
The History and Philosophy of Christian Education

International Educational Fellowship School of Ministry

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Chapter One

Purposes and Goals

How do evangelism, fellowship, service, kingdom consciousness, and worship relate to the purpose of Christian education, or to education in general? Some educators may raise serious questions about the growing similarity between Christian and secular education. They wonder, what purpose does a Christian have in a public school? Others maintain that the acquiring of knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors is important in and of itself, and that the added purposes of evangelism, fellowship, service, and worship only detract from education in its highest form. Why then suggest any additional purposes? Other concerns may be raised by Christians who differ in their interpretations of Scripture, or in the value they place on experiences vs. reason. Their philosophical differences will naturally effect their choice of purposes and goals for education.

Here is a list of seven possible goals for Christian education:

- Seek to foster a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience, and a sense of personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ.
 - Seek to develop an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teachings of Jesus so as to lead people to experience him as Lord and Savior, and to follow him loyally and obediently in daily life and conduct.
 - Seek to nurture a progressive and continuous development of Christ-like character through the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - Seek to develop the ability to participate in the spiritual and social outworking of the gospel, in being about God's work in the world while not being of the world.
 - Seek to develop the ability to participate in the Christian family when appropriate, and the extended Christian family, which is the church.
 - Seek to encourage the development of a Christian world view that is incorporated into the life of each person.
 - Seek to educate Christians in the whole counsel of God as recorded in Scripture, which is the authoritative guide for all faith and life.

Although the relative emphasis on each of these seven goals may vary according to the teaching situation, their general thrust has an enduring quality. The careful stating of such purposes and goals is the key element of an educational philosophy. The following general purpose for Christian education can be proposed:

The general purpose of the church's educational ministry is that all persons know of, and develop a dynamic, growing personal relationship with God (John 17:3) and God's creations. This knowledge and relationship is to be grounded in God's revelation and self-disclosure in Scripture and centered completely and decisively in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (John 14:6; 17:7; 2 Tim. 3:16). Persons of all ages are enabled by the Holy Spirit to respond in faith, love, and obedience such that each one is continually growing as a member of the Christian community and living in the world as a representative of Christ, while abiding in the hope of His second coming. The goal of educational ministry is that persons become obedient disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20), prepare for works of service and conform increasingly to the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16).

There is an expanded perspective in which Christian education centers on both the living Word of God (Christ) and the written Word of God (the Bible). This alleviates the danger of failing to relate biblical content to the living Christ and to the lives of persons. Evangelical educators have been particularly prone to this temptation. Another issue at stake is the place of students' experiences and needs.

Some suggest that student needs, problems, and interests should have priority, while others suggest that the logical order of the content should be the primary guide. Others, in addition, emphasize the place of social or communal responsibilities. In a social situation where there is an overwhelming preoccupation with human needs, evangelical teachers must discern the nature of those needs. A common belief of this age is that educational content should be primarily designed to address student needs. A distinction is made between "felt" needs and real needs, with "felt" needs being the initial focus, while the real needs are

eventually exposed and addressed. But such worldly wisdom may result in a serious disregard to God's demands on a person. Christian educators must evaluate human needs according to scriptural guidelines, because society can actually distort the perception of needs.

One example of this is the tendency to measure progress by the accumulation of material wealth. Thus there is a constant need for increased possession of goods. Such a materialistic view fails to consider how God measures progress, as defined in His word. The teacher's task is to challenge what the society perceives as needs, and to present divine demands that reveal values beyond materialism. (This does not deny the importance of addressing genuine human needs, discerned using biblical guidelines.)

Another issue is the relationship between action and content. Some educators suggest that content is of primary importance, and that experience is of secondary importance. Thus their first objective is to share content, and then to later address how that content can lead to action or affect experience. Other educators emphasize the experiential aspects of life, and so action becomes the primary focus in their teaching.

The Christian teacher is called upon to share biblical information and the beliefs of the Christian faith. In addition, she or he may share other insights from any number of areas, with the stipulation that these insights be consistent with a biblical world view. It can be extremely challenging for teachers to integrate their various subject areas, while remaining consistent with Christian teachings throughout history. Success is determined by their faithfulness to God and to their fields of study.

The final authority in all things is God, and so the Christian teacher is ultimately accountable to Him in every endeavor. The teacher is also accountable to other people, groups, and institutions. This does not diminish the teacher's responsibility in setting goals and procedures. A teacher is also subject to valid insights which may be offered by students.

The Christian teacher is one of the many influences in a student's socialization (learning to relate in society); others being parents, church, community, and government. The Christian teacher may also be called upon to re-socialize, if prior influences have created the need. This additional responsibility requires very careful discernment -- biblical values must be maintained, while respecting proper social influences. Another phenomenon is the socialization of teachers with students, through their various interactions with one another.

As a facilitator, the Christian teacher does promote creativity and growth, but not always in the students' own terms. The teacher's perspective must be grounded in God's values, and this may or may not conflict with those of the students. Human creativity, growth, and freedom must be understood in relation to God's order and structure for life. Within God's order there is tremendous potential for creativity and growth, but there is also the potential for human sin and its accompanying deceptions. The Christian teacher must also be aware of his own need for continued growth and creativity.

The Christian teacher is a valuable model to the extent that Christ is a living reality in his or her life (1 Corinthians 11:1). An enthusiasm for learning in all areas of life must be felt by Christian teachers. They must not settle for the mundane, lacking excitement and color.

An additional challenge is presented by the fact that a teacher is a person. Too often the essential personhood of a teacher, as created by God, has been denied. The biblical model of teaching, on the other hand, stresses a personal relationship between teacher and student. Truth is taught through the sharing of both doctrine and life. Properly balancing their different roles is a difficult task for teachers to accomplish in various settings involving teaching. Competence and excellence is required in their attempt to reflect the glory of the Master Teacher. Further insights can be drawn for the role of the teacher through a careful study of the teaching ministry of Jesus Christ.

From a Christian perspective, teachers are fellow persons with students. They are fellow creatures of God with unique strengths and weaknesses, affected by the fall. They may be

believers in Christ or they may not be, but nevertheless they can be instruments used by God to teach students. Scriptural standards for teachers include the following:

- a believer in Christ (1 Cor. 12:27-28);
- called by God and gifted for the teaching ministry (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-12);
- faithful to true doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3-7; 2 Tim. 2:2);
- a servant, an authority, and a mature and maturing disciple of Christ (1 Tim. 3:1-7; James 3:1); and
- responsible before God for both life and teaching (Matt. 23:10; 1 Tim. 4:12-16; James 3:1).

In describing the roles of the student, we must move beyond an understanding of the student as strictly passive/receptive, and actively participate in and explore areas. The extent of their participation will be dependent upon their level of maturity and experience, but wherever possible, their participation should be encouraged. Their God-given ability for total life responses should be given ample opportunity for expression. Students are partners with teachers in the educational effort, and any attempt to stifle their active participation is a denial of their humanness. Christian truth must be taught to persons, and to neglect persons ignores half the equation. There are unique differences among students, and dialogue should be encouraged -- not to deny the authority of the teacher or the value of his more direct teaching, but to enable active learning by the students. Otherwise Christian educators will be promoting mechanical forms of learning; mechanical learning has little ability to be transferred outside the educational setting, do little to aid in integrating life with a Christian world view.

A Christian philosophy of education will view students in several ways: one is that the student is a creation of God created in the image of God. The student therefore has value in God's eyes. This means that the student, as well as others, should value and respect the student. The student is not a second class citizen or an empty container to be filled, but he/she is a person of value and potential.

A second point is that the student, like all of mankind, is fallen. Therefore, the student has limitations, faults, and destructive behavior which may affect his growth and interaction with others.

Third, every human is potentially a child of God or is a child of God. This potential is realized in Christ.

Fourth, the student is capable of change and growth. The Christian view suggests that through the work of the Holy Spirit the destructive traits and behaviors of the student can be corrected or nullified through daily sanctification.

Fifth, the student is responsible before God for his or her actions, sinfulness, and response before God.

This view of the student reflects both his/her potential and responsibility. The student's ability to perform roles may vary depending upon the student's age and maturity in Christ.

- The student should strive to grow into the likeness of Christ.
 - The Christian student should worship and glorify God through his/her learning and the application of that learning.
 - The student is to be a good steward of his/her talents.
 - The student should be diligent in all that their hands find to do.
 - The student should test all knowledge with scripture and test spirits and teacher.
 - The student should apply his/her learning, being not only hearers but doers (James 1:22-25).
 - He or she should remain open to the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - He or she should value all of creation.
 - He or she should be in community and encourage others (Heb. 10:24-25)

Various factors in the environment, context, or settings for education must be considered. The first factor is the natural aspect. This aspect entails the physical factors and

material resources of the classroom, including room arrangement, decoration, and resource display, along with factors that affect visibility, mobility, and comfort.

The human aspect is the second factor. It focuses upon the teacher(s) and student(s) and other human resources and factors. The nature of commitments, interactions, and personal or shared concerns in educational interaction are involved.

The last factor is the divine aspect. The Holy Spirit is the primary environmental presence in Christian education, and the challenge is to create those conditions in which the Spirit of God can work most fruitfully in the lives of persons. All three aspects require attention in Christian education.

The need is for an approach that considers all three aspects of the environment, giving clear priority to the divine aspect. Every setting for education involves these three aspects in varying degrees. There is a need to consider the human aspects in terms of political, economic, social, communal, and familial forces. The dimension of cultural factors must also be recognized. But an continuing question for the Christian educator is how the three aspects of the environment interact and facilitate the most effective learning.

The element of evaluation reintroduces the question of values because it is out of the identification of values that one evaluates. In evaluation, the Christian educator assesses the extent to which purposes and goals have been addressed. In evaluation, there is a call for responsibility and accountability. To a certain extent, the outcomes of Christian education can be observed in terms of the change in knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviors manifested by both students and teachers. Evaluation is ultimately subject to divine assessment, yet Christian educators must devote the necessary time and energy to carefully observe and assess the results of their efforts and those of their students. The effectiveness of evaluation is largely dependent upon the prior clarification of purposes and goals that can be measured after regular periods of time. Evaluation strives to combine both

objective and subjective criteria for judgment with an openness to the unintended and unexpected results of teaching.

Having discussed the subject of specific educational philosophy, we will now consider a number of modern philosophies and identify their characteristics. The following philosophies will be considered: perennialism, essentialism, behaviorism, progressivism, behaviorism, progressivism, reconstructionism, romantic naturalism, and existentialism. Some of these can be complementary in actual practice, but for the purpose of description they will be viewed as distinct.

Perennialism

Perennialism emphasizes the development of reasoning powers along with academic excellence. It affirms intellectual, spiritual, and ethical purposes in education in guiding the individual to the truth. Goals include the teaching of a prescribed body of classical subject matter. Classical advocates of this philosophy include Aristotle.

The content of perennialist education includes Great Books of the Western World and the traditional liberal arts. The mind and reason are emphasized in exposing students to the great works of the Western intellectual past. The curriculum is subject centered, with stress on mental discipline and literary analysis.

Teachers are viewed as academic scholars; philosophers who have a grasp of vast areas of knowledge and wisdom. Corresponding to the teacher's role, students are viewed as rational beings who are to be guided by the first principles revealed in the classics and liberal arts. In perennialism, the primary settings for learning include the classroom or lecture hall, the study, and the library where classical heritage can be shared.

Perennialism can be affirmed for its sensitivity to the past, for its concern for rationality, and for its emphasis on excellence. This philosophy maintains that absolute truth exists and that human nature is consistent. Perennialists recognize the intellectual, spiritual, and ethical

purposes of education. Perennialism can be criticized for its preoccupation with the past and its tendency toward rationalism. Its structure may squelch creativity; in addition, its totally intellectual and teacher directed approach may not recognize the whole character of persons and the limits of human reason.

Essentialism

Essentialist educators stress academic excellence, the development of the intellect, and the teaching of a certain body of subject matter. The content of essentialist education includes the fundamental academic subjects and the mastery of basic and advanced knowledge. Its curriculum stresses mental discipline. Unlike perennialism, essentialism considers modern scientific and experimental inquiry in addition to classical studies. Essentialism stresses a movement in education back to basics along with the mastery of those basics broadly defined.

For essentialism, the model teacher is the person of literature and sciences who is in touch with the modern world and has become an expert in his subject area. Students are viewed as rational beings who gain command of essential facts and skills that support their intellectual study and help them adjust to their physical and social environment. Like perennialism, essentialism centers upon the primary settings of the classroom and library, but also emphasizes the research laboratory. Essentialism can be affirmed for its emphasis on the mastery of basic learning skills and its recognition of the need for hard work and discipline in learning. This philosophy also recognizes the intellectual, spiritual, and ethical purposes of education. But different from perennialism, it also emphasizes adjustment to the physical and social environment. Criticisms can be raised about essentialism's teacher-directness and its possible tendency toward rationalism. It can lead to problems if the needs of individual students are ignored.

Behaviorism

Behaviorists strive to form persons who function with efficiency, economy, precision, and objectivity. Education serves to shape certain persons in behaviors and responses. This philosophy incorporates a behavioral modification sequence for desired student responses and skills. Clear objectives are stated, and students are exposed to a rewarding environment with the possible use of programmed instruction.

Teachers are viewed as skilled technicians, sculptors of both students and environments. A behaviorist approach strives to develop well-sculptured, conditioned persons who are valued by society. Students are viewed as valued easily influenced beings in need of clear direction. The appropriate setting for learning is a carefully controlled institutional environment where distractions can be eliminated.

Behaviorism can be affirmed for its careful consideration of action and behaviors along with its conscious attention to environmental influences. This educational philosophy has been effective with some groups and with certain behaviors. The major criticism of behaviorism is its limited conception of persons and its focus on behavior. Human beings are more than well-conditioned animals. Freedom and dignity have a place in a Christian view of persons, and transformation beyond the realms of conditioning is possible with God.

Progressivism

Progressivism fosters the development of serious thought for social problem solving, democratic relationships, and growth. Progressive educators strive to enable students to learn how to learn in order to adapt to a changing world. Life adjustment in society's terms of expectations is a key goal in this perspective.

The content of education for progressivism is a comprehensive, exposure to problem-focused studies. Curriculum centers on social problem solving through the scientific method and the use of democratic processes. Cooperative learning is stressed with priority given to

students' needs and interests. Wherever possible, freedom of choice is given to students. The teacher is not an authoritative classroom director, as is the case for perennialism, essentialism, and behaviorism. Rather, the teacher is a person seeking progress, committed to society and democratic ideals, and sensitive to the growth of students. Thus the teacher is a fellow learner, traveler, and guide who facilitates the group learning process. For progressives, students are thinking and socially responsible individuals who are called to work democratically and cooperatively with others. Persons are viewed as organisms in connection with others and their social environment. Students are to be actively engaged in their own learning and that of others.

The preferred setting is the democratic classroom, which is sensitive to and representative of the wider society. In a real sense, the educational setting for progressivism is the world, because the learning experience is part of life, not a preparation for life. Progressivism can be affirmed for its concern for persons, who are viewed as active participants in the learning process. This philosophy encourages a sensitivity to student experiences, needs, and interests, along with a concern for cooperative learning. It deals with issues of everyday life and breaks the barriers between academic formality and daily experience. Progressivism can be criticized for its optimistic perspective of persons, which does not recognize the effects of sin. Persons cannot solve their own problems without God. Progressivism also allows for relative truth and values, as opposed to God-ordained absolutes, and it locks faith in the supernatural dimensions of life.

Reconstructionism

A reconstructionist educational philosophy holds the goal of building an ideal and fair social order. Efforts are directed toward the establishment of a practical utopia where persons are liberated to be and become all they were intended to be. The content of reconstructionist

education centers upon social problems and the development of corrective programs. Critical analysis is made of social flaws.

Teachers are viewed as subversive educators, social critics, and community organizers who seek to raise the consciousness of others in the direction of needed change. Students are viewed as potential change agents committed to and involved in social renewal.

The settings for teaching are varied and include the classroom, the small cell or group meeting, the community center, the streets, and the fields.

Reconstructionism can be affirmed for its critical examination of current social, political, and economic orders and for its concern for social needs. Reconstruction seriously grapples with human responsibility in the world. Reconstructionists recognize problems in current society and see possibilities for reform. Educators in this perspective are viewed as primary instruments for social change. Reconstructionists, while recognizing social sins, may ignore the realities of personal sin in the liberators and the oppressed, as well as in the oppressors. Their preoccupation with the social order may result in ignoring personal responsibilities, and their emphasis upon change may ignore the need for continuity in personal and corporate life.

Romantic Naturalism

Romantic naturalism values individual freedom to develop one's potentials with the goal of self-actualization. Self-fulfillment and realization are to be fostered through the growth process of education.

Learning activities are based upon a person's felt needs and real needs, which are identified with the help of others. The curriculum provides for a free learning environment with artistic self-expression and creativity.

Teachers are viewed as visionaries who provide the space for self-discovery and exploration. Teachers are sufficiently permissive and supportive to allow freedom in learning.

Students are perceived as unfolding flowers unencumbered by society's limitations. They are encouraged to learn in a variety of modes that best suits their individual dispositions.

Ideal settings for education include the free school, the open classroom, the open world, and the home, where students may be free from intense competition, harsh discipline, and the fear of failure. Such settings could be best described as non-interfering. Romantic naturalism can be affirmed for its concern for individuals, human freedom, aesthetics, and creativity. It can be criticized for its denial of the teacher's responsibility and authority to share necessary wisdom and direction. Romantics can deny the realities of human sin while stressing freedom, and can negate the need for social responsiveness and discipline.

Existentialism

Existentialism as an educational philosophy emphasizes the inner search for meaning for one's own existence. The content for an existentialist education centers upon the themes of the human condition, with unstructured learning activities. These activities are designed to free the individual to find her or his own being. The curriculum would include opportunities for introspection and reflection in a free form learning environment.

Teachers are viewed as fellow inquirers with students; fellow travelers in the quest for meaning. Teachers are viewed as authentic persons who are mature and deep in their understanding of life. Students are persons in search of the meaning of their own existence and open to inquiry and exploration.

The ideal setting for this in-depth learning should allow for the personal encounter which explores the inner world. A classroom where reflection and introspection are valued provide one such setting, but others can be imagined.

Existentialism as an educational philosophy can be affirmed for its concern for the individual and the place of personal choice. It values authenticity and integrity, emphasizes personal responsibilities, and encourages both the creativity and discovery of students.

Existentialism rebels against the materialist and conformist tendencies of modern society and acknowledges the presence of alienation. But existentialism can be criticized in that a focus on individuals diminishes the authority of the teacher. It can lead to a position that is overly introspective, reducing realities to feelings and opinions. The existential focus on personal existence and choice as primary may diminish the place of God's existence and choice. Truth may be ever expanding and changing in this philosophy, with little possibility for continuity in life or in the Christian heritage.

Chapter Two

Choosing An Educational Philosophy for the Church

A blending of the various philosophies described above best contributes to educational practice. There are three different focuses in education: student interests, social functions, and organized knowledge. In other words, educational philosophies may center on persons, communities, societies, or content as their primary focus, while recognizing the place of the other two focuses. Thus perennialism and essentialism can be seen as philosophies which are content-centered. Behaviorism and constructionism can be seen as society-centered. Romantic naturalism and existentialism are primarily person-centered. Progressivism can be seen as emphasizing both the society and its democratic process, and persons in need of growth, but its primary emphasis can be seen as society-centered.

With these various focuses educators are challenged with the need for choice. Education is teaching persons in the context of their community and society; extremes of any approach are limited to a holistic perspective.

The three approaches to education: person-centered, content-centered, and society-centered, might be roughly compared with the preparation of a meal. The content-centered host is primarily concerned with the detailed preparation and serving of the food itself. The society-centered host is primarily concerned with the choice of the food in relation to the group assembled and the nutritional content of the menu in terms of preparing guests for the activities during and after the meal. The person-centered host desires to please and is sensitive to the individual tastes of each of the guests and their unique needs. The educator acts like a chemist, processing the various elements of students' interests, social functions, and organized knowledge.

It is possible to conceive various combinations of emphasis involving the three centers. It is also possible to conceive of a change in emphases within a particular group over time. Given the possible variation and combination of emphases, the educator's problem is how to maintain an adequate balance in his or her class, curriculum, or educational program. Evangelical educators have proposed that a God-centered education offers an alternative and that a Christian life view provides distinctives with which to guide the entire educational process. What, then, is a God-centered approach to education?

A God-centered approach establishes as its starting point the authority of God as revealed through Scripture and illumined by the Holy Spirit. From the Bible, viewed as the guide for Christian faith and practice, essential principles are derived for educational efforts. One such guiding principle is that all truth is God's truth, which implies a unity in truth and a correspondence between scriptural truth and reality. This principle calls for the joyful acceptance of truths in Scripture without a rigid literalism.

As was previously stated, the evangelical is not exempt from the tasks of Bible study and the challenge to understand biblical truths in contemporary settings. A God-centered approach subjects all claims to scriptural scrutiny, while recognizing that the Bible is not an exhaustive source of truth and knowledge. Thus, any truth claims are initially judged in terms of their consistency with a Christian world view. A God-centered approach, with its belief in the primacy of biblical authority, also recognizes tradition, history, intuition, and even imagination. But insights derived from these sources are always subject to scripture. This approach recognizes that certain educational issues are not resolved by a flippant "proof" from scripture, or a referral to biblical principles that ignores adequate grappling with the questions.

Chapter Three

Christian Education and History

This survey of philosophical foundations has identified essential issues that demand the continuous attention of Christian educators. All teachers have philosophies or theories with which they operate. Without attention to philosophical foundations, Christian educators have wandered in the deserts of cultural accommodation or cultural irrelevance, and have failed to provide that vision necessary to guide others in relating God's truth, in its beauty and wholeness, to the tasks of Christian education. It is no longer possible to have this irresponsible approach and claim to be faithful.

History and Education

History cannot provide easy solutions to present and future problems, nor does it give specific answers for the problems of education. Rather, history provides an awareness of both the possibilities and complexities of education. It helps to reveal the continuity of the past into the present and future.

Beyond points of continuity, history also reveals points of *discontinuity* with the past. For example, today's educational challenges may be similar to those of the Middle Ages, yet those questions will be met in different ways. Thus historical study must explore cultural and social factors. For example, the question of how to share the Christian faith with children is an ongoing one, but the way this is addressed in the twentieth century is quite different from how it was done in the first century.

Another contribution of history to education is how it enables us to see the broader stream of cultural and intellectual history of which education is just one part. In studying and

practicing education, educators must explore the wider social context and consider the economic, political, and social interests that affect teaching. Different views of history exist and it is important to ask which values and orientations guide a particular historical view. History is more than a political statement. For example, science has a great impact upon the views of those making and writing history in the twentieth century.

History and Christian Education

Martin Luther considered history the story of divine providence and a practical guide for life. He praised historians for aiding the understanding of worldly events and for noting the wonderful acts of God. The Christian teacher can also view the accounts of past efforts in Christian education as providing key insights and lessons. In response to such lessons, educators can take a stance of affirmation or criticism in light of liberating or oppressive effects of past efforts.

Christian teachers do not have to reinvent the wheel. They can identify principles, purposes, and goals of education which may be eternal and unchanging through the study of history. In addition, they may adapt educational strategies and methodologies that were effective in the past to present realities. Several key questions can be asked:

(1) What caused an awakening, renewal, or growth in godliness and how did education foster this development?

(2) How did Christians effectively relate their faith to their cultures?

(3) How were needs of persons effectively addressed and what biblical demands considered?

(4) What vision underlies effective educational work and how is this communicated to others?

Those who ignore the mistakes of the past are bound to repeat them. Christian educators must carefully assess how social, economic, political, technological, and religious factors in

the culture hindered effective education. In this assessment they must be aware of the effects of classism, racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice that have prevented the formation of whole persons, that is, persons created in God's image and reflecting that reality and potential in all areas of their lives. Much can be learned from the mistakes of the past if persons are willing to rely upon God's grace and seek the forgiveness of God and others in owing the past.

Beyond these areas of affirmation and criticism, it is possible for the Christian to study history with a sense of appreciation and inspiration. A Christian world view affirms God as an active agent in the historical process. Christians can appreciate God's intervention in the world and His working through persons. The Christian teacher can discern how God has revealed and transmitted truths through education in the past. Christian teachers can study past developments in Christian education ask these questions:

- How were Christian or biblical philosophies of education formulated, and how did they differ among various groups?
- How was the practice of education affected by new insight from Christian sources?
- To what extent was the faith adapted to fit the culture, as compared with the cultural renewal in Christian education?

Through such study, Christians may be inspired by realizing that others have trod a similar path, encountering and overcoming obstacles through faith in God. History reveals that *persons* make history and can be used of God to redirect historical developments in significant ways.

Every group has influences which serve to guide it. The Christian's education has been influenced by family, church, community, and economy. Today education also depends upon the school, the media, and various social and community agencies. As these influences have shifted over the generations the forms of education have also shifted.

Beyond a church's particular educational agenda, Douglas Sloan, an educational historian, points out that churches have given expression to many of the core values and life views of the larger community. They have also carried the prime responsibility for certifying, preserving, transmitting, and transforming those values and views from generation to generation. In this effort the church has employed all the traditional means of education: teachings of the Christian faith; teachers (ministers, theologians, Sunday school workers, and spiritual guides); textbooks (scripture, creeds, and commentaries); and teaching aids (rituals, sermons, catechisms, and spiritual disciplines). In a broader sense, too, as the outward expression of the ideas, values, convictions, and prejudices of a culture and its subcultures, Christian faith has often furnished the very material and matrix of education. Moreover, Christian movements have in various times had an impact of their own in defining reality, sanctioning and rationalizing behavior, and developing social visions and goals that can be described as educational. Such a broadened view of the role of the Christian church provides the context in which to consider the Christian education heritage. We will survey this heritage from the pre-Christian sources of Old Testament and Greek education to post-Reformation developments in the United States. Only key issues will be highlighted with an emphasis upon areas of continuity.*

* For more information, see Marvin J. Taylor, ed., *Religious Education: A Comprehensive Survey* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960), 11; Douglas Sloan, *Historiography and the History of Education: Occasion Paper No. 3* (New York: Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, n.d.); More detailed accounts are available in other sources. For example, see Kenneth O. Gangel and Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: Its History and Philosophy* (Chicago: Moody, 1983); and John H. Westerhoff, III, and O.C. Edwards, Jr., eds., *A Faithful Church: Issues in the History of Catechesis* (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1981).

Chapter Four

Foundational Issues in Christian Education

The Old Testament

Old Testament teaching included instruction and admonition. Instruction involved informing persons of God's truths and demands; admonition entailed challenging persons in their way of life. Education centered in the *Torah*, the Law of God, first communicated orally, then written in the Scriptures which contained the very moral and spiritual revelation of God. God was the measure of all things; all of life was dedicated to God. The purpose of education in the Old Testament was for holiness and transformation. Persons were to be trained in the very ways of God and the focus was on godly character and wisdom that would issue in moral action. The Law was to be lived; obedience was the fruit of a faithful response to education.

The primary context for education was the home, and parents were responsible to instruct their children in the Law, bring them into wedlock, and to teach them a trade. Beyond the centrality of the home as a house of worship, participation in communal religious life served to educate persons. Priests were experts in ritual life, bridging the gap between persons and God, and prophets spoke God's Word protesting the violation of it in personal and corporate life. Wise persons spoke to ethical questions and shared guidance for practically working out their dedication to God. During and subsequent to the exile, synagogues and schools developed to teach the Hebrew language, oral tradition, and the written scriptures.

Teaching methodology depended upon oral communication with various memory aids, including poetry, word play, and acrostics. Teaching was conducted at scheduled times and on various spontaneous occasions (Deut. 6:7), with significant time devoted to instruction

(Neh 8:3). Visual aids were used in teaching (Exod. 12:1-28; Deut. 6:4-9; Josh. 4:1-24), along with music and psalms. The guiding principle in all these teaching efforts was that persons would bring honor and credit to the name of God and their families through their lives. In relation to God, honor was expressed through an obedient life as an expression of worship and reverence. The Hebrew child learned to through a relationship with a worshipping parent, through a worshipping community, and through intentional education built into the rituals of home and community worship. Their lives were full of sensory experiences and vivid, thought-provoking symbols and dramas. They learned from ethical conduct growing out of worship and through recreating their history through Sabbath and festivals which were a significant part of their liturgy.

The Greek Heritage

In his discussion of Western education, Freeman Butts, an educational historian, makes this observation: "We think the way we do in large part because the Greeks thought the way they did. Thus, to understand our own ways of thinking we need to know how the Greeks thought." Given this dependence upon Greek thought in the West, educational thought and practice reflect distinctives of the Greek intellectual heritage. Socrates maintained that knowledge itself was a virtue. For Socrates, to really know what is good was to prohibit one from doing evil. He stressed the place of reason and logic, with thinking itself viewed as objective reasoning. Human reason was the means by which to discern divine revelation and its implications for all of life. Socrates stressed the importance of moral life, but not in terms of the God of the Hebrews. Of greater subsequent influence in the Christian community was Plato. Plato defined education as the training in excellence from youth upwards that makes a person passionately desire to be a perfect citizen and teaches him/her how to rule with justice. He viewed only the ideal as real with actualities being mere copies of the transcendent and perfect ideal. This aspect of Plato's thought was particularly attractive to Christian faith.

Plato's idealism fostered a concern for social and political reform as a fruit of education in the lives of those persons who grasped the ideals.

In contrast with Plato's emphasis was that of the Sophists. The Sophists advocated the use of reason and judged that metaphysical questions were beyond solution. Therefore their stress was upon human nature and human relations which resulted in the belief in the relativity of all truth. Ultimately, persons were the measure of all things, not God, who was beyond knowing. Their concern was with the world of the senses and with the effective use of reason. The perspective of the Sophists is associated with skepticism and individualism, which are dominant philosophies in the post modern world.

Representing a mediating position between Plato and the Sophists was Aristotle. Balancing Plato's idealism and the Sophists' this worldliness, Aristotle viewed matter as purposeless with form emerging as the mind or spirit transformed matter into something with life and purpose. Aristotle is associated with scientific empiricism and realism in emphasizing control of oneself and one's environment. Aristotle's golden mean stressed that nothing is to be done in excess, assuring discipline and control in the entire life process. Education was viewed as a means by which persons, through the use of reason and experience, could achieve balance and moderation in life through making right choices. Human virtue was based upon knowledge of the world and its rational principles and was evidenced by appropriate behavior in all dimensions of life.

A Greek concept of particular significance is that of *paideia*. *Paideia* represents a culture's consensus about what constitutes human excellence. It reflects a culture's ideals and vision that shapes the calling of a nation-state as well as its individual citizens. Socrates, Plato, the Sophists, and Aristotle all had different visions and ideals. Further differences were apparent in the distinct visions of the city-states of Athens and Sparta. In Sparta the male ideal was the well-conditioned military leader with a courageous and bold character. In Athens the male ideal was the citizen developed both in mind and body with a strong

intellect. Therefore, in considering any educational heritage, one must consider the controlling *paideia* in any particular community or effort. The ancient Greeks used the term to refer to "education," "culture," or "social, political, or ethical aspiration." But significantly, some have considered the concept of *paideia* to be incompatible with individual freedom and growth given the stress of a corporate or communal vision that is imposed upon individuals. Nevertheless, he points out that individuality is impossible to define apart from some sort of community life.

Paideia, communal vision, is a major challenge in the pluralistic society of the West. There exists a genuine quest for community on the part of many persons who do not relate that quest to a continuing and exclusive emphasis upon their private and individual lives. A renewed awareness is needed in the Christian community in affirming the public and communal dimensions of life. Apart from such awareness, individuality and private life is truncated. In addition, effective educational planning requires the articulation of a shared *paideia* within a particular faith community.

The biblical use of the term refers to nurturing, chastening, and character formation implying that persons are genuinely committed and vitally related to one another in community. It also implies that there exists a vision for excellence within that community which directs the process of forming character, and chastening and nurturing persons. Frank Gaebelein maintains that in Christian education those responsible have a duty to point all persons "to the highest examples of excellence-namely, the most excellent of all books, the Bible, and the most excellent of all persons, Jesus Christ (Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Christian, the Arts, and Truth: Regaining the Vision of Greatness*, ed. Bruce Lockerbie (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah, 1985), 144)." This duty demands the best of efforts to pass on a Christian *paideia*, a Christian world and life view that addresses one's role in society.

In addition to *paideia*, other issues emerge from consideration of the Greek educational heritage. What is the nature of knowledge in a Christian perspective and how is

knowledge related to life? How is reason related to faith? What has Jerusalem to do with Athens? To what extent can Christianity be wed to a particular philosophy or does Christianity itself imply a general philosophy and an educational philosophy? what Christian virtues should be fostered in Christian teaching? How does one balance commitments to the community with personal needs and aspirations? How does one fulfill Christian commitments in both the private and public spheres of life and educate others in these responsibilities?

Abraham Heschel, a Jewish educator, suggests a comparison of the insights from the Greek heritage with those of the Old Testament and today: The Greeks learned in order to comprehend. The Hebrews learned in order to revere. The modern man learns in order to use (Abraham J. Heschel, *Between God and Man: An Interpretation of Judaism from the Writings of Abraham Heschel*, ed. Fritz A. Rothschild (New York: Free Press, 1959), 37)."

Whereas comprehension and the use of learning are important, the challenge remains for Christian educators to enable persons to revere, to appreciate, to stand in awe of and worship God as a result of their teaching. This challenge applies to those who teach in homes as parents and family members, in churches, schools, and communities as teachers, pastors, and fellow Christians, and in all other settings of life.

The New Testament

Beyond the biblical foundations presented above, additional observations can be regarding the practice of education during the New Testament period. The disciples of Jesus followed the Jewish patterns of worship and learning. Several New Testament books evidence the use of different methods of education, most reflecting earlier Jewish customs.

Some persons learned in family settings. Timothy was influenced by both his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5, 3:15). The Ethiopian eunuch was instructed by Phillip before coming to faith, and presumably received some instruction subsequent to his conversion (Acts 8:36-40). Still others assimilated their faith into pagan

and Jewish backgrounds. Paul, for example, was thoroughly trained in the Law under the tutelage of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He made use of this training to become an effective advocate for the faith among both Gentiles and Jews.

Education gradually came to emphasize a distinctive way of life for God's chosen people. Christians were identified as followers of the Way (Acts 9:2; 24:14). Education emphasized the teachings by and about Jesus, for in his very person he represented the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The disciples of Jesus were commissioned to teach others to obey everything Jesus had commanded (Matt. 28:20). Education emphasized the Old Testament background for interpreting the meaning of Jesus' lordship (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39). Creedal summaries and hymns (1 Cor. 15:3-8; Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; Titus 3:4-7) suggest essential truths that the early Christians felt important for converts to learn. In time, certain official teachers arose after the rabbinic pattern whose responsibilities included the preservation, transmission, and interpretation of essential truths to the Christian community. They were called and held responsible for the stewardship of their ministry (James 3:1). Teachers were to insure the perpetuation of the Christian beliefs which were essential for the identity of the Christian community in the midst of a hostile and pluralistic world.

The way of knowing and life in the New Testament called for active engagement in the world in obedience to Christ's reign and in response to the experience of Christ as Lord in the midst of life (See Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 157). This active engagement included the need for careful reflection upon the teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures and the words of Christ as shared and elaborated by his disciples and later recorded. Such reflection was to enable a faithful response to God's calling on the part of the followers of Jesus. Their faith was to be expressed in their way of life. The Miracle of the incarnation was to be repeated in the lives of the disciples through the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Education was to

help persons reflect the renewed image of God through the presence of the risen Christ. In the light of this New Testament perspective, one issue posed for current and future educational efforts is the extent to which educational efforts foster the head, heart, and hand response of persons to the very revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Such a response is to embody in fresh ways the reality of the living Christ in the world.

Early Christianity

In the early church there was an emphasis on the faithful transmission of the Christian heritage. Up until the fourth century, this was done in a hostile society which resulted in a largely counter-cultural stance of contending for the faith. External and internal challenges had to be addressed in carefully reflecting on the faith. In this context the community was maintained by stressing the canon, a rule of faith, and church order. The canon identified those accepted sources which were to ground the faith and be its final authority. The rule of faith included the confession of Jesus' lordship, the Apostles' Creed, and summaries of biblical history which were to be believed by those faithfully following Jesus. Church order specified the organization and discipline necessary to define the true church and those with valid authority in directing the church's shared life (William Bean Kennedy, "Background Historical Understanding for Christian Education" (Union Theological Seminary, 1980), 1). These three elements served to maintain continuity without distortion as the faith addressed a Hellenistic-Roman world marked by cultural and religious pluralism.

Various educational forms emerged to deal with the challenge of interpreting the faith in the light of unfulfilled eschatological expectations. In particular, catechesis arose as an essential component of passing on the faith. John Westerhoff points out that the Greek source for this term refers to resounding or echoing, to celebrating or imitating, to repeating another's words and deeds. When the term catechesis was first used, it referred to instruction by oral repetition in which persons were taught by having them sing out the answers to posed

questions (John Westerhoff, III, "The Challenge: Understanding the Problem of Faithfulness," in *A Faithful Church: Issues in the History of Catechesis*, eds. John H. Westerhoff, III and O. C. Edwards, Jr. (Wilton, Conn: Morehouse-Barlow, 1981), 2). In order to fulfill the need for catechesis, catechumen classes emerged in various localities to support home training and worship services. The form and length of this catechesis varied, but generally the training continued for three years (Michael Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries*, trans. Edward J. Haarl (New York: Sadlier, 1979), 94).

Historical Foundations

This period served as a time of training and probation before full acceptance into the church. Among the catechumens the "hearers" were those considering Christianity, the "Kneelers" remained for prayers after the hearers withdrew, and the "chosen" or actual baptismal candidates were given intensive doctrinal, liturgical, and ascetical training in preparation for baptism and full participation in the life of the church. Following baptism, additional instruction was provided regarding the meaning of the sacraments and other mysteries of the church which had been experienced by new members.

In addition to catechumen classes, catechetical schools were formed. Christianity soon found itself needing highly educated apologists to interpret the faith in Hellenistic terms and to defend it against cultured attackers. At catechetical schools like the university in Alexandria future leaders of Christian thought and life were instructed in the various disciplines and philosophies of Hellenistic culture. Some leaders, such as Tertullian, maintained that to use the thought forms of Greek philosophy to express the gospel was dangerous and even heretical. Other leaders, such as Origen, believed that it was essential to synthesize the Christian faith with contemporary thought forms in order to address the world on its own terms.

The curriculum for Christian education included the reinterpretation or interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Many converts were not Jews and were exposed to the Old Testament for the first time and needed an interpretation of how Jesus' life and ministry related to God's previous dealings with people and creation prior to the incarnation. For those converts who were Jews, the Old Testament had to be reinterpreted in the light of the claims of the Messiah. In addition to the Old Testament, the gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus were shared. Following the death of eyewitnesses, these accounts and their implications were codified to provide an authoritative standard. In addition to the Scriptures, the curriculum was comprised of the confession of faith and teaching of "The

Way." The confession of faith was the affirmation of Jesus' lordship elaborated in the Apostles' Creed. "The Way" specified moral expectations for a follower of Christ which were clearly outlined in the Didache, the earliest extant form of catechetical instruction. Beyond these explicit curricular components, the common life of the Christian community provided the implicit curriculum as non-formal and informal teaching and learning occurred.

As has been suggested for other historical periods, certain issues emerge from the general distinctives of the educational heritage of early Christianity. A recurring issue is continuity. An alternative to this emphasis is one that focuses upon the adaptation of the faith in light of a rapidly changing world and in some cases drastically distinct conditions. A second issue relates to the maintenance of the Christian community.

Foundational Issues in Christian Education

In the early church the constant threat of annihilation required an emphasis on order, discipline, and clear guidelines, but in a more accommodating societal and cultural context an emphasis upon ardor rather than order may be appropriate. Certainly the loss of community rather than its maintenance may be more of a contemporary concern, but the need to balance both continuity and discontinuity is posed in each historical setting of the Christian church. The tasks of education in the midst of these issues are to raise such questions and to suggest possible ways to resolving inevitable tensions.

Membership in the early church implied costly discipleship and serious commitment in stark contrast with many contemporary congregations in the West. There is a need to make church membership mean something more than occasional attendance, financial giving or even the mere appearance of one's name on a church roll. The radical demands of following Christ must be made explicit through educational efforts that move the church beyond a faithless cultural accommodation to a faithful response. A final issue is posed in terms of the

inclusion of definite ethical demands as a part of the curriculum where "The Way" is specified and persons are actually expected to fulfill their ethical responsibilities, allowing for the place of forgiveness and operation of God's grace in the midst of human frailty and sin.

The Middle Ages

After Constantine and the establishment of Christianity, the role of Christian education changed. The church no longer required intensive training for those joining its numbers. Church leaders had to find new ways to nurture large numbers of persons and lead them to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the faith. With the fall of Rome and the collapse of imperial power, the church became the social institution with continuing influence. As a result of a power vacuum, ecclesiastical interest increased in the direction of all areas of human life. The emerging dominance of the church had a profound impact upon education.

Worship emerged as the chief medium of Christian education. Although Worship was directed chiefly toward God, the developing richness of symbolism in architecture and art taught lessons of the faith to participants. The elaborate character of worship included the mass, which was celebrated daily; the various Christian festivals associated with the liturgical calendar; and the religious drama of the morality and mystery plays.

Historical Foundations

Along with drama and architectural and artistic symbolism, penitential literature addressed ethical concerns. All of these non-formal vehicles functioned to convey the Christian message to a largely illiterate population who for the most part had no access to formal Christian education. The very fabric of the shared life of the church with its sacraments provided cognitive input to supplement the affective input of drama and

counseling, and the visual input of architecture. Thus socialization, acculturation, and enculturation provided the vehicles for educating the masses.

During this time the family declined in its relative importance in educating for the faith. Celibacy or the single life emerged as a viable option and manifested a redefinition of the Christian faith. Those intensely committed to spiritual formation could opt for life in monasteries and convents which sought to foster community and a sense of order through common discipline, manual labor, and spiritual exercises. The rise of alternative communities to the family as the center for Christian education must be seen in relation to economic developments in which survival was all-consuming concern. Primary energies were devoted to economic sustenance, and opportunities for reflection and learning were extremely limited outside of the worship experience for the common folk.

Formal education was conducted in monastic and cathedral schools as well as universities (beginning in the twelfth century). Such education was reserved primarily for a few young men entering the orders. These schools eventually broadened their curricula after 800 to include the seven liberal arts, and were the forerunners of later universities. From approximately A.D. 500 to 1000 monastic schools were centers of intellectual activity, but as large cities grew, collegiate church schools or cathedral schools emerged. Their curricula stressed the liberal arts and humanities, in addition to theology; the focus was not upon personal piety. In the twelfth century, universities grew out of the cathedral school movement; they sought to produce both a professional and scholastic mind. Their origin reflected the growth of cities, the rise of a middle class, and new intellectual interests stimulated by contacts with Moslems. The universities were not narrowly religious in focus, and most students studied law, medicine, and other secular subjects in preparation for careers outside the church. Increasingly the church, government and theology itself were subjected to critical inquiry in the universities despite their rigid and formalized instruction.

Foundational Issues in Christian Education

In Children Without Childhood, Marie Winn suggests that North American society is moving toward a "New Middle Ages" in how it relates to and educates children (Marie Winn, *Children Without Childhood: Growing Up Too Fast in the World of Sex and Drugs* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 205-10). She points out a shift in focus upon children being protected and differentiated from adults in the past century to a current emphasis on the preparation of children for adult life which places them in an undifferentiated position. Her provocative suggestion is that this move re-institutes a view popular in the Middle Ages. Winn's analysis, if correct, maintains that current educational efforts have focused on children gaining awareness of the responsibilities and realities of the adult world. Such an exposure assumes that children need to know about both the positive and negative dimensions of life, often in areas which they cannot handle.

The issue posed for Christian educators is whether they should maintain a guarded environment for children and youth or expose them to societal realities with adequate opportunity for dialogue and reflection. One youth worker, for example, was faced with the dilemma of being invited to a questionable video movie with youth with the possibility of discussing its portrayal of life with them or opting to refuse their invitation and to discourage the viewing. In this case he chose to view the video and was able to discuss the debasement of human sexuality and the alternatives suggested by the Christian faith.

Beyond the issue of children being protected or prepared, the increase in the options of a celibate or single life have resulted in persons opting out of marriage, birthing, and parenting within marriage. These developments raise the issue of the place of family in local church efforts. In that a large portion of the adult population is single, the local church must consider educational programming that includes singles, childless couples, and others, and that is sensitive to their needs. Jesus, who was himself a single adult, may not be welcome in

some churches which have an exclusive emphasis on the nuclear family. The church is a household of faith.

Paralleling medieval developments of increased anomaly and a plurality of visions for life, the local church in modern times must address the need for a unifying center in communal life. Without understanding the Christian call to corporate life that affects the public and wider society, a narrow concern for personal survival and a fortress mentality can emerge which isolates persons. Certainly, the church must address the genuine needs of food, clothing, and shelter, but an educational agenda must also emphasize the Christian responsibility to care for the world as God's creation and the stewardship of resources beyond the maintenance of any personal, familial, or national fortress.

Historical Foundations

Beyond the walls of present-day monasteries and convents are vast areas of human enterprise which require the presence and work of Christians who can make a difference by the grace of God.

Two additional issues are suggested by the educational heritage from the Middle Ages. The increased interest in spiritual disciplines and formation which characterized monastic developments can be affirmed as they foster necessary communion with God and reflection in a rapidly paced world. Christian education efforts must seriously evaluate the extent to which persons are encouraged to grow in their personal relationship with God, provided a concern for the private sphere does not neglect the public and corporate responsibilities of Christians. An emphasis on personal spiritual piety can readily degenerate into a pietism devoid of concern for the wider community and culture. Evangelicals have been particularly delinquent in this area as they have neglected Jesus' call to work for justice and peace.

A second issue is posed by the extensive use of visual communication during the Middle Ages. A loss of the impact of the written word can be noted in a media-oriented society like

the United States, paralleling the lack of availability of the written word and formal education in supplement visually oriented technologies and forms to teach the Christian faith? Fewer people are reading books in the United States and the rise of various visual media demand a critical and appropriate response by Christians in order to effectively address persons without diluting the message of the gospel.

The Renaissance

The Renaissance was a reawakening, a rebirth, a renewal of learning which took place in the fourteen, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. A reawakening interest in the classical sources originated in Italy, but spread to other parts of Europe. Corresponding to this classical interest was a rise in humanism, with persons and their world rather than God and heaven as the focal point of human interest. A new emphasis on individualism began to develop, reflecting a break with traditionalism and a reaction to ecclesiastical despotism that characterized medieval society. These shifts occurred in the context of chaotic societal change with great ferment in the political, social, economic cultural, and intellectual dimensions of life.

Various areas of life affected by the Renaissance in turn influenced education. Education became important to individual cities, with rich merchants and powerful banking houses supporting and sponsoring learning. Political tensions between the papacy and various princes and rulers resulted in an emphasis on education as serving the state and society at large. A scientific revolution, beginning with Roger Bacon's inquiries, fostered a focus on the created world rather than its Creator. This new interest in science resulted in shifts in the curricula of schools. Much experimentation developed in music, architecture, literature, and the arts. In the area of religion, increased interest in differing perspectives was fostered through the printing of religious books which, though expensive, were in demand.

Many Renaissance leaders and thinkers might be characterized as seeing the chief purpose of persons as glorifying human life and enjoying the world to the fullest.

A broadening aim characterized Renaissance education, with more emphasis on individual development. Individuals were viewed as increasingly separate identities from their communities, but possessing sufficient personal influence to affect those communities. The great technological advance of printing made self-education possible. Greek and Roman classics were re-appropriated through Moslem and Jewish scholarship, which provided vast resources for curricular expansion along with increased scholarship and study in the areas of the humanities, arts, and sciences.

Issues which emerge from the Renaissance reintroduce questions from the Greek educational heritage, in particular, the place of human reason in relation to the Christian faith. For some Renaissance thinkers, reason was enthroned above faith. There was a tendency to place the humanities, science, and arts on an equal footing with the revealed truths of Christianity.

Evangelicals, in contrast, maintain that all truth is God's truth, but not all truth is of the same order or on the same level. The question of priority is important and evangelicals assert that only the truth revealed in Christ and in Scripture comprises the ultimate and unifying perspective for learning and life. Anything less can make persons the measure of all things. Faith in Christ and reliance upon Scripture are to have a higher priority over those insights gained through human reason and experience.

Augustine maintained that if one did not believe in God that person would not come to know the essential truth. Anselm of Canterbury in the eleventh century stated, "Believe that you may know." Evangelicals suggest that this principle also extends beyond religious faith to other endeavors in that believing, as commitment, leads to the knowledge of truth.

Historical Foundations

This stance in Christian education implies the need to emphasize personal belief in Christ and Scripture as the essential foundation for inquiry in the pursuit for knowledge and truth.

This reliance upon Christ and Scripture follows from the recognition of the presence of sin and the fallen nature of persons which affects the use of unaided reason, not subject to divine revelation. Given the presence of personal and corporate sin, Christian education must address the areas of moral and ethical character formation to supplement intellectual training, but not in a way that violates the worth and dignity of persons as God's creatures. How this balance is achieved presents a continual problem in the actual practice of education. For example, what is the place of doubt and questioning? The use of reason implies posing questions and having doubts, even about certain truths which Christianity has historically defended. Posing questions becomes the very occasion for discovery and inquiry using the capacities of human reason created by God.

The Reformation

Medieval patterns of education (home training, worship, pastoral teaching, and guidance) continued past the schism of the church (Kennedy, "Christian Education Through History," 24). Home training made use of a number of catechisms written for both children and adults, and parents were held responsible for the religious training of their children. Worship included the liturgy, but the sermon also took on new importance as a primary vehicle for teaching. Pastoral preaching and teaching were revised to encourage that active participation of laity as learners; pastors were to assume the educational leadership of their congregations. Guidance was provided by church leaders and parents who sought to encourage personal appropriation of the Christian faith. An additional educational form for Roman Catholics was the confessional, which provided additional personalized guidance and teaching. The

Authority of the Bible was emphasized with a return to the sources of the Christian faith. Historical-grammatical exegesis of the texts in their original languages resulted in a new appreciation of biblical truths. *Sola scriptural* affirmed the sole and final authority of the Scriptures over that of the church.

There was an emphasis on justification by faith (*sola fide*). A distinction was made between faith and belief. Faith emphasized with whom one walked, whereas belief emphasized content and creed. Both faith and belief were important, but salvation was seen in terms of personal faith, a personal commitment to and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Hence, there was a new concern for the evangelistic dimension of the Christian faith; salvation centered in personal response in addition to participation in the church's life. Another principle was the priesthood of all believers. Each and every person had access to God through Christ and had significance in Christ's body, the church.

These three principles fostered a new vision for Christian education cast in terms of universal education. The aim of Christian education was to train all Christians to be priests of the living God. This was to be realized in part through translating the Bible into the vernacular. One could know God directly through reading Scripture with the eyes of faith. For education this implied that each individual was important and that reading was an essential skill for each and every person. Preaching was revitalized as well and was viewed as teaching persons to assume their personal responsibilities before God. Preaching was not evangelistic in its primary thrust, but expounded the biblical tradition in a didactic manner to foster its personal appropriation by all God's people. The home was viewed as an extension of the church for instruction of all its members. Luther stressed the centrality of home instruction by writing catechisms for children and regularly encouraging parents to assume their teaching responsibilities.

Because an educated citizenry was valued and domestic training was inadequate, state-supported schools arose. These schools were supported by those in political power, often in cooperation with the church. State-supported education generally developed along two tracks or levels. On the lower level vernacular elementary schools sought to teach children how to read. On the upper level elementary and Latin grammar schools and the universities sought to teach those with promise to become future societal and church leaders. Despite these efforts, the realization of compulsory universal education awaited later historical developments.

Noteworthy in the efforts of the Reformers is the inclusion of girls along with boys in the schools established by John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland, and John Knox in Scotland.

Given the potential impact of a revived Christian education, teachers had an essential role which demanded both dedication and training. Calvin, for example, stressed the need to train ministers as teachers because of their place in the community. As the major educated person in the community, the minister became the chief teacher or school supervisor, and the importance of right doctrine required that teaching be a high priority in pastoral ministry (Kennedy, "Christian Education Through History," 24).

Historical Foundations

During the Reformation, education for the sake of the community of faith—for its protection, its enhancement, or its extension—began to share primacy with education for the development of the individual. Christian education was first for one's personal response to God, but increasingly for the fulfillment of one's individual potential as God's unique creation with a contribution to make to the larger community. Thus there emerged an increased appreciation of the nature of the Christian calling or vocation to be in the world serving God and others. This responsibility belonged to each priest, each faithful believer in Jesus Christ.

By comparing and contrasting developments in the Renaissance and Reformation, it is possible to identify issues for educational thought and practice. A number of similarities between the Renaissance and Reformation, can be noted. Both movements were expressions of societal renewal: in the case of the Renaissance the renewal was cultural and intellectual; in the Reformation, it was primarily theological and ecclesial. In both periods the individual was affirmed: in the Renaissance the autonomy of persons was stressed; in the Reformation a new sense of individual faith fostered personal reading of Scripture and the personal responsibilities of Christians to be God's priests in the Christian community and in the world. In terms of education, both movements expanded the curriculum beyond traditional areas of study. Finally, both movements represented a break with tradition and a questioning of existing authorities. In the Renaissance a questioning of the political power and mind-set of the state and church developed; and in the Reformation serious questions were raised about established religious norms and church traditions. These similarities indicate the potential for renewal and change that can significantly affect all dimensions of life. They also indicate the potential costs of implementing change and the need to raise questions about the limits of that change.

By way of contrast, the Renaissance and Reformation represent distinct commitments and world views. The following contrasts can be noted:

- Whereas the Renaissance generally focused upon persons, the Reformation centered life and education upon God, evidencing a renewed consideration of persons as God's creatures with definite privileges and responsibilities.
- Whereas the Renaissance centered primarily on the elite, the Reformation included the masses of society as well.
- In the Reformation spiritual renewal was primary, whereas the Renaissance centered upon cultural and intellectual renewal. But spiritual renewal and cultural or intellectual renewal are not mutually exclusive.

In Reformation thought, human reason was viewed as fallen and subject to God's revelation in Scripture, whereas in certain Renaissance developments human reason was

perceived as perfected. Given the Reformers' sensitivity to human depravity their primary source for understanding was the Bible, but biblical truths were integrated with insights gained through reason and experience.

- In contrast with a Reformed focus on the Bible, Renaissance thinkers primarily relied on extrabiblical classical literature.
- Reformers stressed the use of the vernacular in disseminating knowledge in contrast with the exclusive use of classical languages by Renaissance scholars who were not necessarily committed to universal education. Nevertheless, many of the Reformers were schooled in classical studies and used classical languages in their scholarship.
- A final contrast might be stated in terms of the ultimate goal of education. In the Reformation knowledge was viewed in relation to the higher goal of commitment to and communion with God, whereas in the Renaissance traditional knowledge itself was a goal, largely irrespective of God's revelation.

In relation to each of the above contrasts, choices must be made and priorities set in relation to basic educational thought and practice. Each contrast can be best thought of as representing a possible continuum of emphases upon divine and human-centeredness. A Christian world view must remain faithful to God's revelation while being sensitive to human realities.

John T. McNeil maintains that the Reformers differed from Christian humanists in that they emphasized the majesty and holiness of God, the sinfulness of persons, and the gulf between God and persons reconcilable only in Jesus Christ (John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York Oxford University Press, 1967). But in the Renaissance there were those who could be identified as moderate, radical, and Christian humanists. Erasmus best typified the Christian humanist who influenced the Reformers. The young John Calvin hoped to see humanism contained within the bounds of decent responsibility. Thus the Renaissance and Reformation pose the issue of the relationship between theism and humanism in the context of the very human enterprise of education which seeks to be faithful to God. Certainly the roots of the Reformation were in the

Renaissance, but subsequent historical developments posed many questions regarding the central thrusts and emphases of educational commitments.

The United States

In dealing with the complexity of the post-Reformation, education developments in the United States will be considered in this section while recognizing that significant changes have occurred in other contexts as a result of a host of intellectual, political, economic and social factors which include the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and increased urbanization and plurality. In addressing these complex developments, Lawrence Cremin proposes a network or configuration of institutions that educate. These social institutions include the family, church, community, school, various agencies, the media, and others. Each institution has its own values, assumptions, and agenda which are either explicit or implicit in teaching its members or participants. *

Awareness of educational configurations forces the evangelical educator to consider a vast array of institutions and their interrelationships far beyond parochial concerns. For example, those primarily concerned with church education via the Sunday school cannot neglect the educational impacts of families, schools, communities, media, and the larger society in planning and implementing programs. Such influences must be considered in identifying purposes, developing strategies, implementing programs, and evaluating efforts. In addition, networks must be established with other institutions or vehicles for processing their messages, if the church is to be effective. To neglect to do so is shortsighted and consigns evangelical efforts to cultural backwaters.

The relationships among the institutions or agencies constituting an educational configuration can be described as confirming, complementing, and/or contradicting one another. Institutions confirm one another by supporting the same message and encouraging compliance with certain guidelines. For example, the church can confirm the role of the

family by encouraging children to honor and obey their parents and to heed the truths passed on by parents. Likewise, parents can confirm the role of the church by encouraging children to learn from, respect and obey Sunday school teachers, pastors, and other adults in the church setting. Parents can also confirm the church's message through their active participation and support of the church and by modeling the church's teachings.

Relationships between institutions can also be described as complementing one another in the sense of having input and impacts that supply areas lacking in the other compatible institutions. For example, schools can complement families in certain settings by supplying lunches for children from homes that cannot supply them. In a similar way, parents can complement the school by tutoring their children in subjects that teachers cannot address. Parents may be also able to complement or supplement the emphases in Sunday school curriculum through family devotional times, elaborating themes and concepts shared by teachers.

A third possible relationship is contradictory in the sense that institutions may have distinctly different messages that create dissonance and conflicts for participants. A contemporary example of this is the relationship between the agenda of certain segments of commercial television and the values supported by the Christian church or family. Commercial television generally defines the good life in terms of the abundance of goods a person possesses. This stance contradicts Christian concerns for stewardship and service in a world of declining resources. Another example of a contradictory relationship is the perception of some Christian parents that the public schools' secular humanism directly opposes Christian values and truths. This perception has resulted in the increased development of Christian private and home schools which confirm and/or complement a Christian world view held by the family.

In addition to these three designations to describe the relationships among institutions in an educational configuration, configurations as a whole or in part interact with the larger

society. An example of this is a Christian family that takes a strong counter-cultural stance and as a result decides not to own a television, attend movies, frequent public places or relate to local public communities. The Amish and Bruderhof communities represent guarded Christian enclaves which opt for a more cloistered and separated life in relation to the larger society.

Using this concept of an educational configuration, the shifting relationships and perspectives of the constituents of Christian education efforts can be traced. Rather than attempt to recount a vast and diverse array of shifts, developments in general education in the United States as traced by Cremin will be described with implications for Christian education.

* Lawrence A. Cremin, lecture presented at Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, New York, 18 December 1978. See also Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience 1783-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); and his forthcoming volume, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience*.

Historical Foundations

Cremin identifies five major thrusts which characterize American education. First, there are a multiplicity of educational institutions. The impact of these institutions differs with the individual. Some people gain their education through self-education rather than through the direct efforts of a traditional educational agency or program. For example, persons may be educated primarily through personal study, observation, and reflection, using resources made available through libraries or other information storage agencies. An implication for Christian educators is the need to carefully assess the particular educational configurations of persons with whom one is ministering. Persons who are primarily self-educated may need

increased access to resources and opportunities to share with others what they have gained through their study and experience.

Christian educators must also assess the extent to which inputs from other social institutions and society in general confirm, complement, and/or contradict the truths and values of a Christian world view. On the basis of this assessment, decisions must be made regarding possible Christian responses to the particular historical context. The allocation of personnel, material resources, and time requires a reading of the times in the light of the past and the projected future. Christian educators must ask about the ways in which teaching in any institution, agency, or program were or are educative in terms of specified purposes. One challenge posed for current Christian education efforts is how parents, pastors, teachers, and others should respond to the increased impact of the media.

Cremin's second point in assessing developments in the United States is that at different times society has placed its emphases in different institutions. During the colonial period (1607- 1783), the family and church were the educational institutions of primary importance and society was to be saved and bettered through their teaching efforts. Colonial developments did evidence distinct configurations in New England, the Middle Colonies, and the South, but the efforts of the family and church generally confirmed and complemented one another. During the national period (1783-1876), the school (in particular, the public school) along with the church was to educate persons and save society. This occurred in the context of a rapidly expanding nation and the increased separation of church and state. During the metropolitan period (1876-1986), the school and various child rearing or rehabilitative institutions were to make for an educated and good society.

Each of these emphases had varied success and has been viewed differently by historians from various perspectives intended to save all, but their effects varied. Some people were significantly served and bettered through their educational experiences in the dominant educational configuration, whereas others were not served. Cremin's account indicates the

decreased role of the church amidst the increasing secularization of life, but does not indicate that Christians cannot influence the educational efforts of society in general. This scenario suggests that the church has a key role to play in raising critical questions about the dominant educational configuration and in proposing alternatives from the perspective of a marginal status. This marginal status is implied by the decreased impact of Christian values in the wider society.

Third, in the United States a concerted effort has been made in the schools to balance the societal ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Liberty can be viewed as the right to strive for educational, social, political, and economic achievement. Equality traditionally has been viewed as equal opportunity for all, but in the twentieth century has been redefined in terms of results. Fraternity can be defined as the concern for human community and the desire to build a new and good society with education at its heart. Given the ever present plurality of persons in the United States, the realization of community has necessitated an interaction and mix of persons and groups. In such a mix, a constant tension exists between maintaining one's distinct identity and entering the mainstream of society. This tension has been particularly acute for those coming from cultural and racial backgrounds other than that of northern Protestant Europe. In addition, the two primal crimes of the United States, namely the genocide of American Indians and the system of chattel slavery of blacks have perpetuated a struggle with racism and discrimination. Thus the ideal of liberty must address the liberation of persons currently excluded from society along with a commitment to the responsibilities liberty entails; the ideal of equality must address the fact that some are perceived as more equal than others; and the ideal of fraternity must assess the nature of the community which has excluded some from full membership.

Christian educators can relate to the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity in terms of the Christian gospel. Liberty can be defined as the freedom made available in Jesus Christ. Yet this freedom must not be viewed in isolation from the corresponding obligation of

covenant, with responsibilities to God, other persons, and the creation. Equality can be defined as equal access to God through Jesus Christ. The gospel embodies a commitment to view each person as having infinite worth and dignity by virtue of being created in God's image. Fraternity can be defined in terms of the common humanity of all persons and the unique relationships that exist in Christian community. Christian educators can affirm these three ideals in their educational efforts, but they must always be related to the whole counsel of God as revealed in Scripture.

Fourth, there has been a persistent effort to popularize education, to make it more readily available to all persons. This popularization involves access, content, and control. The advantages and disadvantages in population can be cited in terms of the inevitable tensions between quantity and quality. Popularization may result in the vulgarization of knowledge and truth, while lack of popularization results in an elitism which is inherently prejudicial.

Cremin's fifth and final observation is that historical record of education in the United States reveals that efforts have been both oppressive and/or liberating, depending upon the persons or groups involved. Christians have been both faithful and unfaithful in sharing the faith and though the prospects of popularizing the faith are not an option, the concern is to enable every person to hear the claims of Christ in a way that enables a knowledgeable response. The call is to faithfulness over against a popular accommodation of the faith, while sharing the Christian world view in ways which others can understand. In relation to Cremin's fourth and fifth points, it must be asked if evangelical communities have vulgarized the gospel in the effort to be popular in society and have therefore oppressed those persons who need to hear the whole counsel of God. This may be the case if an emphasis on personal transformation has neglected the call for social transformation.

History and Philosophy of Education Final Exam

1. Describe briefly each historical educational period in the manual.

a. Old Testament

b. Greek heritage

c. New Testament

d. Middle Ages

e. Renaissance

f. Reformation

g. United States

2. Describe briefly each philosophy of education described in the manual.

a. Perennialism

b. Essentialism

c. Behaviorism

d. Progressivism

e. Reconstructionism

f. Romantic Naturalism

g. Existentialism

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