12-1-1971

Theology, News and Notes

Fuller Theological Seminary

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The Christian Community as Teacher

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Teaching has taken place in the Christian community since the time of Christ. The form that it has taken was to be found in the Jewish communities from the earliest of history. The content and the particular form of teaching has differed over the succeeding centuries. Today in the Church when we think of teaching we normally think of it in a formalized sense and often call it Christian education. It is difficult for those of us who live in a modern, Western society to think of teaching in the Christian community apart from the Sunday church school, parochial education, youth groups and other formalized teaching. Actually, the formalized type of instruction has taken place only in very recent times when we consider the long span of teaching both in the Jewish and the Christian communities.

In the earliest of times teaching took place primarily in the larger family context, with some instruction being offered outside the family. Until recent times very little conscious consideration was given as to how people learn and to what type of content is most agreeable to a learning situation. As has been said, when we think of teaching and of Christian education, in our day it is almost impossible to think of it apart from the Sunday school. Robert Raikes is generally credited with organizing the first Sunday school in Gloucester, England, in 1780. Raikes was a layman, and his first efforts were largely in the form of a charity movement to get children off the streets on Sundays. Having gotten them off the street, it seemed appropriate that they should be taught the Bible and catechism. Others began to follow his efforts, and the idea spread to the early American Colonies with several Sunday schools being established in the mid and later 1780s.

The first national organization of Sunday schools in America was begun in 1824 in Philadelphia, where the American Sunday School Union had its beginning. This organization had, and still has, as its purpose the spread of the Sunday school throughout the country. The first National Sunday School Convention had its origin at a conference of friends of Sunday schools held in Philadelphia during the anniversary of the American Sunday School Union and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, May 23, 1832. The enthusiasm of the first convention was so great that another one was held the following spring. But the third convention was not held until 1859, and with the Civil War another could not be held until 1869. It was the fifth national convention at Indianapolis in 1872 which was destined to be epoch-making. There were a large number of delegates, and there was presented at that convention the proposal for some form of uniform lesson materials. Prior to this time, what existed as a Sunday school curriculum would be a far cry from what we would describe today. Bibles, themselves, were very expensive until the founding of the American Bible Society in 1816, so the catechism was used as the primary means of instruction. From the Sunday school convention in 1872, however, there came the first efforts toward a uniform curriculum development. The two men most responsible for the opening success of a uniform lesson plan were Dr. John H. Vincent, later a bishop of the Methodist Church, and Benjamin Franklin Jacobs, who was a Baptist layman. The new lesson plan and the new lessons met with wide and enthusiastic approval, so much so that the International Lesson Committee reported to the 1875 convention that the lessons were being used in 19 nations in the three years since they had been approved.

As time went on there were many objections, however, to the Uniform Lessons. It was difficult to use them with all age groups. They seemed to be fragmentary in their presentation. There were not doctrines for denominations. There was not opportunity to treat particular subject matter such as missions. There began an effort to bring about what we know today as graded lesson materials. However, this met with very great opposition and suspicion by very many people, so that final ap-
have demanded constantly better and more effective tools to use and have relied with increasing dependence on the publishing houses to provide them with both the content and methodology of teaching. This is certainly a very far departure from the emphasis of the family as teacher which existed during the first eighteen centuries of the Christian Church. This is not to say that this emphasis has been bad, but it is to point up where we have placed the primary concern for the investment of all the various resources available to us.

Today, even as theology seems to be "up for grabs," so Christian education is in the same sort of hiatus. It may be, in fact, that Christian education as a discipline within the Church is in even more precarious shape than our basic theology. What we do in Christian education has in recent times been influenced by the theology which is regnant at that time as well as the thinking of educational philosophy and psychology.

There is one bright hope in the educational field today. However, that same hope brings with it a very deep concern. This hope and concern centers in the very considerable influence of Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist and educator who has brought refreshing insight as to how people learn. The hope which Piaget brings to us is the freshness and the practicality of his insights, but the concern comes that once again the Church may simply adopt an educational philosophy straight from secular teaching and forget that it has a unique message of redemption to declare. There is, of course, a danger on the other side, that those who have been steeped in traditional Christian education may react to try to exclude the influence of a secular educator. It is probably true that most especially in our day we need both the fresh insight of a dynamic and alive theological expression, as well as the most comprehensive and incisive views as to how we learn, molded together, that truly all men may know of the message of the gospel in its fullest and deepest sense.

In this particular issue of Theology, News and Notes we have tried to bring together some of the many concerns which exist in the field of Christian education today. Much has been said and written in the area of communication, and Dr. Ted Ward has written an article on that. He does not pretend to be exhaustive in this area, but rather to indicate to us at least two areas of concern — how we communicate within the Church and also beyond it. We have mentioned the large amount of resources from the Church which have gone into the development of curriculum materials. Dr. Iris Cully has written a very penetrating article about this. There are some challenges for us today for those who call themselves conservative evangelicals. F. Franklyn Wise expresses those concerns. Donald B. Rogers indicates how instruction in a very urban and mass society can be individualized. Probably the most exciting developments in the area of teaching within the Church are taking place today in the Roman Catholic Church. We have available to us in this issue a very refreshing and exciting article written by Robert L. Faricy. There are a number of other areas in the teaching ministry of the Church which could have been covered and which have not been touched in this issue. We hope, however, that this will indicate to you some of the current concerns, and that for those who are engaged in teaching in the Christian community, whether it be in the home, in the Church, or in the school, will find one or more areas in these articles which will assist them to make their teaching more exciting to themselves and more engaging to those who are learners.
The community of believers is engaged in two vital communication processes. (There are three if you include the conversational significance of the spiritual walk with God through Jesus Christ.) In terms of functional and interpersonal communication, the individual Christian has two communities with which to relate. For the purposes of this paper, the two are designated as the “community of believers” and the “outer community.” These two sets of communications are deeply interrelated, so much so that the primary messages of the one become the secondary messages of the other, whether we like it or not.

The outer community is learning about the Christ we proclaim not only through the outward-directed media from our community, but also through observations made of our relationships within the community of believers. Similarly, nurture within the community of believers is affected not only by the direct communications of so-called “Christian education” (a term I prefer not to use), but by the observations that Christians make of the messages their own community is sending to the outer community. Indeed, for the members of some congregations the basis of their inadequate nurture is a series of repeated exposures to the “plan of salvation” — a case of the community of believers attempting to be nourished on the most elementary communications intended for the outer community. Even the “newborn” Christian is entitled to a more nourishing diet of the milk of the Word! (Consider: the milk of the Word is for the Christian; the call of Christ to salvation is for the outer community.)

Because the two sets of communications — within the community and with the outer community — are deeply interrelated and because there are so many cases where the distinction between the sets is not even recognized, it is necessary to examine both in order to understand either.

Communicating in the Community

Ted Ward

The Basis of the Community’s Communication

The relationship among the words communication, community and unity is significant. Language is a reflection of human experience. It is rarely an accident that certain words are closely related to each other. That the word unity is embedded in community is a linguistic representation of a relationship that exists in life. That community is embedded in communication is another linguistic reflection of human experience. It is amazing that the linguistic heritage can be overlooked and earlier understandings can ultimately be lost despite the linguistic reminders! Yet today in the wake of the communication revolution there are too few who understand that communication depends to a great extent on the existence of real community. The “sharing in common” that is community is essential to the exchange of ideas that is communication. In order to communicate, people must share language (verbal and/or nonverbal), they must share interests, values and sensitivities. All of these are based on past experiences. Thus, at the risk of over-simplification, it can be said that communication depends on the sort of past experi-

Theology, News and Notes

VOLUME XV, NUMBER 3, DECEMBER 1971


Integrator, December Issue: James H. Morrison.

Managing Editor: Bernice Spencer Bush.

A publication of Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 North Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, California 91101. Published four times a year in March, April, June and December. Second class postage paid at Pasadena, California.

The editorial content of Theology, News and Notes reflects the opinions of the various authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the views of Fuller Theological Seminary trustees and faculty.
ence that community provides.

Community, in turn, depends on unity. Even among the founding fathers of this nation the dependency was understood. The document that gets the most popular attention is the Declaration of Independence, and the contemporary American embraces it (superficially) because of his fierce individualism. But the independence it declared was the independence of the community of Americans as a whole not from each other, but from a resented distant government.

The more important document, having the status of legal foundation of the republic, is the Constitution. The Constitution, together with its amendments, speaks of rights of the individual, but its major burden and primary focus is on the ways to build and maintain unity. Community of the states was not possible short of a basic and transcendent unity. *E pluribus unum* reflects the goal, but the unity itself is dependent on identifying and nurturing the purposes, goals and values that provide central focus. The founding fathers seem to have understood the basis of unity. The Preamble to the Constitution is given to the building of unity through purpose: "We ... in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. . . ."

John Gardner is one of the few public figures today who seems completely aware that a common identity and a common purpose are basic to restoring unity in the United States. His new organization, Common Cause, is committed to the development of unity through purpose.

Whole new "communities" (more descriptively called "societal conglomerates") are failing to get off the ground because no essential unity has been identified or nurtured. Many parts of certain American cities are disintegrating for the same reason: lack of unity — in the sense of a single set of purposes, goals, values or on-going experiences that could provide a central focus upon which to establish a sense of community. Pearl Buck is currently involved in a fascinating unity-builds-community project in Danby, Vermont. With her keen awareness of the relationships of the individual and the community and her oriental experiences in village-city interdependence, she is helping Danby residents find a common purpose through refurbishing and putting to gainful use several historic buildings in the center of the village. She is helping to rebuild a dying community by helping its citizens find common purposes, goals and values. This is a small incident, but it illustrates the point: to the extent that unity can be established, community can develop.

Communication within the community is dependent on the vitality of the sense of community. Communication of the community of believers with relation to the outer community is similarly dependent on the vitality of the community. Effective communication must have "heart"; and it must be backed up by reality. All of this ultimately rests on unity of identity and purpose.

Of all institutions, the Church has the most clear-cut basis for unity. (Lest the reader become apprehensive, be assured that this paper neither reviews the history of attempts to realize functional unity in the Church nor expounds the theological basis of unity.) Whether or not the Church as an aggregate of management units can, in fact, reflect unity, the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ compels men to unity with one another in Christ. When Jesus prayed that his disciples would be made one with each other the language was figurative but certainly to be understood practically.

To relegate "unity of the believers" to a purely spiritual relationship is to deny the behavioral reality of living as a Christian. Certainly the Acts of the Apostles reflects that the early believers felt a sense of identity and obligation to one another. In an earlier era within our own country, and most especially among the large immigrant groups of the nineteenth century (both Protestant and Catholic), a sense of unity among believers provided the basis for many strong communities. Within several states today there are vestiges of these communities whose original unity was the unity of believers. (In some cases these communities are now maintained on the unity of idiosyncratic identity.) Because of their views of the Scriptures and their "old world" characteristics, not all of these groups were inclined to be communicative with the outer community, but they were marvelously communicative within their own communities.

Why doesn't the Church today reflect more community? Perhaps the answer is that the underlying unity has not been developed and maintained within recent years. Such an answer, for all its sincerity, must be kept in perspective: first, the reference here is to the Church in the United States — the Church in certain other countries shows a high degree of community; second, there are notable exceptions to the answer suggested — there are, in fact, relics of the earlier Church-communities, especially in rural pockets, and there are new forms of community arising from the anti-establishment and reform movements among young urban Christians.

**COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS**

Although the intentional messages of the Church to the outer community are relatively simple and direct, the messages *within* the community are complex and elegant. They encompass the perpetuation and development of life-styles and a whole ethical system in terms of the world-and-life view of scriptural Christianity. These within-the-community communications constitute the major educational tasks of the Church; they demand a variety of media. We understand that the home plays a vital role in this communicating-educating and we augment the home by establishing school-like operations — Sunday school, vacation Bible school, "Christian day school and the "Christian college."

In the minds of most Americans, education is too readily equated with schooling. Ours is a school-oriented society, wherein schooling serves as the ladder of socio-economic progress, technological advancement and social mobility. This sort of education is a system of buildings, campuses, dedicated blocks of time, abstractions from reality and symbolic hurdles, stages and achievements called courses, grades, certificates and degrees. Schooling, for many, is a sort of Lobster Quadrille performed because it is "good" to be performed. Except for the fact that society naively pays obeisance to its symbolisms, its values are dubious and its processes are largely ineffectual for many who most need its help.

In the current reexamination of the strengths and weaknesses of educational enterprises in the public and private sectors, the case against schooling is becoming strong. Anthropologists and those educational theorists concerned with the roles and modes of education within society (e.g., Ivan Illich, Paulo Friere) are now making sharper distinctions among
three sets of educative modes: the informal, the formal and
the non-formal.

Informal education is the sort that is present in all cultures.
It is exemplified in the way language skills are transmitted
during the first few years of life; a child learns to use his
mother tongue because he is in an environment wherein the
stimuli and rewards for learning are virtually integrated with
the entirety of life experience. Informal education occurs be-
cause the milieu is "right" of eliciting and supporting certain
behaviors.

Formal education is that aspect of education that the lay-
man associates with the word "education." It consists of
schooling and other organized, ability- or age-scaled, sched-
uled and overtly declared instructional functions within the
culture. Formal education includes the public and private sec-
tors, from kindergarten through swimming class.

Non-formal education is the Cinderella currently coming
into the limelight. Educators who are disillusioned with the
failure of formal education to deliver on its oversell are re-
discovering that there are, in most cultures, extensive educa-
tive functions that operate in contrast with formal education.
Non-formal education includes activities that are more-or-less
scheduled, somewhat scaled (usually in terms of interests of
the learner rather than by age or other arbitrary standards),
and usually not identified as part of the mainline educational
establishment. Though trade schools are a borderline case,
symphony orchestras, museums, libraries, literary and discus-
sion clubs, family planning services, social and welfare
counseling services, and many other exemplars of non-formal
education come to mind.

The distinctions among these three sets of educative modes
are important for several reasons: First, the tendency to over-
rely on formal modes has militated against creative uses of
non-formal modes and against proper recognition of the vi-
tality of the informal modes. (Reflect on the fact that the
most complex cognitive learning of life — language — is mas-
tered at a highly functional level by most humans at around
age five or six. The school then spends twelve years struggling
to induce learnings far less complex and less competently
achieved!) The second importance of the distinctions is the rec-
ognition that purposeful, goal-oriented educational commu-
nications can utilize non-formal modes to augment or re-
place the more costly formal modes. While this latter point
constitutes a threat to the schooling establishment, it can be a
welcome incentive to the Church. The Church has utilized
informal and non-formal modes of education as its basic
communication media within its community since the time of
Christ. Now these very modes — affinity clubs, camping ex-
periences, discussion groups, dinner parties, seminars, special
short-term study institutes, counseling sessions and the like,
are coming into their own as educational media. (Curiosity:
did each of the examples cited in the previous sentence bring
to mind its precedent as used by Jesus in his ministry? Or did
you read with only the contemporary equivalents in mind?)

Communications with the Outer Community

Communication is organic. Communication is an extension
of the living organism or the living social structure. An open
person or system communicates with candor and trans-
parency, not using his messages to create false images of
himself.

Manipulation is the communication of a diseased person or
system. The communication of a closed system or a non-
relating person works for obscurity of the true state of things
in favor of a contrived ("manipulated") view of itself and its
relation to the target of the communication. In lower forms
of life, this sort of communication often appears within pat-
tterns of predatory behavior. Getting the target of the com-
munication to do what he would not do if he had "the whole
story" is manipulation.

Manipulative communication within the community of be-
lievers and communication on behalf of the community of
believers should not be encouraged. From a position of values,
the Christian need not engage in "selling Christ" through half-
truths or distortions. Since God is truth and his Word is truth
it is neither necessary nor feasible to "sell Christ" through less
than completely honest messages. (Parenthetically, one prob-
lem comes to mind here: the Christian who wants to build a
"winning case" for the message of the gospel sometimes ex-
aggerates what Christ has done for his own behavior. Such
distortions are perhaps of the most hazardous sort, because
they alert the listener to watch the salesman even more closely; inconsistency will surely spoil the whole effect.)

Since the community of believers is essentially a purpose-
oriented community, communication plays purpose-fulfilling
roles. Comprehensive definitions of communication are based
on the idea of transferring ideas or data from one mind to
another. Broad views of communicative processes are useful
in many situations, but in terms of its roles with regard to the
community of believers, communication needs to be defined
in terms of purpose and achievement. Purposeful communi-
cation is defined in essentially the same terms as purposeful
education: the presentation of information in a carefully de-
dsigned form to an appropriate audience through a useful
medium in order to produce change. Purposeful communi-
cation is concerned with producing change; until change
results, the communication hasn't "gotten through." Change,
in this sense, refers to the difference that it makes because
one knows. Behaviorally-oriented educators look at it this way:
if what a person knows makes no difference in what he does
or what he is, the knowing is of no consequence.

A behavioral view of communication and education makes
one uneasy about the prevalent idea that the obligation of the
Church is to give the outer community "a chance to hear." Such
a concept of the obligation of the Church tends to pro-
duce a view of communication as a one-way process. If all we
are to do is to give men a chance to hear, then communication
can be accomplished by telling, informing, showing and
broadcasting. Each of these words connotes a one-way flow
of information. The objectives implied by these terms are
summarized as exposure. Purposeful communication, by con-
trast, involves a two-way flow of information, from sender to
receiver and back to the sender again in such a way as to
allow the sender to reshape and resend his message. The ob-
jectives of purposeful communication are expressed in terms
of changes in the receiver, not merely in terms of the sender's
quantity of dump-out.

The Present Need

For one reason or another many of today's young people
have become keenly aware of the lack of community in the
American life-style. Some handful are able precisely to iden-
tify their frustration as arising from rampant individualism;
many others are reacting irrationally to the vacuum of com-
mon goals, to the lack of identity and to the self-seeking achievement syndrome that has become characteristic of so many Americans.

The war has much to do with this nearly complete collapse of community in the United States. Given modern communication technologies and a relatively unrestricted press, it is inevitable that a nation locked so long in so unclear a cause on such dubious premises would be disintegrated. Wars have curiously contrasting effects on those who indulge: a cause held by the masses to be in their common interest can weld unity even in the face of probable defeat and oppression; but a cause for which support is seriously divided and for which the masses cannot be rallied is sure to cost dearly in terms of moral and cultural degradation, even if the conflict itself can be "won." Such are the history lessons so conveniently overlooked by those whose ethnocentric idealism becomes an obsession. (That America can serve as the righteous arbiter of the issues of the world is such ethnocentric idealism gone berserk.)

If the Good Fairy were to grant me one wish I think I'd ask for a year (or maybe just a month) of living in a real community. There are so few communities, and so few of us ever get the opportunity to become part of one. Although life there isn't all milk and honey, a sort of frustrated envy creeps over me when I'm visiting friends in a kibbutz. For all its shortcomings, Walden II rather intrigues me; and as for the Oneida, Amana and other experiments in communal living - I can only wish that history weren't so persistent; I'd rather believe that these attempts to create heaven on earth were more successful!

But if my wish were granted, I might find myself in trouble. Notice that I stipulated a limited time span for my ecstatic experience in a real community. I'm not at all sure that I could adjust to the demands a community would make of me. Having been encultured rather thoroughly to a competitive, individualistic society, it could be most uncomfortable to become a fledgling in a true community!

Whether competition is more the human norm than cooperation can be only a doctrinaire argument. From the increasingly popular position valuing "the family of man," cooperativeness is valued more highly than competitiveness; but a biblical view of man precludes a pragmatic conclusion. Nevertheless it seems consistent with scriptural ethics to expect that in regenerated man cooperative motives would dominate competitive motives.

My theologically educated friends may frown at the invocation of the Good Fairy and may scoff at my fantasy of the elusive sense of community. But I believe that longing for a profound sense of community is a response to the Lordship of Christ. Since Christ has made me part of the Body that is the Church, and since his glorification has become my primary objective, it seems only appropriate that a sense of community with other believers should follow. I think I am ready to feel at one with any and all who want to find ways to so order our lives that the transcendent importance of Jesus Christ takes first place in our common goals. Must we always assume that since it will be hard to put this principle to work in our community, there is no use in trying? Not to try will further impede the communication of Christ in the world.

Communication within and from the community of believers is dependent on the reality and awareness of community implied in Romans 12. Even a casual evaluation of the messages sent to the outer community by the Church reveals two weaknesses: The first is the lack of a clear, single voice. Though a monolithic and standardized proclamation is hardly to be desired, cogency and coherency should be expected as an evidence of the singleness of the God of creation, the Christ of redemption and the Holy Spirit at work in us. But what does the outer community see? Weird and wonderful variations on an all-but-lost theme. Small wonder it is that one of the most common responses to the communication of the gospel is "Why are there so many different kinds of Christianity?" The second weakness is even harder to justify. The messages that the outer community "reads" are in two forms - verbal and non-verbal - and the two forms are often in conflict. The old adage, "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say" is painfully apt. Christians as individuals, congregations as a whole, and denominations as entities are constantly under examination for consistency. That God is not eager to judge and condemn inconsistency is not much encouragement; the outer community's "Church-watchers" are neither forgiving nor forgetful.

North American Christianity will spend the rest of this century under indictment for the past generations of silence on matters of social injustice; the "brotherhood of believers" will continue to be regarded as a sham so long as ultra-separatism is more highly valued than cooperation within the community of believers; and the Church's concern for lost men will be suspect so long as that concern has only a spiritual dimension. Communicating Christ in this country and from our shores is profoundly difficult inasmuch as the verbal messages are so often negated by the non-verbal messages.

Summary

Coherent communication must be based on community. The community's internal behavior must be consistent with its external messages if they are to be believable. Unity is the basis of existence of the community; a community is a behavioral manifestation of unity. Unity is a product of common identity and common purpose.

UNITY

COMMUNITY

COMMUNICATION

The unity of the community of believers is in the Lordship of Christ. The community of believers acts out their responses to his Lordship. Therefore, effective communication within the community and with the outer community depends ultimately on the acceptance of the Lordship of Christ by and among those who are called by his name.

Bibliography


Although somewhat dated, considering the rapid development of the fields of behavioral science, this one-volume review of key research in all aspects of human behavior is fascinating. For the non-specialist, the strength of the book is its attempt to simplify and make understandable — and for this the authors have received sharp criticism from their professional peers.


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The Curriculum Scandal

Large and well trained denominational staffs are endlessly tied up working at a Sisyphus-type task that gets nowhere.

Iris V. Cully

+ A SCANDAL in Protestant denominations is the continuous process of curriculum construction. Today it costs $2 million to bring out a new curriculum, and the price rises every year. As to labor, it takes ten years from the initial planning conference until the first year's materials reach local churches. Large staffs of editors and writers are kept busy, backed up by researchers and field representatives—the task of the former being to find out what should be written and of the latter to get churches ready to use what is written.

In spite of the massiveness of the undertaking, several large denominations are at the moment in various stages of developing new curricula. The American Baptists and the Disciples recently brought out a cooperatively written curriculum, using themes developed by the National Council of Churches Curriculum Research Project. Each denomination has used different illustrations, separate teacher training materials and its own press name. The United Presbyterian Church U.S.A.'s new curriculum is just appearing. The Methodist Church is in the midst of major rewriting, that on youth materials having already been done. The Lutheran Church in America is in the midst of a survey and is conducting early conferences preparatory to revision of a 1963 curriculum. Among the larger denominations, only three are left with an "older" plan: the Presbyterian Church U.S., the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church, whose materials date respectively from 1965, 1961 and 1955.

Sisyphus Rolling the Boulder

This is a scandal because the outpouring of huge sums of money continues in the face of widespread cuts in programs and personnel throughout the denominations, the rethinking of both structures and programs and the reallocations of priorities and funds. More sadly, it is a scandal because large and well trained staffs are endlessly tied up working at a Sisyphian task that gets nowhere. Every 20 years they decide that the curriculum did not accomplish its aim, but that the next one will surely do so. As a veteran of such conferences ever since the Christian Faith and Life curriculum (Presbyterian U.S.A.) was enthusiastically plotted more than 20 years ago, I have long since ceased to share such hopes. Even the Seabury (Episcopal) curriculum, begun on the theory that newness would be ensured by using only people who had had no previous experience with conventional curricula, has not been signally successful. Like the rest, its materials, filtered to the pupils through conventional teachers, have been ignored more often than used by the parishes.

At this point a precautionary confession is in order. I have been on the lists of these editors for many years and have written for various curricula. I run the danger of being blacklisted for this effort. I like the job and the money and I am not trying to pull down the departments. Religious education has enough trouble surviving among Protestant establishments without disloyalty from within the ranks.

The question I raise: Is this the best way to spend...
the money and to use the competent staff.

The image of Sisyphus endlessly rolling the boulder toward the top of the hill is meant seriously. When the United Presbyterians launched the Christian Faith and Life curriculum, they were sure that a strong biblical-theological curriculum would overcome the weaknesses of the liberal era and produce informed and even committed members. Now they have decided that this has not happened and a new approach is needed. In the 1950s the Lutheran Church in America published impressive position papers which to many of us in the field sounded like a creditable base for an effective curriculum. Now an elaborate longitudinal study of parishes has provided evidence that little significant learning has taken place which can be traced directly to curricular materials. In spite of these experiences, the material sent out by the Baptists and Disciples to launch their latest effort exudes hopeful expectancy. Why no results?

The Weaknesses

The Sunday school itself is only about two centuries old. The first real attempt at a "new" curriculum was the Uniform Series based on an outline usable across denominational lines. Biblical material was presented in a seven-year cycle, adapted for group-graded teaching and arranged in "quarters" (i.e., dated materials issued in four lesson manuals per year). This material is still being used for pupils of all ages among some denominations and by some independent publishers; only for adults or for adolescents among other denominations. The NCC's Division of Christian Education is the keeper and dispenser of the basic outline.

The first radical change was the abandonment of a uniform outline for age-group outlines -- a change that made experience-oriented material possible. The closely graded materials which were next developed indicated an awareness that some Sunday schools were large enough to have completely graded classrooms. Only recently has the quarterly system been abandoned by a few in favor of a yearly or semiannual coursebook. Scarcely anyone dares use open-ended units which do not presuppose the completion of material within a given time span. Few will assume that teachers are capable of evolving their own session plans from resource materials and class experience. Madison avenue's interest in "R and D" has reached the denominations, but the developmental results of the research are not apparent. There is talk of "functional goals" to replace high-minded objectives, but these require more specific tools for evaluation than are evident anywhere. In short: the model is still a class of between ten and 20 three- to 12-year-olds and a pleasant youngish married teacher (probably white and female) in a separate classroom with some basic equipment and materials for 45 minutes each Sunday morning for approximately 40 weeks of the year (52 weeks outside New England), the objective being to make God's self-disclosure through the Bible relevant to life.

Weakness 1: Adults, potentially the largest and most varied group in any congregation, both in age and experiences, are allotted proportionately the smallest amount of money, material, variety and expertise. Yet everyone knows that adults form the power structures in church and society. The ability to think conceptually (in the now popular psychology of Piaget) is an adolescent development, and the possibility of commitment (according to the equally popular Erikson) belongs to adolescence. Even if the churches may have given up hope of reaching many elusive adolescents and the young adults who are enjoying freedom from religion, there is no sense in ignoring the rest of the adult potential for education. Yet in basic curricular planning "adult" is a department equivalent to "primary."

Weakness 2: Denominational loyalty is an assumed although rarely explicit aim of religious education. The Christian education department is viewed structurally as a "service to churches" arm of a denomination. The local parish is expected to buy the whole package of materials, including the "resources." This comes out explicitly in the teaching about worship (which is training in a particular denominational form), in the rare references to polity, and in units on church history (which are glaringly denominational). Such being the case, the hope of loyalty is an illusion. Americans move too frequently, and no curriculum has yet been devised which prevents them from choosing a new parish for various nonreligious reasons. Moreover, every denomination knows, uncomfortably, the percentage of its parishes which use materials from private publishers or other sources. Although these publishers are loyal members of churches, they are downgraded in no uncertain terms by the establishments which feel threatened by their continuing existence.

Weakness 3 (akin to but not the same as No. 2): Denominational planning ignores the now well advanced ecumenical dimension of the church and its education. When Catholics, with a new-found freedom, explore Protestant educational theories and materials, they find puzzling blind spots. Although in regard to scholarly writings no student today finds it necessary to inquire whether an author is Catholic or Protestant, the bias in both language and reference is still apparent in lay-oriented teaching materials. One of the songs found in many of the
collections young Catholics are using goes like this:

We are one in the Spirit of the Lord,
We pray that our unity may one day be restored,
And they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand,
And they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Protestant materials are not flexible enough to have included this kind of thinking, which is unfortunate — especially since so many materials claim to be "new." This fact underlines not only the denominationally Protestant bias of the writing but the lack of an ecumenical interfaith dimension in the materials used and the attitudinal goals proposed.

Weakness 4: The material, continuing a long tradition, is based squarely on the idea of making it possible for volunteers (not even skilled amateurs) to keep a class together and possibly do some teaching. This is the reason for dividing material into equal (weekly) parts and for giving step-by-step directions for each session. (For the effect on sales statistics when this factor is ignored, consult Seabury Press.) This method guarantees minimal learning experiences and little freedom for advanced exploration by teacher or learner.

Weakness 5: Special needs of all kinds are neglected because the staffs are so involved in developing the monolithic curricular package. Although the Methodists (10 million members) attempt to take care of variously sized classes through the use of closely graded, group-graded and broadly graded curricula, even this device is inadequate because of an assumption (made clear by curriculum style and content) that the very small classes are in rural areas — when as a matter of fact sophisticated downtown city churches also have a small enrollment of children. Again, cultural differences are not considered in the curricula. Illustrations, both verbal and pictorial, attempt to give all learners a broad experience, but an illustration of black city children playing on the street outside a drab apartment building is not one with which, say, a rural child can identify. In fact, urban, suburban and rural learners all have some distinctive experiences. So do handicapped, institutionalized learners, those in armed-forces schools and those living abroad as civilians. For these, the present curricula, elaborate though they be, are useless, and adaptations are at best makeshift. One constructive footnote: the NCC has issued a course of study for the mentally retarded, consisting of one course each for children, youth and adults.

Weakness 6: The entire curricular plan is based on the theory that the denomination knows best what each constituent parish should study at each level, in what order it should be learned, and what are the goals of teaching and the methods to achieve learning. This theory bespeaks an incredibly exaggerated image of the wisdom of the planners at central headquarters.

The Solution

1. Specialize in a need instead of a denomination (the COCU members at least should be able to do this). Then curricular resources responsive to specific geographical or cultural backgrounds and intellectual and social needs would be produced. A publisher might specialize in a particular age range — children, youth or adults. Some publishers would be known for a distinctive biblical or theological stance. Each would have a specific area and all materials would be available in the open market. In their limited way the independents are specializing right now. They might be welcomed in Christian charity as fellow workers rather than snubbed as interlopers. Examples: two curricula that are completely experience-centered but theologically far apart — Beacon and Herder (the latter unfortunately now being phased out); two curricula that are alike basically biblical but hermeneutically far apart — David C. Cook and United Presbyterian.

2. Encourage the black denominations to experiment and produce black-oriented materials, of which some continue the traditional emphasis of their congregations on the Bible, others stress black interpretations of theology and the black experience.

3. Work with Catholic educators to develop materials for ecumenical teaching centers — which will continue to increase in number — as one answer for teaching the Christian content. The NCC's through-the-week curriculum points in that direction with the specific aim of looking at the religious implications of classroom studies, but it was done without the collaboration of Catholics.

4. Work seriously at meeting the widespread needs and interests of the adult population who make up a large proportion of church membership and all of its leadership. Take account of the concerns of specific adult age groups, of functions (parent, spouse, worker, retired), of religious development and response, and of religious knowledge. The educational background of the learners is an important element, and courses for them need grading as surely as do those for the young.

5. If the volunteer teacher system is to continue indefinitely (and there are signs that the Catholics are taking up the idea), do some serious research into the qualities of the good amateur teacher, the kinds of training necessary, the factors that make for

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Concerns for the 1970s
A Conservative, Evangelical Assessment

F. Franklyn Wise

During the last third of this century, conservative evangelicals will face many challenges — as indeed will all religious groups, whatever their theology may be. If the current youthful generation abandons the institutional church, the next generation will be without it.

It is my purpose to discuss five areas of concern to Christian educators as we move into the decade of the 1970's. While these concerns are not unique to any particular group, I shall view them from the perspective of the conservative evangelical. My purpose is not to be critical, but objective. As an insider who is able to appreciate the sincerity and commitment of these people, I hope that I am able also to assess the difficulties they face in dealing with these problems.

I. The Conservative-Evangelical Setting

The conservative evangelical groups I have in mind are identified by their strong emphasis upon personal, crisis experiences of grace. They have been strongly influenced by the Arminian-Wesleyan theological position that believes strongly in man's free will and the certainty of a knowable witness of the Holy Spirit to man's personal spiritual relationship to God. Most of them believe in two crisis experiences of grace — conversion and sanctification. Great emphasis is placed upon the latter as the apex of human divine grace. Perfect love and Christian perfection are keystones of their doctrine. They clearly distinguish between Christian perfection and human perfection. The former is marked by the ability to love God perfectly and always seek to obey Him. Human perfection is unattainable in this life and beyond man's reach. Sin is defined as active rebellion against God; is possible at any time man decides to disobey Him. Errors of judgment and human reactions are to be expected but are not sins unless they involve violation of God's known will.

With such credentials one wonders why they face any critical challenges. The desire to love God and commit one's self to Him requires deep devotion. Fulfillment of His will should require little else than understanding. Love for one's fellow man both within and without the church should provide tolerance for those of different races, ethics or values. Innovation and change should be readily accepted, easily instituted.

Unfortunately the reverse has characterized them. The ability to adjust to changing social conditions has been minimal. Instead of flexibility there has been rigidity; in place of openness, exclusiveness. The very theological commitments that could provide the greatest fulcrum for action has instead created some cul de sacs that seriously impede progress toward solving the challenges of the '70s.

There are at least three such deterrents recognizable. First, the strong emphasis upon individual experiential crisis of conversion and sanctification, though changing the person's life orientation, at the same time fosters a sense of closure and completeness that sharply increases rigidity and lessens receptivity to new ideas. These crisis experiences tend to give rise to the characteristic attitude of graduation, rather than commencement. New-found enthusiasm for service is frequently stifled by tradition. Instead of looking for new horizons to explore, people seek for a seat next to the window to review the receding landscape.

Growth in grace and the process of continually becoming Christlike are constantly advocated from the pulpit. However, these possibilities are practically interpreted as relating primarily to the narrow spectrum of spiritual graces already received, not encompassing the whole of man and his active involvement in planned social change.

In addition this emphasis tends to center attention upon one's self. Do I still have the grace of God? Am I still pleasing God? Have I lost any spiritual ground? The very pitfall of self-centeredness from which these experiences sought to deliver people too often ensnare them. The spiritual energy expended in sustaining their spiritual graces occupy so much of their time and attention, there is too little left to invest in altruistic concern for others and adjustments to changing society.

Second, conservative evangelicals, especially those who stress perfect love, strongly advocate non-agression, non retaliatory behavior in the face of hostility from others. A mark of perfect love is the ability to "turn the other cheek." Consequently these people find it difficult to be aggressive against social evil. Perhaps it is best illustrated by a statement the basketball coach of a Quaker College made, "It is difficult to get these Quakers who believe in pacifism to be aggressive on the basketball court." It is hard to preach and stress peaceableness in the church and then go out in the street to attack evil.

Third, there is a tendency to oversimplify complex issues and problems. The crisis experiences and prayer are the ready answers to most of life's problems. "Christ is the Answer," is frequently proposed. A right relationship with Christ and sincere prayer are extremely helpful and effective in resolving many of life's problems, it is true. But whenever such oversimplification of individual and societal conflicts is used as an excuse to evade seeking available help for one's own problems or becoming involved at every opportunity to alleviate social problems, they are wrongly used. Before it can be sure how Christ is the answer, the church needs to ascertain what the real questions are, otherwise it will be struggling with answers to questions today's world is no longer asking.

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Class News

1951
ARNO ENNS’ (B.D.’51, M.A.’67) Man, Milieu and Mission in Argentina, is now off the press. Arno is associate foreign secretary of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

1954
ROBERT MOUNCE (B.D.’54, Th.M.’56) has returned to Western Kentucky University, where he is professor of religious studies and director of the graduate program in humanities.

1955
ELDON JAY EPPE has been appointed Harkness professor of biblical literature at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland.

1956

GLENDON E. BYRCE has been appointed assistant professor in Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary.

RONALD OLSON and family are on furlough in the states from Bolivia where they serve with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

1959
DEWAYNE B. BELL, assistant to the president of Azusa Pacific College, has been chosen to be listed in Outstanding Educators of America for 1971.

ROBERT H. CONKLING (x’59) was married August 23 to Betty Clutterbuck in Pasadena.

1960
DOUGLAS D. BEYER has been selected to appear in the 1971 edition of Outstanding Young Men of America. He currently is pastor of the West Side Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas.

JAMES R. BRUENING is now pastor of First United Methodist Church in Aurora, Colorado.

1962
MARVIN L. EYLERT, now assigned to the 3rd Marine Air Wing at El Toro, recently spent a year as a chaplain in Vietnam. Robert Ives is pastor of the Grantham, Pennsylvania, Brethren in Christ Church and chaplain to Messiah College.

KURT G. JUNG received the Dr. Phil. degree at Free University, Berlin, and is instructor of religion there as well as director of religious education.

STANLEY LANDAAS (x’62) and his family currently are on furlough in the States. They serve with the Missionary Aviation Fellowship.

JOEL STOLTE (B.D.’62, Th.M.’63) and his family have returned to Bogota, Colombia, after a 13-month furlough.

1963
ALEX ABONIS is now serving as a Navy Chaplain in the Philippines for a year. Wife CAROL (DAVIES) ABONIS is staying in Pasadena with the children. Alex reports he just completed a Ph.D. at American University in Washington, D.C. (courtesy of the Navy!)

LAWRENCE CARAWAY is the new minister of Chevy Chase Baptist Church of Los Angeles. George Ladd participated in his installation service recently.

At PBY has become the first full-time prison chaplain of the Nevada State Prison.

1964
RICHARD V. and JUDY (BOPFELL) PEACE are now residing in Newton, Mass. after their stay in Natal, South Africa.

1965
DAVID L. EBB is director of student development at Whitworth College in Spokane, Wash.

1966
RONALD ALLISON is pastor at the University United Methodist Church of Irvine, Calif.

WILSON PARKS (MRE) is serving as minister of Chapel #2 at the Army base at Fort Lewis, Wash., following Vietnam service.

STANLEY SCHIAG has been appointed minister at the O’Neill United Methodist Church in Nebraska.

AL LORENZ is the new minister of Grace Presbyterian Church in the Highland Park area of Los Angeles.

1968
DENNIS D. DENNING was ordained to the ministry in June at the Richmond, Calif., First Presbyterian Church.

KEITH D. JACKSON (STB) is taking graduate study at the Institute of Foreign Studies. He formerly served as assistant pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Carmel, Calif.

1969
DAVID SCOTCHMER and Sara, who are serving in Guatemala, are the proud parents of Jonathan David born in March.

1970
ALEX AVERS is the new minister at the Lima Grove Presbyterian Church in Iowa.

JAMES BIDDERMAN was married to Chris Leader in February in Norristown, Pa.

DAVID DONALDSON (Ph.D.) is head of Christian Counseling Center at Life Center in Denver.

ROGER HEDLUND (M.A. Missions) is now administrator-principal at the Baldwin Park Christian School, Calif.

DONALD WADE was ordained in June to the Presbyterian U.S. Church and is currently serving as assistant minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Marietta, Ga.

1971
WALTER CARLE is the new pastor of the Granada Hills Baptist Church.

GEORGE W. GILCHRIST has been appointed assistant pastor of Wicomico Presbyterian Church in Salisbury, Maryland.

ROGER MINASIAN is the assistant pastor at the Glenkirk Presbyterian Church in Glendora, Calif.

ROBERT M. PIETRICH is assistant pastor at Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Santa Ana, Calif.

JON WILSON is the new assistant pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Concord, Calif.

Placement Opportunities

These churches or organizations have contacted the Seminary for assistance in filling a vacancy. If you are interested in any of these positions or other possibilities, please contact Bernice Bush at Fuller Seminary.

Theology, News and Notes
Assistant Minister, Mayflower Congregational Church, San Gabriel, Calif. Ind. Cong. Coordinate youth program; pastoral outreach, radio and business administration.

Minister, Plymouth Congregational Church, Newport Beach, Calif. Ind. Conservative church in growing area.

Director of C.E., United Armenian Congregational Church, Hollywood, Calif. Ind. Membership 650. Supervise C.E. program; jr. high through college, including lay leadership.

Pastor, Colton Community Church, Colton, Oregon. Ind. 30 members.

Pastor, Lincoln Acres Community Church, National City, Calif. Ind. 120 attendance. Suburban San Diego.

Youth Minister, United Youth Committee of Auburn, Calif. Joint effort of First Congregational Church (UCC) and Pioneer United Methodist Church.

Minister, St. Paul's Union Church, Chicago, Ill. Ind. Southwest Chicago. 350 members; attendance 200. Past ministers have been Presbyterian.

Director of Training, World Christian Training Center, Los Angeles. Work with varied cultural and educational backgrounds. Responsible for securing teaching materials for WCTC courses; develop teacher training program; schedule classes; recruit teachers.

STUDY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARISH MINISTERS

Ordained staff of local churches are invited to apply for study leave grants covering periods from one month to a full sabbatical year now offered by the Fund for Theological Education. Applicants are encouraged to design study programs which fit their needs that can be carried out not only in seminary of the applicant’s choice but in any accredited or approved institutions. Fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis.

Candidates must be no older than forty and must have completed their first professional theological degree not less than seven nor more than twelve years at the time of nomination. THE DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS JANUARY 1 of each year. Those interested should contact the president or dean of the seminary from which they were graduated.

Alumni Cabinet

Members of the Alumni Association Cabinet for 1971-72 are:

RICHARD ANDERSON, B.D. ’62. President. Pastor, Sierra Madre Congregational Church, Sierra Madre, California.

DAVID R. ANDERSON, B.D. ’68. Secretary. Writer, Johnson-Nyquist Productions, Northridge, California.

LENOX G. PALIN, B.D. ’53. Vice President. Pastor, San Gabriel Union Church, San Gabriel, California.

RICHARD H. BAGLEY, B.D. ’69. Young Life Area Director in West Los Angeles, California.

GREGORY A. BARNETT, B.D. ’61. Camp Administrator, Pine Summit Camp, Conservative Baptist Association, Big Bear Lake, California.

WILLIAM EBLING, B.D. ’59. Pastor, The Redeemer Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California.

FRANK E. FABRELL, B.D. ’51. Associate Editor, World Vision Magazine, Monrovia, California.

JOHN P. GOFFIGON, B.D. ’53. Chaplain, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department.

JAMES W. HAGELGANZ, B.D. ’58. Senior Minister, Arcadia Presbyterian Church, Arcadia, California.

RILEY E. JENSEN, B.D. ’68. Assistant Minister, Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Bellevue, Washington.


SAMUEL A. MATEER, B.D. ’65. Pastor, Altadena Valley Presbyterian Church, Altadena, California.

JOHN C. NOTHEL, B.D. ’58. Pastor, Elim Covenant Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.


JOSEPH A. RYAN, B.D. ’53. Executive Director, World Christian Training Center, Los Angeles, California.
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Whatever attempts to meet the challenges of this later third century of the technologically dominated space age evangelical conservatives devise, they can succeed only to the degree they come to grips with these built-in resistances. Perhaps no other segment of Christiandom will be as sharply aware of the dilemma posed by Kenneth Scott Latourette.

How far is Christianity conforming to the contemporary world? Is conforming to Christianity doing so in such a fashion that it is weakening or losing the essence of its gospel? On the other hand, is it so responding that it is being released from crippling integuments inherited from its accommodation to earlier environments and so to fresh expressions of its power? 1

II. Five Areas of Concern

1. Civil Rights and Social Action

Conservative evangelical churches have retreated from their heritage in this area. A century ago groups who preached sanctification were actively involved in social problem alleviation. Dr. Timothy L. Smith summarized the mid-nineteenth century revitalism in this way:

Thus declined the ancient distinctions between piety and moralism, spiritual and social service. The prayer of all disciples "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" took on new significance as the soul-winning impulse drove Christians into systematic efforts to relieve the misery of the urban poor. Home mission, Sunday-school, tract, and temperance agents early felt the weight of organized evil in the festering slums. The flight of the churches from destitute neighborhoods alarmed them while old world pioneers in Christian social service presented inspiring examples. Individual churches soon joined the interdenominational societies in distributing food and clothing, finding employment, resettling children, and providing medical aid for the lowest classes. The revival of 1858 was in many respects the harvest reaped from this gospel seed. 2

Dr. Ozzie Edwards, professor of sociology, University of Illinois, Circle Campus, Chicago, spoke to the Christian Education Leadership Seminar sponsored by the National Sunday School Association in Cincinnati on October 24, 1969. He related the all too common occurrence that before he could enroll his children in a Christian day school, the board had to vote to accept a Negro child. A letter had to be sent to all the parents to ask if it was all right to enroll the children of a black fellow Chris-


2. Behavioral Psychology

As late as 1956, a book on the psychology of personal adjustment said, "As a school, behaviorism is dead. Hardly a psychologist calls himself a behaviorist." 3

Today there is a resurgence of behaviorism due in large part to the work of Skinner in operant conditioning. Teaching machines and programmed learning are used in public education. Christian education is moving in this direction. Recently the Church of the Nazarene published its first programmed text for Christian education.

The problem of conservative evangelicals is one of consistency. Can churches whose theology of man insists upon his free will be consistent and use teaching machines that have been developed from a theory that postulates relative little, if any, free will in man but regards him as the product of the conditioning agreement? Or, should Christian educators acknowledge that conditioning does shape behavior to a degree and then use learning devices to that same limited degree?

In addition, conservative evangelicals must combat behavioral psychology's conception of man as a bio-chemical machine. When carried to its logical extension, religious and biblical moral standards will become outdated and useless. Rather, society will establish the moral code without regard to supernatural forces. Any sense of sin and guilt will result from disobedience to society which will sit in judgment upon behavior, rather than from violation of God's laws.

The conservative, evangelical youth of today are already caught in this dilemma. The public education program stresses the value of empirical data derived from scientific psychological research. The church strongly advocates the immutability of God's moral code. These youth cannot escape the current trend to be skeptical about traditional authority. The prevalent illiteracy about the biblical background for the Church's position and its theology results in their ambivalence and uncertainty in the face of today's challenges. Any projection of the future state of this segment of Christiandom cannot ignore the impact of this conflict situation.

3. Social Mobility

Conservative evangelical theology and behavioral codes are rooted deeply in the rural traditions of our nation. In the large farm areas people tended to be skeptical of the fashions in dress and permissiveness of behavior seen in the cities. However, as the population balance shifted from rural to urban with the growth of large cities, a polarization of religious perceptions began.

By 1885, the sweep of the awakening into the midwest and South was producing two more or less distinct groups. One, largely rural, was more emotionally demonstrative, emphasized rigid standards of dress and behavior, and often scorned ecclesiastical discipline. The other was urban, intellectual, and somewhat less zealous about outward standards of holiness. 4

Dr. Ozzie Edwards, in the speech mentioned earlier, pointed out that the last census showed 70 percent of the population of the United States living in cities of 100,000 or larger. The first census showed only four per cent were urban. People in urban societies, he pointed out, were more heterogeneous, impersonal and isolated, segmented and withdrawn, more rational than emotional. He said, "Unless the church is relevant to the urbanite, unless the church is

Many of the current practices and programs of these churches are a carryover from this rural influence, i.e., the time of Sunday services, the emphasis upon corporate worship on Sunday and Wednesday night, the use of mass evangelism for outreach.

With the work week decreasing to twenty-four and thirty hours, the problems of ministering to urbanites with rural oriented programs will increase. Can the church any longer afford to say to its members, "If you do not come Sunday morning at 10:45 a.m., you will not enjoy the benefits of corporate worship?"

What types of programs can be designed so that urban youth can feel they are making a significant contribution to the church community and not just doing busy work or being entertained? How do they establish their ability to assume responsibility when society expends huge sums of money to extend the adolescent period beyond high school into college?

The evidence of this urban-rural conflict is seen in church administration. Many people in the power structure reflect the rural ethos. The younger laity is on the average more educated and more urban in outlook. Consequently friction between church leadership and the younger laity is being generated. It may increase to the point where division could result. Or, the urbanites may feel that time is on their side. As the leadership personnel changes, they will be able to elect younger leaders and affect the legislative changes they feel are essential to the survival of the Church.

4. Sex Education

The traditional attitudes of conservative evangelicals toward sex have been rooted in fear and evasion. Their fear has expressed itself in rigid control of the dress standards for women. After all, Eve was able to entice Adam to share with her the act of rebellion that precipitated the Fall. If men were to avoid being trapped by the power of sex, women's attractiveness had to be neutralized. What was the best way to offset her power? She would have to be desexualized by imposing rigid taboos against make-up, jewelry, exposing her body and demanding she wear plain hair-dos.

These controls were taken seriously by many women and many preachers, though not all. Unfortunately, some ministers who were especially fearful of their own sexual feelings, developed symptoms of reaction formation, evidenced by their constantly preaching about the women's dress code. Conformity and non-conformity to these standards became a ready-made test of true Christianity. They were the most easily observable marks of distinctiveness.

Another familiar example of distinctiveness is that of the rejection of jewelry and cosmetics on the part of certain American sects, early in the twentieth century. This was true especially of the Free Methodists and the Nazarenes. Only a very insensitive outsider could fail to be moved by the spirit in which such sacrifices were undertaken... Those who ridicule such actions are telling more about themselves than about the objects of their ridicule. The religion of the early Nazarenes, whatever else it may have been, was not mild and many of the good effects are notable to this day. The mistake of such actions is not the mistake of being willing to be a conscious minority, but rather the mistake of arriving at distinctiveness too simply.

Having thus imposed strict controls upon sexual temptations, they avoided acknowledging them as being problems either in the home or in the Sunday school. If any attempts were made to discuss sexual problems with adolescents, they were usually oblique. Generally, prayer and personal commitment were felt to be sufficient to handle the problem until marriage.

Developments in the area of sexual behavior in our society make it imperative for conservative evangelicals to face up to the necessity for them to provide assistance to their young people. The fear of pregnancy is no longer a valid tool to use to restrain sexual intercourse since the pill is readily available as are other contraceptive devices. The threat of venereal disease has been reduced by the discovery of drugs to cure it. The sex act is being interpreted as a biological act similar to other behavioral responses that result in drive reduction. Guilt is thus reduced. Commitment in love raises sexual acts from the level of sin to a "meaningful relationship."

Until recently the church could look to societal support for assistance in its moral codes. Civil laws prohibited certain types of public and private sexual behavior. However, recent court decisions that found topless and bottomless females dancing before cafe patrons were not indecent or lewd have abolished legal support. The inability of the Supreme Court to clearly define pornography has left the church without official civil recourse. The trend of litigation is increasingly indifferent to private sexual behavior between consenting adults. Frontal pictures of nude males and females are accessible to adults in newstands. Nudity and explicit sex scenes on the screen and stage are pushing these churches to face several problems. Is the biblical standard as traditionally held still valid? What can the Church teach about the "quality" of life resulting from sexual experiences within the biblical context as over against premarital and extramarital ones? What educational programs can be designed to supplement the objective, non-judgmental programs of public education with moral, spiritual and personality factors in sex behavior and sexuality? How can individual responsibility in these areas be developed?

Something is happening in these groups. More relaxed dress codes are being adopted. Most of the reaction formation symptoms have disappeared. The sexual drive is recognized as a reality requiring some information and guidance if youth are to cope with the permissive mood of society. Cautious sex education is being attempted in some local churches and through some youth periodicals. These attempts approach sex education from the point of view of stewardship and biblical prohibitions against any form of pre-marital intercourse. Homosexuality is felt to be contrary to God's moral code.

5. Christian Education

Conservative evangelicals will face in the next few years the problem of the "hardware gap." As electronic technology produces more exotic educational hardware at cheaper prices, public education faced with rising salary demands by militant teachers while tax paying parents vote down new and additional levies will no doubt begin to employ more self-instructional machines. Small churches and denominations may find the costs of such items prohibitive. Even if the costs were within reach they may find themselves without adequately designed and operationally tested programs. The personnel in many local situations would be woefully inadequate. Thus the hardware gap would widen and only compound the trained personnel gap which already exists. What boy or girl who attends public school five days a week and participates in the most modern teaching-learning situation will want to regress on Sunday to a pre-1940 level of instruction in a pre-1930 building?

Another problem is that of clarifying aims. Today, conservative evangelicals experience a diffusion of aims. A great deal of public oratory extols the educational aims of Christian education. Practical emphasis and promotional schemes work toward institutional aggrandizement. Too often the first question a pastor asks another one upon meeting is, "How many did you have Sunday school?" Few times, if at all, is the question, "How many were won to Christ?", or "How much insight into the Christian life did your Sunday school pupils receive?" The greatest rewards in praise and ecclesiastical promotions are given to those who bring to the god of statistics the largest numerical increases!
Individualizing Instruction in the Church School

There seems to be no program of formal schooling in existence that could profit more from an individualizing of instruction than the church school. Our pupils enter the church schooling process at different ages, they attend with great irregularity, their extra-school educational experiences are widely diverse, they move from curriculum plan to curriculum plan with greater and greater freedom, and they bring to the schooling process in the church all of the differences of development and ability and interest that are evident in other schooling.

Yet the prospects of individualized instruction becoming a reality in church school face a number of major barriers, even though contentment with the status quo in this respect may soon be seriously disturbed. Imagine the conversation that may take place in any number of church school's at the registration table. The routine question is asked, "And what grade are you in at school?" Silence is the reply. Repeat, "What grade are you in at school?" Answer, with some anxiety, "I don't know." "Surely you know what grade you are in. Where is your mother?" "Mrs. Mother, what grade is your child in at school?" Answer, "In reading she is working at what was once considered a fourth grade level. In social studies she is involved with a group of children who range from two years younger to two years older than she. In math she is doing what was once thought to be fifth grade work. She isn't in any grade. If it's any help, she is 10 years old." "Oh, well, then you are in fifth grade. That meets in Room 6 upstairs." As the child and mother leave, the child asks, "Mommy, what is a grade?" Individualized instruction through non-graded schools, or individually graded placement in subject areas is a fact in public education in many places. The age-graded system of the church is the anomaly.

Barriers to Individualization

The barriers are more significant than contentment with another system, significant as that attitudinal barrier may be. Nor are the attitudinal barriers to be found only in those who have the administrative and teaching responsibilities in church education. In fact the attitudinal barriers may not be primarily the possession of those people since they are the ones who are often most keenly aware of the artificialities of a closely walled grouping of children in which individuality is ignored. Good teachers, especially, it seems to me, those in the pre-school and early grades, have individualized instruction frequently within existing structures and programs (perhaps out of sheer necessity as much as anything else).

Attitudinal barriers arise in parents and pupils as well as teachers and administrators. For good reason, parents who have very definite expectations of general schooling and private lessons in dance and music have very vague expectations of the church school. At church they are most interested in knowing that there is some class for their child to attend, inappropriate though the class may be. The major source of attitudinal barriers is the impression fostered by our existing patterns of schooling.

Closely graded curriculum materials, designed as a means of individualizing instruction, having become one of these barriers. As long as you have materials which are identified as being for a grade and as long as you have rooms and teachers who are also identified by grade, the expectations of all those involved in the schooling

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This article is reprinted from the July-August 1970 issue of Religious Education, by permission of the publisher, The Religious Education Association, New York City.
program will continue to be a barrier to the full individualization of religious instruction. Teachers have become age-level specialists to the extent that they have an internal barrier to seeing themselves as competent to help children move from one level of knowledge and understanding to another regardless of age or grade.

The major barrier has not yet been mentioned. Even if the mind-set of all those concerned becomes open to the individualization of instruction, even if materials and rooms and administrative structures become flexible to permit partial or complete non-graded approaches to church schooling, the barrier of inaccurate evaluation will remain.

If we are going to shift from asking "What grade are you in?" and the correlate "Is this child ready for sixth grade work?" to the question "What is this child ready to learn?" we are going to have to refine much more fully our understanding of appropriate sequences in religious education. It is very difficult today to find anyone who can determine just what a child of any age knows and understands. It is even more difficult to move to specific suggestions as to what would be the appropriate next-step options. Most difficult of all is to find people who are fully willing to trust the child's own sense of what the next step should be.

There is no doubt that simply placing a child in a grade group on the basis of age or public school progress is easier than a custom tailored curriculum for that child in which interest, previous experience, existing knowledge and understanding and ability are taken into consideration as more significant than age or grade. But there is also no doubt that the latter is possible and desirable in existing church school systems. Can steps in the direction of individualized instruction be taken?

**POSSIBLE STEPS TOWARD CHANGE**

Any church school staff which thinks that individualized instruction is a possibility worth exploring can turn to the public school literature and experience for guidance. (A bibliography of books and articles will be found at the end of this article). The evidence is not all positive. The experience of educators has not been 100% favorable. Because it hasn't, the church school staff can look at the issues squarely. Careful evaluation is required in this process. Teacher roles are changed from instructor to facilitator. Curriculum resources have to be more widely known, more generally available, and in some instances revised. Children who have learned in a graded system have to learn how to handle the elements of responsibility and freedom in new patterns. Grading or grouping according to criteria other than a blanket level of progress assessment remains as an option in individualized instruction. No one seriously suggests that this kind of schooling is the panacea. But its possibilities for church school education appear to outweigh the problems.

One step to take is to find out from school educators just what patterns of individualized instruction are being used in area schools. Many are partly individualized, more are becoming non-graded each year. Conversations with these public educators (including, also, the similar programs and personnel of private schools) are a good early step. The rationale suggested in brief in this article would need to be expanded in terms of the specific situation of the church. Values, options, patterns, problems, learning theory, group theory — all these are grist for the rationale mill. Included in this stage of the process should be the step of identifying the places and ways in which individualization of instruction is already being done in the church school. Are any departments operating on a team teaching basis with interest groups, electives, guided research projects by individuals or teams? How do some of your teachers handle individual differences in their classes now?

Another step that can serve to provide training as well as an evaluable experience is to use some of the existing short-term school programs to try out ways of individualizing instruction. Vacation church school, the pre-Christmas period, a series of family night programs, are the kinds of short-term special events that lend themselves to this experimental step.

Making curriculum resources available on a broader base will also help to break the closely-graded syndrome. When a teacher knows that a resource is available even though it isn't in his lesson book, or when he knows that another group elsewhere in the church will be turning its attention to an area in which one of his pupils has shown great interest, then on this small basis the curriculum can be re-written for one child. Later on the practice can be extended.

Short-term exchanges of teaching responsibilities are another way of helping teachers to realize that they can work with children of different ages than their usual class and have an effective teaching-learning experience. It might be best in some instances to allow the visiting teacher to assume a helping role to begin and later assume more responsibility. This is a particularly easy step to take when team teaching is already part of the school program.

Finally, teachers need to be encouraged to take the time to evaluate progress and knowledge and understanding. The barrier of inadequate insight into pupil readiness will have to be overcome before individualization of instruction can become a viable option in the church school.

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Processes in the Religion Curriculum

Robert L. Faricy, S.J.

How can we get away from the static orientation of religious education and teach in terms of processes of living?

Teaching the Christian faith poses special problems, problems much more complex than those involved in teaching reading, social studies, mathematics, or simply the content of various religions. The majority of these problems come under the heading of "curriculum." By the curriculum of religious education, we mean two things: (1) the objectives of religious education, and (2) the program of putting the objectives into practice.

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What is the over-all objective or purpose of teaching the Christian religion? It is initiation into the Christian faith commitment, and further deepening of that commitment.

The general problem of religious education, then, is this: how can we communicate God's word to people effectively so as to create a faith response situation? It is for this reason, that we might believe and believe more and more strongly, that God's Word became flesh to dwell among us; and it is for the same reason that religious educators try to communicate to others God's revelation in Christ.

To communicate God's word is much more than an intellectual problem; it is a complex and practical problem. In the first place, for God's word to be communicated it is not enough that it be spoken; the word must be spoken to someone. It must be addressed. This means that God's word must be spoken to people in terms of their own experience. And what is involved is not simply intellectual experience; human experience is broader than that. The problem concerns man's whole stance in the world, his way of experiencing himself, others, the world around him. Furthermore, the word to be communicated is, ultimately, not just God's word but God's Word, the Person of Christ who is the sum and fullness of God's revelation to us. Somehow, then, we want to communicate Christ to persons in terms of their own experience as to strengthen their faith.

What is this faith commitment that is the goal of religious education? The faith in question here is not the faith that is a supernatural virtue by which we assent to all the truths that God has revealed on the authority of God who can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is, rather, the faith of the New Testament, and especially the faith of the Gospels. It is the faith that Jesus invites men to have in him. It goes far beyond intellectual assent; it is a hoping and loving adherence to the Person of Jesus recognized as Savior. It is the response to God's invitation, the acceptance of God's saving love present for us in Jesus.

Christian religious education, then, must begin with human experience in order to speak to people today; it must be incarnate in contemporary culture. Secondly, religious education must be Christ-centered. The purpose of religious education is not the communication of a set of doctrinal propositions, nor is it principally formation in ethical conduct. The basic purpose of Christian religious education is the communication of Christ.

Religious education, if it is to be contemporary, incarnate in the culture of our times, must take into account modern understandings of person and community and of the relationship between them. Often, when American religious education has tried to ground catechesis in an adequate understanding of person and community, it has used notions of person and community that are at variance with American thought today. Some past catechetical programs are based on European, post-World War II existentialist philosophy and on the existential and phenomenological thought of men like Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. These philosophies are by their very nature and presuppositions static systems. They do not take into account the essential dynamic qualities of person and community. In a future-oriented culture, presentation of Christianity in the framework of a static understanding of person and of society, whether that understanding be Thomist or existentialist, is not useful; and it can be disastrous.

American culture stresses not only the importance and dignity of the individual, but
especially the possibilities of the person for growth, development, and fulfillment. And Americans today see society in terms of progress, in terms of moving into a future for which man is responsible, in terms of a world with possibilities for the future, a world-to-be-built. The United States is a nation that has been frontier directed from the beginning; and, in one way or another, the frontier has always been the future. This is the New World, the world of the future; and the "new" — whatever is closest to the future — is what attracts Americans, who watch the news, read newspapers, and ask when they meet, "What's new?"

It is the future that draws us, that moves us to grow, to transcend present limitations in the direction of a better future. If catechesis is to deal with real problems, it must be developed in categories of person and community that are, not static and rooted in an unmovable present, but dynamic and future-directed.

Because man today is oriented toward the future, he is pragmatic. He wants to build the world in the direction of the future, and so he is interested in what is useful, in what he can use. Both children and adults today are interested less in what things are than in how things work; they are not so much interested in "What is it?" but, rather, in "How do you do it?". They are interested less in who Christ is than in how to encounter him. They seem not to want to know what prayer is, but they do want to know how to pray. They want to know not so much what love is as how to love. This kind of pragmatism should influence religious education. Religious education can no longer afford to be statically content centered; it must begin to be dynamically process oriented; and, if it is, content will be used pragmatically, in such a way that it contributes to the learning of processes.

Theologians like Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jurgen Moltmann, and especially John Baptist Metz have seen these dimensions of today's culture and worked out theologies of hope and the future in the framework of a dynamic, future-directed, pragmatic process view of reality. But catechesis has not yet caught up with theology, and remains content-centered and culturally not very relevant. Like Christian theology, American pedagogical theory has in recent years taken contemporary man's pragmatic and dynamic way of existing into more serious considera-

tion. The "Bloom taxonomies" in the cognitive and the affective domains are having an important influence, not only in the area for which their classification of educational goals and processes is intended — the area of testing — but also in the realms of educational theory and curriculum construction. The taxonomy concerning the affective domain, attitudes and values, is of particular importance for religious education. A number of books have appeared that stress the articulation of educational objectives in behavioral terms and the construction of process-oriented curriculum. Objectives are stated in a framework of process, and the processes to be learned are the new content.

Christian religious educators often seem unaware of these developments in theology and in general education.

Since religious education is fundamentally the communication of Christ, it must be not only incarnate in today's culture; it must be centered on Christ. What Christian catechists are trying to communicate primarily is not words, nor even ideas, but Christ who is the Word and the revelation of God.

In American religious education today there is, more and more, a strong reaction against catechetical approaches that have over-emphasized the teaching of abstract doctrinal propositions. No one doubts the doctrinal soundness of the Baltimore Catechism, but, catechetically, it leaves a great deal to be desired. It represents a catechesis that is not truly incarnate in contemporary experience. The reaction to this lack of catechetical incarnationalism sometimes takes the form of a catechesis that takes "life" for its content, without any explicit reference to Christ or to the Church. The remedy is worse than the sickness; teaching mere humanism is not an adequate replacement for teaching abstract doctrine. That religious education is becoming more life centered and trying more to teach in terms of life experience is, of course, progress. Furthermore, teaching about "life in depth" or how to be "fully and deeply human" is good in itself. But it is not the teaching of religion.

The trouble with both doctrine centered and life centered approaches to religious education is that they are content centered rather than process oriented. Content-centeredness makes them not only culturally irrelevant but, more importantly, unable to communicate Christ. Christianity is not primarily about doctrine, nor is it primarily about life experience. Christianity is about Christ and about how man is, through the world and through the Church, in relationship with Christ. The answer to the categorical problem is not to teach scholastic theology, nor to teach just "how to be human," but to teach Christ. Since Christ is a person, he cannot be taught as though he were a set of doctrinal truths or a cluster of insights into "life."

II

The goal of religious education is to bring persons to encounter Christ and to encounter him more fully. What must be learned, then, are those processes by which Christ can be known, loved, and served — those processes by which Christ can be met and adhered to in himself, in his Church, in persons, in experience, in the world. The principal processes to be communicated are the processes of understanding and valuing experience in reference to Christ, processes of living and working with others in Christian community, and processes of prayer.

A first set of processes that religious education is concerned with are the processes by which daily life can be understood and valued in the light of Christ, processes by which the meaning of experience can be illumined by Christ. For this, it is necessary that catechesis begin with life experience, but it cannot end there; it should reveal how that experience is related to Christ.

Another set of processes that are important in religious education are the processes of Christian community, processes of living and working together in a Christian way, of finding Christ in others, of giving, receiving, helping, trusting, loving, in a Christian context.

A third set of processes, extremely important, are the processes of prayer, the processes involved in entering explicitly and consciously into relationship with God, processes of offering, asking, hoping, being sorry, loving, thanking, praising. There are religious educators who are uncomfortable with prayer, who seem embarrassed by it; and prayer is an element that is tragically lacking in much religious education. Nevertheless, all catechesis should be ordered to

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5. The important work of Ronald Goldman has contributed much to an understanding that catechesis must be grounded in life experience (Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence, London: 1964). Goldman's ideas, however, remain in the content-centered religious curriculum.
prayer. Children, adolescents, and adults all have a right to learn how to encounter Christ as a person, how to take him seriously as a person who takes them seriously, to be with Christ in prayer.

In teaching all of these processes, content should be used pragmatically; it should be used to teach processes. This means moving the textbook away from the center of catechesis and using it as a tool. The textbook, and all content — whether doctrinal or "life centered," should be used insofar, and only insofar, as it is useful for learning processes. That is the purpose of content. What is more, many present catechetical practices will have to be dropped or radically revised if processes rather than content are to be central in the educational experience. Grades and report cards will have to go, for they put undue stress on knowing content and so detract from the centrality of Christ. Large classes, and even classes of more than eight or ten, will have to be reduced in size, for religious processes are very difficult to teach to large groups. Religious education will have to be moved out of the present classroom situation with its highly controlled environment and set procedure. More attention will have to be given to individual development and to interior growth.

III

The question arises: how can these processes be taught? That set of processes which includes understanding and valuing one’s self and one’s life experience in the light of Christ can best be taught by beginning with an actual classroom experience. This experience might be one of role playing, of writing a short essay, or some creative art work. For example, in a lesson concerning Christian obedience, the students might be asked to role play situations in which obedience to parents or teachers is difficult; or they might be asked to write out examples of situations in which they found it difficult to obey, and then read to the group what they have written and perhaps comment on it. This classroom experience could be followed by a discussion in which the movement would be from the particular experience to different life experiences. If, at this point, an appropriate scripture passage were read aloud, the discussion could continue along the lines of trying to put the whole problem in a Christian context. For example, why does a Christian obey? Finally, if the group prays silently and aloud over the matter discussed, this helps greatly to see self and experience in the light of Christ.

How can the processes of Christian community be taught? For one thing, they cannot be taught with much success in the ordinary classroom atmosphere. The classroom is, at best, a formally structured environment. It is necessary, if there is to be really personal interaction, that there be an informal atmosphere where students can speak without raising their hands, where there are no rules but the rule of Christian love and respect. Furthermore, the group must be small enough, eight or nine persons, to permit discussion and dialogue. This kind of unstructured, small group meeting format, rather than a classroom format, will certainly give rise to discipline problems, at least in the beginning. The writer knows from experience how difficult it can be to informally discuss things with a group of small and restless children. But this is how they will learn to listen to one another, to help one another, to share with one another, and to respect one another. Praying together, silently and aloud in their own words also helps students to learn the processes of Christian community.

Finally, how can the processes of prayer be taught? We learn to pray by praying, and especially by praying with other people. Children, especially, can learn quickly to pray in their own words. If the teacher prays aloud spontaneously, the students will have a practical model for their own silent and spoken prayer. A simple way to pray is to ask God for help, or to thank Him. The prayer part of the lesson needs to be planned carefully, and it calls for simplicity and prayerfulness on the part of the teacher. But the rewards are great.

A sample format for a small group meeting in which Christian processes are taught is this:

1. opening prayer (This can be a moment of silent prayer, or a vocal prayer such as the Our Father).
2. review of previous lesson by discussion.
3. classroom experience.
4. discussion of the experience.
5. scripture reading.
6. discussion of scripture.
7. prayer, silent and spoken.

Process oriented catechesis calls for painful changes in much present practice if the processes of knowing and valuing in the light of Christ, of being Christian with others, and of praying — silently and aloud, liturgically and non-liturgically, spontaneously and together in a fixed way — are to be made central. What is most important is that we know what we are aiming at, whom it is that we are trying to communicate.


Continued from page 15

The young generation is sensitive to the worth of individual persons. They reject this instrumental use of people. The church must find a way to clarify its goals in Christian education so that persons, not institutional gains, are stressed. Otherwise, conservative evangelicals may face a serious generation gap. If this youthful generation abandons the institutional church, the next generation will be without it.

III. Projections

During the last third of this century, conservative evangelicals will face the same challenges as all Christians. They will find ways to adapt within the context of their built-in conservatism. Whatever changes do occur will come about slowly and with varying degrees of tension and resistance. Such reluctance grows out of sincere concern and commitment, not pure stubbornness. In some areas the leaves of change are rustling in the tree-tops.

In the area of civil rights and social action, the hand of fellowship and equality will be extended, but much too slowly. Little change is perceived in social action, nor will there be a return to the mood of self-denial that marked the mid-nineteenth century. Most sermons against materialism and affluence are preached in heavily mortgaged, newly built edifices by pastors who drive new cars and reside in ranch-style parsonages.

Behavioristically originated programmed learning will increasingly be used. Few will be concerned about the philosophy behind it.

Social mobility will result in struggles, adaptation and changes both in operational procedures and in emphasis. Small splits off over the larger denominations will probably drain off the most militant conservatives so that explosive confrontations and divisions of major proportions will be less likely to take place.

Next to the changes urbanization will affect, sex education will be the area of most profound change. The trends of permissiveness will force the issue. Church designed curriculums will appear to substitute for or supplement public school courses.

Christian education itself is the most problematical. Contradictory trends are in evidence. Whether outreach or real education will prevail is uncertain. Probably both can and will have concurrent emphasis.

The organized institutional church, whatever its theology may be, has an important, timely message for every age. It is hoped that whatever alterations of methods and predominant themes may be required, the essential kerygma will remain.
Book Reviews


Commentaries on the Fourth Gospel come in all sizes and are addressed to several classes of readers. For the past thirty years one volume has stood in a category of its own in spite of the fact that it first appeared in a series of exegetical works associated with the name of H. A. W. Meyer. Since then this commentary by Rudolf Bultmann has been revised and enlarged, though its general position has remained unchanged amid the swirling currents of changing theological thought since the close of World War II. Now, thanks to some persistent efforts of the British publishers of Basil Blackwell's of Oxford and the prodigious labors of a small team of translators, headed by G. R. Beasley-Murray, we are able to salute the commentary in its English dress; and readers who have been unfamiliar with the German original will be able to see for themselves the sort of job that Bultmann does when he turns his hand to the task of biblical exegesis. We can now evaluate the dictum that Bultmann will be remembered by posterity, not for his famous demythologizing program nor for his existentialist interpretations of Jesus and Paul but as an exegete of the Johannine gospel.

The alert student of the New Testament will already be conversant with the main ideas associated with Bultmann's John. In three areas his views are stock-in-trade of the students' mental furniture department, and only the briefest comment on these is required in this review. First, his work was one of the most thoroughgoing in taking seriously the possibility of disentangling putative sources behind the completed Gospel of John. In particular, he built a lot on the proposal that two chief sources could be unreeled: a signs-source, containing stories of the miracles of Jesus, and a source containing the revelatory discourses placed in the mouth of Jesus. The role of the evangelist is that of editor who employed these sources and commented on them and adapted them to his final purpose expressed in the publication of the Gospel itself. Since Bultmann's day the same exercise has been applied to the Synoptic Gospels in the latest discipline of Editorial- or Composition-criticism, and already several large volumes have appeared in recent times which try to show that Mark in particular has taken over and adapted a source of miracle stories.

Then, the notion of an "ecclesiastical redactor" was summoned by Bultmann to account for what he deemed to be contradictory statements on the Gospel's eschatology. Both strands of a realized and a futurist eschatology are apparently present in the chapters as we read them today. Bultmann labored to show that the final editing of the pre-canonical material has decided the issue in favor of a realized or presentative (Moltmann's term) eschatological stance.

The major issue, however, which Bultmann faced was a decision to place the Gospel in the stream of early Christianity and to observe what were the most powerful influences at work on the evangelist. Following on an earlier article back in 1925, he championed the view that the (then newly discovered) Mandean texts gave the closest parallel in thought and language to the milieu out of which the Fourth Gospel came. His large commentary is marked by a systematic attempt to carry through this proposal and to turn to the documents of the Mandean sect for an understanding of the world-view of the Gospel. Sometimes the suggestions have a semblance of plausibility; often there is none, as when he tries to offer a Mandean parallel to the Good Shepherd imagery of John 10 (p. 367). Consistently, near eastern religion (usually in its gnostic thought patterns) is appealed to as the Open Sesame to unlock the doors of Johannine exegesis, whether the text invites this possibility (as in the Logos teaching of the Prologue) or not (as in the Miracle of the Water turned into Wine, seen as a motif drawn from the Dionysus cult).

As a further comment (again intended to be brief) let me say a word on the status quaeestionis in these three areas. At least until very recently, Bultmann's source criticism had little favor, and the general rubric applied: "It looks as though, if St. John used written sources, he wrote them all himself" (so Pierson Parker in 1956). Latterly, however, there has been a re-opening of this question by R. T. Fortana, but once more with some question-marks placed over this whole method.

Bultmann's exercise in Redaktionsgeschichte has had a more enduring history, though again notable attempts have been made to synthesize the Johannine eschatology without recourse to any theory of editorializing treatment by a later hand.

It is the issue of background and interpretation which has claimed a central place in scholarly work since 1941, with a noticeable swing away from Bultmann's general position to one of uniting John's Gospel more closely with the synoptics, and seeing both as having roots in Palestinian Christianity of
the first century. Indeed, the so-called "New Look" (J. A. T. Robinson) on the Fourth Gospel leads to such a closeness of ties with the other records of Jesus in its historical witness and value as a repository of Jesus' teaching that one is tempted to ask, Is John also among the synoptics? To read A. M. Hunter's oeuvre de vulgarisation, According to John (1968) is to enter a different world from that of Bultmann's, and to feel that after all the feet of the Johannine interpreter rest on some solid rock of history instead of the shifting sand of theologizing. But is this security obtained at too easy a price, so that we are glad to be able to take advantage of the New Look materials and become overconfident that a text from John is as good as a verse from Q? A reading of Bultmann's massive work will dispel any idea of a facile security and make us think seriously about what we mean when we talk about the historical witness of the Fourth Gospel. And that will be a salutary exercise, for ready-made slogans are dangerous even when they buttress an orthodoxy position.

This is a commentary which will prove valuable according to the expectation we bring to it. For a serious study of the Gospel it is already an indispensable tool, but needing extreme caution in its use. My old teacher, T. W. Manson, used to say (a classroom bon mot) that no student without a Ph.D. should be turned loose on Bultmann. Its value as a preaching guide is limited, though the background material is useful. Again we counsel extreme care, for the material can be taken in several ways, and a false step under Bultmann's tutelage is easy to make. But any masterly book like this one contains some gems, even if they have to be dug for. Take, for instance, Bultmann's comment on 2:17, "Zeal for thy house will consume me." We normally see this OT citation as a platitude expressing Jesus' concern for the Temple - he is full of zeal for the honor of the Father's house. How differently this comes out in Bultmann's view. Jesus' zeal in cleansing the Temple will lead him to his death.


Prof. Leon Morris, now principal at Ridley Hall in Melbourne, Australia, established himself as a competent evangelical scholar some years ago with the publication of The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (1955) which is notable for its defense of the theology of propitiation over against C. H. Dodd's theology of expiation.

The present volume contains a collection of essays dealing with problems around The Gospel of John: The Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics; the question of history and theology in the Gospel; the problem of authorship and eyewitness; and a comparison of John's Gospel with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Morris revives B. F. Westcott's famous argument for the apostolic eyewitness authorship of the Gospel. He thinks that John is independent of the Synoptics, that no literary dependence can be established, but that John wrote to fill out and explain what the Synoptics had written. His well documented essay in history and theology makes it clear that John thought he was relating historical facts even though he was concerned to bring out the theological significance of these facts. He discusses such themes appearing in both John and the Qumran writings as dualism, the sons of light and darkness, truth and error, predestination, the eschatological struggle, etc. He comes to the conclusion that there exist such striking similarities between John and Qumran that one is faced with the possibility that "at roughly the same time, and in roughly the same part of the world, two different groups of men independently evolved the same terminology and thought of the same ideas" (p. 353). This Morris judges to be highly unlikely. There must be some kind of relationship between Qumran and John. Morris conjectures that this may have come about through John the Baptist and his disciples (John 1:35 ff.). In any case, these similarities establish that the Fourth Gospel is Palestinian but they do not detract from the "uniqueness of Christianity" and the centrality of Christ.


One keeps an eye out for new books by certain authors, both because they are going to be publishing regularly and because they are aware of the real problems and have a wide breadth of understanding of them. Dr. Clark Pinnock is one of those men, and evangelicals will welcome this book. Still a young man in his mid-thirties, he is professor of apologetics and theology at Trinity Theological Seminary in Deerfield, although he also has a background in New Testament studies, evident in his awareness of modern biblical scholarship which he cites extensively.

With this book he has chosen an unfortunate publisher who does not do him credit. For instance, the biblical citations in the original manuscript were from the RSV but the publishers have changed them to make them all from Berkeley or Williams. The indexing is not always done carefully. For example, I find nearly twice as many references to Karl Barth in the text as are listed in the index. The bibliography indicates further carelessness giving only one date for the publishing of both Kittel's multi-volumed Theological Dictionary of the New Testament and Karl Barth's Dogmatics. There are also many careless typographical errors such as "Theodore or Mopsuestia" (p. 150) and "honur" (p. 151).

The book itself is far more careful. Dr. Pinnock develops a doctrine of Scripture as prolegomena to a study of theology for, since Dr. Pinnock believes that theology is "the articulation of the cognitive substance of divine revelation," the character of the medium of that revelation is important. He presents a cogent defense of a conservative doctrine of Scripture in terms of such definitions of inspiration as inerrancy, infallibility, verbal, plenary, confutent, etc. This position is developed over against modern neo-orthodoxy or liberal views, sometimes too readily lumped together and dismissed under the umbrella of the weakest in the group. For instance, in discussing 20th century fideism Dr. Pinnock criticizes Barth's view of the "logical circle" (Church Dogmatics, I.2.535) which he calls the "vicious circle" because it is allergic to Christian evidences (although the viewpoint is much like that of Hebrews 11:8). But then Pinnock's summary of the fideistic approach which he uses to attack the stance does not really cope with Barth's particular weaknesses. Barth's point in I.2.535 is that "the Bible must be known as the Word of God if it is to be known..."
as the Word of God,” the lesson he learned from Anselm and Calvin. One could not conclude that for Barth theology is totally dependent upon Christian experience which lacks substantive content, for one has confronting him the great tomes of the Church Dogmatics which rely for biblical support on far more than the Christological parts of Scripture. If Barth rejects a “mechanical doctrine of verbal inspiration” (Church Dogmatics, I.1.126f.), Pinnock does not want to be tied to a mechanical doctrine either. If Barth sees in the reformers a willingness to tolerate certain ambiguities, modern doctrines of Scripture seem more brittle by comparison.

Dr. Pinnock also uses the strange procedure of citing non-authorities at times, sometimes because they are fellow conservatives and make the point he would like to make. For instance, why cite Peter Berger from a popular book to show that the same theological questions are raised in many ages; or why use “Gerstner’s case” (p. 47) or why cite Ryrie (p. 73) to substantiate the point that no notable theologian doubted inerrancy until the 18th century (not to mention that the ramifications of that statement do not always support Pinnock’s case); or why cite Leo XIII to support inerrancy when the Roman Catholic view rests upon dictation, a position Pinnock is careful to disengage himself from.

This problem of selective citing is intertwined with another problem which pervades the book: i.e. Citations are multiplied without clarity as to what they are intended to support. For example, on pp. 150ff. a series of quotations from the Fathers, the medieval Church, the reformers and theologians from the age of orthodoxy are cited, to prove—what, exactly? At one point (p. 147) one gets the idea that the point is to prove plenary, verbal inspiration; at another (p. 147) to prove a high view of Scripture or at another merely that the Scriptures are inspired (p. 150). Throughout the book there is difficulty with this. When Irenaeus is cited (p. 150), Dr. Pinnock adds, “his view of plenary, verbal inspiration is impeccable,” which seems to indicate that the whole list is set forth to demonstrate this view. But certainly, then, the following citation from Augustine needs to be made more carefully (p. 151, from Epist, a quotation Pinnock seems carelessly to have lifted from the Roman Catholic, Congar): “I have learned to defer this respect and honor to those Scriptural books only which are not called canonical, that I believe most firmly that no one of these authors has erred in any respect in writing,” for Augustine regarded the Old Testament apocryphal books as canonical.

Again, Dr. Pinnock needs to take a great deal more care in citing Luther, from whom much can be proved. To say “in Luther’s case statements supporting complete inerrancy are so numerous and so uncompromising that the only conceivable way to make him teach anything else is to charge him with gross inconsistency,” and then to add a footnote indicating where the contrary evidence may be found in secondary sources is but a recognition of the complexity of the evidence. Or can we cite from Calvin’s Institutes, that Scripture has plenary, verbal inspiration; at another (p. 147) to prove a point (p. 147) one gets the idea that the point is to prove the truth of such statements of Calvin as that Scripture has plenary, verbal inspiration; at another (p. 147) to prove a point (p. 147) one gets the idea that the point is to prove a high view of Scripture or at another merely that the Scriptures are inspired (p. 150). Throughout the book there is difficulty with this. When Irenaeus is cited (p. 150), Dr. Pinnock adds, “his view of plenary, verbal inspiration is impeccable,” which seems to indicate that the whole list is set forth to demonstrate this view. But certainly, then, the following citation from Augustine needs to be made more carefully (p. 151, from Epist, a quotation Pinnock seems carelessly to have lifted from the Roman Catholic, Congar): “I have learned to defer this respect and honor to those Scriptural books only which are not called canonical, that I believe most firmly that no one of these authors has erred in any respect in writing,” for Augustine regarded the Old Testament apocryphal books as canonical.

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It seems to me that, in an attempt to prove that the new views of Scripture are a break with tradition, Pinnock is suggesting something like an Orthodox Vincentian canon. Now the strength of such an argument is that a strong view of authority and inspiration can be supported by a host of quotations, but the more developed formulas that Protestant orthodoxy formulated need more careful citation, for historical evidence is too incidental to do all that we might want to do with it. A prime example to belabor this important point is the citation (p. 155) of article 20 of the Anglican 39 articles to gain support for the view of verbal inspiration when that article maintains that the Scriptures contain all things necessary for salvation.

There are, of course, many questions that Pinnock leaves unresolved. For instance, what is the effect of the Council of Jerusalem’s decisions about the OT canon on his view of the canon? How much may the specific statements of Christ about certain OT books and figures be generalized to apply to the whole OT, (particularly a book like Ruth whose canonicity was determined quite late)? Or how may the extension of apostolicity as a criterion for NT canonicity apply in the case of Hebrews or James? The exact criteria on the basis of which the early Church determined what books were to be in a canon are not available to us, but they seem to include the non-rational factor, that a book “feels inspired.”

It also seems to me that a view of inerrancy which is forced to rest upon what a writer intended to teach is in trouble. We must ask (p. 75) why should NT citations of the OT not be exact if one holds a view of inerrancy? Why should Stephen’s apology in Acts 7 not be historically accurate if one holds a view of inerrancy? What were the parts of Scripture which the human author influenced so that we may be sure Dr. Pinnock is not really espousing dictation? He suggests (p. 57) that Scripture is written in the style, vocabulary and modes of that day and (on p. 69) that the words are “flavored by their (the writers) touch.” Does that mean that in style, vocabulary, world view and words we might expect the human element in all its humanness to be active, such as in OT citations and in Acts 7? How can we let the inerrancy that inspiration implies for Pinnock reside in the ultimate product, the writings themselves, without in reality espousing dictation?

There is no doubt that the doctrine of Scripture needs an able statement today. When Bishop Epiphanius had a group of active Marcionites in Salamis he became concerned about heresy, and when there are a rash of attacks on a high view of Scripture, we need able statements supporting a true and historic position. What Pinnock ultimately leaves us in doubt about is whether the position he sets forth in reality goes behind the 18th century. No doubt the Fathers and many medieval theologians as well as the reformers had a high view of Scripture, but would that view look like the one that Dr. Pinnock sets forth? It will be interesting to see what historical evidence Dr. Geoffrey Bromiley raises as he works on this question over the next three years.

It is worthwhile, indeed, to react to the book as we have done, and these reactions are intended in that spirit, for this is a really useful book, offering genuine help for those struggling with various aspects of the question of biblical inspiration.
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stability in service, the format that best renders the teaching task easy for him and profitable for the learner. Then produce varied training materials to meet these needs.

6. Stop trying to produce denominational members and think about developing Christians. Draw up course outlines and resource materials, leaving the development of a curriculum to be tailor-made by each congregation. Have resource people sufficiently well versed in the multiplicity of available materials to be helpful consultants. Publish a “Schwann Catalogue” or “paperbacks-in-print” kind of volume listing available teaching outlines and resources under age categories and subjects. Include Catholic and Jewish sources. Since there is still a lot of dated material around, this volume would need to be an annual. Few people undergo an orderly 12 years of religious education under one system anyway, and there is no research to demonstrate whether those who have are therefore more knowledgeable or effective in their faith than are others (especially since parents and teachers also play a part in religious development). It would be difficult to prove that the choices a particular parish made in the use of biblical and/or experience-centered materials involving varied methodologies and even various points of view would be damaging to the learner. If we really believed that, teachers would be more carefully screened than they are for their own theological and educational commitments before being asked to teach. Everyone knows that availability is the chief criterion for selecting church school teachers.

I am aware that this approach would require arduous work by a responsible group of people within a parish. I believe such groups can be found. I think this approach is preferable to having teachers choose or “adapt” courses, having local ministers write courses, or having denominations plan the entire input.

Many of my suggestions are becoming applicable to Catholic materials, despite the fact that these are produced by independent publishers. Some creativity in methodology is apparent in these materials, especially on the youth level, but in content there is a distressingly prevalent stress on the salvation-history orientation. Also, most of these materials are written for middle-class learners despite the known fact that many parishes are adapting them for urban learners. While there is still potential flexibility, let Catholics be forewarned!

Curriculum for the '70s should be as much a concern of the local church as it is of the seminary. After all, most people do get their start in some parish.

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Professor Cherry brings a very British wit and profundity to the expositing of information theory and the basis for understanding human communication. Strictly for three sets of people: communication specialists, those who are serious about understanding communication theory, and masochists. These three sets may be somewhat overlapping.


Although heavily pessimistic, Muller suggests the sources of possible solutions for some of the contemporary dilemmas of American society. Professors of theology and pastors would do well to read with a sharp pencil at hand, making marginal notes on their own preparedness to cope with the world Muller describes.


A popular yet carefully conceived presentation of the demands of community in the Church. Dr. Schaeffer is concerned with the biblical backdrop of cultural shifts within western society and the implications these have for the Church.


Although far too technical for the layman, specialists in communication and homiletics use this volume as a reference. Schramm has brought into one huge paperback a sobering collection of research papers and reviews describing many of the landmark studies in communication.


Slater’s approach to the criticism of American culture is thematic rather than comprehensive, but the reader is coaxed into a more critical look at himself and the values that are reflected in his behavior. The book might properly be classified “popular social criticism.” It is easy to read and highly anecdotal; can help oldsters understand such youthful phenomena as Hollywood’s The Graduate and Marcuse’s One-Dimensional Man.

Theology, News and Notes
DECEMBER 1971