

# The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship  
April 2003

## **National Conference**

**June 26- 28**  
**San Antonio, Texas**

## **A Baker's Dozen**

### **Of Montessori benefits for the child Help for the strong willed child**

Schools traditionally are not good places for strong willed children. They don't challenge the child or train him to challenge himself. Now the child will certainly challenge you, the class, the school and the system.

For the environment to be successful for the child you have to bring both challenges – his and yours - together. What happens most often is that the child is challenging and the teacher is defending the system. When you are defending a system, even Montessori, you tend to lose sight of the real goal in the challenge – getting the child to challenge himself (and not necessarily the system).

Strong willed children are leaders. They are born that way. Our responsibility is to take that raw power and drive and help the child transform it into harnessed energy.

One advantage of a prepared environment is that a child has choices. Choice, even all by itself, allows a strong willed child a focus for his drive. So instead of using his energies to

separate you from your sanity he is challenged by the choices. In a traditional environment he has one choice do what is asked or fight for his “better idea”. Bright children, and being strong willed seems to polish that brightness, don't want to be bored. They want to use – even HAVE to use – their drive to accomplish their goals. The challenge for us is to make our goals their goals without destroying the integrity of “following the child”.

A tension between Montessori and traditional education is the question of conformity – everyone doing the same thing at the same time in the same way to come out with the same results.

Again, we too have to be careful that we are not looking for our children to learn in conformity with our own training. It is the observation of the child that will lead you to know which track to take and which avenue to pursue.

Now in a Christian context, and this is where many secular Montessorians are extremely wary of faith based Montessori, doesn't the child have to conform to Bible based criteria? Of course he doesn't. Should that last sentence have read, “of course he does”? The answer to all of the above questions is a very definite “yes and no”. I'm glad I could clear that up for you.

On one hand there is no absolute free choice – neither in Montessori nor in

life. Everything is prescribed; everything has limits – even freedom. The environment is not a totally free environment. It is set up according to the historical dictates of what Montessori observed to be of necessity and value to the child. If you want to be a “real” Montessori school you use certain materials, certain procedures, certain practices. That is not a lack of freedom but the embracing of the freedom that does lead to a “certain” kind of outcome.

Now also remember that the child does not have absolute freedom in the environment. He may not abuse or destroy the materials; he may not interfere with the work of others etc. The strong willed child wishes to set his own direction and just like in the environment we set the walls up, we also set up walls that give direction and guidance.

So lets bring this back to our Christian context. If we treat the child’s spiritual life, like we traditionally treat his educational life we give him no joy, no challenge and no sense of choosing. Jesus woos us. Jesus attracts us with love not legalism. And the miracle is He chooses us then we choose Him.

Traditional educators have the fear that if learning is not “compelled” that no one will learn. And there are people of faith that fall into this same trap. I don’t know why children come into the world loving God. They do. They just don’t have a name for Him until we teach them. Then they embrace Him fully.

The strong willed child has a drive for independence. Now define

independence as self-governing and you now have a key for challenging the strong willed child. Combine this with a fundamental tenet of Montessori – learning to make wise choices – and you now have two keys for helping the driven strong willed child to reach the potential that God has placed in their life.

## **The 10 P’s of Ministry**

### **8. Perseverance**

It is always too soon to quit. Little in life is accomplished without resistance. In the natural realm we have gravity and friction that make tasks more difficult to accomplish. We exercise our muscles to pick up things or to move things. Now what we have done in the natural realm is to create tools that help us overcome gravity and friction. We use forklifts or two wheel dollies, we use graphite and oil. We create or adapt tools to meet the need at hand. My daddy used to tell me the difference between a professional and an amateur was that the professional had the right tools (and of course knew how to use them).

Having the right tools will help us persevere in our ministry. The first tool to acquire for perseverance is the attitude that adversity – friction, gravity, what have you – is common and is a given to be expected. Just because I do God’s work does not mean I get a free ride on the common problems of life. And on occasion we actually get more than our share of grief. You have to find the balance between feeling you should have no problems and feeling that Satan is ubiquitous (everywhere) and that he is all-powerful (he isn’t). What we face in any endeavor is the non-heavenly trinity of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Any project – ministry or otherwise – will land you in contention with this trio. The world made up of all its systems, both man made and God made (weather, gravity etc) will impose their own roadblocks to the achievement of your goals. The flesh, both others and ours, gives rise to friction and inertia. Having to deal with the first two by themselves sometimes doesn't even give the devil much to do. However he does go around like a roaring lion – spreading both fear and discouragement – seeking whom he may devour. If he makes you afraid or discourages you he doesn't have to oppose your work because you will have already given it up.

The second tool to acquire is the ability to listen. When God gives you a call it is important to listen carefully so you can remember clearly in times of conflict and opposition what it was that God asked of you.

The third tool for perseverance is to remember He has tremendous confidence in you. He doesn't give you tasks that He and you together cannot perform. Notice the order of the words – tasks that **He** and you together cannot perform. Remember when you get in a situation and you cry out to Him "I can't take it any more"; He will bring you back to 1 Corinthians 10:13 "He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear." The Greek word for temptation has the meaning of "putting to proof" and by implication – adversity.

And the fourth tool is to learn to be a good soldier. 2 Timothy 2:3 "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus." Every commander sends his troops into battle knowing that some

will be lost but their loss is accounted as part of the cost of winning. We endure hardship so that Jesus' goals and objectives will be reached – not just our own. If we lose our life for his sake (Matthew 16:25) we will find it. For some the losing of their life is truly a martyr's death but for most of us losing our life for his sake will mean "losing" our time by giving it to others, "losing" our money by giving it to others, "losing" our dreams to build God's reality and "losing" our egos to become more like Jesus.

It takes time and perseverance to become like Jesus but our Heavenly Father has all eternity and He will persevere to conform us to the image of His son.

## **Holidays**

### **Easter**

Of all the holidays (holy days) Easter is truly the greatest. We make more fuss over Christmas and Thanksgiving but as far as our spiritual life is concerned Easter **is** the defining moment of time because it allows us to enter into eternity. The great marvel of Easter to share with our children is that because Jesus died and rose again we don't have to be afraid. We don't have to be afraid of dying Jesus did that part. We don't have to be afraid of missing heaven because Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven and is waiting for us. We don't have to be afraid. He is risen. Halleluiah.

## **National Conference**

### **Proposed topics**

1. Celebrating the holidays
2. Practical life cycles

3. Real PE
4. Nutrition
5. Discipline
6. Grace and Courage
7. The prepared environment
8. How Jesus comes to your classroom
9. Respect for the child
10. Praise and worship
11. Music
12. And more

The conference begins at 10:00 A.M. Thursday June 26<sup>th</sup> and runs through Saturday evening.

Christian Montessori Fellowship  
22630 East Range  
San Antonio, TX 78255

Or call 210-698-1911

**Send in your registration Now  
and  
Make your reservations  
at**

The Crockett Hotel  
Across from the Alamo  
1-800-292-1050  
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Double or single

**Do we have your current Email  
address?**

Conference cost is \$325 (\$300 if paid by May 1<sup>st</sup>.) and covers 3 lunches, 2 continental breakfasts, morning and afternoon breaks and Saturday banquet. More details are available on our website [www.crossmountainforum.com](http://www.crossmountainforum.com)