

The **Cobbler** Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship
April 2005

National Conference
June 23 – 25
San Antonio, TX

Regional Conferences
April 16, 2005
Apache Junction, AZ
April 23, 2005
Bernardsville, NJ

The Goals of the Christian Montessori Fellowship

1. Bring honor to God through the gifts He has given us.
2. Provide encouragement and fellowship for people who share these two great passions and gifts – Jesus and Montessori.
3. Articulate and share the Christian spiritual basis of Montessori education.
4. Provide professional development and best practice information for Montessori professionals.
5. Create a training program that combines the highest academic standards with the greatest spiritual understanding.
6. Lower the financial and distance barriers that prevent the training of more Montessori guides.
7. Create multiple training centers for Montessori education by

- means of DVD' s and national training camps.
8. Provide for Christian Montessori school accreditation.
 9. Help encourage and transform traditional Montessori schools to become Christian Montessori schools.
 10. Help and encourage traditional Christian schools to become Christian Montessori schools.
 11. Help encourage and start new Christian Montessori schools.
 12. Help encourage, train and start missionary Montessori schools in all parts of the world.
 13. Provide a network of mentors to enhance Christian Montessori education.
 14. Network with individuals, schools and organizations that share these goals.

**“Beyond the 3 R’ s
and the 4 Walls.”**

**Our call to share the Gospel
“And you will be my witnesses in
Jerusalem, and in all Judea and
Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”
Acts 1:8**

When you run a school or a classroom (they often run us), there is not much time or energy to consider anything beyond the challenges at hand. Giving your best to your students is a

joyous but demanding calling. Just making your environment (and school) into the model of the effective prepared environment occupies so much of our time, even out of school. (Consider that Montessorians may be the only ones who go to Paris and come back with twelve assorted sizes of Eiffel Towers.)

Our challenge as Christian Montessorians is to think beyond our four walls and three R's to how we can best share this tremendous heritage and treasure of Christian Montessori.

There are at least five things each of us can do. Depending on the times and seasons of our life some can be more effectively done than others.

The first priority has to be to make our environments and programs the very best examples of what Montessori can aspire to. Good enough is never good enough but then neither is perfection the goal. (The only way to have a perfect environment is to keep the children and teachers out.) Excellence and the continual striving for even better is realistic. Our environments are our Jerusalem.

Second, we need to look for or create opportunities to invite outsiders in so they can witness and experience the miracle of Montessori. Having an open door and an open heart to share what we are experiencing will in effect be our outreach to "Judea".

Third, making the commitment to keep on learning and expanding our experience, understanding and acquisition of best practices by reading, going to classes and conferences will not only reward us but give us the opportunity to share with others the adventure we are on. This in effect is our Samaria.

Fourth, join up with other Montessorians. There is strength in numbers but even more importantly, there is encouragement in joining with others. As independent as we are, there is a deep satisfaction in knowing that we are not alone in our endeavors.

There are many Montessori organizations both locally and nationally that offer training, teaching and encouragement. There is much to be gained from all of them. However, given the uniqueness of the treasure we hold and share I would ask you to make the Christian Montessori Fellowship a pre-eminent consideration for your limited time and resources.

When you support the work of CMF you will further both Montessori education and the sharing of the Gospel. You in turn will receive tremendous dividends on the investment of your time, treasure and talents.

As we find each other and our numbers grow we will discover that each of us have gifts that need to be shared. Some have taught for thirty years and have deep insights that need to be imparted – especially to beginners. And no matter how many years we've taught there is always something new that someone else has discovered. Others have developed unique presentations and effective programs and have pioneered areas that others, not gifted in that particular way, can use to enhance many schools.

The Christian Montessori Fellowship exists to network and share these gifts. The fellowship also exists so you can get to know other wonderful people who share your two great passions – Jesus and Montessori. The way to make the fellowship more effective is for each of us to make a commitment to:

1. Join the fellowship
2. Support, host and attend the regional conferences.
3. And to make sure there is someone from your school attending the national conference to bring back encouragement, enthusiasm and new ideas

The fifth major thing that we can do is to share our best strategies, plans, insights and presentations to be published in *The Cobbler*. I know how difficult it is to add “one more thing” to our already full things to do today list. But that is the commitment and the thank you gift we can return to God for the blessing of Montessori and in gratitude to all of those who went before us and shared their insights. We can pass on these unique insights and activities that God creatively gives us so we can bless multitudes of children all over the world.

Can some of your sweet anecdotes be jotted down in two minutes? Can some of your presentations be written down in ten? Can you find an hour to share your insights and discoveries?

If each of us will make one effort, can you imagine the return on your investment of time? You will receive dozens, if not hundreds, of ideas, shared pearls of wisdom and practical applications. This will be taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

The Christian Montessori Fellowship exists to be a catalyst for enhancing, refining and encouraging the very best Montessori teaching.

The fellowship also exists to help each of us to honor God with the commitment of our minds, souls and bodies through this unique way of, not

only teaching, but of living life in its fullest dimension.

In doing all of this we can fulfill our part of the great commission to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world.

A Baker’ s Dozen Of Montessori benefits for the child Repetition

Over and over again, we need to be reminded that just as the caterpillar is and is not the butterfly and the tadpole is and is not the frog so the child is and is not the adult. This is most profoundly apparent in the matter of repetition.

As adults, we want to do a job and be done with it. A child looks at his tasks with a different perspective. Of all people in life that you will meet, children come closest to understanding (before they have to re-learn it as adults) that life is a journey and not a destination. They take great joy in the prospects “at hand”.

We’ ve all seen children wash tables again and again. As adults, we bemoan the fact that we would have to wash the table a second time because we didn’ t get it clean the first time. “Clean” is a destination for the child and not the enjoyment of the journey, of the water, the soap, the brush, the rag, the movement, the pleasure and the satisfaction of the process.

Traditional schools want the child to master (or reasonably master) whatever task has been presented and move on. The attitude is that this was one more thing “accomplished”. Children look at their activities differently. Repetition is not burdensome but joyful if it is an activity that is meeting a deep-seated

need or joy. (Doing dozens of sheets of math problems does not fit this criteria – unless the child has chosen them.)

Repetition for the child represents both an opportunity to perfect (to the child's satisfaction) the activity and/or to enjoy the confidence that the child feels in his accomplishment. Repetition is the savoring of the moment, the activity, and the accomplishment.

Children are not as in a hurry as adults. Adults often lose the perspective of joy and enjoyment while the child easily (by repetition) savors life one activity at a time.

Do you notice that when older children re-visit their pre-school that they gravitate to exercises of practical life or sensorial activities. These were their first individual accomplishments and they hold, not only memories, but are the representation of the seeds of success and confidence that the child now feels in his latest endeavors.

Understanding the need and place of repetition in the child's life can also make us slow down, re-visit, and savor the multitude of accomplishments that we too have experienced.

Repetition, also, has a Biblical precedent. When God performed a redemptive act in Israel, He encouraged them to build an altar of stones, so that in future days when their children would see the altars they would ask, "Why are these stones here?" And the Israelites would retell the stories of God's deliverance building confidence in God's power and love. So repetition is a reminder to the child that God has empowered them with the abilities to master and conquer not only life at hand but themselves as well.

It is no wonder that children trained in Montessori have such a profound

different approach to life than so many children that have not had the benefit of this experience.

Educational Principles Of Montessori

10. Observation

Observation has two parts in a Montessori environment: What the student does and what the teacher does. In contrast to traditional education, a Montessori student spends as much time looking as he does listening. Students are encouraged to "copy" each other. In fact, observation is a major teaching component of peer teaching. Students begin to understand the process of learning by watching other students perform. They, then in turn, begin to perfect this acquisition of learning by getting their hands on the materials.

Often, it appears that students have "magically" learned something they have not been shown how to do. The explanation of this is certainly observation.

Just as a student learns by observation, a teacher also learns. But the knowledge that a teacher acquires is of a different sort and for a different purpose. The teacher's observation is to gain knowledge, not of the materials but of the interaction between the child and the materials.

Traditionally, a teacher is looking at how to better present the material, while a Montessori teacher is concentrating (observing) on the interaction of the child with the material. Excellence still needs to be developed in presentations

but the art comes in knowing which presentation to which child at what time.

Yogi Berra is famous for such remarks as, “You can see a lot if you just look.” Funny but true.

The 10 P’ s of Ministry

Pain

Failure

A classical definition of tragedy is the downfall of the protagonist through a weakness of his own. That is a long way around definition to tell you that some of the pain involved in ministry is of our own doing. That is not really a revelation to any of us, is it? But it should be a reminder that getting knocked down (even when we deserve it) though it might bring much pain – does not have to be a tragedy.

Failure in our lives needs to be acknowledged and at the same time, it has to be defined as something other than “the end of the world”. Most of our failures are not fantastic, nor final, nor fatal. They are failures - a failure to achieve a goal on the first attempt. Most failures in life allow you second chances. (Isn’ t that what God does with Salvation and Grace?) You take a driver’ s test over, lawyers take the bar exam over, you burn dinner, you start over.

Many of our failures impact only us. We are disappointed with ourselves; we get mad at ourselves; we feel stupid and depressed.

However that pales in comparison with the feelings we get when we fail with other people. Invariably, we will disappoint someone. Someone will get

mad at us over unfulfilled expectations. We will have to manage people who don’ t want to be managed. We will have to confront people who don’ t want to hear what we have to say.

And all of that is but a slice of disappointment and hurt compared to the damage we do to others (and ourselves) when we display our temper, our fits of pique, our impatience and all of the other attitudes that we harbor that cause hurt and resentment.

If we were only perfect then these pains we cause others (and ourselves) would disappear. Unfortunately, they would be replaced by probably a greater pain – the self-righteousness of our seeming perfection. Can we win for losing?

Failure is not all bad. I don’ t wish it on anyone but then you don’ t have to. As Proverbs tells us, “As sparks fly up from the fire so is man born to trouble.” We will always have our failures and the pain that those failures bring.

God allows our failures. He could protect us from all of them but we might never learn those special lessons of humility, compassion, grace and long-suffering. We are a sensitive people, as Christians and Montessorians, but each of us have our blind spots and rough spots. And it is our failure to live up to His perfection and sweetness that ultimately makes us depend on Him to do in us what only He can do.

Now, what happens when others will not forgive us our failures? That becomes part of the pain that we learn to live with. What happens when our actions make people break fellowship with us? That is part of the pain that we don’ t want to have to deal with again and that will make us temper our actions and words and attitudes.

Ultimately, pain protects us from greater pain – and death. Like the old story, “Why do you keep hitting yourself in the head with a hammer? Because it feels so good when I stop.” Pain makes us wiser to avoid activities that bring discomfort. However, it takes great wisdom to know which pains bring death and which pains (and failures) will bring life and honor and glory to God.

Insider Montessori Myth #1

“If a child is not in Montessori by the time he is three it is almost too late.”

We’ve all heard it said one time or another. We may have even repeated it ourselves. We’ve taken a grain of truth about sensitive periods and have expanded it beyond its original intention. Montessori does say, “A sensitive period refers to a special sensibility which a creature acquires in its infantile state, while it is still in a process of evolution. It is a transient disposition and limited to the acquisition of a particular trait. Once this trait, or characteristic, has been acquired, the special sensibility disappears.” *Secret of Childhood* (pg.38).

It is a great joy to watch children move through their sensitive periods becoming normalized and flowing through the environment. The older a child is when he enters the longer it takes him to become normalized. My preschool staff never wanted me to bring in five year olds because they had a tougher time (both the child and the adult) adapting to the dynamics of the environment. Then again, my elementary staff never wanted me to bring in new first graders who had no

Montessori training – let alone second graders or third graders. And heaven help us and them and everyone if we ventured to enroll non-Montessori upper elementary students.

So what started as an observation of the uniqueness of the sensitive periods became a dictum for protecting the normalized environment from four-year-old “foreign” influences. Given the “difficulty” of slotting in a “non-Montessori” child into the environment at five or six or seven or later, it became a “law of too late”.

Yes, there are challenges in bringing a child late to the environment. It is not that it is too difficult for the child to adapt but it requires a uniqueness of ability and willingness on the part of the guide.

Montessori later in the same chapter (pg.39) says, “But if a child has not been able to act according to the directives of his sensitive period, the opportunity of a natural conquest is lost, and is lost for good.” The great operative words in this quotation that combats insider myth number one are “natural conquest.” Yes, it is much easier to learn a foreign language as a young child but that does not mean it cannot be done later in life.

The ultimate reproof of this myth resides in you and your environment. How old were you and your co-workers when they came upon this wonderful way of learning and living? We are never too old to come to Montessori nor too old to come to God. God is a great Redeemer of all that is lost.

**Regional Seminars
Apache Junction, AZ
Mountain Brook Montessori
Academy**

**201 N. Ironwood Dr.
Apache Junction, AZ 85220
Pat Barton
(480) 983-0883**

**First Presbyterian Church of
Bernardsville
321 Mine Brook Road
Bernardsville, NJ 07924
908-766-2950**

**Seminar Fee \$150
Early Registration \$125
Membership discount \$25
Job Openings**

Go Like the Wind! Montessori School

Director of Admissions

The candidate must be an effective communicator, able to share with prospective families the philosophy of the Montessori method of education. They must also strongly support the school's Christian mission. The ideal candidate must be positive, mature, professional; team oriented, and have excellent relationship-building skills. The qualifications are Undergraduate degree; Montessori certified; teaching experience; school administrative or leadership experience; Strong knowledge of child development; business and management skills. For complete details, see www.golikethewind.com.

Lower and Upper Elementary Teachers

The school seeks certified, experienced Montessori teachers devoted to elementary-age children. The candidates will have an opportunity to work closely with the co-teachers of the existing classrooms. A Bachelor's degree, along with Montessori Elementary certification (6-9 and/ or 6-12, AMS or AMI), are required. Please forward your cover letter and resume to Doug Collier, Administrator. Go Like the Wind Montessori School, 3540 Dixboro Lane, Ann Arbor, MI. 48105, 734 747-7422 doug@golikethewind.com

Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR TODDLER (18 MOS. – 36 MOS.), PRIMARY (3-6 YRS.), ELEMENTARY (6-12 YRS.) LEAD TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS.

Program: Christian Montessori School is seeking individuals with a true commitment to Christ and educating children. We are a Christian Montessori school that boasts and exceptional Montessori trained staff and multicultural community. We are located on 20 acres of picturesque farmland in the beautiful Lake Norman area, 20 miles north of the city of Charlotte, NC. We are looking for unique individuals, with a true commitment to Christ, Montessori excellence, and professional growth. Our vision is to become a foreign immersion school representing at least 5 (five) continents.

Position Requirements: Montessori Certification; Associates or Bachelors degree preferred but not required for Lead Teachers. At least one-year experience in a childcare setting preferred.

Salary Range: Based on education and experience.

Benefits: (F/T only) Medical and Life Insurance, 401-k; paid personal/sick and vacation days, professional development funds, and training sponsorship available.

Contacts: Submit resume and cover letter by fax to (704) 875-9799 or e-mail to scurry@christianmontessorischool.org.

Incarnate Word Academy Director Wanted

Incarnate Word Academy in Corpus Christi Texas is looking for a Montessori Coordinator to direct their Montessori program of 141 students in three primary, three lower el and one upper el environments. Need to be degreed, certified, experienced and Catholic. Contact Sister Camelia Herlihy at 361-883-0857, sherlihy@iwacc.org.

Missionary Opportunity India

**22630 East Range
San Antonio, TX 78255**

We are in need of \$2500 to buy a set of Montessori equipment for the classroom. Will you be able to depute a short term Missionary to come and set this up for us? We will provide clean place for the person to live in. May I hear from you soon?

Please note our contact address: Bethany Educational Society, Vennikulam Post, Thiruvalla, Kerala 689 544, India, tel. # 0469 265 0578 (Office), 265 1675 (Residence), e-mail. pta_bethany@sancharnet.in, website. www.bethanyacademy.com ..Thank you. God bless you.

Mathews Chacko

Chairman

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.

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

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

