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MORAL EDUCATION REVISTIED: TRENDS IN TEACHING RIGHT FROM WRONG

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Introduction

There are many debates in education today, but perhaps none evokes more controversy than the teaching of morality in the schools. The debate concerns not only how we teach it but should we be teaching it? Should morality be the concern of the schools or is this a societal problem that more rightly belongs in the domain of the family, the church, the police, the courts, the media, or even the culture? Actually moral education is a hot potato that no one wants to take responsibility for and its failure is often described as part of the malaise of our time. In any case, it is clear that the problems of teenage crime, violence, pregnancy, substance abuse, suicide, and lack of purpose for Generation X have become major concerns in North American society.

In this essay I would like to present a short history of moral education in North America during the last century, review changes that occurred during the 1960s, critique current methods, and then make suggestions for improving how we teach morality in the home and in our schools. Although morality can be taught as a secular subject, this issue is important in terms of a Christian education because how we make moral choices may be a clear measure of our true spirituality.

History

One hundred years ago character education was the mainstay of teacher training programs and the focus of classroom instruction. *The McGuffy Readers* presented stories at graded reading levels whose main purpose was to teach a specific moral at the conclusion of each story. Most stories were also meant to be read aloud with dramatic emphases to further make their points. Curricula in North America originally presented a Christian worldview such as people asking for God's help in making right moral choices, however, this has gradually shifted to increased secularization with an emphasis on the autonomous individual (Van Brummelen, 1994). The respect given to authority figures such as teachers was considered paramount and deportment grades were as important as academic ones. Teachers themselves were considered as models for deportment for their pupils (Lickona, 1991; Kilpatrick, 1992).

Character education uses the assumption that people are not naturally good and

that attaining such goodness is hard work. Even St. Paul in the Bible laments, "The good I want to do I don't, while the evil I don't want to do, that is what I do." From a traditional point of view, the main way to counter a lack of will is through the development of good habits. An effective character education would be to encourage habits of honesty, helpfulness, and determination to the point that they become automatic. In that way, one would not need to debate a course of action when the time came. The ancient Greeks and Romans used the terms virtues instead of habits, which originally meant something like our word for strength. These virtues were taught by identifying with and imitating someone who alreadypracticed them, such as a warrior-hero or statesman. However, worthy models were not always easy to find so additional models were drawn from legend and history. This model of forming one's character through the example of outstanding models was the first meaning of the term humanities. It is important to remember that for the Greeks, a democracy was only meant for virtuous people. Far from limiting our choices, habits and virtues enhance them by given us power over our actions. Choices informed by moral values are far different from the compulsive and addictive behaviors now common among young people (Kilpatrick, 1992).

Reasons for the decline of moral education often start with the well-known Hartshorne & May (1928) studies at Yale University. Results indicated that honest or dishonest behavior is highly variable and mostly determined by the degree of risk involved in a specific situation, and not by some consistent internal moral personality trait. They concluded with a doctrine of specificity which discouraged the idea of character training, although later analyses of the data did find some evidence for a more general character. Other possible sources may have been the philosophical movement of logical positivism in the 1920s which made a fundamental distinction between facts and values, along with the personalism of the 1960s which celebrated the worth, dignity, and autonomy of the individual person and the inner subjective life. Morality was privatized and made to seem a matter of private choice and not public debate. Any constraint on personal freedom was regarded as an intolerable restriction on individuality (Lickona, 1991).

Reform

Moral education, or what used to be called character development, went through a reform starting in the early 1960s. Probably as a result of fears of indoctrination used by the Nazis and Communists to train their youth, post-war educators decided to strip moral education of its emotional appeals in favor of "critical thinking" or "rational strategies." Educators felt the freedom to experiment since most st udents were well-behaved at that time and there was a belief in natural morality that was little influenced by culture. It was an era not only of free speech but also of much

political upheaval in which culture was seen more as something to be ashamed of rather than transmitted. Educators tried to have students make their own decisions without indoctrination and to discover values for themselves (Kilpatrick, 1992; Lickona, 1991; Ryan 1994).

By the 1960s most teachers were being told that the seeds of moral wisdom and ethical values lay within the students themselves and that the teacher's role was to be that of a morally neutral facilitator. Two different models developed from this approach. One was called "Values Clarification" which evolved from humanistic psychology such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow while the other, called "Moral Reasoning" evolved from cognitive psychology such as Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. Values Clarification emphasized nonjudgmental attitudes used by therapists and equated values with feelings. Moral Reasoning used ethical dilemmas in which right and wrong behavior depended on the ability to give a solid argument for how you behaved. In each camp there are no absolute standards of right and wrong. In the former you make decisions based on what feels right for you and in the later you have to be able to rationalize your decisions.

Sources for these two methods may have come from two philosophical movements in the 18th century. Values clarification is similar to the Romantic movement which elevated emotion and irrationality, along with the nobel savage concept of Rousseau. Moral reasoning is similar to Rationalism which held that the exercise of reason is the only basis for belief and action, along with Kant's ideas that moral order can be based on self-regulation of the individual person (Lickona, 1991).

By the 1960s children were no longer reading heroic literature and role model imitation was discredited since it might engender inferiority feelings. Popular books for young people such as the *Judy Blume* series have main characters learn to just accept themselves and not try to change. Slogans of the day suggested that narcissistic self-centeredness was normal and told teenagers to get in touch with their feelings or look out for number one (Kilpatrick, 1992).

Many educators and psychologists were interested in expanding the concept of self-awareness of personal feelings, or what was loosely called affective education. Just as the Age of Romanticism was formed to counter the excesses of the Age of Reason, the non-directive nature of humanistic psychology was considered an attractive alternative to the strict determinism of psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Discussions of feelings such as used in group therapy was seen as a model for teaching teenagers about the dangers of drugs and sex. However, the results of the implementation of many of these programs showed that, rather than preventing the occurrence of risky behaviors, the students were actually encouraged to experiment

with alternative lifestyles counter to their upbringing.

Much of this was based on the 1969 book by Carl Rogers called *Freedom to learn*, which became a model for turning a classroom into a sensitivity group with teachers as group facilitators. Instead of being authoritarian and describing clear standards for right and wrong, the teacher is expected to be democratic and nonjudgmental in order to encourage self-expression of feelings and to enhance self-esteem. To give an example, let's look at what teachers learn at a 3 day workshop to present the program called *Quest*, which is a drug education program:

> Paraphrase ("So, you've had a similar experience.")
> Reflect feelings ("I can see that really annoys you.")
> Watch advising, evaluating, or moralizing.
> Remind yourself you're asking for opinions; everyone has a right to his or her own.
> Ask nonjudgmental questions to promote further thinking.
> Express your own feelings.
> Push their risk levels gently.
> Trust the process. (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 37)

While these are the skills are that often taught to beginning therapists and work well in the exploratory stage of counseling, they are not helpful in teaching students right from wrong. These ideas were followed up by Thomas Gordon who, in his 1970 book *Parent effectiveness training*, urged parents to adopt these same attitudes of being nonjudgmental when listening to their children. Often parents were placed in the roles of the bad guys who are overbearing and strict. Instead teenagers are told to not let themselves be influenced by society's traditional values but are encouraged to judge for themselves, no matter what their parents say.

So if students are taught not to listen to their teachers or parents, then where do they turn for moral authority? According to affective educators, the answer lies in the emotional part of yourself. Surprisingly, in many of the drug and sex education programs used in the schools, little factual information is given, either on the legality or the dangers of risky behaviors. Instead the focus is on the student's own self-esteem which is supposed to protect students and assure that they will make wise decisions regarding their own behavior. However, rather than focusing on self-esteem in the abstract, it would be better to acknowledge that "real self-esteem is a by-product of real learning and achievement. We feel good about ourselves because we've done something good or worthy" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 41).

The 1960s quest for the true inner self is often said to be responsible for the

increase in experimentation with drugs and sex that characterized that decade. Many of today's programs to educate students about drugs and sex contain the same emphasis on rejection of authority, spontaneity, self-expression, and emotionalism which developed from humanistic psychology's emphasis on the self. In this sense morality is seen to be a by-product of feeling good about yourself Values clarification told teachers not to try and teach values at all, but rather help students to clarify their own values. It made no distinction between what you ought to do and what you want to do. Many sex and drug prevention programs actually give little factual information as part of the trend in education today which has shifted from an emphasis on content to an emphasis on process. Defenders of programs like Quest point out that it does teach listening and communication skills. The problem is that it does so in a cultural vacuum. Except for some references to popular culture, many of the usual sources of important values such as myth, religion, history, and literature are missing (Kilpatrick, 1992, Lickona, 1991).

The 1960s spawned the decision-making model called *Values Clarification* with the publication of the book Values and Teaching in 1966 by three professors of education. In contrast to traditional methods of indoctrination, this program stressed that students should develop their own value systems based on their own beliefs and feelings. In fact, it seems to equate values with feelings and not intellectual reflection. Although it is presented as value-neutral, it is really value-relative. When discussed in class, students are often asked to vote on which values they see as important, as if they were simply a matter of personal taste.

One example of a Values Clarification exercise is called "The Lifeboat Exercise" in which the students are asked to imagine that a boat has sunk and a lifeboat has been put out to sea; however, the lifeboat is overcrowded and may sink unless its load is lightened. Based on a brief description of its 10 hypothetical passengers, students must decide who to sacrifice. It doesn't matter who is asked to leave since it is just an intellectual exercise based on utilitarianism. There are no wrong answers since the idea is to just generate discussion. Although similar to the story of the sinking of the *Titanic*, it was not used since it doesn't allow for equal answers on all sides. If we want a value-neutral climate then we want to avoid any type of drama which would have an emotional force. Howeve r, "the more abstract our ethic, the less power it has to move us" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 142). In its defense, values clarification may be helpful when it points to discrepancies between what people say they do and what they actually do.

The other alternative to Values Clarification is the emphasis on moral reasoning skills through the use of ethical dilemmas. The impetus for this program was from Harvard psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg, who wanted to turn children into moral

thinkers whose decisions would be based on reason. He choose the Socratic dialogue which draws out ideas without the imposition of values. At the same time, it creates an atmosphere of equality between student and teacher and so avoids any charge of authoritarianism (Lapsley, 1966). Debating and arguing over possible solutions was supposed to stimulate and revise students' thinking so they could progress up to the next level in moral development. At each higher stage a person was supposed to better integrate conflicting perspectives on action and make a decision that respects the rights of all parties (Lickona, 1991).

The use of ethical dilemmas in class can be exciting since it provides an emotional roller coaster for discussion since there is much argument about who is right and what course of action should be taken. An example of an exercise is the famous Heinz dilemma in which a husband is forced with the decision of whether to steal a drug to save his dying wife (Helwig, 1994). Another example is should a girl tell on her best friend who has been shoplifting? In each lesson there is no right or wrong answer so whatever position the class takes, the teacher can play devil's advocate and take the opposite position.

There is no end to the many modern dilemmas which can be used: abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, extramarital sex, and even cannibalism are often used in junior and senior high curricula. One danger is that students will start to think of morality as a problematic issue where it is difficult to decide what is right and wrong. After being faced with several such dilemmas in which the right answer is anybody's guess, students get the impression that ethics is either vague or controversial. It can be argued that classroom time might be better spent in discussing the virtues of honesty, loyalty, and friendship rather than dredging up situations in which honesty might not be the best policy or where loyalty and honesty may conflict.

The reason why things aren't done in the logical way is that many educators assume most basic human virtues are already highly valued and the only difficulty when practising them is how to choose the right behavior in situations when these virtues conflict. That is, they assume a natural goodness in children in which they will almost always want to do the right thing. Thus the dilemmas represent situations in which some kind of higher-order reasoning is necessary. However, some of Kohlberg's critics contend that "relatively few of our moral failings are attributable to inept reasoning about dilemmas. Many more arise from moral indifference, disregard for other people, weakness of will, and bad or self-indulgent habits" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 88).

Although the dilemma approach can be used judiciously for older students, it is not and should not be used as an introduction to moral behavior.

> Debunking moral values before they are learned is not a good policy. Before students begin to think about the qualifications, exceptions, and fine points that surround difficult cases they will seldom or never face, they need to build the kind of character that will allow them to act well in the very clear-cut situations they will face daily. The basics ought to come first (Kilpatrick, 1992, p.88).

While Kohlberg may claim to be just following the Socratic method, even Plato maintained that this type of teaching was to be reserved for more mature students who already knew a great deal about the subject matter. For young people there is always the danger of enjoying the argument more than enjoying the truth.

Many radio and television talk shows these days revel in the controversial issues of the day in which opinion on both sides are given equal time and respect. While these formats probably do not make adults change their opinions on issues, they do promote tolerance for different points of view and behaviors. It is only in recent times that the stance that opposing points of view ought to be respected has gained credence. For example, do the values of the Mafia or Ku Klux Klan deserve respect? One side effect of increased tolerance is that the students' capacity for moral indignation is inhibited.

Virtues

The ancient Greeks presented what they thought of as the four cardinal virtues which should form the cornerstone of character education. They are prudence or practical wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance or self-control. These virtues form a complete unit on how to build character if they all work together. For example, what good is a sense of justice unless you have the courage to stand up for a man who is unjustly accused? And likewise, what good is courage without both a sense of justice and wisdom? Each of the virtues can also be broken down into component parts. For example, courage can be divided into the parts of physical, intellectual, and moral. It is not confined to spectacular acts of bravery but also has a sustaining value of standing by something you believe in. Aristotle also had the notion that each virtue stood between two polar opposites. For example, courage is the midway point between not only cowardice but also foolhardiness. A high school program to teach these virtues could use the following sources: Plato's *The Republic*, *Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics*, and from the *Bible* the books of Genesis, Exodus, Samuel, and Matthew.

Even on the college level the use of ethical dilemmas can emphasize a kind of ethical relativism in which there is no good or bad behavior, but only good and bad

arguments. This is not to say that all behavior must be considered in absolute terms and that there is no room for cultural relativism. It is important for students to take into account the consequences of their behavior and not just be concerned with justifying their actions. What is important is to attack a dogmatic relativism in which morality is seen as relative to taste or fashion or cultural differences. If you can engage students with the problem of what kind of person they want to be and how to become that person, then the issues of morality take on a more natural and personal meaning.

The four cardinal virtues can best be taught though exposure to history and literature. Though the use of narrative, they take on a personal rather than just abstract meaning. Here are some examples using some well-known classics:

> In Robert Bolt's play *A Man for all Seasons*, we see a remarkable combination of all four virtues in one man, Sir Thomas More. The plot of *High Noon* revolves around a tension among justice, courage, and prudence. *To Kill a Mockingbird* shows one kind of courage, *The Old Man and the Sea* another. *Measure for Measure* and *The Merchant of Venice* teach us about justice. *Moby-Dick* depicts a man who has lost all sense of prudence and proportion. In the character of Falstaff, we are treated to a comic depiction of intemperance; in the story of David and Bathsheba, we are shown a much harsher view of a man who yields to his desires (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 242).

Note the difference between teaching morality based on these historical and literary selections versus the Values Clarification model of having students use their own feelings or uninformed opinions to make ethical decisions. In the former students learn to make decisions based on moral wisdom while in the later the students are left with the arbitrary distinction between "I say" versus "what you say."

A knowledge of virtues provides a standard by which ethical behavior can be measured. They can be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of valid versus specious moral arguments. Values themselves can be evaluated, such as values that are transitory versus values that remain longstanding, or of subjective values such as brand preferences versus objective values such as the obligation to share and not be greedy. Perhaps most important is a standard of how to choose appropriate role models. Until recently it was common for teachers to mold the character of their students based on the examples of outstanding people drawn from history and legend. Today many students don't make a distinction between a celebrity and a hero. Students need to learn to distinguish between the talent and creativity of a musical performer versus the talent and wisdom of a scientist, between the physical courage

of a sports hero versus the combined physical and moral courage of a statesman.

Even the importance of social manners can be viewed from the stance of ethical behavior. It is said that manners are the small change of morality. How you say something may turn out in the end to be an important part in accomplishing your objectives as well as what you say. The social graces, what used to be called etiquette and decorum, are now reduced to the rubric of generic social skills training. While crude examples of vulgarity are still frowned upon, the niceties of treating teachers and others in aut hority with respect and deference are often overlooked. Many students don't seem to be aware that displaying a sullen attitude and using swear words are not a social statement but only reflect on their own social insensibility. The responsibilities of acting like gentlemen and ladies are seen as old fashioned rather than part of demonstrating your pride in yourself and your family. Even the old stand-by of school spirit is lacking as graffiti and vandalism are now the norm in many school buildings. Students no longer dress up to attend school and there is no longer a distinction between school and play clothes.

Esthetics

Another aspect of morality is the force of esthetics on culture. The philosopher Nietzsche can be singled out for consideration. For Nietzsche morality was only good for ordinary people and he claimed that it was an invention of Jews and Christians. He called it 'slave morality.' His own interests were in the type of extraordinary individual he called the superman who is not constrained by conventional morality but was a law unto himself. Instead of receiving values, he creates his own and therefore, creates order out of chaos. The only meaning in life is that which is imposed on it by strong-willed individuals, so that right and wrong are reduced to politics. Superior people have an inborn right to rule. The greatest rulers were also artists since imagination rules reason. People are convinced more by aesthetics than arguments - by the force of beauty.

Even children are attracted to the power of aesthetics. In reading fairy tales, the child is concerned less about right versus wrong but who is the most attractive and sympathetic character. Kilpatrick suggests that "long after childhood, our ethical behavior is still influenced by our aesthetic preferences: by what attracts our imagination. Therefore any adequate analysis of moral behavior must look at the imagination as well as reason and volition" (p. 167). One educator states that reason is not very strong compared to imagination and will and, therefore, should always be taught in combination with the other two. The answer then lies in presenting good art to students, which is defined as art which is not only realistic but " faithful to th e human condition, and not escapist, illusory, or cynical... Good art provides a

revelation of ethical reality" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 168).

The recent rise of street gangs and random acts of violence may not be random at all but expressions of an esthetic of violence. Nietzschean esthetics are said to play a large part in the ritualized behavior of gang members, not that they ever heard of Nietzsche, but they are strikingly similar in their view of elites being above conventional rules of right and wrong or good and evil. They believe that a brief but individualistic life is preferable to a long life emasculated by societal demands. Many activities of gang life can be looked upon as street theater. The tendency of youth to live dangerously and want action are satisfied by this dramatic existence. An aesthetic satisfaction becomes its own justification. Conversely, the programs which have been the most effective in criminal rehabilitation have an aesthetic of their own such as the Guardian Angels, Outward Bound programs, and boot camp prisons.

Music

Music which consists mostly of loud rhythms and repetitive or senseless lyrics may stimulate young people in a negative way. The appeal of rock music is that "it is possible to have a community innocent of civilizing restraints in which everything can be done on instinct, and in which everyone is free to express himself to the fullest...Rock music allows us to indulge in expressions of strong emotion while freeing us from the obligation of doing anything" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 177). Therefore, it has been suggested that rock music pumps up children without channeling their emotions by encouraging them to develop a passionate attachment to their own needs and wants. It takes normal adolescent rebellion and turns it into hatred of authority figures like parents and teachers that stand in the way of self-gratification. When listened to by earphones in isolation, loud and rhythmic music may encourage a need to have strong, sensual emotions without the control of reason.

Rock music that is not combined with other forms of music such as blues or folk is characterized by the absence of a story. MTV is an example in which a narrative is replaced with a montage of loosely connected images. What rock music does is to presented a series of meaningless episodes with no development of a story line. What lyrics there are often repetitive and vulgar and suggest that hostile and sexual relatio ns between the sexes are not only common but acceptable. One alternative solution is to encourage music that can be shared such group singing, music that tells a story, and that channels emotions such as listening to but especially performing folk songs, spirituals, and harmonious classical music. Music can also promote feelings of patriotism and pride in your country or school when performed at ritual ceremonies

such as holidays or graduation. Music therapy is now used to treat mental illness such as depression by elevating the spirit and soothing the mind.

Literature

Narrative material can be an essential component of effective moral education. This can include oral, written, or cinematic narration (Vitz, 1990). Although stories are often recommended as a primary method for moral education, it is also important what stories are told. The best use of narrative uses stories that have a plot and to be realistic. Beyond their entertainment function, stories need convince us of the meaningfulness of life. Our life itself then becomes a story which keeps us going even in the face of despair. Stories give us a reason for living and living well and "the sense that life makes sense is really the sina qua non for ethical behavior" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 196). For if the larger narrative of our life does not make sense, then any individual acts become meaningless or nihilistic. Our best reason for acting morally is to believe that we have a role to play in life. One popular film example is that of the character George Bailey in the film, It's a *Wonderful Life*, in which a man sees his importance by the consequences of his absence.

A contrast can be made between the idyllic versus the moral imagination in literature. One explanation is that "the moral imagination is concerned with things as they ought to be, while the idyllic imagination is concerned with things as they can never be" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 208). One works within the limits of reality while the other doesn't. This isn't the same as fiction versus nonfiction. However, nonfiction must hold up an ideal in a world that is attainable by hard work. If not, it is like a child's daydream. It becomes escapist self-pleasure and doesn't help one to strive for the attainable in life. It is admitted that some literature falls between these two realms such as the works of C. S. Lewis and Shakespeare. Idyllic imagination can be used as recreative daydreaming, but it lacks a tragic sense and can't protect us against the misfortunes of life. At its worst it can lead into a fascination with the occult which suggests that good and evil are really sides of the same coin. The idyllic imagination, if not tempered by the moral imagination, can become a diabolic imagination of the occult and other grotesque tales. Proponents of idyllic myths such as Joseph Campbell and even the Star Wars film series can be criticized as over-emphasizing the notion that intuition ("the force") is more important than wisdom or morals (Kilpatrick, 1992).

Psychology

What psychological processes demonstrate that the narrative method will have some profound effects? Bruner (1986) has proposed that there are two qualitatively

different modes of thought: propositional thinking and narrative thinking. The first consists of logical argumentation which attempts to convince by some abstract, context-independent truth, while the later describes real human and interpersonal situations which require imagination, an understanding of human intention, and an appreciation of the particulars of time and place. Narratives therefore focus on people and on the causes of their actions (Vitz, 1990). Tulving (1983) has demonstrated that there are two types of memory, semantic and episodic, which are close to prepositional and narrative thought. Semantic memory is involved with factual knowledge unrelated to time or place while episodic memory involves autobiographical events that occur in specific times and places. The distinction between left and right hemisphere mental functions contrasts linear linguistic reasoning in the left versus a more holistic and emotional processing in the right half. Dual coding theory by Paivio (1975) suggests that words and images are storied separately in the brain and that words may elicit associated images that are loaded with emotion.

These psychological processes demonstrate that communication which depends on the selection of words with associated images which are also emotional is what storytellers and poets do best. Therefore, morality evolves from personal emotional experiences since it depends more on what a person cares about rather than on abstract moral rules. Pascal's aphorism is relevant here: "The heart has its reasons that reason doesn't know." In other words, "we need to attend to virtues in the first place in order to understand the functions and authority of rules (Vitz, 1990, p. 713)." What a person perceives in a situation may have less to do with moral rules than what he cares about. Many emergency situations happen so quickly that there is no time to weigh the pros and cons of getting involved. In rescue situations many people claim they acted without much thought of the dangerous consequences of getting involved.

Another important process is that of empathy in which a person comes to understand the point of view of another person. A empathy-helping relationship often motivates people to care for and help others in need (Batson, 1990). Even for children, skill in empathy for others leads to an awareness of reciprocity and fairness. The best situation in which to develop moral behaviors is one in which the person can experience moderate amounts of interpersonally based conflict (Haan, 1985). Many psychologists reject the notion of abstract moral stages that are dependent on only cognitive processes. Moral sophistication may not be the best measure of moral life and instead may be best understood by actual behaviors that arise from real experiences. So the best way to teach children to the moral life, short of placing them in morally challenging situations, is to expose them to morally challenging narratives (Coles, 1986). Narratives through vicarious experiences provide the models needed

for the development of moral thought (Vitz, 1990). The use of Bible stories has also been identified as important sources of moral responses, especially the life examples of Christ and his followers (Coles, 1986).

For children especially, the use of adventure stories captures the imagination quite easily. One main conclusion is that morally inspired stories or narratives, often of a religious kind, provide strong support and inspiration for children to make moral choices (Coles, 1986). Much of the great popularity of sporting events for adults can be attributed to a narratively organized adventure - the good guys (your team) versus the bad guys (the opposing team). The game format in which one team wins and the other loses makes them examples of short stories. Moral tales, ethically uplifting essays, and inspirational poetry that have been central to education in our Western cultural heritage represent our national common ground (Bennett, 1993; Ryan, 1994). In fact, the use of stories seems to be one of the few universal aspects of moral education across all cultures (Vitz, 1990).

The most serious objection to the use of stories that involve direct teaching of morals is the threat of indoctrination. However, even Kohlberg's presuppositions are not value-free since they ignore duties, social context, and emotional issues. Critics also question the assumption that "morality is more a matter of thinking than acting, and they even more strongly question the humanistic assumption that the highest or most mature stage is exhibited by those who make moral judgments in accord with their own self-chosen assumptions (Myers & Jeeves, 1987, p. 14)." The critics of values clarification and moral reasoning are concerned about perceiving the modern world as an alliance between rationalism and romanticism in the service of the autonomous person. Tolerance and open mindedness become the chief virtues and morality becomes completely relative (Lickona, 1991). In contrast is a life of service to others using empathy and altruism as chief virtues combined with moral absolutes, as in the example of Christ's life.

Schools

Now what else can schools do to inculcate respect for moral values and encourage moral behaviors? One model is to compare our schools with is the military which has an ethos of pride, loyalty, and discipline. This esprit de corps is especially lacking in many of our inner city schools. For adolescents, a rigorous and disciplined schooling can be analogous to initiation rites in a sex-segregated group. Certainly the idea of boys taught by men is an honorable one, practiced for centuries in a wide variety of cultures, from primitive tribes to English boarding schools. The lose of male initiation rites in our culture has been lamented as one of the failures to socialize young boys into courageous and responsible manhood (Bly, 1990).

All-girl high schools have recently made a comeback and show higher academic scores and school spirit than similar schools that are sex-integrated. Many current sexual harassment codes in high schools and colleges might be unnecessary if proper conduct and habits were learned at an earlier age. We no longer have finishing schools to teach proper manners and etiquette and stress individual expression over social conventions. Respect for the opposite gender is the beginning of treating others fairly and not trying to manipulate others for your own advantage.

Creating a positive moral environment in the schools can be a primary way to bring ethics and character back into our schools. There are four ways in which we can effect this change. First, the ethos of a school, not its course offerings, is the most influential factor in changing attitudes and behavior. The primary mission of schools should be to socialize but our concern with individuality can overlook this important function. Curriculum changes alone will not reverse this situation. What we need to change is the moral climate of the schools themselves by providing a vision of higher purpose: not only the defense of one's own or other nations against unjust aggression but also the provision of humanitarian relief and reconstruction in the wake of war and natural disaster. Second, we can create a sense of pride and specialness our schools by providing school traditions, setting our expectations high, requiring dress codes, and enforcing rules of deportment. Third, by providing a rigorous training that creates high achievement and thus real self-esteem. And fourth, by being a hierarchical institution in which authority is respected but which prepares students for self-government so they can participate in a democratic society (Kilpatrick, 1992).

What became of the moral climate that was once so prevalent in schools? One explanation for this deterioration is the demanding effort involved in rigorous character education. An effective school must find ways to make rules and enforce them consistently, to give challenging assignments and correct them diligently, to police behavior in the hallways and classrooms, to initiate contact with other teachers and parents, and to demand respect from students and mutual respect for other students. All this is not easy and requires considerable work and cooperation from the teaching staff and leadership from the administration and community leaders.

In many schools there is a strong pattern of work avoidance which prevails, both by the students and the teachers. There is an unstated contract in which if teachers do not give demanding assignments, then students will not create discipline problems in the classroom. Over time even this system breaks down as teachers are tempted to look the other way and discipline becomes lax. The end result is that neither teacher nor student take school seriously and each look upon the school day as a form

of time serving. If teachers lose the power to discipline, then they also lose the power to care about making serious changes in their students' lives (Wynne & Ryan, 1993).

There is also a concern that many academics look upon the classroom as a simulated political cell for raising awareness levels. It is argued that "if morality just boils down to politics, it means that youngsters needn't really concern themselves with developing character. Instead of reforming themselves, their job is to reform society" (Kilpatrick, 1992, p. 147). If independent moral truth does not exist, then all that is left is power. Whoever is in political or military control then decides which behaviors are sanctioned.

Parents

There is increasing evidence that parents don't spend as much time with their children as they used to. For many families children are seen as inconvenient, expensive, and annoying. One explanation for this avoidance is that children and adolescents are increasingly disobedient and disrespectful to adults. Some of the reasons for these authority problems are related to the following myths about parenting:

1. The myth of the good bad boy in which children who misbehave are essentially good, such as Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.
2. The myth of natural goodness in which all the parents have to do is love their children in a noninterferring way.
3. The myth that moral problems are psychological problems in self-esteem or unmet needs.
4. The myth that parents don't have the right to instill their values in their children. (Kilpatrick, 1992)

Other societal problems which contribute to behavior problems in children include increasing rates of divorce, single-parent families, expecting the culture or schools to reinforce home values, and the influence of the mass media which has become so pervasive in everyday life. Countermeasures parents can take at home include setting definite limits, enforcing good habits such as helping with chores and volunteering in the community, and having a strong sense of family values and rituals. Family bonds can be strengthened by doing activities together, whether sharing a meal, working in a family business, or spending time in religious devotion practices.

Although children need to be given some free time to relax and enjoy their childhood, this does not mean that they should have much idle time in which to get bored. Children need some sort of schedule to look forward and practice, such as

music, art, and sports lessons, family projects, peer group activities, homework, and reading. Self-interest needs to be tempered by family obligations. Each family also needs to have a mission statement in a moral ethos is created within the home. It has even been suggested that we should have a national campaign to convince parents how important they are in influencing their childrens' values and activities (Lickona, 1991).

Conclusion

This essay takes the position that moral education is a serious endeavor and urges both parents and educators to take a careful look at how we have gone wrong and what we must do to rectify teaching methods and curricula to better influence the character development of our children. As adults, our role is to set the standards and limits of behavior and teach clear standards of right and wrong. If we fail at moral education, we will fail our culture and our future. Moral education is also the basis for integrating faith and learning since we must learn when to act on our principles. While schools are often concerned with individual development of the students, their first function is to socialize students as a group. Only when we begin to transmit our heritage of virtues in a systematic and consistent teaching environment, can we make a real difference in showing young people how to choose right from wrong behaviors and act out of sound moral habits and knowledge of virtues. As Christian educators we should be in the forefront of such a movement.

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