion or not. When students are ill or depressed, I use my life experience to help them; and with my faith I can point to heavenly things. With loving persuasion God has brought me into the congregation of this church. For the past year and a half, I have been the youth leader of the Dutch field, together with Brother Hans Rekker. I am so grateful to God, not only because He gave me my dream job years ago, but also because I can now exercise my love for youth work in relation to God with so much passion in this congregation. About a month and a half ago, I had a nervous breakdown. But in the process of healing, God gave me the solution to my burnout. I then dared to stop being part of the management team and to go back to the classroom—that’s where God wants me.

Now I have more time for Him, for youth work, and for my dream job. God is good! ■

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