



Transcriptions

Agenda for Christian Education: Making Christian Education a Strong Field of Education Ted Ward

Annotation: *NAPCE/NADCE Conference, Pasadena, CA, 1982.* After offering hope for the future of the professional field of Christian education, Ted Ward suggests specific themes as an agenda for NAPCE/NADCE and the field for the next several years. (NAPCE is now SPCE, the Society for Professionals in Christian Education. See <http://spceonline.org>; see <http://www.nadce.com> for information about NADCE.)



The development of God's people is the ever-renewed evidence of the power of God. There is no less grand a theme than this which must underline and backdrop everything we do in the field of Christian education. I'm going to be dealing in this session with the matter of continuing education [unclear phrase] and the need for continuing to develop our competencies and our abilities, our insights, our understanding, our skills, yes; but, more particularly, our grasp of what it means to be involved in that ever renewed evidence of the power of God.

When I first began working in the field of Christian education again after so many years in secular education where the good Lord had put us, in his own best judgment and providence, a leading that we didn't understand because we had assumed that the career that God had before us would lie distinctly in the peculiar field of Christian education. And after the number of years that it took for us to somehow discover what God had in mind, I began dealing more explicitly with Christian education problems. And one of the things that I discovered as I was speaking and doing

workshops is that God's people loved to be reminded what they're not doing. One way to perceive me and my contribution here is with the model of a kind of sadomasochistic indulgence in which I tell you what's wrong and you moan and say, hit us again; it hurts so good. That's one way to read it. But God spoke to me about that kind of playing into people's needs some time ago and I have tried to quit that and I have tried, in every case, to balance a criticism with a suggestion. Unfortunately, since they've given me four time slots in this program, I'm not going to balance that carefully each one of them so it's possible that any one, including this one today, might come off over-balanced in the direction of criticism and concern. But taken as a whole, I hope that you will see something of a tapestry woven from four different perspectives. These are not sequential talks. They could almost be given in any order. But they are far more than a sadomasochistic kind of thing in which I'm simply trying to recite what we're doing wrong and all the dirty linen of the field.

Now it might be that there's a second model of my presentation which would get closer to the truth. Some of you remember the old story of The Emperor's New Clothes, and many, many people were so willing to applaud that the emperor took his parade in his finery and only one small naïve child said: Hey, he ain't got no clothes on. It's quite possible that after a four sessions of raving and ranting, some honest individual here might say: Hey, he ain't got no clothes on. It's altogether possible, but I hope, in the providence of God, that it would not be true because I am thinking from a heart of seriousness and concern. But I can't ask you to believe that. I can ask you instead only to evaluate, to reflect, to think. I rarely apologize for asking people to think. In fact, many times people say I enjoyed being asked to think. And I take that as a great compliment. I'm going to ask you to think and, as the Scripture would suggest, that you weigh out the spirits and hold tight to that which is good; but be very ready to throw away that which is not.

There's a third model of perception of what I'm trying to do and I think it's even closer to what I'm trying and how I see it and it's from another child's fable that has to do with what happens when you go into the woods: you leave a trail of bread crumbs and hope the birds don't get them. One person wondering in this woods along with you is attempting to leave a trail of bread crumbs so we can find our way out into what might be seen as a more promising era for our discipline and field in Christian education.

I think, in my own view of the times and my own eschatological perspective, I believe that this is a time for the people of faith and love to not only be manifesting that faith and actualizing that love, but this is a time for us to come forward with yet another of the three great ingredients that are summarized in 1 Corinthians 13: the ingredient of hope. If there's anything that distinguishes the Christian community today, especially since the '60s when the secular society discovered love, it is this component of hope. Everybody puts faith in something. Our faith is particular; our faith is peculiar as Christians, and our faith is well-founded. But we are not uniquely the people of faith. If you don't believe that, read Fowler. Clearly, we are people of hope if we take ourselves and the gospel of Jesus Christ seriously.

We need to talk of change because people of hope have to think in terms of things being different. All is not well. All is not well in the general society—that hardly needs reiterating—but I think we might even say: all is not well within our academic field and within our discipline and within our work in local churches as Christian education people. Within that context, we need to ask questions like what needs to change, who needs to change, and how can changes be made.

I'd like to backdrop the rest of what we're going to do this morning with a Scripture that perhaps you have never thought of in the context I'm going to use it. It's the 1 Corinthians chapter 14 material on tongues, for heaven's sake. As I read the problem at Corinth, I see the function of tongues as symbolic of a class of problems that has forever and always beset the church: the dissonance between a spiritual emphasis and an intellectual emphasis, and the danger that results when there become imbalances between a spiritual and an intellectual concept of the development of the people of God. I don't propose to get into the issue of tongues except as Paul gets into it: to identify that there are some transcendent concerns regardless of the particular of the tongue: "Pursue love," Paul begins in 14:1, "yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, and in his spirit he speaks mysteries." Spiritual, but over-balanced. "But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification," for feeding, intellectual, rational, capable of building – "edification and exhortation."

That is encouragement and support in the realm that sometimes we call the "emotional," the "affective," and "consolation." Again, comfort and hope in the affective. "And one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but one who prophesies edifies the church." Verse 7: "Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air." Verse 12: "So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. Therefore, let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful."

Notice this: spirit, mind imbalance. Nowhere does the Apostle Paul ever recommend purging those things which have a spiritual edification, even when they lack an edifying communicable dimension. But Paul persists, in this whole section, to bring back into focus both a spiritual and a rational cognitive function of the development of the people of God. "What is the outcome then?" 15, "I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also." And he puts it together in the 20th verse, "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes." You don't need to experience everything. You can remain undeveloped in evil "but in your thinking be mature." And in 40, "Let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner."

A strange text perhaps but a backdrop for the four sessions in which we try to wrestle with the problem that educators in the service of the church always confront, and that is the relationships between the spiritual and the intellectual and other facets of human development.

As I see it, our purpose in these days is to look at our own development in the particular ministry that God has put us that we might seek for a restored relationship ourselves between mind and spirit and that, in the consequence, it may renown to the glory of God and to the strengthening of our field in Christian education. The theme today in one version—the earliest version of the program—is called An Agenda for Christian Education and I hope to end this session with some very specific suggestions about some themes that would constitute a sort of an agenda for one or another or both of your organizations for the next several years. But I want to begin the substantive portion by looking at what our grounds of hope are and what some promising guidelines that that

hope would allow; maybe in reference to the development of the field that we are so concerned with.

It is quite possible that, in our time, we may be able to rehabilitate the concept of profession. There is a great ambivalence in the field of Christian education about whether Christian educators should be or should not be professional. In fact, there is even in the theological field, in general (our parent discipline) something of an ambivalence over the same language. And what we find is that there is an attempt—which somewhat violates Matthew chapter 23’s injunction about attempting to change reality by renaming it—a resistance to the notion that the pastor is a professional person. It does not follow at all that by ceasing to call a profession a profession and a professional a professional, you’re really going to change his behavior one iota. The issue is not whether or not we are a profession or see ourselves as professionals nearly so much as it is what kind of professional and what kind of profession. There is a legitimacy in profession. It does not follow that servants cannot be professional. In fact, one of the things that makes England so elegant is that they still, to this day, nurture and maintain a professionalism in service that assures a high quality of servanthood; not just a well-meaning-ness in servanthood. I submit that because of this ambivalence with regard to the notion of profession and professional, we’ve thrown out the baby with the bathwater. In fact, my working title for this series was “Of Babies and Bathwater.” We decided it wouldn’t look good on the program, but you get the idea. The rehabilitating of a concept of profession would be to take much more seriously what it means to have a profession and whether or not we want one; and if we decide we don’t want one, to realize what blight this puts us under.

Second, I think there is a source of hope in the development of a stronger discipline, especially the knowledge base of the discipline. As a watcher from the side of the road, I am disappointed over and over again with what emerges as our knowledge base in Christian education. There is relatively little that represents a well-dialogued knowledge base in the field. And, by the way, we’re going to re-re-opening some of these themes as we go along in the other lectures today and just weaving the basic structure of our tapestry.

The third source of hope is that ultimately we might be in a position to influence our parent discipline, theology, especially theological education, in the direction of taking better account of the creature. I feel that we are in a blighted situation because the field of Christian education exists. It allows the field of pastoral development in theology to bypass the crucial material on the nature of the creature. I’m impressed that homiletics in so many of our seminaries is concerned with effective delivery to television cameras. The issue, I submit, is much more the issue of, what is the human being like and how does the human being process what is experienced and what is heard. I think that this particular impact on theological education right now is unlikely, but it could happen. It will happen, however, only if Christian education merits being listened to within the larger field of theological education. And God knows, there are some messages needed.

I’d like to share with you some guidelines that might help us in this trail of breadcrumbs out of the woods. There are three of these. The first is from the Attributes of a Profession. The second will be a Holistic View of Human Development, and the third the Pursuit of a Reforming Theology; but one at a time. There will be four of these sub-points. I will deal with them one at a time. As I see it, when we ask the question, what would make Christian education a strong field of study, we have to seek guidelines somewhere. One of the possibilities is to seek the guidelines that come from the attributes of a profession. The fact that I’m dealing with theological issues as the third in this sets of

guidelines does not mean that I see it as third in importance. I don't argue for any priority of these. This one, however, I think serves as an adequate backdrop to see the whole problem.

The attributes of a profession have been very well studied. One of our problems in the field of Christian education is that we tend sometimes to avoid the literature of other fields, especially if we're not dead sure that Shakespeare was a Christian. And specifically in contemporary research literature, if we haven't done it over again we can't possibly be interested in what Kohlberg had to say. There is that kind of 'me, too' problem that says, you know, they've done it, but we can't believe it 'til 'me, too' has done it. We'll talk about that in a subsequent lecture. Myron Lieberman and other sociologists, particularly epistemologists and sociologists of knowledge, have looked at this question of what constitutes a profession and I would give you something of a set of four common denominators across that body of research. The first component of a profession is a discernible knowledge base. One of the reasons I'm so anxious in our own field about the quality and substance of our knowledge base is that I don't think you can have a profession without it. And a knowledge base is not so simple as passing back and forth the recent paper on this or that technique or methodology or practice that we happen to have lucked into in our creative wanderings. We need a much better, more substantial focus on the discovery and expansion of our knowledge base through the discovery of new knowledge.

One of the problems, of course, in a discernible knowledge base is that it has to be rooted in something. So much of the presuppositional thinking in Christian education is limited to the presuppositional thinking in theology which, in the final analysis, presumes that everything knowable has already been revealed. The only issue is to massage it a little more; re-write it again with a little different set of footnotes, and through another analytical paper come out with fresh quote "research" unquote. I submit that that is adequate only in very limited fields of history and very limited fields of theology; certainly not even the whole of theology. But that model of research dominates our colleges. It even dominates, God help us, our Bible schools. It dominates to far too great an extent our theological seminaries, and it certainly dominates the shape and form of theological literature. The analytic paper rehashed for the 4,000th time with some trivial new insight in order to justify republishing the thing gets to be pretty tiring. It is absolutely inadequate for a field concerned with a dynamic society such as we live in today. There has got to be a tap into the empirical. There has got to be a clear-cut way to draw upon new data about the realities in which people find themselves if we are to take seriously the notion that Christian education is a ministry field.

The second of the guidelines for a profession is an identifiable social purpose. A profession never exists apart from an identifiable social purpose. Some analysts use the word "identifiable" and "unique" social purpose. One of the problems, again, here in the field of Christian education is that our purposes are generalized to the point where they are almost interchangeable with the purposes of anyone else in a given congregation. Other than the fact that you don't have to work at the gas station or the oil company or the bank or someplace else, and you're drawing your salary from a church base, it's sometimes very difficult to differentiate clearly the special unique social role that is played by the Christian educator in the local parish. And sometimes I wonder if the same fog does not exist with reference to what the professor of Christian education is all about. I do believe that it is possible to develop a very clear notion of the social purpose of the Christian educator, but I submit that if we do that it will deal with something very different from the notion of managing programs. I don't think there is any way to magnify *program manager* into a profession, and that may

be part of the rub because many of us are hired essentially to be program managers. I don't think that will ever convert into a true profession. It may be a very worthy livelihood, but so is knitting.

The third element of a profession is a body of distinctive knowledge and skill. Now this is different from the knowledge base. This is concerned with the knowledge carried by the practitioner. What is it in terms of particular knowledge and particular skills that distinguishes the member of our profession? Here we suffer under the problem that for many years this field of Christian education was basically a voluntary field increasingly utilizing—as most of the society used for volunteers—unemployed women; quite often mothers and others who were not employed because you don't pay women. And the field of Christian education really emerged into a women's profession; a profession that I think of in categorical terms, with no particular intended humor, as the function of the nun. When the function of the nun in Protestantism became an educated class, namely when seminaries and Bible colleges put in courses in this field, it moved away from the volunteer and moved inevitably toward men. And we see, then, a situation in the field—without ever really redefining that body of knowledge and distinctive skills—of shifting from a period we might call “the nun period” into what now exists: the male nun period. And part of the problem is that if a person in Christian education gets out of the role of male nun, then he is seen as a threat to the priest, sometimes called “a pastor.”

We have got to take much more seriously what are the peculiar knowledge and skills that distinguish a person who is competent and well educated in the field of Christian education. Now I believe that there is a high overlap between this body of skills and knowledge and that of the pastor. As a matter of fact, I believe that one of our problems is that, as I suggested earlier, because the field of Christian education became labeled, it became possible to separate away from the pastoral role many of those tasks in the development of the whole people of God which once were clearly pastoral tasks. And what we have in this era of mechanization, industrialization, and efficiency is more and more emphasis on narrower and narrower specializations until we have the rather exhausting situation in many churches today of having a separate pastor of singles, the unmarried, old married, gerontology, you know, whatever; and God bless them for having a vision for some of these areas especially areas—some of which I just mentioned—which have been largely ignored. But I really wonder what happens when we split up the pastoral responsibility to the point where the only thing that a pastor can really look forward to any more is a larger radio audience.

The fourth component of a profession, and the last in this series, is a commitment to effectiveness and a means of regulation. You are surely aware that, in the large public professions: medicine, law, architecture, engineering, etc., there is within each of those professions a means by which people of that profession police the profession. Now in most of our states there is also added to that the force of law which allows that profession not only to self-police but, in effect, to be required to do so and to give an account in public. Some professions give an account in public. At any rate, in virtually every substantial profession, there has emerged over time; not because anybody said that in Hezekiah 5:9 it says, thou shalt do so, but because in the emergence of human society it has become apparent that there needs to be a regulation from within the profession of what do we mean by effectiveness and what standards of excellence are appropriate. To far too great an extent, this field that we represent here has been, in the final analysis, both overlooked and victimized by the only policing bodies that have ever really effectively gotten into the matter of theological education, namely the accrediting association which tend to presume institutional qualities above personal qualities. And it's not surprising, then, that we have our programs evaluated in the course

of standing for accreditation. But we have very little concern about that kind of evaluation that would come from systematic surveys and analyses of alumni of those programs.

Furthermore, we are living in a period when the field of Christian education is becoming very, very transient and the tenure within Christian education is dropping to the point where it's almost ludicrous. And part of the reason for this is that persistent complaint that much of what was provided in the training has so little to do with the reality of the need in the situation that many people get into that situation and find themselves very uncomfortable. Now I submit that until this field takes seriously the notion of an effectiveness criterion and the development of means for identifying effectiveness that we will be stuck with that kind of a problem and transiency will be ever, ever with it.

The second of our set of guidelines is what I have called in rather suggestive terms, perhaps not as explicit as this first one, A Holistic View of Human Development. One of the more hopeful evidences in our time is that there is becoming awareness in many fields of education and certainly in Christian education that we no longer are teaching kiddies who bring their minds to Sunday school and leave their bodies parked in the hall. We are dealing with whole people in whole contexts. I believe that one of the reasons why this holism has become realized and actualized is such an organization as Christian Camping International.¹ I am a warm advocate of the camping education movement and for good reason. I think that within the whole of Christian education there are relatively few sectors that have moved into the whole of human development as effectively as the camping people. Interestingly, they do this quite often from a relatively low base of academic preparation. Within the sectors of Christian education you'd have to call them, overall, one of the least thoroughly or least well-educated in terms of degrees and credentials. But, as a matter of fact, they seem to have a sense that they're dealing with real people and that helps. It seems that there may be some rather inverse relationship between advance degrees and awareness of people.

In looking at three aspects of this holistic view that I think is beginning to affect us constructively within the field of Christian education is the restoration, really, of the centrality of the spirit as a matter of more than just good rhetoric. It's all well and good to say but you know man is a spirit. There's quite a different thing to say now let's see, what are the aspects of human beings that we have to give account of? Oh, yes, physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and moral. And oh, we must have left out one, surely we did. Oh yes, spiritual: one more aspect of human development. What distinguishes us from our secular colleagues? We add in the sixth finger: spiritual. I submit that that's a very, very shoddy view and does not get much support from biblical teaching. The human being is not a composite of six aspects. The human being is much more like the hand. Add those five fingers as you will, it does not add up to a hand. Those five components of the hand that you can see there hanging out are, in fact, just that: they're the components that are hanging out. They are the components that you can get hold of. You can get hold of physical development. You can get hold of intellectual development. You can get hold of emotional development. You can get hold of social development. You can get hold of moral development. They're hanging out—what I call the empirical aspects of person. But what holds them together is that they are part of a reality that has a nucleus, a core, and that nucleus or core exists in all people. In spiritual reality, the core exists.

¹ Now, Christian Camp and Conference Association

The Scripture in theological categories refers to it as a dead core for the unredeemed, but it's there. The new birth awakens that core and makes it possible for the finest sort of articulated holism among those pieces. Everything we do educationally works through one or another or a combination of those parts that hang out. If you don't believe that, go to Sunday school and find the people pump on this finger: intellectual development. We have presumed so much that the gospel, in this time of individualistic salvation, to be essentially a matter of subscribing to a set of verbal propositions; that our evangelism is verbal going through a rational, cognitive kind of an approach concerned that people know.

Now the Bible teaches that we should know. Again, as we go back to the theme text in 1 Corinthians 14, the relationship between the spiritual and the mental is very much at our concern. But we are, like the Greeks of that time, in a culture that is glorifying the intellectual, and it becomes very easy for us to simply 'me too' that emphasis and ignore the rest of the human being. Now thankfully God has raised up, in our time, a whole series of ministries of helps. Praise God for it. And it is becoming much more recognizable in the local parish that the ministry to the whole people of God involves emotional development, involves social development, and even, God help us, involves moral development now and then when we really take seriously that it's not good enough to know what the Bible said. In the more Hebraic sense we've got to be walking the Word of God.

The second aspect of this hopeful guideline series is the biblical relationship among knowing, doing, and being. Now those of you who are Greek scholars know that there's a problem in here that this way of dividing it is very much a product of Western thought and mostly a linguistic process of cultures that are particularly close to ours. But nevertheless it helps, at least for us, to think through the fact that our education historically has not carefully balanced and related these functions of *knowing* objectives from *doing* objectives from *being* objectives. As we have 'me, too'd' in the last few years this movement toward more and more technology in education, we have I believe borrowed even more heavily from a technological model in order to replace a classical model. Now let me just give you this as a kind of an index to the problems. I see three types of education related to that guideline. Each one of these is a different kind of way of putting together the objectives of knowing, the objectives of doing, and the objectives of being. Classical education puts a big know, k-n-o-w, see it. A big know and then asserts a little 'be.' If you know these things you will *be* a certain way. This is very Aristotelian: that what you are is a product of what you know. So then education has to be concerned classically with the dominant concern about 'to know' and a minimal concern ultimately for 'to do.' It's presumed that somehow the doing will take care of itself way down there somewhere so we, even in that model, put it in parentheses without ever asking the question of should. What should be demanded in the parish and what should the response be? In other words, the technological tends to use a lot of empirical focus and tends to make a lot of pragmatic conclusions. I submit that even evangelical seminaries today have gotten into this business to a dangerous extent in which *knowing* is simply to facilitate a *doing*, and the *doing* again is presumed to ultimately to add up to a *being*; but you really don't ask much about that.

I'm depressed as I work in workshops with seminary faculties so predictably you start talking about the development of Christian communities among students and faculty and sooner or later somebody says it, we really don't think that's important. They can do that when they get out. And I keep pointing out that most of the people that they are dealing with as students have never been in a true Christian community and they won't have the foggiest notion what to look for when they get out. But here we are concerned about *knowing* in order that people can *do* things like *leading* in Christian communities.

There is a third way of looking at things and, of course, it's possible to exaggerate the goodness of this third model, but I think in many respects it's a more promising model. It has its problems, too. It's a more holistic model and, by the way, if you persist in spelling holistic with a w-h that's fine. More people understand it that way anyway. *Can you put that transparency up again?* I sure can. Yeah, the holistic or the third of these of these models where the *knowing* and *doing* are seen as an interaction. This is sometimes called the praxis interaction, the *knowing* and *doing* interaction; that one never *knows* apart from the *doing*.

Now if you're familiar with the epistemology of the of the Greek and the epistemology of the Hebrew, you're aware that this is closer to a Hebrew view of knowledge than it is to a Greek view of knowledge. And I submit that it's ultimately, for my taste and more biblical to think that way, that knowing is not ever testable by testing information. Knowing is testable in terms of the walk, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We get this in the Psalms and the Proverbs and we also get it clearly in the Epistles.

Being, however, is the ultimate concern. What sort of a person—what is this person in a relationship to God? What is this person in a relationship to fellow man? So, then, *knowing* and *doing*, as a praxis, becomes part of that being; and the being then, particularly, determines what among the doing capability is really done. Which then tells us why, in Matthew 25, the ultimate judgment, the 'judgment of the nations' is symbolic of a judgment in which the issue is not what do you know to do, because clearly the sheep and the goats both knew to do, but the distinction was what are you doing. And the sheep were doing without being highly conscious of it, and the goats were doing nothing until they were sure that they were doing it for the right cause. I submit that's a lot closer to evangelical tradition.

Back to the guidelines. The second set, third element, the development of understanding in the context of praxis. Now those of you who are familiar with literature from various fields of theological writings are aware that the Catholic literature today just can't get beyond page three without talking about praxis. Well, you know, we've got to be careful about this because if the Catholics are using the word, we surely don't want to. Something we learned from the McCarthy era is that communists eat broccoli and ever since then good Christians have avoided it. I think we've got to be realistic. There is a sense of awareness growing today that knowledge for knowledge's sake is not only dumb but not even very workable. There is a concern for experience and involvement in the action context; that's what's involved in praxis. Our praxis is at the heart of Christian service. We cannot learn Christianity apart from service. We cannot reduce Christian values to propositions without distorting them. Christian propositions are learnable only in the context of service. I wish we could get that through our heads. We know the biblical validity of that, but somehow we keep trying to skirt it and come back to it so that we can give better tests. I don't know how you test some of these things, but I do know that there are things more important than things we know how to take: tests. That ought to be a humbling concern. As we begin today to use more and more education in experience, we have a far greater chance of improving the quality of our field.

The third set of guidelines is drawn from the Pursuit of a Reforming Theology. By that I refer to the affirming of a creational foundation in theology. One of the most serious problems in the field of evangelical theology is a warfare over particulars of Creation methodology while systematically not taking seriously the implication of Creation. I am absolutely sick to death of debate over the technology of Creation. I think we have had enough already. The issue is, what does it mean to begin with the presupposition, "In the beginning, God . . ." For one thing, it says that

everything we come in contact with in the Creation has in it the handiwork of God, blighted by sin but nevertheless the handiwork of God, and it can be understood to be the handiwork of God; and as we study it, we come closer to a grasp of what God has done. A Creational theology is concern for the effectual study of the Creation. It strikes me as being rather insulting to know a composer of a piece of music and to introduce him to our friends as the composer of a certain piece of music which in the quiet of our heart we realize we've never heard, never learned the words to, and really don't care a lot about because we're too busy introducing our friend. I submit that we do the same thing with the Lord of the universe: we ignore the very thing that was his magnum opus, the sixth day creature, the human being. And the human being in person and in society can be studied. Hence, a creational theology, a foundation in Reforming theology, is concern with the involvement of God with that creation. In person and in society, the issue is redemption. If we somehow could become the people of Creation and the people of Redemption, we could get our act together theologically. It would require a deeper respect for the natural Creation. It would lead to a deeper consciousness of the incarnation and it would exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. It would carry a deeper respect for that coupling of Adam's sin/Christ's redemption, and we would be able to put things more clearly into their perspective instead of throwing a sin consciousness all over the place and then blocking ourselves out from careful analysis of the nature of personhood and the nature of society simply because we alibi it and say well, it's 'under sin' anyway. Sure, it's under sin anyway. So are the roses; so are the stars of the heaven. The whole Creation groans and travails until the day of its redemption. It's not a peculiarity of man to be under sin. I get so sick and tired of the willingness of theologians and theological people to go to the God of Creation and talk about the stars and the sands of the seashore and to shy away from man because, after all, man's under sin. Now that's theologically sloppy stuff.

Society. First of all, it would require a recognition that the church *is* a society. It is a peculiar company of people. It is a particular society and it is impacted by all the dynamics of human society. The church is people in combination, in social structure, and I submit that one of the reasons that we have churches flying apart left and right and the reason we have marriages flying apart left and right is because in this day of hectic society we don't understand the dynamics of society well enough to know how to hold things together. Where are we as redemptive people? And second: It would lead us to a recognition that the church is in ministry to society and if we are in ministry to society, we are obligated to grasp the meaning of that society and deal with its reality.

Let me bring this back round to some kind of a focus now. I had promised in this first session that we would get so far as to setting forward some kind of an agenda. These I see to be promising objectives for the field of Christian education. And there are five of these. First—and this is under way, thank God—push out the walls and bend the clocks. How many of you remember Salvador Dali's paintings of clocks? He had the idea that clocks are to be hung on clotheslines and warped around. Warp the clock, bend the clock, push out the walls, and let us get beyond this fixation that Sunday school is a place and a time. Let us get into the lives of people and get outside those sterile conditions in which we attempt, in ridiculously short pieces of time and absurd physical locations, to try to help people grasp something of the grandeur of God. It makes me sometimes weep to look at the context in which children are asked to come together for one startling hour a week and contemplate the meaning of God. Awful. Where is God's universe? Yes, it's in there, too, but it's in bad shape in there.

One of my concerns is the field of nonformal education and one of the things we believe in that field is that schools are okay, but schools are limited. That's what the field is really all about.

There is an awful lot that people learn in deliberate experiences, plans, staff, sometimes even salary that are outside the four walls of schools and those are sometimes far more rich experiences. Where are we in Christian education? Here, again, the camping people have the vision.

Secondly—this is also going on, thank God—learning is for kids? No, learning is for everybody. We'll talk more in another lecture about what damage has been done by preoccupying ourselves with kids. There's a real hazard in preoccupying yourself with kids. We'll talk about that as we go along, but people are more aware today than I think ever before in the field of religious education that learning is for everybody and we can break loose from this fixation on children.

Third, professional preparation is lifelong. This is probably closest to slogan as anything I've got up here. But your theme of this conference is continuing education and that's what you're here for—one more of a lifelong series of stretching, growing, developing experiences for yourselves. I'm keenly aware of some of the contexts in which the DCE's particularly work. I'm aware of some of the blood, sweat, and tears that go into it. I'm sympathetic to some of the limitations because of the perceptions that are held in local congregations. I know them well. And I know your context and I feel for you. And that's one reason why I think we have to work *with* the congregation; not just *on* them, but *with* them to grasp the idea that there really is a professionalism here and there really is a growth potential and there's really something to gain from a conference other than a chance to go to California and visit the Disneyland's of the West.

Fourth, we need to be continuing the Reformation. The leadership issues are next. As I see it, Martin Luther left a number of things off his thesis on the cathedral door; that if we were putting it back up there today, we'd put up there. One of them is the issue of nuns and priests, and we have that problem, by the way, in evangelicalism. We have our class of nuns, both the male and female, and we have our class of priests. Leadership issues were not squarely addressed in the Reformation. If you don't believe that look at the Lutheran church and the Baptist church. One has it at a high level of organization; the other slips it in the back door, but it's there. I can say that because I'm a Baptist—not a Baptist, but a Baptist.

The second of the leadership issues that never has been squarely faced, and we're about to see being faced in a grand way, praise God, is the clergy/laity issue; a most intriguing extra-biblical notion. Do you believe in the offices? Yes, I believe in the offices, but I notice that they are distributed. There are all sorts of invalid dichotomies and non-biblical hierarchies floating around and this is the time to say down with the big daddy model of servanthood; up with truth. A high view of Scripture demands a high view of truth. The Quakers are the only group that I ever really got closely acquainted with that were convinced that this was so: that the issue of truth and truthfulness from person to person was the ultimate sober test of the Christian-ness of the person and of the community.

We need to be more explicit about things. We need to be more forthcoming about things. We need to be more honest in every respect about things and, ultimately, we have with its own valid proof text Matthew 23.