CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE CHRISTIAN METHODIST

EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF DAVID R. HUNTER'S

CONCEPT OF ENGAGEMENT AND THE PROBLEM OF PLURALISM, TODAY

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE SUBJECT STATED AND DEFINED

The purpose of this writing is to present a study of models
to ministers and laymen of the Christian Methodist Episcopal
Church specifically, and other Christians generally, as they
consider critically the need for understanding more about con-
temporary problems in our rapidly changing society and our
responsibility to keep Christianity alive. David Hunter's
"Engagement" concept is perhaps the key word for making relevant
religious doctrines, eliminating worn-out practices, and accept-
ing new patterns for keeping Christianity a way of life.

The central theme of this thesis is to explore and propose
ways to keep Christianity a way of life in the C.M.E. Church. To
reflect on the mood of this motif is to recall the days when theolo-
gy seemed to be the primary interest of the church. Generally,
religious groups developed behavior patterns which they considered
as expressing the requirements of Christian ethics and to which
they ascribed the sanction of divine authority. Deviations from
these patterns by members of the group were a violation. Those
remembering conservative religious communities in the 40 s and
early 50 s might recall that a person was considered to be growing
in God's Grace if he refrained from dancing, card-playing, theater-
going, liquor-drinking, and cursing or swearing at any time, and
especially on Sunday.

However, the codes of Christian ethics have undergone con-
siderable modification in recent years. The "new morality" is

threatening the place of the old. The pluralistic society we live in proclaims that variations must be considered critically and rationally in the light of their actual or probable consequences, and not conventionally in comparison with traditional and uncriticized standards. Twentieth century secularization, thought of sociologically as pluralism, stresses that matters must not be closed or conclusions drawn too soon by arbitrary or snap judgment, since all questions which vitally affect the associated life of men involve the intricate interplay of many factors. This philosophy is the foundation upon which Joseph Fletcher wrote his <u>Situation Ethics</u> and Harvey Cox his <u>Secular City</u>.

The question we raise is, "How can Christianity be a way of life in the C.M.E. Church in the light of the focus of contemporary interests?" This is asked with a belief that religion has something to say about the behavior of men in society and about the structure and processes of the social order. Whether one looks at our civilization's most urgent problems from the standpoint of the professed religionist or from that of the avowed secularist, it is hard not to believe that religion has a legitimate part in their solution, if religion has a right to exist at all. Religion must make its contribution to social and moral betterment in concrete ways. Thus Christian education will be a necessary instrument for helping the C.M.E. Church be engaged in community improvement actions.

PROBLEM OF PLURALISM

Whether churches care to admit it or not, they are faced

with the realities of a pluralistic society. And if they are
going to be relevant to the formation of public policy in in-
creasingly large areas of modern life, they must first of all
accept this fact and seek to understand it. Functionally, many
churches are confronted with two main obstacles which prevent
them from facing the new realities of present-day religious life
in this country. First, the assumption is that this country has
always been an essentially Protestant Christian nation. Sec-
ond, there is a fear of losing the traditional privileges and
support which they have received due to the quasi-establishment
of Protestantism.

Two questions will continually press them for answers:
"What, if anything, of positive value to faith will be lost by
the acceptance of pluralism?"; and, "What will be the gains in
terms of the integrity of the churches?"

However, overarching these concerns is the urgent need for
the churches to recognize the new religious situation that has
emerged in this country since around 1960. As a nation we have
only begun to wrestle with the legal, moral, and theological di-
mensions of pluralism. Thus it is impossible to tell what the
effects of this transition will be either upon the institutional
character of the churches themselves or upon the character of
our national public life. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to
call attention to three implications of religious pluralism
which are receiving growing attention and a considerable area of
agreement, particularly in Protestant circles.

First, religious pluralism presupposes or suggests a secular

society. If religious pluralism presupposes a secular society,
then a radical conception of pluralism is in vogue that describes
Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism as three equally
acceptable forms of American religion. All three of these re-
ligious traditions have a great deal in common: belief in the
same God, a common conception of the nature and destiny of man,
and a generally common morality. All three are opposed to sec-
ularism, atheism, and agnosticism. Hence neither Catholicism nor
Judaism poses a real threat to the effort to preserve the image
of the United States as a religious and Christian nation. But a
secular society, regardless of whatever else it may be, is one
which "explicitly refuses to commit itself as a whole to any
particular view of the nature of the universe and the place of
man in it."[1]

At this point it is necessary to distinguish clearly between
two closely related words: secular, an adjective; and secularism,
a noun. A pluralistic society is secular, but it is not secular-
istic, for a secularistic society is one in which secularism has
become the official world view. Secularism has its own distinc-
tive dogmas which its adherents seek to impose upon society as a
whole through the public institutions. Hence, a secularistic
society would be just as much opposed to authentic pluralism as
any other form of establishment. A secular society, on the other
hand, refuses to adopt any particular world view. It recognizes
the right of groups which hold radically different conceptions of
the ultimate nature of man and of the universe to participate

[1]D.L. Munby, The Idea of a Secular Society (London: Oxford
University Press, 1963), p. 14.

fully and freely in the civil community. Such a society is un-
likely to be religiously homogeneous, and it does not seek to
become so through its public policy. Rather, it seeks to main-
tain its unity through the discovery and pursuit of common aims
derived from the common humanity shared by all of its members.

What is said is that pluralism implies a secular society and
Buddhists, Moslems, secularists, humanists, agnostics, and athe-
ists are to be accepted on a level of equality in our public
life along with Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.

The positive value of a secular society points to greater
respect for the individual and for the smaller groups of which
the community is composed.[1] It means an enlargement of man's
freedom and a fuller recognition of the humanity of each in-
dividual. It means a fuller recognition of the importance of
religious liberty. It means a greater respect for the integrity
and responsibility of religious faith, for it recognizes the
freedom of religion to stand in judgment upon society and to
seek to transform the latter.

A second characteristic of a genuinely pluralistic society
is that it provides a framework in which honest dialogue among
the various religious traditions, including secularism, can best
take place. In such a society no religious group would have any
built-in advantage from the official culture. Hence, each would
be thrown back upon its own resources both in the areas of evan-
gelism and religious education and in the effort to influence

[1]Ibid., p. 33.

public policy. More significantly, each religious group would
be driven to a deeper examination of its own heritage and of its
distinctive beliefs and values. Thus it would gain strength
born of theological depth and historical perspective. Pluralism
means that each tradition would be encouraged to maintain its
own inner spiritual and moral integrity. Without such integrity,
it could not make its full contribution to the society as a
whole. We do run a risk, however, for there is no final guaran-
tee that a pluralistic society will not degenerate into a secu-
laristic culture or that it will not develop a lowest-common-
denominator faith.

A point of significance here is that every religious group,
whether in a pluralistic society or in a culture wherein religion is
given official status, is tempted to refashion its faith into
some form of culture-religion. But a pluralistic society pro-
vides a greater safeguard against this tendency in every group
than does any other known form of establishment.

Third, there is the need for a reappraisal of the doctrine
of separation of church and state. (I shall only deal with this
partially in this writing in that I plan to do depth study in
this area at a later time.) In the course of our national his-
tory this has meant many different things to different
people. Moreover, sharply opposing groups have frequently
joined in the defense of this principle for various and incon-
sistent reasons. In view of the increasing inroads of secular-
ism in American life and in view of the common problems con-
fronting all of the major religious groups, many Protestants

have come to recognize the need for a theological position
which goes beyond separationism and relates more positively to
the goals and aims of Christian faith. Hence, there has been
growing support for what Sanders calls the "transformationist
view"[1] of church-state relations. The transformationist approach
to church-state problems rejects the tendency implicit in sep-
arationism to draw a sharp distinction between the religious
and political spheres of life by relating them to the values and
norms of Christian faith. Instead of dealing indiscriminately
with all matters of church-state relations on the basis of a
doctrinaire appeal to a "wall of separation," transformationism
seeks to analyze specific problems on the basis of their ob-
jective merit and in the light of presently existing circum-
stances. It recognizes, for example, that American society,
including both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, has under-
gone significant changes in recent decades and that American
Catholicism is different in many respects from European Catho-
licism. The transformationist approach to church-state re-
lations implies a strong emphasis upon cooperation among
Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in their common effort to
overcome the secularization of American life.

What we have said up to this point is that the transition
of this country to a religiously pluralistic society implies
the acceptance of a secular society. This presupposes creative
dialogue among the faiths represented in the national community.
It also demands of the churches that they enter into this dia-

[1]Ibid., p. 56.

logue and interpret anew the relevance of Christian faith for the definition and achievement of positive aims in the political life of the nation instead of withdrawing behind a mythical "absolute wall of separation" or wasting time on forming one big denomination, e.g., the Church of Christ Uniting.

THE ENGAGEMENT CONCEPT AND ITS MEANING

To appropriate a developmental model of the engagement concept is to find a safe and workable base to begin,   which seems to be secure in Martin Buber's 1923 German publication of I and Thou. He raised the issue to show the radical difference between a man's attitude to other men and his attitude to things. Through the "Thou"---the eternal Thou---God, man becomes "I."[1] When man, the "I", comes into interaction with the "Thou" to a functional point, and becomes the bearer of its (Thou's) perceptions and executor of its impulses, he becomes an "I-It."[2] Thus here is an early twentieth century approach to understanding man's relationship to God, and man's relationship to man. The "Thou," says Friedman, is elusive, seductive, magical, lures man into dangerous extremes, and shattered security; but a moment with the "Thou" does what the "I-It" can never do.[3] "The Thou," continues Friedman, "comes to bring man out to presentness and reality. If it does not meet one, it" seeks new ways of re-

[1]Martin Buber (translated by R.G. Smith), I and Thou (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1937), p. 28.

[2]Ibid., p. 29. (Also, p. 60 of Friedman's book).

[3]Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 60.

vealing itself.[1] Implied here is that man may have an encounter with the "Thou" and can thus become an "I." If he should become engaged with the "Thou," he becomes an "I-It." But if man should remain detached from the various forms the "Thou" uses in confronting man, man rejects that which would make him an "I."

Emil Brunner's 1943 The Divine-Human Encounter postures a concern for the God of man and the man of God. God's primordial act was a concern for His sovereignty over, and His fellowship with man, so that it becomes impossible to think of God without thinking of his will for mankind. Thus the divine-human encounter makes up the content of the Bible, a history of God confronting man and man's encounter with that confrontation. This points in the direction of engagement, for here is interaction. Brunner states clearly that the initiative is made by God, which is always first, hence man's consequential response is secondary. It is only through this "engagement" that man comes to know himself in his relation with God.[2]

In 1955, Lewis J. Sherrill rejuvenated Brunner's "Encounter" concept and wrote on "Confrontation-Encounter." Revelation as confrontation is introduced immediately in this context. Sherrill posits that God confronts us for revelatory purposes (Self-disclosure); in the resulting encounter (God meeting man---confronting man) "the rift within man himself

[1]Ibid., p. 60.

[2]Emil Brunner, The Divine-Human Encounter (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), pp. 48-50.

can be healed." Sherrill tries to make clear that this "rift within man," not rift between man and God, or man and man, is his central concern at this juncture.[1]

In 1962 Robert R. Boehlke wrote about "Creation-Engagement."[2] This seems to be the first time "engagement" comes up for the purpose of explaining God's action through the media of Christian Education. One could believe that Boehlke's treatment of "Creation-Engagement" is founded on much of what Brunner said about the "Divine-Human" experience. For Boehlke means by this concept that the human recipient and God, the initiator, are in active relationship at every level in the learning process. He contends that it is possible to learn pertinent subject matter without reference to God, but the learning of the attitudes, values, and skills of the Christian faith is not engaged without God as a partner.[3]

With this background I think we are in a better position to appreciate what Hunter seeks to convey in his concept of "Engagement." He strengthens the contextual meaning of "Engagement" by saying that it stresses meeting and knowing God rather than knowing about Him (Scripturally or historically), or preparing to meet Him in the future. The central thrust in this concept seems to be a move away from detachment to an

[1]Lewis J. Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 68-70, and 77.

[2]Robert R. Boehlke, Theories of Learning in Christian Education (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 186.

[3]Boehlke, p. 188.

awareness of the present activity (uniting and reconciling action) of God in human life and in all creation. Thus it seems to be that if God is "now", then the program of Christian education should be an inclusive one designed to provide nurture for all of God's creation. Whatever results from this engagement is what Hunter calls a religious issue.[1]

It should be made clear that "Engagement" does not include our inactivity, for implied in God's activity are His "loving demands upon us, and His reconciling work" that reflects our moral life as we interact with one another, and also in our moral life as members of a society and a culture. In other words, "How can one say that he loves God, whom he has never seen, and cannot become ENGAGED with people he meets daily?"

Boehlke compares engagement with the meshing of two or more gears. Engagement is when both gears are in motion and thus the gear teeth are interacting and interlocking with one another. This denotes activity within the relationship. Expressing God's initiation in the divine-human relationship is the initial contact of the moving gear with the one that is stationary. True to the divine-human engagement is the direct contact of the second gear with the first, and the acting upon it, even though the first gear is supplying the power.[2]

Also, one could think of engagement as an infusion of the divine-human. For if there is a true engagement, as tea ex-

[1]David R. Hunter, Christian Education as Engagement (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963), pp. 7-9.

[2]Boehlke, p. 187.

tracts become infused in water, there is little chance of a re-coiling. The idea is that once one is infused with God, as it were with water and tea, he becomes a slave and does not want to be free, as it was with Paul.

A fair assumption of Hunter's "Engagement" would be that he is talking about curriculum planning and its implementation. But a caution is in focus for us not to miss seeing this concept covering the Christian spectrum. In other words, let us broaden curriculum and extend its scope from a classroom situation to the mission of the church, as it gathers and scatters. The mission of the church is seen clearly in the discussion on "Culture Transmission vs Culture Change." He opts here for the earliest possible time to prepare a child for interaction with his contemporaries and "to become a change agent for Christ rather than a" replica of traditional culture.[1] This is significant, for too often we give children "culture" for future use or engagement, which is detachment. What religious infusion is then taking place as this child has problems with present, everyday existence? The answer is perhaps, "little, if any." On the other hand, however, Hunter does not divorce himself from the importance of transmitting culture to the young, for if this is not done, the foundation upon which the future rests is never used as a reference, and there will be no guide into the future. I suggest that only by the degree of our infusion/engagement with God can the extent of the use of each be determined.

[1]Hunter, p. 20.

THE SUBJECT DELIMITED

In delimiting this thesis plans are to show that pluralism is very much a part of the way American Protestantism generally, and the C.M.E. Church specifically, should be engaging in church activities. It is desired that one would see clearly that many church improvements must be wrought in the 70s.

In this study the terms Christian education and religious education, and "secular" and "pluralism" are used interchangeably. This study will be confined to pluralism in America. Acknowledged is the fact that European influence on pluralism outdates American pluralism, historically and philosophically; but for the practicality of this motif, we shall focus our study around twentieth century American pluralism.

This study is restricted to the general use of the "Engagement" concept and is applied to Christian education in the C.M.E. Church. David R. Hunter uses the concept "Engagement" for the pedagogy of theology in Christian Education. He states

that "engagement" is the church's educational task; and its function is to communicate knowledge of God.[1] He says that God works through "interpersonal relations" and "His reconciling work is to be found both in our moral life as we interact with one another, and also in our moral life as members of a society and a culture."[2] His primary theme of engagement is curriculum development. He states that "every curriculum, every course, and every class or group session needs some kind of structure that will enable teachers and leaders to move ahead with suffi- cient order and relatedness."[3] Engagement is related to Christ- ian Nurture in that the church prepares (e.g., going through some form of training) itself through Holy Fellowship, the worshiping community, and the Body of Christ to exist in the world participating in God's mission.[4] Engagement, for Hunter, is viable only to the extent it can be evaluated. He states that rather than wait for someone else to discover one's weak points, a built-in feature should be made "for an honest and penetrating appraisal of our work at every significant stage of the way."[5] Thus "Engagement" for Hunter is to be immersed/in- terlocked with God as one theologizes and uses some form of curriculum to do Christian nurturing and evaluation.

[1]Hunter, p. 108.

[2]Ibid., p. 26.

[3]Ibid., p. 37.

[4]Ibid., p. 52.

[5]Ibid., p. 89.

PLAN OF PROCEDURE
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The consideration of this subject in the first chapter will
be to provide insights for understanding the vogue of pluralism.
Secularization, philosophical pluralism, and religious pluralism
are defined. Harvey Cox and Cornelius van Peursen parallel
their development of our secular society to show the evolution-
ary stages of man coming of age. A question will be raised and
answered concerning the relevance of denominationalism. The
argument will be dealt with in the light of an interpretation of
the meaning of the church.

What Christian education is doing in the C.M.E. Church is
included in a section devoted to the origin of the C.M.E. Church.
This chapter closes with suggestions of creative ways and church
styles for making Christ mobile in the C.M.E. Church, in this
our pluralistic---mobile---diversified society.

Chapter two stresses an optimism for religious education in
the C.M.E. Church for the 70 s. Overarching what is said of
Sunday school literature being irrelevant to the black church,
the agenda of the C.M.E. Church that does not allow for much
involvement in community action programs, there is a faith ex-
pressed that the high caliber of the C.M.E. Church will steer
itself to a revision of its objective as a church, single out
black youth, who constitute the majority population in the
black community, as a focal point for church-community action-
engagement. The conclusion of this chapter expresses a hope
that the foregoing will be professionally engaged and theo-
logically sound.

Chapter three will bring conclusions and recommendations into focus and request the C.M.E. Church to respond to the challenge of these paradigms that are commensurate with its capabilities.

CHAPTER I: "PLURALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH: A PERSPECTIVE"

Pluralism is with us. Secularization is influencing us. The heart and mind of space-age man are bent toward this world and this time. The alert and venturesome turn their eyes to distant planets and ocean depths, to the physical, biochemical and sociological conquest of disease, ignorance, poverty, hate, and even death. This is where the action is. In and through the new pluriform society there is much talk of making and keeping life human, and few words about making and/or keeping it divine. It is in this new secular thrust that we are called to live, to witness, and to educate. The question is, "What are we to do and say and how are we to say and do it?"

There are social institutions that do not readily conform to recommendations proposed by contemporary sociological-religious theory. They are societies fused by common values, molded and shaped by tradition, which play a significant role in their modus operandi. Now, whether there is maximum effectiveness per the potential of the social institution is another question. Many of these institutions appear to be maintained more by coercion than by consent. They are divided within and without by sharp and persistent cleavages, which threaten their merging (if this means anything now), and perhaps points rather keenly to their dissolution. Changes in these structures are often brought to bear through unprecedented means; accompanied in some way by violence. Violence is an ambiguous term ranging from the use of force injuriously to expressing passionately

one's feelings, e.g., from the 1968 Chicago riot to Martin Luther King's cry for social justice. To make a general reference to the developmental stages of our secular society, and to illumine the needed change features within the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church as one social institution in the pluriform church structure constitute an important and challenging task. It is with this motif, and its implications for change through the use of the missionary arm of Christian education that we are here concerned.

SECULARIZATION: DEFINITION AND PROCESS OF

To engage in this discussion is to first clarify the terms we shall employ. Since much of what will be discussed in this paper will stem from the effects of secularization on our society, it will be necessary to define secularization. The concept itself is ambiguous in that its meaning depends on the context in which it appears. The early meaning of the term applied to the confiscation of church property by the State and the use of the revenue procured for other than church purposes or the transformation of spiritual domains into secular possessions, as was Charles Martel's case of wringing from the Church a great part of its estate for the benefit of his vassals; and the Carolingian and Merovingian action.[1] Harvey Cox defines it as the process of man's primary task and attention from the other world, beyond or above this one, to this world and this present age. This, says Cox, "is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1944 called man's coming of

[1] "Secularization," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, ed. Samuel M. Jackson (Michigan: Baker Book House, Vol. X, 1953), p. 327.

age."[1] This usage applies to the severing of this world from
its dependency on mythical, metaphysical or religious dualism
of any sort to a pragmatic embracing of this world's empiricism
and aspirations. Lesslie Newbigin observes the process of secu-
larization negatively and positively: (1) In its negative posture
it denotes the withdrawal of areas of life and activities from
the control of organized religious bodies, and the withdrawal
of areas of thought from the control of what are believed to be
revealed religious truths; (2) Positively, it is viewed as the
increasing assertion of the competence of human science and
technics to handle human problems of every kind. It claims
the freedom to deal with every man simply as man and not as the
adherent of one religion or another, and to use all man's mas-
tery over nature to serve the real needs of man. The religious
view on this note postures man as entering into the freedom
given to him in Christ, freedom from the control of all other
powers, freedom for the mastery of the created world which is
perceived by many as God's promise to man.[2]

Secularization discussed from a sociological-religious
perspective is to unearth the word pluralism. Jean Wahl de-
fines pluralism as viewing the world and its many institutional
forms in their free harmony, considering all the world's flux
and diversity, and things in their state of disorderly struggle.[3]

[1]Harvey Cox, The Secular City (New York: The Macmillan
Company, 1965), pp. 1, 2.

[2]Lesslie Newbigin, Honest Religion For Secular Man (Phila-
delphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 8.

[3]Jean Wahl, The Pluralist Philosophies of England and
America (London: The Open Court Company, 1925), p. 275.

Pluralism describes the world as composed of a number of independent beings, and thus is opposed to Monism, which asserts that there is only one ultimate form of reality. In other words, it states that there is no absolute unity in the universe. Spinoza is an exponent of Monism and declares the interpretation of all forms of existence as part of an Absolute Experience (philosophy).[1] In a sense, pluralism is a protest against a Monism that would merge the many individuals in a one all-embracing, absolute system, and thus leave no place for their independent life and power of free initiative. The Pluralists insist on the separateness and uniqueness of the personal life of the human individual, which cannot be reduced to a mere part or element in a larger whole.

The concept "pluralism" can lead us into many different facets of our culture that have to deal with multiple factors within themselves, e.g., politics, economics, religion, philosophy, and cultural pluralism. In this paper we want to focus on religious pluralism in a secular society. Among the theologians writing in the field, Dr. Letty M. Russell and Dr. J.C. Hoekendijk are rather clear in saying that the Church stands in need of finding new ways of disclosing itself beyond the posture of it being a separate society, as if it were a stationary place. This conclusion is reached by each writer in the light of their perceiving our pluralistic society as continuing to expand its cultural spheres, each with its own character. Just

[1]"Pluralism," ed. James Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Volume X, 1925), pp. 66-67.

as a platted rope, each strand has its own roots, but daily
one finds himself shifting from one to another, perhaps playing
a number of different roles that may have little bearing on
each other. But in each shifting, usually one's relationship
is polarized differently, e.g., intimate contact is made in
one instance and the relationship is remote in another. From
the standpoint of what ought to be the task and the life style
of the church for our society today, Dr. Russell says that "a
witnessing community is not necessarily any one particular type
of church structure."[1] The cast of this structure should be
determined pragmatically and empirically for the betterment of
the community, and the needs of its constituency.

The following is an outline of the developmental stages
of our secular society. Colin Williams quotes Cornelius van
Peursen and Harvey Cox as they spoke of three stages of the
thinking and mobility processes of man, pointing to the plural-
istic society we are in today. STAGE I is van Peursen's "period
of myth" where magical and frightening forces are perceived by
man and little or no evaluation is made of the meaning of life
and its forces;[2] Cox's "period of the tribe" is similar and is
characterized by the acknowledgment of kinship ties as the basis
for association and shifts from myth and magic to religion and
theology, belief in superstition to supernaturalism, from

[1]Letty M. Russell, Christian Education In Mission (Phila-
delphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 40.

[2]Colin Williams, Faith In A Secular Age (London: Collins
Cleartype Press, 1966), pp. 21, 22.

witch doctors to priests and teachers are realized.[1] STAGE II
is featured by van Peursen's "Ontological period" where man
becomes more rational about his world. The model by which he
saw his world was to see things up or down. Above him was the
spiritual world with God at the top, as the source of being,
and below him was the material world. His model provided space
for him in the middle to receive revelations from above and
thus became the embodiment of rational control for the world
beneath him. A certain feeling of security came from having
everything in its place, organized and orderly, and under con-
trol;[2] Cox's "period of the town" shows man emancipated from
the shackles of kinship to a fellowship within a larger group/
community. Nevertheless, man's affections remained family
oriented and his thinking tribal. Thus groups work against
each other.[3] STAGE III is marked by van Peursen's "functional
period" where a pragmatic model is erected by man embracing
his increased confidence in his ability to control the forces
of life from below. His concern now is "with thinking rather
than with thought, with acting justly rather than with justice,
and with the art of loving rather than with love;"[4] Cox's "peri-
od of the city." Here van Peursen and Cox are again saying
about the same thing. Cox states that here people are liber-
ated to free association without fear of prejudice and hostil-

[1]Ibid., p. 25.
[2]Ibid., p. 22.
[3]Ibid., p. 25.
[4]Ibid., p. 22.

ity.[1] Colin Williams amplifies this latter stage to say that science broadened the scope of life and brought about the gradual removal of more and more institutions from the control of the church. Economic institutions, hospitals, and schools were gradually removed from the power of the clergy and the institutional control of the church."[2]

Now, the church need not lose heart in the light of this secular thrust. The secular understanding is that the way to a union of the church with society lies via common secular involvement. In other words, the church's old forms for engaging society do not speak to new shifts in our pluriform society.

THE C.M.E. CHURCH AND DENOMINATIONALISM

It seems that the C.M.E. Church's most exciting involvement as a denomination in domestic affairs of America is an active participation in the Consultation On Church Union (COCU). Many members of the C.M.E. Church disagree with this agenda. One pursuing a church union when there are more consequential issues crying for leadership, and when church movements are toward new church styles, is as one attempting to apply artificial respiration to a hopeless case. There is no apparent harm in a church's continuing to exist. It may do some good that would not be done otherwise. But let it be clear that maintaining a denominational structure, using all resources to keep it alive and functioning, is no longer in the central Christian stream.

[1]Ibid., p. 25.
[2]Ibid., p. 43.

Revolutionary movements are recruiting young people and most
of them are very active in community-action programs.

Although many state that attempts to form a larger de-
nominational structure is not relevant to the times, some think
that it is. Whether this larger allegiance will sever histor-
ical significance and celebration within denominations is a
question yet to be answered; but there is a fear that it will.
The group finding it meaningful to seek a development of this
larger body is said to be giving a new form to church govern-
ment. Some observers of this trend describe this new style as
Connectionalism. This term simply means that all the churches
and members of an official body are interrelated. Each minis-
ter, while a member of a local organization, is considered a
member of the whole church. Every member is considered to be
a member of the total church, not just a member of his commu-
nity church. This style of membership carries with it many
privileges. This relationship holds true even with depart-
mental functions of each cooperating denomination.[1]

What is indicated here is a trend toward centralization.
This is an outgrowth from responses to the stresses and strains
encountered by overloaded churches, at both the local and head-
quarters levels. Some implications for this trend are: special
needs of local congregations have increased the number of de-
nominational specialists; increased organization of metropolitan
councils of churches developing into denominational councils;

[1]Lyle E. Schaller, The Impact of the Future (New York:
Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 240.

and funds solicited locally to help the denomination participate with other denominations in social crises.

For those electing to participate in community-action programs through a denomination, it is suggested that connectionalism strengthens the denomination. Certainly, joint projects by denominations would enhance greater outreach.

The external forms of denominational activity will undoubtedly continue to exist for quite a while as vestigial elements in our culture; but it is believed that people will be less and less interested in traditional church styles. Presently, many middle and older adults move from one neighborhood to another, change their denominational affiliation (from Methodist to Baptist) with ease and with little or no reservation about the decision. Even the line between Roman Catholics and Protestants seems to be coming shorter as the differences become less apparent. One reason is that Roman Catholicism recognizes that some changes need to be made. Is it too late? One can only conjecture.

Many revolutionaries today recognize clearly that to be engaged with Christ is to be committed to the total cause of Christ. Some do not know how big the Church of Christ is, but they at least know that it is bigger than any particular denomination. They are not, for the most part, arguing for one great monolithic ecclesiastical structure, but they are humble enough to try to learn from one another. The rise of this trend is seen among members of the National Committee of Black

Churchmen. It is realized that no group has a monopoly on truth. Many are perfectly willing to allow their denominational affiliation to stand, but they know it is foolish to get excited about it. One who becomes overtly enthusiastic about his denomination today is behind the times, at least so far as the main thrust of Christianity is concerned.

What has been stated is not to ignore the traditional meaning of the church. In fact, it is difficult to see how one can eliminate such a concept. If anything, current efforts are to give it a larger and more relevant meaning. If the church decides to take on the recommended new forms (provided at the end of this chapter) to relate to the changing patterns of our culture, many structures will be torn down or deserted. The day seems to be drawing closer when it will be difficult to keep the traditional church's doors open, because the members will be finding involvement more meaningful elsewhere.

Since it is believed that God has not nor will desert the church, a new interpretation is being placed on the "where two or three gather in my name, there am I in the midst." The belief is that should two or three gather in a university or elsewhere and call themselves Inter-Varsity Christians, they are still a "church." The same might be said of a group meeting at a laundromat concerned with minority group dehumanization processes, a Black Panther headquarters concerned with human deprivation, or a group gathered in a home to understand the relevance of the Bible for peculiar problems men face. In these and more activities it is conceivable that there would be suf-

ficient growth of members to consider the construction of a building for meeting, though different in style or architecture from what we have now, which would become the "church" building of a new generation. On the other hand, a building for congregating might not be needed. The function might necessitate other possibilities. This is not to say that doom is cast on the institutional church as an assembly place. Nevertheless, there must be adjustments made to it, regarding location and form, to meet the challenge of the secular age.

If God really loves the church and continues to elect it for mission, He will not desert it and neither will it die; only its forms might change to administer to the times. Where His gathering hand is there also is His power, and where His power is there is resurrection and renewal.

THE BIRTH OF THE C.M.E. CHURCH

The Christian (once known as colored) Methodist Episcopal Church began as an organized structure on December 15, 1870, in Jackson, Tennessee, at Liberty C.M.E. Church. It separated peacefully from the Methodist Church South following the 1865 Emancipation Proclamation, which set all Blacks free. Two C.M.E. Church bishops were consecrated on this day by two white Methodist bishops. This phenomenal event allowed the C.M.E. Church to accept from the white bishops the bond from a lineage stemming back to John Wesley himself. The two denominations have continued to respect this connection. The C.M.E. Church grew in its concern to convert the unsaved, build churches, increase its membership, and provide education for the many

Blacks impoverished by segregation and discrimination. Since that time the Church has spread throughout most states of the union with over 450,000 members and over 2,500 churches. It has four colleges and is a part of another college - Paine College, and a seminary - the Interdenominational Theological Center.

THE GENERAL BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
AND AN EVALUATION OF ITS PROGRAM

The Board of Christian Education has had little success in reaching the local church in helping it to become more engaged in some of the more relevant matters of church life today. Responsible largely for this is the bottle-neck of the church's structure - the bishops. In most cases, by the time programs find a place on their agenda or in their schedule for approval, the church has outgrown the program or grown weary from the wait. The church presently has moved beyond a need for traditional programs to a need for participation in more engaging activities. It is not known what this could be as yet, but a search would be late, if it started now. The activities that have been sponsored by the General Board of Christian Education, e.g., quadrennial Youth Conferences, where off-beat discussions take place and meaningless elections are held, are obsolete and the church is drying up on this account. Christian education constitutes the heart of the church and the other functions of the church are veins and arteries for carrying spiritual life where needed.

What is meant here is that Christian education is to help persons to live as Christians. This indicates that it is related to every phase of man's life and is concerned with making each area Christian. Christian education addresses itself to the growth of the whole person, starting with the present interest of the person, and expanding into abiding interests that will embrace all of the person's experiences as he interacts with the total world. The minister, who carries a message to people who realize a hunger for God, recognizes that a church stands a great chance of expanding through the activities of Christian education. Thus the C.M.E. Church needs to be up and about making some radical changes in its power structure to allow for more free movement in uniting with the mass pluralistic society.

THE LOCAL CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

For too long the weaknesses of this denomination have been the tendency of congregations to sidestep their personal responsibility as missionaries, directors of Christian education, etc., and relegate it to their pastor - (The bishop looks on this and finds himself sucked in to doing a lot of things at another level that could more easily be done by a more equitable distribution of authority; but he asks, "Where are you going to find people interested?"); and sermons which answer unasked questions - (Little, if any, dialogue takes place on issues that would become tools for an engagement in society, in the light of its growing pluriform style.). Also, there is the tendency for churches to be void of young adults (ages 18-30). Often it is

the case that the church is composed of children, senior citizens, converts, and church members in need of expanding their horizons, who need teaching, training, edification, and admonition in regard to the Christian way of life, today.

Important questions at this point are, "How can the Story be told in the new age?", "What does mission mean in this time of revolution?", and "Will the C.M.E. Church be forced to develop new structures commensurate with the changes in human communities caused by the science-technology developments---our pluriform society?" In responding to the third question, this writer hopes that it will. To speak to the other questions, it is felt that a new missionary movement, God's new way of handing His Son over to the world, coming of age, will use some of the learning of the new world in which it lives. The most alert of our generation, and this includes large numbers of youth, are fired with crusading zeal to make life human in the three "B's" of life: being, bargaining, and belonging.

RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Indications are that the American society is increasingly without religious implication, and is being stripped of transcendent meanings. A pluralistic culture seems to be in vogue that does not provide a framework for man to stand in awe at mysteries of life. Either he sets out to solve them and apply scientific theories or place them in the category of phenomenology to be dealt with when man is equipped to apply his knowledge. Increasingly, secular man is becoming more of the reg-

ular guy in the American culture.

The trend for the family seems to be towards gaining a greater degree of freedom and being confronted with more tension-producing choices as the amount of the family income climbs and the amount of discretionary time increases. Decisions reached on these two emerging surpluses - money and time- determine a family's adjustment to a changing family structure.[1] Divorce statistics reveal that the length of time a family has stayed together has little to do with keeping it sovereign. The recent changes in the pattern of divorces reveal that more long term marriages are terminating in divorce. Schaller suggests that more couples feel economically and psychologically freer to choose divorce rather than to make it work.[2] Could there be a deeper issue? Does religion play a part? Does the church have a responsibility? These are relevant questions as one witnesses the mounting reorganization of our society.

Since the local church is traditionally known for its support of the family, it is challenged to mobilize resources, and develop skills to help families counter the forces that tend to destroy family life. But is there something beyond this pragmatic concern, something that gives reason to moral responsibility? It is important to operate within a church's structure and become engaged where the action is, but is there a reason for an engagement in a power that comes before in-

[1]Schaller, p. 47.
[2]Ibid., p. 49.

volvement where the action is? The far-reaching significance is for man to find in himself that which transcends himself to knowing God. Thus, cutting across all other concerns, e.g., social reordering and family matters, the task of the church is to nourish men so that they can transcend their pragmatic necessities and reach into the freedom of transcendence, the freedom in which they become human beings. It is through this engagement that man becomes capable of deriving the meaning of life. It is here that alienated man and secular man witness a rapport existing between man and nature, man and creation, man and everything that makes this life look like chaos or terror or hell. The ultimate demand of man is that he find reality and in such a way that he can affirm it, though he can prove it to no other man in the universe. This engagement of faith helps man know himself as a man and not as a number.

To look at this another way, pluralism provides a framework for man, an opportunity to be free, to operate in a secular society. But there is a need for structuring or revising a larger framework that will hold together a world operating on the continuum of living in many worlds. This framework can take the shape of a flexible, imaginative church at work to create new images large enough to couch the extended dimensions of a pluralistic, technological society. The church could consider revising its doctrines and church styles to the extent of holding together the inner world of man and the outer activity of secular man. It is believed that with this framework in vogue, moral integrity will be open to man and an order with authority

will be capable of sustaining peace. It is believed that the church is obligated to provide a framework around man in such a way that a conversion becomes possible, not once, but continuously. This conversion process allows man to affirm his manhood by his daily transcending of himself through new attachments, involvements, ventures, and explorations.

Therefore, goals with far-reaching objectives are needed, not objectives that will be achieved by going tomorrow into the social situation where the action is. The action is certainly necessary for the transformation of society, but transformation will not last long and will not be consequential unless long term tasks are undertaken with the imagination, the intelligence, the sacrificial insight of those who would build a moral order for human life at a new level of freedom and sophistication.

A secular theology is gradually emerging that speaks of a worldly Christ set loose in the healing events and movements of our time on the streets out there beyond our church doors, calling for new forms that are taking shape around His secular presence. To many minds this is a new thrust for mission; but lest we forget, the historical Christ was very much a part of the secular scene. He made His presence felt where the people were, e.g., the woman at the well, the man in chains.

SUGGESTED MODELS FOR RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN A SECULAR WORLD

The following prescriptions for leaders in the C.M.E. Church and suggested models for church structures in a world of change are recommended to prepare one psychologically and structurally

for maintaining a commitment to the work of the Kingdom.

1. Develop an openness to the world. In many ways the C.M.E.
   Church has operated closely to its bureaucratic agenda and
   has participated minimally in local and national problems of
   disfranchisement, brutality, and social and economic sup-
   pression of minority groups. Thus it has failed to become
   really engaged with Christ as a world man. "It is he who is
   the same yesterday, today and forever (not the church); and
   he is the living one. And it is in him that this openness
   to the world is seen. This is what it means to say that his
   coming was a secular event."[1] Christ is the same each day,
   because he is always relentlessly involved in the events of
   our time. Because of his relevance, he is constantly in
   tune to the needs of the world and continuously seeks to be
   the servant of mankind. Thus if we become engaged with him,
   we become servants, too (with him).

   The C.M.E. Church needs to free itself to accept the
   Christ that comes to it from the world and to be with God as
   He moves to hand His Son over to the world. The church has
   the charge to participate in this handing over process in
   ways that souls will not go uninfluenced.[2]

2. Plan for new shapes of the church in the light of the pluri-
   form society and the message of God to it. We need church
   forms that will take their shape around the particular func-

[1]Williams, p. 108.

[2]Ibid., p. 108-110.

tion(s) involved. Dr. Letty Russell recommends some new forms. I shall cite two, namely:

a. Structures of permanent availability operate from a base to provide certain permanent services to a society that itself is highly concentrated and yet highly mobile..."[1] The word structure here does not mean the immovable plant erected for a certain job. Here it only exists to provide a group with enough identifiable forms for it to do its own thing.

b. Task Force. This force emerges on the light of a problem. Here a people come together for the purpose of doing a specific job. The force dissolves or becomes a task force for another task after this one is done.[2] This may or may not have a set place to meet. The task itself will dictate more about the gathering place or places.

One advantage of the task force is that it has concentrated motivation towards a certain problem and can become more engaged and realize a larger benefit. Certainly, all its energies will be directed on the problem. Moreover, this group will become engaged where the action is.

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[1] Russell, p. 60.

[2] Ibid., p. 60.

CONCLUSION

We have said that today's pluralism is forcing the church to reconsider new ways to participate with God in reaching a highly mobile and secular society. The prognosis is that community church structures are going to be less effective and used by the mass as people begin to spend most of a day living in many worlds and getting enjoyment and benefit as a result. This arrangement is accelerated above the family-job-church relationships where the family is the center. The C.M.E. Church must become serious about this and be about its father's business ministering through revised media to a morally sick world. New models for church-society engagement are recommended that will strive for a new morality with a larger integrity and greater demands for discipleship. This new church style will be creative and permit indulgences in bolder images of faith for secular man to express himself and sustain the order of a world peace and of inner fulfillment.

CHAPTER II: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE CHRISTIAN
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH FOR THE 70s

INTRODUCTION

It has been assumed that a secularistic culture does not
have the symbols, the methods, and the insights to meet man's
spiritual need, which is felt to be a built-in desire for an
eternal rapport. It has been acknowledged that twentieth
century man is living a multi-leveled life. Our objective has
been to show a need for society continuing as a community with
moral and integral commitments for man with spiritual needs.
We have proposed new styles of Christian living that will cer-
tify themselves in the vision of a world searching for a better
way. In this chapter we shall survey Christian education in
the C.M.E. Church, analyse some of its assets and problems,
and offer some recommendations for its engagement with "where
the action seems to be."

Looking at the development of Christian education over the
past two decades, and being forced to react to radical move-
ments, religious workers are having to take a renewed look at
the Christocentric milieu and face the challenge of more meaning-
ful service, now. Most timely is the question, "Is not the
church being called upon to redefine and re-evaluate standards
for community life?" Per this decade, certain communities have
had to recall their rather adamant stance in accepting into
them only those who were compatible ethnically, racially, and
economically. Others have had to make consequential adjust-

ments to shifts striven for. Altogether, these changes have
affected our society or vice versa. Nevertheless, it seems
rather clear that areas of our government are reversing their
priorities, e.g., less focus on the Viet Nam conflict and more
attention on domestic problems. Thus the question having a
bearing on our motif is the one Christendom is having to ask,
and thereby the C.M.E. Church, "What directions are being given
by the church to bring about a more congenial society?" Making
this question more complex and difficult to answer is the crit-
ical examination objectives of religious education are going
under. The bases largely for this review are the resurgence
of the theological question of God's existence; the seemingly
ineffective use by educators of "introducing persons to Chris-
tianity"; and the nebulous meaning of the integral part religious
education plays in "the church's response to God's mission in
the world."

The predominately Black Colored (changed to "Christian" in
1954) Methodist Episcopal Church was born in 1870 with a mandate
to bear witness to the revelation of God in every area of the
life of Emancipated Black people, and to persons of all ages,
both within the Christian community and outside the organized
fellowship of the church, e.g., the African Nations.

THE C.M.E. CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN NURTURE

The C.M.E. Church has used the Graded and Uniform church
school materials of the Methodist Church for as long as many
can remember. These materials have not adequately improved
Christian commitment among many members of the C.M.E. Church.

The Scripture is read and explained in bits and pieces, but seemingly very little happens to the participants enabling them to trust one another for greater community togetherness and development; escalate to high ideals of Christian witnessing wherein zealous evangelistic thrusts are made to expand the Kingdom of God on earth, and passionate mission to become a part of one's everyday experiences; and where communal fellowship within the church is kept at a peak wherein one grows to a genuine identity and a satisfaction is maintained in the environment of the "People of God." Until the civil rights issue became hot, the materials had all white pictures in the books, which did not identify with the predicament and needs of Black C.M.E.s. In recent years Black pictures have been added, but the content remained basically the same. C.M.E. literature, this first quarter of 1970, is dressed in graded materials of the uniform series that has a C.M.E. cover to it. But again, the material is strictly Bible-centered. Many are troubled by this limited approach, because they see little, if any, relation made to contemporary issues. Many see no significant increase in membership, nor any noticeable changes in policy and procedure that would be indicative of provisions for creativity and a distribution of power within the church. The participation of laymen within the church's larger structure is just a vehicle largely to involve more manpower to raise money. What is happening to the spiritual nurture of our church? Dr. Nile Harper makes reference in one of his articles to Charles Glock and others of the University of California Survey Research Center conducting a study of the Episcopal Church on the popular criticism of

the contemporary church. Their findings revealed that the
church was irrelevant to the real issues of social life. The
membership of the church was unbalanced, and composed of those
who found no fulfillment in society. The ministry of the church
gave its attention to administering to the needs of their de-
pendent people. Thus these persons were less concerned with
issues of society-politics, social justice, and an evangelistic
ministry to the secular world. In fact, "the more involved
members were in the church, the less involved they were in
society at large," states Dr. Harper.[1]

This is cited because it speaks generally to the unbalanced
membership problem of the C.M.E. Church, its stagnant enroll-
ment, its meager involvement in social affairs, and even its
limited outreach to the unsaved in its community. Most of the
C.M.E. ministers that are engaged in community action programs
are using the church only as a base - a retrieving center or
security point; and their evangelistic ministry - their ministry
to the parish - is limited largely to keeping the membership
satisfied and supporting the general church. This perhaps re-
fers to some of the reasons the denomination is not active in
the judicatory process to eliminate the ills of society suffered
by minority groups.

THE PEOPLE-ORIENTED APPROACH

The contention is that the church will have to be less

[1]F. Nile Harper, "Some Limitations of Educating For Social
Change," p. 12. (This article was published in Religious Educa-
tion, Volume LXIV, #5 (September-October, 1969), under the title
"Social Power and the Limitations of Church Education," pp. 390-98).

organization-oriented and more people-oriented, if it is going to ful-
fill its task of reaching people for Christ and influencing lives in the
1970s. It is believed that the C.M.E. Church has the resources to do a
sufficient job, but some fundamental attitudes need to be changed and
new approaches initiated. Much of the confidence in the C.M.E. Church
lodges in its massive investment in education. Forty-five and six-tenth
per cent of its total budget goes for education, e.g., support of six
schools, scholarships, and educational programs. Moreover, parts of the
remaining budget influence the educational role of the church. The
belief is that where education is given its proper emphasis, persons of
high caliber come through its processes.

The C.M.E. Church may be considered "high quality" as one evaluates
its educational qualifications. Looking at the academic standards of
the nine bishops of the church: two Ph. D.'s, three who have completed
studies toward their doctorate, and the remaining four who have graduate
degrees from prestigious schools; the number of ministers who hold
graduate and undergraduate degrees, and/or have attended leadership
training schools; and the many laymen who have undergone training and/or
have marketable degrees, one may conclude that this denomination has
placed a premium on qualified leadership. If this is an assumption, where
has it led the church? A deeper concern is, "Where are the members?"

The C.M.E. Church has unofficially claimed the same 350,000 to 400,
000 figure membership for more than twenty years. "What is being done to
lift Christ up?," is a question Christian education may want to look at.
Maybe, there is a need to look at the objective Christian education should
have in the 70s; the clarity that Christian education goals should have and

the age group that would benefit most from Christian teaching
in the 70s; and thirdly, specific directions that should be offered
in Christian education for the 70s.

A NEW OBJECTIVE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

If the C.M.E. Church is operating on the basis of the ob-
jective of Christian education posited by the National Council
of Churches (being a member), then one could say that it has
good front. But as one looks at that objective, one realizes
that Black people have not been affected to a noticeable degree
by it. An objective ought to be met with results. The first
half of the objective deals with God confronting man and seeks
for all persons to "be aware of God through his self-disclosure,
especially his redeeming love as revealed in Jesus Christ; and
enabled by the Holy Spirit, respond in Faith and love."[1] In
our pluriform world, God is exposing Himself in many ways to all
kinds of people. However, the problem is not with God making
Himself known, but with the second half of the objective, man's
encounter with God. The objective continues, "that as new per-
sons in Christ, they may (1) know who they are and what their
human situation means, (2) grow as sons of God, rooted in the
Christian community, (3) live in obedience to the will of God
in every relationship, (4) fulfill their common vocation in
the world, and (5) abide in the Christian hope."[2]

[1]"An Objective and Aims," Spectrum (New York: National
Council of Churches, Volume 46, #3, May-June, 1969), p. 15; and
Baptist Leader (Pennsylvania: American Baptist Board of Education
and Publication, Vol. 31, #10, January 1970), p. 65.

[2]Ibid.

Slavery and current depressive conditions have taught the
Black man who he is and the limits of his human situation. Abid-
ing in a Christian hope is largely what has brought him this dis-
tance in freedom. But the disturbance is over man's growth as
"sons of God, rooted in the Christian community," man's obedience
to the will of God, and man's vocational purpose in God's world.
The alternative resulting from the failure of the C.M.E. Church
to equip people for meeting the problems and changes of today
points to the need for a new objective that aspires to bring
the Christian faith to bear directly on everyday affairs. Thus
an engagement will take place.

Dr. Nile Harper speaks to this issue in defining Christian
education. He offers ingredients for a more workable objective
in the C.M.E. Church. The objective stated would be to prepare
man for the work of the Church in the world by helping him to
be aware of God's acts of redeeming His world, and his obligation
to participate "in those events believed to be scenes of God's
redemptive work; to develop skills and help communicate informa-
tion for effective involvement in the structures of society;"
and to employ God's revelation and tradition in clarifying and
interpreting his relation to the world, the Church, and to God
Himself.[1] What this brings one around to is a religious educa-
tion more of practice than of theory. Thus a shift is hoped for
from the developmental approach, specifying where a person's
attainment should be, to a more individualized approach that
starts where the person is. The curriculum employed is all-

[1]Ibid., p. 3.

encompassing. It understands where people are and merges sub-
ject matter with the experience of the individual to effect a
fuller and more adjustable life in the secular society. More-
over, this objective is more directed to the secularistic age
now being struggled with.

An example of this new approach where this objective is
used in part is presented in an article by Farnum Gray, "Teach
People - Not Subjects."[1] This article reflects a concern for a
more people-oriented approach to religious education. The set-
ting is in the Pennsylvania Advancement School, Philadelphia,
Penn. The philosophy of the school is that children will not
be marched through a textbook nor attempts made to transfer a
codified body of knowledge into their heads.[2] The school oper-
ates on the basis of emotional, personal, and perceptive de-
velopment. In other words, as a student increases his self-
confidence, and feels that others appreciate his worthwhileness,
he learns better.

In the C.M.E. Church one major handicap is poor reading.
This reflects our training in public and private schools. Based
on the approach used by the school mentioned, the church school
can assist in the improvement of reading abilities among Blacks
who participate in its learning sessions. The method employed
by this school consisted of keeping the students talking - en-

[1]Farnum Gray, "Teach People - Not Subjects," Colloguy
(Pennsylvania: The United Church Press, Volume 2, #2, February
1969), p. 26.

[2]Ibid., p. 27.

couraged to express themselves more accurately - reading and
writing. Noticeable was an increase in vocabulary. Later, the
pupils became comfortable with complex sentence structures. As
we will see further in this paper on Goldman's research with
children, the ability for children to grasp knowledge and to
be able to articulate what they feel is more rewarding in terms
of a healthy adjustment to life.

The principle objective of the Pennsylvania school has to
do with affective development of youth. Success is not measured
by the traditional way of grades, but is demonstrated in affect-
ive behavior changes: youth listen better, work better in groups,
are more relaxed, etc. Since more than half of America's popu-
lation is under age 25, and since the current forces of rebellion
against social injustices are led by youth, the belief is that
the more challenging work for the C.M.E. Church in the 70 s is
going to be with these youth, and children and adolescents.
Proverbial language says that "if you plant your seed in fer-
tile soil in the 70 s, you'll have a good crop in the 80 s." This
is to say that youth generally are more receptive to change and
are explosive with ideas. When the proper climate is set in
church schools, Christian development of youth can be affected
just as result is being met in secular circles where advancement
is pursued, and thus prepare our youth for adult religious re-
sponsibilities in the 80 s.

Young people today have set themselves off as a uniquely
different generation that no longer holds to tradition or "old-
fashioned" objectives. They are pictured as the generation that

has found a new (modern) approach to life as they revolt against obsolete approaches to education, worn out standards of morality, and rusty codes of ethics. They have become characterized as a generation demanding new forms of religion, a Christian witness that moves outside the four walls of the church, that lays aside the mask of piety and faces life and its realities with honesty. The C.M.E. Church has faltered at the point of giving guidance to the many youth who seek greater personal responsibility. Because of our inefficiency on this matter, many of our youth are leaving the church and are seeking answers in drugs, free love, and irresponsible acts of violence. It is moralistic to contend that what this generation is and will be is left to the youth. The exclusive right to make their own decisions, set their own standards and goals in life is not theirs. Parents, religious educators, pastors, members of the church, and responsible citizens, have the challenging task of doing what is their obligation to those who have not had family responsibilities, have not been affected by the repeated influence of history, and do not grasp the full meaning of tradition. There are many things that are fresh everyday to those who hear. But because some have failed to live up to what that tradition signifies, many of our youth are requiring new shapes to the ministry of the church. They are challenging the total church to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with our world today, a gospel that really faces life as it is. In fact, they seem to be saying as deLubac that the first century Christians saw the church as a reality to be lived, not as something to be embalmed in bricks and mortar. New Testament writers viewed the church as

an object of faith and of loving concern. The same is true of the Fathers who read Scripture through the eyes of tradition which was not the past but the present.[1]

Youth themselves have become involved in social issues. Much has been done on the basis of general principle, resulting in violence, injury and destruction of property. Some has been controversial, such as draft card burning, and seizure of universities. Others have expressed dedication to causes of civil rights, involvements in politics, and social and welfare projects. They have taken on these responsibilities because many adults have not lived convincingly by objectives of religious education that outlined this kind of involvement. Professionals, many of whom have said little one way or the other, are guilty of indifference, and are the focus of ridicule, as those who are guilty of misguiding youth by weak commitments.

There can be no doubt that the C.M.E. Church, reflecting the church universal, is going through a period of crisis which has touched all levels of its activity, and seemingly, challenged every tenet of its faith. The present stagnancy of the church represents a basic instability in faith and practice which will inevitably lead to some changes in the church as we know it. It will be largely up to this and the next generation of Christians, and thus radical action in the 70 s, whether a renewal of our present objective will lead to a collapse and disintegration of the church, or whether it will blossom into more fruitful ways

[1]Henri deLubac, The Splendour of the Church (New York: Sheed and Word, 1956).

of expanding the Kingdom of God.

YOUTH: THE FOCUS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR THE 70 s

Second, in support of the claim that education for the
70 s should be more youth directed (meaning children and adoles-
cents), and in the light of the prognosis of Tom Skinner that
the message of Jesus Christ will have an age twenty-five and
under majority population in the 70 s to be delivered to,[1] the
need arises to give some attention to what Dr. Ronald Goldman's
discoveries are in his researching of adolescents and children.
He cautions that children's religious ideas and concepts are
usually immature and often linger on into a considerable part
of adolescence. "A great deal of religious thinking is proposi-
tional," he says, "and therefore can only be dealt with at a
formal operational level of thought, to be intellectually satis-
fying."[2] His suggested mental age base for abstract thinking is
13-14, depending on how the student is taught up to that point.
But if dealt with properly, a child can move into adolescence
with a more critical and rational approach to religion. He
would perhaps say that the cause for adolescents being inactive
in church is that they have been presented with a false view of
the nature of the Bible and of religious thought. Accounting
for children's confusion with religion is what he terms as child-
ren finding a conflict between the literal view of the Bible's

[1]"Young Churchmen Eye The Seventies," Christianity Today
(Washington, D.C.: Christianity Today, Inc., Vol. XIV, #7,
January 2, 1970), p. 24.

[2]Ronald Goldman, Readiness For Religion (New York: The
Seabury Press, 1965), p. 67.

teaching and what they learn about natural causation in secular lessons. Moreover, he posits that children are not taught to think in matters of religion, but just to accept. He would advise to constantly test how children receive what is taught them, which is best achieved by a dialogue rather than a monologue. A problem most church schools are having with children understanding Bible materials, and thereby being unable to incorporate them into their lives, is lack of understanding of Biblical background. What one sometimes fails to help children understand is that, in the Bible, the community was largely rural and pre-scientific, and now it is urban and scientific. He urges that background can and should be taught parallel with the stories.[1] However, he cautions that the child must constantly be kept in mind. If teaching is Bible-centered and not child-related, it will consequently have little effect. Everything must be linked with the child's experiences. One would fall short of the mark if he limited himself to the child's present experiences. Rather, one must seek to extend their experiences.[2]

A crucial matter in the minds of children is their inability to differentiate between the Bible world and the scientific world. Dr. Goldman suggests in his "Child-Centered" concept that if the child encounters religion as the here and now, not as the then and there, the two worlds need not be separated. Stories of the present day should be linked with the Bible sto-

[1]Ibid., pp. 145-153, 203-4.
[2]Ibid., p. 47.

ries.[1] However, one should be aware of the fact that as child-
ren get older, and learn more of science, and come more into
contact with non-Christian ideas, more problems will arise. The
key practice to exercise in these situations is to be absolutely
honest with oneself. When one does not know, one should say so,
and then try to find out. If the children have doubts, let them
blurt them out freely. In order to help a child grow into a
healthy development, one should let the child expose himself
without shame. One should not react in shock, but respond
seriously.

Workers of religious education are obligated to seek dili-
gently to understand what children are thinking, what their in-
terests are, and to talk their language. This is not to agree
with including their slangs in our vocabulary, but to couch our
meanings in terms related to their interests.

The key to Dr. Goldman's Readiness For Religion, and the
major concern for the C.M.E. Church, is to bring the child and
adolescent face to face with everyday incidents and the Source-
Book itself and let the child respond intellectually, emotional-
ly, and physically. The individual will thus be seen to grow as
he encounters Goldman's three stages of development: pre-reli-
gious, sub-religious, and religious.[2] What this implies is that
since a child forms his concept of God from his experience, he
should be led into the process of building up concepts before he

[1]Ronald Goldman, Religious Thinking From Childhood to Ado-
lescence (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 226-229.

[2]Op. Cit., p. 40.

has an intellectual understanding. The Bible can be quite help-
ful in this venture.

Thus meaningful religious education should neither be Chris-
tian indoctrination nor the bombardment of multiple areas of
religious experience in hopes of the child's extracting something
of value. The task for the C.M.E. Church in the 70's is to give
our youth such an understanding of religious beliefs that will
lead them to an appreciation of the Christian view of the world
and society, and of the significance of Christian commitment.

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Third, some directions for religious education in the 70's.
We are concerned here with eradicating what Philip Berrigan says
is the present life style of the church. He claims that "the
church is the moral custodian of the status quo, and therefore
it is a power that honors conventional signs of privilege---
wealth, racism, war. It is not for self-determination, either
personal or international. It is not for revolution. It is not
for justice and not against injustice."[1] In other words, the
C.M.E. Church, and Christendom at large, provide secular society
with two valuable ingredients: moral incentive and moral sanction.
Thus the church is not conducting itself as a Gospel community,
but as an ethical management system under a thin veneer of
rubric and ritual. Nevertheless, hopefully it is possible to
create a religious education adequate for the new secular age.

[1]Philip Berrigan, A Punishment For Peace (New York: Mac-
millan, 1969), p. 54.

Remote is the dream now of a Christian Monism (everything under one roof, so to speak). The pluralistic society forbids it. This condition, however, does not stand in the way of the church becoming a significant force in our secular society.

Rachel Henderlite suggests some characteristics of the new Christian education. Two characteristics shall be used here as criteria for the C.M.E. Church to form in the 70 s. First, religious education should be theologically sound.[1] She uses Niebuhr's Christ and Culture, but does not explain the stages by which the Christian Church has historically related its faith to human life. A summary of this can be put in three stages. The first stage is "Christ Against Culture" which views Christ as coming into the world to call out His chosen people. They are formed as a community of the redeemed and set apart from the world. The theological thrust here is otherworldly.[2] Second, "Christ Of Culture" pictures a rather peaceful relationship between the church and the world. They complement each other. The cultural accomplishments of the secular world have the blessings of what Christianity stands for.[3] Third, "Christ And Culture in Paradox," an extension of "Christ Above Culture," postulates the church as an agent of redemption in the world. Noticeable here is a breach between the ethics of the Christian

[1]Rachel Henderlite, "Toward A New Direction For Christian Education Today," Spectrum (New York: National Council of Churches, Vol. 45, #4, July-August 1969), p. 6.

[2]H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), pp. 45-82.

[3]Ibid., pp. 83-115.

community and those of secular society.[1]

Now, with this as a background, we, as Christians, have
the charge to not withdraw from society, but to participate with
Christ in His transformation process of culture. God is still
creating, redeeming, and calling. Hopefully, the church can
"move beyond fragmented Bible study to the kind of study that
shows the Bible's message of the creating, judging, redeeming
God who loves the whole world and calls it to work with Him for
its salvation."[2] This should be the theological thrust.

Next, religious education for the C.M.E. Church in the 70's
should be professionally done.[3] An injustice is wrought through
picking up any untrained person and expecting him to interpret
the Bible to men and women, boys and girls as they become en-
gaged in modern-secular life. Resources are available in com-
munities that often go unused. For example, look at the number
of Black public school teachers who have been trained in methods
and procedures of getting material over to children, and who
perhaps would be very happy to assist. Their skills can be
transferred into use in the educational development of the
church's body.

The obvious changing pattern of relationships between the
church and the world confronts churchmen with the need to re-
examine their situation and role. One point becoming increas-

[1]Ibid., pp. 117-189.

[2]Rachel Henderlite, p. 6.

[3]Ibid., p. 22.

ingly clear is that if the church is to survive, and if it is to
adequately communicate its message of the redeeming love of God
through Christ, its members must become a part of the community
working together towards the realization of that goal. Task forces
(mentioned in Chapter I) thus become an important concept in the life
of the church; and seeking new ways of communicating with youth be-
comes a priority in our educational process. Only when one understands
another's needs can one fill the gaps.

CHAPTER III: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A quote from Larry Shiner's The Secularization of History offers a perspective for bringing our conclusions and recommendations into focus:

> Christian faith is not only compatible with secularization but positively demands its continuance and expansion into all areas of life in order that faith can remain genuine faith. There are two requirements if secularization is to be preserved and enhanced. First, the world must remain subject to man's rational administration and man must remain free of any limits imposed from outside his own conscience. Secondly, this responsibility itself must not be permitted to become a law which poses as the final justification of man's being and action, but it must be united with an awareness of the mystery of the being of man and the world. If either of these requirements is missing, if man thinks he has a final answer to the meaning of existence or, if he gives up seeking an answer altogether, secularization has been replaced by what Gogarten calls "secularism."[1]

CONCLUSIONS

1. We are very much a part of a pluralistic culture. There seems to be little hope of ever going back to more familiar roles. There is a worldwide surge for power to control one's own destiny that is expressed in most segments of society,

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[1]Larry Shiner, The Secularization of History (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 165-66.

and there seems to be no letup to its expansion. For example, the
trend towards self-determination is understood among blacks in their
struggle for racial justice and in demands to set their own goals.
Today, minority groups are demanding a voice in the decision making
process that determines their fate.

2. Pluralism is a fairly recent American idealogy that makes an allowance
for radical movements of change. Pluralism permits and supports the
freedom to challenge the authority---"the structure." Thus the move-
ment for self-determination stands in direct opposition to the old
pattern of vesting control in a hierarchy that has lines of authority
running in only one direction.

3. It seems highly possible for the C.M.E. Church to be successful in
continuing to perpetuate Christianity as a way of life in the 70s.
However, creative and flexible ways will be necessary to carry on
this mission. The price for a commitment to this venture matters
little to him who sees the results of God's engagement with secular
man. The conclusion is that secular man needs God, and God can relate
to him, regardless of cultural changes.

4. Man must become engaged with God in order to receive revelations of
His unfolding creation. Engagement with God means that man is in con-
stant tension with himself and God and is ever thirsty for that un-
committed part of him to become engaged with the Transcendent. The
harmony and pleasantness of having one of man's gears meshed with God's
is incentive to get the whole self active in this engagement.

5. The hope is that the C.M.E. Church will be a part of the Church of Christ Uniting and will let that achievement be a springboard for immediate involvement in activities where minority groups are hurting. It is hoped that the church will be receptive to meaningful changes in structure and policy to meet the spiritual needs of the masses.

6. Complaints are that the General Board of Christian Education is not reaching the local needs of churches. Thus an evaluation is needed of what the general department is doing and how it can better approach the issue of engaging Christian education with the program of the church.

7. Youth is a prime concern of revolutionary minds. Youth is in rebellion against a society that is increasingly depersonalizing humanity. It seems that as the degree of alienation from society increases the more attached youth is to philosophies of nihilism and anarchy. This is a gavel note to the church to help youth see its way through a pluralistic, baffled world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The church must recognize and respond to the heavy strains now being imposed by secular society on contemporary man. The family is caught in the vise between familiar patterns and the pressure of pluralism. Thus the church needs to guide the family in receiving help to discover and more effectively fulfill its role as a family in a changing society.

2. In the People-Oriented approach to Christian education, a
   concern for family life should be given greater prominence
   than ᴬcounseling-after-the-fact approach. Also, since sta-
   tistics state that the American population will consist of
   largely youth under age 25 in the 70's, it is suggested
   that the church give serious thought to how it ministers
   to non-family persons.

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