POINTS OF VIEW

Educators must understand religious viewpoints

Question: I was watching a Christian TV show the other night which had nothing good to say about public education. They attacked Outcome Based Education, the whole language versus synthetic phonics, multicultural education, site based management, AIDS education and any course that dealt with opinion as opposed to absolutes. As a school administrator, how did you deal with fundamentalist Christians who want to dietate curriculum?

Answer Dr. Arnold Burron, Professor of Education at the University of Northern Colorado and a fundamentalist Christian, says, "Any attempt to speak for all Christians on any point of controversy may just lend credence to the adage," Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Dr. Burron conducts seminars across the United States for local chapters of Citizens for Excellence in Education for "fundamentalist Christians."

tians."
As an administrator, I always believed fundamentalist Christians have
a right to their beliefs and opinions as
well as any group, religious or otherwise. But I also knew that Christians
speak with many voices. There are
Catholic Christians, Protestant Christians just as there are different
voices heard among the Jewish,
Muslim ... or any other identifiable

religious group.

As a school administrator, I believe one has to understand where any religious group is coming from to be able towerk with them. Dr. Burron says, "Many public educators appear to be woefully ignorant of the traditional Christian belief in superseasionism. Superseasionism is the belief in the exclusivity of Christianity that states that only through faith in Jesus Christican salvation be attained." It's a point that always bothered me as a Christian Catholic. I mean, I believe in a hereofter, but who gets to heaven first.

I little Anne Frank and the six million Jesus who died in the Holocaust of the Christians (mostly Catholics, as I am) who tended the camps?

Fundamental Christians, according to Dr. Burron, believe that all people have a right to practice any religion they wish. . . while at the same time being opposed to the teaching that all religions are the same. Nothing wrong with that belief.

I believe the curriculum problem many traditional Christians have is when Outcome Based Objectives pop up in a course that says something like, "All students will be able to lislike, "All students will be able to lis-ten, share opinions, negotiate, compro-mise and help the group reach con-sensus."

Fundamental Christians would tend to believe this leads to Relativism... the belief that truth depends upon the



🖪 As an administrator, I always believed fundamentalist Christians have a right to their beliefs and opinions as well as any group, religious or otherwise. But I also knew that Christians speak with many

individuals or groups holding them
... that knowledge is relative to the
limited nature of the mind. In this
case, fundamentalist Christian belief
in a Higher Power than the human
mind is really no different from the beliefs of most religious groups.
Educators get in trouble in such situations as that of the Ohio teacher who

taught a consensus module. All students in the group had to agree before closing on an issue. One student, a fundamentalist Christian, idin't agree with the group. He was the only one in the group who didn't agree and the teacher, in his infinite wisdom, gave him an E. . for not agreeing! That type of situation bothered his fundamentalist Christian parents and his church leaders, as it would any reasonable parent or group. able parent or group.

As Gordon Allport, the great social psychologist, says, "We tend to group people because it takes less effort than to deal with individuals within a group (i.e. all fundamentalist Christians are

to deal with individuals within a group (i.e. all fundamentalist Christians are this or that). Dr. Alex Moinar, a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin, in Educational Leadership (Dec. '33) asys, "Fundamental Christians are adiverse group, and only a minority advocate extreme right-wing political causes. Consider abortion, Only 22 percent of self-identified born gain, evangelical Christians listed abortion as a major issue in the last presidential "Indeed, when right-wing Christian political activists viciously went after Professor James Sears of the University of South Carolina for developing a course called "Christian Fundamentalism and Public Education... his staunchest defenders were the fundamentalism and Public Education...

mentalist Christians who were taking the class.
As to your question regarding how educators should deal with fundamentalist Christians: Just as with any other human beings, educators school clearly explain the rationale for school cutriculum, explain the goals and objectives in course description booklets and in school newsletters — the obvious!

and in school newaletters — the obvious!

At a higher level would be forming a Council of Church Leaders and Educators. Set up a monthly lunch during the school year. The superintendent, assistant superintendent and guest would attend. Sit at a large round table so everyone is facing each other. Anyone who has an issue, education or otherwise, speaks to it.

When I was in the West Bloomfield School District, this Council of Churches luncheon model was followed. It created dislogue that stopped rumors and misunderstandings of what was going on in the school system. It was well received. And Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and fundamentalist Christians, to me, all seemed to be brothers and sisters in the fiesh. In deed, part of one master plan.

James "Doe" Doyle, a former teacher, search

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LETTERS

To be religiously correct

S kywatch columnist Raymond Bullock states that "coinciden-tally, Easter Sunday will be on April 3 this year . . . Determining the date of this very erratic holiday is not as difficult as you may think. All you

need to know is the phase of the moon

Then he refers to the First Nicene Ecumenical Council (325 A.D.) but by omission he leaves out the most-im-portant requirement which the Holy Fathers felt atrongly enough to put in Canon form: "Canon VII - If any Bish-op, or Preabyter, or Deacon celebrate op, or Presbyter, or Deacon celebrate the holy day of Pascha (Easter) before

the vernal equinox with the Jews, let

Bullock also ignores by "omission" the Orthodox Catholic Christians, of which there are many in the Detroit area, and who will celebrate Pascha this year, not on April 3, but on May area, and who will celebrate Pascha this year, not on April 3, but on May 1, in keeping with the original, correct— therefore "orthodox"— determination as stipulated by the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Briefly stated, the Roman Catholic Briefly stated, the Roman Catholic Church, after separating from the Catholic Church, dropped the Jewish Passover consideration and the Protestants, who subsequently broke away from the Roman Church, continued with this regrettable Roman change for celebrating this most Holy of Holy Days of Christianity. Please note that next year, First Day of Passover will be April 16, non-Or-thodox Easter on April 16 and Ortho-dox Pascha on April 23; in 1996 they will be on April 4, April 7 and April 14. respectively.

> Victor Chacho West Bloomfield
> Lay Director/Trustee
> Orthodox Christian Churches

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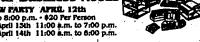
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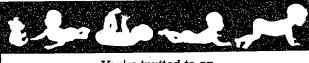
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