By Grant S. Shockley

Christian Education and the Black Church: A Contextual Approach

INTRODUCTION

Christian educators in the black church are beginning to recognize some new issues involved in defining their taste. Primary among these questions are not only the standard ones of objectives, content, curriculum, learning, teaching, leadership, and evaluation, but the more insistent and crucial question of the relationship of these to the black experience, the black community, the black church, black theology and black liberation. In other words, the new questions for christian education as they are viewed by the black church are essentially contextual. From goal-setting to evaluating, black educators in black churches are viewing the educational process in relation to the kind of learning and teaching that considers the black experience as central and the liberation of black people as its focal point. Briefly, then, the new definition of christian education views it as that process which teaches concepts, attitudes and skills which facilitate meaningful learning in relation to the black experience and the church's implicit taste of humanization and liberation.

This new definition of christian education in relation to the black church is not emphemeral. It has a long and deep history. The main outline of that history must be understood if black church members are to be involved meaningfully in the task of liberation in the black church through christian education. The purpose of this paper, then, is to review that history and to suggest some implications it may have for the theory, practice and design of Christian education in black churches in America.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest efforts toward the Christian education of blacks in America grew out of and centered around Christian evangelization and missions.

There are indications of intention and deed regarding the Christian education of blacks on the part of both Puritans and Anglicans in the first quarter of the 17th century.

> "As early as 1620, when the slave trade began, English clergymen had expressed an interest in extending religious training to those in bondage beyond the seas and had made some progress in this direction.[1]

[1]Henry A. Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 11-12.

In 1624, Anthony Johnson, one of the twenty indentured African servants brought to America in 1619, and his wife, Isabell, became the parents of the first black child to be born in "English" America. The child, a boy, was taken to the Anglican church in Jamestown, (Virginia) where he was christened, "William," in the faith of his parents. It is reasonably certain that these black parents were catechized prior to, or during that Baptism.[2]

Father White (Jesuit) brought two West Indian Negroes (Sousa Mathias and Francisco) with him as personal servants when he came to America (Virginia) in 1634. In all likelihood both of these servants had been Baptized prior to their arrival here and had been given informal instruction by their masterpriest.[3]

Prior to the institutionalization of chattel slavery which began in Virginia as early as 1667, many examples of Christian education of this kind can be found.

With the rise and spread of chattel slavery the situation alters, radically. Whereas, previously both Baptism and instruction were available routinely, the question of Baptizing slaves raised the issue of his status as a Baptized Christian in relation to his condition of servitude.

Here the Churches compromised both the civil and spiritual rights of the slave by equivocating over the meaning of Baptism and adulterated the content of his religious instruction. For an example, on the issue of slavery, neither the Church nor the Virginia colonists objected when the Virginia Assembly declared that:

> "Baptism doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom; that divers masters, freed from this doubt, may more carefully endeavour the propagation of Christianity."[4]

Between 1619-1666 Baptism and Christian education were available somewhat as ends in themselves. After 1667 they were to be means to the end of maintaining the institution of slavery and placating the conscience of the Church. While this situation was not without some "benefit" to the slave, i.e., it obtained literacy for many, it also corrupted her judgment and compromised her power in dealing with her larger future responsibilities to blacks.

Black Enslavement and Christian Education Missions: 1667-1863

While Christian education among black people in America antedates any other organized effort to improve the slave's condition of chattel servitude and illiteracy, these educational experiences were generally,

[2] Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before the Mayflower, A History of the Negro in America, 1619-1964* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 30; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Negro Church* (Atlanta: The Atlanta University Press, 1903), section 8), p. 110.
[3] Margaret A. Diggs, *Catholic Negro Education in The United States* (n. p., 1936), pp. 2-3.
[4] Du Bois, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

truncated to meet the requirements of slavemasters. They were also held on a segregated basis.

Anglican-Protestant Episcopal

The first major missionary effort directed toward the elevation of the status of blacks in America was that of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701). It was founded for the purpose of

> "... supplying the destitution of religious institutions and privileges among the inhabitants of the North American colonies ... and ... of extending the Gospel to the Indian and Negroes."[5]

Missionaries from this Society evangelized and taught among blacks from 1702-1819 along the Eastern seaboard from New England to South Carolina.

Following the Revolutionary War mission Christian education work shifted to the local parishes of Protestant Episcopal Churches where scores of rectors conducted "colored Sunday Schools" as a regular part of their parish activities.

Roman Catholic

Between the introduction of chattel slavery and slave-emancipation thousands of black slaves had become Roman Catholics. The Catholic treatment of slaves, generally, and their education was unique. Unlike most Protestant groups, who conceived of conversion and education as means toward developing a more efficient quasi-human labor machine, Catholics viewed conversion and education more as ends in themselves. In keeping with this, Catholic treatment of slaves was, generally, somewhat more humane. Much of their religious instruction was received in the homes of their masters, where they were thought of as "the family" or "our family." Barely, were black Catholic families separated or sold without each other.

Christian instruction was given to slave workers on the plantations and to free blacks in the Negro "settlements." From the very beginning Sunday Schools were established for both free and servant blacks to supplement their secular education. Such classes usually met on Sunday afternoon or during the week.

Congregational

The great Puritan divine, Cotton Mather favored both the conversion and baptism of slaves. Together with John Eliot, he also favored religious instruction for them. Richard Baxter in a tract published in London in 1673 is found in agreement with Eliot and Mather.

Stewart found in the middle of the 19th century that the religious education of Blacks in Connecticut Congregationalism

[5] Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of Negroes in the United States* (Savannah: Thomas Purse, 1842), p. 8.

"... had increased and their instruction in matters of religion was an affair of importance."[6]

LUTHERANS

From the earliest years of the 19th century, Lutherans in America manifested an interest in the Christian education of blacks. Sunday Schools for blacks were found to have been related to their churches in both the North and South. Of course, these facilities were used on a segregated basis.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Instances of Quaker missionary Christian education activity among blacks are fairly numerous. The women of the Maryland Society protested the lack of education for black children in 1678. In 1679 and again in 1690, George Fox writes to America, "And, also, you must teach and instruct blacks and Indians ..."[7] The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting required Christian education for their slaves," ... during the time they have them ..." Anthony Benezet began his evening school for the religious and secular instruction of blacks in 1750. Black Quaker, Paul Cuffe, opened his school for blacks in Massachusetts about this same time. In North Carolina (1815) Quakers were still advocating literary and religious instruction for blacks.

The Society of Friends never attracted large numbers of black worshippers, however, despite their liberal stand and willingness to educate blacks in religion.

PRESBYTERIAN

Virginia Presbyterians initiated efforts toward the religious education of blacks as early as 1747 through the ministry of Samuel Davies and John Todd.[8] Presbyterians were also among the first major religious denominations to advocate education for blacks after their Emancipation. In 1800 the General Assembly recommended "the instruction of Negroes, in various parts of the country, who were destitute of the means of grace."

The United Presbyterians began a rigorous Mission Sunday School Program in the South in 1890 out of which came more than 3,800 Sunday Schools and churches.

MORAVIAN

One of the few religious denominations that came to America, primarily, to evangelize were the Moravians. About 1735 they organized a congregation consisting of Indians and blacks as well as white settlers. In 1738 we find the Moravians attempting to organize missions for blacks. The principal activity in these missions were religious instruc-

[6] George Stewart, Jr., *A History of Religious Education in Connecticut to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924), p. 182.
[7] W. D. Weatherford, *American Churches and the Negro* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1957), p. 56.
[8] Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-39, passim.

tion. Nathanael Seidel and Eric Westman itinerated west of the Susquehanna River in the winter of 1747. Later they made their way to Virginia where they catechized and evangelized blacks. In 1749 in Philadelphia, blacks sought out the Moravians for instruction and baptism. Blacks attended the "black" chapel and Sunday School built for them in Salem, North Carolina in 1823. In 1865 the Moravians founded a mission among the emancipated blacks with a "flourishing Sunday School."[9]

Methodists

Methodist concern for the Christian education of blacks is evidenced in a General Conference Journal entry in 1785. In answer to the question, "What can be done in order to instruct poor children, white and black, to read?" The answer was, "Let us labor, as the heart of one man, to establish Sunday Schools, in or near the place of public worship."

In 1785 William Elliott is said to have founded Methodist Sunday Schools in Virginia, one for blacks and one for whites. A Sunday School was held in the home of Thomas Crenshaw (Virginia) in 1786. John Charleston, later to become an outstanding African Methodist Episcopal minister, attended the Crenshaw's school. In 1787 George Daughty, a Methodist preacher, was drenched with water at the public pump for conducting a Sunday School including blacks. An "African Sunday School existed in New York about 1817. It had possibly been promoted by the black Methodists, probably those who became AME Zions.[10]

III. BLACKS AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

The Sunday School Movement in America never effectively related itself to black people. The bulk and center of Protestant education has never shown more than a token interest in comprehensive non-segregated education, nor has it ever really come to terms with its white racism. It is interesting to trace this development.

The vast majority of English and other missionaries serving in America withdrew at the close of the Revolutionary War. This left the missionizing and evangelizing of blacks (and Indians) to the emerging American denominations. While there was no lack of enthusiasm to continue the work of organizations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the direction of this American development in the area of Christian education in relation to blacks moved toward segregated Sunday Schools.

There are further distressing developments in the Sunday School

[9] Harry E. Stocker, *A Home Mission History of the Moravian Church in the United States and Canada* (The Special Publication Committee of the Moravian Church, 1924), pp. 14, 15, 29, 38, 61, 240-41; Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31, 57, 64-65, 66-67, 69.

[10] Addie G. Wardle, *History of the Sunday School Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1918), pp. 45-49, 52-65; Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

movement in relation to blacks. There was a high degree of sensitivity and concern on the part of some white patrons of Sunday Schools for blacks for the possible consequence of slaves learning more than the restricted and innocuous biblical material requisitioned by slaveholders.

An example of another kind of circumscription in this period is mirrored in Carter G. Woodson's observation:

> "The colored pauper children apprenticed by church wardens were prohibited by statue immediately after Gabriel's (Prosser) Insurrection in 1800."[11]

Still another example is W.E.B. DuBois' report in connection with the black revolt under Toussaint L'Overture in Haiti, that South Carolina passed a law declaring:

> "It shall not be lawful for any number of slaves, free Negroes, mulattoes, or mestizoes, even in the company of white persons to meet together and assemble for the purpose of mental instruction or religious worship, either before the rising of the sun or the going down of the same."[12]

Levi Coffin's Sunday School also upset a number of slaveholders. Again Woodson reports:

> "In 1821 certain masters were sending their slaves to a Sunday School opened by Levi Coffin . . . Before the slaves had learned more than to spell words of two or three syllables, masters became unduly alarmed, thinking that such instruction would make the slaves discontented."[13]

Despite the racially bigoted character of the Sunday School in the post-Revolutionary years, it still must be emphasized that it was an important factor in Negro education. Woodson reminds us of this:

> "Although cloaked with the purpose of bringing the blacks to God by giving them religious instruction the institution (Sunday Schools) permitted its workers to teach them reading and writing when they were not allowed to study such in other institutions."[14]

Oral Instruction Period

The objective of the American Sunday School Union's "Mississippi Valley Enterprise," launched in 1830 was "to organize a Sunday School within two years, in every destitute place in the Valley of the Mississippi." This "Enterprise" never reached blacks. As a matter of fact between 1830 and 1890 little or nothing was done for the religious education of Negroes in the Mississippi Valley, despite the fact that this section compromised one of the most densely populated black areas in the country.

This "by-pass" was characteristic of the operational style of the A.S.S.U., particularly during the slavery era. Laurence Jones suggests the reason for this as he speaks about the A.S.S.U. as well as the

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[11] Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1915), pp. 112-113.
[12] DuBois, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
[13] Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
[14] Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

American Tract Society and the American Bible Society and their defections from the Abolition Movement.

> "These groups were charged with ignoring the whole issue of slavery in order not to alienate those slave holders who offered financial support."[15]

The main thrust and dominant motif in the Christian education that was offered to blacks during slavery and especially from 1800 onward was not "religious" or "Christian" basically, but rather sub-Christian and racist.

Prohibited by the "black codes" from gathering or being gathered together as a group to learn to read or write, much Christian education from about 1834 onward was relegated to what Woodson calls "religion without letters" or oral (catechetical) instruction.

The most widely used of these catechisms was the one developed by William Capers (1790-1855). In reality it was a theology of black de-humanization, e.g.:

Q. What did God make man out of?
A. The dust of the ground.
Q. What does this teach you?
A. To be humble.[16]

The slave was not only taught to be "humble" but he was taught that slavery can be justified. In Capers' catechism the slave read that God "sentenced" man to "labor and sorrow, pain and death." This is a significant modification of its source — John Wesley's catechism, which read that mankind was "driven out of paradise and became subject to pain, and death."

The Nadir

Following the Emancipation of the slaves (1863), the conclusion of the Civil War (1865) and the Reconstruction Era (1866-1876), black Sunday Schools were generally neglected, especially in the South. What energy and church funds that were available were put into secular schools for the ex-slaves, forming the foundation for a system of denominationally related black colleges. Christian (parish) education was left largely to Northern missionaries or to the black churches that were missionizing in the then "liberated" South. Some few black Sunday Schools were even united with local and state Unions in this period, especially in the larger urban centers of the North.

Generally speaking, however, the era 1863-1893 represented a low point in Christian (parish) education among blacks in so far as the A.S.S.U. and the white denominations were concerned.

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[15] Lawrence N. Jones, "They Sought A City: The Black Church and the Churchmen in the Nineteenth Century" *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* Vol. XXVI, No. 3, Spring, 1971, p. 267.

[16] William E. Capers, *Catechism: For the Use of Methodist Mission,* Part First (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1857. Revised in 1880 by T. O. Summers).

International Sunday School Association Era

In 1893 the International Sunday School Convention meeting in St. Louis, Missouri took an action that created a field-secretariat approach to Sunday School Missions. Between 1895 and 1908 four pioneer black religious educators traveled throughout the South promoting black Sunday Schools and training leaders, particularly in areas where none existed. These men were: L. B. Maxwell, Silas X. Floyd, G. B. Marcus, and James E. Shepherd.

About this time other denominations, especially the Methodists, Episcopalians and Baptists, created denominational field staff positions in the area of Sunday School and in some cases youth work.

The inability of the local black Sunday School Associations to raise their part of the budget for the I.S.S.A. plan caused it to fail.

The Clifton Plan

In search of a more feasible plan to improve Christian Education among blacks, W. N. Hartshorn, President of the International Sunday School Association called together a group of leading religious educators and Sunday School workers at his summer home in Massachusetts in 1908. The 1908 Clifton Conference is notable because it was the first such meeting that included blacks to discuss and solve "their" problem of Christian education.

The "Clifton Plan," produced at this conference, envisioned courses in religious education and Sunday School administration in the black colleges whose students and graduates would train black lay teachers and Sunday School workers in local leadership training type courses.[17] The Clifton Plan raised the level of performance of thousands of black Sunday School teachers. It was not capable of reaching a sufficient number of teachers, however, especially in the non-urban and non-college town areas.

Summary

Early efforts toward the Christian education of blacks grew out of the mission impulse. This motive was subverted by the equivocation of the churches on the issue of the human and political rights of chattel slaves.

Christian education among blacks antedates any other organized effort to improve the slave's condition of illiteracy. Much education so received however, was a truncated version of the Biblical message accommodated to the requirements of slaveholders. It also assumed black intellectual inferiority.

The (white) Sunday School Movement did not relate itself to blacks

[17] William N. Hartshorn, ed., *An Era of Progress and Promise, 1863-1910* (Boston: Pricilla Pub. Co., 1910, exp.), pp. 11-27.

in helpful or effective ways. It showed only token interest in integrated schools and failed consistently, to come to terms with its racist policies and practices.

IV. BLACK CHURCH MOVEMENTS AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The main lines of Christian education development in black denominations which originated in the early part of the nineteenth century become highly instructive as we view the current task of Christian education in the black church. Representing as they did separatism occasioned by racial prejudice and discrimination rather than disputes over doctrine, liturgy or polity, they perceived rather early the incompatibility of the "white over black" attitude of their fellow-Christians and opted for a separate development approach. This approach had considerable viability at its beginning, it continued into the present century. Presently it serves as a launching model for contextual learning in black churches, generally.

A.M.E.

In 1795 Richard Allen, the founder and first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church established in 1816, organized the first black (Church related) Sunday School in America. Charles S. Smith organized the first black Sunday School Union in 1882 and in 1888 became one of the first Black Christian Education executives as Corresponding Secretary of the Union. W. H. Coleman conducted the first Black Leadership Training Enterprise in 1874 while youth work in the form of Christian Endeavor societies started early in the 1880's. Adult work began in the 1850's as literary societies. By the 1920's the denomination had a comprehensive, national program of Christian Education.

A.M.E. Church School literature, "the First . . . ever published in this country for the exclusive use of Negro Sunday Schools"[18] has been published since the 1800's. In 1936 a Board of Religious Education was established to coordinate Sunday Schools, Allen Christian Endeavor Societies, and Leadership Education programs. In 1952 this Board became the Division of Christian Education of the General Board of Education.

A.M.E. Zion (1821)

Christian education in the form of Sunday School work was organized in A.M.E. Zion Churches along the Eastern seaboard and as far West

[18] Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville: A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1891), Vol. 1, p.

as Pittsburgh a generation prior to the Civil War.[19] A Sunday School Union was founded in 1889. In 1916 the A.M.E. Zion General Conference elected a General Superintendent of Sunday Schools, and an Editor of Sunday School literature, and created a Sunday School Board. In the 1880's the Varick (Youth) Christian Endeavor Society was organized. Adult education, as in the A.M.E. Zion Churches, began in the form of literacy societies in the 1860's.

Scant records about the first publication of Sunday School and youth literature in the A.M.E. Zion Church indicate that it got underway about 1876, prior to which time it probably used Methodist Episcopal materials.

In 1924 the General Conference combined the Sunday School and Christian Endeavor Department forming the Department of Religious Education. In 1932 this was merged with the Department of Education to create the Christian Education Department, the name of which was later changed to the Board of Christian Education.

C.M.E. (1870)

Sunday Schools existed in the C.M.E. Church prior to its organization as a denomination in 1870. They were organized into a department in 1918. An Epworth League Department was organized in 1902. In 1934 these departments were merged to form the General Board of Religious Education. Between 1934 and 1938 the youth of the denomination were organized and in 1950 the General Conference Board of Education was merged with the Board of Religious Education to form the General Board of Christian Education.

The curriculum materials used in the C.M.E. Church are adapted versions of the materials of the United Methodist Church.

Baptists (1880)

Baptist Sunday Schools had existed among blacks since the 1770's. James D. Tyms, in his volume, *The Rise of Religious Education Among Negro Baptists*[20] places the beginnings of denomination-wide organized Christian Education among black Baptists in 1895 when the National Baptist Educational Convention met in Atlanta, Georgia. Following an internal struggle respecting the control of writing, editing, printing and publishing printed resources for Baptist Sunday Schools, etc. a National Baptist Publishing Board was established in Nashville under black management. Other administrative-program units of the National Baptist Convention, Inc. were: The Sunday School Congress and The Baptist Young People's Union Board; later the Baptist Young People's Training Union (BYPU).

In 1915 The Convention divided. The National Baptist Convention,

[19] cf. Grant S. Shockley, "The A.M.E. and The A.M.E. Zion Churches." *The History of American Methodism* (Vol. II), pp. 569-572.
[20] James D. Tyms, *The Rise of Religious Education Among Negro Baptists* (New York: Exposition Press, 1965).

Inc. organized the National Sunday School and B.Y.P.U. Congress, a merger of the former Sunday School Board and National B.Y.P.U. Boards.

V. THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

The basic components of Black Protestant education today are Sunday Schools and Youth Groups. These agencies, like the black churches, have never reached and are not now reaching more than a minority of black children, youth, adults and families. Also like the black church, the Sunday School and Youth groups have relatively conventional and conservative approaches to Christian education.

Mays and Nicholson (1933) in their singular, if somewhat dated study of "The Sunday Church School" found in *The Negro's Church,* more than confirm this hypothesis. In the area of enrollment and attendance they reported that the "... membership of most of the Sunday Church Schools is less than half the church membership." In their study of 609 urban churches they found that,

> "The aggregate enrollment in the schools is 109,865 while the aggregate church membership is 357,169... The Sunday Church School enrollment is 40.7 per cent of the membership in churches with fewer than 1,000 members; 31.3 per cent in churches with between 1,000 and 2,000 members; 20.0 per cent in churches with between 2,000 and 3,000; 15.5 per cent in churches with between 3,600 and 4,000; and 18.0 per cent in churches with 4,000 members or more."[21]

Their finding, that, "the larger the membership of the church, the less likely is it to have a school enrollment comparable with its size", is a sobering fact, if it is considered that Black Protestants in the urban centers particularly, seem inclined to attend large churches. An additional factor causes concern in the constituency-enrollment picture is the attendance factor. Mays and Nicholson report that:

> "While the total enrollment of the Sunday church schools is 109,865, the average attendance is only 65,211, or 59.4 per cent of that enrollment. The large number of absentees (about 44,654) presents a problem, in that schools must discover some way of reducing the number."[22]

As in the enrollment picture Mays and Nicholson point out again that:

> "In churches with large memberships, not only is the Sunday church school enrollment proportionately less than smaller churches, but the average attendance is also less."[23]

A third factor wihch Mays and Nicholson mention is the preponderance of children and the paucity of youth in the statistical profile of the black Sunday school and youth groups studied.

There are other crucial problems that were highlighted in the Mays and Nicholson study. In the area of curriculum materials it was found that out of the 608 Sunday church schools studied, 94.8 per cent used

[21] B. E. Mays / J. W. Nicholson, *The Negro's Church* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933), p. 126.
[22] Mays / Nicholson, *op. cit.,* p. 127.
[23] Mays / Nicholson, *op. cit.,* p. 127.

the Improved Uniform Lessons, while only 5.2 per cent used graded material. They found that extra biblical material was seldom used and that "little or no account is taken of the teaching values available in history, biography, . . . etc."[24]

Mays and Nicholson found leadership problems in the Christian education programs studied. Most pastors did not lend outstanding support to their educational programs. Less than six churches had full-time Directors of Christian Education. It was also found that the college and professionally trained blacks were least available for teaching and for assistance in the educational programs of the Churches and that standards for the utilization of teachers were generally lacking.

An outstanding problem in black Churches is that of young people. Mays and Nicholson found that the youth work received comparatively less emphasis, was poorly organized, lacked specificity regarding objective and catered to a basically transient membership. The leadership of youth in the Churches studied by Mays and Nicholson was almost completely dominated by adults.

While this study of Christian education in black Churches is dated and Christian education in some black Churches has improved, the basic problems indicated in the study have dominated the field of this investigation until very recently.

Summary

The basic setting for Christian education in the black Church, the Sunday School and "youth groups", have been widely influenced by white models that in their present forms they are generally inadequate to cope with the contemporary tasks of black experiencing and liberation.

Black Protestant programs of education, limited almost exclusively to Sunday Schools and "youth groups", reach only a minority of black children, youth, adults or families.

The central emphasis in Black Protestant church education must shift from a traditionalist to a liberation orientation.

VI. BLACK THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Black theology confronts Christian education, especially in the black Church, with the challenge to engage itself effectively in the liberation of oppressed black people. This challenge has historic significance. It marks the first time in the history of Church life in America that a racial minority has aggressively challenged the theological assumptions of the Christian faith on the basis of its own ethic of inclusiveness. Also, it is the first time that a color-minority has articulated such a protest in the form of an alternative system and church style.

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[24] Mays / Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

In this section of the paper primary attention will be given to some of the implications of black theologies for Christian education. Christian educators who are black must raise at least three questions in attempting to develop an educational design to complement the current movement of Black Theology: (1) rationale, (2) guidelines, (3) design.

The rationale for a church education program developed from a black theological perspective is four-fold. First, it is congenial with and "suggests a felt need to reconstruct a world view as it concerns an entire people".[25] That world view is a new future that black people can have. It is a future in which black people believe and know that they can be free if they want that freedom enough to suffer, sacrifice and perhaps even die for it. It is the recognition by black people that "we are somebodies".

Second, the agenda of the black community in America is being reshaped to define what that "somebodiness" means — individually, socially, cuturally, economically, politically and theologically. Essentially it calls for the humanization of the dehumanized, the liberation of the oppressed and the empowerment of the powerless.

Third, the Black Church has affirmed this agenda in its historic "Black Power statement": "We commit ourselves as churchmen to make more meaningful in the life of our institutions our conviction that Jesus Christ reigns in the 'here' and 'now' as well as in the future he brings in upon us:"

Fourth, the black agenda must begin with black people and black people must initiate the black agenda. Liberation is not something that can be done for a people. In solidarity with others in similar situations, women, Asians, Hispanics, Nadirs, Americans — the "consciousness" of black people must be raised, our identity self-affirmed and our liberation claimed. Implicit in any educational effort is the objective of change. Christian education, therefore, fulfills a highly normative function when it seeks to manipulate the teaching-learning process to the end that justice and a new humanity may emerge.

Guidelines for developing the implications of Black Theology for Christian education in black Churches grow out of and center around the experiences, relationships and situations that black people use in their day-to-day struggle for survival in a basically white-oriented society. In the light of this discussion they seem to give several directions.

1. A theoretical and operational educational model that conceptualizes an "empowering process" for a "powerless" minority.
2. A cognitive model of learning that maximizes the biblical, historical and theological sources and images of the Christian faith as authentically "for others" and pro-black without being anti-white or racist.
3. A model of learning that is "holistic", i.e., it emphasizes the organic or "whole" nature of existence rather than the compartmentalize

[25] Leon E. Wright, "Black Theology" or Black Experience? *Journal of Religious Thought* (Summer, 1969), p. 46.

aspect thus insuring and guaranteeing a wide frame of reference for the inclusion of differences and uniqueness.

4. A model of socialization that permits free interaction of ideas, concepts, customs and heritages to intermingle without attending prejudices with the result that all are inherited as a result.
5. A model of leadership in and through which parents, teachers, pastors and power figures can see and be influenced by what Carl Rogers calls the development of "fully-functioning persons capable of impacting society . . ."

In this concluding section of the paper the writer will suggest an educational design to embody the rationale and implement the guidelines that have been suggested above.

First, let it be said that the objective in curriculum and teaching the Christian faith in relation to the black experience can best be achieved if viewed from a contextual prospective i.e., the facilitation of the learning of black persons in such a way that they become aware of God as the God of the oppressed and of his self disclosures in the redemptive and empowering love of Jesus Christ, the liberator that they come to know who they are, and what their human situation means and how they can and may best respond in love and faith through their Black Christian experience, personally and socially.

A Conflict — Change Model

There are six components in the following conflict-change model for the Christian education experience in relation to the black experience:

1. Conceptualization — the basic step — developing and facilitating a process in which black learners may come to a fundamental understanding of the nature of the Gospel in relation to the concrete situation in which they are and have a sense of God's power through Christ as being with them and for them.
2. Awareness — developing and facilitating a process in which black learners may come to a conscious awareness of the nature and extent of the oppressive forces and circumstances from which liberation (for them) is absolutely necessary for their humanization.
3. Analysis — developing and facilitating a process in which black learners may possess the ability and skill to analyze effectively, the personal, attitudinal, institutional and systemic dimensions of their oppression and make a determinative choice to become free or remain in bondage.
4. Conceptualization — developing and facilitating a process in which black learners are able to conceptualize and announce a new future — their own model of self (personal) liberation and/or social (commiting liberation).
5. Praxis — developing and facilitating a process in which black learners come to command the ability to "be responsible" and to enact in some objective way the ideas thay hold to be true and to become "free agents" in dealing with the theologizing process as it flows out of their historical situations.
6. Community — developing and enabling persons and groups to initiate, "grow in", "share" and extend "communities of the committed" for the purpose, support, encouragement, praxis identification and radical change.