

From This Corner

## **Teacher**

Larry Baird

*“...but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.” - Jesus*

The berries are on the Mountain-ash. All my life this has meant one thing. School is about to begin. Our neighbor had one of these lovely and messy trees. I remember the berries would fall off during the first weeks of classes and cover the walk. The neighborhood gang liked to squish our way over them not considering for even a moment what this must have meant to the school custodian.

I have always had mixed feelings about the “beginning of school.” On the one hand, it meant the certain end of vacation. There was always a little sadness that long warm summer days would soon be lost in falling leaves and cooling temperatures. It was a bit depressing knowing that we would be indoors rather than primarily outdoors. On the other hand, it meant a fresh start at life symbolized by a new pencil box and its contents. It also meant the excitement of coming under the tutelage of a new teacher. I have to say I think I fared well in the assignment of pedagogues over the years. I can only remember one whom I did not like in the least. I think the feeling was mutual. I remember little about that year except enduring being in her class. For the most part, however, from kindergarten through seminary, I have to say teachers have blessed my life.

There is a lot of talk about education these days. Most of it has to do with media technology and technique. This is true in the public arena as well as the church. Like everything else, the trend is toward more electronic technology. One article I read told about a school that was busy replacing pencils with laptop computers. I wonder if kids will have the same relationship with these computers as we did with our pencil boxes and their contents. What will they do when they want an undeniable break and cannot take a two-minute crank on the pencil sharpener? “Larry, sit down! There will be nothing left

of that pencil!” It is my prayer that the human interrelationship between student and teacher is not lost to primary attention to a screen.

Reflecting on all of this brings me to one clear thing I think is of great importance to remember as schools and churches start their teaching year. I cannot remember as much about what was in those books and on those green-boards, as I can about my teachers. (Green rather than black on chalk boards was the biggest change in technology at the time). This is not to minimize the materials, the methods, or the content. In truth, however, teachers like Mrs. Bane, Mrs. Peters, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Stornelli, Mr. Large, Professors Rhodes, Ashcroft, Smith, and Taylor appear to have made the biggest impact. This is probably why God sent the Word in its ultimate and most effective form in the person of Jesus. The tablet of stone had important information on it, but it took a person to bring the truth home to God’s children.

Likewise, the latest computer, and the latest technique may carry a message in the most spellbinding way, but in the end, whether or not the lesson hits home depends on the incarnation of the lesson in the relationship between the student and a real teacher.