

ISSUES...

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Fall 1973

Volume 8, Number 1





Published three times a year
By the faculty of
Concordia Teachers College
Seward, Nebraska
A teacher preparation college of
The Lutheran Church—Mo. Synod

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IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Editor's Notes

Salvation is a very personal thing. Each individual must possess faith to be numbered among God's chosen, and no one can live someone else's life. Religious educators can forget the implications of these truths as they cope with groups, budgets, deadlines, and the quest for efficiency. This ISSUES details the problem and suggests alternatives and idea sources for directing our ministry toward meeting the *personal* spiritual needs of individuals.

We also regret very much that ISSUES is late in reaching you. Production problems beyond our control caused the delay.

THE EDITOR



AUTHORITIES IN EDUCATION

During the decade of the 60s some brave educational observers cautioned against the obvious authoritarianism of the American educational system. Liberal critics like Paul Goodman, Edgar Friedenberg, Herbert Kohl, and others warned that our schools were places of oppressive control which sapped the human spirit of freedom and initiative. Their words have gained considerable credibility since the recent publication of the comprehensive three-year Carnegie study of the American school system.

The research contained in Charles Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom* lends impressive empirical data to their earlier observations. Silberman does not focus upon a single problem, but rather writes of numerous difficulties in the typical school. Yet were one to choose but a single word to describe the crisis, that word would probably be authoritarianism. "Oppressive, grim, joyless" schools are places where imposed authority inhibits learning and destroys health. Administrators impose upon teachers—and they in turn impose upon children—thoughtless regulations and unintelligent controls.

American schools did not suddenly become such institutions of repressive activity. They have always been so. Conservative in origin, they remain reflectors of the larger society. The antecedents of imposed authoritarianism are part of our educational heritage.

One may cite two obvious examples from the history of American education. The Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647 is certainly not the original "magna charta" for a free liberal education. A more accurate appraisal would in all likelihood reveal that the legislation was in defense of parental control and for the protection of the threatened Puritan family. The oppressive doctrine of *in loco parentis* was part of our early heritage, and the inherent authoritarianism of Puritanism was passed naturally to the schools.

Second, the compulsory education legislation of the 1850s may also be understood as legislation imposing arbitrary authority upon all young Americans. What style of authority can dictate that all children must attend a particular educational agency? Compulsory education remains a suspicious doctrine for thoughtful Americans. Both

illustrations vividly portray the imposed authority of adult society upon the young.

The intellectual learning enterprise of academia has its own authoritarian antecedents as well. The authority of truth has long been the claim of the academician. The day of absolute revelation may be past, but the age of the academic expert is not. We maintain the hoax that certain individuals because of intellectual expertise do possess considerable authority. Knowledge remains powerful, especially in academia. Thus the teacher maintains absolute authority over the learner by a marvelous system of intimidation: tests, evaluations, grades, rewards, and punishments. Powerless before such a system, the learner soon masters obedience, cowardice, and passivity. Learning becomes meaningless, and hostility is nurtured in the hearts of the sensitive.

The doctrine of parental authority in matters of education is surely questionable, especially in light of a number of critical observations made. The knowledge gap between parents and children continues to grow. Parents dare not bear the responsibility for education. Families may be our last hope for intimacy. They are not our best hope for educational reform. The appeal to *in loco parentis* is a romantic appeal to a past age. Parents have neither the time nor the skill to manage the difficult task of leading children into the discipline avenues of intellectual activity.

The arbitrary authority of compulsory education is surely difficult to maintain. Public schools have unfortunately reflected the repressive structures of the larger society. They have been conservative preserving agencies, perpetuating all the inequities of American culture. They reflect the failure of the community *paideia*; they are no worse or better than the cultural environment that sustains them. Authority is imposed from without upon the educational system, and tragically little hope is birthed in repression. As a nation we need alternatives. Possibilities such as free schools and parochial schools deserve more of our critical attention. The possibility for option must be maintained.

If we are to reverse imposed authoritarianism by society or a single teacher, we will need to redefine our educational goal. Dare we operate without external authorities? Are there alternatives to repressive authority?

editorials

Yes, such is my hope, if we are able to seek a completely new base for authority, and if we can agree that ultimate human authority resides within the personal human experience and the perception of that experience by the individual. Dare we risk the view that each creature is possessor of his own personal truth and there is no other authority? The rebirth of freedom within our larger society and our educational institutions must rest upon such hope. If we can so affirm our human trustworthiness that we place absolute authority for learning upon the learner, then perhaps we do have hope.

Teachers could enable children to explore. Disciplines become structures for learning, ways to learn to learn. The hope we can have is the ancient hope of Christianity. The Christ event in time marks all men with the potential of personal authority. Truth resides among us, and we must seek it within us. We dare never obey another authority, for ultimately there is one God; He remains our Father and Jesus Christ our Brother.

STEPHEN SCHMIDT

PERSONALIZING INSTRUCTION IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

A current "discovery" in educational circles is that there is no such thing as a homogeneous group of children. Each child has differing growth patterns, experiences, abilities, needs. Because of this fact, one blanket assignment ("Do all math problems on page 47 in the next half hour!") is no longer considered a meaningful experience. It cannot meet the diverse needs of all the students.

The church has long been told the same. The various talents available in Christ's body as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 mean that no two people are alike. Therefore the idea of personalizing instruction to meet the needs of students makes sense to the Christian who realizes God gives different abilities to people in the first place. It does, however, necessitate a change in the classroom environment, the role of the teacher, and the evaluation process.

CIRCULATION POLICY—A copy of ISSUES is sent free to each church, school, and District and Synodical office in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In addition, bulk mailings are sent to high schools, colleges, and universities affiliated with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Individuals wishing personal copies may obtain them as follows: Single copy @ 75¢ each; Subscription @ \$2.00 per year; Ten or more copies mailed to the same address @ 35¢ per copy.

Learning Environment

If the classroom is going to be truly child-centered, its physical appearance will start to resemble that of a playroom or junk shop. Designated areas will have interest centers. Children will work all over—on the floor, at tables, at desks—and have great freedom to move around the room. If a student needs a week at the science center to finish a project, he can have this time. If he sees a friend in need of help, he is free to talk and assist him.

Meanwhile the teacher is no longer a lecturer or group entertainer. Rather, the teacher must learn the interests of each child—how he best works, what his capabilities are—and seek learning projects to fulfill these needs. His role is one of a resource person, an educational facilitator. He will encourage the student to think for himself, to research, to make decisions and accept the consequences, to become independent, to learn how to use freedom. Problem-solving and making value judgments will be emphasized as these skills are necessary for all of one's life.

The traditional A.B.C system of evaluation, the giving of pop quizzes, the testing for factual information are no longer useful evaluation tools in this setting. Rather, the teacher and the student evaluate his progress, keep a personal record of his activities, decide what skills he has mastered. The child learns because he is interested in what he is doing and not because of threat of failure or a bad report to his parents.

Implications for Religion Instruction

The concept of personalizing education has some thought-provoking implications for the Christian day school teacher. It implies a religion center in the classroom with the possibility of children working at it for long periods of time, or few, or none. Questions which arise include: Can a Christian teacher allow a student *not* to choose the religion center for two days or more? Shouldn't each class in the day school have 40 minutes (the first 40 minutes) each day for formal religious instruction? Is there freedom *not* to structure religious education this traditional way?

Personalizing instruction allows the student to worship God in his way, using whatever resources he finds or creates. It implies that knowing at least 100 memorized *Bible* passages and the facts of the *Bible* stories will not be as important as knowing God and His relationship to His people throughout history and as knowing their problems and ours and what God has to do with them and our decisions.

But can we afford to let students come out of 8 years (or more) of Christian day school

and not know who the father-in-law of Moses was or just exactly on what day God created the animals? Shouldn't there be some measurable difference between the Christian students who go to parochial school and the Christian students who go to public school? Can we afford to let the students question Walther, Luther, or the *Bible* and find the answers *themselves*? Is there freedom *not* to tell them what they have to believe?

Finally, personalizing education would mean that giving grades of S's or U's in religion would lose significance. Since factual knowledge of the *Bible* would not be emphasized, the teacher would be forced to discover an evaluation method of how the Holy Spirit was working in the child's life. Or could the evaluation be a simple private sharing of the faith between teacher and child of how God has been at work in each of their lives the past quarter? How more personal can one get? What could be more exciting than to hear how the Holy Spirit had individualized His work in each of the lives of the students and teacher? Is there freedom *not* to judge (or grade) others and the Spirit?

KAREN BUCK

LET THE KIDS DO IT

The October issue of *Interaction* contains a 16-page "Media Primer" produced for "media children."

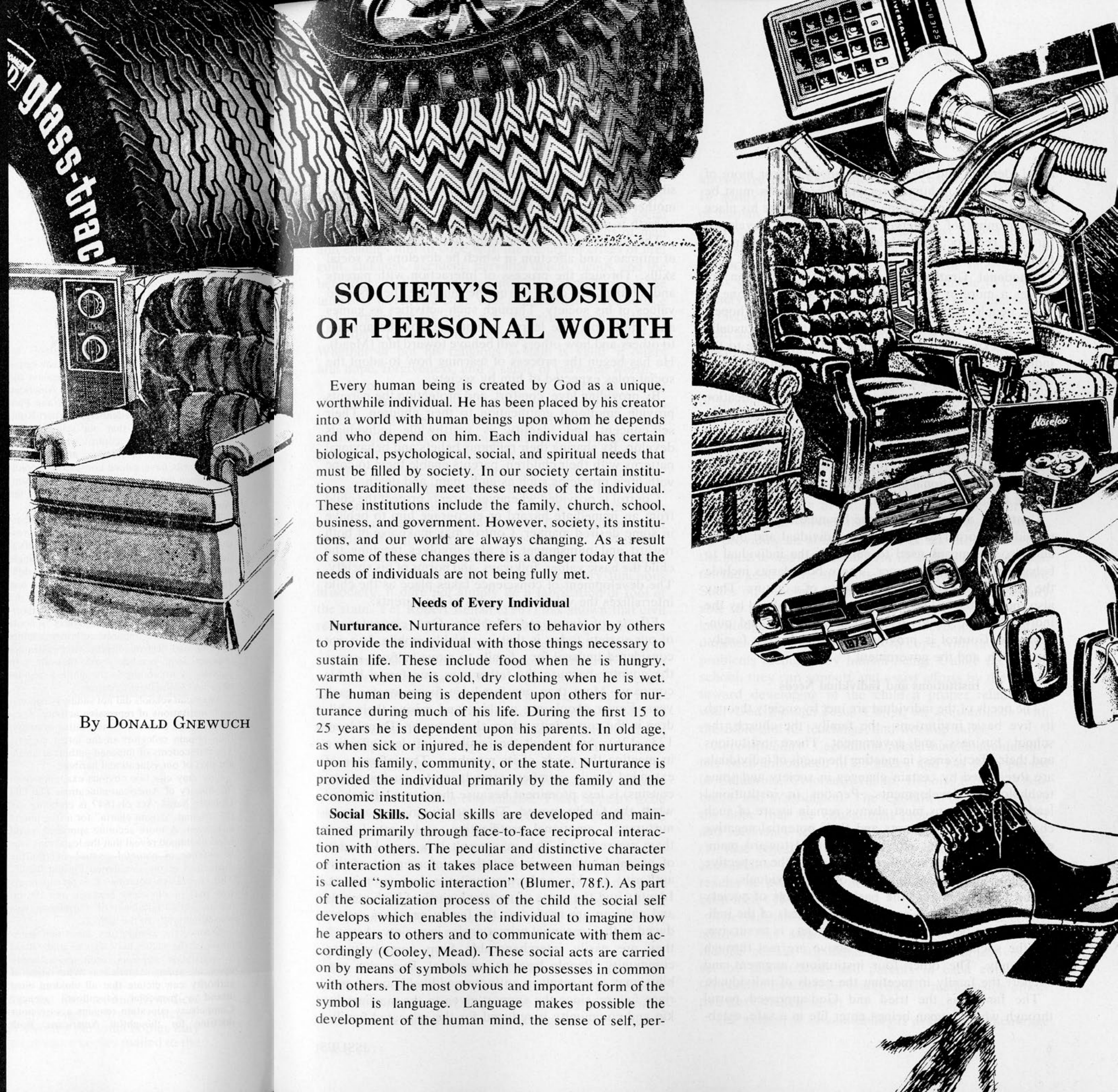
During the 1972-73 school year we were associated with a media project at a Lincoln, Nebraska, elementary school and worked with 350 children. We were freed to explore "doing the media" kinds of things with teachers and kids. The "Media Primer" reflects much of what we learned with them. In addition to the media introduced in the primer, some children made super 8mm films and videotapes.

Some conclusions from that year's efforts:

1. *Kids are media oriented.* They live in the nation that gets much of its information via the audiovisual media. To ignore audiovisual media in any kind of education, secular or religious, is to ignore a major part of the child.
2. *Kids are different.* Some turn to one form of media, some to others. Kids should be offered options, i.e., the possibility of using various media forms.
3. *Kids learn best by doing what they want to do.* Helping them to recycle God's truths in audiovisual media can be exciting for both kids and teachers.
4. *Audiovisual media are new tools, new ways of communicating.* Learning to use these media is like learning to speak . . . and the more a child uses the media the better he is able to express himself adequately. So, let the kids "try on" these new ways of communicating.

P.S. If you haven't seen the "Media Primer" in the October *Interaction*, write us for a copy.

JACK MIDDENDORF
KEN HAAR



SOCIETY'S EROSION OF PERSONAL WORTH

Every human being is created by God as a unique, worthwhile individual. He has been placed by his creator into a world with human beings upon whom he depends and who depend on him. Each individual has certain biological, psychological, social, and spiritual needs that must be filled by society. In our society certain institutions traditionally meet these needs of the individual. These institutions include the family, church, school, business, and government. However, society, its institutions, and our world are always changing. As a result of some of these changes there is a danger today that the needs of individuals are not being fully met.

Needs of Every Individual

Nurturance. Nurturance refers to behavior by others to provide the individual with those things necessary to sustain life. These include food when he is hungry, warmth when he is cold, dry clothing when he is wet. The human being is dependent upon others for nurturance during much of his life. During the first 15 to 25 years he is dependent upon his parents. In old age, as when sick or injured, he is dependent for nurturance upon his family, community, or the state. Nurturance is provided the individual primarily by the family and the economic institution.

Social Skills. Social skills are developed and maintained primarily through face-to-face reciprocal interaction with others. The peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings is called "symbolic interaction" (Blumer, 78f.). As part of the socialization process of the child the social self develops which enables the individual to imagine how he appears to others and to communicate with them accordingly (Cooley, Mead). These social acts are carried on by means of symbols which he possesses in common with others. The most obvious and important form of the symbol is language. Language makes possible the development of the human mind, the sense of self, per-

By DONALD GNEWUCH

sonal identity, and the ability to adopt one or more of the social roles in human society. These skills must be learned by the human being before he can take his place as a member of society. Social skills are developed through reciprocal social interaction primarily in the family and the school.

Emotional Gratification. Emotional gratification involves a more or less intimate relationship with one or more people with whom the individual shares hopes, fears, values, and goals. Emotional gratification usually involves expressions of affection and acceptance to the individual. He is recognized by others as an individual and as a worthwhile person. He is assured that he is wanted and needed by them. Emotional gratification includes the provision of comfort, hope, and assurance in times of crisis and trauma. It also includes a shared world view and philosophy of life that provides to the individual the means for coping with the ultimate questions of life. Emotional gratification is provided primarily by the family and the church.

Control. Control refers to the boundaries to behavior provided in order to protect the individual and others, and also the means used to persuade the individual to behave in a desired manner. These boundaries include the norms, legal codes, and folkways of a culture. They also include the values and attitudes internalized by the individual. The means used include rewards and punishments. Control is provided primarily by the family, the church, and the government.

Institutions and Individual Needs

The needs of the individual are met by society through its five basic institutions—the family, the church, the school, business, and government. These institutions and their effectiveness in meeting the needs of individuals are threatened by certain changes in society and some technological developments. Persons in institutional leadership positions must always remain aware of such changes and developments and their potential negative effects in order that efforts be directed toward maintaining or restoring the full effectiveness of the respective institutions in meeting the needs of the individuals.

The Family. Among the basic institutions of society the family is the most essential if the needs of the individual are to be met and the larger society is to survive. All the social needs described above are met through the family. The other four institutions augment and support the family in meeting the needs of individuals.

The family is the tried and God-approved portal through which human beings enter life in a safe, estab-

lished, and responsible way. Here the father is responsible for the protection and physical maintenance of the mother and children. The mother cares for the child who at birth is unable to feed, protect, or support itself.

The family provides the child with the environment of intimacy and affection in which he develops his social skills. Through the process of interaction with parents and siblings the child learns the language, beliefs, and values of his society. Through such activities as games and child's play he learns to imagine how he appears to others and how others will behave toward him (Mead). He has begun the process of learning how to adopt the social roles expected of him by society.

By providing love, comfort, and protection the parents provide emotional gratification to their children. Their self-concept and identity as worthwhile individuals develop. By sharing their religious beliefs and behavioral patterns with their children, parents enable them to cope with life's problems such as guilt, pain, and death.

Control is provided whenever parents protect the child from an immediate hazard or encourage him to behave in some desired manner. Control may make use of both reward and punishment. It also involves teaching the child the basic values, folkways, and norms of his society. The development of conscience takes place as the child internalizes the values and norms of his parents.

Effects of Increased Mobility. One characteristic of our society today is that it is highly mobile. It is not considered unusual for a family to move halfway across the country because the father was transferred by his company. More than one family in five relocates each year. Fewer people are working and raising their children in the community where they grew up (Donaldson, 123–126). As a result the family is left less effective in meeting the needs of its members. The influence of extended family members (grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins) is less prominent because they were left behind when the family moved. The opportunities to receive nurturance, emotional gratification, and control from them are reduced. This may result in a partial erosion of parental authority in that the reinforcement of this authority by kin and community is less prominent. Identity and the sense of personal worth of both parents and children are eroded as the family members are reduced to their essential primary roles in society. As such they are easily interchangeable from community to community. People become personnel. Excessive mobility may also result in an increased likelihood of marriage failure, since the support given to the marriage by kin and community is reduced for the relocated family.

The Church. It is generally recognized that the religious functions which the church performs are necessary for every society in order for it to survive as a social system. The church meets the emotional needs of man and enables him to cope with the recurrent crises of life: guilt, sickness, accident, personal defeat, death, and the hereafter. Religion enables man to reach beyond the temporal world and cope with the problem of the source and purpose for his existence. Religion is man's attempt to satisfy his emotional, mental, and spiritual needs. Whether or not his religious system is valid, it offers him hope, forgiveness, and a sense of personal worth.

Religion is a primary source of a person's values (Yinger, 205). As such it also serves as an agent of social control. Through his religion the individual is constrained to conform to group beliefs, prescriptions, and proscriptions. This influence is based on the effect of belief in a deistic god who metes out rewards and punishments in this life and the next. This is the natural religion of the Law based on a work-righteous ethic, which has permeated and become the dominant tenet of much of Christianity.

Effects of Civil Religion. In order that the religious institution be able to carry out its necessary functions in society, it dare not simply be a fabrication or tool of the state. Yet Robert Bellah (1967) has shown that civil religion has been dominant in American religious history. It is a mistake to overemphasize the specifically Christian elements in American religion. This civil religion as described by Marty (1959) has a system of beliefs and a system of worship that is neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jewish. According to Yinger (1970, 437 f.) the tendency of civil religion in recent years has been to emphasize more fully the pluralistic nature of the American religious situation. The common concern for American society of the Christian, Jewish, and humanistic traditions is being emphasized. There appears to be less distinction between the tenets of civil religion and the tenets of particular faiths.

The threat that civil religion poses to the Christian church cannot be overstated. The danger lies in the fact that civil religion undermines from within and destroys particular religious bodies leaving only the shell of the institution which now serves the state rather than the individual. The life-bringing truths of Christianity are replaced with an opiate for the people.

The School. Together with the home, the school has the basic responsibility for filling the need of each individual for socialization. Part of the activity of the school consists in transmitting to the young the accumulated

knowledge and skills which are necessary for survival. In addition to transmitting selected parts of the store of human knowledge, the school develops in the child the requisites of humanness which must be worked out by people in the process of life through interpersonal interaction. These requisites include the interpersonal skills without which the individual is unable to cope in society. In other words, through face-to-face interaction the school teaches the child not only how to read, write, spell, and add, but also how and when to smile, how and when to cry, how to think, and how to act in every situation alone and with others throughout life.

The ability of the school to fill the socialization needs of individuals is potentially threatened by two factors.

Decline of Parochial Education. The first factor threatening the effectiveness of the school in meeting individual needs is the relative decline of private and parochial education in the United States in recent decades. Strong private and parochial schools at every level are not only of value in their own right but also because of the service they render to public education. By providing an alternative they check the tendency of the state to use the schools for its own ends rather than for the good of the students. Furthermore, in the United States only the parochial and private schools are legally able to assist the family in equipping children with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop the spiritual dimensions of their lives and to cope with the spiritual problems facing every human being. Unlike the public school, they can support and assist efforts by the family toward developing in the child a proper relationship with God through Jesus Christ, an acquaintance with the Bible and its teachings, and worship skills.

Accountability. Legislation prescribing accountability has been introduced in 25 states and has been passed in California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Florida, Oklahoma, and Washington. The legislation is designed with the hope that the educational program of elementary and secondary schools will be improved by demanding: (1) that objectives be set, (2) that someone be held accountable for achieving the objectives, and (3) that results be evaluated to determine if the objectives have been met. (Thomas)

The legislation typically provides for joint accountability. This means that although each system must include certain stipulated elements, the objectives are set by the students and parents in each community (Popham). Evaluations are typically made, using objective tests. (Havighurst)

The system of accountability is designed to encourage

the teacher to stress those skills that are measured by the evaluating tests. This may have the favorable outcome of stimulating better teaching. There are, however, certain undesirable outcomes which threaten the effectiveness of the school in meeting the needs of its students.

The teaching of interpersonal skills may be negated. Many educators and social scientists recognize that the learning of interpersonal skills is most important in the socialization of the child. Without these he will remain a social cripple. Computational skills, language skills, and knowledge of facts are more easily measured by objective tests. Even if the development of interpersonal skills is chosen as an objective by a school district, attainment of the objective will probably not be measured directly but rather inferred from the knowledge of certain facts. The teacher will be tempted to teach these facts as well as others being measured and may pay little attention to those skills not being measured. (Nordberg)

The bias against minorities and those lower on the socio-economic scale may be intensified. Joint accountability seeks to overcome the homogenizing effect of accountability. Yet it can be expected that the more articulate and influential students and parents will have a disproportionately large influence upon decisions regarding educational objectives. The more articulate and influential students are more likely to be white than black, Mexican-American, or American Indian. In addition, the influential students are likely to be from homes with more affluent and better educated parents.

The Economic Institution. The life maintenance needs such as food, shelter, and clothing are always concerns of every human being, and so are the activities which seek to meet these needs. The basic activities represented by the economic institution are those of production, distribution and consumption of goods, and services. In order for him to survive, it is necessary that these goods and services be produced and distributed by him or others. The economic world of agriculture, industry, transportation, and business provides individuals and families with goods and services necessary to maintain life.

In order to make a profit, a business must be able to sell its products or services. Two techniques utilized by the business world in selling its goods and services threaten to erode the identity and social skills of the individual.

Reductionism. When dealing with human beings the use of reductionism consists in reducing the whole human to a few of his characteristics, and dealing with

these as if they were the whole. When dealing with large groups of potential customers, the business world has found this technique to be very efficient. Individuals are reduced to their primary roles in society. They are placed into various categories and dealt with according to the category in which they fit.

The human being is not a number or category. Each human individual is created by God in His own image and as such is an infinitely complex being who is both biological and spiritual, rational and irrational, logical and inconsistent. From time to time he may perform in various roles some of which may even conflict.

The high speed computer is a boon to the economic world. Reductionism is one of the less desirable by-products of the widespread use of the computer. A mechanical cybernetic system is unable to deal with human beings in their infinite complexity. Therefore, instead of dealing with the infinitely large amount of potential information regarding every person, only a predetermined limited number of variables are selected, measured, and used as indicators of the needs, capabilities, or potential of that person. Often qualitative human attributes are quantified. Other information is then disregarded as unimportant. This type of reductionism may be good business practice, but it threatens the identity and sense of personal worth of the individual.

Mass Media. The mass media are most useful to the business world in that they provide the means for creating the needs for goods and services in a public of potential customers. The media serve society by providing entertainment, recreation, and information in an efficient manner.

The potential threat of the mass media to the individual lies in the fact that they may be too efficient. Products may be sold as the result of the appeal created by advertisements rather than on the basis of the usefulness of the product itself. The individual is used rather than served.

The mass media may be too entertaining. In this respect television particularly poses a threat today. Excessive watching of television by children may result in an undesired psychological impact and in underdeveloped social skills in the individual. The negative influence of some television programs upon children has been documented. The effect of the watching process itself, when continued for many hours every day, upon the socialization of children requires further empirical investigation.

Instead of interacting reciprocally with members of his family, a one-way pseudointeraction is substituted when the child watches television. The child can only

watch and listen. Unlike what occurs in face-to-face interpersonal interaction, if the child reacts to what he sees and hears on television, his reactions have no influence upon what is shown on that program. He can only change the channel or shut the set off. Instead of learning through interaction, the child is programmed. Since there is no reciprocity, there is little opportunity for the development of a healthy self-concept, social skills, and personality.

The Political Institution. The political institution consists of the rules used to maintain the boundaries and components of society as well as the privileged personnel, vested with power and backed by force, who establish and enforce these rules. The political institution is charged with the responsibility of maintaining harmony and order in society so that the other institutions can function and meet the needs of the individuals who make up society. The political institution assists the family by providing protection from abuse or violation by others, thus permitting it to function adequately. The need for control is also met by government when it provides legal codes enforced by rewards and punishments.

"Big Brother" Government. One of the positive contributions resulting from the Watergate investigations is a warning that government may be growing too powerful. There is a tendency for persons in positions of power to use this power to force their will and point of view upon others, and thereby robbing the individual of his identity as well as his freedom. George Orwell (1949) in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* described a future "Big Brother" society, a society that is completely planned and totally controlled, in which individuals are reduced to interchangeable things.

When the political institution becomes so powerful that it dominates and controls the other institutions, the conditions for totalitarianism are established. The other institutions are no longer free to meet the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual needs of people. Instead they become ideological tools of government. Then those in power positions are the ones who interpret what the needs, goals, and values of society, its institutions, and its people are. A totally ordered society in which all human behavior is determined and regulated becomes the highest good. All people are locked into the system which has been designed for them by those in power and imposed upon them. The school, church, business world, and even the family are reduced to tools of the state. People are reduced to interchangeable role occupants.

Conclusion

In order that the needs of the individual be met, all the institutions of society involved in meeting these needs must be kept strong and effective. No one institution dare be allowed to dominate, control, or destroy the others. Adjustments in the structure and function of the institutions must be made continuously to compensate for the effects resulting from social changes and developing technology so that the needs of individuals in a changing world are always met. Pastors, teachers, and church workers must remain aware of these changes and their potential effects so that they may always effectively proclaim the Gospel and meet the spiritual and other needs of people created by God in His image and redeemed by His Son Jesus Christ.

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BIBLICAL CLUES FOR MINISTERING TO INDIVIDUALS

By HAROLD I. HAAS

Did Ruth counsel with Naomi, her mother-in-law? How did David and Jonathan support each other? What was the relationship between St. Paul and Timothy? Did Mary and Martha only bicker? What clues for our lives lie in Jesus' words to them and to us? What does the Bible tell us about how to minister to the spiritual needs of other people?

Cutting the Pie

Christians are not the only people trying to help the troubled and alienated. Psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and social workers make a full-time profession of it. Physicians, educators, clergy, and counselors bearing many different labels give much time and effort to counseling. Our society is remarkable for the variety of mental health clinics, welfare agencies, and institutions it provides to help people in distress. All are "ministering" in the broad sense of helping people with problems involving thoughts, moods, and deeds. Practitioners frequently get into spiritual problems with patients in the narrower sense of personal guilt, lack of joy and peace, and religious questions.

This raises the question of where the Christian comes in. Does he have a right to meddle in such matters? An obligation? Should he leave such things in the hands of professionals? The writer has a vivid fantasy in this regard. He imagines a great psychological vacuum cleaner in the sky. It draws from the earth all the help and ministering simple folk give to one another. When it has extracted all the nonprofessional aid available, the cry of pain and anguish that goes up from the earth swells to a deafening roar which no man can endure. The fantasy is a way of answering: "Certainly people have to help one another."

Christian people especially are given a ministry to fulfill. They are to be a salt that flavors the earth around them. This ministry has two thrusts: (1) their verbal witness to a living faith in Christ as Redeemer, and (2) the witness of their lives as people who have been touched by the love of God. The only question is how to draw the line in helping others. Expressions of kindness, care, and concern are always in place—a warm smile, the tender touch of a hand, a friendly greeting, a private prayer. Pat solutions, moralizing judgments, cheap advice are usually worthless. In cases of borderline

mental disorder they may be harmful. When one senses that another person is in deep psychological trouble, and people are not stupid about these things, professional help is needed.

Biblical Models for Helping Relationships

One might assume that the Bible is a rich treasury of models for ministering effectively to people. With all of the colorful Biblical personalities and events it just seems certain that here is a marvelous cornucopia of examples of how to help troubled individuals. It takes only a modest amount of searching, however, to force the realization that the Bible is in no sense comparable to a modern textbook of clinical psychology or even an Ann Landers column in the daily newspaper.

After examining in detail some 20 human interaction sequences, including David and Nathan, Esther and her husband, Mary and Martha, Paul and his several co-workers, and Jesus and various individuals, the author reached the conclusion that there are few extended examples of ministering to be found. Scripture records mainly actions and words and very little about the interplay involved in how individuals helped one another. One is left to infer, often very speculatively, about the nuances of the helping relationship. The Bible remains what it is: the account of God's dealing with mankind, the history of Israel, poetry and wisdom literature, the life of Jesus, the early history of the New Testament church and, of course, primarily the message of salvation

in Jesus Christ. A psychology textbook it is not.

The Scripture does not leave us bereft, however. There are some Biblical relationships which are fairly extended and rich in detail, and there are some in which important clues are given in only a few words. We shall look at: Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus. In addition, there is another source of clues in Scripture. But they are to be found in the Gospel rather than in human interaction sequences. That constitutes the last section of this article.

Ruth and Naomi

The most interesting and revealing of the human interaction sequences reviewed by the author is that of Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi. While Ruth turns out to be the heroine of the story, it is actually Naomi who does the "counseling." Our interest centers in chapter 1.

The reader no doubt will recall the essentials of the story. There is a famine in Judah. A man named Elimelech takes Naomi, his wife, and two sons to Moab to live. Elimelech dies; we are not told how. The sons eventually marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. About 10 years later the sons also die. Naomi decides to return to her own land, since the famine has lifted. So the three start out. But Naomi is concerned about her daughters-in-law. The essence of the problem lies in the importance in Old Testament times of a husband and having children to carry on the family line. Although it is not stated, there is possibly also the matter of "culture shock." Undoubtedly Naomi had been through shock herself when the family moved to Moab: different customs, different language, a land of strangers. At least Naomi had had her husband. But now Orpah and Ruth are leaving the land of their birth and their parental home without husbands.

Naomi is deeply sensitive to what all this will mean to the younger women. She tells them to return to their mothers' homes. She wishes them Yahweh's blessing and expresses the hope that He will give them husbands. A weepy scene follows in which the daughters-in-law protest that they will go with Naomi, and she argues that she has no more sons to give them as husbands. Naomi is convinced that God's hand is against her. Finally Orpah gives in, kisses Naomi goodbye, and returns to her people. But Ruth is adamant, and there follow these moving words: "Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God, my God." The rest of the story plays itself out in chapters 2 and 3. Ruth meets and marries Boaz, gives birth to Obed, and becomes a Gentile ancestor of Christ.

Clues for our ministering to one another in this episode are several. There is the sensitivity to being husbandless in a culture that puts a premium on bearing children. Ministering means *sensitivity* to another person's deepest emotional needs. There is also the sensi-

tivity to culture shock; many of us know people who have come from a distant place and need friends in a strange land. There is the deep *loyalty* of Naomi and Ruth for each other. Ours is an age when relationships tend to be fleeting and superficial. The encounter group movement is interesting in this respect. Strangers come together for a week or a weekend and develop extremely intense, warm, and usually healthy relationships, but then they part. Only seldom are the relationships continued. There is a need in the Christian community for *lasting relationships*, and this is a very real type of ministering to the spiritual needs of others. Similarly the Christian may minister to non-Christian friends simply by providing a dependable, lasting relationship in a world full of loneliness and easily severed friendships. (The opportunity for witnessing is, of course, also obvious, but we stress here the importance of simply "being there" as a friend.)

In some ways the Naomi-Ruth episode fits a client-centered counseling view of helping relationships. We note that Naomi is *nonmanipulative*. She puts Ruth's welfare ahead of self-interest, but when Ruth determines to go with her, Naomi is *accepting* of that also. One senses in Naomi the kind of deep respect for Ruth's right to be herself and make her own decisions that characterizes the client-centered approach. Naomi does not even, apparently, push on the religion question, although in the end Ruth confesses beautifully her commitment to Yahweh. In contrast, it is astounding to see how often we strive to control and manipulate one another. The father is sure he knows what his son should be like, from his haircut to his political attitudes. The wife complains because her husband is not the person she thinks he should be, from his table manners to his occupational choice. Minister and parishioners, so-called moderates and conservatives, all are trying to remake one another into what they consider right and proper. Ministering requires *deep respect* for another's right to be what he is, to make his own decisions, and to move gradually in new directions. Naomi gives us an important clue.

David and Jonathan

Another beautiful, helping relationship is found in the friendship of David and Jonathan. In this instance also the chief character, David, is the one who benefits most from the relationship. The key references are in 1 Samuel.

Jonathan's deep trust in Yahweh is brought out in chapter 14. In chapter 15 Saul is rejected by Yahweh because of his failure to carry out the command to destroy completely the Amalekites. In chapter 16 David is anointed by Samuel to be the future king of Israel. David is also selected to play the harp to soothe Saul's troubled spirit. This incidentally is probably one of the earliest recorded instances of music therapy. Chapter 17 describes the well-known killing of the giant Goliath. David's great trust in Yahweh is indicated.

Chapter 18 tells us that Jonathan's soul became bound to David's and he loved David as his own soul. That is a striking way of portraying the depth of Jonathan's unselfish devotion to David. In verse 8 Saul's jealous rage over the fame which came to David from killing Goliath and in verse 10 Saul's madness when seized by the evil spirit sent from God are told. In this state Saul attempts to pin David to the wall with his spear.

Saul's anger and jealousy do not abate. He plans to put David in a position where he is likely to be killed by the Philistines (a stratagem used by David later to get rid of Uriah and obtain Bathsheba). In chapter 19 Saul openly tells Jonathan and his servants of his intent to kill David. Then occur several instances in which Jonathan warns David of the danger he faces. This reaches the point where, in chapter 21, Jonathan incurs his father's wrath for attempting to aid David. Saul reminds Jonathan that as long as David lives, his claim to the kingship is endangered.

In addition to the lesson of *unselfish devotion*, we may learn from this relationship the importance of *courage* and *persistence* in ministering to others. It may be only at some cost to ourselves that we can help others. An example that comes quickly to mind is: a businessman may find it costs something to warn a customer of a bad deal. He ought not leave his mantle of ministry at the door of his business. Or a person may find that he is unpopular because of the company he keeps. (Jesus too was accused of hanging around with trash.)

A different possibility is that one may be rebuffed in his first attempts to be a warm and helping person. Someone who has been often hurt is likely to be suspicious or withdrawn. It is hard to draw the line between gentle, loving persistence and "do-gooder" meddling. Genuine soul searching is needed on that!

Finally we find Jonathan *interceding* with Saul in David's behalf. There is still a place in the world for Christians who intercede for others: with God in prayer, with parents for son or daughter, with a spouse, with an employer.

But perhaps above all, Jonathan reminds us not to grow weary in well-doing. (For an interesting outcome to all this see 2 Samuel 9, where the next generation reaps the reward of Jonathan's unselfish love for David.)

Paul and Timothy

A different kind of relationship is found in the case of Paul and Timothy. Three qualities in the relationship are notable. First, Paul talks to Timothy as if he were his own child—a "spiritual son." The address always has the quality of the older, wiser, divinely inspired apostle speaking to the younger, less experienced man. Second, Paul makes free use of advice—a violation of the canons of some—but not all—contemporary counseling procedures. Third, while the advice is meant to be passed on to others, it is also meant for Timothy himself. Paul

is deeply concerned about the spiritual welfare of his younger friend. Our observations are based on the First Letter to Timothy, but it has been necessary to make a selection. Someone else might select different emphases.

In chapter 1 we learn from St. Paul that the goals of Timothy's spiritual instruction of others are: (1) love, coming out of a pure heart, (2) a good conscience, and (3) sincere faith. Those should be our goals in helping others also. The foundation for these goals is "Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners," of whom Paul considers himself the worst. Faith and a good conscience are our best weapons in the battle of life, and violating conscience jeopardizes faith. Of this we can remind others.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain a variety of admonitions which may be passed on to others, after first being heeded by ourselves. Prayer is to be offered for all men, especially government officials. Women are to dress modestly and without expensive clothing and jewelry. Women are to know their place and not usurp authority over men. (*Women's libbers*, take note!) Church officials are to be temperate, courteous, hospitable, not greedy, manage their households well, have a good reputation, etc. None are virtues that any of us should neglect. In our spiritual support of one another we should both exemplify them and commend them to others.

Chapters 4–6 contain more spiritual advice. This includes cautions about false teachers, the observation that youthfulness does not make the Gospel message less viable, comments concerning the respect due older persons, warnings against idleness, gossip, meddling, playing favorites, and becoming involved in pseudo-intellectual arguments. All of these may have their application at one time or another in dealing with others. The section on the folly of wanting to be wealthy and the temptations to which it leads seems particularly apt in this affluent age. To seek instead justice, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness until the appearing of our Lord would be wise in any age.

Jesus as Model

Finally we come to our Lord Himself. His helping interactions with people were many. Few of the New Testament accounts are lengthy, however.

Mary and Martha are an example (Luke 10). Martha apparently is a nag, and possibly an obsessive-compulsive neurotic. Mary sits at Jesus' feet to listen and learn. Martha tries to get Jesus to support her in what the Transactional Analysis people might call a game of "Ain't It Awful?" "Ain't it awful, Lord, that Mary leaves all the work to me?" Jesus will not be drawn in. He tells Martha she worries and frets about too many things. He firmly tells her that only a few things are important, and only one is necessary. Mary has chosen that, namely, concern about the Word of the Lord. This story makes an excellent departure point for counseling people who are trapped in the cares and worries of this world. And

who of us isn't? It is also a clear statement about *values*. In a grossly materialistic culture like ours, Jesus reminds us that what is important above all else is the spiritual dimension.

A difficult time to minister to other Christians comes when there has been a death. The things people say to each other at a funeral home range from trite to profound. It's fortunate that many of them are not tape-recorded. In John 11 we have the dramatic raising of Lazarus from the dead. There are words there for us when we visit a funeral home to share the grief of the bereaved. Jesus says: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he dies, shall live. Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

Space does not permit examining many more interactions. Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus brings out the importance of making *restitution* when a person is suffering from guilt. This is a point often overlooked by Christians, probably because it is difficult and embarrassing. The point is stressed, however, by some psychologists that confession and restitution are critical for mental health. With doubting Thomas, Jesus demonstrates His infinite *patience*, the mark also of a good friend or a counselor. Even on the cross, in the midst of unbearable anguish as he bore the sins of all mankind, Jesus displayed a sensitive and understanding attitude toward human psychological need. To His mother He said: "Woman, there is your son!" And to His disciple: "There is your mother." (And from then on Mary made her home with John.)

The Gospel and Helping Relations

Motivation for Helping

The foregoing examples give us hints for helping relationships. But *why* should we minister to the spiritual needs of others?

Professional counselors and therapists do it to make an honorable living, for humanitarian reasons, and sometimes for very selfish reasons. And many, of course, act out of Christian motives. On what basis do Christians attend to the needs of others?

The answer lies in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Reduced to its simplest form, the Gospel is a message of *love*, God's love for us. "When we were still sinners, Christ died for us." We care about others because God first cared about us. For us Christ was made man. For us He died on the cross. God's love for us becomes the starting point for our loving others. Out of that love grows our helping disposition.

So, if we are *sensitive* like Naomi to the spiritual and emotional needs of others, it is because God has been sensitive first to our lost condition. If we *persevere* and are *courageous* like Jonathan, it is because we know God's love endures and Christ risked even death for us. If we have deep *respect* for the personhood of others, it

is because God does not coerce us but gently invites. If, like Timothy, we pass along God's *admonition* and *wisdom*, we do it because God through His Spirit moves us. If we seek to copy Jesus' *patient, sensitive* way, it is because His life has touched our lives. The key to it all is the forgiveness of sins we have experienced.

Deeper Spiritual Needs

The deepest trouble into which people get themselves, often without knowing it, is their own sin and its consequence. They do not understand that their guilt feelings, anxiety, depression, or loss of meaning stem from their lost condition and spiritual sickness. Ministering to their spiritual needs then means speaking the Law and witnessing to the Gospel. In simplest words, that means telling them they need a Savior and who He is.

Even Christians get into deep spiritual trouble. The Christian requires daily visits to the fountain of God's mercy. In our ministering to others we often can make the trip together to the community well, which is Christ. That may mean *putting into words* our own awareness of our sins and the warmth of God's forgiveness. It may mean *invitation*, going together to the house of the Lord for study and worship. Both are Biblical.

$$2+2=4$$

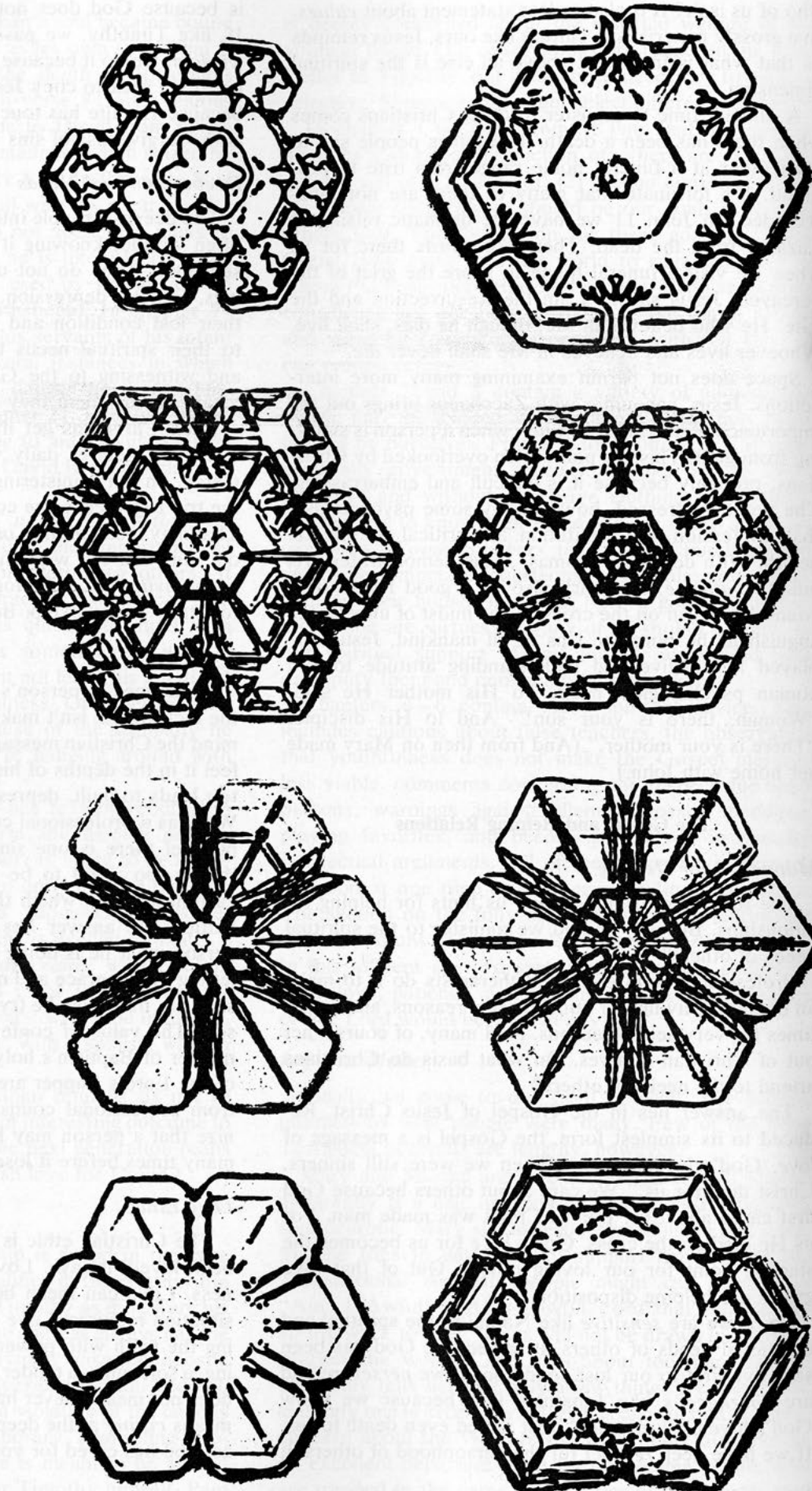
Sometimes a person's spiritual distress comes from the fact that he isn't making $2+2=4$. He knows with his mind the Christian message of forgiveness, but he doesn't feel it in the depths of his being where it's needed. That too leads to guilt, depression, and malaise of the spirit. Work as a professional counselor reveals that often people feel there is one sin or series of sins in their past that is too awful to be forgiven. Or sometimes it is a current sin with which they seem to be fighting a losing battle. The answer lies partly in pointing out to the person what he is doing (really, failing to do). He is not letting God's grace and mercy cover the multitude of his sins. He may even be trying in a subtle way to save himself. The value of confession to a pastor, the daily reminder of Baptism's holy washing, and the frequent use of the Lord's Supper are all in place. And to take a cue from professional counselors, it is important to recognize that a person may have to talk about the same sin many times before it loses its painful hold.

Love Ethic

The Christian ethic is a *love ethic*. Love as you have been loved, it says. Loving others is complicated business. Love can mean being soft and yielding when the situation requires. Love can mean being firm and speaking the truth with power. Love can mean patient listening, a soft smile, a tender touch, a gentle suggestion. Love does not mean "never having to say you're sorry." Love means *caring* at the deepest levels of your being—caring as God has cared for you.

TEACHING THE WORD TO MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

By MARVIN BERGMAN



A teacher of the faith can imagine finding himself involved in any of the following situations. In meeting a 6th grade midweek church school class, you have discovered quickly that the experiences and backgrounds of the learners vary considerably. Some are quite familiar with key Old Testament events, people, and passages, while others hardly have begun to explore any part of the Old Testament. How does one attempt to meet the needs of 15 youngsters with a wide range of experiences and competencies?

Assume also that you have agreed to serve as the teacher of a senior high church school class. Very soon you are informed, gently but firmly, that the group is not interested in a study of the Bible or theology. Will responding in either an authoritarian or permissive manner help to meet the needs of this group?

A third situation is one in which you have invested a considerable amount of time and effort in investigating a number of curricula designed for adults. One strikes you as being exceptionally well designed and related to the interests of adults in your parish. After much publicity and promotion, your efforts result in the enrollment of two adults.

Though these three situations are contrived, each reflects various facets of a number of problems and challenges which face teachers in the church today, none of which can be met or solved through a formula or simple directive. However, teachers can plan learning experiences based on strategies designed to meet learners where they are, while at the same time going beyond "felt" needs that can be expressed and diagnosed at superficial levels. In this discussion, three strategies of teaching have been selected relating to children, youth, and adults with the purpose being that of providing an overview of the "nuts and bolts" of these approaches to teaching the Word, which hopefully will stimulate further exploration and experimentation.

I. The Learning Center Approach

Features of the learning center approach to church education include *learning or activity centers* and a variety of resources which allow a learner to begin where he is and become involved in experiences that will contribute to his growth. The climate is one of freedom to choose from a number of options and a sense of working as a community. Groups may be broadly graded,

including grades 4-6, for example. Learning centers may be structured in a number of ways, with four possible forms being: (1) *The Thematic Activity Form*, in which a Biblical theme or topic becomes the basis for setting up interest centers extending over a period of time; (2) *The Open Classroom Form*, in which interest centers are planned for small groups or individuals, with primary emphasis placed upon individuals being able to move freely from center to center at their own pace as they become involved in personal discoveries related to a theme; (3) *The Community Building Form*, which focuses on the building of interpersonal relationships and a variety of experiences serving as a base for "thinking theologically"; (4) *The Self-Instruction Form*, which features a variety of media, such as books, filmstrips, cassettes, etc., made available to the individual as he pursues his objectives.¹

A teacher who is working with a group of 4th-6th graders in a midweek school situation could employ the thematic activity form in this way. With "God's Covenant with Abraham" serving as the theme, the leader presents the theme to the entire group at the beginning of the first session, while also describing various learning centers and activities. Each person is given opportunity to choose to work at a center during the session, with 4-5 learners possibly working at a center. Activity centers could include: (1) *A Story Center*, in which a number of Bible and story books relating to the life of Abraham are placed on a table together with a cassette and writing materials. Key passages from the Old Testament that focus on important happenings related to the covenant and Abraham could be identified and noted on cards placed on the table. Guidelines that have been spelled out on a poster could include such questions as: (a) Which story do you like the best? Why? (b) What kind of story can you write and/or tell that shows how Abraham felt when God made the covenant? (2) *A Drama Center*. In another area, a table with a variety of "dress up" clothes could be provided with such guidelines as: (a) study Genesis 15 and then do a role-play in which Abraham discusses with Sarah, Eliezer, and two other servants the covenant that God has made. (b) After studying Genesis 15:7-12 and 17-18, do a role-play of the covenant ceremony. (3) *An Audiovisual Center*. Here filmstrips, low-cost slide mate-

rials, markers, etc., could serve as the basis for a number of activities, such as: (a) after studying Genesis 15 and viewing the filmstrip, which kinds of pictures would you add to the filmstrip which you saw? (b) Study Genesis 17:1-8 and draw a number of pictures on slides which show some of the changes in Abraham's life which you imagine happening in Abraham's life as a result of the covenant. (4) *An Arts and Craft Center*. Another table in the room could provide a variety of materials, such as butcher paper, tempera paint, brushes, paste, scissors, staplers, etc. Possible guidelines include: (a) Paint a picture which shows what Abraham saw in the vision described in Genesis 15:12-21; (b) Make a paper model which shows the key parts of the covenant ceremony described in Genesis 15:7-11. (5) *Library Resources Center*. This center may serve as a resource for individuals working at any of the centers, with a resource person, Bibles, Bible dictionaries, concordances, word study books, atlases, commentaries, etc., supplying needed input for individuals. Learners could also work on research projects at this center.

After working at the various centers for a number of sessions, leaders could provide opportunity for participants to share art work, stories, slides, etc., with other groups or the entire group. Sharing of this kind will reveal that key Biblical concepts can be explored, developed, and expressed through a variety of learning experiences, some of which are perceived by individuals to be more meaningful and appropriate than others.

II. Experiential Education

A dilemma which sometimes confronts teachers of youth is pointed up in a recent survey of senior highs whose chief complaint about their church school classes was one of boredom. Further analysis revealed that while their teachers were focusing on the concrete level of thinking, youth were no longer thinking on that level, but had developed and were thinking on the level of the abstract-personal. That is, their interests centered on questions, issues, needs on their own agenda, many of which, of course, can and do relate to Scripture and theology. Boredom in this instance was the result of restricting learning to cognitive experiences which were not perceived to be related to personal concerns and interests.

One way of endeavoring to more adequately meet the needs of youth and address their concerns is to plan learning experiences based on what can be described as "experiential education."² Experiential education takes seriously the claim that "a learner will become deeply involved in any community of learning only when he perceives the meaning and value of the Gospel for him right now in his own life situation."³ This observation is especially applicable to youth, who within the church have become volunteer learners. Experiential education, by accenting experience and personal involvement by youth, opens a number of doors by allowing the in-

dividual's or group's experiences to serve as the point of departure, which can then lead to an encounter with the Bible, theology, etc. This contrasts with beginning with the Bible or theology and then making a transition into the world of the learner. The cognitive and psychological development of youth clearly favors the former approach.

In experiential education, a number of strategies have been developed, one of which will be explored at this time. "EIAGRing" focuses on a number of activities which can be described in this way:⁴ (1) *Experiencing-"doing."* Here the focus is upon actions, feelings, ideas, etc., related to real life situations that have been identified by individuals or groups as warranting exploration and study. (2) *Identifying-"looking."* At this point, involvement in an experience is suspended, with participants stepping back to look at what has been going on and directing attention to particular slices of the experience. Questions which could be explored include: "What happened?" "What did they say?" "What is the most important thing to you that has happened?" (3) *Analyzing-"thinking."* This part of the experience centers on making an analysis of the effects of the action upon others, asking what was helpful, not helpful, etc. At this time other resources that relate to the experience can be explored in order to deepen the analysis. Questions include: "What kind of impact does this action have upon participants?" "What effect did the experience have on you?" "What did you feel as this was happening?" (4) *Generalizing-"relating."* At this point, participants can explore ways in which the experience and insights emerging relate to their own lives. Finding personal meanings, sharing such meanings with others, getting feedback are some objectives. Questions that could be raised include: "What changes does this experience suggest?" "How could this be done differently?" (5) *Repracticing-"doing."* This step involves focusing upon translating insights and learning into practice. Questions that could be explored include: "What factors will help make change possible?" "What are the blocks to change?" "What will I be able to do in order to recognize that change has occurred?"

One may envision a group of senior high youth who have been confronted by questions and issues related to the mission of the church engaging in "EIAGRing." *Experiencing* could include involvement with two or three parishes in the community, perhaps of various denominations, during which time youth through contacts with laity, pastors, teachers, etc., could learn about what's happening in parish organizations, parish involvement in the community, and the activities of individual parishioners in the larger community. After being involved in such parishes for 4-5 weeks, the group could then focus on *identifying* what people are doing and saying. *Analyzing* could involve a comparison of what has been observed in one parish with what has been seen in another. A deeper probe could involve an ex-

ploration of a theological perspective on mission, using selected Biblical passages or such resources as Paul Bretscher's *The Holy Infection*. *Generalizing* provides opportunity for participants to relate learnings to their own lives and parish. *Repracticing* can involve one asking about what differences this experience will make in his life as well as how one who sees himself as a participant in God's mission can implement desired changes.

III. The Situational Approach to Adult Education

Imagine having the time and opportunity to participate in any or all of the following educational experiences: (1) a neighborhood Bible study group, meeting for 8 weeks, exploring the book of Job; (2) a 2½ hour discussion of Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*; (3) a one-day workshop on "Family Worship in the Home"; (4) four lectures on "Issues in Biblical Interpretation Facing the LCMS." A poll of adults in the church would reveal that some would hire the services of a baby-sitter for a worship workshop or group Bible study, while others could not become interested. A study of discipleship seen through the life and theology of Bonhoeffer would attract some, while others would remain disinterested. An exploration of issues in Biblical interpretation would stimulate considerable interest among some, while others would maintain that lectures, listening to cassettes, etc., only add to the confusion. As teachers who work with adults quickly discover, adult learners cannot easily be programmed or attracted by appeals which lie outside their interests. What one may see as the most creative, helpful, and relevant curriculum may be viewed by others as irrelevant. As a volunteer learner, an adult selects the kinds of experiences in which he will invest time and energy.

One approach that recognizes this reality is the situational approach to adult education, which is geared toward helping adults participate in planning learning events and curriculum. Though this approach is probably best learned by working through the process in a setting in which a block of time is available, as in a workshop, an overview of the plan can provide one with an awareness of the key components of the process.⁵

1. Determine Basic Purpose

The first step involves responding to two questions: (1) Why are we doing adult education in our parish? and (2) When laity participate in adult education experiences, what will they be able to accomplish? By writing out a statement that spells out one's overall goal, one will be giving direction to the planning process. Such a goal statement needs to reflect a *theological* perspective of what the mission of the church is, while at the same time giving attention to the needs of adults and expected outcomes stated in general terms. A sample goal statement is: "The purpose of adult education in this parish is to help men and women identify their own needs and

concerns as God's people, while also providing resources and experiences that will enable them to better carry out the work of God's mission in their family, vocation, parish, and larger community."

2. Gather Information

The purpose of this facet of the plan is to gather data from laity which would help to identify those issues, concerns, problems, interests, and needs which are on the learner's agenda. This means that planning does not begin with a curriculum, a book, an individual's suggestion or hunch, or action by a committee; rather, input supplied by potential participants furnishes the most important data. Information can be gathered in a number of ways, such as a checklist in which adults indicate their interest in a number of possibilities, or a completion questionnaire in which adults express their reactions to a number of incomplete sentences, such as "The greatest need in our congregation is . . ." Small group conversations, interviews with leaders, adults currently enrolled in classes, Bible class dropouts, etc., will furnish other data.

3. Identify Adult Concerns

When raw data has been gathered, planners can then examine such data and identify as many of the concerns of laity as possible. Usually a wide spread of interest will appear, necessitating a ranking of concerns. A variety of clues can point to "burning issues" in a parish or community. After concerns have been ranked in a 1, 2, 3 order, these can then be examined in the light of the working purpose in order to identify those interests which can be explored appropriately within church education. When three or four such interests have been identified, then planners know that they are working with an agenda that is related to the interests of a number of individuals.

4. Focus Main Concerns

Having identified several main concerns, planners can develop the process by relating the interests of adults that have been identified to subject areas. By probing and seeing more of the questions and interests of adults while also exploring various facets of the subject area, planners will uncover points of intersection in which people interests are related to manageable subject areas. A simple worksheet in which two headings appear:

Laity Concerns	Subject Areas
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will provide stimulation for exploring such questions as: "What subject areas relate to the questions being asked?" "What topics relate to the subject areas?" "What do adults want or need to learn and do?" "At what points do learner interests and subject areas meet?" At this point, a curriculum can be seen to be emerging which is based on learner interests and not the planners' own agenda.

God's People Today

Concordia invites you to make summer '74 come alive for your vacation church schoolers. Our '74 VBS program is exciting and practical. It helps learners discover what kind of persons God's followers are today and how they can serve God in their own daily lives.

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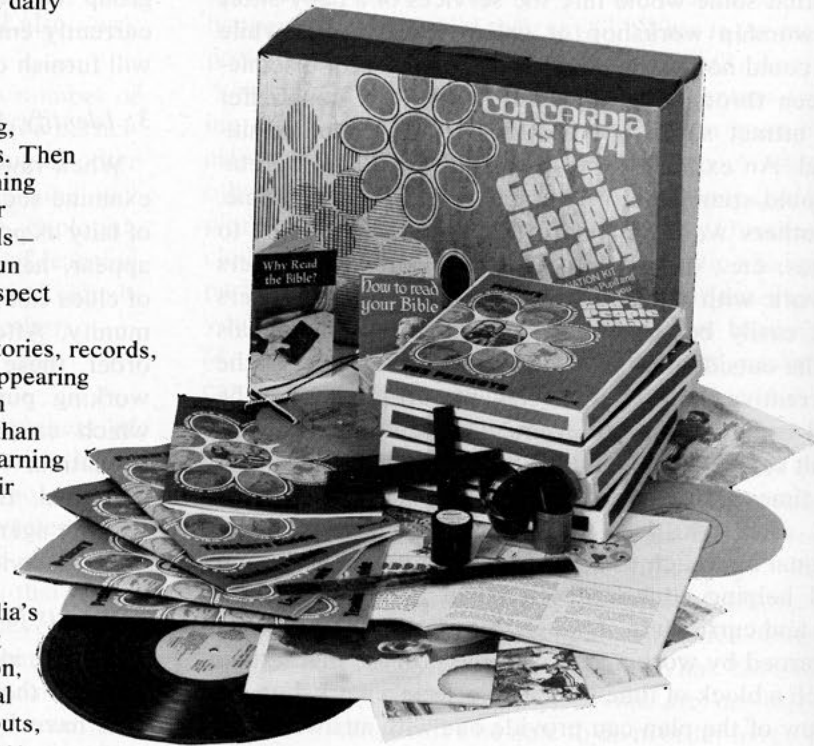
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5. Write Objectives

At this point, planners can ask questions about anticipated outcomes and objectives in terms of what learners will be able to do. This will help avoid vague and fuzzy objectives which are of limited use to either group leaders or participants. Important here is the distinction between a *goal*, which is seen as a broadly stated description of content and direction, and an *instructional objective* in which an anticipated outcome is stated in terms of a particular action on the part of an individual. An example is: "At the end of this session one will be able to name four calamities which struck Job described in the prologue." Of course, no one can dictate a response on the part of another person, nor can a response to the Word be prescribed. However, an objective spelled out in terms of learner outcomes can be seen as providing a target, which the learner may accept, go beyond, or reject. Traps that are avoided include aimless wandering, entering teaching-learning situations with low expectations, and completing a number of sessions without any basis for evaluation.

6. Design Strategies

A planning group is now ready to direct attention to such questions as, "What kinds of learning activities fit the people involved, the objectives, the subject area, time available, and the setting?" Especially helpful at this point is an identification of learning activities that involve adults as full participants rather than casting them in the role of spectators. Some approaches include a project, a study/action group, a workshop, a film festival, a seminar limited to a small group, etc. Within each approach a number of particular activities can be identified, such as role plays, listening teams, research teams, buzz groups, lectures, simulation games, field trips, and audiovisuals. A key question is, "What kinds of learning strategies will best help participants reach their objectives?"

7. Describe Leadership and Identify Resources

Rather than attempt to select people at this point who seem to be "natural leaders," the focus here is a description of the kind of leadership skills needed that will help groups and individuals. After leadership skills are described, individuals who could possibly serve in such roles can be identified and contacted. These individuals may already have the necessary skills, or they may be helped to acquire such skills. Another task is that of beginning to describe and locate some of the needed materials and resources, such as media, resource people, texts, curricula, etc.

8. Plan for Evaluation

This planning step involves asking, "What do you want to know about outcomes?" and "How are you going to find out?" Obtaining feedback at various times during a learning event as well as after can be highly illuminating

for both group leaders and individuals. Attention can be directed to such questions as: (1) "What kinds of learning have occurred?" (2) "What are learner reactions to the teaching-learning strategies?" (3) "How involved in the activities are participants?" Methods of evaluation that can be employed include: a pre-event evaluation sheet, interviews during the course of a group event, an observer who supplies data on how the group is functioning, and a questionnaire through which individuals can make a self-evaluation. By building evaluation into the planning process, leaders and learners may not only help each other to remain "on target," but they have data which can help to make any needed readjustments during the event.

9. Inform and Interpret to the Congregation

In order for the situational approach to adult education to become operational in a congregation, a planning group will want to consider a number of possibilities to interpret the plan to members of the parish. Working closely with groups already established, offering "mini" experiences in the planning procedure, and following up information gathering with explanations of what is being offered, what participants may expect, etc., will lead to a greater involvement by adults.

Summary

In view of the wide range of learner interests, experiences, and social backgrounds, Christian educators face a challenging and complex task in planning teaching-learning experiences that address the issues and needs of individuals. This task is further complicated by the fact that the deepest needs are not recognized through self-analysis, but rather, emerge as one confronts the living Word of judgment-grace. Teachers in the church who tap the strengths of such approaches as learning centers, experiential education, and the situational approach to adult education can make a significant contribution toward helping individuals to draw upon the resources of the Word which empowers for a life of mission.

NOTES

¹ A very helpful resource is *The Learning Center Approach in Church Education* (Philadelphia: United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1971). This publication is available from Central Distribution Service, Box 7286, St. Louis, Mo. 63177 (\$1.25).

² For a fuller discussion, see Robert Dow, *Learning through Encounter: Experiential Education in the Church* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1970).

³ Joseph Ban, *Education for Change* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1968), p. 63.

⁴ The writer wishes to acknowledge being introduced to this strategy by Charles Dull, Concordia Teachers College, Seward.

⁵ An excellent resource is: Robert Kempes, *Planning Lay Education* (Philadelphia: Board of Christian Education, The United Presbyterian Church U. S. A., 1971).

book reviews

FREEDOM TO LEARN, by Carl R. Rogers. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969.

This reviewer believes that Carl Rogers' *Freedom to Learn* is one of the most important books on learning and schools to be published in the last 10 years. It has not received the popular acclaim of John Holt's polemics (e.g., *How Children Fail* and *The Underachieving School*), or Haim Ginott's folksy psychologies (e.g., *Between Parent and Child*, *Between Parent and Teenager*, and *Between Teacher and Child*). On the other hand, *Freedom to Learn* is not a polemic—it is basically a positive statement (refreshing in the way that Harris' *I'm O.K.*, *You're O.K.* is a refreshingly positive book about psychotherapy). In those few instances when Rogers becomes polemical, he feels obligated to follow with a suggestion of a positive alternative (cf. chapters 8 and 9). Certainly chapters 1, 2, and 3 provide possible alternatives to the status quo at the elementary, undergraduate, and graduate levels of education.

If you're interested in "How in the world could one be 'open' with the 6th grade I have this year!?" read at least chapter 1. It's about Miss Barbara Shiel and a 6th grade that had her "up the wall." Though not intended as a model to follow like a recipe, this chapter may provide an insight (or two!) into openness and student goal setting.

If you are interested in college education—or the way it is (or was) or isn't (or wasn't) done, take a look at chapter 2.

If you're currently chafing under a graduate program that espouses to make you an independent learner by totally prescribing your learning experiences, try chapter 3 or the combination of chapters 8 and 9.

But LOOK OUT! Reading such material may make you take a copy of Postman and Weingartner's *The Soft Revolution* to find ways to change the old system—and that is called Rebellion!

On the other hand, if you want to know what is meant when someone is said to be "Rogerian," here is the book that may help to provide that meaning.

J. D. WEINHOLD

RISK, TRUST, LOVE: LEARNING IN A HUMANE ENVIRONMENT, by William D. Romey. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1972.

The student is a reservoir of important information. He knows what is relevant to his needs and is capable of making significant decisions about what happens to him. Nothing is more important for him than to know himself.

Having a variety of alternatives for learning, being free to do things differently and at different times than anyone else and being supported when making significant decisions—all contribute toward a rich learning environment. The accessibility of this environment is dependent on the degree of trust between teacher and student. The development of this environment is best effected by a person who has experienced it himself! Coming from these assumptions, the author pieces together a "facilitator of learning" in a humane, caring, learning situation.

Facilitating is risky business. Teachers need to understand their place in the classroom as one of many learners: a co-learner or an experienced learner.

Teaching is comfortable. Teachers can stand in front of a group of children all day and talk about what interests them. The children must listen quietly and attentively, and react positively to what they say and do. They have "techniques" they can use to get their ideas across and can use their power as an enforcer when all else fails. They manage their classrooms, make all of the decisions, including what children must learn and how they are to learn it, and wield the big stick of grades in a most admirable way. The end product is row upon row of "well-trained" children, growing up with rigid minds and dulled spirits.

What happens if teachers take time to initiate open supportive relationships with their co-learners and really trust them to take responsibility for themselves? What happens if teachers consciously place themselves at the facilitative end of the response-management continuum? They can let it be known that they are not computers to produce answers, but that they will gladly suggest

alternatives and help their students understand what is important for their lives. With more avenues for learning and the ability to make relevant decisions about their learning, students will make commitments to their needs more readily and in a realistic way.

Adopting the facilitator mode is not an escape from the pressure and hard work that goes into teaching, but a release from mediocrity and redundancy. It is not irresponsibility in letting children wander aimlessly where they may, but an active caring in a dynamic situation.

It is the facilitator's task to develop the richest learning environment possible. The "student" learner is responsible for himself; the "experienced" learner is responsible for caring for his co-learners and answering to their needs.

NANCY YOUNG

From Skinner to Rogers: CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO EDUCATION, by Frank Milhollan and Bill E. Forisa. Lincoln, Nebraska: Professional Educators Publications, Inc., 1972.

The coauthors have written a concise, objective, easy-to-read presentation of two divergent, philosophical, psychological models of men. The outstanding feature of this little book is that the coauthors trace the historical antecedents of B. F. Skinner and Carl Rogers in some detail and still devote approximately one-half of their 124 pages to the writings of Skinner and Rogers. Milhollan and Forisa have written a book intended to be helpful to any person who wishes to develop and appraise their conception of how learning occurs. The book is not intended as an introduction to learning theory, nor is it addressed to advanced scholars. The book is a suitable supplement to any standard educational psychology text.

The authors guardedly state that there is truth in both the behavioral and the phenomenological views of men and in the methodology of both of these psychological orientations. The authors do not discuss the implications upon society if one model were chosen to the exclusion of the other. Their treatment of both views is free of any discernable bias toward either viewpoint. The book's shortcoming is that it takes the position of objectivity toward both viewpoints, but does not suggest how the teacher can sensitize his views in a practical manner.

The authors concisely trace the historical development of the conception of man as a passive organism, governed by external stimuli and the acceptance of the scientific method as appropriate to the study of man. The writings of B. F. Skinner are presented as representative of the contemporary expression of this approach to the study of man and of the behavioral model of man. The phenomenological orientation toward man is traced from its historical antecedents of antiquity to the present day writings of Carl Rogers. This model of man considers man to be the source of all acts. Man is essentially free to make his own choices in each situation. The real world of man is his inner world and

man's behavior is an expression of this private inner world. This view insists that the study of man should focus on the experience of each individual man as it occurs in his world of being.

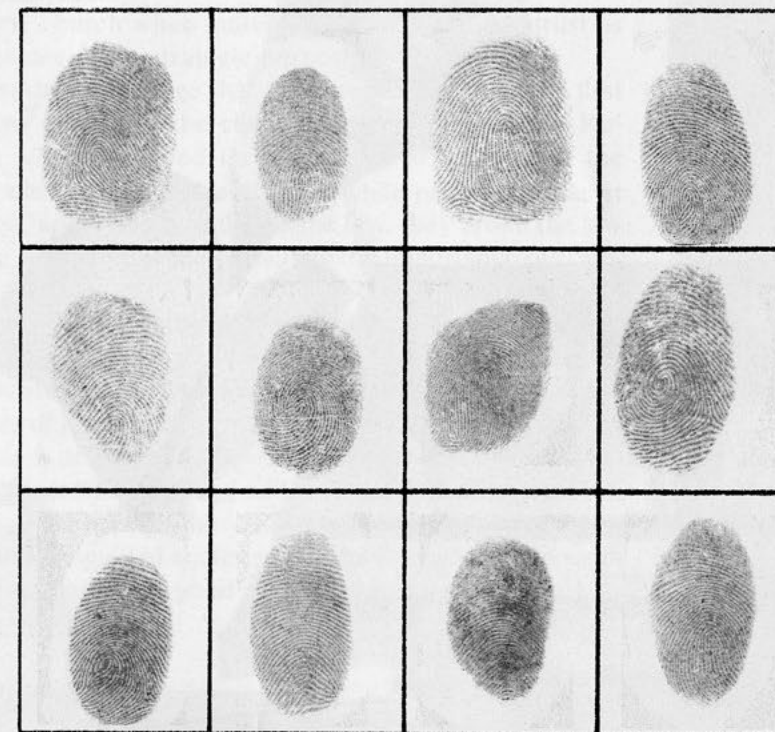
The historical section of the book is well written and adequately reviews the development of the two models under consideration. The authors briefly trace the development of the two points of view from antiquity to Godfred Leibnitz and John Locke. The controversy between philosophers orientated towards one or the other of the two traditions is traced up to the birth of psychology as a science in the latter half of the 19th century. The debate from this time centers on the question of what kind of science orientation, naturalistic or humanistic, psychology should take.

B. F. Skinner's scientific analysis of behavior in the process of learning from his point of view is described very effectively. The teacher who wishes to reacquire himself with Skinner's definitions and his basic concepts of respondent conditioning and operant conditioning will find chapter 4 to be extremely helpful. The authors present a rather detailed discussion of reinforcement, extinction and the schedules of reinforcement. Their definitions of primary, secondary, and generalized reinforcers are clear and concise. The authors are particularly helpful in distinguishing between discrimination and differentiation in Skinner's approach to learning. The discussion of Skinner's view of punishment and the use of chaining are also concise and clearly presented.

In tracing the historical and philosophical antecedents of the phenomenological orientation, the influence of "Gestalt" theory and of existential philosophy is given its rightful emphasis. Sartre's influence upon this orientation is appropriately emphasized. The contemporary status of the phenomenological approach to learning is presented by discussing the 19 principles of Rogerian phenomenology and by reviewing Roger's emphasis as stated in his book, *Freedom to Learn*. Roger's view that the educated man is a man who has learned how to learn is presented with force and within his context and understanding of the importance of interpersonal relations. Roger's emphasis upon the necessity for teachers to be genuine, trustful, accepting and skillful in interpersonal communication is discussed in adequate detail. Jerome Brunner's emphasis upon inquiry and Roger's promotion of the encounter group as appropriate methodologies in education complete the discussion of the phenomenological orientation towards education.

The book is helpful for reviewing these two philosophical and psychological orientations toward man. The authors do not intend to assist the reader in deciding between these two points of view. My uneasiness with the presentation is that I feel it would be helpful to most teachers only in the context of a study group or a seminar, since the authors do not assist the teachers in the process of applying both methodologies simultaneously when such utilization might be advantageous.

EUGENE OETTING



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The word "truth" seems to be going through a period of strangely inconsistent and contradictory usage these days.

On the national scene, certain people in government positions consider themselves protectors of political truth. Yet they tell lies in their effort to elect the people who in their judgment will preserve the truth.

On the religious scene, newspapers spring up and present themselves as champions of the eternal; unchangeable doctrinal truth. Yet they deal so loosely and uncritically with hearsay and rumor about people whom they consider to be their theological opponents that the real effect is the dissemination of falsehoods.

Political leaders, we are told, have long argued that occasional lying is necessary for expediency reasons. One wouldn't expect church people to argue that way. Yet there is growing evidence that certain self-styled defenders of theological truth are simultaneously disseminating lies about some of their brethren. Indeed, this is happening with such regularity in certain segments of the maverick religious press that one is led to believe that the editors involved consciously support this double standard, believing that telling lies is necessary or at least excusable in the defense of truth. A more charitable explanation for their behavior, namely, that they don't really understand what they are doing, is almost as uncomplimentary as the other.

What is communication coming to when the very ones who appoint themselves as watchmen over truth, lie?

What has happened to the church when individuals who solicit our trust as defenders of the faith practice deceit for strategic purposes?

There is small comfort in the knowledge that the present era is not the first to experience double-standard dealing in the church. The apostle Paul in Romans 2 refers to individuals who considered themselves to be "a guide to the blind" and "a light to those who are in darkness"; yet, while preaching against stealing, they stole themselves, and while boasting in the law, they broke the law themselves. Today's example would be: while preaching the importance of truth, they lie themselves.

On the other hand, there is large comfort in the Lord's assurance regarding the staying power of the church. Double-standard practices can not prevail as the accepted norm. They eventually must be found out and recognized for the evil that they are. These kinds of promoters of truth and light must eventually be exposed as, in fact, perpetrators of deceit, darkness, and death. Praise God for our Savior's Matthew 16 promise: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We can have the assurance that the present-day church, as its pristine forerunner, will survive the machinations of misguided ecclesiastical manipulators, who seem to be blind to the evil inherent in pursuing good ends with bad means.

W. TH. JANZOW

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