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CONCEPTS OF GOD
FOUND IN SELECTED BOOKS ABOUT GOD
PUBLISHED FOR CHILDREN UNDER NINE YEARS OF AGE

By
DOROTHY OLSEN VAN VLEET
A.B., Taylor University

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INTRODUCTION

CONCEPTS OF GOD
FOUND IN SELECTED BOOKS ABOUT GOD
PUBLISHED FOR CHILDREN UNDER NINE YEARS OF AGE

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem Stated and the Study Justified

The problem of this study is to examine the recent books about God for children up through eight years of age, those published 1942-1948, with the purpose of discovering what concepts of God are contained therein. These concepts are then to be examined with regard to the concepts of God considered basic and essential for children by authorities in the field of Christian education.

Just as parents are solicitous concerning the physical and mental growth and well-being of a child so they should be concerning the child's spiritual development, for children are spiritual as well as physical beings. Children need to be strong emotionally, intellectually and spiritually as well as physically. And building toward these goals needs to be begun at birth. One writer says:

"All human understanding rests on a basis of experience. That experience begins long before it can be expressed by the intellectual medium of speech. That is why the first twelve months are as important for the future development of the mind and spirit of a child as for

that of his body."¹

In the case of the older children, their questions give one an insight into what they are thinking: Who made me? Where is God? Will God punish me if I'm bad? Jones aptly says, "Children are philosophers and theologians as well as scientists."²

Because of the spiritual nature of children, it is important that they be given positive instruction to aid in their spiritual development. It is not a question of whether or not children should be taught about God. They are being taught. As Robbie Trent puts it:

"Shall I teach my child of God? I am answering that question everyday. For good or for ill, positively or negatively, for faith or for fear, I am teaching my child of God. For an inner security that nothing can shake, for emotional stability and for clear standards of living, for fearlessness and guidance in solving problems, for energizing faith and richer living even in childhood—that he may have all these, I shall seek to lead my child to grow in his understanding and in his appreciation of God."³

It is the purpose of this study, therefore, to examine one of the means, namely, current books about God, which may contribute to the concepts of God children are forming.

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1. Noel E. Nicholl: A Child's Personal Religion, p. 9.
2. Mary Alice Jones: The Faith of Our Children, p. 10.
3. Robbie Trent: Your Child and God, p. 14.

B. The Subject Delimited

This study does not include books primarily about Jesus, prayer, or the Bible. Although books on the above subjects would necessarily contain concepts of God, this study is concerned with books specifically about God.

Church-school material, such as texts, workbooks, or quarterlies, is also outside the scope of this study.

C. Sources of Data

1. Primary Sources

Since the main consideration of this study is to determine what concepts of God children may gain from recent books about God, these books will be the main objects of study. They were selected as follows: ten of the largest publishers of religious books were chosen, representing a cross-section of denominational, non-denominational, evangelical non-denominational, university presses and commercial publishers. These publishers were requested to list the books about God for children up through eight years of age which they had published during the past five years. The data received was supplemented by information from the Cumulative Book Indexes. Five out of a possible seven books were then selected for analytical study:

1. Edith Welker and Aimee Barber: Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls.

2. Mabel Niedermeyer: Then I Think of God.
3. Mary Alice Jones: Tell Me About God.
4. Dorothy Andrews: God's World And Johnny.
5. Olive Burt: God Gave Me Eyes.

2. Secondary Sources

For secondary sources the books chosen include all of the books on children's theology published since 1940. These books dealing with Christian nurture and the spiritual development of the young child were selected because of their pertinency to the subject under consideration. The following were found included in this group:

1. Frank and Mildred Moody Eakin: Your Child's Religion.
2. Henry W. Fox: The Child's Approach to Religion.
3. Mary Alice Jones: The Faith of Our Children.
4. Noel E. Nicholl: A Child's Personal Religion.
5. Herman J. Sweet: Opening the Door for God.
6. Robbie Trent: Your Child and God.

D. Method of Procedure

The first task of Chapter I will be to define "concept of God" in relation to the use of the term in this study. The major portion of the chapter will be given over to a consideration of the concepts of God considered most basic and essential by the above-mentioned authorities in

the field of children's theology.

A chapter will be devoted to each book except for the last chapter which will include two books of a similar nature. The main object of each of these chapters will be twofold: (1) to analyze the book for the concepts of God it contains and (2) to consider and examine these concepts in the light of the standards set up in the first chapter.

A summary of findings and conclusions derived from the study will conclude the thesis.

CHAPTER I

DETERMINING CONCEPTS OF GOD

IMPORTANT TO THE YOUNG CHILD

CHAPTER I
DETERMINING CONCEPTS OF GOD
IMPORTANT TO THE YOUNG CHILD

A. Introduction

In order to deal objectively and adequately with the books selected for analytical study with the intent of discovering the concepts of God they contain, it is necessary that "concept of God" be defined (with special reference to its use in this study). That will therefore be the immediate purpose of this chapter.

It is the further purpose of this chapter to discover the concepts of God considered most primary and important for children by outstanding Christian educators.

B. Concept of God Defined

1. The Meaning of Concept Determined in Relation to This Study

A concept may be regarded as a thought or an opinion. An opinion has been defined as belief stronger than impression, less strong than positive knowledge; a belief; view; judgment. Relative to the study at hand a concept will be regarded as a belief stronger than impression.

2. Essential Qualities of a Concept from the Standpoint of the Young Child

a. A Concept is Concrete

In addition to this, it must be remembered that for the young child a concept must be concrete rather than abstract. As Trent states it,

"He thinks objectively. His thought fastens on the most concrete concept available. It is the only type of thinking possible to one of his limited experience."¹

b. A Concept is Functional

Closely akin to the fact that the child's concept is concrete, is the realization that any concept presented must be related to his experience, in other words, functional. To quote Miss Trent:

"Little children think largely in terms of what a person or thing does. A chair is something to sit on. Mother is someone who loves you and cares for you. Because their thinking follows this pattern, we teach little children what might be called a functional concept of God, a concept growing out of the kind of things God does."²

The child forms his opinion or concept of a person or thing by what the person or thing is or does.

Nicholl's statement that "All human understanding rests on a basis of experience"³ confirms that the knowledge of God, the concept of God the child holds has come to him

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1. Robbie Trent: Your Child and God, p. 17.

2. Trent, op. cit., p. 18.

3. Noel E. Nicholl: A Child's Personal Religion, p. 9.

through experience. In agreement with this, Trent states that:

" . . . concepts grow out of and are related to the child's natural, everyday experiences. These experiences are his building materials. He has no others . . . Out of these experiences, the things of which he is a part, he must build his concept of God. This idea of teaching the nature of a thing by finding out and recognizing what it does is not new. Read the history of God teaching a nation of himself and notice how he revealed himself to the people by the things which he did. 'I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,' he says when he would identify himself as the giver of rules for wholesome, happy living."1

Concerning the relation of a child's experience to his capability of knowing God, Jones has this to say:

"Long before the child asks his parent any question about God—indeed, before he is capable of using language at all—it is likely that his experiences will have built barriers in his way to knowing God, or will have prepared him to share a satisfying faith in God. For it is clear that adults cannot 'teach' children anything unless there is something in the experience of the children which gives the teaching meaning . . . The little child's sense of the reality of God does not, then, come primarily from direct teaching about God, but primarily from sharing experiences of God."2

We may conclude, then, on the basis of these statements, that if the books to be considered in this thesis are to be understood by the child, the concepts of God presented must be both concrete and functional, directly related to his experience.

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1. Trent, op. cit., p. 19.
2. Mary Alice Jones: The Faith of Our Children, pp. 16-17.

C. Specific Concepts of God Considered Essential to Children
by Authorities in the Field of Children's Theology

In drawing up standards on the basis of the writings of several authorities, it must be remembered that they vary in their beliefs. Therefore only those concepts generally agreed upon by all are included.

One must also note that the emphasis varies with the author. That is, one author may consider one concept most important and another author may consider the same concept as secondary. Therefore no attempt has been made to rate the concepts in order of their importance; however it may be indicated which concept is considered basic by an authority. On the other hand, those generally considered important by all the authors will form the nucleus of this study and will be treated more fully than the two or three on the periphery.

There is a difference of opinion as to when God should be introduced to the child. Eakin and Eakin would advise not mentioning the name of God until the child is about six. Previous to this, they feel, the child's religious experiences should be with the good and beautiful in nature and in people.¹ In relation to this view, Trent has

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1. Cf. Frank Eakin and Mildred Moody Eakin: Your Child's Religion, p. 17.

this to say:

"One school of pedagogy argues against teaching little children of God. Its exponents say: 'Give the child experiences first. Later give him a label. Let him have experiences with God first. Then help to interpret.' This advice overlooks at least one basic fact: the child is constantly experiencing. He does have experiences with God, whether he knows it or not, whether we grownups recognize it or not. He lives in a universe more or less orderly as it conforms or fails to conform to the laws of God. His body operates on dependable principles which God has made inherent in nature. He breathes the air which God has provided. He looks with wonder at the beauty God has made. He needs only a suggestion to enable him to connect God with his experiences."¹

Jones has this further word:

"Just when the word God comes to be associated with some unseen but very real person in the child's thought we cannot be sure. There are those among the careful teachers of little children who advise us to refrain from making direct statements about God to very little children lest they come to substitute words for a real experience. Certainly the many adults around us who speak glibly about God but who confess both in words and in their lives that they have no real consciousness of God bear witness to the danger of verbal religion as a serious barrier to a vital religion. Yet it seems scarcely possible, even if it were desirable, in a normal American environment to keep children from hearing God's name mentioned. And so it seems wiser to refer to God by name whenever the occasion arises and to try with each reference to help the little child to grow in understanding."²

There is necessarily some overlapping in concepts.

Rather than list each concept separately, the aim has been to group related and more secondary concepts together under the primary concepts.

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1. Trent, op. cit., p. 13.
2. Jones, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

These concepts of God which modern Christian educators of children were found to consider essential and basic for young children, will now be considered in turn.

1. God is a Person

While the concept of God as a person is emphasized most by Trent and Fox, its importance is also recognized by the Eakins, Sweet, and Jones. Sweet points out the dangers involved in teaching this concept. The Eakins suggest a unique approach to teaching the young child that God is a person. Nicholl does not mention this concept but it is clearly a basic assumption of her treatment of the child's experience of God.

Fox states that, "We being what we are, human personalities, must, I believe, inevitably think of God in terms of personality."¹ Since children are capable of entering into a personal relationship and a close fellowship with God, it is important that they have an idea of God as a person.² Trent says: "What do we want the young child to think of God? First of all we want him to think of God as Somebody, as a personality."³ Sweet agrees with this, but he is cognizant of the danger involved:

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1. Henry W. Fox: *The Child's Approach to Religion*, p. 19.
2. Cf. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 14, Trent, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
3. Trent, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

"We want the child to know God as personal, yet we moderns have often recoiled at childlike pictures of God as a person. Children have all sorts of concepts ---God as a great giant, infinitely strong; God as a kind old man with a long beard; God as a king on a throne up in the sky. Not adequate, we say. Of course not. But it is worse if the child, like one modern philosopher, sees God as a sort of 'oblong blur'. We need not fear too much the child's limited and concrete ideas of God. These are quite natural to children, no doubt. God is a Person. We do want our children to have a personal God. That they think of him as a person very much in human terms, in the human mold, is not strange. What we need to be concerned about is the sort of Person God is to the child. And this, may we repeat, is why we have attached so much importance, first, to the experience the child has with persons, especially parents; and secondly, to the way in which he is led to make this experience the foundation of his natural approach to God . . . Crude pictures of God as a person become refined and later spiritualized; but God the person remains."¹

In the opinion of Mary Alice Jones, an emphasis on the purposes of God in our teaching may detract attention from the child's concept of God as a physical form.²

On the other hand, the opinion is held by Eakin and Eakin that while the young child needs the Good personified, he needs it in the form of a visible companion rather than an invisible God. This would apply to children under five. When the child is between six and eight he can be introduced to the unseen God.³ The latter opinion is held by a minority, consequently the former view will be given preference in the quest for the concepts of God in

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1. Herman Sweet: Opening the Door for God, pp. 47-48.
2. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 18.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

recent books for children.¹

2. God is good and just.

The Eakins emphasize this concept more than any of the other concepts and more than the other authors except Jones who devotes a chapter of her book to a discussion of "The Righteousness of God."² Sweet, Trent, and Fox stress this concept and consider it highly essential for children. Each author discusses the goodness and justice of God as closely related attributes. They also indicate the child's responsibility to God as being proportionate to what he understands about the goodness and justice of God.

"The thought of God as good is probably more fundamental than any other thought of him,"³ in the opinion of the Eakins. But this concept perhaps more than any other needs to be interpreted to children in terms of their experience. Children may learn to know about God by learning to know what is good. Seeing good in people helps the child to know what is good.⁴ With a basis of understanding in experience, the child can be taught that God is better than anything which he can imagine.⁵

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 17-18, Sweet, op. cit., pp. 39-40, Trent, op. cit., p. 13.
2. Jones, op. cit., pp. 49-56.
3. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 8.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 16-17, Trent, op. cit., p. 33, Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 12-13.
5. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 17, Sweet, op. cit., pp. 12-17, Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

The concept of God as good may be strong motivation to good action. With the realization that God is good will come the understanding that doing good pleases God and doing wrong invokes his displeasure.¹

The goodness of God and the justice of God are closely related. Since God is good and his plan for the world and for his children is good, it is obvious that people who do not act in accordance with this plan must be doing that which is displeasing to God, thus invoking his displeasure and disapproval. God would not be good, nor would he be God, if he did not take a positive attitude toward sin. Jones sums it up in these words:

"In order to be granted the boon of freedom, man cannot be forced to choose the good. There must be allowed him the real opportunity to choose evil. And if he chooses evil he starts chains of events and situations which have far-reaching consequences not only for himself but also for others whose lives touch his directly or indirectly. In this world of moral law, when greed, the struggle for prestige, the reaching after power, have loomed so large; when the prophets who would recall the nations to the righteousness of God go unheeded, then, in our own day as in all other ages since man became man, disaster befalls. God may not abrogate the moral order of the universe without denying himself. This is the sober truth which our children must be taught."²

The concept of God as good and just is complex and has many implications which children cannot understand, but they can understand that he is good above all else and that

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 41; Jones, op. cit., p. 17.
2. Jones, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

wrong-doing is contrary to his plan and consequently displeases him.

3. God loves us.

In the minds of Trent, Sweet and Nicholl, this is the basic and most important concept. Jones considers it equal in importance to the concept of God as good and just. Eakin and Eakin and Fox who discuss it very little, do so almost entirely in terms of fellowship with God.

One of the first things the child experiences is love, the love his mother expresses for him in caring for him. It is mainly through experiencing the love his parents have for him that the child can understand that God loves him. "Love and trust in the family become the child's framework for his concept of God."¹

God's love is made manifest in many ways, but in terms of the child's understanding, according to the writers studied, there are perhaps four ways which will gather together God's expressions of love.

a. God cares for us.

God's care was one of the two aspects of his love regarded as being of primary importance by all except the Eakins and Fox.

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1. Sweet, op. cit., p. 40.

One mother told her child, "'God is made of love. He has enough for everybody in the world and he wants to take care of each one of us.'"¹ In relation to this, Sweet believes that, "For the very youngest, the first impressions should be of the God of loving care and protection."² The child should be helped to realize that this care is constant and not limited to certain times or places. A sense of God's loving care gives to the child that feeling of security that is so essential to his normal physical, mental and spiritual growth and well-being.

b. God gives us good gifts.

This aspect of God's love was emphasized by Nicholl, Trent, and Jones. Nicholl who is more specific on this point than the others says: "For the little child the giver-of-food is also the giver-of-love. . . ."³ When the child regards his material possessions, physical necessities, and parents as gifts from God, he is in a good position to feel the obligation and responsibility which go with the receiving of these gifts from God. He has the foundation for learning that these things are to be shared with those who have not what they need.⁴

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1. Trent, op. cit., p. 43.
2. Sweet, op. cit., p. 40.
3. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 48.
4. Cf. Ibid., Trent, op. cit., pp. 18, 20, 82, Jones, op. cit., pp. 27-40.

c. God forgives us when we do wrong.

The most specific discussions of this characteristic of God are given by Jones and Trent, but it is mentioned in various ways by all of the writers.

Just as a child understands, when he confesses a wrong to his mother or father, that they forgive him, he can understand that God forgives. This should motivate the child to confess rather than to conceal any wrong he has done.

d. We can have fellowship with God.

Fellowship with God is the one aspect of God's love which is recognized as vital by all of the authors without exception. To the Eakins and Fox it is the most important way in which God's love is experienced. In fact, the Eakins and Fox do not discuss the other aspects of God's love. Trent, Sweet, Jones, and Nicholl, who give the most complete discussion of God's love, regard the aspect of fellowship as a concept to be desired above the others.

Fellowship is the reward of obedience, of doing what pleases God. In Jesus we have the best illustration of fellowship with God. Mary Alice expresses it in this way:

" . . . Jesus experienced fellowship with God. His confidence in God and in God's love, even when all external evidences of it were removed from him, came from his experience of God. He knew God. And because he

knew him, he knew that the love of God was real and abiding and active, making for goodness and joy though suffering and evil were about him. It is this high concept of the love of God which we wish our children to develop and in which we wish them to find abiding happiness. May we expect them to move from the beginning thought of the love of God revealed in terms of physical comforts and benefits to the concept of the fellowship of God, supporting them, giving meaning and purpose to their struggle to achieve their full stature as sons of God? The Christian faith affirms that we may . . . We may not expect boys and girls to move rapidly from the thought of God as the Great Provider to the thought of God as the Great Companion, and we shall make a mistake if we attempt to hurry them along. And yet we shall make a greater mistake if we fail to recognize that the sense of fellowship is very real to a child and that it is the experience upon which we may build with the greatest confidence."¹

Prayer, talking with God, is one of the chief ways of having fellowship with God. Sweet quotes Rufus Jones: "Prayer is a highly personal matter. But prayer is born, says Rufus Jones, out of our need for spiritual fellowship."²

The fellowship with God can be very real to the young child. Prayer can be real to him.³ In the words of Sweet: "God must be the Companion of all our ways, no stranger to any experience, or to any time or place."⁴ "Loving and serving persons is not a way of appeasing God. It is a way of experiencing God and a way of fellowship with God."⁵

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1. Jones, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
2. Sweet, op. cit., p. 83.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 84-86, Trent, op. cit., pp. 81-82, Jones, op. cit., pp. 30-31.
4. Sweet, op. cit., p. 86.
5. Ibid., p. 136.

That is truly fellowship which is based on love.¹

Such are the ways in which the child commonly experiences God's love for him.

4. God is Creator.

This concept is recognized by all of the authors as absolutely essential and exceedingly helpful as a stepping-stone to other concepts. Jones says that this is the concept which opens the avenue of approach to an understanding of the greatness of God.

Wonder is a natural reaction of the young child and it is one which we can capitalize in our efforts to aid him in developing a concept of God as creator. Mary Alice Jones has aptly said:

"Probably the first approach to an understanding of the greatness of God is through the world of nature. For little children, the ugly bulb becomes a nourishing vegetable, the stars in the night sky, the rainbow against a cloud all call forth wonder and awe; and these feelings may be cultivated. The perfection of little things, the delicate balance of a butterfly's wing, the color of a tiny wild flower, the pattern of leaves—these also offer opportunity for building a response to the greatness of God."²

The child's questions present excellent teaching opportunities. Since many of his questions relate to the great out-of-doors it should not be too difficult to impress

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 30-31, Sweet, op. cit., pp. 27-28, Fex, op. cit., p.37.
2. Jones, op. cit., p. 46.

upon the child the wonder of One who has created so much beauty. The child's sensitivity to beauty is another thing to be developed along with and as a part of his concept of God as creator.¹

Concomitant with this concept a realization of the wonder, greatness, and power of God will begin to impress the child. He will begin to realize that God is ever present and not limited by time or space.²

The concept of God as creator cannot be restricted to the out-of-door world, for inevitably, sooner or later, will come the question, Where did I come from? A part of the creator concept must be the concept that God is the author of life.³

Inherent in the child's concept of God as creator should be the idea that he is sustainer of life. Of course, those terms will not mean anything to the child, but he does understand that God not only creates things but he helps them to keep growing. Nicholl says: "Little children will discover that though we must prepare the soil, sow the seed, water and tend it, only God can make it grow."⁴

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1. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 10-13, Jones, op. cit., pp. 42-46, Sweet, op. cit., pp. 12, 15, 46, Trent, op. cit., pp. 18, 45, 82.
2. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 10-22, Trent, op. cit., p. 82, Sweet, op. cit., pp. 12, 13, 42, 47, Jones, op. cit., pp. 41-46.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 13-14, Jones, op. cit., pp. 9-10, Sweet, op. cit., p. 12, Trent, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
4. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 19.

Thus there are several phases to the child's concept of God as creator. Only a wonderful, great and powerful God could have created the beautiful world of nature. Not only has this great God created the out-of-doors, but he has created people. Furthermore, his work did not stop with creation but he continues to keep things alive and to make them grow. These aspects of God Trent suggests in the following poem:

"God of the earth, the sky, the sea!
Maker of all above, below!
Creation lives and moves in Thee,
Thy present life through all doth flow."¹

5. God is our Father.

While this concept was set forth by each of the six authors, it was not discussed at length by any of them. They were agreed upon the fact that it is through a healthy relationship with his own father that the child is most easily led to an understanding of God as his Father.

The words "Our Father" embody an important concept for the child. If in his experience he is familiar with his own father's love and care, the concept of God as a loving Father will not be hard for him to grasp. In the child's eyes, his father knows everything and can do anything. It is not hard for the child to think of God as

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1. Trent, op. cit., p. 112.

a loving Father having these same attributes.¹

A positive teaching of this concept is important for it will fortify the child against undesirable ideas of God to which he may be exposed.² For example, "One mother says: 'God cannot be both a spy and a loving Father in the child's mind.'"³ If for no other reason than unlearning the idea of God as a spy, it is important to help the child to know that God is a loving Father.

Obviously this concept is closely related to the concept of God as a loving and forgiving God.

D. Summary

At the outset of this chapter, concept was defined with relation to this study. This was followed and supplemented by a discussion of two essential qualities of a concept for children. A concept must be concrete, for children think in concrete rather than abstract terms. A concept must be functional, directly related to the experience of the child.

With this background, the concepts of God regard-

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 20-21; Sweet, op. cit., pp. 14-15, Jones, op. cit., pp. 16-17, Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 21-22; Sweet, op. cit., pp. 13-15, Jones, op. cit., pp. 16-18.
3. Trent, op. cit., p. 22.

ed as basic for children by contemporary authorities in the field of children's theology were set forth and explained. Each concept has been considered in the light of the emphasis placed upon it by the various authors.

The concepts found emphasized are as follows:

1. God is a Person.
2. God is good and just.
3. God loves us.
 - a. God cares for us.
 - b. God gives us good gifts.
 - c. God forgives us when we do wrong.
 - d. We can fellowship with God.
4. God is Creator.
5. God is our Father.

There are a few concepts suggested by some of the authors which are not included in this set of concepts. The reason for omitting them is that they are not generally agreed upon by all of the authors.

Finally, this chapter, in the concepts set forth, forms the foundation for the study of the books about God for children.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN

THOUGHTS OF GOD FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY WELKER AND BARBER

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN THOUGHTS OF GOD FOR BOYS AND GIRLS BY WELKER AND BARBER

A. Introduction

Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls, as indicated on its title page, consists of:

"Selections for family worship from the 1936 to 1946 issues of the devotional book published four times a year by The Connecticut Council of Churches under the sponsorship of The Committee on Religious Education of Children."¹

This book was published in its present form by Harper and Brothers Publishers in November 1948. It is a devotional book with a song, story, or poem for every day in the year.

Written in language a primary child can understand, it combines pictures, stories, songs, poems and prayer thus making a usable book for worship in family groups. The reading material and the pictures are designed for the various seasons of the year but are easily adapted to other seasons. The stories range from those of local interest to those of a world-wide nature. They include stories ranging from those about Jesus to stories about commonplace things in the home. In the opinion of Paul H.

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1. Welker and Barber, Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls, title page.

Vieth, it is the best devotional manual for families with¹ children.

B. Analysis of Thoughts of God
for Its Concepts of God

Since this book is primarily about God, it offers² a variety of concepts of God. Most of these are strongly emphasized by repetition and restatement. They are arranged here according to emphasis, the concept mentioned most being discussed first and followed by the others in order of their emphasis in the book.

1. God is Creator.

The concept of God as creator is by far the most prevalent one in the book. By means of poems, litanies, songs, stories, Scripture and prayers, the fact of God's creatorship is made evident.

First of all, there are frequent references to the fact that God made the world and its inhabitants in accordance with the Genesis account.³ Two examples of this

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1. Cf. Ibid., fly leaf of book jacket.
2. There are two views set forth in Thoughts of God which, while not apparent elsewhere in the book, are given a definite place. The first of these is the progressive growth of the concept of God (pp. 147-150). The Hebrews did not worship Yahweh until their experience at Mount Sinai. Even then they were not sure he was the only God. The second of these is the theory of the evolutionary concept of creation (pp. 213-215). In the presentation of the second, the first view is also implied.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 8, 26, 90, 159-162, 192, 206, 210, 212-215, 223, 228, 259, 313.

are in a prayer and a poem. The prayer, in part, is this:¹
"Thank You God for creating such a beautiful world . . . "
The first verse of a poem entitled "God's Creation" clearly
expresses the creator concept:

"God created heaven and earth,
The stars, the moon, that watch over us at night,
The sun that gives us light by day.
God created everything."²

God's creativity did not stop with the initial
act of creation according to the emphases in Thoughts of
God. He continues to be active today as giver and sustain-
er of life.³ At the close of a story in which a boy learns
how potatoes grow, the prayer begins like this: "O God,
for the wonder of life and growth we give our thanks to
You . . . "⁴ At the end of a story entitled "Growing Up"
is this prayer:

"We wonder, O God, at Your plan for our bodies to
grow, and the way food and sunshine and air change us
from babies to men and women. Help us, as our bodies
grow, to learn to think more clearly and to act more
wisely every day."⁵

Beautifully expressed in the last verse of a song
is the concept of God as giver of life:

"Praise to our Father, God,
Giver of life to all,

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1. Ibid., p. 90.
2. Ibid., p. 192.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4, 5, 6, 13-14, 26, 27, 52, 83, 87, 90-93, 95, 96-99, 101-103, 136, 192, 222.
4. Ibid., p. 101.
5. Ibid., p. 83.

Wonderful life, that cannot die,
Given to great and small!"¹

In connection with the creator concept, several characteristics of God are revealed. Without them, a discussion of this concept would not be complete. God's wisdom is mentioned numerous times.² Here is an example: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all" (Psalm 104:24).³ God's power and majesty are expressed in words from the Psalms: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable."⁴ And "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."⁵ This characteristic is brought out indirectly along with much of the teaching of the creator concept. God's orderliness is a recurrent teaching.⁶ It is expressed in the beginning of this prayer: "O God, as we study Your plan for the universe, we learn that it has been for countless years, and we know that it will always continue . . ."⁷ It is also embodied in the prayer previously quoted which shows that God is active in the growth process.⁸ The faithfulness of God is another characteristic

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1. Ibid., p. 87.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4, 5, 73, 83, 85, 88, 98, 104, 111, 112, 114, 115, 116, 118, 206, 207, 209, 210, 218, 230, 245.
3. Ibid., pp. 8, 294.
4. Ibid., p. 228.
5. Ibid., p. 229.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 83, 85, 88, 98, 207, 209, 210.
7. Ibid., p. 210.
8. Cf. Ante., p. 23.

which is found in Thoughts of God.¹ A prayer epitomizing this concept goes like this:

"O God, the sureness of day and night, of the seasons, of flowers and birds returning in the spring help us to know that we can always depend on You. Amen."²

"God is the creator of beauty" is the theme of much of the material which embodies the creator concept.³ In a prayer it is expressed:

"We thank You, God, for all the beauty You have put into the world. We wonder that this beauty is found even in little things like snow flakes . . . "⁴

And again in a short poem:

"I watch the seasons come and go and know
That it is God who plans it so—
Who shows the beauty of each season as it comes,
And lets me find the wonder of each passing one,
Until I know that they together make the year—
A year of seasons, and every one
A new one more lovely than the last."⁵

Concomitant with a large portion of the teaching of the creator concept is the element of wonder. It is evident in some of the above quotations. The authors use repetition and restatement to cultivate wonder, this natural reaction of the child.⁶ It is aptly summarized in the

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 105, 223, 243, 244, 250, 300.

2. Ibid., p. 223.

3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 26, 52, 90, 93, 98, 107-108, 134, 136, 161, 162, 216, 219, 224, 225, 245, 248-249, 298, 311, 313.

4. Ibid., p. 8.

5. Ibid., p. 245.

6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 8, 16, 83, 90, 95, 101-103, 105, 114, 136, 161, 206, 208-209, 212, 213, 216, 234, 237.

concluding verse of a poem, "I Wonder":

"I have so many wonderings
I think about so much;
Is wondering part of God's great plan?
Perhaps some day I'll find answers!"¹

Thus, the concept of God as creator found in Thoughts of God includes God's initial act of creation; God's continuing work in the creative process today; God's characteristics of wisdom, power, majesty and orderliness; and God, the creator of beauty. In all of these the child's reaction of wonder is cultivated.

2. God is love.

The love concept is depicted in a variety of ways. It finds a consistent and recurrent emphasis throughout the book.

The universality of God's love (God loves everyone) is one phase of the love concept. A section of the book which includes parts of November and December is especially given over to this phase of God's love.² Perhaps the concept is best stated in a song found in that section. This is the last verse:

"Our Father's love is like the sun,
Enough for all to share;
Surrounding children white and brown
Ev'rywhere.

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1. Ibid., p. 237.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 319-338.

Our Father's love is like the sun,
Ev'rywhere."¹

This section also includes letters from a Mexican boy to an American boy and the replies of the latter. It includes stories about children in other lands, showing that God loves all children.

Stories about Jesus also express God's love. One of the daily meditations about the private worship of the boy Jesus closes with these words:

"The rain falls on all alike,' thought Jesus, 'sun and rain are for all to enjoy. God's love is like that, too. It is for everyone.'"²

God cares for us. Most of the teaching of this phase of the love concept is indirect.³ However, in one story, "How God Takes Care of Us", there is a clear direct statement of God's care. The teaching of the story is this: One way God takes care of us is by giving us minds to understand and use the dependable laws by which the world is run.⁴ Another way that God's care is shown is through stories about families working happily together. God has planned that mothers and fathers should help him to care for children.

God is described as the giver of good gifts.⁵

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1. Ibid., pp. 325-326.

2. Ibid., p. 28.

3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 11, 12, 20, 51, 63, 73, 155-157, 165-166.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 242-243.

5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 246, 303, 304, 315, 322.

This thought is stated in the words of a familiar song:

"All good things around us
Are gifts of God's great love.
Then thank the Lord,
O thank the Lord
For all his love."¹

One prayer opens with these words: "O God, the giver of every good gift . . . "² A verse of scripture embodies the concept: "'God giveth us richly all things to enjoy' (I Timothy 6:17)."³

The aspect of fellowship also receives mention. It is certainly implied and encouraged by the short personal prayers with which many of the daily meditations close.⁴ Since this book was intended for family worship and fellowship with God, it is quite fitting that there should be stories about families worshipping together. Along with one of these stories is this verse of scripture: "'Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you' (James 4:8, Moffatt)."⁵ In the following a child says: "'Every night I read and think with God.'"⁶ This emphasis on family worship and individual worship is the note on which the book opens.⁷

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1. Ibid., p. 303.

2. Ibid., p. 322.

3. Ibid., p. 246.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 30, 33, 35, 42, 74, 127, 141, 174, 205, 251, 268, 338.

5. Ibid., p. 2.

6. Ibid., p. 3.

7. Cf. Ibid., pp. 1-3.

God loves us and forgives us. This is not stressed greatly. It is mentioned in a few stories in which the concept is clearly stated.¹ Some of the prayers are based on the fact of this concept.² One of the prayers is this:

"Our loving God, it makes us sorry when we do wrong, and we know You are sorry too. May we try always to be loving and kind. May we remember that You always love us and expect us to show our love for You. Amen."³

Another aspect and perhaps a more general one is that God's way is the way of love. Wherever people help each other and show love for one another, God's love is at work. A recurrent emphasis is the way in which God's love works in the home.⁴ A section is given over to stories about Jesus. Most of these stories depict Jesus teaching about God and his way of love.⁵ One of the thoughts during the month of December is God's great love in sending Jesus to the world.⁶

Finally there is emphasis on the child's responsibility in relation to this concept. Because God loves him so much he should love God and try to please him by loving and pleasing others. There are frequent references

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 50, 55, 59, 60, 69.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 50, 55, 60, 69.
3. Ibid., p. 55.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 1-4, 87-88, 91, 101-105, 302.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 26-75.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 348, 350, 351, 357, 358.

to ways in which children can show God's love.¹ This is especially true of the prayers many of which begin: "God of love" or "Our loving God."

These, then, are the ways in which the concept of God as a God of love is presented in this book.

3. God is good and just.

This concept is implied throughout the book. In addition to the numerous implications, the concept is frequently put into concrete terms.² One prayer states it thus: "Our loving God, we find that Your plans for the world are wise and good . . ."³ In one of the litanies the refrain is this: "Give thanks to God for his goodness."⁴ Another reference to God's goodness is found in a prayer: "O God, help us to know of Your way of love and goodness . . ."⁵ And in a prayer poem God is addressed in this way: "O God, our Father, loving and good . . ."⁶

All of these references have been to the goodness of God. The justice of God, as such, is mentioned only a few times⁷ (indirectly it is mentioned through the teaching on God's unchanging laws⁸). Disobedience and punishment

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 55, 60, 61, 70, 163, 166, 322-325, 332.
 2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4, 9, 26, 50, 70, 209, 218, 251, 276, 296.
 3. Ibid., p. 4.
 4. Ibid., p. 9.
 5. Ibid., p. 70.
 6. Ibid., p. 358.
 7. Cf. Ibid., pp. 25, 55, 60, 144, 145.
 8. Cf. Ibid., pp. 85, 88, 207, 209, 211, 288.

is the subject of one story. The teaching is summarized in this way:

"Unhappiness . . . is one way we are punished when we displease God. We don't have happiness until we are ready to do better. When we disobey God's plans for His world, the results often make us unhappy. God expects us to work with Him. We can depend on His justice."¹

Another aspect of God's justice is discussed in a story entitled "Does God Save People From Harm?" The gist of the teaching is that God does not make people do what is right. He lets them choose and he does not interfere even though it may mean that a person who chooses to do wrong may harm a person who chooses to do right. "Things don't always seem right to us . . . but certain results follow certain causes. If God changed his law, no one would know what to depend on."²

In these ways God's goodness and justice are depicted in Thoughts of God.

4. God is our Father.

This concept is not so consistently stressed as the above concepts. Although the references to the Father concept are few, they are significant. By far, the majority of references to God as Father, occur in the prayers.³

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1. Ibid., p. 358.

2. Ibid., p. 289.

3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 32, 47, 50, 186, 252, 274, 284, 291.

The remainder are in scripture verses, quoted or referred to.¹

The main teaching is: God is our Father, the Father of all boys and girls, men and women, all over the world. This prayer epitomizes the Father concept set forth:

"Our God, we are glad for the different races of people, for the beauty to be found in the skins of other colors. We know we are brothers, because we think and feel alike. We get tired and hungry. We need food and clothes. We know that all people are the same in Your love. Keep us remembering that You, O God, are Father of all. May we act like children of one God. Amen."²

Through this concept the child is related to God in a father-child relationship, and to all the peoples of the world in a brother relationship since God is the Father of all.

C. Comparison of Findings with Concepts of God Considered Basic

1. Are the concepts concrete and functional?

It was shown in the first chapter that in order for a concept to be understood and grasped by the child it must be concrete and functional.³ In comparing the concepts of God found in Thoughts of God with this standard it is revealed that they are both concrete and functional. That the

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 12, 28, 66.

2. Ibid., p. 333.

3. Cf. Ante., pp. 3-4.

concepts are concrete is evident in the expression of the creator cited previously in the chapter.¹ In this prayer it is pointed out that God helps the child to grow physically. Not only does this prayer express a concrete concept but it also expresses a functional concept, a concept that is related to the child's experience. Growing, thinking, acting, these are part of his daily activity and the fact that God made possible these activities by creating his body and his mind, his whole being, relates God the Creator directly to the experience of the child.

2. How do the concepts of God found in Thoughts of God compare with the basic concepts?

The concepts of God found in this book and given in the order of their emphasis are:

1. God is Creator.
2. God is love.
3. God is good and just.
4. God is our Father.

These will now be compared specifically, one by one, with the concepts considered basic for children, as set forth in the preceding chapter.

- a. God is Creator.

In the discussion of this as one of the basic

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1. Cf. Ante., p. 23.

concepts the following aspects were presented: God is the creator of the great out-of-doors; God is the author of life; God is the sustainer of life; God is wonderful, great, and powerful.

In Thoughts of God, the creator concept presents God as creator of the world and its inhabitants; God is sustainer of life; God is wise, powerful, majestic, orderly, faithful and wonderful; God is the creator of beauty.

Thus the creator concept in Thoughts of God, although very similar, is broader than the basic concept. It includes, in addition to all of the aspects set forth in the basic concept, the wisdom and faithfulness of God, and presents God as creator of beauty. Therefore, the creator concept as set forth in this book is completely adequate according to the basic concept.

b. God is love.

In the basic concept there are mainly four aspects of God's love: God cares for us, God gives us good gifts, God forgives us when we do wrong, and we can have fellowship with God.

That God is love is shown in Thoughts of God in these ways: God loves everyone, God cares for us, God gives good gifts, we can have fellowship with God, God loves and forgives us, God's love is at work wherever people show love for one another, because God loves us we should love

him and try to please him.

Here also the concept in Thoughts of God is broader than the basic concept, for it includes not only all of the things suggested in the basic concept but it also includes the following: God loves everyone, God's love is at work wherever people show love for one another. The idea of the child's responsibility is also brought out.

Thus the concept of God as love, meets all the requirements of the basic concept.

c. God is good and just.

According to the set of basic concepts, the concept of God as good and just is in essence this: God is good above all else and wrong-doing displeases him.

The concept of God as good and just is presented in Thoughts of God in this way: concrete references to God as good and to his goodness; disobeying God's laws brings punishment; God does not make people good, they must choose.

In comparing the basic concept and the concept of this book, it is revealed that the presentation of God as being good above all else is lacking in Thoughts of God. The implications are there, but it lacks the specific teaching to emphasize this aspect. Thoughts of God contains these aspects which are not mentioned in the basic concept: disobedience brings punishment and God does not make people good.

Thus the concept of God as good and just in Thoughts of God is weak in presenting God as good above all else, but it is adequate in other respects according to the basic concept. Furthermore, it includes slightly more than is suggested in the basic concept.

d. God is our Father.

In elaborating the basic concept, it is suggested that the idea of God as Father is related in the child's mind to his own father's love and care.

In Thoughts of God, the father concept is presented almost wholly in terms of God as the Father of all mankind. In the basic concept it is more personal. In this book, the concept lacks the personal emphasis; it is universal.

Therefore, according to the basic concept, the concept in Thoughts of God is not sufficient for it lacks the personal element.

e. God is a person.

This concept, as such, is not found in Thoughts of God. It is implied, but nowhere is it mentioned specifically.

D. Summary

This chapter has been devoted to an analysis of

the devotional book, Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls, by Welker and Barber. The following concepts of God were found:

1. God is Creator.
2. God is love.
3. God is good and just.
4. God is our Father.

These concepts were examined to discover whether or not they met the requirements of being functional and concrete. They were then compared to the basic concepts set forth in the first chapter:

1. God is a person.
2. God is good and just.
3. God loves us.
4. God is Creator.
5. God is our Father.

The results revealed that the concepts in Thoughts of God were both functional and concrete. They more than met the requirements of the creator concept and the love concept. They were slightly weak in relation to the basic concepts of God's goodness and justice, and God's Fatherhood. The concept of God as a person was entirely lacking in Thoughts of God except for implications.

In conclusion, it may be said that, on the whole, Thoughts of God compares favorably with the basic concepts.

CHAPTER III
CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN
THEN I THINK OF GOD
BY MABEL NIEDERMEYER

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN THEN I THINK OF GOD BY MABEL NIEDERMEYER

A. Introduction

Then I Think of God, a devotional book for children, is seasonal in its organization. The book is divided into four parts each of which is prefaced by a litany heralding the coming season. The child's everyday experiences form the subject matter for the litanies, especially the last three. There are four devotional readings for each month. Each consists of a story, a prayer, and a Bible verse. One simple picture is used for each month. It is found with each of the four stories for a particular month. Experiences common to the child form the basis for all of the stories.

B. Analysis of Then I Think of God For Its Concepts of God

The concepts of God in this book are found primarily in the daily prayers and Scripture verses. Only in a small measure are they found in the stories. These are the concepts arranged in order of their emphasis in the book:

1. God is Creator.

The creatorship of God is easily the most important

concept in the book. This concept is embodied in each of the four litanies which introduce the seasonal sections of the book.¹ The first litany, "A Song of Creation," presents God as creator of the world. The creation story following the Genesis account is set forth with the intermittent refrain: "O sing unto the Lord, For he hath done marvelous things."² This concept is further emphasized by verses from Genesis:

"And God said, Let the earth put forth . . . fruit trees bearing fruit of their kind . . . And the earth brought forth . . . trees bearing fruit . . . And God saw that it was good."³

The creation of the sun, moon, and stars is related in similar manner, accompanied by the appropriate verses from the creation account in Genesis.

God is presented as being active in the creative process today as the sustainer of life. This aspect of his creatorship is well illustrated in the litanies which introduce spring, summer, and autumn.⁴ The following lines are from "A Song of Spring Beauty":

For the world which God has filled with beauty,
 Oh give thanks unto the Lord,
 For he is good.
For the bloom and fragrance of the flowers,

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1. Cf. Mabel Niedermeyer: Then I Think of God, pp. 13, 39, 65, 91.
2. Ibid., p. 13.
3. Ibid., p. 53.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 39, 65, 91.

Oh give thanks unto the Lord,
For he is good.
For the greenness of the new grass and its softness
under our feet,
Oh give thanks unto the Lord,
For he is good."¹

And in "A Song of Gladness" this aspect of the concept is
again stressed:

"I am glad for my ears so that I can hear the bark of
my dog, my father's laugh, and the crackling of burn-
ing leaves.

I will give thanks unto God,
For I am wonderfully made.
I am glad for my voice so that I can talk, and sing,
and whistle, and just make joyful noises.
I will give thanks unto God,
For I am wonderfully made."²

God's activity in creation today is also echoed in "A Song
of Thanksgiving."³

That God has a plan is evident in nature. The
subject of one story is God's plan for making coal to keep
us warm.⁴ A prayer expresses clearly the reality of God's
plan:

"Dear God, I am glad that you thought about the birds
when you planned the world. And that you planned how
to care for them, too. I am glad for all the wise plans
you have made. Amen."⁵

Certain characteristics of God are mentioned in
connection with the creator concept. God is great, faithful,

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1. Ibid., p. 39.
2. Ibid., p. 65.
3. Ibid., p. 91.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
5. Ibid., p. 43.

wonderful and wise, and He loves and creates beauty. That God is powerful is implied. His wisdom is also expressed in the above prayer. Some of these characteristics are set forth in a prayer and the Bible verse which follows:

"Oh, God I wonder sometimes at all the things which you have made. Help me to understand your greatness. Help me always to remember that you used your greatness to put beauty and goodness into the world. Amen. 'For thou art great, and doest wondrous things; Thou art God alone. Psalm 86:10.'"¹

God's faithfulness is brought out in a story which reveals that blossoms on fruit trees are God's promise of fruit on the tree. When one sees the blossoms one can be certain that God will send fruit.²

The concept of God as creator in Then I Think of God reveals him to be creator of the world, the author of life, active in creative processes today, having an orderly plan for the world, a God who is great, faithful, wonderful, wise, a creator of beauty.

2. God loves us.

A simple positive teaching of this concept is not generally found in the book. The aspect of the concept most stressed is God's care for us. As a rule this is not directly stressed but it is frequently and definitely implied in the prayers that God cares for us through people, as for

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1. Ibid., p. 51.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 52-53.

example: "Thank you, God, for pets. Help me to take care of mine as well as Mother helps you take care of me. Amen. He careth for you. I Peter 5:7."¹

God is presented as a giver of good gifts. This concept is embodied in "A Song of Thanksgiving" in which these words form the refrain: "Praise the Lord for his lovingkindness, And for his wonderful works to the children of men."² It is also expressed in a Bible verse: "God giveth us richly all things to enjoy. I Timothy 6:17b."³ It is also found in a story in which the main character tells about the many good things God has given her.⁴ In the same story the concept of fellowship with God is brought out. Fellowship with God is brought out in another story built around the child's experience in the church.⁵

Thus, the concept of a loving God is set forth mainly in terms of his care for us, his good gifts, and the possibility of fellowship with him.

3. God can help us.

While this concept as stated is not taught directly, its implications are unmistakable for in three-fourths of the prayers is a petition of this type: "help me," "make me,"

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1. Ibid., p. 59.
2. Ibid., p. 91.
3. Ibid., p. 37.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 112-113.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

"show me", "teach me".¹ This points to a God who is able to help, one in whom lies the answer to the problems the child faces. The Christmas prayer illustrates this concept:

"Thank you, God, for the birthday of Jesus. Help me to plan to make someone happy at this Christmas-time. Help me to think of the gifts which I will give and not of the gifts which I want for myself. Show me ways of showing love to others. Amen."²

This consistent emphasis on requests to God for help have the effect of showing God as one who can help us.

4. God is good.

This concept receives its main emphasis in "A Song of Spring Beauty". The refrain of this litany embodies the concept.³ The other indications of this concept are found in the following Bible verses:

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Psalm 33:5."⁴ "Do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:18."⁵ "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness. Psalm 65:11a."⁶

Thus, this concept is not greatly stressed in Then I Think of God.

5. God is our Father.

Since God as Father is mentioned only twice in the

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 29, 33, 41, 45, 47, 51, 53, 59, 61, 63, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 85, 87, 89, 101.
2. Ibid., p. 115.
3. Cf. Ante., pp. 40-41.
4. Ibid., p. 69.
5. Ibid., p. 85.
6. Ibid., p. 95.

entire book, it must be regarded as insignificant in Then I Think of God.

C. Comparison of Findings
with Concepts of God Considered Basic

1. Are the concepts concrete and functional?

The concepts of God set forth in Then I Think of God are both concrete and functional. This is evident in the litanies and prayers referred to and quoted in this chapter.¹ That the concepts are concrete is especially evident in the four litanies.²

As well as expressing concrete concepts the last three litanies set forth functional concepts, for in each litany the subject is a part of the child's experience.³ Since all of the stories are directly related to the child's everyday life, the concepts, which are found mainly in the prayers and Bible verses following the stories, are functional.

2. How do the concepts of God found in Then I Think of God compare with the basic concepts?

The concepts of God found in this book and given in order of their emphasis are:

1. God is Creator.

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1. Cf. Ante., pp. 40-44.
2. Cf. Ante., pp. 40-41.
3. Cf. Ante., p. 39.

2. God loves us.
3. God can help us.
4. God is good.

These will now be compared, one by one, with the concepts considered basic for children, as set forth in the preceding chapter.

a. God is Creator.

As one of the basic concepts, this concept includes the following phases: God, the creator of the out-of-door world; God, the author and sustainer of life; God, wonderful, great and powerful.

In Then I Think of God the creator concept reveals that God is creator of the world, author of life and active in creative processes today as sustainer of life. He has an orderly plan for the universe and his works show him to be great, wonderful, faithful and wise, a creator of beauty.

Thus it appears that the creator concept in Then I Think of God compares favorably with the basic concept except that it lacks any direct emphasis on God's power (it is implied). In other respects the concept in this book exceeds the requirements in showing God to be faithful and wise and a creator of beauty.

b. God loves us.

In the basic concept of God as love, there are

four aspects: God cares for us, God gives us good gifts, God forgives us when we do wrong, and we can have fellowship with God.

The love of God as presented in Then I Think of God is expressed in terms of God's care for us, his good gifts to us, and the possibility of fellowship with him. Rather than in direct teaching, this concept is set forth by implications.

It is evident, then, that the concept of God as love found in this book lacks any reference to God as one who forgives us when we do wrong. The teaching does imply that God cares for us, that He is the giver of good gifts, and that it is possible to have fellowship with him. The entire concept could be strengthened by more direct teaching.

c. God can help us.

Because this concept is not stated as such among the basic concepts does not mean that it is not inherent in them. It is implied in a definite teaching of the concept of God as loving. In this book, the above concept is not related to the love concept. That God can help us is not strongly emphasized, for it is set forth by implication rather than by direct presentation. However, this concept may be utilized as a supplement to a more direct teaching of the concept of God's love.

d. God is good.

Among the basic concepts is this one: God is good and just, He is good above all else and wrong-doing displeases him. In Then I Think of God this concept consists of references to God's goodness in one of the litanies and in a few Bible verses.

The concept in this book is good as far as it goes. It lacks the emphasis on God as good above all else and on his justice. While it does not give a complete presentation of God as good, it gives the foundation for a teaching of the concept. Like the above concept, it could be used as a supplement to or a basis for a fuller presentation of the concept of God as good. Any reference to God's justice is complete lacking.

e. God is our Father.

The idea of God as Father should be related in the child's mind to his own father's love and care. Since this concept is mentioned but twice in the entire book, it can hardly be said that it meets the standard of the basic concept.

f. God is a Person.

No reference is made to this concept in Then I Think of God.

D. Summary

The devotional book, Then I Think of God, by Mabel Niedermeyer has been the subject of analysis in this chapter. The book was found to contain the following concepts:

1. God is Creator.
2. God loves us.
3. God can help us.
4. God is good.
5. God is our Father.

These concepts were compared to the basic concepts set forth in the first chapter. The comparison revealed that the concepts were concrete and functional, directly related to the child's experiences.

The creator concept, as a whole, exceeds the requirements of the basic concept. The concepts of God as love, and God as good and just were incomplete in comparison to the basic concepts. God as Father receives only brief mention and God as a person is not set forth at all.

Thus it may be concluded, that Then I Think of God contains a good presentation of the creator concept, and a good, though somewhat incomplete, presentation of the concepts of God as loving, good and just.

CHAPTER IV
CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN
TELL ME ABOUT GOD
BY MARY ALICE JONES

CHAPTER IV
CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN
TELL ME ABOUT GOD
BY MARY ALICE JONES

A. Introduction

Written in narrative style, Tell Me About God is designed to answer the young child's wondering questions about God. In each of the twenty short sections some aspect of God's character or his work is discussed and relevant Scripture is quoted.

The book is written in language a child can understand and is attractively illustrated to stimulate his interest. The material is presented through the medium of conversations between a mother and her son Bobby who asks many questions about God. Since his questions come out of his own experience the answers given to him and discovered by him are related directly to his experience. It is evidently the purpose of the book to inform and stimulate the child.

B. Analysis of Tell Me About God
for Its Concepts of God

God is presented positively in this book and largely in terms of three concepts. These concepts in order of their emphasis are:

1. God is Creator.

Since Jones in Faith of Our Children considered this concept as an avenue of approach to the child's understanding of God's greatness, it is not surprising to find that she has emphasized it more than any other in Tell Me¹
About God.

Several Scripture verses and some of the short stories reveal God to be the creator of the universe.² Here are a few of the Scripture verses:

"God . . . made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein. Acts 14:15."³ "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good . . . And God called the light Day. Genesis 1:3, 4, 5."⁴ "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. Genesis 1:16."⁵

Some of the stories which contain this concept bear these titles: "God Plans for Day and Light,"⁶ "God Plans a Beautiful World,"⁷ and "God Made the Night."⁸

That God is the author and sustainer of life is evident in these stories: "God Gives Us Water,"⁹ and "God Plans Food for Us."¹⁰ These Scripture verses emphasize God

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 46.
2. Cf. Jones: Tell Me About God, pp. 13, 20, 21, 25, 44, 45, 48, 71.
3. Ibid., p. 13.
4. Ibid., p. 21.
5. Ibid., p. 48.
6. Ibid., p. 21.
7. Ibid., p. 23.
8. Ibid., p. 48.
9. Ibid., p. 32.
10. Ibid., p. 28.

as the sustainer of life:

"He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. Acts 17:25."¹ "Give thanks unto the Lord . . . who giveth food to all. Psalm 136:1, 25."² "God sendeth the springs into the valleys . . . They give drink to every beast of the field. Psalm 104:10, 11."³

"God Plans a Beautiful World" is the title of one of the stories which present God as a creator of beauty.⁴ This aspect of his creatorship is also expressed in a verse of Scripture: "He hath made everything beautiful in his time. Ecclesiastes 3:11."⁵ There are several references to the beauty of creation which imply that God is the creator of beauty.⁶

Along with the creator concept, these characteristics of God are revealed: orderliness, greatness, and wisdom. His orderliness has the most constant emphasis. In almost every section some reference is made to God's plan.⁷ His greatness is stressed in relation to the things He has created.⁸ His wisdom is implied in a few places and mentioned once.⁹

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1. Ibid., p. 20.
2. Ibid., p. 30.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 24.
5. Ibid., p. 25.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 45, 71.
7. Cf. Ibid., pp. 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 56, 57, 59, 60, 71.
8. Cf. Ibid., pp. 20, 23, 44.
9. Cf. Ibid., pp. 11, 24, 44, 49, 51, 67.

Thus the concept of God as creator presented in this book includes the following aspects: God is the creator of the universe; God is the author and sustainer of life; God is the creator of beauty; and God is orderly, wise, and great.

2. God loves us.

The love of God is the second of the two most emphasized concepts in Tell Me About God. In addition to simple statements, this concept is presented largely in terms of God's care, his help, his forgiveness, and in the possibility of fellowship with him.

a. God cares for us.

The titles of several sections reveal the aspect of God's care: "God Loves Us and Cares for Us",¹ "God Helps Us Take Care of Ourselves",² "God Plans Food for Us",³ "God Gives Us Water",⁴ "God Loves All His Children".⁵

This Scripture verse and others indicate God's care: "He careth for you."⁶

b. God helps us.

God helps us in our everyday experiences and God

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1. Ibid., p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

3. Ibid., p. 28.

4. Ibid., p. 32.

5. Ibid., p. 66.

6. Ibid., p. 16, Cf. pp. 24, 28, 30, 36, 40, 49, 52, 68.

helps us in times of trouble. This is the essence of this phase of the concept of God as love found here. In the following sections reference is made to God's help: "God Helps Us Take Care of Ourselves,"¹ "God Helps Us in Trouble,"² "God Helps Us To Be Good."³

Several Scripture verses set forth this aspect.⁴ Here is one of them: "God is our . . . help in trouble."⁵

c. God forgives us.

One of the short sections is devoted to a discussion of God's forgiveness.⁶ In this discourse it is pointed out that God's forgiveness is based on his never-failing love. At the end is this verse: "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive. Psalm 86:5."⁷

This concept of God's forgiveness is also presented in the section entitled "God Loves All His Children." Here is part of it:

"Does God love everybody?' Bobby asked.
'Yes, Bobby, everybody.' . . .
'Even bad people who hurt other people?' Bobby went on.
'I think God is sorry when anyone hurts anyone else, Bobby. But I think God goes on loving everybody and trying to help each one be good.' . . .

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1. Cf. Ibid. p. 17.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 37.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 61.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 13, 18, 37, 40, 63.
5. Ibid., p. 13.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 64-65.
7. Ibid., p. 65.

'Does he punish them to make them good?'
'We do not know just how God works to help bad people be good. But we know he loves them and forgives them and wants to help them.'¹

This verse is found at the end of the above discussion:

"Thou art a God ready to pardon. Nehemiah 9:17."²

d. We can have fellowship with God.

"God Wants Us To Talk With Him" is the title of the section in which fellowship is discussed. The concept is summarized in the closing sentences of the section:

"'God will hear you, dear, whatever you talk about with him. But often there may be reasons that you do not know why it is not good for you to have many things that you think you want. Can you remember that God always hears you and loves you?'

'Even if I don't get what I want?' Bobby asked.

'You can count on God's love, dear, whatever happens.'³

The Scripture verses at the end of the discussion also present the concept.⁴

Directly related to the aspect of fellowship is the section, "God Is Always Near", which stimulates worship as well as petition in fellowship with God.⁵

Besides the simple statements of the concept, these aspects of the love of God are discussed: God's care, his help, his forgiveness, and the possibility of fellowship with him.

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1. Ibid., pp. 66-68.
2. Ibid., p. 68.
3. Ibid., pp. 50-52.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 52.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

3. God is good and just.

The concept of God as good and just receives less than half of the emphasis that is accorded to either the creator concept or the concept of God as love. The Scripture verses contain the primary teaching of God's goodness, as illustrated in ~~one~~ of the verses: "Oh give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good. Psalm 118:1."¹

Reference is made to God's goodness in these sections: "God Helps Us To Be Good"² and "Let Us Give Thanks To God."³ In all of the references to God's goodness the teaching is simply that God is good.

God's justice is emphasized in the sections entitled "God Loves All His Children",⁴ "God Helps Us To Be Good",⁵ and "God Forgives Us."⁶ In these sections it is seen that God gives us the right to choose whether we will be good or bad, but He is sorry when we choose to do what is wrong.

Thus, God's goodness and his justice are stressed in Tell Me About God. God is good, He gives us the right to choose between right and wrong, but wrong-doing displeases him.

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1. Ibid., p. 71, Cf. pp. 13, 65, 71.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 61.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 69.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 66.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 64.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 61.

4. God is our Father.

Only one reference is made to God as Father. Therefore this can hardly be considered one of the concepts of God set forth by the book.¹

C. Comparison of Findings
with Concepts of God Considered Basic

1. Are the concepts concrete and functional?

Since the content of the book consists of a small boy's questions about God and the answers his mother gives, the concepts presented are both concrete and functional. The boy's questions grow out of his everyday experiences and the answers of his mother are in terms of his experience. Being directly related to the child's experience, the concepts are functional. That they are concrete is illustrated by the reality of God's care of which Bobby is very conscious. This is especially evident in the section entitled "God Loves Us and Cares for Us."²

2. How do the concepts of God found in Tell Me About God compare with the basic concepts?

The following concepts of God in order of their emphases are found in Tell Me About God:

1. God is Creator.

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 68.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 14-16.

2. God loves us.

3. God is good and just.

The comparison which follows will reveal how these concepts measure up to the standards of the basic concepts.

a. God is Creator.

In this book God is presented as creator of the universe; author and sustainer of life; creator of beauty; orderly, wise, and great.

The basic concept sets forth God as wonderful, great, and powerful; creator of the beautiful world of nature; and the author and sustainer of life.

Thus, the creator concept found here is quite adequate according to the basic concept. It adds to the concept God's characteristics of wisdom and orderliness, but omits his power and wonderfulness which in a large measure overlap with wisdom and orderliness.

b. God loves us.

The basic concept presents God's love in terms of these phases: God cares for us, God gives us good gifts, God forgives us, and we can have fellowship with God.

Here God's love is set forth in these aspects: his care, his help, his forgiveness and the possibility of fellowship with him.

It is evident, then, that the only difference in

these two concepts of God as love is that in the basic concept He gives us good gifts while in the concept in Tell Me About God He helps us. The latter concept is broader and in this book the concept of God's care includes the fact that He gives us the things we need. Thus, it is not hard to reconcile the two and conclude that the concept of God's love in this book meets the requirements of the basic concept.

c. God is good and just.

According to the set of basic concepts, the gist of the concept of God as good and just is this: God is good above all else and wrong-doing displeases him.

The concept here sets forth God as good and just. The teaching of his goodness is simply that He is good. His justice is presented in this way: He gives us the right to choose between good and bad, but He is displeased when we choose what is bad.

The only difference in the two concepts is that the basic concept presents God as good above all else and the concept in this book does not specifically stress God as good above all else, but simply as good. Except for this lack, the concept of God as good and just found in Tell Me About God meets the standard of the basic concept.

d. God is our Father.

Since this concept of God is mentioned only once it cannot be considered one of the concepts set forth by the book.

e. God is a Person.

This concept is not presented in the book.

D. Summary

Tell Me About God, the book analyzed in this chapter for its concepts of God, was written by Mary Alice Jones. It centers in a small boy's questions about God and the answers his mother gives. The following concepts of God were found in the book:

1. God is Creator.
2. God loves us.
3. God is good and just.

All of these concepts as presented in this book are both concrete and functional. In comparing these concepts with the basic concepts it was revealed that on the whole they meet the standard of the creator concept, the concept of God as love, and the concept of God as good and just. However, there is no teaching about God as Father and God as a person.

In conclusion, it may be said that Tell Me About God meets the majority of the requirements of the basic concepts.

CHAPTER V

CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN

GOD'S WORLD AND JOHNNY

BY DOROTHY W. ANDREWS

AND

GOD GAVE ME EYES

BY OLIVE W. BURT

CHAPTER V

CONCEPTS OF GOD FOUND IN GOD'S WORLD AND JOHNNY BY DOROTHY W. ANDREWS AND GOD GAVE ME EYES BY OLIVE W. BURT

A. Introduction

The two books to be discussed in this chapter are both short and have similar content. They will be analyzed separately and summarized together. Because of their brevity, these books are being considered in a single chapter rather than individually in separate chapters.

The everyday experiences and discoveries of a farm boy, Johnny Wade, find expression in God's World and Johnny. His eager questions are patiently explained by an understanding mother and father. While God is related at vital points to Johnny's experience, the majority of the material is not about God. However, throughout the book, Johnny's parents are seeking to guide him in right attitudes and right conduct.

God's World and Johnny has some kind of illustration on almost every page. There are a number of beautiful, full-page, colored illustrations, and several smaller colored and black and white drawings. This book was written for the kindergarten division of the Presbyterian New Curriculum, but it is also being sold commercially.

God Gave Me Eyes is intended primarily for children

from three to seven and is appropriate for leading the young child into the experience of worship. The text of the book is a six-stanza poem. Each of the first five stanzas is about one of the five senses. The last stanza is a prayer in which the child thanks God for making him and for giving him the senses of hearing, feeling, and seeing. One or two lines of the poem appear on each page along with a brightly colored illustrative picture. The entire poem appears on the last page of the book. The pages of the book are not numbered; consequently any references made will be to the text of the book quoted in this chapter.

B. Analysis of God's World and Johnny
for Its Concepts of God

As revealed in the title, the concept of God set forth in God's World and Johnny is the creator concept. Johnny is first introduced to God, the creator of heaven and earth, through the Bible verse: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."¹ This comes as part of an answer to his question, "'Mother, who made this tree?'"² In relation to the question God is shown to be sustainer of life for He gives the sun and rain which make the tree grow.³ Another reference to God's initial creation is found in the

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1. Dorothy W. Andrews: God's World and Johnny, p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 8-10.

answer to Johnny's queries about oil: "'Deep in the earth God made and kept a black liquid we call petroleum.'"1

"'Did God make me?'"2 is Johnny's question which provides his father with the opportunity of presenting God as the author of life. His answer is:

"'He surely did, Johnny. God planned the way of it, the way everyone is born. Mother and I were part of his plan for you. People are very wonderful, son.'"3

Through the experiences of feeling nails, smelling hay, seeing a blue sweater, listening to the sound of a saw, and tasting a peppermint, Johnny's father teaches him that God gave him five senses. To this his father adds:

"'God made you to feel, and smell, and see and hear and taste. Automobiles cannot do any of these things, son. Dogs and horses can. But you have an extra gift from God, Johnny, which he gives only to people.'

'What is it, Daddy?'

'You can choose, son. You can say yes or no. You can do bad things or good things. You can decide what is best.'"4

That God has a plan is revealed in relation to some of the above aspects of the creator concept. When Johnny asks his mother about the tree, and if God made each tree, his mother replies:

"'God didn't make each separate tree, but he thought about and planned the way it should come to be. He gave us the seeds, and the sun and rain, and men like Grand-

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1. Ibid., p. 18.
2. Ibid., p. 30.
3. Ibid., loc. cit.
4. Ibid., pp. 32-33.

father Wade to plant the right kind of trees in the right places. And just as God planned it, everything in the world came to be."¹

Then Johnny looks all around; he looks at the little colt and her mother, the cows, the pigs, the vegetable garden, the flowers, the chickens, and he realizes that all these are part of God's plan.²

This bit of dialogue reveals further teaching regarding God's plan:

"'There are ever so many people to love, aren't there, Mother?' said Johnny.

'Yes, and ever so many to love us,' replied Mother. 'That's part of God's plan too, Johnny. People can't get along without loving and being loved.'³

When Johnny asks a question about the robins, his father answers:

"'God's plan was for families to have children and to take care of them while they are young. That's why Mr. Robin had to work hard to find berries and seeds to carry to his babies.'⁴

Thus, the creator concept in God's World and Johnny sets forth God as creator of heaven and earth, the author and sustainer of life and a creator with a great plan for his creation.

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1. Ibid., p. 9.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Ibid., p. 44.

C. Comparison of Findings
with Concepts of God Considered Basic

1. Is the concept functional and concrete?

Johnny asks questions directly related to his experiences and his surroundings; hence the answers are also in terms of his experiences and are functional. The concepts Johnny is taught are concrete for they are taught in terms of Johnny himself and of the tangible things in his environment.

2. How does the concept in God's World and Johnny compare with the basic concept?

This book presents God as creator of the universe and author and sustainer of life. It also emphasizes the fact that God has a plan in creation.

The basic concept includes all of the above aspects of the creator concept and adds to them these characteristics of God: greatness, wonder, and power. Thus, the concept of God as set forth in God's World and Johnny covers the main points emphasized and lacks only the three characteristics of God indirectly implied in the fact that He is creator.

Limited as it is to the creator concept, this book does not explicitly touch on the remaining basic concepts: God is a person, God is good and just, God loves us, and God is our Father.

D. Analysis of God Gave Me Eyes
for Its Concepts of God

The content of God Gave Me Eyes is also organized around one concept of God, the creator concept. Furthermore, it deals with only one aspect of the creator concept, God's creation of a child and the five senses he possesses.

"God gave me eyes that I might see
The wonder of a blossoming tree,
My dolly's face, my story book
And how the various creatrues look.

God gave me ears that I might hear
The laugh of brooklets ringing clear,
My kittens, purr, a violin
And Mother, when she calls me in.

God gave a nose that I might learn
The perfume of each flower in turn,
Of fragrant foods prepared to eat,
The dusty smell of new cut wheat.

God gave a tongue that I might know
The flavor of all fruits that grow,
The tast of honey from the bee,
And good things Mother cooks for me.

God gave a sense of touch that I
Might do my work, feel wind pass by,
Might know the sun's caressing heat
And dusty roads beneath my feet.

I thank You, God, for making me
So that I hear and feel and see;
And since these dear gifts came from You
I'll use them as You'd want me to."

Thus the child's experience through the avenue of one of his senses is described in each stanza. It may be noted that all of these experiences are pleasant ones: seeing a blossoming tree, dolly's face, story book; hearing the

laugh of brooklets, a kitten's purr, Mother's voice; smelling flowers, good foods; tasting honey and the good things Mother cooks; feeling the wind, the sun, and dusty roads beneath one's feet. Since all of these pleasant experiences are made possible by God's gift of the five senses, the child is grateful to God and his relationship to God is a happy one. The child's gratefulness for God's gifts to him is depicted in the last stanza. There, also, the child seems to sense his responsibility to God and promises to use these gifts as God wants him to.

While the poem presents God specifically as the child's personal creator, there are other implications as well. The element of wonder is introduced in the first stanza: "The wonder of a blossoming tree." And in each stanza at least one thing from the great world of nature is introduced. This seems to indicate a sense of God's creation of the world of nature as well.

Thus the creator concept presented here is God's creation of the child with his capacity for seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. In addition to this, it has been pointed out that the child's relationship with God is happy, and he seems to sense God's creation of the world of nature.

Implied in the last stanza of the poem is the concept of fellowship with God in prayer and in doing his will.

E. Comparison of Findings
with Concepts of God Considered Basic

1. Is the concept functional and concrete?

Since the one concept in God Gave Me Eyes is presented entirely in terms of the child's experience it is highly functional. Furthermore, all of these experiences of the child are in the physical realm; therefore they are concrete and the concept is concrete.

2. How does the concept in God Gave Me Eyes compare with the basic concept?

Like God's World and Johnny, this book specifically deals with only one of the basic concepts, the creator concept. God Gave Me Eyes presents God as the author of life or more specifically as the personal creator of a child. There are also implications which suggest that God has created the world of nature which is wonderful to the child. Aspects of the basic concept which are not mentioned directly in this book are: God's characteristics of greatness and power, and the fact that He is sustainer of life, but these too are indirectly implied. The aspect of fellowship also is indirectly suggested.

Thus, the creator concept in God Gave Me Eyes may be said to deal specifically with one aspect of the creator concept, God is the author of life, but the other aspects are implied.

F. Summary

This chapter has been devoted to an analysis of two books, God's World and Johnny and God Gave Me Eyes, both of which present only the creator concept.

Since the material in both books consists of the child's experiences in relation to his surroundings, the concepts set forth, as may be expected, are highly concrete and functional and are definitely adequate in this respect according to the requirements of the basic concepts.

Of the two, God's World and Johnny contains the broader presentation of the creator concept, covering most of the phases of the basic concept. God Gave Me Eyes is mainly limited to the concept of God as the author of life, although the other aspects of the creator concept are implied.

Since both books present only the creator concept, they are of a specific rather than a general nature. The creator concept has been considered as an avenue of approach to understanding the greatness of God. On the basis of this proposition, these books might be considered primers in the child's study of God.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this study to analyze recent books about God, written for children under nine years of age, to discover the concepts of God which each presents. The first chapter was devoted to setting up standards with which these concepts might be compared. Authorities in the field of the Christian education of children were found to agree that any concept for a child should be both concrete and functional, growing out of and relating to the common experiences of the child. The following concepts of God, considered basic for children by these same authorities, were listed and discussed in that chapter:

1. God is a Person.
2. God is good and just: He is good above all else and wrong-doing displeases him.
3. God loves us.
 - a. God cares for us.
 - b. God gives us good gifts.
 - c. God forgives us when we do wrong.
 - d. We can have fellowship with God.
4. God is Creator: creator of the universe, author and sustainer of life, great, wonderful, and powerful.
5. God is our Father.

In each of the subsequent chapters, one of the books (in Chapter V two similar books were considered together) was analyzed and the findings were evaluated in the light of the above standards.

Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls, by Welker and Barber, is a devotional book for children suitable also for use in family worship. It contains a story, poem, or song for every day in the year. Analysis revealed that the book presents the following concepts of God: God is creator, God is love, God is good and just, and God is our Father. A strong emphasis on God's justice is lacking; no mention is made specifically of God as a person; and the personal element is absent in the Fatherhood concept. However, these additional aspects of God (exceeding the basic requirements) were found: God is wise, faithful, majestic, orderly; He loves everyone; his way is the way of love; He is the Father of all people everywhere. The concepts in Thoughts of God are both functional and concrete and the book compares favorably with the basic concepts.

Then I Think of God by Mabel Niedermeyer is also a devotional book for children. It contains four readings for every month and is seasonal in its organization. Each of the four seasons is introduced by a litany. The short readings consist of a story, a prayer, and a Scripture verse. Then I Think of God, it was found, presents God as creator,

loving, and good. The creator concept is most fully set forth and meets all the requirements of the basic concept. The concepts of God as loving and good were seen to be somewhat incomplete. There is no emphasis on God's justice, God as Father, and God as a person, but there is a strong emphasis on God as one who is willing and able to help the child in all circumstances. Growing out of the child's experiences the readings in this book contain concepts which are concrete and functional. In relation to the basic concepts, the creator concept is the strong point of this book.

Mary Alice Jones has written Tell Me About God in narrative style. It consists of conversations between a small boy, Bobby, and his mother. Since the teaching is contained in the answers to Bobby's questions, it was obvious that the concepts are related to his experiences and thus they are concrete and functional. The concepts of God contained in the book are these: God is creator, God is love, God is good and just. These three concepts are in full accord with the basic concepts except that God as good above all else is not stressed in Tell Me About God. While there is little mention of God as Father and no reference to him as a person, the concepts in this book meet the majority of the requirements of the basic concepts.

God's World and Johnny is a narrative of the conversations of Johnny Wade and his parents. It was written

by Dorothy Andrews. Although it is similar, in its method of presentation, to Tell Me About God, it is different in this respect: God is introduced only at vital points and therefore not central in every story as in the previous book. God's World and Johnny was discovered upon analysis to contain only the creator concept. It contains all the aspects of the basic concept except an emphasis on God's characteristics of greatness, wonder, and power which are however implied in the fact that He is creator. Since the book centers around the creator concept, it does not include the other basic concepts. Besides comparing favorably with the basic concept, the creator concept here is both functional and concrete, for it is set forth in direct relationship with Johnny's experiences.

A twenty-four line poem constitutes the entire text of God Gave Me Eyes, by Olive W. Burt. Each of the first five stanzas centers around one of the five senses and the child's delightful experiences because of this particular sense. Consequently the concept presented is concrete and functional. The last stanza is a prayer in which the child thanks God for making him and giving him the five senses. He promises to use them as God wants him to. Thus it is evident that, like God's World and Johnny, this book presents only the creator concept. However, the concept of fellowship with God is inherent in the last stanza in which

the child prays a prayer of thanks to God. Since the concept set forth in this book is one aspect of the creator concept, the creation of the individual, the book is specific and does not present the more general and more complete creator concept.

It is evident, then, that while Thoughts of God offers the most complete picture of God, each of the books has a definite place. Thoughts of God and Then I Think of God are both devotional books. The former is more complete and comprehensive and would be well-suited to older children. The latter is written more simply and could be used advantageously with younger children. Tell Me About God and God's World and Johnny are alike in this way: both are based on a child's conversations with his parents, his questions about and their answers. More of the content is about God in Tell Me About God than in God's World and Johnny for in the latter book God is only introduced at vital points while in the former God is the subject of every short section. Tell Me About God presents a fuller picture of God and thus could be used with an older child whereas God's World and Johnny contains mainly the creator concept and would be best used with the young child. God Gave Me Eyes and God's World and Johnny, although different in method of presentation and amount of material, both contain mainly the creator concept. Because God Gave Me Eyes is more simply written and more elementary,

its primary use would be with the very young child. Thus, each book has a definite purpose and value.

Without exception the concepts found in the five books are highly functional and concrete. In each book the material was seen to be directly related to the child's common experiences. The format of these books is attractive. The brightly-colored illustrations and large letters appeal to any child. These books rank with the best in secular books for children in this respect. Furthermore, the child's experiences described therein are pleasant and are directly correlated with thoughts about God. The result is that the child has a happy association with God through these books.

From the above resumes it is evident that the creator concept is, by far, the most emphasized concept. At least a fairly complete coverage of it is contained in almost every book (God Gave Me Eyes is the exception since it specifically limits its presentation to God as the author of life).

Second in emphasis, it was discovered, is the concept of God as love which is found in Thoughts of God, Tell Me About God, and Then I Think of God. The most complete presentation is in the first two of these three books.

God's goodness and justice are stressed mainly in Thoughts of God, but they are also mentioned in Tell Me About God and in Then I Think of God.

The Fatherhood of God is emphasized only in Thoughts of God. The concept of God as a person is found implied in most of the books but not mentioned specifically in any of them.

In view of this study there are perhaps two conclusions which may be drawn. First, the creator concept is by far the strongest. The concepts of God as loving and good are slightly minimized. However a strong presentation of the complete creator carries within it implications of the concepts of God as loving and good. Secondly, it is obvious from this study that no one book is sufficient in itself. Although Thoughts of God presents a fairly complete picture of God, one would want other books for variety of approach. One should not depend on any one book to give to the child a complete concept of God. On the contrary, these books supplement and complement each other and together they present a well-balanced concept of God.

It must be remembered, also, that books of this type are only one way of teaching the child of God, a way which is not at all sufficient in itself but which can be decidedly helpful in contributing to the child's knowledge of God.

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