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Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education

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No. 4

Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education. RICHARD R. CAEMMERER	197
God's Acts As Revelation. MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN	209
Report on Spiritual Speaking. Reprint from the <i>Living Church</i>	217
HOMILETICS	224
THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER	233
BOOK REVIEW	240

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Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education

By RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

EDITORIAL NOTE: This paper was originally delivered to a conference of Secretaries of Education.

THE present topic enables the discussion of a number of crucial questions. Kerygma, "proclamation," designates the message of the Christian Gospel. Didache, "instruction," has been employed to summarize the teaching of the Bible concerning Christian behavior. Are these terms employed with due attention to their Biblical usage? What is the relation of the one to the other? How are they to be used in religious education? Is religious education adequately structured by these two concepts in combination and in sequence? If so, what is the sequence to be?

I

The terms *kērygma* and *didachē* have become commonplaces in theological discussion. This is due largely to the small but influential monographs of the Briton C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper, 1936), and *Gospel and Law* (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1951). He affirms that the *kērygma*, e.g., in 1 Cor. 1:21, is that which the Christian preacher preached in order to save people (*Preaching*, p. 7). As displayed in the Book of Acts and the epistles, this preaching was that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again; additional ingredients more or less frequently added to this core involved the promise in the Old Testament concerning

the Christ, the description of His incarnation and life, the exaltation to the right hand of God and His intercession, and the promise to return to Judgment after the program of world evangelism is completed. (*Preaching*, summary appendix)

The *didachē*, on the other hand, is ethical instruction, as exemplified in the *Didachē tōn Dōdeka Apostolōn*, which was directed to those who had been converted to the Christian faith. Here the latter portions of the epistles of Paul and Peter give an illustration (*Gospel*, p. 5). Yet also the gospels provide such materials, related to narratives in contrast to the epistles, which relate them to theological doctrine (*ibid.*, pp. 5—7). Dodd is anxious to describe the uniqueness of this instruction. It pertains only to those who were members of the church and had placed themselves "under the judgment and mercy of God as declared in Jesus Christ" (*ibid.*, p. 10). In contrast to the "self-contained and self-justifying system of ethics" (*ibid.*) of the Greek moralists, the Christian didache showed affinity with the Jewish tradition, the way that the *halakha*, or regulation for conduct, grew out of the *haggada*, or exposition of religious truth (*ibid.*, p. 11). The heart of the didache was the sample of conduct given by Jesus Christ and narrated in the *kerygma* (*ibid.*, p. 36). Dodd believes that the motivations of Christian ethics according to the didache are: The kingdom of God, coming yet already arrived; the body

of Christ, the community of the church; the imitation of Christ according to the pattern set up in the kerygma; and the primacy of love. (*Ibid.*, pp. 25—45)

Much in Dodd's emphasis is useful. It is a basic principle that Christian behavior must grow radically out of God's act in Christ and hence that the proclamation of that act must precede the norms of ethical behavior. Dodd is in reaction to an anti-nomianism which weakens the imperatives for action in the New Testament, and he holds up the ethical principles of the gospels and epistles as standards driving to "repentance" and thus as stimuli toward accepting forgiveness and as positive moral guidance for action to those who "have received the kingdom of God" (*ibid.*, p. 64). This corresponds roughly to the second and third uses of the Law as employed by Lutheran theologians.

For Dodd the "law of Christ," his summary of the Christian didache, "works by setting up a process within us which is itself ethical activity."

His precepts stir the imagination, arouse the conscience, challenge thought, and give an impetus to the will, issuing in action. . . . The precepts . . . must become, through reflection and through effort, increasingly a part of our total outlook upon life, of the total bias of our minds. Then they will find expression in action appropriate to the changing situations in which we find ourselves. That is what I take to be the meaning of the "law written on the heart." [*Gospel*, p. 77]

As the Christian behaves himself in keeping with this law, he "bears witness to what the Gospel declares about the eternal nature of God as revealed in Christ, out of which all moral obligation flows" (*ibid.*, p. 82). While Dodd grants considerable

difference in method between the ethical sayings of Jesus and those of the epistles, he is nevertheless anxious to stress that we have to do with a true law, command, and demand of God, and he deprecates suspicion of Christianity as a new law (*ibid.*, p. 66).

Is this polarity of kerygma and didache fruitful for a Lutheran program of religious education? Lutherans remember the attack of the Lutheran Confessions on the idea of Christ as the new Lawgiver (cf. Ap. IV 109, 15; 167, 392; XXVII 271, 17 [Tappert ed., Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1959]). A luminous accent on the primacy of the Gospel and of faith in Christian behavior should help us (Joseph Sittler's *The Structure of Christian Ethics*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 1958). On the other hand, Dodd's accents on "law" and "Kingdom" sound no more legalistic than Martin Luther (cf. Johannes Heckel, *Luthers Rechtsbegriff: Lex charitatis* [Munich: Bayrische Akademie, 1953]), and they underscore accents in the New Testament. Dodd should come under criticism, however, on other counts. His concept of didache is not derived from the New Testament term, and it will be helpful to explore it at first hand. We shall find in the kerygma, furthermore, an affirming of the Atonement which is essential to all ethical action as a Word of God transforming and directing the inner life of man through renewal rather than psychological reflection.

II

The New Testament does not neatly compartmentalize kerygma for unbelievers, didache for believers, as two successive activities. Jesus went about teaching in the synagogues and preaching the Gospel of

the Kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 11:1); the Great Commission (28:19,20) employs a similar juxtaposition. Acts 5:42 says of the apostles that both in the temple and in the houses of the Christians daily "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"; 15:35 describes Paul and Barnabas preaching and teaching at Antioch; 28:31, Paul at Rome. This juxtaposition is highly important.

The term *didaskein* is used of training toward faith and relation to God, rather than ethical behavior, in such instances as Mark 4:2 (the parable of the sower); 8:31 (Jesus' forecast of His passion); Luke 12:12 (the Spirit teaching what to say in witness); Matt. 7:29 (teaching with the authority setting free from sin); John 8:28 (Jesus' description of Himself as Messiah); John 14:26 (the Spirit's corroborating Jesus' teaching of the Atonement); Acts 5:25 (the apostles preaching in the temple); 18:11 (Paul's preaching in Corinth); 1 Cor. 4:17 (the way of life in Christ); Col. 2:7 (the process by which the faith was imparted in which they now have to be established); 3:16 (applying the Word of Christ to one another, which is the message of the peace of God); Heb. 5:12 (the first principles of the oracles of God; 6:1,2: "repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment"); and 1 John 2:27 (the anointing which we have received from God, i.e., the Spirit working in the heart). True, some usages of the term are specifically directed to ethical counsels, such as 1 Tim. 2:12; 4:11; 6:2, and some are undefined.

The noun *didache* deserves similar exploration. The usage is quite parallel and

suggests that we are dealing with a noun betokening an activity of teaching rather than merely the subject matter of what is taught. Thus Matt. 7:28 (explained in v. 29 as the process of setting free through teaching); 22:33 (the process by which the Sadducees were discomfited); Mark 4:2 (He said to them in His process of teaching, i.e., in the parable of the sower); 11:18 (the teaching related to casting out the money changers); 12:38 (an indictment of the Pharisees which occurred "in His teaching"); Luke 4:32 ("astonished at His doctrine, for His Word was with power"); John 7:16-18 ("If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself"); Acts 2:42 (a process of training that was correlated with fellowship and sharing with the apostles); 5:28 (specifically of the preaching of the Gospel); 13:12 ("the doctrine of the Lord," the entire complex of the preaching of the Gospel and the reproof of opposition with miracles); 17:19 (the preaching of Paul to the heathen); Rom. 6:17 (the Gospel, by which the Romans had been turned from death to life); 16:17 (the teaching that welds Christians into a unity in the body of Christ); 1 Cor. 14:6, 26 (a form of utterance within a gathering of the Christian congregation, evidently restating former information in contrast to new revelation or interchange of experience); 2 Tim. 4:2 (part of the definition of action taking place in "preach the Word"); Heb. 6:2 (initial training in the essentials of Christian faith and life such as Christ, new life, faith, Baptism, etc.); 2 John 9:10 (the doctrine of Christ essential for having God).

The cognate concept of nurture, *paiden-*

ein, is employed several times in ways quite comparable. Whereas the objective is indeed ethical in nature, the burden of the intrinsic instruction is primarily the kerygma. (Cf. Titus 2:11-14; 2 Tim. 3:14-17)

Interesting are the uses of the term *didaskalia*. They may imply the substance or body of teaching or the process of teaching as it is expressed in didache. They relate quite frequently to the total domain of faith and life in Christ rather than particularly to ethical conduct. Thus 1 Tim. 4:6 ("words of faith and good doctrine" coupled directly with the status of salvation, v. 10); v. 13 (a unit in the process of communicating Biblical and apostolic truth to the Christian group, along with reading and exhortation); v. 16 (the output to the hearer, in contrast to care for personal nurture as a pastor); 5:17 ("word and doctrine" a field of labor of the elders); 6:1 (the name of God and his doctrine); v. 3 (the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine which is according to "godliness," ethical in objective but Christological in content); 2 Tim. 3:10 (first in a list of activities serving as a pattern by Paul to Timothy); v. 16 (Scripture profitable for doctrine; either very general or after correlates of "reproof, correction, instruction" defined as "in righteousness," in Pauline literature not primarily ethical, but concerning the relation to God which is by faith in Christ Jesus, v. 14); Titus 1:9 (the process of promulgating the "faithful Word"); 2:1, 7 (labels related to a series of ethical objectives in hearers and in self, but note the structure of this operation in v. 10: "the doctrine of God, our Savior," set forth by the passage, "for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath

appeared, nurturing us so that we live, etc."). Like *didaskain* and didache this term thwarts the effort to extract it from the orbit of the proclamation of God's redeeming act in Christ, although its objectives are indeed at times ethical in nature.

Before drawing the implications, it may be well to remember the force of kerygma or *kēryssein*. The noun is used by Paul of his own preaching of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:4; Titus 1:3); or of that of the apostles (1 Cor. 1:21; 15:14; 2 Tim. 4:17). Matt. 12:41 and Luke 11:32 use it of the preaching of Jonah. *Kēryssein* is joined with specifications of its content: Rev. 5:2 (angel summoning to open the book); Mark 1:45 (publishing the miracle; similarly Mark 5:20; Luke 8:39; Mark 7:36); Matt. 10:27 (also Luke 12:3, what they hear in the ear); Luke 4:19 (the acceptable year of the Lord); 2 Tim. 4:2 ("the Word"); Rom. 10:8 (the Word of faith); Luke 8:1 (the kingdom of God; also Luke 9:2; Acts 20:25; 28:31); Mark 16:15 (the Gospel; also Acts 1:2; Gal. 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:19; Mark 13:10; Col. 1:23); Matt. 4:23 (the Gospel of the Kingdom; also Matt. 9:35); Luke 4:18 (deliverance and recovery of sight to the blind); Matt. 24:14 (the Gospel of the Kingdom; also Matt. 26:13; Mark 14:9); Mark 1:4 (Baptism; also Luke 3:3; Acts 10:37); Luke 24:47 (repentance for the forgiveness of sins); Acts 8:5 (Christ; also 1 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:15); Acts 19:13 (Jesus); 2 Cor. 4:5 (Christ Jesus as Lord, ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake); 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:19. With special definition: Mark 1:14, that the time was fulfilled and the kingdom of God was near; Acts 9:20, that Christ is the Son of God; 1 Cor. 15:12,

that Christ is risen from the dead; Acts 10:42, "and testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead"; Matt. 3:1 (Matt. 10:7), repent, etc.; Mark 1:7, John's preaching of Christ. Almost ironically the term is used of the propaganda for work righteousness (Acts 15:21; Gal. 5:11; Rom. 2:21). Without any proviso, giving the term a technical equivalent of *euangelizomai*, we have Matt. 11:1; Mark 1:38, 39; 3:14; 6:12; 16:20; 1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 10:15.

From this mass of material we are justified in regarding Dodd's separation of kerygma and didache unwarranted. But for our purposes this correction is of only minor importance. We are concerned with the actual structure of the Biblical message as a power for moving and nurturing the human heart. The New Testament sets before us one great act: God Himself, executing a plan which He had before the foundation of the world, in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world. This plan involves an act of mercy toward the human race and the human being who is powerless of himself to make a change in his condition. The plan is executed in two stages. The first is that in Jesus Christ God carries out an act which we call redemption, or atonement, by which God Himself looses mankind from the bondage of its rebellion, or moves toward restoring life to what had been by birth and nature death; He does this through the incarnation and the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, His Son. In Him the sin of mankind is covered, and life and immortality are brought to life.

But now comes the second stage in the process, and that is that this act is proclaimed, this breaking in of God's rule

and kingdom is announced, this loosening from bondage and giving of life is heralded. The Cross itself becomes a manifestation of this act of God (Rom. 3:21-26), and it is proclaimed as such by the act of God which is coupled with the Cross in the message of the Atonement, namely, the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Rom. 4:25). The heralding of this act of God is set up on an enduring basis, through every human generation and age and people, as God's own nation becomes the agent and minister of the redeeming acts to itself and to the world. The Word of reconciliation is entrusted to preachers (2 Cor. 5:18-21); Christ sends His disciples to bring men to faith just as God sent Him to be the Word of faith. (John 17:8-21)

The pronouncing of this Word of God's act in Christ is given various titles in the New Testament. We have been using kerygma, the heralding of a great and important fact, completed, but with continuing meaning to those who hear it. Parallel is the term *euangelion*, the good news, a fact which has already transpired, yet the telling of which brings always renewed joy in the hearer who truly comprehends it, or disgust in the person who rejects it (2 Cor. 2:16). These terms sometimes imply a fact, the wording or content of the message which is heralded or told. But more frequently they imply the actual telling of the fact. What was foolish to Greek and Jew of St. Paul's day was not simply the redemption or the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ but the fact that the mighty objectives of this redemption were made to hinge on feeble or uneloquent men and their preaching it. (1 Cor. 1:17-31)

Those objectives indeed comprise that men are to turn from unbelief to faith, from rebellion against God and His forgiveness to accepting Him (Luke 24:44-48). But the objectives comprise all the other great functions of the Christian life and the progress of the Christian church until the return of Christ to Judgment. Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is a power of God "unto salvation," that is, effective for all the situations of faith and life down to the day of Christ's Judgment (Rom. 1:16). He says that it is God's plan to reconcile all things to Himself through the blood of Christ, to maintain His people "holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight"

if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven. [Col. 1:19-23]

For this side of the grave God's people are under relentless attack upon their faith and their standing with God; hence the kerygma has meaning for them to the end of time, also after they are converted.

The functions of the Christian life, furthermore, do not comprise merely being sustained in faith. Christians are to be a salt and leaven in their world, and they are to be knit together in the fabric of the holy Christian church, which is an operation of love (Col. 3:3-17). To all of these objectives the proclaiming of Christ's completed act of the atonement remains basic. In fact, for the objective of something so ethical as love within the company of believers and disciples, Jesus Christ gave the Sacrament commemorating His own dying as the stimulus (1 Cor. 11:23-26). The

writer to the Hebrews tells his readers that they must continue to speak to one another about Jesus Christ as the High Priest through whom they have access to God, for thus they will stimulate one another to love and to good works (Heb. 10:18-25). Paul tells Titus, in words crowded with language concerning teaching and nurture, that the objectives of self-denial, reverent and pious living, steadfast hope for the return of Christ, and equipment for good works, are to be achieved altogether by proclaiming that the grace of God that brings salvation has already appeared, namely, in Jesus Christ, "who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people." (Titus 2:11-14)

Didache, *didaskalia*, *didaskein*, *katechein*, *paideuein*, are therefore not activities separate from *keryssein* and *euangelizein*. But they are the process by which the great fact of the atonement is brought into relation with its target in the here and now. The kerygma affirms that the intention of God to redeem the world has been carried out. The didache applies that intention of God to its target now, whether that be one not yet in the orbit of the kingdom of God or whether it be a member, young or old, in the holy Christian church. For the intention of God is never merely to rescue His people from death but to employ them for the activities of rescued and rescuing people.

With that digest of Biblical materials, we may be equipped to review the process of Christian education more directly. For that, too, is the business of making God's act in Christ, completed in the death and resurrection of Christ, apply to and do its work on people now.

III

"Christian education" is a comprehensive term which has been used to comprise all departments of Christian life. In this context we are concerned at least with those activities which can be organized in the family or the Christian congregation and its services of worship and educational activities in schools and special groups, and for which programs of learning and of training the teachers can be devised. How shall we apply kerygma and didache to these activities and programs?

It may serve our purpose to employ, for a moment, the terms of the educator regarding his work. He must confront his objectives, and he must discern functions and methods by which he proposes to arrive at the objectives. The fatal split in the concept of C. H. Dodd was that he assigned kerygma to the objective of bringing non-Christians to faith and relationship with the church, and didache to those objectives which concern the behavior and conduct of those who are already Christian. We are saying that the kerygma is basic, an essential ingredient, toward whatever objective is before the Christian preacher or educator, whether he envision people before conversion or afterward. C. H. Dodd and many others in the history of the church have granted that it is basic. They will say the Christian church can function only where its people have come to faith, or where they have been baptized, or where they really are God's people. But this is not saying that the kerygma is basic, but only that the fact of which the kerygma speaks is basic. The kerygma is not merely a statement of fact. But it is a tool to an end. We are saying it is a tool to every

Christian end. For it is the speaking, the continued proclaiming, that is the power.

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. [1 Cor. 1:21]

But the moment that I speak of functions by which the objectives are to be achieved, I am speaking of didache, the process by which the kerygma is being brought to its target. That is why the last word that we have about St. Paul in Acts 28:31 links his preaching with the act of teaching, just as Matthew speaks of Jesus' first word in Matt. 4:23 being teaching. Functions are good in education, indispensable, but they have to be toward objectives. Objectives are essential in education, but they have to have function to achieve them. Another way of saying this is: Really to play its role in the process of Christian education, the Gospel has to be directed to explicit ends and purposes; but really to provide power in Christian education, it has to direct the Gospel of God toward its ends and purposes.

Let us observe this principle in action in the New Testament, first of all, in the domain of ends and goals that concern faith. These comprise the initial turn to faith and conversion; in many a congregational program this is termed "evangelism" rather than "education." But they comprise many other goals likewise: sustaining people in the doubts and trials that affect their faith; encouraging people to continued and increasing worship and adoration toward God; training for the life of prayer and devotion to God. The normal prescription is likely to be: Speak the Gospel. But that is saying only half of it; the whole prescription should be: Proclaim the Gospel,

and direct it by teaching toward those goals of sustained faith, trust in God, and constancy in prayer.

Thus Hebrews gives a splendid kerygma of Jesus Christ as the High Priest through whom we have access to God and directs us through Him to find access to God. In its closing chapters it applies this awareness of Christ to the objective of constancy in faith under persecution and trial. Colossians had to combat a heresy in its time of trusting in and worshiping created powers, "angels," in place of the living God. Paul sets forth a detailed kerygma of the redemptive act of God in Christ, but he is explicit in directing it to the worship of Christ as All in all, the Fullness of God.

But notice that in this Letter to the Hebrews the same kerygma of Christ as High Priest is directed to the goal of the members of the church maintaining their concern for each others' spiritual life in the common assembly and their mutual conversation and profession of faith. Notice that in Colossians the kerygma concerning Jesus Christ as Redeemer is directed toward the maintaining of the Christian behavior that is the mark of people who are members of the body of Christ in the church.

When Jesus Christ first came preaching, He proclaimed the kerygma that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But He taught, pointing out the purpose of it: "Repent," turn, have a new mind. At the end of His sojourn with the disciples He said that they were to be witnesses of the fact that repentance toward forgiveness of sins was to be preached—that is teaching; and the kerygma that was to inform this teaching was that Jesus Christ had suffered,

died, and had risen again. Jesus taught His disciples that the kingdom of God had to take hold in their lives, that they were to bring forth the fruit of mutual love and courageous testimony. But in John 15 He preached the kerygma in word and action of Himself, being given into death, as the Source of their love to one another and the Vine into which they were to be grafted to bring fruit. In Matt. 20 He taught the disciples that they that will be great must plan to be everyone's servant, and He preached the kerygma of His own death as ransom and portrayed it in His own face steadfastly set toward Jerusalem.

True, "teaching" does more than simply outline objectives of the power that is preached in the kerygma. We think of the possibility of discussion, of questions and answers; of the regrooving of initial impressions, visual aids and illustrations to make the basic facts clear, particularly in the case of instruction in spiritual and intangible things. We think of the testing of results, the demand to try out the recommended power in life situations. But notice that all of these revolve about the teaching of the objectives. The objective is the great visual aid in all teaching; it relates the item to be learned to the learner's own life and growth; it demands of the teacher that he teach not for the sake of the item to be learned, or for the sake of himself, but for the sake of the learner. In preaching we say "The best illustration is application." Hence the kerygma must be implemented by teaching, and the teaching must implement the kerygma.

A further word about the application of this principle in the New Testament is important, and that is that it is a deadly risk to omit the kerygma, in any phase of

Christian education. "To do the right thing for the wrong reason" is not just inconvenient, but in terms of the Christian faith, it is a sin. It is the process of government to get people to live orderly, to construct a productive society, whether they have it in their heart to do so or not and whether their motives are shaped by the Spirit of God given because of God's redeeming act in Christ or not. But Christian education dare never depend on any power besides the trust in God's own Spirit at work in the heart, and He is there only as the individual is pondering that redeeming act of God in Christ. You can talk about good deeds and recommend them and assume that the individual is remembering that he is a baptized Christian and that the Spirit is properly at work. But unless you help the learner remember, you are running the risk of another power taking over—self-interest, or desire for approval, or fear of penalty. Or you may imply no power for motivation at all and fall into the trap of the academician in assuming that because you say the right thing the learner automatically has the will to do it—a presumption hoary with precedent in Lutheranism, and in all education. The whole Epistle to the Galatians is written around the damaging situation that people engage in moral and religious acts not for the sake of the objective which God would have them reach, or because of the power which the atonement in Christ puts in the heart by the Gospel, but from fear of penalty and in pursuit of winning God's favor.

Let us devote some final remarks to summarizing these principles at work in the two major areas of Christian education—the program of catechetical training

and preparation for church membership and the program of nurture.

Catechetical training applied to religious instruction the classical program of imparting factual truth and subject matter by means of conventional disciplines. Certain minimal objectives were outlined: that the learner would be able to qualify for salutary participation in the Sacrament; that he would be able better to understand sermons and share in religious discussion; that he would know what he was saying when he recited the propositions of the Creed or shared in the church's apparatus of worship; that he would have a minimal deposit of religious knowledge on which later instruction could be built. A theory concerning the process is that it was sufficient for an age in which youngsters went to work after grade school and confirmation but that now more is necessary, since they go to high school and college. Actually this is not the point to which criticism should be directed. The real difficulty is that many of the above objectives are really in the domain of function, present or future, and they do not concern the great objectives of the Christian faith and Bible and church at all.

As the church trains its people for salutary participation in the membership of the church, that membership is an objective. Christians have to see what they are to contribute to the spiritual life of one another and how all of them together are to live and associate in order to witness to their world in their callings. Subsidiary to this membership is the life of love between Christians, beginning in the family and pervading all cells of the structure of the church; and the sacrifice of love extended to people outside of the church

likewise. The doctrinal insights into Biblical truths about sin and grace, the atonement and the sacraments, are actually for the most part in the domain of the kerygma, the power that is to be exerted toward the objective.

Hence catechetical instruction has to preach the kerygma as the claim of God on the learner and set before the learner the purposes in his life as an individual and as a member of the body of Christ which God in His call has empowered in Baptism, is now empowering in the Gospel, and will continue to empower in Gospel and Sacrament. The teaching process will certainly not belittle "propositional truth," but it will regard it as a tool toward objectives which are utterly in the domain of genuine action in the faith, worship and prayer, the love, self-sacrifice, and consecration of the learner. The teaching process will canvass handicaps and gains in the process and will enlist the help of Christians young and old, in the group and outside of it, to that end.

It is questionable, therefore, whether a catechetical lesson or a study help for basic mastering of Biblical fact can ever be allowed to ponder Biblical truth for its own sake, or to discuss any Biblical truths out of relation to the central act of God as He approaches the learner through the atonement in Christ. But always, somehow, the program of God for the capture and sending of the learner must be related to the matter in hand, and that is both kerygma and didache. The simplest watchword for this principle would be 2 Tim. 4:2: "Preach the word, be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." The meditations of a master learner in the

119th Psalm reveal the process at work; there is not an episode where the psalmist, even as he remembers statutes and commandments, is not drawing thirstily on the mercy of God to sustain him and make him glad.

Let us apply similar criteria to the development of materials and programs of Christian nurture. Obviously this category is not completely separate from the previous one, except that here we are thinking of people, young and old, who are in the fellowship or in the orbit of the congregation and for whom a growth in the life of the spirit is desired. The objective, so-called, of preparation for church membership falls away. Now other words enter: "inspiration" or "guidance" or "training in stewardship" or "family life education" or "helps for worship." That these words are sometimes threadbare is in no sense to imply that these programs are unimportant or that Christian educators are to stop preparing them. In the aggregate they represent the church on its long thin front trying to hold the line against world, flesh, and devil. Ephesians would use another word, "edification," which likewise has worn out and yet is so important: shoring up the moorings, tuckpointing the fabric of the walls, of the individual Christian, and particularly of him in relation to his fellow Christian in the body of Christ. For every Christian is under attack, and every device for aid, from the simplest moment of worship or common chat about God to the most elaborate liturgy or the most adroit course work in Christian education, is important in the process.

At once we start with the principle that the materials and programs must be saturated with kerygma. Unabashed, painstaking-

ingly, in a thousand changes of method and approach, with every resource of translating religious and Biblical language into the understanding of the present time and its particular age level, the religious educator has to talk about Christ as the Mediator to God, the Son of God and Redeemer, the Servant who bears our load, the Captain who fights for our lives, and the Runner who went all the way ahead of us.

I find that in their anxiety to make their materials relevant, preachers and educators are tempted to the breaking point to stress the objective, current need and situation, dressed in Biblical language and profuse with the use of the word "Christ," or "Jesus," but actually to say very little about the great event that is already past, God's breakthrough to time which occurred at Bethlehem and climaxed on Calvary. This seems to have been the reticence of the writer of the Book of Esther, or of Saint James, or actually of their readers through the centuries who have been so delighted with the situation that they describe and the objectives of faith and life which they hold up to the extent that they do not even notice their kerygma shining through. If that can happen in Biblical books, let the religious teacher beware. Here is the obverse of catechetical literature; here "doctrine" in the churchly sense tends to fade away and history, sociology, economics, group method, literature, fill out the print in the name of relevance. How important that in an age where people are almost losing their sensitivity to words at all, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not allowed to become inexplicit to the point of omission!

But immediately we have to say: Let the kerygma be taught, let it be applied.

The catalog of vices in Rom. 1 and 2 or 2 Tim. 3 suggests that our age has dreamed up nothing very new, and Friedlaender's *Sittengeschichte Roms* indicates that the apostolic age even knew how to advertise its dirt. Hence the cues in the New Testament can be helpful. The people whom we are trying to reach are in peril. We who are trying to reach them are even more so, for we have undertaken a mandate not just to interest them, or produce salable merchandise for our publishing houses, but to reach people with the one thing needful. Every teaching operation walks on two legs: the function, reaching all the way to the objective, and the objective. Let our materials be explicitly kerygmatic, but clearly related to recognized causes and objectives. The redemption happened 1930 years ago. Religious teaching takes the message of that ancient act and rams it home as help, resource, life, and joy right now.

A footnote to this for people in charge of producing the church's materials in religious education is that much of their work reaches the final target at second and third hand. The church does not simply distribute printed materials; it enlists teachers to train others and puts handbooks and manuals and leaflets and monographs into the hands of the teachers to stimulate cells of conversation and learning. This is wonderful, for this is the church in action, training its people to be ministers who in turn train others. But this means that the structure of printed material for the church's use has to be frank in its purpose and explicit in its materials. The kerygma has to show; the whole thing has to be didache in action.

How in the world can a person keep such material fresh? Only by proposing objectives in the midstream of the ultimate learner's interest; by setting forth God's plan in Christ as God's own agency to reach the objective; and by remembering to speak that same plan in Christ to the person who is going to function as teacher and go-between. A teacher's manual ought to have mighty encouragement in it for the teacher to accept the role and responsibility from God for which Christ died and rose again.

Religious education in the field of the existing church has auxiliaries which should be exploited in the very nature of the task. Basically the kerygma has one all-pervading goal: that people turn to the forgiveness of sins, said Jesus. Hence every program of group study in the Christian church, from the family to the most elaborate Common Service, must sooner or later involve the practical confronting and confessing of sin and the proclamation of forgiveness. The more realistic and genuine this program is, the more self-evident is the corollary of thanksgiving and joy. This mutuality, this group process in

Christian education, is the organic cement that binds kerygma and didache together.

It is this ingredient which turns the educational process from a barren review of Biblical words and data, or mute gatherings of people assembled in response to a sense of duty to engage in "Bible study" as a program of piety, to a situation in which actual didache is going on. For whether the objective of the lesson has to do with the strengthening of the upward reach toward God in faith or worship or prayer, or the lateral reach of concern and Christian love, or the inward reach of battling with the flesh, the common interest in the subject, the confessing of faults to one another; the contribution of ways of thought and expression that each participant can make, and the combined prayer for God's gift of new light from His Word, are major methods for applying the kerygma of God's saving action to the hearts of God's needy people. And where that is going on, the assembling has not been in vain, and Christians by the rehearsal of that very kerygma will stimulate one another to love and to good works.

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