

# The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship  
October 2005

## National Conference 2006

“The Icon of Faith”

July 27 – 29, 2006

San Antonio, Texas

Mark the dates on your calendar

## Regional Conferences

Amarillo	October 22
Kansas City	October 29
Honolulu	January 14
Phoenix	January 21
Shreveport	January 28

## The Future is Always Now

One of the challenges we face is underestimating the impact of what we do now. We put the future in a category of something that will happen later. Yet, real life experience always seems to indicate it is what we do today that creates the future that we want. When you were in college or Montessori training the future always seemed so far away, so distant from the reality you were then experiencing. But that future was totally dependent on your successfully creating and mastering the present.

This, in large measure, is what we are doing for our children. Their concept of the “future” is vague and ill defined. What is an hour, a day, a week or a month – let alone a year really mean to them? It is the mastery of the moment

that creates all future success. It is much like a runner who wants to enter a marathon. If there is no today for the runner – which means running now – there will be no ability (physical, emotional or mental) to run the marathon in the “future.” Desire to run the marathon is not enough. That desire has to be rooted firmly in the actions of today to have a future chance of success.

This applies not only to our children but to us as well. Our becoming the best teacher that we can be is firmly rooted in enhancing our experiences today. Charles “Tremendous” Jones, a motivational speaker, shares that you will be different tomorrow by two things – the books that you read and the people you meet. It is those two things applied to your experience today that will change your tomorrow.

Read! And then re-read your Montessori books. A reading program of five pages a day will get you through the essential canon of Montessori writing in a year. The reading program changes what you “remember” from your training. It also sharpens your insight and skill.

There is the classic story of two woodsmen chopping wood. The younger worked without stopping and the older stopped for 10 minutes every hour to rest. At the end of the day the younger woodsman remarked, “How did you wind up cutting more wood than I did because you rested every hour?” “Yes.”

replied the elder, “But did you notice that when I rested I sharpened my ax?”

We live and work in an emotionally intense environment and we need the refreshment of our spirit and our ideas – as well as our ideals. So the challenge is (even though we don’t have the time or the money) to be continually refreshed. Reading is one way to begin this process and the other is to network with people who share your passions and your skills.

This is why the Christian Montessori Fellowship holds regional and national conferences – to provide you with opportunities to network and learn from people who share your interests and passions.

Doctors are required to take continuing education for the care of the physical, temporal body. How much more urgent is it for us who deal with the spirit and eternal soul of the child?

Our challenge, just like Jesus gave the disciples is to “come apart for a while.” It certainly is better to “come apart” then to “come a part.”

This call is similar to what the airline flight attendant instructs you before taking off. “If the yellow oxygen masks deploy, put your mask on first before trying to put the mask on your children.” Good advice for on the ground as well.

### **The Secret of Childhood**

Numbers in parenthesis are page numbers from Ballentine Books edition.

#### **24. Repercussions on Physical Health**

“One of the most striking things about our normalizing schools is the fact that children who have been freed from their psychic deviations lose their greedy craving for food.” (178)

“Children do not eat all they need at once, but often stop eating for considerable periods of time..They (infants)withdraw from their source of nourishment before they are full in order to rest, and then return to it in a kind of slow, intermittent rhythm.” (179)

“A person can find a refuge in sickness...The symptoms are due to subconscious psychic disorders which succeed in dominating the laws of physiology. Through this type of illness the ego can withdraw from unpleasant situations or obligations. The disease resists all treatments and only disappears when the ego is freed from the conditions it sought to escape. Many illnesses and morbid states, like many moral defects, disappear when children are placed in a free environment where they can live and act in a way that brings them back to normal.” (181)

#### **25. The Conflict Between Adult and Child**

“In the time of Moses it was known that the first man sinned and that his sin brought ruin to all mankind. To those who do not understand its true nature, original sin may seem to be unjust and unreasonable since it involves the condemnation of all of Adam’s descendants. And yet we see under our very eyes innocent children condemned to carry within themselves the fatal consequences of centuries of error with respect to their natural development.” (184)

#### **26. The Instinct to Work**

“Growth and development depend upon a continued narrowing of the relationships between a child and his environment..the development of his personality, or what is called his ‘freedom,’ cannot take place unless he becomes progressively independent of adults. And this growth is effected by means of a suitable environment, in which a child can find the necessary means of the development of his own proper functions.” (185)

“The most important discovery is that a child returns to a normal state through work.” (185)

“A child’s desire to work represents a vital instinct since he cannot organize his personality without working: a man builds himself through working.” (186)

“When because of favorable circumstances work flows naturally from an inner impulse, it assumes an entirely different character, even in adults. When this happens, work becomes fascinating and irresistible and raises a man above his diverted self.” (186)

“Men have a natural instinct for work, and it is through work that their environment is perfected. Work is characteristic of men, and progress in civilization is directly linked with their manifold ability to create an environment that will make life more easy and comfortable.” (187)

“In such an environment men thrust aside a natural way of living. Nevertheless, the new environment which they create cannot be called artificial. Since it transcends rather than

replaces nature, it may perhaps be best described as transcendent. Men become progressively so habituated to this transcendent order that it becomes their vital element.” (187)

“Man today no longer lives simply according to nature, but nonetheless he makes full use of both the visible and invisible forces of nature.” (187)

“(Man) builds for himself a transcendent environment which, because of the richness of its production, obviously surpasses the simple fact of existence and pertains rather to a cosmic order.” (188)

“The perfection of man’s work is not to be measured by man’s own personal needs but by the mysterious designs of his instinct to work. By a fatal deviation, man has been separated from his goal in life. If a child is to become the kind of a man that he should, his development must be intimately united with his own guiding instinct. The normal education of a child should thus lead to man’s transcendence.” (189)

## What Does Love Mean?

Out of the mouths of babes

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore." Cindy - age 8

"My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night." Clare - age 6

"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you." Karen - age 7

## The Icon of Faith

In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." In Luke 18:16-17, He repeats the same words and goes on to say, "I tell you the truth; anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

To begin to understand how the child becomes this icon of faith – this representation – we need to explore what the kingdom of heaven is and how we enter into it.

Jesus' first mention of the kingdom of heaven is in the beatitudes (Matthew 5:3) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Here poor signifies a sense of humility, a beggar, possessing nothing. It is this sense of humility and dependence on God (and others) that does mark the child's attitude and position. It is this unconsciousness of self-worth and self-importance that marks the child in comparison to the adult.

Humility is a tough virtue – as soon as you can brag about it, you no longer have it. It is this unconscious, unspoken humility of the child that silently says, "I don't deserve redemption, salvation or the kingdom of heaven. And everything I have and everything I am given is given to me out of love." It is this humble understanding that begins to make it possible for us not only to enter into heaven, like the child, but to also "deserve" the gift.

Jesus' first parable about the kingdom is found in Matthew 13:24. "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'

I scratch my head and ponder, "This is what the kingdom of heaven is about – weeds and wheat?" And, yes it is – weeds and wheat. That is what our lives are made up of – weeds and wheat. Doesn't our Heavenly Father sow good things into us? Does He not sow the virtues, the gifts, the talents? Are we not born with those miracles of His love and grace already within us waiting to be revealed?

I am humbled (and somewhat chagrined) to think that I spent much of my life thinking that I was building something into my children, when in reality whatever success the children truly displayed was because we only helped to reveal the treasures that were already there. The good seed was already sown.

When Jesus explains the parable, He likens the field as to the world but I think He would also liken each of us as a microcosm of that “world.” Then that field becomes us. He sows good things into us but an enemy comes and sows the weeds. What are jealousy, hate, pride, murmuring etc but weeds among the blessings that He gives. And we as the servants are quick to point out the faults in others – and we want to root them out. This is probably the hardest thing I’ ve had to deal with in nurturing children – wanting to root out all that is bad. It has also been a challenge in understanding Montessori – not focusing on the negative and even ignoring it. Her words of insight, “Be careful to not destroy that which is good.” echo the question and answer of the parable, “Do you want us to go and pull them up?” “No, because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them.”

This is not a blanket endorsement of ignoring behaviors and activities but a call to careful, prayerful, select intervention. So what is going to happen to the weeds in the personality (original sin run rampant so to speak)?

When the harvest comes, the weeds will be separated from the wheat and destroyed. I look at harvest as maturity – a time of maturing. It is at this point, actually, there are many points of maturity, (just like there are many seasons of harvest) that the weeds of our personality, our sin, and our self-centeredness will be removed by the knowledge we’ ve attained and the choices we have been trained to make. Ultimately, it all comes down to “Choose you this day whom you will serve.”

The kingdom of heaven then belongs to those who not only recognize that which is a weed but who will choose accordingly to remove them.

I’ m challenged again to remove the beam from my own eye before I remove it from my brother’ s eye.

One other thing from the parable stands out. The seed was sown in a good field – one that was prepared. It was not stony ground, hard pathways or briar choked. It was prepared to receive the good seed.

### “Quote”

“Children are the true connoisseurs. What’ s precious to them has no price – only value.”

Bel Kaufman

## Fundraising – Ugh!

Few among us like fundraising. Most every school does something – candy, books, wrapping paper and the list goes on and on. Why do we do it? Because we want to add value to our children’ s lives by what the money will buy.

We pray that every month The Cobbler adds value to your lives and makes you a better teacher for your children. Your lives are busy and full. And many people share that they meant to send in their membership but life just keeps happening.

So, today a gentle reminder to take out your checkbook or your credit card, fill out the application and support the good work of the fellowship.

## **Educational Principles of Montessori 11. Self-correcting**

It would seem obvious that self-correcting materials would make the teacher's job easier. So much traditional time is taken up with making sure the student got it "right," when it is possible for the student to make sure he got it right (without the teacher's help or correction.)

In traditional settings, students are sometimes allowed to correct their own papers and work but to do this on a large scale seems to invite cheating and laziness. And so teachers shy away from this.

Self-correcting materials is more than about a student "getting it right"; it is about a student getting it. When you work out a problem for yourself; when you figure it out on your own; when the process becomes as important as the answer (the answer still being important) you will have a totally different kind of education.

Self-correcting materials also frame and change the student's approach to exterior praise and motivation. In one sense, self-correcting materials allow the student to be insular – self-contained in the learning process – and not need (as much) praise and motivation from the outside.

Why won't Montessori students become lazy and cheat as their traditional counterparts would be tempted to do? The complex answer has to do with mastery rather than passing or grades. The self-correcting lessons are another tool for the student on the way to becoming self-sufficient, mature and independent.

It seems that ultimately self-correcting materials lead to self-confidence because "I did it myself." Without the need of approval or guidance that smothers initiative.

### **"Quote"**

"It is to be noted that children's plays are not sports, and should be regarded as their most serious actions."

Montaigne

### **Cross Mountain Press**

[www.crossmountainpress.com](http://www.crossmountainpress.com)

Copies of "Getting Your Money's Worth" Your Investment in Christian Montessori are being purchased by schools from Massachusetts to California. A school in Michigan ordered a copy for each of their board members to better understand the value of Montessori.

It is never too early to educate your parents about the treasure their children receive each day in your school. Order today.

#### **Amarillo, TX October 22**

Southwest Montessori Preschool  
4515 Cornell St.  
Amarillo, TX 79109  
806-359-9826  
Betty Golightly

#### **Lawrence, KS October 29**

Sunshine Acres Montessori  
2141 Maple Lane  
Lawrence, KS 66046  
785-842-2223  
Susan Mozykowski

### **Head's of Schools Seminars**

#### **The Ten P's at the Heart of Management**

Come share three days with other heads of schools. Gain new insights into

the challenges of creating the finest schools possible.

November 17-20

For more details, visit us at

[www.crossmountainforum.com](http://www.crossmountainforum.com)

## Christian Montessori Fellowship

### Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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How long have you taught? \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

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Level you

teach: \_\_\_\_\_

(Mark all that apply.)

Are you a: teacher \_\_\_\_\_

administrator \_\_\_\_\_

owner \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

What is your church affiliation?

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### Interests

What is your interest in Christian Montessori?

To teach in a Christian Montessori school \_\_\_\_\_

To start a Christian Montessori school \_\_\_\_\_

To transform an existing school \_\_\_\_\_

To be a better teacher where you are now \_\_\_\_\_

Not sure at this time \_\_\_\_\_

Are you familiar with hands on Bible curriculums (Godly play, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd)? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Do you have an interest in being a regional representative for CMF? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you in a position to host or help host a regional CMF seminar?

Host \_\_\_\_\_ Help \_\_\_\_\_

[www.christianmontessorifellowship.com](http://www.christianmontessorifellowship.com)  
[mfidellow@swbell.net](mailto:mfidellow@swbell.net)

### Membership Benefits

1. Discounts at conferences, seminars and forums.
2. Discounts on CMF tapes and literature
3. Membership certificate
4. Reduced advertising costs in the Cobbler
5. Discounts from selected vendors
6. A nice warm feeling knowing you are not alone and are not the only one seeking to return to the true spiritual roots of this unique education.
7. Your membership will help you, and many others, to serve your children better in Christ's name by providing opportunities for fellowship, learning and encouragement.
8. We have found a "pearl of great price" and your support of the Christian Montessori Fellowship will help spread this "good news" so many more children

might truly be nurtured intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually and come to know the Good Shepherd personally.

Join and support the fellowship by making your check for \$25 payable to: The Christian Montessori Fellowship or use your Visa, Master Card, or Discover.

Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_  
Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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22630 East Range  
San Antonio, TX 78220  
210-698-1911

### **Regional Conference Cost and Registration**

**Seminar Fee**                    **\$150**  
**Early Registration**        **\$125**  
(Three weeks before  
Seminar)  
**Membership discount**      **\$25**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_

Registration may be paid by check or credit card.

### **Order Form**

Membership	\$25	_____
Directory	\$15	_____
Conference		_____
Getting Your Money's Worth	\$ 7	_____
Total		_____

Make checks payable to the Christian Montessori Fellowship or use your Visa, Master Card, or Discover card.

Credit card Number  
\_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

Christian Montessori Fellowship  
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