

The **Cobbler** Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship
May 2005

National Conference San Antonio June 23 – 25, 2005

Administrators Seminar Sessions For School Management www.crossmountainforum.com

**June 12th, 16th, 20th, 27th
July 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th**

Membership Drive

Before you pack it all up for the summer get a jump start on next year and become a member of the Christian Montessori Fellowship. Your membership fee of \$25 in the fellowship provides the Cobbler to Montessorians all across the country and the world. It provides for regional seminars, the national conference and the networking of Christian Montessorians. It provides for the advancement of Montessori education, the starting of new schools, continuing education and the blessing of thousands of children all over the world.

Please take time and make the financial effort to take part in this opportunity to both bless the future and to give thanks for all of those that have gone before us in this marvelous way to teach. Your membership will be in effect through August 1st, 2006.

The History of the Christian Montessori Fellowship

Barbara and I started a Christian Montessori School in 1972 for our own children. In the following ten years we changed locations and names three times finally settling as Lakemont Academy on four and a half acres of land in the middle of Dallas, TX.

Like many programs, we started with preschool and eventually added to both ends of the program ultimately going from Toddlers (eighteen months) through twelfth grade. The program included everything from formal dining rooms, to gardens, greenhouses, animals (a horse, pony, donkey, goats, sheep, chickens, rabbits and a peacock). Most importantly, it included a commitment to sharing Jesus with the children.

Having been among the early pioneers of Christian Montessori it dawned on us that we couldn't be the only ones interested in sharing Jesus with our children in a Montessori manner. There must be other Christians who were involved in Montessori, so we set out to find them. Using whatever directories and lists that were available (where was the internet when you really needed it?), we sent out over 1500 letters. It was a joyous time to get the mail each day to find brothers and sisters who shared these same great passions for Jesus and Montessori. As our board chairman reminds us that in those days most of the Christians were working in

secular schools and now over twenty years later there are hundreds of Christian Montessori schools.

Having spent over ten years discovering how wonderful it was to nurture children in this most fantastic Montessori way we wanted to apply this same technique to the teaching of Bible and the scriptures. After we started the fellowship, we discovered that others had the same idea and we were introduced to Jerome Berryman and Godly Play and to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. And to lots of wonderful Christian brothers and sisters.

We held our first conference on April 23rd, 1983 in Dallas. The Fellowship has held a three-day conference each year since then, with Montessorians attending from each coast, from North and South and even Canada.

In August of 2001, we closed our school after 29 years. Closing a labor of love and your calling, under difficult circumstances, takes great faith in the sovereignty of God. You have to believe that God has better ideas than even the one you thought was His idea to begin with. The closing of the school did not dim the call of Montessori but allowed us to concentrate full time on the Christian Montessori Fellowship.

The newsletter of the fellowship “The Cobbler” had been an intermittent publication. In January of 2002 “The Cobbler” began regular monthly publication. Someone recently wrote and said, “I have a copy of “The Cobbler” from 1993 and the next issue I have is from 2002. Can you send me the ones in between?” We had to laugh. As you all well know, running a school leaves little time for almost anything else.

The inauguration of the first regional conference in March 2002 was held in Washington D.C.. Montessorians attended from New York, New Jersey, Virginia and South Carolina. In July 2002 the national conference was held in San Antonio right next to the Alamo. (However, we all survived.) San Antonio is now the home for the Christian Montessori Fellowship and hosts the national conference each summer.

Our grown Montessori children encouraged us to use the internet to search for more Montessorians and Christian Montessori schools. (Montessori training does make children smart.) So we began prospecting on the internet. There are thousands of sites with “Christian” and “Montessori” in them. Many are lists of Christian schools and Montessori schools. Some sites tease you – like the Montessori school on Christian avenue, or the Montessori school that held its auction at Christian Brothers Winery, or the Montessori school with a little boy named Christian on their home page. But the internet has yielded a wonderful harvest of a diverse assortment of Montessori schools interested in the Christian spiritual nurturing of their children - not only in the United States but in Canada, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Finding more Christian Montessori schools has led to an ever-expanding list of regional conferences each year. Recent conferences have been held in Charlotte, Ann Arbor, Seattle, Chicago, Boston, Shreveport, Houston, Corpus Christi, St. Paul, D.C., Atlanta, New Jersey and Phoenix.

Interestingly, the history of the Fellowship is directed at the future. Everything that has gone on before is only a prelude to the making of new

history and the ability to bless even more children by training more Montessori guides and starting even more Christian Montessori schools.

The work we do today is tomorrow's history. The poet, Kahlil Gibran, wrote that children's "souls dwell in the house of tomorrow". And it is the efforts of all that have gone before us and those that go with us now that will continue to write this wonderful history. And then we can say about these children, like Paul says about the Corinthians (2 Cor.3:3) "You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

The ultimate history of the Christian Montessori Fellowship will be written in heaven. As children pass through our doors and are introduced to Jesus, His words of "Let the children come to Me." will be fulfilled. And the significant history of eternity will record their names in "the Lamb's book of life."

Of all the ways we can spend and pour out our lives, there is no greater significance than to minister to our children and to help them become all that God intended for them to be – both for time and eternity.

Help write the history.

Hands On

This story came over the internet. All of us receive dozens of emails. Some we have no interest in, others make us laugh, others choke us up and some make us think. "Grandpa's Hands" is a touching reminder to Montessorians.

Most of the important things in life become mundane – not unimportant but just accepted as part of our everyday life: the love of our family, our

relationship to God, the great country we live in and even our daily dose of Montessori.

So every now and then we need to remember Paul's words to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:6) "...fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you..." The gift that is within us is the recognition of the God revealed character of the nature of the child as shared by Dr. Montessori. It is this "hands on" approach to learning that becomes 'mundane' to us as we become fascinated by the amazing growth and learning our children do and who they become in the process. And it starts and continues with the hands.

GRANDPA'S HANDS

Grandpa, some ninety plus years, sat feebly on the patio bench. He didn't move, just sat with his head down staring at his hands. When I sat down beside him he didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if he was OK.

Finally, not really wanting to disturb him but wanting to check on him at the same time, I asked him if he was OK. He raised his head and looked at me and smiled, "Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking", he said in a clear strong voice. "I didn't mean to disturb you, grandpa, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were OK." I explained to him.

"Have you ever looked at your hands?" he asked. "I mean really looked at your hands?" I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. "No, I guess I had never really looked at my hands." as I tried to figure out the point he was making.

Grandpa smiled and related this story:

“Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled, shriveled and weak have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life. They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child, my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots.

They dried the tears of my children and caressed the love of my life. They held my rifle and wiped my tears when I went off to war. They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son.

Decorated with my wedding band they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special. They wrote the letters home, and trembled and shook when I buried my parents and spouse and walked my daughter down the aisle. Yet, they were strong and sure when I dug my buddy out of a foxhole and lifted a plow off of my best friend’s foot.

They have held children, consoled neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand. They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw.

And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer. These hands are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of my life.

But more importantly it will be these hands that God will reach out and

take when he leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side and there I will use these hands to touch the face of Christ.”

I will never look at my hands the same again. But I remember God reached out and took my grandpa's hands and led him home. When my hands are hurt or sore or when I stroke the face of my children and wife I think of grandpa. I know he has been stroked and caressed and held by the hands of God. I, too, want to touch the face of God and feel his hands upon my face.

Real Hands on Bible

Carolyn Ely of Montessori Episcopal School in Lewisville, TX shares these two “hands on” Bible experiences.

The toddlers had received the presentation of the Annunciation. Little Johnny was now working with the lesson. However he had removed all of the furnishings from Mary’s home – the table, chairs, vases, bed etc – and had them spread out all over the mat.

Seeing this, the teacher quietly asked, “Is this how Mrs. Jones showed you to do this lesson?”

Johnny replied, “No, but Mary is having a garage sale.”

Carolyn was preparing to present the Advent lesson which includes several votive candles. The children were seated on the circle ready for the lesson, when Sean got up and hurried over to the play area to retrieve a fireman figure. He protectively placed the towering fireman next to the lesson. Of course, Carolyn let the fireman stay an “observe” the lesson.

A Baker's Dozen Of Montessori benefits for the child Control of error

There is an old joke that says they have invented a new puzzle for children to prepare them for the 20th century (I told you it was an old joke). No matter how you put the puzzle together it doesn't fit. I think that puzzle is still good for the 21st century too!

And that brings us to control of error. Obviously one of our advantages in Montessori is that we hold to a basic concept that, by and large, all of the exercises contain a mechanism whereby the student can guide himself to a successful completion of the task.

The control of error is a first step in helping the student not to be dependent on an adult. There is something wonderfully psychological about being able to "do it myself". The function of the control of error is to foster this independence, this ability to keep putting the pieces together until they fit.

The significance of the control of error is that our children become use to putting the pieces together and it becomes a habit that will serve them well when the pieces of life do not fit and it will require concentration, determination and tenacity to deal with all of "the errors" of life.

What is Love?

Out of the mouths of babes

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So, my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.

Rebecca – age 8

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

Karl – age 5

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know your name is safe in their mouth."

Billy – age 4

National Conference Topics General Sessions

Montessori and the fourth R
Public Relations for Everyone
Secret of Childhood
Health and Fitness

Preschool

Circle time
Toddler Bible lessons
Sensorial extensions
Hands on Bible
Unit lessons
Plus

Elementary

Economic geography
Teacher evaluation
Classroom management
Record keeping
Bible for elementary
Plus

Membership Application

Available on the web site.

www.christianmontessorifellowship.com

National Conference

June 23-25
Respecting the Child
His spirit and his life

The conference begins at 10:00 A.M.
Thursday June 23rd and runs through
Saturday evening.

**Conference cost is \$325 (\$300 if
paid by May 1st, plus an additional
\$25 discount for CMF members) and
includes 3 lunches, morning and
afternoon breaks and Saturday
dinner.**

www.crossmountainforum.com

Or call 210-698-1911
Send in your registration Now

Make your reservations at

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

Lodging costs \$98.28 (tax included)

Double or single

Rates are good if you register for the
hotel by May 23rd

Christian Montessori Fellowship
22630 East Range
San Antonio, TX 78255

More details are available on our
websites:
www.christianmontessorifellowship.com