

Life, Liberty and Law



Nancy Murphy

Several months ago, in an effort to discover what it was about Values Clarification that Catholic teachers found so fascinating, why they were so eager to flock to government-funded workshops and why, after a two- or three-week exposure to Piaget, Kohlberg, Simon, Howe and Kirschenbaum, some of them were anxious

to experiment on children — I read Piaget, Kohlberg, Simon, Howe and Kirschenbaum. I also read Moral Development: a Guide to Piaget and Kohlberg, a book written and published by Catholics who appear to be sold on VC and development stage theories. (I strongly urge all Christian parents to read this book, available from Paulist Press, 400 Sette Dr., Paramus, N.J. 07652; \$3.95.) In my considered judgment, Values Clarification is an intriguing mixture of atheistic Humanism and group therapy; and this book written and designed to praise it, actually succeeds in burying it.

There are specific rules governing a person's "progress" through the Kohlberg theoretical stages,

and these are seen as absolutes. "1. One must progress through the stages in order, and one cannot get to a higher stage without passing through the stage immediately preceding it. 2. Subjects cannot comprehend moral reasoning more than one stage beyond their own. 3. Subjects are cognitively attracted to reasoning one level above their own. 4. Movement through the stages is effected when cognitive disequilibrium is created, that is, when a person's cognitive outlook is not adequate to cope with

a given moral dilemma if a person's orientation is not disturbed, if there is no disequilibrium, there is no reason to expect any development. Note: Please reread no. 4. What it says is unless the facilitator, teacher or group leader shakes up the subject's moral foundations — unless the subject is shaken until he no longer recognizes right from wrong, good from bad, unless he is forced into a state of moral confusion or "disequilibrium" there can be no hope of moral

development. Only when he is deliberately provoked into confusion through the use of the Piaget-concocted stories, dilemmas or strategies, only when he is beyond his ability to cope, can the subject be led upward toward "maturity." And remember please, the subject may be as young as ten years.

Stage two: "Parents fall off the pedestals they were on and it becomes thinkable that somebody else's parents would be preferable to ours."

Stage four and one-half: "The (Catholic) Church where one was nurtured and which one thought of as a guaranteed instrument for peace, order and happiness has fallen off its pedestal. It is not now seen as a divine institution free from error, but as another human institution with all the frailties and limitations of human institutions."

"This is not easy for parents to accept. Remember, you cannot imprint your values on your progeny." That's Catholic teaching!

ON THE RIGHT SIDE



Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

Most priests and Sisters who served the diocese of Rochester when Bishop Lawrence B. Casey was auxiliary to the beloved Bishop Kearney smile to remember his passion for promptness in time, and precision in order. I myself often thought of him as a human IBM machine, grinding out directives and plans and assignments with wise but soulless efficiency. His recently published book, The Heart Remembers, Too, reveals a compassion which will surprise many. Whether he mellowed in the episcopacy, or had a gentle grace which he kept hidden, I do not know. But his book is a touching selection of thoughts from the heart as well as from his mind.

His style is homely, folksy, simple. He tells stories to illustrate points. He touches the bases which are understandable to the Grass Roots Catholics. He edifies by his compassion without being sentimental.

In one article, entitled The Pursuit of Happiness, he begins:

"Just after she celebrated her 20th wedding anniversary, Mrs. Dwight Morrow, mother of Anne Lindbergh, sat at dinner next to Paderewski and was reminded of a time when she heard the great pianist from a gallery seat in Northampton's Academy of Music.

"Paderewski asked if she often went back to her Alma Mater. Yes, I like to go back and sit in my old chapel seat, thinking how much happier I am now than I ever thought I would be," answered Mrs. Morrow. Paderewski stopped eating at her reply. You don't mean to tell me that you are happier now than you thought at eighteen you would be. Yes, indeed! Mrs. Morrow answered. Paderewski made her a deep bow. Mrs. Morrow, I want to meet your husband.

"Happiness is bound up with the ability to work and to be readily interested in the world around us." It

also demands an unabashed appreciation of leisure and solitude.

A funny yet instructive chapter is entitled Our Schnozzles. It reads: "Jimmy Durante has some delightful tales about his childhood. When he was eight, his mother made him wear a Buster Brown suit with a large flowing collar on Sundays.

"He slunk along self-consciously, hugging the walls. The lad was afraid his gang would make fun of him.

"The future comedian saw himself in a store window. As he gazed at the apparition he started laughing. Some of his gang came along and said: 'What's so funny?' Look and Jimmy pointed to the figure in the window. 'A guy dressed like a sissy with a face like a horse.' Soon his friends were laughing along with him.

"All of us have schnozzles — are ridiculous in one way or another, if not in our faces, then in our characters, minds or habits. When we admit our schnozzles, instead of defending them, we begin to laugh, and the world laughs with us.

The chapter called Your Expression is a gem. "Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important. The next time you catch a glimpse of yourself in a store window, skip the glance at your hat angle and check up on the expression just below. Then decide if it isn't worth a little time and effort to exchange that look of grim determination for something more appealing. You are never fully dressed until you wear a smile.

"Here is a prayer written by an old friend. O God, Creator of all good things, grant to Your servants the gifts of cheerfulness, of joyful living, of ready and smiling acceptance of Your Will. May our countenance and our lips mirror the happiness of living in your friendship. And may we, by our own example, spread around us the blessing of your love and joy. Amen."

These are only samples. If you want a good treat for a friend, or for yourself, do buy Bishop Casey's paperback, The Heart Remembers, Too (\$1.95). It is available at some book stores and in some church book racks. Or you can get a copy by writing to me at Holy Trinity Church, Webster, N.Y. 14580.

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