

The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship
June 2003

National Conference

**San Antonio, Texas
June 26 – 28th**

A Baker's Dozen Of Montessori benefits for the child

Order

One of the great insights of Dr. Montessori concerns the sensitive period in the child for order. God has put into each of us this drive for order just the same as He has put this spiritual drive that is in each child from birth. If you take this tender shoot (the child) and nurture him correctly (Montessori?) from birth you wind up with a different kind of mature plant – the adult. This concept in itself is not rocket science but what is significant is the completely different kind of adult you wind up with – not just different but transformed.

This is what I believe Montessori was counting on as the “normalized child” that would become the peace bringer adult and by doing so impact the world. The concept has great value, as there are many wonderful people involved in Montessori who truly seek to create this “peaceful” world.

The one significant difference is that this “transformed” adult has only so much natural power to effect this wonderful and lofty goal. But to achieve this goal of peace requires supernatural power. You need this supernatural

power first to deal with yourself then to be able to deal with a misshapen world.

Everything that is good in the universe resides within us as well as everything that is bad. There are many well-meaning people who hold to the philosophy that man is good. And there are many well-meaning people who hold to the philosophy that man is evil. I believe that basic Christianity holds both viewpoints. And there are plenty of scriptures to back up both – Psalm 8:4 “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

So is man good or bad? Both. If we hold only to the former thesis – that man is good and only needs the benefit of enlightened education (Montessori?) to become the new man of peace then we effectively say that Christianity is unimportant. Unimportant because if man is good he doesn't need a Savior and effectively again we do away with the message of the Angels to the shepherds (Luke 2:10) “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

However if we do not recognize that man is good – and worth “saving” – we tend to trample on the creation of God (which is what a lot of education and parenting seems to do.)

What does all of this have to do with order? We have got to get the order correct concerning man and good and

evil. It is not that man is – good, good, good, good or bad, bad, bad, bad. It is that man is good, bad, good, bad. He is good enough to “save” but not so “bad” that he is beyond redemption. It has been said that there is a God shaped hole in each of our hearts and we are not satisfied until our hearts find rest in Him. The good that we possess and are impels us towards Him. That is why little children are drawn to the Good Shepherd. However it is the evil that we also harbor that keeps us from coming to Him. To come to Him means we have to be willing to give up all the things that keep us from Him. You can pick any group of scriptures that lists the depravities of the human heart and you can make your own checklist. (Let’s try Colossians 3:5 “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry”. If we don’t identify with verse 5 we can move onto verse 8 “But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.” Verse 9 “Do not lie to each other...”

If you have ever undertaken a self-help program to correct these kind of things – whether it was for Lent or not – you know the challenge. That is why we need supernatural power. That is why we need a Savior. That is why we have to have our life in order because it is in this order (the order that God has ordained) that we will find our fullest development as human beings in right relationship to God and to each other. That is where we will truly get the Angel’s message “Peace on Earth to men on whom His favor rests.”

This great goal of Dr. Montessori (and God) is to help create this order in the child, in the future adult, and in the

world. The child is trying to make sense out of their environment. The infant is learning hot and cold, yes and no. The child is learning to decipher the language code putting the words in order to make sense. This is why a Montessori environment is such a peaceful place for children because it is an ordered world. Things are as they should be. Things are in their place. There is little loss of emotional energy giving to fretting over disorder. Intellectual energy is spent going forward instead of being wasted trying to regroup and organize. The whole environment is in proper order to help the child add one learning experience to another in the most beneficial and efficient manner instead of being shot gunned with multitudes of random intellectual pellets from which the child is expected to draw the right and logical conclusions. In the environment he uses his skills to continue to put in order the experiences that are coming to him. And since he already has been given an orderly frame of reference the task becomes much more of a game (and enjoyable) and less of a threat (and frustrating).

Order is God’s idea. That is how he created the universe all the way down to the phylum and the colors of the rainbow. Our children are happier with order. Our world is happier with order. When our children get the order down personally they then have energy and drive to create that order and peace in the world. Order really is a spiritual question. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and then all of these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

The 10 P’s of Ministry

10. Principles

You could almost humorously say that principles don't give lots of people any trouble because they don't have any. While it may be humorous it would also be very sad. Most people would say that they live by the Ten Commandments and that would be good but it is the principles between the commandments that need to draw our attention.

Our modern society has not put a lot of emphasis on developing principled action. Much of what we hear from pop psychology, education and culture concerns how we feel about things. Principles are not about feelings. They are thought out responses before the need to respond presents itself. Principles are based on religious, moral, and ethical considerations. Principles don't change according to the situation – that's called situational ethics. Principles are those beliefs we live by (and die by if necessary) when faced with a situation that requires decisive and critical action.

Most people never develop their own principle code. Leaders must. (And teachers are leaders.) Leadership is a trust – sometimes given to us by men but most often given by God. To fulfill this trust we have to be consistent in our words and in our walk. Failure isn't solely personal. It enters the spiritual realm when the reputation of God is brought into question. It is not always about us. It is always about God.

Therefore developing principles – not leadership principles – but personal, moral, ethical, and spiritual principles is a necessary step in our development not only as leaders but also as Christians – and representatives of Jesus.

The development of principles is not a feel good action because it usually occurs through fire and furnace. And the subsequent holding to principle is

often achieved at great cost – emotionally, physically, financially, socially and professionally. Ironically it is only when we fail to hold to principle that we are hurt spiritually. There is not a lot of comfort in doing what is right (being principled) when everything around you seems to go to “hell in hand basket”. That is why principles are not emotionally based. There is little joy when called upon to exercise principle because if doing what is right is its own reward it doesn't “seem” to pay off emotionally, physically, financially, socially or professionally. I'm not being negative here. The reality is that when you are called on to act principally it is often in a situation where there will be no real winners. If you win by violating your principles you've gained little. If you lose by following your principles few will applaud you. (The applause of heaven is hard to hear in the here and now.) That is why you develop and hone your principles long before you need them. That is why you choose “your” principles carefully. Principles are like a sword. If you hold them tightly they guard the soul. If you drop them they, like a sword, can cut soul and spirit apart. Still leaders need principles (as dangerous as they might be) because our service is not really to ourselves, or to our people or our ministries. Our service is to God. Next month we will begin to explore the seven principles that we have chosen to guide our actions. You will have to choose your own.

Please send in the questions that you are always asked about Montessori.

National Conference

Proposed topics

1. Celebrating the holidays
2. The Special Needs Child

3. Real PE
4. Nutrition
5. Discipline of the Environment
6. Grace and Courage
7. The prepared environment
8. How Jesus comes to your classroom
9. Respect for the child
10. God's children Sing
11. Music, How it affects the learning potential of the child
12. The importance of Toddler training
13. Hands on Bible

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

Christian Montessori Fellowship
22630 East Range
San Antonio, TX 78255

Or call 210-698-1911

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