

# *A Theological Perspective for Christian Educators: Five Theses*

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1. *A Christian educator's philosophy of education should be an integral part of his Christian theology.*

The purpose of this essay is to seek a perspective in which the concepts "Christian" and "education" are integrated with one another to provide a useful outlook for Christian educators. It is possible for Christians who operate or teach in church-supported schools to separate the two aspects. We are familiar with the case of Communist schools in Hong Kong which at times have clearly appeared to be more concerned about propagating Marxist or Maoist ideology than about fulfilling the aims of education as such. In an analogous way it is possible for devout Christian educators to understand their primary purpose in teaching or in operating church schools to be that of communicating the Christian faith and tradition to the pupils. In other words, education as such would be regarded chiefly as an opportunity to fulfill a higher goal, namely, the salvation of the individual students through confession of faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, however, this viewpoint represents a reduction of both the vocation of being a Christian and the vocation of being a teacher.

On the other hand, it is equally possible for Christian educators to be solely concerned with education as such and to lose the benefit of a specifically Christian approach to education. Their Christianity and their work as educators are entirely in separate compartments, in theory if not in practice. Such persons feel that it is wrong to use education as an opportunity to proselytize but fail to see how Christian faith, as distinct from Christian love, has any bearing on their philosophy or practice of education. The result is again a reduction both of the understanding of education and of the understanding of Christian faith.

Another possible position falls between these two extremes. Many Christian educators feel the responsibility to provide first-rate education in terms of academic

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excellence and at the same time feel the responsibility to expose their students to the biblical tradition of Christianity. This middle position does not represent the golden mean, however, because Christian faith or, more specifically, Christian theology and philosophy of education are still not integrally related. The two compartments of "Christian" and "education" are merely juxtaposed, and both suffer because of the separation. The Christian educator still does not have an understanding of his vocation which integrates both his responsibility as a Christian and his responsibility as an educator. Education remains one thing and Christian faith another. The two are not logically connected, and both are reduced by the absence of the other.

Education which does not issue from a comprehensive view of life and reality either pursues aims which are undesirably limited, such as when academic learning is the sole aim of teaching, or else it may serve unexamined purposes, as is the case when so-called Christian schools achieve only the ends of secular or humanistic education. Conversely, Christian faith which does not see the place of education in its view of life and reality is too narrow in scope. If religion is understood as a total scheme of orientation around which a person's life is organized, then it should include a theory of education within the total scheme. A Christian educator's systematic and practical theology should include the general aims and ethics of his educational work.

*2. God is the personal Creator Spirit, the loving Father of all human persons and in Jesus Christ the revealed criterion and living power of all human spirit. God created man in his own image. Therefore, man is personal spirit and the fundamental aim of education should be the development of individuals as persons. The Christian criterion for this development is the Spirit of Christ.*

What does our belief about God imply for education? Our belief about God determines our belief about the nature and being of man and this, in turn, determines our theory of education, which is one of the basic functions of man. We say that God is the Creator, the Father of all men, the Personal Spirit who indwells and yet transcends all that is, the One whose Word includes the rationality of the universe. As Creator who continues to create, he accounts for the being and potential that man has. We believe, further, that man's potential reflects some of the characteristics of God, notably his personal and rational being. Man, in fact, can be defined as the creature who is a person. It is possible then to say that the fundamental aim of education is the development of individuals as persons.

Man is a person because of his spirit. In this respect he is like God, who

is personal because he is Spirit. Human beings have spirit and personality and freedom because they are created in the image of God, who is the free, personal Creator Spirit. Human spirit consists in the peculiar ability man has to transcend himself, that is, to stand outside himself, as it were, and look at his own thoughts and actions analytically before freely deciding what to think or do according to his chosen norms and criteria. Man's spirit is his capacity for self-transcendence, self-creativity, and self-integration.<sup>1</sup> To be a person is to be not entirely determined by one's destiny but, rather, in the circumstances of one's destiny to decide freely what one will stand for and against. One's ultimate concerns or ultimate norms of action determine the characteristics of one's spirit or personality or faith. A person's spirit is the integrated expression of that person's power, values, and ideas. A mature person or mature human spirit is one who is integrated to a high degree so that a large percentage of his actions and thoughts are consistent with his deepest beliefs and values. Freedom, understood as the capacity for decision on the basis of chosen norms or values, is directly proportional to maturity. Education, in the light of this understanding of man, is the intentional development of persons to become integrated, creative, mature, and free human beings.

Some philosophers of education have arrived at similar theories of education without the explicit theological orientation. Philip H. Phenix offers the following definition: "Education is the process whereby persons intentionally guide the development of persons."<sup>2</sup> Robert Ulich holds that "the purpose of education is to make man humane—that is, to tune his mind and soul in such a way that he becomes eager to draw into his development all that makes his and his fellowman's life rich and creative, and so capable of truth, love, and justice that even sacrifice may be preferred to desertion."<sup>3</sup> The term "person" is not explicitly mentioned in this definition, but the quality of humaneness and the terms love, truth, and sacrifice are exclusively the property of man as a person. This is sometimes argued on strictly humanistic grounds, but Christians hold this to be true because the Creator is personal and he has made man in his image.

As Christians, we believe that Jesus of Nazareth more than any other person fulfilled the potential of human personhood. Christology has traditionally employed the concept of *logos* to explain that Jesus embodied not only the fulfillment of humanness but the substance of God himself. The concept of spirit, however, may yet prove to be even more adequate for Christology than the *logos* concept. If man and God are understood primarily in terms of the reality of spirit, then the identity of human and divine Spirit in Jesus constitutes the criterion of all human spirit and, at the same time, the decisive revelation

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of God's Spirit. This cannot be fully developed here, but it can be claimed even on the basis of the traditional *logos* Christology that Jesus Christ is the criterion of what is fully and truly human. Moreover, the Spirit of Christ is not an abstract criterion of human spirit but the living power of all human spirit. The *logos* of Christ has traditionally been regarded as both the criterion and actual rationality of man and the universe. Similarly, the Spirit of Christ which St. Paul identifies with the Holy Spirit<sup>4</sup> is both the criterion of humanness and the power that makes man what he is, namely personal spirit. The Christian educator, therefore, can look for the reality of Spirit effecting the development of his students as persons and can look to Jesus Christ as the criterion of personal development.

*3. God loves every person and through his Spirit works for the fulfillment of all. Therefore, the Christian educator's primary responsibility is to guide the development of his students as human beings before turning his attention to the ultimate question of converting his students to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.*

The sanctity of each human individual is derived from the fact that God loves every person. Because of the One whom Jesus called our Father, every human being has the fundamental status of a valued, beloved identity within the total context of reality. The fatherhood of God implies the brotherhood of all men. This is a basic premise in a Christian view of education.

If God is concerned not only about the development of Christian persons but about the development of all persons, then the Christian educator should have a similar outlook. Thus, Christian education is first of all education that is aimed at the well-being of the individual students simply as persons regardless of their state of religious confession. It is more truly Christian for educators to strive first for the development of every individual person in their schools than it is for them to give chief concern to the conversion of the students to the Christian religion. Many Christian educators may sense this to be true but may not explicitly confess it as part of their Christian belief. Without specific confession of this belief, however, a Christian educator's goals may be cloudy and unclear. On the one hand, he may sense the basic justice of being equally concerned for the development of all his students as persons, and he may tend out of love to be so concerned. But on the other hand, he may feel that his chief responsibility as a Christian is to convert his students. The result of his lack of integration may be an uncertainty and ambivalence that undermines and weakens both his concern for the development of all his students as persons

and his concern for their conversion to the Christian religion. Neither thrust will be wholehearted. The essence of education on one hand and the essence of being Christian on the other are both reduced if the Christian educator does not explicitly recognize what his primary purpose is in God's service, namely, the development of each student as a person. Christian education, like God's rain, should fall on the just and unjust alike. This is to the glory of God and the fulfillment of his purposes.

It needs to be seen clearly that having the conversion of students to the Christian religion as the primary goal of Christian education is a reduction of the meaning of "Christian" as well as a reduction of the aims of education. To be Christian and to stand in the tradition of the great prophets of Israel is to acknowledge the fatherhood of God over all men and to acknowledge the priority of the category "man" over that of "Christian" or "Israelite." The prophet Isaiah described the breadth of God's concern in an extraordinary blessing of Yahweh in which he says: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage" (19:25). Amos portrays a similar breadth of God's activity and concern in Yahweh's rhetorical question, "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Capthor and the Syrians from Kir?" (9:7). The book of Jonah ends with the powerful plea of God to Jonah: "And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left?" (4:11).

Jesus' understanding of God's mercy and power was certainly not narrower than that of any of the prophets. He was concerned about individuals as persons with human needs and human potential. Race, nationality, status, and other categories that mark the divisions among men were not considered by Jesus to be of determinative significance as far as the exercise of God's mercy or his own were concerned. The early church in the witness of several new Testament authors described the power and function of Christ in most universal terms: "The true light that enlightens every man" (John 1:9); "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17); "for whom and by whom all things exist" (Heb. 2:10). We cannot deal fully here with all the evidence of God's and Christ's universal presence, but enough has been mentioned to indicate the truth of the claim that a Christian should think first of the relationship of God with all men before thinking of the more specific relationship that is possible between God and the men who confess the name of Jesus Christ. It is more to the glory of God and of Christ for a Christian to acknowledge that God and Christ, inseparable, are involved and active in all men before all men come to the point of explicit confession of Jesus' name. This fact implies

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that a Christian educator can and should be concerned first about the working out of God's purposes for education as such and for schools as such before turning his attention to conversion understood as confession of Jesus' name. This does not mean that "education" and "Christian" are separated into separate compartments. On the contrary, education is viewed in the context of God's purposes for man as revealed in Jesus Christ. Education in this way is seen to be integrally a part of a Christian outlook on life and humanity.

4. *Education can be regarded as the preparatory stage of an individual's history of salvation. As such it can include elements of conversion and salvation as defined by Christian criteria. The preparatory stage has its own valid objectives, but ultimately it points to the stage of fulfillment, the eschaton of personal development.*

Although personal development of students is the primary aim and concern of Christian educators, the question must be asked, "What about conversion?" Perhaps the most difficult question for a Christian educator is this question whether or not he has any responsibility to try consciously to lead students to believe in Jesus. If he decides that conversion is not his responsibility, it seems as if one important stage, perhaps even the most important stage, of personal development is being deliberately excluded from his educational efforts. This is difficult to reconcile with the Christian educator's belief that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life," and the corollary of this belief, namely, that students may be fulfilled as persons in a unique way if they accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. On the other hand, if one decides that converting students to Christ is definitely one of the Christian educator's responsibilities, the problem arises of how to relate this responsibility both in theory and in practice in the primary responsibility of guiding the personal development of students regardless of what faith they confess.

In spite of its difficulties in both theory and practice, the latter position is surely the preferable one for a Christian educator. It is simply inadequate for a Christian educator to separate his work as an educator from his mission as a member of the church. If he believes that trusting in Jesus Christ is the right way to live, he cannot divorce this belief from his educational philosophy or practice. He must find a way of integrating his Christian faith and his educational concerns. It has already been suggested that the Christian concern for all human beings as persons provides the theological basis for saying that the primary responsibility of a Christian educator is to guide the development of his students as persons. The crucial problem now is to relate an understanding of conversion and salvation to this primary task of education.

A possible solution may be found in the concept of the history of salvation. In the history of salvation, either of the people of God or of one individual person, there can be seen to be a preparatory stage and a stage of fulfillment. The work of God's Spirit in developing the Hebrew people under the Old Covenant can be regarded as primarily for the sake of those people themselves, but it can also be regarded as preparation for the establishment of the New Covenant. The primary purpose of God in saving the Israelites in their various historical circumstances was not in conflict with his ultimate purpose of preparing for the advent of Christ in the fullness of time. Both purposes were operative in God's relationship with the Hebrew people. This preparatory stage in the biblical history of salvation had its own inherent and valid objectives. We study the prophets and the Old Testament history not only because of a handful of prophecies about the Messiah but because we believe God was acting in the history of the people of Israel and can be encountered again in the study of that history. God's acting in history to reveal himself to the prophets and to save his people was in one sense an end in itself, but in another sense it was pointing forward to the stage of historical fulfillment which was realized in Christ.

This concept of a preparatory stage in the history of salvation can be applied beneficially in working out a theological perspective for Christian educators. Education can be seen to constitute mainly the preparatory stage of an individual student's history of salvation. Like the preparatory stage of the biblical history of salvation, education is a developmental process in which the activity of God's Spirit achieves certain objectives that are ends in themselves but which anticipate a stage of fulfillment that can be called eschatological.

The primary purpose of a Christian educator in developing his students as persons need not be in conflict with the ultimate purpose of leading the students to an explicit recognition of the glory of God in Jesus Christ. Both purposes can be operative in a Christian teacher's relations with his students even though the primary purpose predominates. Education deals mainly with various aspects of the development of students as persons because it is, in fact, the preparatory stage of a person's history of salvation. This is not to say, however, that salvation, or even conversion, belongs only to the stage of fulfillment. Like the preparatory stage of the biblical history of salvation, education can include elements of conversion and salvation as defined by Christian criteria. Let us look first at the elements of conversion and salvation included in the development of persons before considering the matter of eschatological fulfillment.

If Jesus thought in terms of conversion, it was in terms of the whole person being redeemed. Salvation is a potential for the whole human person, not merely an operation for salvaging man's soul after death. Jesus, true to Hebrew

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psychology, regarded man as a person in which body, mind, heart, and soul were inseparably united. In Jesus' view human life is an indivisible unity. Conversion means a radical reorientation of the whole unity of life, and salvation means fulfilling the purposes of God for every part of a person's life. Conversion does not consist in the mere confession of a certain formula for belief, and salvation does not consist in a merely technical change in a person's status in the eyes of God. God sees much deeper than this and judges man in terms of the real fulfillment of his purposes for each person. This is seen very clearly in Jesus' parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32 and in the account of the judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. In each case judgment is based on what the person actually does rather than only on what the person says.

The implication of this for Christian educators would seem to be that we, too, should have a similar outlook toward those whom we teach. Conversion and salvation as the aim of Christian educators and one purpose of Christian schools should be conceived as functions of the whole person, consistent with the stated purpose of education, namely, the development of individuals as persons. A person's "reorientation of the whole unity of life" (in other words "conversion") may be a gradual process of development in which gains, so to speak, are made in some areas of life and thought, but the explicit repentance and confession are not made until much later or perhaps not at all in the person's lifetime. A person may develop in his "fulfilling the purposes of God" in his life to a great extent without knowing that he is achieving salvation in the judgment of God.<sup>5</sup> A Christian educator can and should regard all the development of all the persons taught in his school as fulfillment of God's purposes for those persons and as reorientation that God will mark in his judgment. In this way, everything that a Christian educator does for the betterment of his students is seen in the context of God's work of saving and redeeming his people, who include those who have confessed the name of Jesus and those who have not.

The reorientation that constitutes conversion has a specific content for Christians. Conversion and salvation according to the Christian way are marked by a distinctive essential feature, namely, that the direction of the person's ultimate concerns is outward rather than inward. Conversion implies turning toward others as well as turning toward God. Salvation implies service for others as well as service for God. Anything that a person does in genuine service represents a measure of salvation. Any degree to which a person is turned toward the needs and well-being of others represents a degree of conversion. Thus, for example, training in good citizenship which includes concern and awareness of social problems and issues is fundamentally in line with the Christian aims for conversion and salvation. All students in Christian schools should be encour-



aged by precept and example to understand the fulfillment of their personal destinies in terms of service to others in society. The essence of the Christian way of living is that self-fulfillment is inseparable from self-sacrifice. Whether or not students of Christian teachers come to the point of explicit understanding and acceptance of the Christian religion, their education should nurture their development as persons turned outward rather than inward.

Personal development according to implicit Christian criteria includes other aspects besides the essential reorientation outward toward others. In his book *Purpose in the Curriculum*, Professor Stanley Nisbet suggests six aspects of personal development: physical, intellectual, aesthetic, social, moral, and spiritual development.<sup>6</sup> For the Christian educator these several aspects can all be governed by Christian criteria and can represent various aspects of salvation understood as the fulfillment of God's purposes for a person. For example, intellectual development aims for the open, honest, and humble approach to knowledge that a Christian should have in the light of his belief that God is the author of all truth and that the truth shall make man free. Moral development is the development of a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Physical development should be understood in the light of the Christian affirmation of the goodness of the material world. Aesthetic development should refute nihilistic art and aim for creativity that is meaningful. All the aspects of personal development together contribute to the development of the student's spirit that makes him the kind of person he is. In every aspect of personal development the *Logos* who became flesh in Jesus Christ is the implicit criterion.

The objectives of education as the preparatory stage of a person's history of salvation can be summed up in the concept of maturity of spirit. Spirit includes every dimension of a person's being. One's decisions and values reflect the whole of one's self, even one's physical constitution. It is the maturity of one's whole self that education aims to achieve. However, especially important among the aims of education are the development of good judgment and responsibility. Alfred North Whitehead in *The Aims of Education* said that "the essence of education is that it be religious." He explained further what he meant by a "religious" education:

A religious education is an education which inculcates duty and reverence. Duty arises from our potential control over the course of events. Where attainable knowledge could have changed the issue, ignorance has the guilt of vice. And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity.<sup>7</sup>

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One may question some of Whitehead's ideas but still agree that education is fundamentally a religious matter dealing with duty and reverence and, one must add, other personal qualities such as belief or hope or love that derive from duty and reverence or from the One in whom duty and reverence are grounded.

The reverence of which Whitehead speaks is akin to one of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, namely, humility before the deepest questions of human existence, humility that comes from the knowledge that the absolutes of God's truth are held by men only in the earthen vessels of human faith and that no man can claim for his own formulations of truth the absolute veracity and adequacy that are the providence of God alone. Kierkegaard wrote powerfully in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: "There always lurks . . . in a man, at the same time indolent and anxious, a wish to lay hold of something so really fixed that it can exclude all dialectics; but this desire is an expression of cowardice, and is deceitful toward the divine." Professor Robert Ulich, who quotes these words, concludes by saying that "it is one of the great and difficult responsibilities of the schools . . . to develop in their pupils the critical sense of doubt without taking away from them the capacity of faith."<sup>8</sup> Spiritual maturity as the primary goal of education includes the ability to think critically as well as to make courageous commitment of faith.

This brings us to the question of leading students to an explicit understanding and acceptance of Jesus as the Lord and Savior of life. I have called this the ultimate purpose of a Christian educator as distinct from the primary and predominant purpose of guiding personal development toward maturity. The explicit trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior represents the stage of fulfillment in an individual's history of salvation. It can perhaps best be described in eschatological terms because Jesus, to be seen in proper perspective, must be understood in eschatological terms. It is widely accepted that the reign or kingdom of God which Jesus preached as the goal or last stage (eschaton) of God's relationship with man was both realized in Jesus himself and is still to be realized in the future. In one sense the kingdom had already come in Jesus, but in another sense it is right to pray "Thy kingdom come." The stage of fulfillment in the biblical history of salvation was inaugurated by Jesus, but its final completion was still to be anticipated in the future. The same can be said about the stage of fulfillment in an individual's history of salvation. The explicit acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior inaugurates the stage of fulfillment in the person's life, but at the same time there remains a goal of complete fulfillment in the future. The "last stage" in a person's development begins with belief in Jesus as the eschatological Lord and Savior.

Entry into the eschatological community of faith is the beginning of the

stage of fulfillment for a person because the relationship with God that constitutes faith is the key to fulfillment of human spirit. This relationship does not necessarily imply a highly mature state of personal development any more than the preparatory stage of the history of salvation implies a necessarily immature level of personal development. But the relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ is a channel through which the Spirit of God moves to create true values and increasing integration of a person's spirit. The opening of this channel is the "last stage" of a person's history of salvation even if it begins in childhood or youth. It can coexist with the gradual development of personal maturity toward the fulfillment of God's purposes for the individual concerned. It differs from the preparatory stage in one's history of salvation, however, by reason of its explicit relationship with the creative and redeeming Spirit of God. To know and love the Source of one's being and the Giver of all good things is the last stage in a person's history of salvation. In a sense, therefore, even the least in the eschatological kingdom of God are fulfilled in a way in which the persons in the preparatory stage are not.

Thus, it is unthinkable that Christian educators should leave this last stage of personal development out of account in their vocational self-understanding. To do so is implicitly to deny the eschatological significance of Jesus and possibly to deprive students of the chance to develop in an explicit relationship with God through Jesus Christ. In principle, therefore, the Christian educator should be committed to lead his students to belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior. The crucial question is, "How can this be done in a way that is ethical and consistent with the Christian teacher's educational philosophy and theological standpoint?"

*5. Education carried out by Christian educators should include some programs that are explicitly Christian in content, but, in order to be ethical and consistent with the Christian educator's theology of education, these explicitly Christian programs must be invitational, not compulsory, for the students.*

First, why should Christian educators present Christ only as an invitation? The main theological reason for this conclusion is that Christ himself is a gift from God, and for his gospel to be offered to people as a gift or invitation is therefore consistent with the nature of the gospel itself. It is incongruous for Christians who acknowledge the grace of God in Jesus Christ to make the knowledge of this grace compulsory for others. This fact, however, does not imply that parents should not teach the meaning of Jesus to their own children. Just as there is validity in parents taking responsibility for their own children in infant baptism, so parents are rightly responsible for the religious education of their

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children up to the time when the children are old enough to decide their faith for themselves. The invitation that Christian educators give to learn of the gospel of Jesus must sometimes, therefore, be given to the parents, whose responsibility it is to decide what religious tradition their children must learn. In situations where the students have already reached the age of independence from their parents, Christian programs, including worship, should be offered to the students themselves always as an invitation rather than as a required activity. It scarcely needs saying that any degree of hidden compulsion in which unrelated benefits or threats are attached to participation in Christian programs should be scrupulously avoided. Whatever means a Christian teacher uses to teach the Christian faith, it is certain that these should not in any way be a practical contradiction of the meaning of the Christian faith itself. In other words, the teaching program should itself embody the Christian way and be marked by Christian virtues such as honesty, humility, love, and respect for the freedom of others.

Because of the practical difficulties of presenting the Christian faith to students in an ethically desirable way, it is not uncommon for Christian educators either to compromise their ethics by proselytizing in unjust ways, or to avoid the danger by ignoring the responsibility to lead students to accept Christ as Lord. It is necessary, therefore, for a Christian educator to be explicitly committed to finding ways of offering the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ to his students. We need to ask ourselves: "What is being offered to our students that will enable them to see the meaning of Jesus Christ and explicitly commit themselves to him?" At the very least there are three general possibilities that should be considered by Christian educators as means of sharing the gospel of Christ with students. The first is teaching the content of the Bible. Christian teachers should ask if and how this is being offered to their students. Can it be done as part of the curriculum of the educational institution? Or would it best be organized on an extracurricular basis? In any case, is Bible study being effectively done? What approach to the Scriptures is being demonstrated in the biblical courses offered? Does this approach enable the students and teachers to hear the living word of God for their lives? If questions like these are not being asked by Christian educators, it is difficult to see how their responsibilities as Christians and educators are being adequately met.

In some Christian traditions like Eastern Orthodoxy the liturgy has been the principal means of teaching the faith to successive generations. In any case, apart from the teaching aspects of worship it is also a means of grace whereby a person is regularly reoriented toward the Lord of his life and progressively integrated or sanctified by the ultimate norms or values which command his obedience. Personal development can be powerfully supported by knowledgeable

participation in the sacraments and other Christian worship. The central Christian symbols and sacraments epitomize and embody the essence of the Christian way of conversion and salvation with the implications of turning toward others and serving. Thus, baptism is an ordination for mission and ministry as well as a mark and medium of God's acceptance of the individual into his service. The Lord's Supper is, among other things, a participation in the intention of Jesus that his followers, like him, should be "for others" even to the point of self-sacrifice. Because the sacraments and other worship can be so effective in teaching faith and developing integrity, a Christian educator must ask, "How can adequate opportunities for worship be offered to the students?"

Finally, at the present stage in history it seems clear that Christian educators must consider the teaching of other religions as part of their Christian responsibility. Modern communications expose most people to the traditions and thinking of most other people. The newly created proximity between peoples of different traditions requires mutual understanding. How can a Christian be a good neighbor to a person of another faith if he does not have some knowledge of that person's religious and cultural background? Christian educators should lead the way in providing their students with the necessary understanding to live responsibly and peaceably in a "global village." For Christian educators to teach other religious traditions in a respectful way may be a powerful means of demonstrating the essence of the Christian way itself. It may also help students to see the Christian tradition in clearer perspective and to achieve a degree of spiritual maturity that might not otherwise be reached.

## NOTES

1. For a helpful analysis of Spirit, see Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III (University of Chicago Press, 1963), Pt. 4, sec. 1, a, b.
2. Phenix, *Philosophy of Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1958), p. 13.
3. Ulich, *Philosophy of Education* (New York: American Book Co., 1961), p. 89.
4. Cf. Rom. 1:4; 8:9; II Cor. 3:17.
5. Cf. the question of the righteous in Matt. 25: 37-39.
6. Nisbet, *Purpose in the Curriculum* (University of London Press, 1957), p. 14.
7. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 25-26.
8. *Philosophy of Education*, p. 87.