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THE NURTURE OF FAITH IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
IN LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

By

JOHN YUN-HAN KAO

B.A., The United College of Hong Kong

A THESIS

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This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my mother and father through whom my capacity for entering into relationship was fostered, and to my wife whose understanding and encouragement has made possible my education in the United States.

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INTRODUCTION

THE NURTURE OF FAITH IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
IN LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is no doubt that religion and education are companions. But if faith is God-given, then what is the role of Christian education? What can education contribute to faith? On the other hand, if a Christian is brought up with Christian ideas and a Christian pattern of life, then where is the place of revelation or God-given faith? There seems to be a conflict between revelation and education.

The purpose of this thesis is to throw light on this problem by making a biblical and educational study of the nurture of faith in Christian education in light of the Gospel by John. The problem is to determine the nature, cause and communication of faith as it is seen in light of this Gospel and the insights of Christian educators.

B. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the nurture of faith in Christian education is of paramount concern today because of the

urgent need to understand the relationship between faith and nurture. This need arose because of the development of the humanistic approach toward Christian education since the psychological movement of the 19th century, when Horace Bushnell published his thesis on Christian Nurture. Bushnell insisted that Christian nurture takes place in the organic cause of the Christian community --the Christian home and church. Bushnell's conception of Christian nurture is criticized because people might be merely building the Christian pattern of life in the personality of the children of Christian homes, while actually leaving them outside of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, some Christian educators stress evangelism in Christian education. And through the influence of present theologians such as Karl Barth and Emil Brunner in Europe and the two Niebuhrs in the United States, Christian educators have now returned to a great concern for theology as well as psychology. The first sign of this return is said to be marked by the publication in 1941 of a book by H. Shelton Smith, entitled, Faith and Nurture. Donald Butler, who traces the above history of the religious education movement and its sequels,<sup>1</sup> concludes his study as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>J. Donald Butler, *Religious Education*, New York, Harper & Row, 1962, p. 118.



This chapter may be concluded, not inappropriately, by an attempt to assess the present situations in religious education. It yet remains for this generation or its successors to explore thoroughly the possible continuity between theology and nurture, building responsible theory in the light of such a continuum and putting it to work in effective practice. This is to say that the issue is not yet clearly drawn and therefore no clear resolution is yet on the horizon.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis is an attempt toward this resolution, in order to help Christian leaders and parents to realize their tasks and to carry out their responsibilities.

### C. DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

To make a thorough study of the nurture of faith in Christian education, it would be necessary to consult the insights of educational psychology and biblical theology. For faith is the subject of theology while nurture is concerned with the principles of education. But psychology deals with both belief and nurture.

Having awareness of the complexity of the problem in relation to different fields, a strict limitation of study is inevitably necessary. This study will not be involved with theological controversy on the origin of faith, nor is it concerned with the logical proof of faith. This study intends to explore "how" Christian faith comes into being, though it will not neglect the

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<sup>1</sup>Butler, op. cit., p. 121.

"why" of the occurrence of faith.

Because the object of Christian faith is the Person, the Incarnate Word, this study of the nature and communication of faith deals mostly with psychology rather than epistemology. It stresses the faith between persons rather than the philosophical or scientific proof of faith.

A strong emphasis will be placed upon the current insights of Christian educators in relation to the communication of Christian faith.

#### D. METHOD OF TREATMENT

A study of the nurture of faith is impossible if the nature of faith is not yet apprehended. Therefore, an inductive study of the nature of faith in the Gospel by John becomes the first part of this thesis. Then, according to these findings, the experiences in interpersonal relationships which lead to faith in God will be explored with the help of psychology. With such preparatory understanding, the ways of communicating faith will then be studied in light of the Gospel by John and with the help of the principles of education in order to throw light on developing Christian nurture.

## E. SOURCES OF STUDY

The first part of this study is based primarily on the Gospel by John, with the interpretations of this Gospel by leading expositors supplementing first-hand inductive study. For the second chapter, the major source material will be Martin Buber's I and Thou, Lewis Sherrill's The Struggle of the Soul, and Reuel Howe's Man's Need and God's Action. The works of current Christian educators such as Miller, Henderlite and Cully are found to be very helpful for the source material of the third chapter.

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF FAITH ACCORDING TO  
THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

## CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF FAITH ACCORDING TO  
THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

## A. INTRODUCTION

The Gospel by John is the most appropriate book in the Scriptures for the study of the nature of faith. The word "believe" occurs nearly one hundred times in this Gospel, and concrete events and discourses are offered to help one understand the nature of faith. Faith is the subject of this Gospel. Thus the author points out his purpose: "but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."<sup>1</sup>

In analyzing this verse, one can see the threefold nature of faith: first, the object or content of faith, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"; then, the reaction or response to the object of faith, "that you may believe"; and finally the result or expression of faith, "that believing you may have life in his name." For the convenience of this study, these may be phrased

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<sup>1</sup>John 20:31. All Scripture references are from the Gospel by John, unless otherwise indicated.

as follows: the object or content of faith is considered to be faith as knowledge; the reaction or response to the object of faith is considered to be faith as confession; the result or expression of faith is considered to be faith as commitment.

These three are one. One cannot be divorced from the other without losing the genuine Christian faith. They are cyclically interwoven although they might be analyzed logically to occur in sequence. It is the object of faith, then, which invites the response of faith so that the result of faith is achieved. On the other hand, the result of faith may enlarge the response to the object of faith. For the convenience of this study, these three elements of faith will be surveyed separately in the Gospel of John.

#### B. FAITH AS KNOWLEDGE OF THE INCARNATE WORD

"These signs [or testimonies] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..."<sup>1</sup>

Believing in God means having knowledge of God, since believing in God and knowing Him result in the same --eternal life.<sup>2</sup> It is revealed in Jesus' prayer, "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true

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<sup>1</sup>20:31.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 3:16,36; 5:24; 17:3.

God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."<sup>1</sup> Robert E.

Speer comments on this verse as follows:

And what is eternal life? It is not the possession of a complete, but the struggle after a growing, knowledge. The whole knowledge was in God and Christ, but it could not be given in one lump to men. It can only come as the gradual apprehension of that which has already apprehended us in Christ. The full revelation had been given, however, in Him.<sup>2</sup>

The object of Christian faith is not a proposition, nor a system of ideas, but a person.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, providing the knowledge of the Incarnate Word is the major purpose of the author of this Gospel. The word "know" or "known" is repeated almost as many times as the word "believe." It was not John's purpose to prove to people through all the testimonies what was true or false. He considered even the mighty works of Jesus to be signs to inform men that "the Word became flesh," to provide the knowledge of God's Incarnation. His mighty works are put together in the category of testimony.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, knowing God's Incarnation is essential in Christian faith.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>17:3, underlining by the author of this study.

<sup>2</sup>Robert E. Speer, *John's Gospel*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1915, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup>See W. W. White, *Thirty Studies in the Gospel by John*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895, pp. 72, 109.

<sup>4</sup>5:31-41. Cf. 10:25,40-42. There "sign" and "witness" are used interchangeably.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956, pp. 87, 297.

The knowledge of the Incarnate Word is Christian faith. This is the object as well as content of Christian faith.

The knowledge of the Incarnate Word is not apprehended by man's intellectual understanding only. It involves the whole personality. The author of the fourth Gospel points out the difference between true faith in Christ, i.e., the knowledge of the Incarnate Word, and mere intellectual assent. When the Jews saw the miracles which Jesus performed, they believed in Him as a miracle worker. They did not see the signs as pointing to the Incarnate Word. Therefore, Jesus did not trust Himself as the Person of the Incarnate Word to them, because He knew what was in man.<sup>1</sup> Without personal experience in the knowledge of the Incarnate Word (as a Person, not a set of ideas) true Christian faith is impossible.

#### 1. Set Forth by John in the Prologue

In the prologue, John, the Evangelist, proclaims the knowledge of the Incarnate Word. This is followed by a series of testimonies to support this claim. The subject matter of the prologue and the entire Gospel is "the Word became flesh." The knowledge of God is obtainable only through the Incarnate Word, because "the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him

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<sup>1</sup>2:1-25. Cf. 8:31-37.



known."<sup>1</sup> There are several reasons why God could be made known. First, the Incarnate Word was God Himself; God was manifested in His Incarnation. Again, the Incarnate Word tabernacled among us and we beheld His full manifestation as the Son of God.

The Word was eternally pre-existent, self-distinct, yet in eternal union with God the Father. The Word was the creative agent and the source of life and light. He is the truth which illuminates every man, yet men are free to respond to the truth of God by acceptance or rejection. Those who accept the illumination of the Logos will have power to become children of God, sharing the very life of the Son. The beginning of such life is not found in the physical realm, nor in natural instinct, nor in the will of rational man. As John, the Evangelist, states, life originates in the knowledge of God, manifested in "the Word become flesh." Then, in the rest of the Gospel, the author presents various kinds of testimonies to support what he has stated in the prologue concerning this knowledge of God.

## 2. Revealed in the Testimony of John the Baptist

John the Baptist contributed to the knowledge of the Incarnate Word. He proclaims His mission to the

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<sup>1</sup>1:14.

world,<sup>1</sup> His pre-existence,<sup>2</sup> His divine nature,<sup>3</sup> and His absolute superiority.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Revealed in the Testimony of Jesus' Mighty Works

Every sign points out who Jesus is. The signs are not meant to prove that Jesus is able to perform miracles. The author does not intend to let people believe that Jesus is only a miracle worker, but he wants people to know that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God."<sup>5</sup> In the prologue, the author tells us that the Incarnate Word was the creative agent and the sustainer of the creation. The unbelievers did believe that Jesus performed many miracles,<sup>6</sup> but they did not read the message of the signs.

W. W. White quotes from Dods in the Expositor's Commentary on John as follows:

John habitually considered the miracles of Jesus as "signs" or object lessons, in which the spiritual mind might read unseen truth. They were intended to present to the eye a picture of the similar but greater works which Jesus wrought in the region of the spirit. He heals the blind, and therein sets Himself before men as the light of the world. He gives the hungry bread, but is disappointed that they do not from this conclude that He is Himself the bread sent down by the Father to nourish to life everlasting. He heals the impotent man, and marvels that in this healing the people do not see a sign that He is the Son who does the Father's works, and who can give life to whom He will. It is legitimate, therefore, to see in this cure the embodi-

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<sup>1</sup>1:29.    <sup>2</sup>9:30.    <sup>3</sup>10:32-34.    <sup>4</sup>1:27; 3:30.

<sup>5</sup>11:27.    <sup>6</sup>11:47.

ment of spiritual truth.<sup>1</sup>

The signs reveal His creative power, as when He turned the water into wine at Cana of Galilee, and fed the five thousand, claiming to be Himself the bread of life. In the raising of Lazarus, He demonstrates that He is the source of life, both physical and spiritual. Similarly, the blind man finds physical sight and spiritual light as he believes in and worships Christ, the source of light.

#### 4. Revealed in the Testimony of the Father

Jesus had appealed to the testimony of the Father.<sup>2</sup> John the Baptist had received the Father's testimony and bore witness to this revelation that Jesus is the Son of God who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. John records the testimony of the Father as revealed in a voice from heaven, stating that the name of the Father had been glorified and would be glorified again through the death of the Incarnate Word.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5. Revealed in the Testimony of the Scriptures

Jesus had also appealed to the testimony of the Old

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<sup>1</sup>W. W. White, quoting from Dods, in *Thirty Studies in the Gospel by John*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895, pp. 84-85.

<sup>2</sup>5:37. Cf. 6:27; 7:16,20; 8:18,54; 11:41,42.

<sup>3</sup>12:27-30.

Testament Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> The Scriptures reveal the Incarnate Word to a limited extent. He is the Word in the word. All the Scripture is fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.<sup>2</sup>

There are announcements in the Old Testament concerning Him. These involve unbelief,<sup>3</sup> His garment,<sup>4</sup> His thirst,<sup>5</sup> His bones and side,<sup>6</sup> and His resurrection.<sup>7</sup>

These are some of the details about the life of the Christ, but the main significance lies in the fact that the Scriptures are revealing the knowledge of the Incarnate Word.

#### 6. Revealed in the Testimony of Jesus Himself

Jesus reveals the knowledge of the Incarnate Word not merely by His life, but also by His words.<sup>8</sup> He says, "We speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony."<sup>9</sup>

Jesus also made specific claims to be uniquely related to the Father.<sup>10</sup> He said, "I am the Son of God,"<sup>11</sup> and "I am in the Father."<sup>12</sup> He also claimed equality with the Father in the words, "that all may honor the Son even

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<sup>1</sup>5:3,46. Cf. 7:3. <sup>2</sup>5:39. <sup>3</sup>12:41. <sup>4</sup>19:24.

<sup>5</sup>19:28. <sup>6</sup>19:34-39. <sup>7</sup>20:9. <sup>8</sup>5:31; 8:13,14.

<sup>9</sup>3:11. <sup>10</sup>5:19-29; 8:12-50; 9:22-39.

<sup>11</sup>10:36. Cf. 3:16,18. <sup>12</sup>14:10,11. Cf. 8:42.

as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."<sup>1</sup>

#### 7. Revealed in the Testimony of Various Individuals

The knowledge of the Incarnate Word is revealed in personal experience. As a Person, He relates to other persons and is understood by them to some extent. If He could not be apprehended in this way, knowledge of Him would have no significance.

This study has looked at the testimony of obvious individuals such as John the Baptist, God the Father, and Jesus Himself. Next, the knowledge of the Incarnate Word shall be noted, as revealed by the testimony of people in various walks of life. The author, John, the Evangelist, speaks from his personal experience:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . . And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace.<sup>2</sup>

He also gives us the knowledge of the humanity of Jesus when blood and water came from the wound in His side at the time of His death.<sup>3</sup>

Many more individuals in the fourth Gospel bear testimony to Jesus' identity. What they knew of the Christ may be summarized: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of

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<sup>1</sup>5:23.    <sup>2</sup>1:14,16.    <sup>3</sup>19:34,35.

Joseph, was not merely an ordinary man. He was the one of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote. He was the Prophet, the King of Israel, the Christ, the Holy One of God. He was coming into the world from God, for He was the Son of God. The judge, Pilate, could find no crime in Him, and the disciples realized that He had the words of eternal life. Through the testimony of the individuals the author presents the Incarnate Word as the personal Savior of all, as Thomas confessed, "my Lord and my God."

These individuals are: Andrew, Philip, Nathaniel, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Peter, the Jewish officers, the blind man, Martha, Pilate, and Thomas.<sup>1</sup>

### 8. Revealed in the Testimony of the Holy Spirit

People can have all the above testimony without true knowledge of the Incarnate Word if the testimony of the Holy Spirit is left out. The people in the days of Jesus were under different circumstances from those after Jesus' death. The later believers must have the work of the Holy Spirit upon them. The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer to be his counsellor, comforter, helper, and advocate; to teach, to bring the teachings of Jesus to his

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<sup>1</sup>1:41-43,49; 3:2; 4:28-42; 6:68,69; 7:46; 9:30-33; 11:27; 19:4,6; 20:29.

mind, to guide the believer into the understanding of the Incarnate Word,<sup>1</sup> and to make him a channel of blessing.<sup>2</sup> The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement to come.<sup>3</sup> The promises concerning the Holy Spirit were fulfilled after the death of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, it may be noted that all the testimonies are to make God's Incarnation known. Those who had believed in Christ, the Son of God, were those who had come to know that Jesus was the Incarnate Word.<sup>5</sup> Those who had not believed in Christ were those who did not know or understand that God had sent the Son into the world.<sup>6</sup>

#### C. FAITH AS CONFESSION OF THE INCARNATE WORD

"These signs [or testimonies] are written that you may believe . . . ."<sup>7</sup>

These testimonies were written to reveal the knowledge of the Incarnate Word, and by the illumination of this knowledge a possibility is opened for one to respond

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<sup>1</sup>14:26; 16:13.    <sup>2</sup>7:28.    <sup>3</sup>16:7.

<sup>4</sup>7:39; 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; Acts 1:8,16,33; 5:31,32; etc.    Romans 1:4,8; 8:2,14; etc.

<sup>5</sup>6:6; 10:38; 14:20; 16:30; 17:3,7,8,25.

<sup>6</sup>1:10; 5:31-47; 6:26; 7:5; 7:40-44; 8:31,37,43,55; 10:33; 11:47,48; 12:48; 14:8-11; 15:21; 16:3.

<sup>7</sup>20:31.

to the object of faith. This response is awakened by the illumination of the Incarnate Word, also determined by man's decision. Some people decide to receive Christ; some people decide not to receive Him.<sup>1</sup> The factors which cause them to make such a decision are the major concern of this study. This chapter deals mainly with the nature of the response to the Incarnate Word.

Those who respond to the Incarnate Word recognize their response. This recognition can be called the confession of faith. The term confession in the New Testament "means to acknowledge, admit, declare, that something is so."<sup>2</sup>

A confession has its threefold acknowledgement. First, one acknowledges his own spiritual insufficiency, his needs. Again, he acknowledges that the Incarnate Word is sufficient to satisfy his needs. Then, he acknowledges the Lordship of the Incarnate Word who does satisfy his needs. These acknowledgements may not be expressed in words, but they are found in the context of the circumstances of those who make confession.

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<sup>1</sup>1:9-12.

<sup>2</sup>Alan Richardson, ed., A Theological Word Book of the Bible, New York, the Macmillan Company, 1951. Cf. John 1:20; Acts 24:14; Hebrews 11:13.



## 1. Acknowledging One's Own Insufficiency

The Word is the perfect light that enlightens every man.<sup>1</sup> By the enlightening of the Incarnate Word, one sees his own insufficiency and inadequacy. A spiritual need is hence created in him. Beginning where he is, man is shown his own spiritual insufficiency.

a. Beginning with physical needs. The first sign was performed by the Incarnate Word on request of man's insufficiency, "They have no wine."<sup>2</sup> People sought physical satisfaction from wine, but the drink was gone before they could really be satisfied. This is true in all ages. The story of the Samaritan woman reveals the same truth. Jesus said, "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again." Thus the woman was led to request, "Sir, give me this [living] water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Though this was a materialistic request, it was a stepping stone toward the spiritual realm. In the natural situation of lacking food, the disciples were awakened to the status of their spiritual hunger. They needed "the words of eternal life."<sup>4</sup>

b. Beginning with physical infirmity. Because of the illness of his son, an official came to Jesus and

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<sup>1</sup>1:9.    <sup>2</sup>2:1-11.    <sup>3</sup>4:4-15.    <sup>4</sup>6:1-71.

begged Him to come down to heal his son.<sup>1</sup> Illness drives people to come to Christ. This is true even now. The physical infirmity of the lame man had thrown him into spiritual despair. In his answer to Jesus, he expressed his anxiety and desperation.<sup>2</sup> The blind man recognized his own blindness so he obeyed Jesus' command to go wash in the pool and immediately his physical eyes were opened as well as his spiritual eye. The Jews were not physically blind, yet they were not aware of their spiritual blindness, so "their guilt remained."<sup>3</sup> Sometimes people are made aware of their spiritual inadequacy through their physical infirmity.

c. Beginning with moral corruption. John the Baptist called people to repentance of their sin; many were coming to him to be baptized, to have their sins washed away. They realized their moral collapse.<sup>4</sup> In a conversation with Jesus beside Jacob's well, the conscience of the Samaritan woman was quickened so that she admitted her moral problem and then she turned to inquire about religion, the spiritual things. Afterwards she even confessed publicly what she had done.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, the Jews thought that they had "never been in bondage to any one" and ignored what Jesus said: "Every one who com-

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<sup>1</sup>4:46-54.    <sup>2</sup>5:2-9.    <sup>3</sup>9:1-41.    <sup>4</sup>1:24-34.

<sup>5</sup>4:16-30.

mits sin is a slave of sin"; therefore they rejected the Incarnate Word.<sup>1</sup>

d. Beginning with mortal life. The mortal life is confined in human limitations and meaninglessness. Being confronted with the Incarnate Word, even a great man like John the Baptist felt his unworthiness and smallness;<sup>2</sup> a learned man like Nicodemus showed his ignorance.<sup>3</sup> No man could really console the sisters, Martha and Mary, when death had come to separate their brother from them.<sup>4</sup> Man is sitting hopelessly under the shadow of death, though man does not like to recognize it. But before one can expect eternal life, he must first admit that he is a mortal being.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Acknowledging Christ's Sufficiency

A realization of one's own insufficiency would throw one into deep despair if a sufficient source for life could not be found. A Christian's confession is therefore not merely negative, looking down at his own inadequacy, but positive, looking up to Christ, at His sufficiency. This is why John, the Evangelist, points out, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth . . . and from his fulness have we all

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<sup>1</sup>8:31-38.    <sup>2</sup>1:24-28.    <sup>3</sup>3:1-15.    <sup>4</sup>11:1-44.

<sup>5</sup>8:24.

received, grace upon grace."<sup>1</sup> Christ is sufficient to meet all man's needs.

a. To meet physical needs. Christian faith does not despise the material world, but insists that "all things were made through him."<sup>2</sup> In time of need, the Incarnate Word exercised His creative power to turn water into wine,<sup>3</sup> to multiply bread and fish into a great quantity so that man's physical needs could be met.<sup>4</sup> He is not merely a materialistic miracle worker; nor does He care only for spiritual things.

b. To restore physical health. Since the Word Himself had become flesh and thus had spoken and acted through it, and sometimes had felt tired,<sup>5</sup> He has great compassion with man's infirmity. Moreover He is able to restore man's health. The official acknowledged that Christ was able to keep his son from dying; by this faith, Christ was able to perform His second sign.<sup>6</sup> The lame man believed that even a word of Christ was sufficient for him to be healed.<sup>7</sup> The blind man acknowledged that Christ was able to open his eyes, so he washed in the pool and was healed.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>1:14-16. Underlining by the author of this study.

<sup>2</sup>1:3.   <sup>3</sup>2:1-11.   <sup>4</sup>6:1-14.   <sup>5</sup>4:6.

<sup>6</sup>4:46-54.   <sup>7</sup>5:1-9.   <sup>8</sup>9:1-7.

c. To redeem from moral corruption. If a man over-exercises his conscience without acknowledging Christ's sufficiency to lift up his moral life, his life would be worse than before. John the Baptist had called people to repentance, but he acknowledged that Christ was the Lamb of God, sufficient to take away the sin of the world.<sup>1</sup> The Samaritan woman recognized that Jesus, who was able to point out her moral problem, was able to redeem her from moral collapse, and acknowledged Him as Christ.<sup>2</sup> Only those Jews who thought that Jesus was merely a man like one of them rejected the fact that the words of Jesus could make them free from bondage.<sup>3</sup>

d. To give eternal life. Eternal life refers not merely to the extent of time, but to a new quality of existence that is found in Christ's life. Christ is not bound in the limitations of man. Besides His capacity to perform miracles, He walked on the sea and was raised from the dead.<sup>4</sup> Nathaniel recognized that Jesus had extraordinary discernment,<sup>5</sup> as did the Samaritan woman.<sup>6</sup> When the Jews followed Jesus only for the physical bread, Peter stood up on behalf of the disciples to acknowledge that Christ had the words of eternal life.<sup>7</sup> But Martha went still further in showing that she believed in Jesus' claim,

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<sup>1</sup>1:29.    <sup>2</sup>4:16-42.    <sup>3</sup>8:31-38.    <sup>4</sup>6:19; 20:1-29.

<sup>5</sup>1:48,49.    <sup>6</sup>4:39.    <sup>7</sup>6:66-69.

"I am the resurrection and the life . . ." <sup>1</sup> This immortal Incarnate Word is able to save man into eternity. <sup>2</sup>

### 3. Acknowledging Christ's Lordship

Recognizing Christ's sufficiency and one's own insufficiency is not beneficial unless the person submits himself to Christ's Lordship. He gives over himself to Christ and relates himself to Christ so that Christ's sufficiency may overcome his insufficiency.

When a person confesses that Jesus is the Christ, he acknowledges that Jesus is his Lord. "Christ" or "Messiah" means "the Lord's anointed One." In the Old Testament the Lord's anointed ones were the king, the prophet, and the priest. These three roles indicate that God is with His people. In the Old Testament, God communicated with man through the individuals in these three roles. Now these roles are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, <sup>3</sup> for He is the Immanuel, the Incarnate Word. Through Him God the Father is made known to man and man is brought back to God. For the Christian, He is Christ, King, Prophet and Priest.

When one acknowledges Christ as his King, he acknowledges God's sovereign claim upon him. Whatever

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<sup>1</sup>11:25-27.    <sup>2</sup>3:15,16,36; 4:14,36; 5:24; etc.

<sup>3</sup>See W. W. White, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

Christ commands he will obey.<sup>1</sup> When one acknowledges Christ as his Prophet, he listens to His instructions which express the will of God.<sup>2</sup> Those who accept Christ's healing and redeeming grace are those who accept Him as their Priest.<sup>3</sup>

Every one who confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Incarnate Word, acknowledges Christ as his Lord who transforms his life into a new quality of existence--the eternal life. For Christ is the Lord of all, the Lord of the creation and the Lord of life.<sup>4</sup>

#### D. FAITH AS COMMITMENT TO THE INCARNATE WORD

"That believing you may have life in His name."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>1:43; 2:5-8; 3:36; 4:50; 5:8,9; 9:7; 11:39-41; 12:26,27,47; etc.

<sup>2</sup>1:14; 2:4; 3:10; 4:19ff.; 5:14; 6:68,69; 7:16,17; 8:31,32,44-47; 10:4; etc.

<sup>3</sup>1:29,36,37; 3:14,15; 5:8,9; 6:53-57; 8:24; 9:31-33; 10:11; 11:41,42; 12:24,32; 17:1-26; etc.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. 1:3,4, which is supported by the various testimonies following through the entire Gospel.

<sup>5</sup>20:31. "The revealed name gathers up and expresses for man just so much as he can apprehend of the divine nature. Compare 3:18, 20:31. From these passages it is clear that the 'name' to the believer is that which describes the Incarnate Word as 'the Christ, the Son of God.'" --F. C. Cook, ed., *The Holy Bible, New Testament, Vol. II, St. John--the Acts of the Apostles*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886, p. 9.

The term commitment is very broadly used in Christian circles; yet its meaning varies greatly. It may mean the very first step in Christian faith; it may refer to the very deepest experience in Christian faith. In fact, Christian commitment is a matter of continuing decision by which one entrusts himself to the Incarnate Word. Christian faith begins when one commits himself to the Incarnate Word and completes his earthly journey by committing himself into the hand of God.<sup>1</sup> In the words of Paul, the life of a Christian is "a way that starts from faith and ends in faith."<sup>2</sup>

As to the meaning of commitment, Jesse H. Ziegler defines it as follows:

We may say that by commitment (as here used) we shall understand the giving over by the self to someone other than the self (Jesus Christ or His church) of something which is of value in order that what is of value may find its complete fulfilment and use.<sup>3</sup>

Ziegler uses the term commitment in this article more in the sense of the beginning of Christian faith in a person. Because he stresses the experience of giving over oneself to Christ at the very first stage, this is

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Luke 2:49 and 23:46. A Christian commits himself to Christ just as Christ commits Himself to the Father.

<sup>2</sup>Romans 1:16,17, New English Bible.

<sup>3</sup>Jesse H. Ziegler, "Psychological Aspects of Commitment," Religious Education, 1956, p. 298.



more like the emphasis on faith as confession.<sup>1</sup> The term commitment in this present consideration will emphasize the latter part of Ziegler's definition, ". . . in order that what is of value may find its complete fulfilment and use." Christ is of value. When a Christian gives himself over to Christ and relates himself with Christ, Christ is expressed through him. The value of Christ may hence find its complete fulfilment and use. In this sense, Christian commitment is the expression of relating oneself with Christ. At the same time, this commitment also results in the gift of eternal life.

#### 1. Trusting in Christ's Promise

Christian commitment is a matter of continuing decision by which one trusts Christ's promise. Christ's saving grace comes upon man only when he has made his decision to trust in Christ's words.<sup>2</sup> But trusting in Christ's words is not a single act which can be completed at the very beginning. "Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'"<sup>3</sup>

The greatest promise which Christ gives to those who come to believe in Him is the gift of eternal life.

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<sup>1</sup>Ante., pp. 12-20. <sup>2</sup>4:41,50; 6:68,69. Cf. 5:38,47.

<sup>3</sup>8:31,32. Underlining by the author of this study.

Those who keep trusting in His word continuously enjoy eternal life. Eternal life is not merely in the future; it is here and now as well. It is the new quality of existence which results from a continuing relationship with Christ. It is a life of freedom,<sup>1</sup> of satisfaction,<sup>2</sup> of peace,<sup>3</sup> of joy,<sup>4</sup> and of light.<sup>5</sup> The channel in which this life flows is faith as commitment.

## 2. Living out the Christ-like Life

Christ's first calling of His disciples was, "Follow me."<sup>6</sup> This may mean following Christ physically, but essentially, it means following Christ's way of life. To quote Christ's own saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."<sup>7</sup> Thomas A. Kempis began his famous Christian classic, Of the Imitation of Christ, with this verse. Kempis also said, "Whosoever then would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ must endeavor to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ."<sup>8</sup> This is Christian commitment. This "endeavor" is not affected by human efforts only, but by the help of the Counsellor, the

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<sup>1</sup>8:31,32.    <sup>2</sup>4:14; 6:35.    <sup>3</sup>16:33; 14:1,27,28.

<sup>4</sup>16:2-24.    <sup>5</sup>12:36.    <sup>6</sup>1:44.    <sup>7</sup>8:12.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas A. Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ, New York, Hurst & Co., n.d., p. 13.

Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Following Christ's example is necessary for discipleship. Jesus said, "For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."<sup>2</sup> This is not learning something from Christ outwardly only, but living out the life that is in continuing relation with Christ. Christian life is a life in union with Christ.<sup>3</sup> If Christ's life is manifested in Christian living, Christ is glorified.<sup>4</sup> His life is the life of love, of humility, of truth, of obedience to God, of service to man and of self-sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> When Christians live out Christ-like lives, the world will listen to them as it listened to Christ, or will persecute them as it persecuted Christ.<sup>6</sup> Where this occurs, faith in Christ is recognized.

### 3. Fruit-bearing

Fruit-bearing is the test of true discipleship, because fruitfulness is inevitable for those who abide in Christ. Jesus used the natural relation between a vine and its branches to illustrate such relationship. Christ is the vine and the believers, its branches. Branches

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<sup>1</sup>14:26; 15:12-15.   <sup>2</sup>12:26; 13:14-15.   <sup>3</sup>15:1-27.

<sup>4</sup>17:10. Cf. 13:31,32; 14:13; 15:8.

<sup>5</sup>13:1-35; 14:21; 15:9-11; 8:31,32; 17:17-19; 17:4; Cf. 2:4; 7:6; 12:24-26.

<sup>6</sup>13:20; 15:18-16:4; etc.

can no longer maintain their function apart from the vine; a vine can bear no fruit without its branches. They are inseparable.

A branch bears fruit when it abides in the vine, and it bears more fruit when it is pruned. A Christian bears fruit when he abides in Christ and bears more fruit when he is made clean by the word of Christ. Abiding in Christ is a matter of committing oneself continuously to Christ's commandment that "you love one another as I have loved you." As the essence of a vine is carried in its branches to bear fruit, Christ's love is expressed through His disciples to be made known to the world. God is love. God's love is manifested in Christ; likewise Christ's love is manifested in His disciples. Christ had made God the Father known to His disciples, so that they believed that God had sent Christ into the world; likewise, Christ's disciples must make Christ known to the world, so the world may believe in Him, too. Loving one another is manifesting Christ's love and making Christ known. Therefore, Christian fruit-bearing means to manifest Christ's love so that ultimately more people will also become Christians. This is a continuously multiplying process. It requires continuing commitment to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Chapter 15.

## E. SUMMARY

In this chapter the nature of faith is considered according to the Gospel by John. It has been discovered that believing in the Incarnate Word is the subject matter of this Gospel. John presents a threefold picture of faith: faith as knowledge, as confession and as commitment.

John puts great emphasis on knowledge of the object of faith. The object of faith is the Person, the Incarnate Word, not a proposition nor a set of ideas. The main essence of Christian faith is the knowledge of the Incarnate Word. Therefore, he first provides the knowledge of the Incarnate Word in the prologue, then supports it with various kinds of testimonies. The Incarnate Word is eternally existent, yet in eternal union with God the Father. The Word is the creative agent and the source of life and light. He has come into the world to reveal God's love and acceptance of every man. He is the personal Savior of every individual. This knowledge is not apprehended by man's intellectual understanding only. It involves the whole personality. Having this knowledge means believing in Him.

When this knowledge of the Incarnate Word is exposed, man will make response to Him by acceptance or rejection. He who accepts Him is willing to expose his

own insufficiency, recognizing his own physical needs, physical infirmity, moral corruption, or his mortality. He will confess that Christ is sufficient to meet all his needs. Then he will submit himself to the authority of Christ's Lordship, so that Christ's sufficiency can become his. This is called faith as confession.

And by this confession, he will commit himself to the life of the Incarnate Word. He will trust in His promise that whoever believes in Him shall receive the gift of eternal life. By keeping himself continuously in Christ's word, he enjoys eternal life--the new quality of existence. Then he relates himself to Christ and lives out the Christ-like life. He manifests Christ's love in his daily living so that people will see Christ in him. Through him people will come to believe in Christ also, because he has expressed his faith as he commits himself fully to Christ.

According to the preceding study, it has been understood that faith operates in person-to-person relationship. Faith as knowledge is a personal acquaintance with the Incarnate Word. Faith as confession is a personal acknowledgement of the Incarnate Word. Faith as commitment is a personal identification with the Incarnate Word. In all these aspects, faith is the expression of a right relationship between man and God.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH IN INTERPERSONAL  
RELATIONSHIPS

## CHAPTER II

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter has provided a biblical understanding of the nature of faith as found in the Gospel by John. It is the purpose of this chapter to enter into the field of psychology with its principles and insights into the experience of faith in interpersonal relationships. Martin Buber says that the Gospel according to John is really the Gospel of "pure relation."<sup>1</sup> Then he refers to the familiar mystical verse, "I am Thou and Thou art I," to point out such relationship in which faith operates. Buber has really recaptured a better understanding of faith as the New Testament writers understood it.

Ronald Smith, in his translator's preface to the second edition, points out the effect of Buber's I and Thou upon the theological thought of such men as Karl Heim, Friedrich Gogarten, Eberhard Grisebach, Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, J. H. Oldham, M. Channing Pearce, John Baillie, H. H.

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, 2nd ed., trans. by Ronald G. Smith, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958, p. 85.



Farmer, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Sir Herbert Read. The list is extended into other fields as Smith mentions Leslie H. Farber, the Chairman of the Faculty of the Washington School of Psychiatry. Buber has also great influence upon men in the fields of psychology and education, especially religious education. The prominent scholars in these fields which could be mentioned are: Paul Johnson, Gordon Allport, W. S. Taylor, Jesse H. Ziegler, Daniel D. Williams, Reuel L. Howe, Wayne E. Oates, Iris V. Cully, Lewis J. Sherrill, and Randolph C. Miller. On the cover of I and Thou, Reinhold Niebuhr enthusiastically comments that "The publication of Martin Buber's I and Thou a quarter of a century ago was a great event in the religious life of the West."<sup>1</sup>

Since so many theologians, psychologists and religious educators appreciate Buber's work and always refer back to his I and Thou, a more emphatic study of his I and Thou in relation to this thesis is justifiable.

This chapter will trace Buber's understanding of the I-Thou relationship to explore the experience of faith in interpersonal relationships. The insights of modern psychologists and educators will be, of course, correlated. W. S. Taylor, in his article entitled, "Faith and its

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., the cover.

Psychology," points out as follows:

In attempting to explain the nature of faith, the New Testament thus proceeds by attempting to describe with increasing precision the nature of the interpersonal relationship of which faith is the expression. This is a difficult procedure, though it may be the only procedure possible in dealing with the relatively new problem of I-Thou relationship. It is perhaps unfortunate that the Christian thought, after the New Testament period, lost this particular approach to the problem of faith. And it may be significant that the modern psychological thought, in its concern to find new ways of explaining the nature of healing interpersonal relationships and distinguishing them from degenerative interpersonal relationships, is following much the same procedure as was followed in the New Testament. It may well be, therefore, that contemporary psychological methods of dealing with interpersonal relationships will help us to recapture a better understanding of faith as the New Testament writers understood it.<sup>1</sup>

Taylor has really spelled out the relevance of this chapter, for it will deal with the psychological insights and principles governing the different aspects of faith in accordance with the first chapter. In other words, the preceding chapter is the biblical view of the nature of faith, while this chapter will involve the modern psychological view of the nature and condition of faith. The first chapter provides a scheme; this chapter will give it support and will heighten the understanding of faith according to the current insights. In preparation, the nature of the interpersonal relationship will be studied.

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<sup>1</sup>W. S. Taylor, "Faith and Its Psychology," the Hibbert Journal, Vol. LVIII, No. 1, 1959-1960, p. 246.

## B. THE NATURE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

When it is said that faith operates in I-Thou relationship or interpersonal relationship, it is necessary to grasp what is meant by Buber and modern psychologists and educators as they refer to it. This will be investigated under the following headings: (1) the meaning of person; (2) the meaning of interpersonal relationship; (3) the distinctions between I-Thou and I-It relationships; (4) the turning between I-Thou and I-It relationships.

### 1. The Meaning of Person

As to the concept of person, modern psychologists emphasize the unity of an individual being.<sup>1</sup> Buber also emphasizes the wholeness and unity of an individual being: human being, spiritual being and things in nature as well.<sup>2</sup> He does not stress the analysis of spirit, soul and body. When he describes God's attributes, being as spirit and being as nature, he stresses God's being as personal. He states that from the attribute of God's personal being "would stem my and all men's being as person, as from those other attributes would stem my and all men's being as spirit and being as nature."<sup>3</sup> It is the attribute of

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis J. Sherrill, *The Struggle of the Soul*, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1961, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Buber, *op. cit.*, pp. 126, 132. <sup>3</sup>*ibid.*, p. 135.

personal being that makes an individual being conscious of self and conscious of other persons. Paul Johnson understands that a person is to be treated with respect for his feelings, because he is capable of joy and sorrow in the sensitivities and appraisals of self-consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. The Meaning of Interpersonal Relationship

Relationship between persons is established when there is dialogue between them, i.e., the addresses and responses between I and Thou. This dialogue is spoken not merely with sounds of lips, but with one's whole being. It may be expressed in ordinary speech or in prayer; but it is mostly expressed without using the vocal organs.<sup>2</sup>

There is relationship only when one makes dialogue with others as persons; there is only separation when one treats others as things although they seem to have a relationship. As Taylor puts it, "Not every interpersonal relationship is one of faith. Not even all relationships with God involve faith; only those which belong to the realm of grace and are concerned primarily with redemption."<sup>3</sup>

It is obvious that Taylor is referring to Buber's I-It and I-Thou relations. An I-It relation is not of

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<sup>1</sup>Paul E. Johnson, "Religious Experience as a Person-to-Person Encounter," Readings in the Psychology of Religion, ed. by Orlo Strunk, New York, Abingdon Press, 1959, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 34. <sup>3</sup>Taylor, op. cit., p. 246.

faith; an I-Thou relation is of faith. Man may treat persons as things, and may even treat God as a thing. Although there is relation, it is not one of faith. Faith in God is not merely a change of object, for instance, from an idol to God, but it is also a change in the nature of the relationship. Buber states:

He who is dominated by the idol that he wishes to win, to hold and to keep--possessed by a desire for possession--has no way to God but that of turning, which is a change not only of goal but also of the nature of his movement. The man who is possessed is saved by being wakened and educated to solidarity of relation, not by being led in his state of possession towards God. If a man remains in this state what does it mean when he calls no longer on the name of a demon or of a being demonically distorted for him, but on the name of God?<sup>1</sup>

Lewis Sherrill shares his understanding about relationship as follows:

A "relationship" in its simplest form is that which exists between two entities and affects them both, when they are brought to bear upon each other. This "betweenness" is a dynamic field in which each entity "does something to" the other, such as attracting, staying neutral, or repelling.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. I-Thou Relation and I-It Relation

Buber uses I-Thou and I-It as combinations of primary words which "do not signify things, but intimate

<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis J. Sherrill, *The Gift of Power*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1955, p. 44. Underlining is in italics in the original.

relations."<sup>1</sup> They represent man's twofold attitude toward the world. Man meets a Thou and uses an It. The world of I-Thou and the world of I-It are intricately interwoven; no clear-cut division between these two worlds can be found. For instance, it is impossible to refer to the scientist's world as It and the poet's world as Thou.

The world of I-Thou or I-It is determined by relation, not by the change of object. If a man meets things in nature, human beings and spiritual beings as persons with his whole being, he is in a relationship of I-Thou. If a man uses them as things, he is in a world of I-It. Randolph C. Miller comments very precisely:

Martin Buber gets at the problem of the relation of theology to life through what he calls the "I-Thou" relationship. He contrasts this with the "I-It" relationship. When we treat a person as a "Thou," we recognize that he is an end and not a means and, therefore, he is not to be used for our pleasure. But we get so mixed up that we use persons and serve things, whereas the proper relationship consists of serving persons and using things. When we use persons as things, we become estranged from them and, therefore, hurt ourselves as well as them.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. The "Turning" from I-Thou to I-It and from I-It to

##### I-Thou Relation

Buber understands that man has an "inborn Thou,"

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Randolph C. Miller, *Education for Christian Living*, 2nd ed., Englewood, N. J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, pp. 70-71.

which from birth is always longing to enter into relationship with the Thou and is constantly over against loneliness and separation. Man struggles for the unity of his whole self in relation to another self. Man's experiences of acting upon and being acted upon by what confronts him, especially in infancy and childhood, will always affect his capacity to enter into relationship. If a man's longing for Thou is disappointed, the object of his longing will change to It. Tension and conflict constantly arise from such duality of man's personal existence.

When a child grows up and begins to be conscious of I and its object, he will find his capacity for entering into relationship decreased and the function of "using" developed. If he is not always related to persons as "Thous," he will relate himself to persons as "Its." Thereafter, his capacity to enter into relationship is decreased all the more. Then, he has turned from I-Thou relation into I-It relation.<sup>1</sup>

Buber abstracts into brief lines as follows:

The particular Thou, after the relational event has run its course, is bound to become an It.

The particular It, by entering the relational event, may become a Thou.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., pp. 25-34, 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 33. The underlinings are in italics in the original translation.

And in all the seriousness of truth, hear this: without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man.<sup>1</sup>

Now, on the other hand, the "turning" from I-It relation into I-Thou relation in the region of theophany is not just by man's own power, nor is it God's "pure effective passage," but it involves a mixture of the divine and the human.<sup>2</sup> God as Person in Christ "enters into a direct relation with us men in creative, revealing and redeeming acts, and thus makes it possible for us to enter into a direct relation with Him."<sup>3</sup>

#### C. THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH AS KNOWLEDGE IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

God's incarnation involves the I-Thou relationship: Thou as God, I as human; these two meeting together are God incarnate. Christ is the Incarnate God, the Word that became flesh, Who reveals the perfect I-Thou relationship. In the preceding chapter, it has been noted that faith in God means having knowledge of God, and God is made known through the Incarnate Word.

Now, since the Incarnate Word is known as the perfect I-Thou relation, the knowledge of the Incarnate Word

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 34.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 135.



is the knowledge of the I-Thou relation. But man can never have real knowledge of the I-Thou relationship unless he himself enters into I-Thou relationship with his whole being. "For only in this way is mutual knowledge of different beings won."<sup>1</sup> The movement into I-Thou relationship is faith.

There are three "gates" through which man can enter into the I-Thou relationship. It is the same as saying that there are three spheres in which the world of relation arises:

First, our life with nature . . .

Second, our life with men . . .

Third, our life with spiritual beings . . ."<sup>2</sup>

These will be studied in this section in accordance with the findings of the preceding chapter, under the categories of "The Mighty Works of God," "The Witness of Persons," and "The Proclamation of Spirit."

1. The I-Thou Relation as Found through the Mighty Works of God

In every miracle Jesus performed there was a message pointing to the I-Thou relationship; some people could read it, some could not. God created the universe just

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 6. Cf. 101, 102.

like an artist creates a work of art through which he conveys his personality. Through the work of art, the artist communicates with the viewer and the viewer communicates with the artist. Likewise, through the wonder and beauty of nature, God can communicate with man and man with God. However, some people meet God through nature, and some do not.<sup>1</sup> Jesse H. Ziegler writes:

God meets persons through the objective physical reality that surrounds them on every hand. The vastness of the cosmos challenges one man to set down its description in mathematical symbols. For another man becoming aware of the same vastness becomes the holy ground on which he meets God. One man looks through a microscope at the structure of a leaf in order to understand the processes taking place within it. Another man looks at the same scene and is interested in the processes but also finds himself looking into the very nature of God.<sup>2</sup>

Buber traces the cause of these two different attitudes to the birth of a child. He considers that a child has an "inborn Thou" that leads him to meet the "eternal Thou." A child personifies things, makes conversation with them, and meets them as "Thou." Because of this "inborn Thou" a child is "inextricably bound up with longing for the Thou."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. James Wesley Ingles, "Art as Incarnation," Christianity Today, Vol. VII, No. 11, March 1, 1963, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Jesse H. Ziegler, "Psychology of Religion and Religious Education," Religious Education, ed. by Marvin J. Taylor, New York, Abingdon Press, 1960, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 28.

Buber goes still further in saying:

Many a movement termed reflex is a firm trowel in the building up of the person in the world. It is simply not the case that the child first perceives an object, then, as it were, puts himself in relation with it. But the effort to establish relation comes first--the hand of the child arched out so that what is over against him may nestle under it; second is the actual relation, a saying of Thou without words, in the state preceding the word-form; the thing, like the I, is produced late, arising after the original experiences have been split asunder and the connected partners separated. In the beginning is relation--as category of being, readiness, grasping form, mould for the soul; it is the a priori of relation, the inborn Thou.<sup>1</sup>

Since nature will not actively address a person by itself, it must be understood that the development of a child's capacity to relate to nature as It or as Thou is greatly affected by the persons who are close to him.

## 2. The I-Thou Relation as Found through the Witness of Persons

Miller comments on Buber's I-Thou relationship that it "is both a theological and an educational insight" that "God works through persons in relationship." He quotes Herbert H. Farmer's statement that "God's purpose is such, and He so made humanity in accordance with that purpose, that He never enters personal relationship with a man apart from other human persons." Miller further explains that "when a man works through such relationships, he treats

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 27.

each other person as a 'Thou' and therefore discovers the 'eternal Thou' behind each person."<sup>1</sup>

There are numerous ways in which a person is affected by other persons. One of the most important is the view of life held by persons around him, especially his parents. "The meanings which men see in life are vastly varied, they are complex, and they are subtle."<sup>2</sup>

Sherrill sums them up in three symbolic terms for life as a whole: the treadmill, the saga, and the pilgrimage. Life as treadmill is life without meaning. "Life is a wasteland, or a desert."<sup>3</sup>

Life as saga is "a little way above the treadmill . . . The saga teaches men to see and honor the humanness of the natural virtues, such as courage, patience, endurance, self-sacrifice, and the like."<sup>4</sup> Although "the saga at its best has a two-fold value: it shows wherein the nobility of great character lies and it shows the heroism of the common life," it is still "essentially bound by the human horizon."<sup>5</sup>

"Life as pilgrimage is open to more than the merely natural and human," says Sherrill, "so that human existence

<sup>1</sup>Miller, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Sherrill, *The Struggle of the Soul*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 4. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 4. <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

is consciously related not only to nature and humanity, but also to God who transcends nature and humanity."<sup>1</sup>

If these descriptions are put in Buber's words, life as treadmill and life as saga are lives with "I-It" relationship, because they are "in the sense of being limited by time."<sup>2</sup> Life as pilgrimage is life with the "I-Thou" relationship, because it is "open to eternity."<sup>3</sup>

These views of life held by the persons around a person will inevitably impress him so that he will hold the same view. Sherrill says about a child, "Now the dynamic self, being born within the actual relationships of a family group, is also being born into the parental view of life."<sup>4</sup>

Since parents are living in a community, and a child will eventually grow up and go into a community at large, he will inevitably be influenced by the culture of his community.<sup>5</sup> Orlo Strunk puts it: "We are prone to assume that one's beliefs are more or less handed down from authority figures, such as parents, state, church, and so forth. It is of course axiomatic that we are greatly influenced by our culture."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, *The Struggle of the Soul*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7. <sup>3</sup>*Loc. cit.* <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup>Ziegler, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup>Orlo Strunk, *Religion a Psychological Interpretation*, New York, Abingdon Press, 1962, p. 57.

These views of life can be expressed through conversations or through attitudes. However, they are witnesses through which a person may hence enter into I-Thou or I-It relationships.

### 3. The I-Thou Relation as Found through the Proclamation of Spirit

Here the term "spirit" refers to human spirit as well as Holy Spirit. Spirit may become word and spirit may become form. Word is from one's saying; form is from one's work. This means that he who meets the word of one's saying and the form of one's work meets one's spirit. The saying and work of a person is present ("to hand"), while the speaker or worker is absent ("not to hand").

If a man treats the saying of a person (e.g., his dead master) not as an object, "that is he will not separate out of the saying any content or rhythm; but he receives only the indivisible wholeness of something spoken,"<sup>1</sup> his I is calling the saying Thou. He will respond to it with his whole being as if he is hearing it directly from his master. Otherwise, he is treating the saying as It.

In another case, if a man stands in front of a famous building and looks at it in the "face of this structure of spirit, this mass penetrated and given body

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 128.

by the mind and hand of man," then the spirit of the building "is transformed into a concrete content which coldly declines to assume conceptual form, but is bright and reliable."<sup>1</sup> Thus he meets the spirit of the architect as Thou; otherwise it becomes It.

The Bible is the word of God, the Church is the work of God. Both of them are of the Spirit of God. A man may treat the Spirit of God as It or he may meet the Spirit as Thou. This is the major concern of this study, and will be explored more thoroughly in the third chapter.

#### D. THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH AS CONFESSION IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the preceding chapter, it has been noted that when man responds to the illumination of the Incarnate Word, he acknowledges his own insufficiency and the sufficiency of Christ, and clings to Him as his Lord so that Christ's sufficiency may become his. Buber understands this as he thinks that man is from birth "bound up with . . . longing for the Thou."<sup>2</sup> Man feels inadequate until he meets Thou and clings to Thou. Strunk looks upon man "in his never-ending search for self-adequacy," and concludes that "religious factors always lead to integration

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 129. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

of personality, for they obtain, one way or another, self-adequacy for the individual."<sup>1</sup>

### 1. The Sense of Self-inadequacy

According to Buber, the sense of self-inadequacy in man is originally caused by an "inborn Thou" that makes him feel inadequate until he meets the Thou.<sup>2</sup> Strunk observes that the sense of inadequacy arises from being faced with a host of difficult situations or problems in life.<sup>3</sup>

Life as "treadmill" as described by Sherrill<sup>4</sup> is a life dominated by the sense of self-inadequacy. Then, does this lead to faith? No; faith as confession is the acknowledgement of self-inadequacy, not merely the sense of self-inadequacy. Man may have the sense of inadequacy without acknowledging it.

A child is obviously from birth "severely handicapped by his very physical inadequacies. He must use other persons to achieve self-adequacy, especially parents and significant others."<sup>5</sup> This implies also his emotional

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<sup>1</sup>Strunk, op. cit., pp. 106-108.

<sup>2</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Strunk, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>4</sup>Sherrill, *The Struggle of the Soul*, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Strunk, op. cit., p. 107.



and intellectual needs. Now, if the parents or the persons close to him are not adequate to meet his needs, and treat him as a "thing" with "things," his longing for Thou is disappointed. He will find it difficult to enter into I-Thou relation with the particular Thou (persons) and the eternal Thou (God), as well.

When a child acknowledges his inadequacy, yet this acknowledgement is ignored and disappointed over a long period, this experience will lead him to refuse to acknowledge his inadequacy even when he is confronted by God, unless he has a radical experience. On the other hand, if a person's acknowledgement of his inadequacy is satisfied to some extent, when he is confronted by God he will cling to Him to find full satisfaction.

## 2. The Illusion of Self-adequacy

The life pictured by Sherrill with the symbolic term "saga" spells out man's desire for self-adequacy.

The saga rises above the treadmill by exalting the distinctively human qualities which exist, if we can see them, within the treadmill. The saga teaches men to see and honor the humanness of the natural virtues, such as courage, patience, endurance, self-sacrifice, and the like.<sup>1</sup>

Life as saga is the expression of man's desire for self-adequacy. However, it is bound in a horizontal plane and is limited by time. The "inborn Thou" of man makes

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 4,5.

him restless until he meets the "eternal Thou." Often, man does not realize the cause of this tension and considers that the life of saga is adequate although he is still in a state of restlessness. Because he is in the secular realm, the human horizontal plane, and he has the illusion of self-sufficiency, he will not recognize that true adequacy means resting in eternal life, until he is confronted by the "eternal Thou."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Acknowledgement of Sufficient Authority

In seeking for self-adequacy, a person will naturally depend on some sufficient resource. Then, this sufficient resource begins to have authority over him because of his dependency. A child depends on his parents, so his parents have authority over him. He is delighted to cling to his parents if they can meet his needs. "But age does not free one from authority; it merely transfers him from one type of authority to another."<sup>2</sup> The authority might be one of humanism, materialism, naturalism, nationalism and patriotism, or the Bible, Church, and God.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul E. Johnson, *Psychology of Religion*, New York, Abingdon Press, 1959, p. 46. See also David S. Roberts, *Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, pp. 108, 114.

<sup>2</sup>Wesley M. Arms, *A Psychological Study of Unbelief in the Gospel by John*, a thesis, New York, The Biblical Seminary in New York, 1948, p. 16.

Faith comes out of admitting that there is an authority. James B. Pratt states: "It is obvious that in every case the belief is really based ultimately on some kind of authority."<sup>1</sup> A man gets his faith by conforming to the parental view of life, to the family traditions, to a secular view of life and to the demands of the State.

On the other hand, man is struggling for freedom to assert his own individuality, especially in adolescence. Then, the pressure of authority from without and the growing desire for independence within form a serious conflict.

Unless he can be helped toward a deeper self-discovery he is in danger of being swept along either toward a sterile conformity to the heaviest pressure, whatever this happens to be; or else toward a futile rebellion against all pressures from every source. In either case there is the possibility that a youth may become a sort of chronic adolescent . . .<sup>2</sup>

The remedy for this conflict is love that is found in the relationship with God through the redemption of Christ.

That is to say, the path to the deepest self-discovery and the utmost self-release lies within the two-fold experience of knowing oneself loved with infinite love, and of giving love in return with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James Bissett Pratt, *The Psychology of Religious Belief*, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1907, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup>Sherrill, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65. Underlining added by the author of this study.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 65.

The movement of entering into this I-Thou relationship is faith. W. S. Taylor says, "Faith signifies the existence of a relationship in which Christ's authority could be exercised without destroying the capacity of the individual to exercise responsible freedom."<sup>1</sup>

E. THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH AS COMMITMENT  
IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Faith as commitment is a person's continuing decision in which he relates himself to some other self. Whenever there is commitment there is relationship; without commitment there is separation. Commitment is a continuing mutuality between I and Thou, while loneliness is the result of I-It.

Reuel L. Howe points out that "all our life . . . is an effort to overcome our separation and to find each other in fulfilling relationship."<sup>2</sup> Man in his innermost part, with his best effort is trying to relate himself to a particular Thou and ultimately to the eternal Thou. But modern psychological insight reveals that many people have difficulty in relating themselves to others. The psychologist traces the cause to the experiences in one's child-

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<sup>1</sup>W. S. Taylor, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>2</sup>Reuel L. Howe, Man's Need and God's Action, Connecticut, The Seabury Press, 1953, p. 11.

hood. If a child has difficulty relating himself to his parents properly, he will find it difficult to relate to persons in his later life.

"It is not surprising, for instance, that difficulties in marital relationship often grow out of difficulties that the partners had in relation to their respective parents."<sup>1</sup> In the same manner, if a child has difficulty in his relationship with his parents, he will find it difficult to enter into relationship with God, the Heavenly Father. Ziegler believes that "No person perceives or experiences God apart from the way in which his life has been formed by the relationships with his own father and mother."<sup>2</sup> Howe adds, "Of course, God has power to transcend and redeem the effect of these, but as we have seen, relationship on the human level may open or close us temporarily to a relationship with God."<sup>3</sup>

The bases upon which relationships are built are trust, identification and love. Hatred creates separation while love brings men into relationship. It is natural to identify with each other while there is genuine relationship. Mutual trust ties men together while they are seem-

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<sup>1</sup>Howe, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Jesse H. Ziegler, *Psychology and the Teaching Church*, New York, Abingdon Press, 1962, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>Howe, op. cit., p. 67.

ingly apart. These are the expressions of Christian commitment. When these are experienced, faith is experienced.

### 1. The Experience of Trust

Christian commitment is a continuing decision by which man trusts in Christ's promise. It is a momentary as well as gradual experience. It is momentary because every decision is finally made in a moment. It is gradual because there are so many decisions along the line of life: decision after decision. In Buber's words, "Happening upon happening, situation upon situation, are enabled and empowered by the personal speech of God to demand of the human person that he take his stand and make his decision."<sup>1</sup>

To Howe, trust and faith are indistinguishable. "The experience of basic trust in the early years of life is . . . a foundation for the later capacity for faith in God."<sup>2</sup> Without the basic experience of trust in childhood, a person can neither trust in God, nor even understand the meaning of trusting in God. Howe points out that the communication of trust is not merely by the language of words, but more important and basic, is by the "language of relationship."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., pp. 136, 137.

<sup>2</sup>Howe, op. cit., p. 67.      <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

When a child finds himself related to someone, through whom his needs are met, he finds this person dependable and hence begins to sense trust. When the word "trust" is spoken and the experience of trust is associated, he begins to understand the meaning of trust. Trusting experience begins with the experience of satisfaction, comfort, peace and joy. When the experience of trust deepens, in spite of all momentary dissatisfaction or suffering, he will still trust that the ultimate goodness will come to him. Therefore, trust is also a growing experience. The growth of trust is based upon mutual relationship: "my trustworthiness helps you to become trustworthy,"<sup>1</sup> yours helps me. Trust is committing one's self to the other as the other commits his self to one.

## 2. The Experience of Identification

Identification is a direct yet unconscious participation in the lives of others "in such a way that the ego of the one becomes like the other, which results in the first ego behaving itself . . . in the same way as the second; it initiates it, and as it were, takes it into itself."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Howe, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>Wayne E. Oates, *The Religious Dimensions of Personality*, New York, Association Press, 1957, p. 222. See also Gordon W. Allport, *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961, p. 541.

Identification is primarily unconscious and is carried out through love and fear of persons, especially of one's parents. "As the child admires and fears his parents, he will identify with them and model his behavior after theirs."<sup>1</sup> What the parents demand or disapprove will be internalized in the child's thinking and doing, and will form in him a personality like that of his parents.<sup>2</sup>

According to modern psychological understanding, a growing child must learn to relate properly to the parents of the opposite sex and of the same sex. This will affect the child in his later life, whether he will be predominantly masculine or feminine. If his father is predominantly feminine and his mother masculine, then, according to the law of identification, the child's need to relate both to a masculine man and a feminine woman is thrown out of balance. Hence, he will have a kind of morbid conscience as far as his relationships to other persons are concerned.<sup>3</sup>

If a person finds it difficult to take his proper role in life to enter into a good relationship with

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<sup>1</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>Loc. cit. See also Oates, op. cit., p. 223.

<sup>3</sup>Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 34-39. See also Oates, op. cit., p. 223.



others, he will find it difficult to enter into relationship with God, too. Therefore, identification is also a very important factor in Christian commitment.

### 3. The Experience of Love

Love is the ultimate and full expression of Christian commitment. "God is love." Man cannot enter into relationship with Him if he has no experience of human love. Love exists in relationship, while hatred results in separation.

God is perfect love. Man's love is a shadow of God's love. But man cannot understand nor can he respond to God's love apart from the experience of human love. A person learns love first from his parents at the very beginning of his life. "The infant . . . is coming to know love, but love which is only a copy, or 'shadow,' or perhaps only a remote likeness to eternal, perfect love. . . . When the infant encounters love he encounters God."<sup>1</sup>

The first experiences of love are intimately associated with the experiences of needs being met: being fed while hungry, clothed while feeling cold, protected while in danger, and comforted while lonely.<sup>2</sup> But sometimes, "man and wife who are not emotionally mature enough for

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Howe, op. cit., p. 83.

parenthood may find themselves swamped by the responsibilities and their own inadequacy."<sup>1</sup> Then, instead of giving genuine love to each other and to the infant, they give things--such as food, toys, money and clothing, even far in excess of casual and ordinary needs. Or, instead of carrying the normal responsibilities of parenthood--such as the child's daily care, participation in his education, or even toleration of his presence in the household--they give him maids, nurses, nurseries, tutors, and highly specialized schools at a distance. In such a case, this child will find himself more "basically related to things than to persons."<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, this person may find it far more difficult to relate easily and deeply to other persons as he encounters them. These are the foundations on which all later life both in the natural and in the eternal order are reared. A child who finds it difficult to relate to his parents will find it difficult in later life to relate to persons, and to God as well. He will love things more than persons.<sup>3</sup>

Love is communicated not merely by words, but more important is the "language of relationship," as Howe puts it.<sup>4</sup> A person has the capacity to love only when he has

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, op. cit., p. 30.   <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-31.   <sup>4</sup>Howe, op. cit., p. 73.

the experience of being loved. The more love he receives, the deeper love he can respond to. God loves man first; His love can invite man to love Him. But if a person lacks the experience of love, he is incapable of responding to God's love. It is impossible for him to enter into relationship with God, unless a radical experience comes to him. It is faith that makes it possible for a person to enter into relationship with God, to be loved by God, and to love God in return.

#### F. SUMMARY

In this chapter a modern psychological understanding of the nature and cause of faith has been discussed. It has been noted that faith operates in what Buber calls the I-Thou relationship. There are three spheres in which the I-Thou relationship may be built. These are: first, man's life with nature; second, man's life with man; and third, man's life with spiritual beings. If a person can enter into I-Thou relationships with other persons, he will be able to enter into I-Thou relationship with God when God confronts him. Man's capacity to enter into I-Thou relationship is affected by his experiences in early life. This study reveals that every man has an "inborn Thou" that makes him feel inadequate until he meets the "eternal Thou." But faith goes beyond man's

sense of inadequacy to his acknowledgement of this inadequacy. A child's satisfaction or disappointment in establishing I-Thou relationship with his parents may affect his capacity to acknowledge God when he encounters Him in later life.

Man's capacity to relate himself to God is also found in the experience of relating himself to his parents in childhood. If a child finds it difficult to trust his parents, to identify with his parents properly, and to love his parents naturally, he will find it difficult in his later life to relate himself to other persons and to God. Therefore, the experience of faith in childhood has a great effect upon one's faith in God.

CHAPTER III

THE NURTURE OF FAITH IN  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## CHAPTER III

## THE NURTURE OF FAITH IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## A. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have explained the nature and experience of faith, so it is now possible to discuss the nurture of faith. It has been noted in the first chapter that faith is a personal relationship with the Incarnate Word. In such relationship, the knowledge of God is revealed and man responds to it by confession and commitment. The second chapter reveals that faith as a personal relationship with the Incarnate Word is understood as entering into the I-Thou relationship with God. This study also reveals that the experience of faith is influenced from early years of life by the quality of interpersonal relationships. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the nurture of faith according to the previous understanding of the nature and experience of faith. Ziegler states that "additional understanding of the nature of the God-man encounter is required to aid in the development of conditions which are more favorable for the nurturing of religious experience."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ziegler, "Psychology of Religion and Religious Education," p. 42.

The first task of this chapter is to provide a ground for the nurture of faith. The major task of this chapter is to discuss how it can take place through Christian education in the spheres of creation, the Bible, the home, the church and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sherrill states:

Christian education is the attempt, ordinarily by members of the Christian community, to participate in and to guide the changes which take place in persons in their relationships with God, with the church, with other persons, with the physical world, and with oneself.<sup>1</sup>

## B. THE NURTURE OF FAITH

If faith is given by God in one lump to man, then the nurture of faith is impossible. Therefore, the meaning of faith as a gift of God must first of all be studied. If faith is not given to man in one lump, the ground for such understanding must be found in the Bible as well as in modern thinking.

### 1. Faith as a Gift of God

The concept of a gift involves three elements: the grant of the giver, the content of the gift, and acceptance by the receiver. The giver must feel free to give and the receiver must feel free to accept; otherwise it is not a gift. That which establishes the relationship between the giver and the receiver is faith.

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, The Gift of Power, p. 82.

When a person gives something to another person, the act of giving and receiving is completed in a moment, but the relationship between the giver and the receiver is an ongoing thing. The giving over of an objective thing is quite different from the giving over of oneself. The act of a husband's giving and his wife's receiving of a diamond ring is completed in a moment; but his giving of his "self" to be received by her "self" and vice versa is an ongoing relationship which is based on faith. Faith is mutual as relationship is mutual. Faith exists between the giver and the receiver. One cannot merely say, "I have faith." He must say, "I have faith in someone," because faith cannot exist alone; it exists in the relationship of one with the other.

Faith as a gift of God must be understood as involving a relationship between God and man. God is free to give Himself in Christ to man by revelation; man is free to accept Christ by response. That which unites God's giving and man's accepting is faith. Without God's revelation, man's response is impossible. Therefore, faith is God's grace, not man's work. Faith is a gift of God.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, although faith is not man's work, man is still responsible for making a decision to accept or to

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<sup>1</sup>Ephesians 2:8.



reject.<sup>1</sup> White comments on such mutuality of faith as follows:

This is emphasized in a remarkable manner in this fourth Gospel. Note that while faith is distinctly declared to be the gift of God, it is most clearly shown to be our duty to believe. Some one has said that "God's commands are his enablings." This is wonderfully true. The man with the withered hand was commanded to stretch it forth. He could not do it, and yet he obeyed the command and did do it. "This is the work of God that ye believe."<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Faith and its Development

Faith is not something "once for all." The Gospel by John reveals that the disciples "believed" again and again.<sup>3</sup> Godet comments on the verb πιστεύειν used in the Gospel by John as follows:

If they receive the witness which is borne to Christ, they are said to believe. If they reject it, they do not believe. If they are partly influenced by it, but yet not affected in the inmost principles of their life, they are described as believing (ἐπίστευον), but not so that Jesus could trust Himself to them (οὐκ ἐπίστευεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς, ii. 23, 24, comp. viii. 31ff.). If they grow in faith, as in the case of the Twelve, they are repeatedly spoken of as believing --the indications of the context being, with each repetition, that the word has a growing fullness of meaning.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See above, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Thirty Studies in the Gospel by John*, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>1:50; 2:11, 22; 6:69; 11:15; 14:1, 11; 16:31; 20:8; 21:25, 28, 29.

<sup>4</sup>F. L. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1883, Vol. I, p. 499.

Godet says that the experiences of the twelve disciples as recorded by John form a "vivid picture of developing faith."<sup>1</sup> White lists the instances of belief and discovers the striking fact of the development of faith. He pursues the different stages of the disciples' faith and concludes with his personal testimony: "The drama of the Gospel by John is being repeated today. All stages of belief pictured by John are in our midst."<sup>2</sup>

Belief has its development and unbelief has its development also. Wesley Arms wrote a thesis on A Psychological Study of Unbelief in the Gospel by John.<sup>3</sup> His study reveals that there are many psychological factors leading to the development of the unbelief of the Jews. His study is based on "the incidents themselves"<sup>4</sup> without referring to the background of the early years of the unbelievers, because John does not provide information concerning the childhood of the unbelievers or the believers. Perhaps it is due to the absence of modern psychological insights or perhaps John does not intend to treat his writing in such a way. He emphasizes the voluntaristic element of faith. He merely points out that the background and the immediate situation of a person may affect his response to Christ.<sup>5</sup> Godet explains that there

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<sup>1</sup>Godet, op. cit., p. 500.

<sup>2</sup>White, op. cit., pp. 96-100. <sup>3</sup>Arms, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 22. <sup>5</sup>Cf. 3:19-21.

is a "psychological relation between immorality, gross or subtle, and unbelief."<sup>1</sup> At this point, modern psychological studies have contributed much understanding to the development of faith.

### 3. Faith and its Communication

Since faith operates in interpersonal relationships, the communication of faith must also take place in the interactions between persons. The communication of faith is mutual. It starts from mutual disclosure: God's disclosure of Himself and man's disclosure of himself. God has disclosed Himself in Christ; if man discloses himself, then the communication of faith takes place. John says:

For every one who does evil hates the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God.<sup>2</sup>

When the Samaritan woman disclosed herself, then communication of faith began.<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that mutual disclosure takes place only when there is revelation. The communication of faith goes on with mutual understanding. Jesus says, "I know my own and my own know

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<sup>1</sup>Godet, op. cit., p. 399.

<sup>2</sup>3:20,21. Underlining added by the author of this study.

<sup>3</sup>4:17.

me."<sup>1</sup> It continues with mutual acknowledgement and commitment. Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."<sup>2</sup> The communication of faith endures with an unending unity; "Abide in me, and I in you."<sup>3</sup>

The communication of faith takes place in a community. One's own I-Thou relationship can help others to enter into the same relationship. Christ is in perfect I-Thou relation with God the Father. Christ's disciples may enter into I-Thou relationship with God because of Christ's I-Thou relationship with God and Christ's I-Thou relationship with them. There seems to have been a certain kind of extension or transaction of relationship, as Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love."<sup>4</sup> The truth of the communication of faith in a community is also revealed in Jesus' prayer:

I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.<sup>5</sup>

This seems to say that if a community is full of I-Thou relationships (i.e., I-Thou relationship with God

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<sup>1</sup>10:14.    <sup>2</sup>10:27,28.    <sup>3</sup>15:4.    <sup>4</sup>15:9.

<sup>5</sup>17:20,21.

and with each other), then another person who comes into this community may enter into the same type of relationship.

It is clear that if one wishes the communication of faith to take place in Christian education, the church members must first have an I-Thou relationship with God and with each other. Second, the teachers must have an I-Thou relationship with the pupils. Sherrill describes the communication of faith by using the term "two-way communication" in contrast with "one-way communication." He states:

This may be one-way communication, in which pressure is exerted by one person to get another to feel or act or believe in a certain way. It is not very probable that the encounter with God will be brought about as a result of the communication. For in this case God is not a Self who confronts us. Instead, we talk about him. He is an object to be discussed. His good qualities are praised, and certain difficulties in his character are ignored. He becomes for all the world like a commodity in the market which we are out to sell in spite of all resistance.<sup>1</sup>

There is a two-way communication regarding God. Here two or more persons truly participate in one another as when, for example, together they face wonder, and share in joy; or as together they face predicament, and share in concern, in despair perhaps, and in release if release should come. As this takes place, communication becomes communion. For in true two-way communication "something happens" which transforms human interaction into a spiritual medium, that is, a medium in which the grace of God is at work, and in which it is possible that God will be perceived

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, *The Gift of Power*, p. 121. The underlining is in italics in the original.

disclosing himself.<sup>1</sup>

However, it must be noted that the communication of faith takes place only when a person himself enters into direct relationship with God. This person's "entering" is out of others' control. Jesus prays: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me."<sup>2</sup> John concludes his presentation of the Gospel with the words: "these are written that you may believe . . ."<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. Faith and Christian Education

Faith has been understood as man's confession and commitment in response to the knowledge of the Incarnate Word that is revealed through nature, through the Scriptures and through the testimony of men and God. The task of Christian education is therefore twofold: to lead persons to the presence of God through the various spheres and to foster their capacity for confession and commitment. It has been noted that man's capacity for

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, The Gift of Power, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>11:41,42. Underlined by the author of this study.

<sup>3</sup>20:31. Underlined by the author of this study.

confession and commitment is affected by the experiences of early life. Therefore, it is better to begin the nurture of faith in childhood. However, according to the understanding of the communication of faith, Christian education cannot control all the conditions to insure that the nurture of faith will take place. Christian education can only "create" the right "atmosphere" so that the nurture of faith may take place.

### C. THE NURTURE OF FAITH AND THE CREATION

It has been noted that the mighty works of Christ reveal the knowledge of the Incarnate Word. Buber also understands that nature is one of the spheres in which man may build his I-Thou relationship. Since creation is one of the spheres in which man can have an encounter with God, the nurture of faith can take place through nature.

#### 1. Encounter with God through Nature

Nature is God's work which reveals God's glory just as the works of art reveal the personality of an artist.

H. B. Philbrook, a scientist, writes:

All the grand affairs of nature call upon man for an answer as to the Author of such wonderful and beautiful orders of creation--All the commodities furnished by nature to people when their use is possible are calling for an answer whether a calculator of people's wants was the Author of the commodity--A creature is brought into being and a person is asked

who created it and what was it for as soon as man is on the earth to see it.<sup>1</sup>

It has been shown that man can have an encounter with God through nature, but while some people are able to meet Him in this way, some are not.<sup>2</sup> This makes the task of Christian education obvious.

## 2. Nurture of Faith through Nature

In the light of Buber's insight into the I-Thou relationship, Christian education should help children to meet things in nature as Thou so that they can ultimately meet the eternal Thou. Modern man has emphasized using things and has neglected meeting things. In order to use a thing, man analyzes it and treats it as an object for his own purpose. In order to meet a thing, man must appreciate it and respond to it with his whole being. Therefore, Christian education should help children to appreciate and to perceive the creation. Sherrill writes:

. . . in the Biblical view the things of nature, in what they are and in what they do, "speak" of God by manifesting his wisdom and power. From a vantage point of this kind, animals, birds, insects, reptiles, flowers, rivers, mountains, winds and clouds, rain and sunshine, and heavenly bodies, to mention no others, all have something to show forth concerning God. The

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<sup>1</sup>H. B. Philbrook, *What and Where is God?*, Chicago, Philbrook & Dean, Publishers, 1887, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 39.



regularity of the seasons testifies to the dependability of God's covenant with man. The convulsive displays of power as in the storm and the earthquake, and the destruction wrought by drought and pestilence, are commonly perceived as messengers of God to express his judgment.<sup>1</sup>

Nature and God are not mutually exclusive. Scientists can discover the laws of nature but they cannot prove that the laws are not set up by God. Christians should help children to relate nature to God while some scientists pull them back. But this is not always the case. Sometimes the scientist observes the power and wisdom of God while the Christian becomes skeptical in the presence of the atheist.

In order to perceive and to appreciate God's creation, creative activities and appreciation of art should be developed. When man develops his capacity for appreciating the beauty and form of works of art, he develops his capacity to enter into the relationship of I and Thou. When children participate in the creative activities of art, music, or drama, their whole beings will be involved in them. They will identify with them and respond to them.<sup>2</sup> The use of creative rhythmic movement and paintings to build up appreciation for the beauty of the human

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<sup>1</sup>Sherrill, *The Gift of Power*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Amy Goodhue Loomis, "The Creative Arts in Religious Education," *Orientation in Religious Education*, ed. by P. H. Lotz, New York, Abingdon Press, 1950, pp. 137-148.

body could also help children and adolescents to have a more wholesome attitude toward the human body.<sup>1</sup>

Christian education may help children to meet God through nature because a child's capacity to relate to nature as It or Thou is greatly affected by the persons who are close to him. Sherrill points out a person's potentialities of relationship as follows:

This means in turn that all his potentialities can be turned away from God and developed in conscious relation only with nature and man, which would complete his conscious and self-determined separateness from God. But it means also that all his potentialities can be turned toward God and developed in conscious relation with nature, man, and God.<sup>2</sup>

#### D. THE NURTURE OF FAITH AND THE BIBLE

Miller states that, "Although God reveals himself to some extent in all history and all creation, the Christian finds a special revelation in the Bible."<sup>3</sup> The Bible presents a concrete picture of the relationship between God and man. Through the Bible, man can encounter God and can enter into relationship with Him.

##### 1. Encounter with God through the Bible

If a man treats the Bible as an It, as merely a

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<sup>1</sup>Robert J. Havighurst, *Developmental Tasks and Education*, New York, David McKay Co., 1961, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Sherrill, *The Gift of Power*, p. 24. Underlinings are in italics in the original.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, *Education for Christian Living*, p. 64.

book, he cannot encounter God through it. If a man treats the Bible as a Thou, as the Word of God through which God speaks, he can have an encounter with God. When a person treats the Bible as an It, he breaks it into fragments and uses it for his own pleasure. When a person treats the Bible as a Thou, he receives it as "the indivisible wholeness of something spoken," and responds to it with his whole being.<sup>1</sup> Then he encounters God who discloses Himself to man in the Bible.

## 2. Nurture of Faith through the Bible

With this understanding of how man can encounter God through the Bible, it is evident that Christian education should help people to respond to the Bible as a whole instead of breaking it down into unrelated fragments. Most of the religious leaders of Jesus' day strongly held the laws and traditions but failed to recognize that to love God and one's neighbor is above all.<sup>2</sup> They concentrated on all the historical facts, but ignored the fact that all the Scriptures were bearing witness to the Incarnate Word. Therefore, when they were confronted by Christ the Incarnate Word, they could not accept Him nor even recognize Him.<sup>3</sup> Jesus pointed out that since they did not

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 7:19-24.      <sup>3</sup>5:39.

get the whole significance of the Scriptures, they could not have "life" through reading the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, many Christian churches today have made the same mistake that the Jews made. Miller has echoed Smart's cry against the misuse of the Bible in Christian education today. He states:

James D. Smart is shocked at the way the Bible has been misused in Christian education. The presentation has been fragmentary, lacking in historical framework and background, based on a false moralism, poorly graded, blind to the strangeness of the Biblical way of thinking, unaware of the variety of literary forms, and unable to present the Word so that it will be heard.<sup>2</sup>

Smart insists that the task of Christian education is to present the Bible to the pupils as God's Word speaking to their present life situations; it is not merely to give information about the Bible. He states:

To teach the Scriptures is nothing less than to undertake the ministry of the Word, and that is to put ourselves unconditionally at the service of God that he may speak through us and through our words and actions. To be ministers of the Word is to be taken into the fellowship of the prophets and the apostles, so that we hear what they heard, see what they saw, and have alive in us the same Spirit of God and the same Word of God that were alive in them.<sup>3</sup>

However, people must be encouraged to appropriate

<sup>1</sup>5:46,47.

<sup>2</sup>R. C. Miller, *Biblical Theology and Christian Education*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>James D. Smart, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1954, p. 152.

the skills and methods of Bible study, so that they can grasp the Bible's intended significance for their lives. Thus, through the Bible, they can communicate with God directly with their whole beings.<sup>1</sup>

#### E. THE NURTURE OF FAITH AND THE HOME

It has been discussed in the second chapter that a person's capacity to enter into relationship with God is greatly affected by his early relationship with his parents. This means that the foundation of faith in God is laid in one's early home experiences. Richard R. Caemmerer reminds Christians that the family which gives and sustains physical life should give and sustain the life of God.<sup>2</sup>

##### 1. Encounter with God through the Home

Jesus' relationship with God is a relationship of the Son with the Father. John reveals that those who have faith in Christ will become children of God sharing the very life of the Son.<sup>3</sup> God is the heavenly Father. The

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Rachel Henderlite, *Forgiveness and Hope*, Richmond, John Knox Press, 1961, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Human Family in God's Design," *Helping Families Through the Church*, 3rd printing, ed. by Oscar E. Feucht, St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1960, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>1:12-18.

earthly father bears an imperfect likeness to the heavenly Father.<sup>1</sup> Through parental love a child can sense God's love, as Sherrill says, "when the infant encounters love he encounters God."<sup>2</sup> Miller, speaking of a child learning of God's nature at home, states, "the mystery of God is a reality in his experience before he can say the word."<sup>3</sup> Howe believes that:

The parent-child relationship is more than an analogy of the relationship of man to God; it is one of the means of God's action insofar as He can indwell and act through it, but it can never be regarded as a substitute for the relationship with God.<sup>4</sup>

There may be a certain "connection between the father complex and the belief in God," but it is hard to agree with Freud that "the personal God is psychologically nothing other than a magnified father."<sup>5</sup> God is transcendent, eternal perfect love while the love of parents is only a "copy," or shadow, as Sherrill puts it.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Luke 11:11-13.

<sup>2</sup>Sherrill, *The Struggle of the Soul*, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, *Education for Christian Living*, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>Howe, *Man's Need and God's Action*, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted by Johnson, *Psychology of Religion*, New York, Abingdon Press, 1959, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup>Sherrill, *loc. cit.*

## 2. Nurture of Faith through the Home

The family is set up according to God's plan for man to experience relationship, so that man can be able to enter into relationship with God. The nurture of faith is the nurture of a right relationship. If the parents are thinking of the nurture of faith in their child, they should first of all examine their own relationship with God and with each other. They should have the experience of God's love, acceptance and forgiveness, because their mutual relationship must be built on the basis of their relationship with God. When the parents have right relationship to God and to each other, they will naturally have a right relationship to their child. In return, the child will naturally have a right relationship to his parents and to other persons and to God.

In building up a right relationship with God and with one another, it is necessary for the members of a family to carry on the various religious activities at home. These may include reading of the Bible and Christian literature, talking about the Christian faith and life, praying and giving thanks to God for everything, witnessing to Christ and going to church together. In all these activities, Christ must be above all.

On the other hand, the religious activities at home are of value only when they can promote right relation-

ships. This means also that religious rituals and traditions must be exercised only when they are related to life. Miller states specifically as follows:

The most important thing about Christian family life is the quality of its fellowship. This is more significant than any religious routines, any teaching about religion, any Bible study, important as these things are. It is good to have grace at table, family prayers, and reading from the Bible, but it is notorious that these can have a negative effect when the relationships are already spoiled by lack of genuine Christian love.<sup>1</sup>

Sherrill traces the root of the quality of family relationships to parental adequacy. The parents' own growth, their marital relationship and their parenthood, all will affect a child deeply.<sup>2</sup> No wonder Feucht so emphatically quotes Wesner Fallaw that, "the problem of adequate Christian education is really the problem of educating parents and, in fact, the entire adult body of the church."<sup>3</sup> This leads to a discussion of the nurture of faith through the church.

#### F. THE NURTURE OF FAITH AND THE CHURCH

When one thinks of Christian education he thinks

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. Miller, *Christian Nurture and the Church*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>Sherrill, *The Struggle of the Soul*, pp. 25ff.

<sup>3</sup>Oscar E. Feucht, ed., *Helping Families Through the Church*, St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1960, p. 93.



of the church school; but the church is more than an institution for religious instruction. The church is God's community for the nurture of faith, because "religious instruction is not to be equated with Christian nurture." Miller says, "Unless religious instruction is supported by a community which lives by the truths taught, it may be both useless and dangerous."<sup>1</sup> Christian nurture can take place in the church not merely because of its instructional function, but because man can encounter God through the church.

#### 1. Encounter with God through the Church

The church is a community of those who bear witness to the knowledge of the Incarnate Word. Christ is made known through the church.<sup>2</sup> Smart writes:

God reveals himself to persons that through them he may become known to yet other persons, and the church is the fellowship of those persons to whom and through whom God is making himself known.<sup>3</sup>

Through the experiences of group life within the church, the child is developing his concepts of the nature of the church as the "family of God."<sup>4</sup> In experiencing

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, *Christian Nurture and the Church*, p. 2f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 17:21.

<sup>3</sup>Smart, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Ziegler, "Psychology of Religion and Religious Education," p. 41.

love and acceptance in the fellowship of the church, the child encounters God.

## 2. Nurture of Faith through the Church

The nurture of faith takes place in interpersonal relationships. So it can take place in the church not because the church gives information about God, but because the church reveals God through the Christians' person-to-person relationship with God and with each other.

Miller writes:

Christians have been called into fellowship with Jesus Christ and with one another, and within this community they know themselves as persons in relationship with God and with each other. In such a relationship Christian nurture takes place.<sup>1</sup>

Faith is not nurtured through proof of God's existence. God's existence cannot be proved<sup>2</sup> but must be revealed. God is revealed in the fellowship of the church. Henderlite says that "the church is the instrument through which the revelation is communicated to the world."<sup>3</sup>

The term "church" has two implications. It refers to the "holy catholic church" which includes all those who have a relationship with God regardless of time and place. It also refers to the local congregation which is a group

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, Education for Christian Living, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup>Buber, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Henderlite, op. cit., p. 41.

of people who have relationship with God and with each other. This group may have a minister, a staff, a building and educational programs.<sup>1</sup> God is revealed in His relationship with His people both in the holy catholic church and in the local church as well.

When the knowledge of the Incarnate Word is revealed through telling the testimony of Abraham, Jacob, Peter, Paul or Luther, one may respond to it by entering into relationship with these persons and by identifying with them in their relationship with God. Thus a way is opened that another encounter with the Incarnate Word may take place. The task of Christian education is not merely to tell stories about the people of God, but to guide children to enter into relationship with the people of God so that they may also enter into a similar relationship with God. When a child enters into relationship with the people of God, he will identify with them. From seeing their inadequacy he recognizes his own inadequacy; from seeing their dependence upon God's sufficiency he learns to depend on God also. Their experiences of trust, of identification, of love may become his. If this takes place, the nurture of faith takes place.

However, a child's capacity to relate to the his-

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<sup>1</sup>See Miller, *The Christian Nurture and the Church*, pp. 7ff.

torical situations is based on his experience in his immediate situations. Unless the child experiences the same thing in the local church and in his own home, the chances are that he will not be able to enter into such relationship with the people of God in the holy catholic church. Henderlite points out that the church must acknowledge its own sin and must accept its ministry of grace and all the activities of the church should be set up to reveal the various aspects of faith. They should be evident in all Christian education programs, in the worship service and sermons, in administration of the sacraments and in the various group meetings. She also says that the church must carry on its responsibility to trust in the reality of new life, so that Christians may live in forgiveness and freedom. When children and adults enter into the fellowship of such a local church, their faith may be nurtured.<sup>1</sup>

#### G. THE NURTURE OF FAITH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is the work of the Holy Spirit that makes God's revelation to man possible. Even in the days of Jesus Christ, the people were confronted with the Incarnate Word face to face. Without the revelation of the Holy

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Henderlite, op. cit., pp. 59-94.

Spirit, true knowledge of the Incarnate Word was impossible.<sup>1</sup> Iris V. Cully points out the work of the Holy Spirit as follows:

The Holy Spirit can transform every area of life and make it new. Because of this work, the Apostle Paul can say, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him" (Rom. 8:28). "Spiritus Creator" describes God present and active in the lives of persons, uniting them with Christ and with one another in the fellowship of the church. He is the bond uniting the Creator with his creatures, bringing human wills into glad surrender to the purpose of the holy God.<sup>2</sup>

Hence it is understood that the work of the Holy Spirit has made it possible for man to build his relationship with the eternal Thou in the spheres of his life with nature, with other men and with spiritual beings.

Miller understands that the Holy Spirit works through illumination, persuasion and regeneration. By the revelation of the Holy Spirit, the confrontation between God and man takes place. However, man is free to make his decision for or against Him or to postpone it.<sup>3</sup> Howe says that "The content of our faith was born of God's action and man's response-- a divine-human encounter."<sup>4</sup> It has been noted that man's response is greatly affected by his

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. 14:25,26; 15:26; 16:7-15. Also Matthew 16:16,17.

<sup>2</sup>Iris V. Cully, *The Dynamics of Christian Education*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1958, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, *Education for Christian Living*, pp. 68-70.

<sup>4</sup>Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

capacity to enter into relationship with a Thou and that such capacity is fostered or decreased by his early experience of interpersonal relationships. However, when the Holy Spirit works, His enabling can also greatly strengthen man's capacity to respond to God.

#### H. SUMMARY

This chapter is a discussion of the nurture of faith in Christian education in the light of the foregoing understanding of the nature of faith as man's confession and commitment to the knowledge of God's disclosure of Himself. Thus faith as a gift of God is understood as God's giving over of Himself to man in Christ by grace and man's response to Him by acceptance. The giving and accepting are a continuing process; so faith has its development. The development of faith involves a continuing interaction of persons by which faith is communicated. In this way, Christian education can lead people to the presence of God and can prepare people to respond to God. However, the real communication of faith takes place only when there is revelation.

God reveals Himself through the creation, the Bible, the home and the church all by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The task of Christian education is to help children to appreciate and to participate in the things

in nature so that they may encounter God through them. It has been shown that the Bible must be presented as a whole instead of as unrelated fragments. It must be relevant to one's own life situations. The presentation of Biblical facts alone is not enough to help children respond to God with their whole beings. The home is the essential unit in which a child's capacity to enter into relationship with man and with God is fostered. It has been discovered that religious activities are of value only when they are promoting right relationships. Thus, the parents' own relationships with God and man are essential. The parents' relationships are fostered through religious activities at home but more often their relationships are promoted through the fellowship in the church community. The church fellowship is therefore the center for the nurture of faith both of the parents and the children. God reveals Himself through the church and the church must respond to God with genuine confession and commitment. The church is the divine instrument for the nurture of faith because it is the community where the Holy Spirit works. It is clear that the nurture of faith takes place by the revelation of the Holy Spirit in a community where people interact in a right relationship with God and with each other.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION



## CHAPTER IV

## GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As stated at the outset, the purpose of this thesis has been to acquire an understanding of the nurture of faith in Christian education in light of the Gospel by John. The motivation for such a study has been twofold: to claim the possible continuity between biblical theology and the nurture of faith, and to help Christian leaders and parents to realize their tasks and to carry out their responsibilities.

The procedure was, first, to obtain a biblical understanding of the nature of faith according to the Gospel by John. This was done by first-hand inductive study. Then according to the scheme set up by the first effort, the contemporary understanding of the experience of faith was explored. These truths concerning the nature and cause of faith, and the nurture of faith were discussed in the light of modern educational principles and further insights into the communication of faith found in the Gospel by John.

In the first part of this thesis essential truths were gained from the Gospel by John in regard to the nature of faith. It has been noted that faith in the Incarnate Word is the essence of the Gospel. The object

of faith is not a proposition nor a set of ideas, but the Person Christ. John presents the threefold nature of faith: faith as knowledge, as confession and as commitment. The knowledge of faith is God's personal disclosure of Himself in Christ as revealed by Jesus' mighty works, by various individuals, by the Scriptures, by God the Father and the Holy Spirit. These testimonies are not meant to prove something, but to reveal the Incarnate Word so that people may make acquaintance with Him. The Word is eternally existent and in union with God the Father. The Word is the creative agent and the source of life and light. He has come into the world to reveal God's love and acceptance of every man. This knowledge is not to be apprehended merely by man's intellect but is to be responded to with man's whole being. Having such acquaintance with Him means having faith in Him.

When the knowledge of the Incarnate Word is disclosed, man will respond to Him by acceptance or rejection. He who accepts Him is willing to expose his own insufficiency, recognizing his own physical needs, physical infirmity, moral problem or mortality. Then he will acknowledge that Christ is sufficient to meet all his needs. He will commit himself to Christ, trust in Him, identify with Him and abide in His love. Hence Christ will impart to him the eternal life which is new existence,

full of joy, love and freedom. Then he relates himself to Christ and grows in living out the Christ-like life. He will manifest Christ's love in his daily living so that people will see Christ in him. When Christ is disclosed through Christians, people will have knowledge of Him, will make His acquaintance and will enter into the same relationship with Him that the Christians have. It is clear that faith is the expression of a right relationship between man and God and between man and his brothers, all through Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word.

In the second chapter, the contemporary understanding of the experience of faith was explored. The study reveals that modern psychological thought tends to explain the operation of faith in what Buber calls the I-Thou relationship. It has been noted that the I-Thou relationship is perfectly expressed in the Incarnate Word. To enter into the I-Thou relationship is the same as to enter into the relationship of the Incarnate Word with God. The spheres in which man may enter into I-Thou relationship are three: man's life with nature, man's life with men and man's life with spiritual beings, because God discloses Himself in these spheres. However, man's capacity to enter into I-Thou relationship with God is greatly affected by his childhood experiences. If a child is greatly disappointed in his struggle for self-

adequacy, he will find it difficult to admit his inadequacy and to acknowledge the adequacy of God and other persons. If a child finds it difficult to trust, to love and to identify with his parents, he will find it difficult to relate himself to God and other persons. This means that the experience of faith in childhood may affect a person's capacity for faith in God and other persons. Without the experience of faith, a person will not even understand the language of faith; then communication of faith will be difficult.

The third chapter was based on the understanding of the nature and cause of faith as discovered in the preceding two chapters. First, faith is man's confession and commitment to God through knowledge of Him revealed in His work, man's life, His Word and the Holy Spirit. Second, man's capacity for confession and commitment is affected by his childhood experiences. Thus in the third chapter, it was discovered that the nurture of faith may take place in Christian education. This occurs in two ways. First, people are led to the presence of God through the creation, the Bible, the home, the church, all by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Second, the right "atmosphere" and "climate" of interpersonal relationships are "created" so that a person's capacity to enter into relationship with God and other persons may be

fostered. It has been discovered that a person may be led to the presence of God through the creation by his appreciation and participation. The Bible is more important as an instrument of God's revelation, but it must be apprehended as a whole and seen in its relevance to life situations, so that the learner may respond to it with his whole being. Religious activities at home may aid in the nurture of faith, but they must promote right relationships in the family. The church is the essential instrument for the nurture of faith, but this must be a community within which Christians know themselves as persons in relationship with God and with each other through the redemption of Christ. For the church to have such a relationship, it must depend upon the work of the Holy Spirit.

In concluding this study, it has been understood that when the nurture of faith takes place in childhood, it occurs in the "atmosphere" of the right interpersonal relationships in the home and in the church fellowship through the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in Christian education the teachers must have a personal relationship with God and a person-to-person relationship with the pupil. The skills and methods of transmitting knowledge are necessary, but they must be considered as aids to achieve person-to-person communication so that

the pupil may be led into direct relationship with God. It is hoped that this thesis will give aid to Christian leaders and parents so that the nurture of faith may take place. For he that has faith in Jesus Christ shall have eternal life.

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