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The Language of Relationships in Christian Education

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THE LANGUAGE OF RELATIONSHIPS

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

Short Title:

Christian Educational Sociology

by

Robert E. Redieck

June 1959

Approved by: _____
                              Advisor

_____
                              Reader

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Our Church has been accused of intellectualism. Our
educational efforts are said to have produced a "confirma-
tion complex," resulting in a false understanding of the
Christian faith. However, in actual practice the Church
teaches both by its words and by its non-verbal setting.
It is thought that it would be helpful to study this non-
verbal context, especially in terms of relationships. As a
suggestion for a partial remedy this thesis explores the
media of personal relationships for education.

Even a simple relationship between two persons dynami-
cally affects them both by "attracting, staying neutral, or
repelling."[1] The personal relationships which exist be-
tween man and man, and between man and God, are extensive
and constant. They have such a communicative significance
for education that they may be called a "language of rela-
tionships." Though this language is both verbal and non-
verbal, conscious and unconscious, it is always a real means
of Christian training in the Word of God. "The language by
which we communicate the truth of God at work in history

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[1]Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York:
The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 11.

and in the lives of men is the language of relationships."[2]

Before going on with an outline of this thesis, let us amplify this introduction to the subject. It is a fact that one person, simply because he is a person, has a deep effect on the other person. Often, our influence is not what we say to another, but what we are. A man standing beside a tree can regard it or ignore it. Yet that same man standing beside another person finds himself in the presence of something immovable and influential upon him. He cannot avoid it. He cannot avoid being changed by the encounter, simply because there beside him is something deep and relevant, something just like and corresponding to his own deep self. Simply because a person is another person, not a tree, one person has an automatic interest in and susceptibility to the other. Therefore, a genuine, deep, and influential communication goes on between two people. It is a real message, a real language being spoken without words. The language exists by relationship. Relationship, just like speech, can be cut off. For example, refusing to listen in a city bus accomplishes much the same as acting aloof and refusing to sit near another. But the language of personable nearness is unique. Face-to-face, non-verbal influence is unique in that it affects another

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[2]Randolph Crump Miller, <u>Education for Christian Living</u> (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 11.

especially because it goes unobserved and unnoticed. We can disagree with ideas in our heads, but we can not deny a whole society of people who unitedly tell us, for example, that we are unlikeable. Unlike mere words, people are a persistent pressure around us.

More fully, personal relationships make us what we are. What others do makes us what we will be. They determine what we will understand words to mean. Howe's description of this process is fittingly informal, when he says:

> My friendliness helps you to become friendly, my trustworthiness helps you to become trustworthy; or my hostility causes you to become hostile, my anxiety causes you to become anxious. If I affirm, you will become affirmative. This is what I call the language of relationship, the communication that results from living together and which gives us the basic and personal meanings for the words we hear and use.[3]

This has great significance for the educational situation. That an instructor affects his student in more ways than by his words is a fact long known. However, the fact has implications greater than before realized. Today we see that the education conveyed by personality has not only been assisted, but often negated by these unseen personality forces. Sometimes personality negates the effect of words. So tremendous is personality influence that we suspect it may be the bigger factor. Words are not useless, but words seem only to explicate and make understandable a greater

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[3]Reuel L. Howe, _Man's Need and God's Action_ (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1953), p. 75.

lesson of life underneath--that of love or security. Words only summate, direct, and explain a small part of man, his head. What about his heart, that greater part? With all of education's arithmetic, geography, and words, it cannot ignore relationship to God. Today we see man as more than a brain. With all his thoughts, man seems changed best not by more thoughts, but by the presence or absence of forgiveness. Uniquely, whole persons are that creation among all things most fittingly created to portray God's forgiveness as personally real.

Since our topic is Christian education, our concern for relationships is not only in the formal class situation, but everywhere in the parish where one Christian person influences another. Perhaps these informal situations are the biggest part of Christian education. Perhaps peer, job, and family influences are stronger than any "teacher." Perhaps even in formal teaching occasions when Johnny sits next to Billy in the Sunday School circle, each with lesson leaflet in hand, the real education often goes on between them. We could not begin to list all the potential which exists between father and son, between pulpit and pew, pew and pew, among adults at work. This paper will not study each educational opportunity as separate units in themselves. Relationship situations are as numerous as mankind's configurations. We will only point up the dynamic of relationships that is sure to go on in all of them. At

the risk of limiting practical applications, we concentrate
on theory.   Fundamental to this thesis is a call to the
Church and all its educational opportunities today.   We
have long enough tried to lift out the Word as sheer words,
separable from people.   It is agreed in many circles that
Howe writes correctly:

> There is abundant evidence that the Church in carrying
> on its teaching function has put too much faith in the
> use of words and used too little the language of rela-
> tionship.[4]

Our thesis' subject is arranged as follows: After this
first introduction, we proceed to a second chapter on the
capacity of relationships to bear the Word of God, then a
third on the relationships of the Word in the Church, and
finally the dynamics of relationships as they, through the
Word, affect the churched individual internally, in a
fourth chapter.

The materials for this study come from the extremely
unsystematic theological and sociological writings on re-
lationships.   However, final definitude in this complex
subject is naturally far from the scope of any one source,
of all of them together, or even of this thesis.   Therefore,
a word about the general attitude of this thesis is neces-
sary.   The basic and first relationship of God to man as
being through the Holy Spirit is recognized.   No thesis can
finally explain how this is possible, because the Spirit is

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[4]Howe, op. cit., p. 73.

defined as That of God's gracious operation which is inde-
finable. We must begin every human work acknowledging that
we can never completely discuss any subject, especially the
divine. We write in word expressions, waiting for heaven
and the Spirit's own thesis without words.

RELATIONSHIPS AND THE WORD

What is there in common between the language of relationships and the Word of God? By the "language of relationships" we explore here the Lutheran and orthodox concept of the Word of God. Under this broad concept we examine specifically His Word of Redemption communicated by extra-sacramental and extra-verbal means, the Word conveyed by person-to-person relations. Does the Word of God extend its expression to those channels which today are thought of in sociological categories?

The "Word" is a difficult subject to write about, especially these days when controversy is so sharpened. So much has been said on so many sides that it is hard to suggest any discussion, for it is sure to have been labeled heretical at least somewhere in the arena of argument. Yet to explain again is our constant task. We volunteer entering the fray merely to point up the fact that no matter what the Word of God finally and definably is, the language of relationships does partake of it. The fact is obvious, and yet unobserved. What if the Gospel would be left without the person who witnesses it? Throughout the centuries it has always been the teacher's person which has taught the faith. Lively trust comes only from lively trust. We

gaze at history, past and present. The saints sacrificed; others tramped the snow; the patient went unapplauded; the helpful were hated; brothers upheld each other. They all make sense when intellectualized, but the Gospel is not mere explanation. Lives are the Gospel--the lives of our forgiving fathers, repentant mothers, and sharing brothers. We who sit at the feet of teachers gaze at more than their vision of Christ's death. While we see in our minds the forgiving One they speak of, we see with our eyes the faces which have found forgiveness. No definition of God's Word of forgiveness can be complete. But no definition would ever be nearly complete without consideration of this Word in communicated life.

The Word as Every Ordained Symbol

No matter how important sacred vocabulary may come to be in traditional teaching, it is the relationships between the old and the young which give these old theological words their entire meanings. Says Howe:

> In order for words to have this power of conveying the meaning of the fellowship to the individual, it is necessary for the fellowship to assume relationship responsibility for the meanings the individual should bring to the hearing of the word.[1]

No word contains all it means. Mere verbage does not

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[1]Reuel L. Howe, Man's Need and God's Action (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1953), p. 74.

exhaust the variety of the Word of God, as Miller explains:

> This language of relationship is something prior to
> and deeper than words. It is illustrated by the child
> who learns to trust his mother because of her trust-
> worthiness; it is the language of love that far trans-
> cends any words of the lovers, although we thank God
> for "words to tell our loving." Words, at best, are
> symbols of experienced relationships, especially the
> great words of religion: faith, hope, love, law,
> grace.[2]

The Word has often been defined by words as words.[3] But
words are only symbols, and they are not the only symbols
God uses. Relationship symbols must precede verbal sym-
bols. Sherrill writes:

> Nonverbal communication thus precedes verbal communi-
> cation. This is now generally understood in psychol-
> ogy and psychotherapy, and it holds true of course in
> religion. . . . Acceptance and rejection do not have
> to be verbalized in order to be communicated.[4]

In rather lofty language Johnson discusses this relation-
ship via symbol in the following paragraph:

> God is the "subject" of our ultimate concern, and he
> has chosen to reveal himself most significantly at the
> human level through the person of Jesus Christ. All
> that can be said about the nature of God in this re-
> vealing event must be said in symbolical form. Here
> the human mind in its relationship with the divine

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[2]Randolph Crump Miller, Education for Christian Living
(Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 71.

[3]"Holy Scripture and the Word of God are interchange-
able terms," quoted from John Theodore Mueller, Christian
Dogmatics (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House,
1951), p. 98.

[4]Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York:
The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 164. In this quotation
the word "symbol" is used as equivalent to words, which is
a different use than this thesis presents.

throws out symbols which represent the character of
the divine-human relationship and its meaning to those
involved in it. This provides the content of the re-
ligious experience, which the mind of man can grasp
and struggle with, seeking for the deeper meanings of
the encounter. Since religious symbols which arise in
this way actually participate in the reality to which
they have reference, they provide a definite form which
gives content. However, because they come to be as a
part of a dynamic personal relationship, sharing in
the power of self-expression of persons (I-Thou), they
never are definitional in character in the sense of
saying that the truth of the relationship is "nothing
else than" at any one point in it. Symbols of the
faith relationship are therefore never static in na-
ture. They constantly entice the participant to move
beyond the particular aspect of the reality which they
represent, to grasp more of the depth of the reality,
the entire meaning of which symbols can never exhaust.
Thus religious symbols unite their definite form with
an infinite meaning which evokes creativity. Symbols
of the faith relationship lend themselves then as ex-
pressions and media of the learning enterprise, as
means of communication, when learning is considered in
terms of dynamic relationship between and among per-
sons, both human and divine.[5]

We must discuss symbol and reality. God is real. And

under Him, emanating from Him, is His real Word. And below

this realm is the strata of His created reality of things.

God so deigns that real material things partake of His real

Word. Under God's Will things can symbolize a more real as-

pect of reality than profane use indicates. Things can sig-

nal His real Word. But only certain things. Only those

things He so ordained to be used by His People will point

to His peculiar and lovely aspect. His Word is Love through

things. This Word can enter and be conveyed through

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[5]Johnson, The Minister and Christian Nurture, edited
by N. F. Forsyth (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), pp. 74-5.

anything which partakes of God's Love. The Word of God is any symbol of His Love which corresponds with that <u>Logos</u>, Jesus Christ. Then His Word is not only to be found in our words, but in our actions, emotions, yearnings, relationships, concerns, and failures. There is sufficient material for communication from among things in our abundance of life, as Sherrill asserts:

> One of the marks which distinguish communication in the Christian community from other forms of communication is the fact that the Christian church holds in common <u>an extraordinarily rich body of symbols for communication</u> regarding the anxieties, the concerns, the tensions, the relationships, and the interaction of human existence, and the divine response through revelation and through grace, to these concerns of human life.[6]

These symbols in His Word come personably, and more curiously, they come as personality in persons. Until the Word of God is regarded as being also extra-verbal, we are far from definition. The non-intellectual sacraments prove this.

The Word as in the Sacramental

It is the mark of a heretic to go about randomly labeling things "sacramental." Jesus Christ does <u>not</u> come through a lotus blossom, or the like. Our Savior has lifted out of all created things those which are to be preserved within His congregation as His means. But when

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[6]Sherrill, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., pp. 84-5.

something within His people promotes His dying, substitu-
tionary image, it should not be rejected. Even if He shows
His forgiveness amid the sins of forgiven witnesses, who
are we to judge His use? The three means of grace (or
four, however the Confessions are read) are not to be so
delineated and narrowed as to refuse His Spirit's operation
when it is not in water, wine, or bread, written or orally
verbal. Though a certain Means of the Spirit may not be
traditionally categorized as "Sacrament" or "Word," it
might be considered "sacramental." However, it can only be
called sacramental if it relates Jesus Christ in Atonement.
As Howe verifies, it certainly is true of God that:

> He created persons for personal relations with Him and
> with one another, and that the world of things was to
> serve a sacramental purpose, namely, to be the instru-
> ment of fulfilling relations between man and man, and
> man and God.[7]

This is not an attempt to canonize the language of relation-
ships as "sacramental." But whether so pigeonholed or not,
we cannot ignore the tremendous influence of church member
upon church member--for good and for evil. Just what is
this influence? Some feel it is not worth studying or
worth integrating into an understanding of the Word. The
"language of relationships" sounds useless. But theology
is not above relevancy. A theology of relationships sounds
unorthodox. But such delicate subjects as this, the Word

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[7]Howe, op. cit., p. 24.

amid the communion of saints, should not always be left for
"further study."

Surely, people are the media for the Word. It has al-
ways been so, claims Sherrill, for:

> human nature is viewed in the Bible as a medium of
> revelation. . . . It is good, not because it is ex-
> traordinary, but just because it is ordinary. So prom-
> inent is this element in Biblical revelation that
> William Temple could speak of "the sacramental view
> of the universe," in which the spiritual can be seen
> disclosed through the material. The common relation-
> ships of life and the common acts of the day are con-
> stantly being drawn upon to furnish symbols for some
> aspect of what God is and does. As symbols they are
> not merely poetic figures of speech, although they
> often have great poetic beauty. The relationships and
> acts of the common life are symbols in the sense that
> they participate in that for which they stand. They
> do not merely suggest something else; they contain at
> least a part of what they stand for. . . . Revelation
> is not information about God; it is what happens in
> the encounter between God as Self and man as a self.[8]

Though only Scripture can be properly termed "revelation,"
nevertheless it is true that in witness to this revelation
lies the personal encounter with God. People are the sym-
bolic media for the Word of God, as really as are the words
of a sermon.

The Word as in Personal Semantics

The Word may be approached in terms of personal seman-
tics. Webster says that semantics studies the relation be-
tween symbols and what they refer to and with human behavior

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[8]Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 70, 1, 2, 8.

in reaction to symbols, including unconscious attitudes,
influences of social institutions, and epistemological and
linguistic assumptions. What words philologically mean can
mostly be found in words' source and use rather than in a
universal sense. We could state semantics more simply by
saying that as words convey meaning, so too do persons
without words. As said before, people, simply because they
are people, communicate meaning, but semantics stresses that
this meaning is never entirely confined in their words.
Meaning is conveyed because of a context of personal atmos-
phere. Miller understands this when he writes that the
Church program of instruction depends on this quality of
atmosphere in fellowship:

> because only when the learner can join a congregation
> on its knees and observe, "Behold how these Christians
> love one another," is there an atmosphere where com-
> munication of Christian truth can take place. Without
> such an atmosphere, there may be instruction in fac-
> tual knowledge, but it will not be Christian nurture.[9]

Christian education apart from Christians in worship is
only words. Worship, that is, relationship action, is the
proper semantic medium, as Miller reaffirms:

> The radical nature of Christian integration tells us
> much about the language of relationships. Often more
> is taught by attitudes and atmosphere than in actual
> words. There is an influence in worship, as the con-
> gregation comes into a new relationship with each
> other and with God, that is often more meaningful than
> the words themselves--for example the manner in which
> a mother treats a young child communicates the

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[9]Miller, op. cit., p. 143.

relationship of love when the word itself is still
meaningless.[10]

Symbol by action communicates God's Meaning.

Beyond the size of this short paragraph, and of utmost
importance, is this reminder that no semantic symbol is
perfect. A symbol partakes of its symbolized reality, but
it does not equal or replace it. Just as Christian formu-
lae are inherently weak, so too Christian people are in-
nately sinful. It is the mystery of the Spirit's activity
that He not only uses material, but material contradictory
to Him. By negation it speaks His truth. By unloveliness
a person can stand for loveliness. The only saints who are
to represent and communicate God's forgiveness are those
who are also most unforgiving themselves. The personal fac-
tor in semantic witness does not mediate God's Love in
spite of itself, so much as because of itself. We mention
this to unidealize Church relationships, to awake to the
wretchedness of evil, and to appreciate the Spirit in His
Word. The Word in personal relationship frees the finitude
of imperfection and literalness.

The Word as Learning of Faith

If the language of relationships affects the concept
of the Word, does it also relate to faith? That is, can

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[10]Ibid., p. 11.

faith be sociologically learned? The question now is
whether or not it is proper to study this person-to-person
interaction in terms of secular learning. Is there an aspect in which we can rightly say faith is learned?

Though catechetical lessons, doctrines, and head
knowledge have been learned by children and adults within
the church for centuries, yet the Church has been reticent
to say that this intellectual process of learning means
that living trust is being learned. And rightly so, faith
is a gift of the Holy Spirit, instantaneous or gradual,
which transcends our understanding of His process. To say
or imply that faith is simply learned as anything else is
learned subverts grace.

It is good to remind ourselves again that the Holy
Spirit alone controls growth in faith. No "learning theory"
of ours could confine or assist what He will do. Without
our intellectualized methods, even contrary to them and
despite them, He will get the job done. But intellectualization is our department in the task. And we are to use
what we see. We ought not fear any theory. Every theory,
even originally secular theory, we can baptize and call
"Christian," when we offer it in dependence on Him.

Our original question is still with us. Is there at
least an external aspect in the realm of spiritual dealing
where we may apply the rules of natural learning? In trying to approach some answer certain denominations suggest

that faith is not intellectually caused. They suggest that faith is "caught," not "taught." Here we take issue with them. They deny the Means. They want the Holy Spirit without His natural consequences in the mind. This is an overstatement.

Unwilling to be labeled with such a shaky camp of education, the Christian is yet objective enough to see value in the "caught" method of faith. In a way, it is caught, not taught, as Murray recognizes:

> Quality of life cannot be transmitted verbally; it comes by contact with people who already have it. This is what people mean when they utter the half-truth, "religion is caught not taught."[11]

If faith is "learned" at all, it is by the process of personal influence more than by sheer information. People exert the real pressure for imitation of their faith and all active attitudes. People are the interpretive or communicative context for all meaningful learning. People preach by being living, moving, struggling, exemplary things. Insight into the character of faith is especially caught from them.

It is not for us to go to battle now for any one formula of this process of education, for example, "caught, not taught." No isolated definition can be final, because in its extreme it perverts the truth. Yet if we can simply

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[11]A. Victor Murray, Education into Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 61.

make a point, it is clear we are to be fully aware of the "unteachable," nonverbal aspect of truth. We cannot teach faith. We can no more use only words, than we can use only smiles and "happiness" lessons. But it is clear that when all is said and taught, all our words and actions--without emoted atonement--would be naught. Sherrill warns that:

> Acceptance is communicated by such means as looks, the tone of voice, gestures, and actions. So with rejection; it needs no words, no [other] symbols. And when the feeling of rejection is communicated, neither words nor [empty] symbols that offer acceptance can overcome the fact of rejection.[12]

Words and deeds without an accepting relationship are a damnable mess.

The Word as Educational Atmosphere

Christian education has a fear that midst all its efforts only confused faith is arising. When words and deeds fail to establish relationships for faith, what else must we concentrate on? Howe presents for us a beautiful picture of learning of faith to help provide the answer:

> Let us use the child's acquisition of trust as an illustration. In the first place, he did not acquire it through the verbal affirmations and explanations of his mother. She did not sit her child on her knee and say, "Listen, my child, you must understand that I can be trusted. I am really quite trustworthy. There is this evidence and that evidence that I am a trustworthy

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[12]Sherrill, op. cit., p. 165. In this quotation the word "symbol" is used as equivalent to words, which is a different use than this thesis presents. For thesis consistency, the interpretive brackets are inserted.

person. Please believe that I know who you are, what
your wants are, that I'll take good care of you.
Please say that you know I am to be trusted." All the
child would do in response to this frantic verbal at-
tempt to preach the gospel of trust would be to stare
uncomprehendingly at his anxious mother and acquire
from her not a sense of trust but a sense of anxiety
communicated by both her increasingly anxious effort
to teach trust and by her failure to provide the very
relationship that would awaken his trust. I wonder if
we do not do just this when we endeavor to preach the
Gospel of Christ by means of verbal affirmations, as-
surances, and explanations alone?[13]

We see that "the real education that goes on is not the
words, but the atmosphere."[14] If the general atmosphere of
faith is missing, then the deeds, even the sitting on the
lap, do not make up for it.

Learning is deepest according to the all-pervading at-
mosphere present. "The Church, as we have already asserted,
teaches more by what it does than by what it says, and even
more by what it is than by what it does."[15] Our educational
goal is to enact the very essence of the Church, not cer-
tain words, or certain deeds. If by "relationship" we are
thinking of a series of words on Sunday morning, or even as
more words sprinkled from Monday through Saturday too, we
are wrong. And if we think of "relationship" as being a

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[13]Howe, op. cit., p. 70.

[14]Dr. A. G. Merkens' class notes, from "New Testament
Education," Course No. 770, Concordia Seminary Graduate
School, St. Louis, Winter Quarter, 1958-59.

[15]Howard Grimes, The Church Redemptive (New York:
Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 91.

series of certain "lovable" deeds through the week, again
we are wrong. The relationship, to be real, must be more
genuine and automatic than that. True relationships which
teach faith are not found in any new educational hope of
high pressure. Relationships are in the simple arrange-
ment of impromptu and natural exchanges among Christians.
Education is to see that Christians confront each other.

This confrontation must aim at faith itself. Mere at-
tempts to teach certain words and deeds will miss the uni-
fying factor, trust in God. The relationships which pro-
duce faith will be in the entire atmosphere, the very
trusting quality of life. No one can help learning; it is
automatic. Merely to live in a Christian congregation is
to be under Christian education. Christian education looks
at the individual, recognizes the automatic learning total
to his life, and knows that "if we don't indoctrinate him
in life, somebody else will."

We have spoken before of the concepts of learning, of
"catching" things via relationships rather than by instruc-
tion. Now we have said that when trust in God is caught,
it is not by certain sporadic deeds either. Rather trust
is learning by atmosphere. Christian educational psychology
provides us with a more helpful theory of learning to under-
stand this. It is learning by conditioning. Conditioned
learning is that constant observation of small new re-
sponses to planned subtle stimuli. Relationships

condition.[16] Faith is only conditioned. Conditioned
learning is the only learning constant and relevant enough
to be basic to life.

If we are interested in that deep level of condition-
ing in interaction and interpenetration at which selves
participate in faith, we are exploring an intense kind of
learning. Christian education aims at growth at deep lev-
els. Johnson examines these depths:

> This is a faith relationship in which changes occur
> at the deepest level of the self structure, resulting
> in a radical transformation of a recreative and re-
> demptive nature. These changes are interpreted as
> learning in its profoundest sense, distinguishable
> from what ordinarily passes as growth, but never con-
> sidered apart from the relationship of love in which
> they occur.[17]

Perhaps our method categories should come from functions of

change internal to people, as Sherrill implies:

> The term "changes in persons" is here used to include
> all that is ordinarily referred to in educational
> psychology as "learning." But it is a broader term
> than learning, and includes much that is not ordinar-
> ily denoted by "learning." [Christian concerns are]
> . . . changes in the depths of the self, that is, the
> deeper changes which take place in the structure and
> functioning of the total self.[18]

Again, the learning we mean by relationships implies a

deeper meaning of learning and of Christianity than is

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[16]Ibid.

[17]Johnson, op. cit., p. 64.

[18]Sherrill, op. cit., p. 145.

ordinarily connoted by these terms.[19] Grimes agrees:

> The most significant learning occurs through the ex-
> perience we may call personal and creative encounter.
> From a Christian point of view, nothing has really
> been learned until it affects one personally ("ex-
> istentially") in terms of his relationships with the
> God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus
> Christian learning involves, at least on its deeper
> levels, this personal encounter between the learner--
> in terms of his understanding and basic experience--
> and the Lord of Life.[20]

We educationally aim at the deeply personal encounter with

Christ, at faith.

The Word as Bible

Lastly, we want to summarize by modificating all that

has preceded this point. We want to emphasize that all at-

tempts here to assert that growth in faith is by relation-

ship are made by overstatement. Verbal teaching is hardly

excluded. Words and person must be held in balance for a

complete doctrinal approach. Carrington says:

> The pattern of that growth will depend far more upon
> the quality of the child's personal relationships and
> his personal experiences than upon the actual teaching
> to which he is exposed. That is not to deny the ex-
> treme importance of good teaching, but to emphasize
> its need for the whole-hearted backing of personal re-
> lationships.[21]

Our earlier discussion of the Word of God was concerned

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[19]Johnson, op. cit., p. 64.

[20]Grimes, op. cit., p. 93.

[21]W. L. Carrington, Psychology, Religion and Human
Need (New York: Channel Press, 1957), p. 38.

with the channels and methods which involve people in the
Word, practically expressed. We spoke of all the final
practical presentations of the Word, not its original pre-
sentation, that is, Scripture. However, we want to remem-
ber that, naturally, all expressions of the Word have the
Sacred Scriptures as their source. The Scriptures are the
sole and primary reference for all we communicate as the
Word. But we are not examining source here. The source is
presupposed and beyond our present consideration. Only to
maintain clear balance, we mention both source and re-ex-
pression, both content and form. Educational form must
hang from Scriptures and draw from this source. Without the
Scriptures as content source, it would be like cutting a
chandelier off at the ceiling. Howe writes of a vital unity
in which both are needed:

> Christian education must be personal; it must take
> place in a personal encounter and, only secondarily,
> is it transmissive. . . . Both are needed. The
> Church as a "tradition-bearing community" contains
> both poles and does not want to subordinate one to
> the other. When the content of the tradition is lost,
> the meaning of the encounter is lost, and in the end
> even encounter itself. . . . We are not saved by
> knowledge alone, and yet without content a relation-
> ship can become formless, purposeless, and destruc-
> tive.[22]

A word of warning is needed. Some have reacted against the
dogmatism of a message-centered approach and have also
therefore missed the meaning of the relationship between

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[22]Howe, op. cit., pp. 114, 115.

the divine message and human need.   But a person-centered
education is not intended to reduce the message.   It cen-
ters attention upon the human person __because__ of the mes-
sage.[23]

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[23]Johnson, __op. cit.__, pp. 41, 45.

CHAPTER III

RELATIONSHIPS AND THE CHURCH

The Church Is a Word Relationship

The Word of God is in the Church, among the people.
"Learning takes place within a particular context. The
Church is the context within which Christian learning takes
place. No one is a Christian in isolation."[1] Without
needing to study the obvious relationship past centuries
have known in the much examined New Testament terms
(ecclesia, "body of Christ," "living stones," "vine and
branches," koinonia, John 17, etc.), we confess the Church
to be the matrix wherein we were born and are sustained.
In their discussion of sanctification, the Fathers of our
Church, though they did not employ the term "language of
relationships," knew the power of relationships. We too
believe in the Church, "in which Christian Church He for-
gives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers."
Cully writes that the Church is an important concept:

> The Christian faith as it exists today is found in the
> church. The institutional structure is not the church,
> but within the institution there is a fellowship of
> the Holy Spirit that flows from communion with Jesus
> Christ. The church has possession of a great truth:

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[1]Iris V. Cully, The Dynamics of Christian Education
(Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 36.

This divine-human society was founded by God through
Jesus Christ and one dwells in this fellowship through
faith, and yet a man cannot acquire this faith except
as he is nurtured within the life of the fellowship.[2]

This fellowship is the relatedness for nurture.[3]

A faith is nurtured in the fellowship. And in turn it
engenders nurture for the rest of the fellowship. The Gos-
pel in terms of personal encounter develops committed in-
dividuals who become persons for encounter.[4] "Those who
have experienced this transformation within the church are
enabled to mediate God's redemptive influence in the other
relationships of their lives,"[5] as Cully confirms:

Those who have found a new relationship to God (through
Christ, within the fellowship of the church) find also
a new relationship with one another. . . . The church
then can be truly the redemptive community.[6]

In the Christian community the relationship with God is re-
flected in relationship with each other. Or better, it is
a relationship repeated.

This fellowship nurtures itself, as before stated, by
the Word. Cully reminds us that, practically expressed,
the Word is called kerygma, or didache:

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[2]Randolph Crump Miller, Education for Christian Living
(Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 50.

[3]Cully, op. cit., pp. 38, 39.

[4]Ibid., p. 94.

[5]Ibid., p. 93.

[6]Ibid.

It may be seen, then, that the church, which is the context for Christian nurture, is the bearer of a redemptive activity which the members have experienced within it. This activity is the kerygma, which both forms the church and is formed by it.[7]

The organic functioning of the community of the church involves the production of didache (teaching), this teaching being derived from the basic kerygma (proclamation). The living fellowship of God's people is brought together, and projected into the future, because of certain acts of God which are vital both to individuals and to the fellowship as a whole. This divine activity, put into words, is the story that the church has always proclaimed to all the world.[8]

Over the backyard fence, this kerygma is called witness. There has been good reason to speak so often of the witness as the Word. Whether we refer to the life of pastor or parish, of employer or employee, witnessing relationship is there. In all the above terms under the Word, the uniting flux is always relationship, or koinonia. Relationship teaches, Cully reaffirms:

While the teaching in the church is derived mainly from the proclamation, the fellowship (koinonia) also yields teaching, similarly based on the proclamation. This arises first of all out of the need for mutual strengthening. The church is always in danger. . . . Whenever an external situation produces threat or concern, the members of the fellowship draw nearer to one another. In worship, testimony, and activity they recall God's gracious action toward them in Jesus Christ. They explain to themselves why this present situation has arisen. They strengthen one another with assurance so that they will be mutually enabled to make a good confession before the world. . . . The fellowship yields further teaching in the task of explaining to one another the meaning of the redemptive

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[7]Ibid., p. 59.

[8]Ibid., p. 42.

experience. . . . Finally, the fellowship yields
teaching as a channel through which to make the gospel
relevant to the ever-changing situations in which the
church's people must live.[9]

This individual witness in the relationship can be made only
by persons who have had the experience of new relationship
in Christ, from the earliest disciples to those of the pre-
sent day. The Church has always had this fellowship among
its purposes, says Cully again, simply because:

persons respond to other persons. The one who wit-
nesses says, in effect: "I know how you feel and what
you need, for I too have feelings and needs. This is
what God does for me; this is what he offers to you."[10]

We then see that there seems to be no term we may use of
the Word of God without reference also to the Christian so-
ciety which uses it.

The Church Is a Redemptive Relationship

The Christian fellowship, by some writers, is referred
to as able to re-enact the Word of redemption. For example,
Miller quotes Canon Wedel:

"The Church exists for the purpose of re-enacting the
Gospel story. Here, in Christian family and parish
life, the divine love which accepts the unlovable and
unworthy becomes a reality in experience, since the
Christ of the Cross is here a continuing presence and
power."[11]

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[9]Ibid., pp. 56, 59.

[10]Ibid., p. 30.

[11]Miller, op. cit., p. 71.

In one way, this is absolutely true. For us men Jesus
Christ suffered and was glorified. As we see this fact, we
are able to share it. By means of this sharing, we spread
His suffering and glory. Our life is that means. Life's
communication is a miniature "re-enactment" of His cross.
Remember, this communication is not only verbal. The
Christian's every symbol of the cross, his manner, person,
and life, also bespeak the Cross: "Christ died my death."
In this way, the whole Christian person becomes again a
miniature "re-enactment" of the Cross.

Because the Christian fellowship witnesses and brings
life to each other, it has been called the "redemptive fel-
lowship." Christians banded together into a group
(koinonia) together exemplify the drama of the Cross. They
convey His Cross to others. Surely, the mere conveyance
itself is not that Cross. Only His Cross originally en-
acted that redemption. But re-enactment by every symbol of
exemplary copy completes that redemption. Redemption never
would have been possible without Christ. But without
Christians communication of redemption could not continue.
In this way the group of Christians can be the "redemptive
fellowship." But only because of Christ, never without
Him. Grimes says it well:

> In order to comprehend the depth of the meaning of the
> Church as a significant part of God's design for the
> world, it is first necessary to see the Church as a
> corporate body--the Body of Christ, to use the Pauline
> expression. One hesitates to use the phrase "the

extension of the incarnation" to describe the Church; yet if this is understood to signify basically the <u>body</u> through which God acts for the redemption of mankind, it is at least permissible if not necessary to indicate the full importance of the Church.[12]

The Church is the body, not the head, of salvation. Actually, terms only suggest what is going on in practice. No matter whether one allows these expressions regarding redemptive fellowship or not, the heresy could be afoot without the terms.

There is potential heresy in the matter. Surely no Christian group would consciously attempt any self-redemption. Yet in practice it goes on all the time. Every group, as every individual in it, is partly work-righteous. Protestants,[13] even Lutherans, are just as much in danger of identifying the Church fellowship with all that is finally redemptive, as do the Roman Catholics the mass. In the theologies of both camps this over-identification is impossible. But in practice it happens.

We have said that the Church is the body of Christ. But because of sin the obverse is not true, namely, that

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[12]Howard Grimes, The Church Redemptive (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), pp. 14-15.

[13]Lois E. LeBar from Wheaton College is an example. In a paper read to the Commission on Research in Christian Education of the National Sunday School Association (October 6, 1958 at Des Moines) she says we <u>must</u> love. Disappointed with present impoverished <u>agape</u> in church groups, she suggests that we will love if we study group psychology. This is a graceless imperative, an idealistic moralism.

our Redeemer, Christ, is the Church. Sherrill explains that
the people's inherent evil must be acknowledged:

> In this view [that there is no "end" at all in educa-
> tion except such as exists with interaction itself]
> the processes of interaction can be so refined by
> human intelligence as to become redemptive. But such
> a view takes no adequate account of the demonic ele-
> ment in human interaction, nor of the demonic purposes
> to which intelligence in interaction can be turned.[14]

The Church fellowship cannot redeem itself or anybody else,
simply because it is perpetually sinful. Viewed from
heaven as holy, in itself it is never more than damnable
and damning society. And surely its witness does not exist
only because its open sin has been exchanged for refined
sins.

We conclude that "redemptive fellowship" is a tricky
term. It is false if it usurps Christ's redemption. A
fellowship can be at most a means of redemption, but no
fellowship can literally redeem. Grimes shows this is
Biblical:

> It is equally true, however, that Paul is set against
> any doctrine of the Church which makes it the deter-
> miner of salvation. . . . We cannot of ourselves make
> the Church. We cannot educate, or create fellowship,
> or convert anyone, or manipulate the Good Society into
> being. This is God's work. The Church is finally his
> gift to us. Yet we must act responsibly. We are the
> individual parts who must respond in such a manner as
> to become a medium through whom he works.[15]

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[14]Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York:
The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 81.

[15]Grimes, op. cit., pp. 31, 34.

No human process is redemptive without Jesus Christ.

The Church Is a Witnessing Relationship

Having asserted the Word in the essential Church's witness, we examine this closer as the Church's witness by people. Perplexed by the unredemptive relationships of the redemptive fellowship, we look more practically at evil in individual witness.

The big question which we daily face concerns the impossibility of communicating love when even a Christian community is unlovely. How can a person receive a faith in being loved despite every sin, when the congregation reflects this truth only by its words? For example, the Christian classroom appears to produce word-wise only infrequent and irrelevant formulae. Some would say that the believers do witness to God's love by themselves being at least in part loving. They would cite Christian hospitals and Christian individuals of fine discipline. But the world also has its noble people; the Buddhists have fine hospitals; and Christian history does not contain only shining examples. Many unbelievers do behold how Christians love one another and know them by their good fruits. It is true that Christian love is of a source and dynamic which is uniquely higher due to faith. But, being imperfect, it is not always so apparent to everyone. One cannot absolutely prove to everyone that Christians do a

better good. Such apologetics are doomed. Others would
say that Christian witness is in words, not deeds. And so
we have the problem back again. How can we communicate
God's love when our actions speak louder than our words?!
Yet right here is the answer. For the Christian witness
includes reference to this discrepancy. In fact, its very
point is that the congregation is hateful by itself and yet
looks for forgiveness. It **is** and **yet**. Kean sees this dual
witness as being witness to judgment at the same time as to
justification:

> The Christian sense of judgment is the proclamation to
> men that they are never external to the problems which
> concern them but are always completely involved. Thus,
> they are never in a position of adjusting to an other-
> wise bad world, or of dealing with objective evils
> from an external position. They are always part of
> the problem themselves. They are not in the position
> of trying to solve a jig-saw puzzle by standing at a
> table and manipulating external and objective pieces
> of wood or cardboard. They, too, are part of the
> puzzle. . . . As long as anyone thinks he can handle
> his sense of lack through something he himself can do,
> he does not see his problem from the Christian point
> of view.[16]

> The note of justification says that, while man does
> stand continually under judgment, he can live a posi-
> tive and creative life here and now. He can do so,
> not because the judgment is forgotten or because its
> significance is dulled, but the contrary. He will do
> so because he accepts the judgment without reservation
> and puts his confidence in something other than his
> own capacity to satisfy what life demands. . . . The
> Christian Gospel maintains that any man, if he is
> honest enough to admit his need, if he is willing to

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[16]Charles Duell Kean, The Christian Gospel and the
Parish Church (Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press,
1953), p. 78.

admit the subtle pretensions of his own drive for autonomy, may know God's forgiveness.[17]

Only this verbally expressed contradiction of despair and Word properly forms people! Witness is that very attempt to point away from one's deeds to imperfect words derived from the Word of God. "We are not to be judged" is, then, that witness. It can be made even in words. In fact, witness is only final in words, since actions are too vaguely symbolic to show incongruity. No matter how much we have stressed relationships prior to words, yet without words the relationship could not become final. The redemptive community is that group which confesses its horrible innate inability to each other and strengthens the memory of forgiveness of each other. Witness is the very knowledge and verbal communication of the fact just discussed, the redemptive inability of the redemptive community. Miller says:

> The beloved community of Christ is a redemptive community, in which all members know themselves to be sinners in need of forgiveness, and are therefore willing to forgive others in the fellowship.[18]

Yet "as we forgive those who trespass against us," we find ourselves praying about not having forgiven those who trespass against us. The witness is a witness to forgiveness one has found, and yet it is a witness offered unforgivingly to others.

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[17]Ibid., pp. 95, 104.

[18]Miller, op. cit., p. 50.

What madness, this incongruity! One does not fit upon the other. How can forgiveness appear clearly over sin? How can one be said while the other is being said? It cannot, unless it is just this dual picture which must be the witness itself. If ever one becomes "clear" without the other, each is meaningless. The witness is exactly both at once--forgiveness and unforgivability. This is an uneasy balance to maintain--or better, a veritable tension to maintain. At the point of tension realized, the witness is complete. The tension alone, in being talked back and forth, corrected and rebalanced, is the witness. And this is not easy. Tension is suffering. Therefore, in the language of relationships especially, we must emphasize the tension of suffering inherent in witness. The suffering is one pole of this witness picture, with grace believed and spoken as the other. Suffering can be within witness, as Cully places it:

> There arise times in which the church is a fellowship
> set apart by suffering. . . . Only through this wit-
> ness is the church enabled to affirm its faith. Other-
> wise it simply echoes the phrases of the world and is
> identified with the culture in which it is set.[19]

Better than any gloriously universal picture of the Church militant, the variety of education problems on the scene, with their constant uniqueness of tensions, best show the community's true nature. The tension arises by the

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[19]Cully, op. cit., p. 40.

infinite practical differences, as Murray illustrates:

> Given the central fact of loyalty to Christ as the
> unifying factor, we then notice that there are within
> it people of all ages, temperaments and abilities, as
> well as people of all classes, races and nations.[20]

Murray continues by advocating the preservation of these

natural tensions:

> For tension is the very breath of life to the
> Christian community, and a segregated society of likes
> is its negation. This fact is not always grasped, and
> in these days there is often too much segregation
> within the Church—women's meetings, boys' clubs,
> girls' clubs, junior church, and so on. These have
> their essential place in the scheme of corporate life,
> but they can easily tend to avoid tension rather than
> to sublimate it. But part of religious education is
> to train people to live together in a society of dif-
> ferences. Such variety has a romantic attractiveness
> until we come to work it out in practice.[21]

As long as the extent of understanding tension is "John,

try to love Bill, even though it hurts," we have only the

world's level of suffering. "John, take up your cross"

better suggests the necessary suffering of "dying to live."[22]

The practical situation with its peculiar individuals is

hard to so understand. For like the Church Universal, the

individual is both redeemed and being redeemed; he exists

both in his actuality and in his potentiality. There is

always a tension between what he is and what heaven may

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[20]A. Victor Murray, _Education into Religion_ (New York:
Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 183.

[21]_Ibid._, p. 184.

[22]_Ibid._, p. 192.

become. In a real sense he is both dead in his trespasses
and alive through Jesus Christ. It is because of this
tension that anyone who takes the Christian individual
seriously must both exalt him as a member of the Body of
Christ and at the same time condemn him for failure to be
in reality a person of God.[23] These mysterious mutual
contradictions are the very Gospel itself. Gospel goes
with Law (Romans 3:20). There is suffering between the
Law and the Gospel because the Gospel says suffering is un-
necessary. Like the Church, the individual is seen in his
redemptive aspect when he is suffering because of the Word.

Howe's expression of this tension of witness in rela-
tionship is superb:

> Some of our wants are immediate and superficial, some
> of them are deeper; but the deepest one of all is the
> desire to be at one with someone, to have someone who
> can be at one with us, and through whom we can find
> at-oneness with all. Our desire for someone with whom
> we can be at one grows out of a profound loneliness.[24]

> All our life, therefore, is an effort to overcome our
> separation and to find each other in fulfilling rela-
> tionship. . . . And how much a friendly encounter
> means especially when we have not expected it; for
> friendliness means at least a partial overcoming of
> the separation that produces our sense of loneliness.
> Can we not admit that it has something of the quality
> of salvation in it?[25]

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[23]Grimes, op. cit., p. 18.

[24]Reuel L. Howe, Man's Need and God's Action (Greenwich,
Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1953), p. 9.

[25]Ibid., p. 11.

Man's need is for a relationship of love and accept-
ance, but when he turns to his companions for it, he
finds that they too have the same need. Being pre-
occupied with our own needs and having little or noth-
ing to spare for our neighbors, we turn away from each
other, thus making our situation worse than before.[26]

Our task . . . is to face and accept the fact that our
ability to achieve reconciliation ourselves is hope-
less because we are both alienated and alienating.[27]

My faith is, therefore, that God uses my power of love,
limited and sinful though it is, to prepare my child
for the experience of His reconciling and fulfilling
love. So real is this that I believe that God is able
to transcend the limitations of my love and that my
child may experience more than my love for him.[28]

This means [that God's] acceptance of us is communi-
cated by His Spirit in and through our acceptance of
each other. . . . This would seem to limit God's ac-
ceptance, except that He is able to transcend our
limitation and do in and through us what we of our-
selves are completely incapable of doing.[29]

Again, we must appeal to the Holy Spirit. This paradox is

beyond us. But our salvation must be beyond us if it is to

be at all! Another way of saying it refers back to the last

chapter on the Word. The Church is more than a mere social

phenomenon because of God. The Church is so because of

God's Word, not our words. The only reason we can state at

one moment the Church's ability to witness, and at the next

moment its inability, is because witness is a mystery. The

paradox rests in God alone.

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26 Ibid., p. 15.

27 Ibid., p. 33.

28 Ibid., p. 96.

29 Ibid., p. 119.

The phenomenon of this mystery is the Church--the
Church at worship. By "Church" we mean more than the in-
fant concepts of the Church as a building or as Sunday
morning. The Church is all faithful people, and that means
Church is the faithful at all times in total life. The
Church is life, and the Church is also worship. Therefore,
all life is worship. This roundabout logic means that one's
whole being, whether in sleep, work, or worship, is offered
to God in praise. We want to capture both witness and
Church under the caption "worship." In worship no grace is
spoken except over against sin. Confession precedes abso-
lution. That is all worship is. As we look over all the
bowed heads, we realize that we share our nothingness only
here. What a joy! "The others are all like me deep in-
side!" It seems so rare when we strip ourselves so com-
pletely of pride, defense, and sufficiency. Only together
in nothingness do we seem to relate internally. Leveled
under the common grace of God, we are caused to repent.
Actually, all life is this worship of confession before ab-
solution. There never is a genuine witness to Christ which
does not amply express common perversion, weakness, and
humility. "Confess your faults one to another" is a part
of Gospel witness. This makes witness worship. The
Christian life of worship, then, goes on whenever a portion
of that great Group shares its dependence on Him--call it
witness or worship. We write this chapter not of people,

per se, but of the Church, the witnessing-worshiping peo-
ple.

Confession is quite noticeable. Herein do we see the
Church in practical occasions giving evidence to its re-
demption. Its witness, as its worship, is primarily con-
fession. Here in confession is seen the practical mark of
suffering. Too often we think of worship simply as pleasant
praise, mere heavenly sunshine. But, awkwardly, it comes
from confession first. A "good confession" is a troubled
one. Confession is not pleasant. There is distasteful
agony and genuine suffering to Church worship. The
kerygma's tension lengthily referred to earlier is only
within and because of worship. For worship is only as con-
stant as suffering is constant. In the constant pressure
to plan confession of faults to one another is our indi-
vidual security in the Church. To such educational plan-
ning of suffering we must commit ourselves.

Education is only by suffering. No faith ever arose
otherwise. The educator teaches by contagion, initiating
confession and absolution. Confession given and taken in
faith is an audible and visible example. The educator
teaches Christians neither only to confess nor only to ab-
solve, but to really hear the confession of others. Con-
fession to others is not the only aspect of suffering which
we must mention. Our people have a serious need not only
to learn confession to others, but also to receive their

confessions aright. The Church is not to be discouraged of
its absolution responsibility to its membership, but it
needs also the encouragement to remain consciously recep-
tive to them. The problem of Christian witness is some-
times not that a witness does not witness enough, but that
his Christian hearer is unreceptive. Commonly, those out-
spoken are unreceptive also themselves. Hearers must be
trained among us to be aggressively receptive. The Church
must learn to listen to itself. The Church needs to hear
confessions, otherwise Gospel will not be understood as
Gospel. Since the Church is One, there is no hierarchy of
audience. We all listen to each other. This means that not
only do others see God in my person, but I see Him in theirs.
He is signaled to me by both their sins and their kind-
nesses. A Lutheran is best prone to such a sacramental
evaluation of people. The Church before God is a single
layer of interacting meetings. Relationships are as poten-
tially numberless as fluid molecules. People must be
trained for new confrontations, or encounters. The place
of "encounter" is being increasingly recognized as a factor
in education. Preparation for encounters is a readiness
necessary to growth.[30] No insightful growth comes without
prepared motivation. Alerted motivation ought to be a re-
sult of confessed sin and hunger for blessing. It is true

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[30]Cully, op. cit., p. 143.

that encounter is finally alone with God, but the fellow-
ship alone mediates that encounter.[31] To perpetuate the
Christian nature of the group, there will be conscious ex-
change over the need for reception of witness. To listen
and understand is not easy.

Education cannot be redemptive without suffering.
There is no redemption without painful self-denial. Cully
explores this critically:

> Here lies the church's function as the redemptive com-
> munity. . . . Is "the good life" self-development or
> self-denial, self-fulfillment or self-giving? Realis-
> tic reading of the Bible has led some to say that the
> crucifixion of Jesus was not a glorious martyrdom but
> the ignominious end to the ever-declining popularity
> of a teacher.[32]

Suffering, even that in education, is redemptive only be-
cause it is Christ's suffering. Christian education, like
people, must painfully live its death with Christ. Of
course, "people" are not a means of grace, nor are "dying
people." But their Word of His death is a means of grace.
The Word comes not only in vocables, but in deeds as well--
and yet not in words or deeds. Unless Christian education
is willingly and consciously carried out through and within
the sinful Christian fellowship, it is doubtful what last-
ingly can be accomplished. We speak not of a good church
nor of a bad church. We speak of a Church which is His, as

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[31]Ibid., p. 144.

[32]Ibid., p. 31.

does Murray:

> We must avoid the idea that Jesus was simply a teacher and that after His death the Church carried on His teaching. In a very real sense the Church **is** His teaching.[33]

His Church is His Word, His acceptance of sin.

We can trust in the Church as educator. We can be confident of growth within its fellowship. But only because and when it is a fellowship built on the Word, Jesus Christ, as Miller emphasizes:

> Whether we be children or adults, the life of the church can meet our fundamental needs. It can meet our ultimate requirement for love and acceptance as we are, by showing us the forgiving love of God in Christ.[34]

We can trust in mother-Church when we remember it is not a denomination but rather believers in acceptance. Miller concludes we can trust because:

> Christ is present in the true church. He is the Christ who was sent by the Father to pay the price of sin, who was born, crucified, and risen, and who lives in the church today. Because of Jesus Christ's redemptive activity in history, as revealed in the cross and resurrection, we know through faith that he continues to redeem us and all the world today.[35]

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[33]Murray, _op. cit._, p. 180.

[34]Miller, _op. cit._, p. 51.

[35]Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

RELATIONSHIPS AND THE INDIVIDUAL SELF

The Self as Social

Our concern in human relationships is ultimately for the individual. What goes on deep within him is of utmost importance, above any abstractions of Word, Church, etc. A complete study of relationships must examine exactly what happens as the individual perceives God's Word coming at him through the Church. Just what are the dynamics of self in social growth toward God? Just how do other people affect a person's faith?

We may as well state the obvious proposition again: people are dependent, especially for their basic moorings, on their social relationships. The social sciences contribute the most to this aspect of education. It is the basic principle of social psychology that no psychology of an individual, per se, is the full picture of that individual, because no person functions by himself alone. Even a hermit had a mother and a culture, which, though he left them behind, still influence him, his actions, and his thoughts. He was once permanently molded by people around him.

But the truth about most people--non-hermits that they are--is that they never leave the realm of society, and therefore until death they are constantly being shaped by

the people about them. It is true that the early years and emotional proximity set the pattern for all of life. The early strong social relations guide life's direction, so to speak, to the east, north, west, or south. However, this does not preclude smaller, later, and the constantly present influences from modifying the basic personality. One is not beyond later change, at least, so to speak, to bend off a due-east course, to the north-north-east, or to make brief excursions even opposingly west at times.

For actually, the human self is a complex thing. We may think an easternly formative environment would coerce the individuals within its group likewise toward the east. But reactionary behavior may occur. An individual may negate all that pushes him, reverse gears, and go west. But such negation of seemingly the entire environment is no slight whim. Actually, within an easternly pull there was something stronger pressuring westward. And so it is that much of our education contains reverse elements which defeat our conscious goal. We may say we are going one way, when all that we do teaches the opposite educational direction.

Consciously, verbally, we design one thing. But it is assisted, or undone, by that of which we are too often unaware. What are these unconscious influences in education? Largely, they are the personal environment around the pupil. For this is the basic finding of social psychology:

we are formed most not by trees or animals, but by people.
If our educational efforts succeed, it is because people
were used in it. And if our educational efforts are even-
tually undone, it was undone by people. We must know more
about the extent to which personal relationships form the
individual.

So much for a preview. We now attack our study of the
social self directly.

An individual is influenced as a whole. That is, he
cannot be affected by someone only in his brain, morals, or
habits. Whenever facts, or conduct, or athletics are
taught, more than these are being learned. An individual
absorbs from each occasion changes over his entire being.
Educational supervision must evaluate its success in terms
of what has happened to the entire person. No education,
even Christian education, can dare fill the head with
platitudes of peace, unconcerned about the possibility of
the heart being filled with an educational by-product, like
anxiety. If a man's growth is not compartmental, then
whatever we teach him will affect him totally. There is no
need to talk of training the "soul," for only secular Greek
thought, not Biblical psychology, considers it separable
from the "body." Actually, this is the only merit of men-
tioning the wholeness of the individual. We mean to apply
this wholeness understanding in this thesis so that even
secular personal relationships are also seen as most

religious. Relationships preach a real theology. People effect and affect Christian faith. Social environment, whether we want it to or not, will ultimately teach a Word of God or an anti-Word. People who surround an individual, whether in a parish hall, parochial school, or public school, will automatically teach as a Church or an anti-Church. All relationships are religious. The learner is not prone consciously to pick out of his environment what is Christian and what is un-Christian. He simply responds as a unified synthesis to the predominant pressure. Christian education observes the determinative importance of the general settings.

Not only is the individual responsive as a whole to environment, but he is responsive to his whole environment. Not only the total self, but the total situation must be considered. Cully comments: "Psychological findings indicate that growth and development include the whole person within his total environment."[1]

How can we detect which factors will be the major ones? They are known by their dynamic, their animism. We approach all education looking for the living, the emotional, the interactional. Our whole approach is dynamic. Development is understood as being organismic, purposive, and

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[1]Iris V. Cully, The Dynamics of Christian Education (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 13.

continuous.[2] It is true that wells, fields, and rabbits are part of one's total environment, and they are moving too. But these are not perceived as major environment because they are not intimate to us. Only life which strikes a respondent chord in our life is able to affect us deeply. That is, only people can do it. Only people are man's real world. A typical analyst today writes:

> Both psychology and sociology have long since concluded that man is primarily and preeminently a social being. Not only does human nature require social conditions for its origin and existence, but human welfare and happiness are so intrinsically grounded in social relationships that human values are actually achieved in social affairs.[3]

Therefore, when we speak of total environment in education, we mean to stress that though all things in the universe somehow relate to every individual, yet social relationships and all that personally implies even in theology are the most influential. While worms, stones, and pencils are not religious, people are. Out of all that we could call total environment, we need, rather, to calculate for education the total social environment. Learning through socialization has deep impact upon the personality and generates inner tensions, needs, and strivings. When we refer to dynamic education we refer, for example, to a boy

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[2]Ibid., p. 129.

[3]Manford George Gutzke, John Dewey's Thought and Its Implications for Christian Education (New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia University, 1955), pp. 106-7.

submitting to the commands of his strict and threatening
father--being too much afraid of him to do otherwise--and
becoming a "good" boy. The greater the fearful submission,
the greater hostility against his father. This repressed
hostility, too dangerous to express or even to be aware of,
may create new anxiety and thus lead to still deeper sub-
mission. It will become a vague defiance, directed against
life in general.[4] Beyond the sphere of conscious acknowl-
edgement can grow intense hostility, summationally against
God. It is this dynamic formation of the inner self which
goes unobserved so often in education, since it is a forma-
tion by social relationship.

Social development always comes by the intimate loss
of self in the self of another. The hostility mentioned
above was not merely formed against the father, but might
be considered as directly absorbed from the father's hostile
strictness by the boy's "being in him." We learn socially
by identification, as Broom and Selznick elucidate:

> One of the important mechanisms by which the individual
> takes on the values of others is identification. . . .
> The normal tendency of the child to take the same at-
> titudes toward himself that others take toward his is
> also a form of identification. If the average child
> does not steal, it is not because he has reached the
> rational conclusion that it is unwise or inexpedient
> to do so. Rather he takes the same morally disapprov-
> ing attitude toward such behavior that others take to-
> ward it. He identifies with the adult point of view,

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[4]Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology
(Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1955), p. 91.

and the thought of stealing prompts feelings of
guilt. . . . There is a stronger and more specific
sense in which children identify with others. Some
adults in the child's experience appear to him as
ideal figures; the child wants to be like them and
models himself upon them. In early childhood, he
identifies with one or both of his parents. Later,
he may develop "crushes" on teachers and peers and
take them as ideal images to be emulated. Identifi-
cations of this sort are often temporary, but some
can become permanent parts of character and person-
ality.5

It is interesting to note that the child identifies with

the guilt feelings and with the idealizations of others.

He cannot help but imitate, therefore, even the guilt anx-

ieties and impossible goals of the spiritually sick about

him. Models of behavior are no small factor as they are

transmitted often from one generation to another.6 Identi-

fication is more than imitation of example. For example,

with love present in another person to identify with, one

becomes a part of that love. In being loved, the person

acts out an extension of that love. It must be impossible

for one person to learn love without perversion or negation

when he cannot identify with a more wholesome other. Chil-

dren and adults identify with those they are closest to,

whether good or bad.

Notice that relationships affect a person totally.

Imagination of oneself in another's place is generally

5Ibid., p. 91.

6Ibid., p. 92.

learned as automatically as life itself. It seems that all helpful social interaction must be built on some unconscious feeling of social oneness. For instance, Lundberg gives an example in ethics:

"If we feel that we must give aid to another, it is because that other lives and strives in our imagination, and so is part of ourselves. . . . If I come to imagine a person suffering wrong it is not 'altruism' that makes me wish to right that wrong, but simple human impulse. He is my life as really and immediately as anything else. His symbol arouses a sentiment which is no more his than mine." Whatever is done under such circumstances is for one's own relief as much as for the relief of the other person. It is a form of sympathy, in the sense of communion, or a sharing of the experiences of someone else, . . . i. e., an ability to imagine ourselves in his place.[7]

We must follow the other with whom we identify in whatever he does, for, to us it seems, he is us.

This learning by identification follows the process of all learning by reinforcement. The continuous, external reinforcement would appear necessary to encourage all learning. On one hand, what has been learned moves toward extinction if there is no reinforcement, since the satisfaction must be immediate if the cue-response connection is to be strengthened.[8] But on the other hand, within social learning the role-playing mechanism internalizes and

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[7]George A. Lundberg, Foundations of Sociology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), p. 296.

[8]Randolph Crump Miller, Education for Christian Living (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), pp. 42-3.

therefore perpetuates satisfaction. Once a sufficiently constant social environment has molded one, there is an internalized role. By perceiving oneself as another, identification tends to continue to become total to the other's entire role in life. A role learned from another is a significant mark of a fixed and active self concept. The copying of a role means filling in all the yet undemonstrated implications of total conformity. As Newcomb describes, it becomes an inner-motivated, perpetual, and thorough learning of a new self:

> Children learn to "take the role of the other" because it is necessary for them to do so. Only by anticipating his mother's responses to himself can a child make sure of the responses which he wants from her and avoid those which he does not want. But since his mother does not behave with machine-like predictability, he sooner or later discovers that the best guide to her behavior is his own estimate of her present attitudes. This, in fact, is the strict meaning of "taking the role of the other"--i.e., anticipating the response of another person who is perceived as having attitudes of his own.[9]

Role playing is dealing with self as a single object. Later we will examine such objectivity. Not one, but many roles of the people emotionally closest are taken in together. These roles together in an individual make up the "generalized other," or the composite for social conformity. Bonner gives the instance of children at play:

> Out of this synchronization or organization of the separate roles emerges the set of attitudes of those

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[9]Theodore M. Newcomb, Social Psychology (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1952), pp. 320-21.

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participating in the game. Mead calls this set of
attitudes the generalized other. The unity of the
individual self, which we shall examine later, lies
in this organization of separate roles, or in the
generalized other.[10]

Educationally the learner does not, and usually is not able
to, ask regarding the people and factors socially coercing
him. Relationships teach pre-consciously and automatically.

It has been very necessary to examine the growth of
the self as identification with the entire roles of others
in life. We see how even at a pre-verbal age a child is
conditioned into absorbing the total attitudes and life of
those most intimate to him. We almost feel that faith or
wretchedness at this age is taken over from another entirely,
as "all or nothing at all." Any adequate Christian educa-
tion will formulate and involve the significance of the en-
tire individual acting upon the child.

The Self as Participating

Identification and role taking, just discussed, indi-
cate that an individual works towards an adequate self,
integrated toward all needs. Some educators have implied
their goal to be relating the student to every existant
thing there is to know. This is scientism. Rather,
Christian education has a less infinite goal. It attempts

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[10]Hubert Bonner, Social Psychology (New York: American
Book Company, 1953), p. 118.

to relate the individual to what he will face in his life,
under trust. It is the Holy Spirit's goal to create faith.
But education's more realizable goal is to place before the
learner the situations wherein necessary trust can be
learned. This sphere of growth, which is most theological,
is via social relationships. A faith must be encouraged
which is able to meet greater and greater trials.

The goal might be called "integration of trust."[11]
Absolute integration is God's goal, a goal as instantaneous
and complete as justification itself. But human goals for
faith are for relative integration of trust. No man will
have perfect faith. Christian goals deal with partial as-
pects of need, with categories of currently practiceable
theology. But education always goes on building a faith
potential for tomorrow. Thus, though goals are partial and
realizable today, we still encourage integration currently
not needed. This "faith for tomorrow," however, is God's
work in His own time. If we are trying to achieve trust
integrated into the "whole" man, we imply what we have not
yet achieved. No one can define what a "whole" man is, nor
all his future needs.

Today a man is secure in a narrow relationship and is
accepted by God. His limited security for his limited
world of tension may be sufficient. But in greater stress

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[11]Miller, op. cit., pp. 11, 67.

tomorrow his faith may be impossible. To be saved a man
must be equipped with faith sufficient for his situation.
Once the old relationship is severed by circumstance, the
over-dependency has not yet learned a security for fuller
participation in life. Total participation, therefore, is
our educational goal. Total integration is God's goal. We
cannot create faith, but we can handle the graduated stim-
uli for it to grow. God can save a man completely where he
is, but Christian education has a wider goal than the first
saving relationship. Every man must be prepared for wider,
more total, relationships. He must be prepared to find
God's same love later and everywhere. And this preparation
comes only through experience with total life. Depending
on the individual's unique situation for security toward
God through man, then, we can use home, or church, or even
counseling as initial agencies toward total participation.

Realizable goals come out of a consideration of man's
nature. For the whole man, we need whole participation.
We effect education of him with methods total to life. Our
methods can be life itself, as Cully explains:

> Methods for Christian teaching should be life-centered.
> The term "life-centered" has been used ever since
> pragmatism became a regnant philosophy for education.
> It usually has meant "experience-centered," and this
> reference has connoted present experience. . . . Ex-
> istence comprises a totality--not the self by itself,
> but the self in relationship to others, things, the
> universe, and history.[12]

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[12]Cully, _op. cit._, p. 119.

One is not nearer God the more total the experience. God is not pantheistic, all-being. Rather, God is instant to anyone as security, that is, through faith in love. Cully summarizes:

> The purpose of Christian nurture is to help people through their growing relationship to God in Christ so to live that they may glorify him and effectively serve others, in the assurance that they partake of eternal life now and forever.[13]

The Self and "I-Thou"

Having so far in this chapter underlined the social involvement of the individual and his ongoing total growth, we look closer at the internal development of faith.

Relationships deal deeply with the individual self. Every relationship is in part a religious confrontation with God. The "I-Thou" analysis which one hears so frequently today is the language of relationship topic "incarnate." Miller introduces us to it:

> Martin Buber gets at the problem of relation of theology to life through what he calls the "I-Thou" relationship. He contrasts this with the "I-It" relationship. When we treat a person as a "Thou," we recognize that he is an end and not a means and therefore, he is not to be used for our pleasure. . . . God works through persons in relationship. This is both a theological and an educational insight. . . . When a man works through such relationships, he treats each other person as a "Thou" and therefore discovers the "eternal Thou" behind each person.[14]

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[13]_Ibid_., pp. 29-30.

[14]Miller, _op. cit._, p. 66.

The following statement by Farmer is concisely classic for
our subject:

> I begin with the proposition that God's purpose is
> such, and He has so made humanity in accordance with
> that purpose, that He never enters into personal re-
> lationship with a man apart from other human persons.
> When he confronts me in the specifically personal I-
> Thou relationship . . . it is always closely bound up
> with the personal I-thou relationship I have with my
> fellows.[15]

God is not a person except through other human persons.

The "I-Thou" scheme is invaluable to demonstrate how
relationship affects faith in God. Both what we are as
civil creatures and as God's creatures is mediated to us
through the same source, people. Both the world and our
Christian fellowship tell us what they consider our divine
relationship is. Of course, they tell us opposite answers.
The more one is in only the fellowship of the world, the
more one will not receive the self-conception of being a
divinely favored "Thou." Miller indicates the pattern of
all of life in the following:

> Even a small child is asking "Who am I?" and "Who are
> you?" before he has found the words to express these
> questions. He learns them from the way he is treated
> by his parents and brothers and sisters in his home
> . . . and this is either good or bad theology depend-
> ing on what answers he learns.[16]

To be treated as an "It" and therefore conclude one is an

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[15]Herbert H. Farmer, The Servant of the Word (New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 37.

[16]Miller, op. cit., p. 68.

"It" leaves one without knowledge of being loved by God.
This doctrine of faith, this attitude toward self, we can
call intrapsychic. However, with Sherrill we can say that
the intrapsychic attitude is preceded by interpersonal at-
titudes:

> The interpersonal relationships into which the indi-
> vidual is born give him his first feelings toward him-
> self. These early feelings for himself are the first
> form of his relationship to himself. They begin to
> set up a relation between the "I" and the "me." They
> give the first shape to his intrapsychic dynamics.[17]

The relation of self to self is crucial. What one is fi-
nally made to believe he is before God is his faith--for
salvation or for peril.

"I-Thou" or "I-It" relationship breeds trust or dis-
trust of relationship. And trust or distrust in all rela-
tionships together corresponds ultimately to that trust or
distrust one has towards God. It corresponds ultimately to
that trust or distrust in eternity. Therefore relationship
with people affects faith in God. It even _effects_ faith in
God. Howe's insight is penetrating when he writes:

> Our sense of trust and mistrust is concerned finally
> with our sense of self in relation to others who are
> the source determinative in the realization of our be-
> ing. Basic trust is fundamental to all trust relation-
> ships including those that we call religious. Trust
> is trust, and who can distinguish between trust and
> faith?[18]

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[17]Sherrill, _op. cit._, p. 165.

[18]Reuel L. Howe, _Man's Need and God's Action_ (Greenwich,
Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1953), p. 68.

We could quote no other Christian reference which is more
significant to this entire study than that just quoted.
Howe elsewhere writes:

> "I believe in God." What kind of meanings do I bring?
> If basic trust is present in me, then when I say "I"
> and "Thou," much that is represented by the word be-
> lieve is implicit in my affirmation. . . . If the
> child through the experience of acceptance can bring
> the right meaning of trust to his use of these two
> most important words, then all that the creed affirms
> about what God has done in relation to human need will
> become more available to him. . . . Have you not
> known people who said that the Apostles' Creed left
> them cold?[19]

To bring the right meaning of trust to the use of words
comes only from a program of experiencing the "I-Thou."
Christian education is to provide that program of experi-
ence. Since such experience is found by persons only among
persons, that program will be consciously social.

The Self and Faith Attitudes

Social psychology has much to say about the formation
of the social self. It presents a sophisticated analysis
of the self-attitude of faith we have just been discussing.
A person's own attitude over against himself, as to whether
he is justified by grace or not, is crucial to salvation.
In the following we explore the unconscious and conscious
formation of faith attitudes.

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[19]_Ibid._, pp. 116, 117.

Faith does not have to be conscious of itself to be saving faith. This is seen in an infant. Pre-natally, without social influence, a fetus has no category to understand mother, dad, and people as anything different than its enwombed self. From conception through birth and on into the following weeks it is not conscious of the social world as separable from itself. The people, who alone are to bear faith to the child, are not recognized as external. At this age environment and self are indistinguishable. Environment is merely an extension of self. The infant has no conception of where it begins and ends and where other people and things begin and end.[20] He carries his toes to his mouth as he does any other object.[21] Bühler believes that the newly born infant is too intimately bound up with his mother emotionally and physiologically to have any feeling for self.[22] He has no concept of "self." And yet the people who mediate faith are all about. They, nor their fruits of trust produced in the child, are recognized by the child.

How much of faith is related to the conscious perception of the Means and of self? If the new-born infant has

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[20]Lundberg, op. cit., pp. 291-92.

[21]Solomon E. Asch, Social Psychology (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1952), pp. 283-84.

[22]Bonner, op. cit., p. 115.

no reflexive notion of himself as an object, and yet it can
be "saved," we have an insight into faith as being also non-
rational. Perhaps this is faith's real essence--the intel-
lectual manifestation being merely an expression of it, its
sharpest mode of communication. Lutheran theology concurs.
A baptized child is saved by faith, though all adult under-
standings of intellectualized faith misunderstand this. A
child learns trust in the context of being loved and cuddled
by its parents who by their sounds, manner, and life admin-
ister Something gracious from beyond them. No matter how
baptism's efficacy is defined, baptism never should be ad-
ministered apart from personal relationships. These rela-
tionships themselves also are valid pre-verbally, pre-
symbolically, pre-reflexively, and pre-consciously. This
would support the ancient non-intellectual view of faith
and the sacraments.

"Self" requires time to develop.[23] It is formed,
coming in living life. In the course of interaction and
struggle between the individual and the surroundings,[24]
gradually the body senses register collectively to be per-
ceived as a unit object.[25] The child knows himself first
as a correlation of hunger, pain, thirst, etc. Self

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[23]Bonner, op. cit., p. 115.

[24]Asch, op. cit., pp. 283-84.

[25]Ibid., p. 284.

becomes more conscious of psychological properties, like strivings, feelings, and skills.[26]

As the child grows finally we see the social world contributing its pervading influence toward self formation. No one lives as an island unto himself. This higher development of self can arise only in social experience.[27] Psychologists and sociologists during this entire century have entirely agreed[28] that the role of others is of transcendent importance in the forming of the self. Asch surveys our interest:

> Just as the bodily self is in large part a function of our relation to things, so the self of motives and feelings is in large part a function of our relation to the human element. We do not know the kind of self we would find in a man who has grown up alone. It would contain some aspects of the self we considered earlier--the bodily self and the active self in relation to objects. When we speak of a self, however, we refer to ambitions, values, reputation; these constitute its center.[29]

Our thesis is concerned with this social self because it is the attitudinal and motivational self. It is built of the crucial values and self worth.

To see the social relations for their real importance we have so far reviewed growth through learned sociability

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[26]Ibid., p. 285.

[27]Bonner, op. cit., p. 116.

[28]Newcomb, op. cit., p. 316.

[29]Asch, op. cit., p. 286.

toward self-consciousness. Now we look especially at the reflexively and attitudinally motivated quality of self-consciousness. This self obviously is social. "Our consciousness of ourselves is largely a reflection of the consciousness which others have of us."[30] By "conscious" self we do not mean only the consciously expressible understanding of self. We mean that adult self attitude which is always present in any non-infant, that self attitude which, though perhaps not normally talked about, yet which would be accessible, if necessary, through psychoanalysis. By "conscious" self we mean that of self which is, or could be, communicated and manipulated by intentional symbols or words. This "conscious" attitudinal self is important to our study because adult Christian faith too has its conscious aspect.

Social interaction is symbolic formation of self. As mentioned before, social interaction is that sphere of imagined identifications, or two selves becoming mixed in the mind as one. Mead said it almost mystically: "No hard-and-fast-line can be drawn between our own selves and the selves of others, since our own selves exist only insofar as the selves of others exist."[31] A self understanding

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[30]Floyd Henry Allport, Social Psychology (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), p. 325.

[31]A. R. Lindesmith and A. L. Strauss, Social Psychology (New York: The Dryden Press, 1956), p. 429.

may not be verbally explicable, yet pictorially it is within every man. Symbol of self is added to symbol. "The meanings of the symbols by which selves are organized are contributed by the responses of others."[32] We are discussing symbol in Christian education because faith also has a symbolic expression, a symbolic regard for self.

"Self" is an educationally accepted term today.[33] Some men, like Hume, denied the self on philosophic grounds. Asch refutes this clinically.[34] The self is real, because symbol is real. Other men had felt that there was no self other than the hereditary or biological self. Dare we study the self as anything like a social production? Mead made respectable the self viewed without prior mind or biology. He answers this in one of the ablest accounts yet written on the origin of self and self-consciousness:

> Our contention is that mind can never find expression, and could never have come into existence at all, except in terms of a social environment. . . . And this entirely social theory or interpretation of mind--this contention that mind develops and has its being only in and by virtue of the social process of experience and activity, which it hence presupposes, and that in no other way can it develop and have its being--must be clearly distinguished from the partially (but only partially) social view of mind. On this view, though mind can get expression only within or in terms of the environment of an organized social group, yet it is nevertheless in some sense a native endowment--a

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[32]Ibid.

[33]Bonner, op. cit., pp. 112-13.

[34]Asch, op. cit., pp. 279-80.

> congenital or hereditary biological attribute--of the individual organism, and could not otherwise exist or manifest itself in the social process at all; so that it is not itself essentially a social phenomenon, but rather is biological both in its nature and in its origin, and is social only in its characteristic manifestations or expressions. . . . The advantage of our view is that it enables us to give a detailed account and actually to explain the genesis and development of mind; whereas the view that mind is a congenital biological endowment of the individual organism does not really enable us to explain its nature and origin at all.[35]

This is all so stated that we may not lessen the significance of relationship in education, blaming faith's ill development upon heredity, or biology, or other non-social factors. More recently the self has been freed of implying helplessness under any social determinism.[36] Therefore, today sociology is presenting an anlysis of self free from involvements and therefore applicable to Christian education. The social self is learned even as is faith. Recently there has been a growing volume of systematic material on the self's perception and discrimination--aspects useful to express the influence of relationships on faith.

Having established the term "self" for theological uses, we requestion the reality of symbolic composites. If an individual has as many selves as there are people who

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[35]Lundberg, op. cit., p. 292.

[36]Asch, op. cit., p. 287; Broom and Selznick, op. cit., p. 92.

carry an image of him in their minds, if his conception of himself varies according to situation and experience, is there any constant that a self comes to view as a real self object? Asch answers that:

> adults from the start address themselves to the child as a person, as a feeling and perceiving being. He observes that his actions produce joy, concern, amusement, anger, or neglect. In the emotions that he arouses, in the responses that his actions meet, in the expectations toward him, he glimpses that he has an existence for others. The consequence is that being objective to others he becomes objective to himself.[37]

Such reflexive consideration of the self is possible only through linguistic relationship with others. "The individual becomes an object to himself only in communication with others, when he takes their attitudes toward himself."[38] Fittingly, linguistics is a symbolic tool, as both self attitude and faith are symbolic. Educationally, this means that though self is found in relationships, relationships are never without words.

Of what growth significance is the self-object? When self has become an object among objects there is a new horizon of growth.[39] Self can be viewed by self as an object under God. Self can objectively relate with all things consciously possible. Self provides self-attitudes

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[37]Asch, op. cit., pp. 286-87.

[38]Bonner, op. cit., p. 116.

[39]Ibid.

expressed verbally. Education can use the analysis of self especially regarding the reflexive attitudes of self. If self is viewed as an object it is a small way to expect self to place value on this object. As Sutherland and Woodward say, all that accrues to the use of such terms of common speech as "I," "me," and "myself" expose self attitude:

> The self is that part of the human personality which has attitudes that are reflexive, that are directed toward itself as an object or value. The "I" condemns or approves or, is pleased or displeased with a thousand things the "me" does or fails to do.[40]

Cooley was the first exponent of the significance of reflexive mentality being manifestly and verbally useful.

"Self-image," another term for "self object," takes us back to the necessity to extract meaning from symbol. This term provides fuller portrayal of details to self. A symbolic understanding of self is the essence of verbal expression and of conscious faith. Bonner explains "self-image":

> In his interactions with others the child gradually develops an awareness of himself, a self-image. This self-image is the result of the child's differentiation of himself from others and of the attitudes they have toward him.[41]

Because the self-image is symbolic and therefore can be

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[40] R. L. Sutherland and J. L. Woodward, Introductory Sociology (Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1937), p. 206.

[41] Bonner, op. cit., p. 119.

expressed linguistically we have a tool of communication
and interaction with that self via words, not actions alone.
This is mentioned at this point to indicate the value of
words toward reconstruction and therapy. A self-image es-
pecially is a symbolically complete view of self. Broom
explicates this:

> Socialization creates a self-image. Through inter-
> action with others and through language, the indivi-
> dual comes to think of himself as an "I." As he per-
> ceives the attitudes of others toward this "I," he
> develops a self-image. He takes on a view of himself
> from observing the way others respond to him. For
> this reason Cooley spoke of a "looking-glass self."
> The image the person has of himself is reflected back
> from a mirror.
>
> The attitudes which enter into the individual's self-
> image are, for the most part, emotive; they are at-
> titudes of approval and disapproval, acceptance or re-
> jection, interest or indifference. They are judgments
> upon the child, sometimes based on his genuine poten-
> tialities, sometimes reflecting the meaning of his
> potentialities for the life of the significant adults
> around him. In either case, the judgments which others
> direct toward the child, expressed in their attitudes
> toward him, are judgments the child is likely to make
> of himself.
>
> The importance of self-image is most easily observed
> in pathological behavior, where socialization has
> created a self-image harmful to the person. In situa-
> tions of neglect, deprivation, and rejection, the
> child may come to think of himself as inadequate; be-
> cause he is unloved, he may think of himself as in-
> herently unlovable. In extreme situations he may de-
> velop self-hatred. The child who steals may be so-
> cially defined by others as delinquent, may come to
> identify himself as a delinquent, and may seek out
> other delinquents to gain approval for his self-
> image.[42]

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[42]Broom and Selznick, op. cit., p. 88.

One's self-image is of central concern to us because we would have individuals view themselves as secure in God. Faith is a self-image. More specifically, adult self-image is related to _fides reflexa_. The importance of self-image is apparent in that it can be the nest of spiritual unbelief. A self-judged, self-hated image is equivalent to damnation.

When Christian theology hears sociology's finding that an individual's concept of himself is socially formed, theology has a question. How much of the formation of society forms also faith? For faith is a self perception, a perception of one's security in God. To what extent is our view of ourselves, whether hated or loved by God, received from people about us? Theology answers in terms of the Means of Grace; all the Means are always channeled by the Holy Spirit through the hands of other people. They administer them and explain them. The social reception of the sacraments and the pulpit and written Word, and especially the informal personable exchanges of the Word, are all through people. Undeniably our socially received faith in God is socially formed. And are not persons that creation among all things most fittingly created to portray God as a real person?

Relationships in all of society as well as in formal education tell one well enough what he should be. Actually, all growth seems a product of compulsion (by punishment and

reward) to attainment. One's security is finally tied up in whether or not he can reach his ideal. Broom refers to an idealized self as a double-edged sword:

> The identification of the self with ideal values, goals, and roles is an important aspect of socialization because it helps to sustain disciplines. On the other hand, if there is too great a discrepancy between the potentialities of the person and his ideal self, or if the ideal self makes extreme and unrealistic demands, the result will be a sense of inadequacy and failure.[43]

The inability to relinquish an impossible ideal is work-righteousness. Ideals unattained bring despair of security. If an ideal is significantly a part of many other frustrated ideals, the despair is felt as over against God. Volumes of words of forgiveness at this point may not be able to relax unforgiven ideals set by years of relationships. Relentless, unattainable ideal is the Christian doctrine of Law. What one does about this ideal self, in neurotic achievement and despair or in acceptance, relates to work-righteousness or forgiveness. The self-image and self-ideal must be a self view of forgiveness in God.

Self-value is always a composite of many self-values. This is because an individual has as many selves as there are people who carry an image of him in their minds. The individual tries to synthesize one attitude for himself out of society's many opinions of him. His constant job

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[43]Ibid., pp. 88, 90.

is the unification of himself. Internal unification of
self-attitudes is the security factor toward a constructive
life. If he does not know who he is, feels schizophrenic,
and is unable to give others the constancy they need, he is
incapacitated and unhappy. Inability to achieve an inte-
grated self attitude is not uncommon. "We might as well
face the fact at the beginning that a completely unified
self does not exist."[44] Unharmonious self-images and the
confusion of not knowing which self to believe, is basically
everybody's problem to some extent. Self-esteem due to
abilities may be high, but this is separate from the basic
life self-security picture of every individual.[45] Many
times a false self-portrayal, developed in some one acti-
vity such as athletics, radiates and permanently affects
the rest of the self.[46] Withdrawal self-attitudes or shal-
low bluff self-attitudes may rise. The integration seems
impossible among the myriads of self-values. And it is im-
possible, because one self-hostility is always to be stirred
up by the next and worse self-hostility.

These many conflicting emotions, those of self-hate,
pride, caution, idealization, content, etc., are not viewed
by the Christian as the central problem of integration. It

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[44]Bonner, op. cit., pp. 127, 129.

[45]Ibid., p. 123.

[46]Sutherland, op. cit., pp. 213-14.

is not a constant problem of what new sin should he accuse
himself. His one and only task of integration is that of
self-mortification with that of self-acceptance in God. He
constantly must realize he is both sinner and saint. Of
these two, there never is real integration. They stand
forever on top of one another. This paradox is that chief
lesson of Christian education, for it is Law and Gospel
applied to the deepest aspect of the self-soul.

We have examined the Word, and the Church, and people's
self-concepts in faith or unbelief. We have discussed the
Word-centered aspect of education in relationship, also the
Church-centered aspect. But now we ask about the legiti-
macy of the person-centered approach of this present chap-
ter. It seems that the language of relationships becomes
almost secular when viewed as people, per se. When the
high-sounding terms "Word" and "Church" are brought down to
produce only self-concepts, it sounds too personalized.

What about private witness expressions? What about
this sectarian variety of self-tongues which upset catho-
licity even in Lutheran groups? Though the final self-
understanding of faith causes confusion, it is to be ex-
pected. The final self-concept will always be a unique
configuration, produced by that person's unique environ-
ment. His understanding of his justification will always
be justification as he has found it over against the pe-
culiar self-judgments he has experienced. Though each

individual Christian uses the set liturgical form with joy, his personal expression of faith will always be different, though meaningful. His individuality is actually quite universal in occurrence--universal to the last man.

Personal application is the final goal of the Word in the Church. Each person has his own needs, and each need is peculiar to each aspect of the Word helpful. Surely, that Word which fills those needs is varied; all answers are common to the Word. The chief characteristic of God's Love as it seeks out lives is that it is always absolutely relevant. What is not relevant to at least one person somewhere is not of the living Word. Theology is relevant to life, and therefore to Christian education. What is not relevant is not of Christian education, as Sutherland implies:

> Theology is the attempt to provide the Gospel's answer in accurate and relevant form. Christian education takes place when men's basic questions are answered in terms of the relationships we have with people.[47]

We raised the question of the propriety of a person-centered approach. Sherrill answers it:

> A Christian educator believes that Christian values are best protected when the objectives toward which one works are person-centered. Every person is worthful in the sight of God, and he who seeks to do God's will needs to give primary attention to persons.

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[47]Ibid.

Persons are to be used not as means to other ends but as ends in their own right.[48]

We conclude this study in devotion of all our efforts to Jesus Christ, who alone is the love, the life, and the understanding of the Church.

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[48]Johnson, The Minister and Christian Nurture, edited by N. G. Forsyth (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 37.

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