

ANABAPTIST THEOLOGIES OF CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION *

(3) ANABAPTIST SCHOOLING : EDUCATION OR SOCIALISATION?

1. Schools

Once childhood is viewed as separate from adulthood, and once children are freed from attitudes that treat them as little men, then training and nurture become important. Equally, once education and schooling become important then goals and ideals, content and methods, are crucial. The Anabaptists viewed childhood as a separate phase of human development with distinctive characteristics as we have seen. They established schools and developed their own philosophy of education. They had a particular style of upbringing.

We have raised certain questions about the nature of education, the tendency to indoctrination, and the force of the process of socialisation amongst Anabaptists. With the stress on obedience, children were under parental control and within a school community to be disciplined and to learn obedience. By their stress on the corporate expression of the Will of God within the Community, and their separation from society at large, they elevated certain people within their own community, notably the schoolmaster. By admonition, instruction and discipline, and by his own example, the schoolmaster was to rear the children in obedience. What else was present in the schooling of Anabaptist children?

Evidence in this discussion is 'A Hutterite School Discipline of 1578 and Peter Scherer's Address of 1568 to the Schoolmasters'¹ It is remarkable in the thoroughness, care and competence with which it treats children. In the history of education and theology of childhood it is a precious piece of work. Harold Bender notes that the schools of the Anabaptists were not to be compared with the usual volksschulen:

They were rather children homes, in which the children were almost entirely reared and trained. For this reason the schoolmasters were not so much teachers as (together with the so called 'school mothers and school sisters') guardians and caretakers (Bewahrer) of the children entrusted to them.²

In the *School Discipline* itself, Peter Walpot, the author, writes that the schoolmaster is to care for the children in every way. He is to sleep with them, have a regard for cleanliness, food and other material necessities. Yet the highest goal of the schooling was to teach the fear of God, and right ways of living.³ Higher worldly scholarship was disregarded, as evidenced by the priests of the Church, who in trying to quench the fire of the spirit in the Anabaptists, served only to reveal their complete ignorance.

* Completing the series begun in July 1982, and continued in October 1982, July and October 1984.

From earliest years the children were handed over to the school. However this did not mean that the Anabaptists did not value the child as a baby. There was no practice of birth control, babies are a gift from God. The mother is free from other duties to concentrate on her baby, and this is not only part of her socialisation in the well-ordered society but also the beginning of the baby's socialisation. Anabaptist mothers played with their babies, and babies were encouraged to enjoy play. They were given toys, but the parent was not disappointed when the infant moved out of the 'toy' stage, for this meant that the child was progressing into the next stage of development. There is a delightful reference to children and their toys in a letter from Sebastian Franck to John Campanus (Strasburg 1531). It refers to the Mediaeval Church and its sacraments. The sacraments are described as 'playthings for children'. However, for our purpose, the reference indicates a picture of infancy and enjoyment of babyhood amongst the Anabaptists, with the satisfaction of the parents when the child grows out of babyhood and puts away his toys:

God permitted indeed gave the outward signs to the church in its infancy, just like a doll to a child, not that they were necessary for the Kingdom of God nor that God should require them of our hands. Instead the church in its childhood did not want to dispense with such things as a staff; and (God therefore favoured the infant church) as a father gives something to a child so that it won't cry. But when the child is at length strong enough and able to throw away the staff, the father does thereupon become angry, but rather the same is pleasing to the father.

... nothing has been taken from the child except the doll with which it has played long enough. One must leave the nest, and thereupon strive for greater and more serious things, namely, for faith, penitence, denial of self. This means the same to be true Christians and to know Christ and (inwardly) to enjoy his flesh as food. ⁴

As soon as the baby was weaned, it was placed in the school and supervised by the school mother. In the Bruderhof of the Hutterites there were two schools, the 'little' and the 'big'. After weaning the child was put into the 'little' school. From the age of six (age of transition from infancy to youth), he attended the 'big' school, supervised and taught by the school master. Great care was taken of the child's welfare, and of the relationships between the children. The school was a miniature community. Examination of the *School Discipline* reveals certain things integral to the whole process:

... (they) shall be gradually trained to love the Lord and as soon as they begin to talk they shall be taught to pray at the proper time. ⁵

... the boys are to be wakened and during the time, the latter (the girls) are clothing, combing, washing themselves, the smaller children are to be taken out, dressed, and washed, so that they will be for prayer and be able to sit at table. ⁶

At evenings one should take particular care not to put the children to bed too soon after eating, which is unnatural for them...⁷

Clearly there is an order: rise, wash, clothe, comb the hair, prayer, exercise and then the meal.⁸

Table Rules are still closely observed by the modern day Hutterites. John A. Hostetler appends a list of them in his work on Hutterite Society. They were part of the children's ritual before eating meals in the dining room of the school. The rules would be memorised, and recited daily before entering the room. They are interesting examples not only of community discipline and obedience, but also of the principle of rote learning, and the common practice of the use of jingles and rhymes to convey strong ethical and moral principles. Hostetler has a list of twenty in all. The following represent a sample for the purposes of illustration:

In table prayer be serious
And fold your hands in love
Always in reverence lifting up
Your heart to God above.

When the meal comes to an end
Be thankful for the good
Be ready with great happiness
To pray in gratitude.

You must never seat yourself
Ahead of all the others,
Because that is the surest mark
Of most ill mannered brothers.

For God has called each one of us
His loving child to be
That we may in our faith persist
To serve him joyfully.⁹

Care was taken over proper clothing and sleeping habits, and in the allocation of work duties to children at different ages.

The children were socialised in good habits, disciplined to accept willing obedience as a positive good and ultimately to enjoy it. But above all the children were to be cared for. Such caring is of God himself to whom the schoolmaster and the sisters will be answerable. Peter Walpot reminds that the schoolmaster and his helpers 'are appointed over the children by the Lord and His People'. They are not to serve the children 'unwillingly with complaint or impatience' for 'there would be no blessing in such work'. They are rather to care for the children 'as if they were his own', for such is pleasing to God. The effects of such schooling were literacy, manners and sense of community amongst the children, and of course a contribution to the wider expression of life and values within the Bruderhof as a whole. John A. Hostetler, speaking of the development of the Hutterites' school, reflects on the fact that it was not until 1775, two hundred years after the first Anabaptist Hutterite settlements, that school attendance was made compulsory in the Hapsburg empire.

Hutterite little schools were in operation 270 years before modern kindergartens were founded by Friedrich Froebel in Germany in 1837. The development of education for the very young was an important aspect of maintaining identity from the very inception of the Hutterite movement.¹⁰

The goal of Anabaptist schooling is primarily social; social cohesion and social responsibility. Teaching the children how to relate in play as well as in community discipline, and care of the sick and the very young, are all essentially communal matters preparing the child for communal living. The Anabaptists were anxious to keep in the forefront of their practices the significance of their theological and biblical understanding, viz. the fallen nature of man expressed in the whole of his life, including the 'pagan philosophy' and intellectual enterprises, which exalted human thought above scriptural declaration. Scientific analysis and technical competence are not as important as manners, character and relationships. Writing of the Amish system Hostetler says:

They are not opposed to education but to having their children trained in a way of life that emphasises analytical science and technical competence to the exclusion of folk wisdom. The Amish teacher must transmit the Amish culture to the children as well as teach them basic educational skills.¹¹

2. Sunday School

Sunday Schools as such were a late development. Like other Anabaptist developments, it is important to keep in mind the different backgrounds of the spread of the movement: Amish, Amish Mennonite, Mennonite and Swiss Mennonite. There was little central organisation amongst them. Lay participation was of the essence of their church government, and policy, shaped by local congregations themselves, could vary considerably from one congregation to another. Geographical variations and ethnic differences also added to the complexity of background. Thus the charting of the origins of the Sunday School Movement amongst them is not easy. However, John S. Umble has done this in his two works: *Ohio Mennonite Sunday Schools* and *Early Sunday Schools at West Liberty*.¹² He recounts how on a pleasant Sunday afternoon in the early spring of 1863, David Plank with his elder brother, Joseph C. Plank, walked to a union Sunday School in a schoolhouse near his home northwest of West Liberty, Ohio. He listened with interest and fascination to:

the busy hum of voices during the class period and still more to the interesting exercises at the close of the school when the children recited Scripture verses and eagerly repeated the answers they had learned in class.¹³

On the way home he wishes such institutions could be started nearer home. The problem was the place of children in worship services designed for adult participation, with long sermons and long prayers, and the consequent boredom of the children. Indeed, '... the service ignored them [children] entirely unless they became disorderly enough to call forth a rebuke from the pulpit...'¹⁴ As far as David Plank was concerned, he 'realised that these services did almost nothing for the children of the congregation'.¹⁵

There was opposition to the establishment of Sunday Schools. The conservatism of the Amish communities made them suspicious of anything new. There were insufficient workers, and few would be able

and capable of teaching children. On 7th June 1863, Plank was given permission:

... to organise a Sunday school in the name of God in this vicinity, for we believe quite confidently that if the mothers and fathers give us their support, much good will arise out of it.¹⁶

Why were Sunday Schools viewed with suspicion by many Anabaptists? It seems that some included the holding of picnics on a Sunday, at which games were played. Others encouraged the formation of the Boys Brigade, viewed with some distaste by the Anabaptists because of its semi-military nature.

Others considered that Sunday Schools would encourage pride in the children, whose knowledge of the Bible would be greater than their elders. More were concerned that Sunday Schools would destroy the pattern of family visiting customary on Sunday afternoons. There was a dearth of teachers qualified to teach the Bible or the German language, and this added to the problem.

Probably the primary objection to the introduction of the Sunday School could scarcely have been put into words or framed into a sentence. This was the Amish and Mennonite deep aversion to change or innovation of any kind. That this deep quality possessed almost universally by Mennonites has served an important function in preserving and conserving certain doctrines and practices of the Mennonites and Amish churches is a well known fact. But that this trait, inbred and ingrained in the Amish and Mennonite character has at times taken absurd and unreasonable forms is also undeniable.¹⁷

However, it seems that Sunday Schools were instituted for two main reasons.

The first was to give instruction in the Bible, with teaching in the foundations of Christian morality in order to withstand the evils of the world. The Bible was a primer, with much formal instruction and moralising. The method of teaching in those early Anabaptist Mennonite Sunday Schools was catechetical: questions and answers with rote learning. Clearly this is not nurture in the Faith as we are beginning to understand it but straight Bible-learning by heart.

... in the class period devoted largely to memory exercises. Teaching was by the question answer method, but both questions and answers were expected to be committed to memory in true catechetical fashion.¹⁸

The church services did not provide adequate Bible teaching for children, and thus Anabaptists began to recognise the necessity of some separation of children from adults for the purposes of understanding the Bible. Worship services were long, drawn out affairs, with long prayers and hymns, long chapters of the Bible read with equally long exhortation and exposition. The result was a long string of texts and sizeable Bible quotations.

Meanwhile there was much confusion. The numerous babies cried and fidgeted, their mothers carried them to the anteroom and anon returned again. There was much passing out and in, not only by boys and girls, but by many older ones... now followed another long prayer accompanied again by much whispering and shuffling in the rear seats where the boys sat. Less boisterous but equally audible was the giggling and visiting over on the girls' side across the partition.¹⁹

The presence of children in the worship service has always been a problem for Baptists and it is still with us. A service so obviously inclined to 'understanding' with stress on words (spoken, sung prayer, read, preached, etc.) with little action or ceremony or movement is clearly not meaningful to children.

The second reason for Sunday School seems to have been the learning and preserving of the German language, especially amongst the Mennonites and Hutterites. We are faced again with the significance of a strong cultural movement.

Hence it came about that during the eighties and early nineties one of the primary functions of Sunday School came to be teaching the children to read German, Bible teaching in most of the younger classes actually became secondary.²⁰

A large part of the Sunday School session was devoted to the spelling, vocabulary and writing of German words. The material was entirely secular and was of the sort 'The bird is in the tree', 'the fish swims', etc. After that came instruction in Bible verses committed to memory, and when the lesson was over, the 'review', which was a kind of testing of what had been learned.

In the earlier years the order of the afternoon school seems to have been:

1. Song by the congregation led by a chorister.
2. Prayer preceded by exhortation, usually by a minister - a custom brought over from the church service.
3. Arrangement of classes - small boys and girls near the pulpit, 'spectators' occupying the rear benches.
4. Passing the German spellers and readers to younger classes and New Testaments to the older classes by the librarians.
5. Class period - reading and discussion of a chapter or studying German.
6. Questions and answers by a minister or the superintendent on the chapter studied by the class.
7. Secretary's report.
8. Business - there usually was none.
9. Closing hymn led by the chorister or someone designated by the superintendent.
10. Benediction by the minister, or if no minister was present, singing the doxology or prayer by the superintendent.

Biblical sermons based largely on the traditional sermons of the

the past, played a big part in the services in addition to learning scripture verses by rote. But so did the hymns. The best hymn writer amongst the Anabaptists was probably the Mennonite Christopher Dock. Not much is known about him, but he was a schoolmaster, working amongst the Mennonites and it is assumed was probably a Mennonite himself. (His church connection and the influence of Pietism upon him is discussed by Ada Kadelbach in an article translated by Elizabeth Bender.²¹ He wrote for Mennonite parents and his hymns were used for teaching, reading and also for practice in prayer and singing. They embody the doctrines of the Mennonite Anabaptists and provide an insight into the communication of doctrines and values by the use of hymns.

It should not surprise us that the style of the hymns is exhortatory and moralistic and the content very much that of God's call to people to be faithful and obedient.

Familiar Anabaptist themes emerge in these hymns: Lebensfaden (the thread of one's life), Pilgerfahrt (pilgrimage), Vaterland (Fatherland), Sturm (storm), Wellen (waves), Schifflein (little ship), Geleitsmann (escort, guide), Ruder (oar), e.g.:

1. 'The Thread of My Life is Running Out...'
2. 'Oh Children, Dear, Would You...'
3. 'Come Dear Children Come Here...'
4. 'Oh Come Here God's Children...'

The tone of the verses is admonitory with warnings, exhortations to moralism, pleading and begging to lead an upright life and to be obedient to God. However, in fairness to him

Even his moralising tones are genuine tones of concern for the salvation of the children entrusted to his Care without any suggestion of condescending superiority.²²

It is interesting, finally, to note how some of the familiar practices of the old English Sunday Schools appear in the Anabaptist Sunday Schools, for example giving prizes. After correctly reciting verses the pupil would receive a 'ticket'. At the end of the year the tickets would be counted and the child with the most would receive a prize, usually a book. The rewards were given in recognition of 'good conduct, attention during the class hour, industry in learning'.²³

Thus the Sunday School developed slowly, though viewed with some suspicion by the older Anabaptists. It developed to instruct in the Bible and to continue the pattern of socialising.

In the modern period the Hutterite and Amish child attends three schools: German school, English school and Sunday school. At the German school he learns to read German, recites passages from hymns and the Bible in German, memorises them and practises writing in German. The child progresses at his own pace and according to his own level.

The children are never given the opportunity to ask questions

about why something is to be learned. Prayers, hymns, catechism, Hutterite history is to be learned because these are expression of the ritual of life. The primary function of the German school is not intellectual, but ritualistic initiation. 'The primary purpose of the German school is to teach Hutterite children the ritual of life'.²⁴ 'There is no room for doubt'.²⁵ Learning is an act of obedience.

At the English school, the children will have an education into the English language and some introduction to the outside world. But the English school is subject to the discipline of the colony and must accord with the routine and calendar of the colony. It is in the English school that the child will get his 'worldly knowledge', as much as is considered necessary to function within the world. Clearly German school is more important than English school.

Children will attend Sunday School until they are baptised, for until baptism they are still in stages of youth and not fully adults. The education is not really an education, rather an indoctrination using Bible passages learned by memory.

Thus 'schooling' has developed evidence of the significance for Anabaptists of child care, child rearing and child socialisation. The home, the parent, the school, the Sunday School, the community, all played their part. The desires expressed in the child consecration ceremony were channelled into a system of instruction and rearing that would hopefully lead the child to the great day when he would 'arrive': his baptism and his initiation into adulthood. Baptism had a social context, those means of admission into the adult world. Further, baptism is a preliminary step to marriage, since 'commitment to God must precede commitment to a spouse...'²⁶ Baptism was a joy to parents and a delight to the community.

Baptism produces a closer relationship between parents and child. Parents now treat their child as a colony member as well as a family member. With the help of God and the colony they have accomplished their task of raising this child 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'. Baptised children and parents identify very closely with one another.²⁷

Anabaptist children do not share the Communion service. In common with most members of the world Baptist family, communion is for believers, and in many instances baptised believers, only. Communion is described by Hostetler as 'high ritual'. With Zwingli it was a 'memorial ritual' but observed as a sign of brotherhood amongst the believers. Grebel saw the significance of Communion in the 'union with Christ and the brethren'.²⁸ To participate in the Lord's Supper was a responsibility. The Ban, when exercised, had effect at the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper was a symbol of unity and brotherhood, therefore brotherhood must reign if the believer is to share in the bread and wine. Children were not present. Yet in the modern period, the children share in the same bread and wine that is used at the Communion, because the bread and wine are ordinary food taken from a household for the purposes of the service. The children share it in the home, as the adults share it in the church service. Thus the unity is expressed in the communalisation life patterns.

3. Education, Socialisation and Nurture

We must now examine the educational content of the Anabaptist conceptions of child rearing both in contrast with education practices in the Reformation and also in the light of our contemporary understanding of these things. Already certain words have been used such as socialisation, education, indoctrination, nurture, with judgments made about the Anabaptists based on the meanings of these terms. In the contemporary situation there is much debate about the nature and goals of education, polarised in such phrases as 'education for life', 'learning for earning'. Radical educationalists, such as Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich²⁹ have made devastating attacks on the Western view of education. There has been a rediscovery of the significance of Christian Nurture as distinct from religious education, in the debate about 'R.E.' in the state school curriculum. The presence of other cultures and faiths has led to a serious look at the nature of a pluralistic society. It is significant that the Anabaptists pleaded for the freedom to believe and practise according to their conscience. They were part of a reformation of society the basis of which was pluralism. Their separation from the State and their desire to preserve their own culture placed heavy responsibilities upon their leaders and parents. We must attempt an examination of their notions of child rearing and evaluate them educationally.

a) How significant for Education was the Reformation?

It was Luther and Melancthon who shaped most of the basis for education in the German Protestant reformation. They placed education in a social context and took it out of the hands of parents alone. They saw education as essential for the well-being of the state and the church, as much as for the development of the individual. The ultimate effect of the Reformation was the creation of a system of schools for every section of the community and the transfer of the authority for education from church to state. Some schools and universities had been established already, but springing from the humanistic tradition relied on men of great intellect in the universities, and men of equally high character and integrity strong enough to overrule the old ways. Thus, when the Reformation broke, two things happened. On the one hand those antagonistic to the church were equally antagonistic towards the institutions controlled by the church including its educational institutions. This resulted in the confiscation of funds, the ending of many endowments and the consequent closure of schools. On the other hand out of religious conviction the Radical Reformers, like the Anabaptists, were suspicious of worldly wisdom of any kind, and condemned learning as evil. Spiritual knowledge was of more significance than worldly wisdom. However Luther and Melancthon were serious about education. They valued scholarship though were concerned that learning should not be the private possession of a few.

The Reformation, in destroying the authority of the Church in those States whose rulers had followed Luther, had thrown into disorder the whole system of education, and there was urgent need, not only for an education suited for the civic and political leaders and the ministers of religion, but also for an education suited to the people at large.³⁰

Luther wrote two tracts: *Letter to the Burgomasters and Councillors of all towns in German lands, urging the establishment and maintenance of Christian schools* (1524) and *Discourse on the Duty of sending Children to School*, and in addition, two catechisms, the Larger and the Shorter. In these tracts, he expounded the importance of the state for founding schools, and the equal importance of parents sending children to a state school. He saw the promotion of religion through education, but also, countries needed wise and educated governors, and women who could look after the households of the nations. Thus education for Luther was a state business to serve the purposes of both state and church. In the preface to the Larger Catechism, Luther wrote of the significance of the home and parental influence, but also pointed out the advantages of the schools where children could learn the arts, language, history. He saw a need for a special class of people, ministers and teachers, who would provide the education of children separately from the home. He wanted an education system that was state financed to which all children would be compelled to go. He did not ignore the difficulties of the poverty of people and the fact that many children had to work and contribute to the family economy. But nonetheless to Luther elementary education was essential:

If the magistrates may compel their able bodied subjects to carry pike and musket and do military service there is much reason for them compelling their subjects to send their children to school. For there is a far worse war to be waged with the devil, who employs himself secretly in injuring towns and states through the neglect of education.³¹

Thus for Luther the state and its social institutions were to assume much of the parental responsibility. Society must be well ordered, just and peaceful. The Anabaptists also desired a peaceful and just society. The irony is that the war of the devil was for them within the very institutions of the state and church, hence their great suspicion of state schools. They desired the upbringing of their own children in the home, the community school and the avoidance of all worldly wisdom. The stress was on that which is spiritual. The ultimate goal of the Anabaptist education was not an 'educated person' as Luther understood it, rather perfect obedience to God and the Community and membership of a church of which believers baptism was the sign.

Philip Melancthon (1497-1560) continued the work set in motion by Luther, by pursuing the creation of educational institutions. He made the University at Wittenburg the centre of Protestant studies by his own lectures, he ran a private school, and wrote a series of grammatical and language text books. Melancthon established a system of education in Germany which allowed for three stages of education: the first class for beginners, rudiments of Latin, and other works in order to acquire a knowledge of Latin; the second, the serious study of grammar; the third, the elements of dialect and rhetoric. The passage from one stage to another was determined by the child's proficiency at each stage. However it was not without loss. The return to the classics and the demand for proficiency in mastering the classical language amounted to a narrowing of the concept of education

for all. In contrast to Luther, Melanchthon elevated the intellect, omitted the vernacular, and rather put the need for a personal faith in second place. Thus a high culture, embodied in the classics, was seen to be of more importance than a personal religion based on experience.

There is much in common with Luther: the stress on parents and the state, the placing of education in the social setting, the aim of not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the service of the state. In addition there is also the development of character with true religion as a basis. The difference lies in the elevation of the classics and the significance of grammar and rhetoric, and the lack of consideration of a faith amongst the ordinary people, of which the vernacular language would be the important factor. There is a complete contrast with the Anabaptists. They had separated from the state. Schooling was not a state affair, rather a 'community of faith' affair. The goal was the raising of Anabaptist children to become Anabaptist adults, and prepare for this life and the life hereafter, with a true faith in Christ.

For Luther and Melanchthon, the principle seemed to be : that formal schooling was to be equated with child rearing. Parents were in the first instance responsible for their children but that responsibility was exercised by passing their children over to the state and to those appointed and trained. Schwartz judges that in his tract *Sermon on the Duty of Sending Children to School*, Luther suggests that any parents who refused to educate their child, especially if he were intelligent, was a traitor to church and state. Even within the home, the proper way to educate was to imitate the school: the use of catechism, examination, learning by rote and memory, recitation of the scriptures, singing of hymns. The great contrast between Reformers and Anabaptists is that to the Anabaptists, child rearing was not the same as schooling. Even among the Hutterites, Mennonites and Amish, whose parents gave their children to the schools after weaning, formal schooling ended before the goals of child rearing were reached. The goal of child rearing was the voluntary surrender of the individual to God and the community. Baptism signified the transmission from youth to adulthood, the acceptance of responsibility for one's actions, a personal faith and also 'the internalisation of Hutterite values'.³² Formal religious education continued after schooling had come to an end especially for the non-baptised child. This is the function of the Sunday School. Child rearing continues even though schooling has finished, until that day when adulthood is reached with the voluntary submission to baptism as a believer. Higher education was considered dangerous because it might lead to pride and the elevating of worldly wisdom over the spiritual knowledge so essential to faith in Christ.

b) How does the Anabaptist view compare today?

In the complicated, ongoing process of upbringing and child rearing, a number of interacting things are at work. A great service has been done by the document *The Child in the Church*.³³ In its very comprehensive survey of the place of the child in the church, it examines the elements in the up-bringing process in order to determine what is the peculiarly Church-related element in child rearing. In Chapter 4 the issue is clearly focused:

Clearly, it is impossible NOT to influence children... Parents who are Christians are creating an environment within which something of Christian Faith will be acquired... Therefore the ethical problems of Christian nurture do not arise from the question of whether to nurture or not, but in deciding what the proper functions and limits of Christian nurture should be.³⁴

Christian nurture is contrasted with indoctrination, instruction and secular education.

Secular education is an open, critical, person-centred process, opening up the possibilities of further learning. Education is concerned with learning worthwhile things in worthwhile ways, promoting attitudes of continuous enquiry. This is not as neutral as it sounds, because education will decide what is worthwhile and equally the worthwhile way in which to learn. The basis is the view that it is a worthwhile thing to be a thoughtful person, to be self critical, to evaluate and continue in the human quest of further enquiry and further learning. When this is sharpened two goals of education are:

1. the creation of people capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what they have been told, or repeating what former generations have done or believed. Creativity, inventiveness and discovery are vital to education.
2. the formation of the critical mind, which develops the capacity to verify what has been received or given, with a view to determining its worth. In this way the educated person does not accept everything he is told or given nor just the first idea that comes into his mind, but evaluate.

Instruction is a content-centred thing, the telling factor which passes on to those who do not know, that which the instructor himself knows. Clearly there is a place for this in the acquiring of skills.

Indoctrination deprives a person of his personhood, by concentrating entirely on content and desiring conformity to what is being told. Indoctrination is a complicated business in itself. It seems to have at least three forms: the uncritical, already established dogma which is to be accepted without criticism or evaluation or any regard for the person; the method which will be the best method to get support from the person avoiding discussion, questioning or doubting; and the aim as conformity.

In contrast to these, Christian Nurture is the process whereby parents bring up their children in the Christian faith. It is not completely open, neither completely closed. The past matters, for it is out of tradition and on the grounds of a dogma that the process proceeds. The past includes Bible, history, denominational tradition, family history and also that living expression of the faith now held by the family through the church to which they belong. The future is a Christian future to which the process leads, but the Christian Faith is such that the shape of that future must not be predetermined. Indoctrination is not Christian and is to be avoided at all costs. Evangelism, the presentation of the message of the Gospel to those who

do not know, must be rational and personal, and expect an equally rational, reasonable and personal response. Much evangelism falls into the trap of indoctrination. But evangelism is not the same as Nurture or education. The report judges:

Secular education fails if a person becomes a bigot but not if he becomes an atheist, Christian nurture fails BOTH if he becomes a bigot AND if he becomes an atheist.³⁵

The theological basis is that faith is a process in which history and life interact, and in which change and contemporary experience is to be taken with utmost importance. There is a faith once for all delivered to the saints, but that is not the same as a fixed and final dogma for all time, regardless of the validity of the experience of the individual and the Christian community which receives, and in the reception, interprets that faith. 'What we pass on to our children is not the painting but the paintbox'.³⁶

There is one other element in the process of human growth and upbringing of children not referred to explicitly in the British Council of Churches document. That is the business called socialisation. Frederick Elkin and Gerald Handel define socialisation as '... the process by which we learn the ways of a given society or social group so that we can function within it'.³⁷ This includes learning such things as wearing clothes, or using eating utensils. Some of it is informed by general education, so that when a child enters a new environment he can infer the pattern of behaviour appropriate on the basis of a 'general' education. Some of the socialising effects are motivated by the example of elders and others, e.g. the desire to 'be like Daddy' or to 'be a policeman'. Socialisation 'helps to explain how a person becomes capable of participating in society... helps to explain how society is possible at all'.³⁸

The prerequisite of the socialisation process is that there is an ongoing society. How that society came into being must be explained from other sources. So there is a complex process of human development: it involves the socialising of a person into the ways of a given society and his own personal development and contribution to that society. It includes the education of a person in order to be a critical, self-evaluating, reflective person. There is the danger of indoctrination especially political and religious. There is the acquiring of skills in the instruction process, so important if the person is to contribute to his society. There is the special process of religious upbringing in whatever religion, viz. nurture. For the church to work out its responsibility towards its own offspring in a pluralistic society this examination is crucial. *What does this say about the nature of the Anabaptist society and the ideas about child rearing and upbringing we have examined?* Anabaptism came into being as part of the process of Reformation. It had a strong biblical basis subordinating all else to that. It had to do with a re-awakening of faith in a particular way, and an eager spread of that amongst others. It led to separation from the prevailing culture, both secular and religious. It was an attempt to re-establish the Church and the Faith in the primitive form of the New Testament. It was the deliberate attempt by some members of a society to establish for themselves a more satisfying culture.

What becomes clear within Anabaptism is the significance of culture. The upbringing process is really a process of acculturation, where the faith functions alongside the culture. Indeed at its deepest level the culture itself becomes a kind of religious faith. The whole separation process and the establishment of a subculture, means that the upbringing of children takes place within a clear value structure and belief system. Careful age grouping in stages of growth and the social-interaction between the personal development of the children and the already formulated faith of the ongoing community of adults, establishes the culture. Thus past (history), the present (morals, behaviour, customs, beliefs) and future (end of history and life after death) are already worked out in a system through which the child must be carefully reared. Thus, the group and its social identity are vital to an understanding of how the individual receives his faith and how the community of faith communicates its faith.

Culture has been variously defined. Ralph Linton's formal definition is 'A culture is the configuration of learned behaviour and results of behaviour whose component parts are shared and transmitted by members of a particular society'. In this the communication process is the significant thing. Thus anything that is strictly individualistic is not really culture. The process involves the rites and ceremonies associated with birth, puberty, marriage and death. It also refers to the social values of that community and the signs and symbols which express them. The family plays a part in this process, but culture is not a family matter alone. For the family to play its part in the acculturation process there must be a wider reference in order to function effectively. Thus the effective transmission depends on the number of adults and the quality of life of the adults. Children are in preparation for adult roles. Baptism was the sign of arrival, both in religious terms and also in social terms, for now the child-become-adult could take his place in the society and contribute to the ongoing process. Thus, the upbringing of Anabaptist children is a process of socialisation, or acculturation, where the communication of the values and ways is the responsibility of the community. The process is a way of ensuring that the culture is continued. Education is severely limited because not only is worldly wisdom suspect, but also the very notion of education as an initiation into enquiry with no limits, even if with a built-in evaluation mechanism, is rejected. The community has already established and evaluated what is worthwhile. Yet for the Anabaptists the question of culture was not merely one of externals. Culture expressed the soul of the people. Their faith did not function alongside their culture, rather the two were fused. The expression of their finer sentiments, their deeper feelings, their hopes and ideals was in the culture and into this the children were initiated and for this they were brought up. The values were communicated in the culture, and were to be continued in the total upbringing of the children, who would then continue the process in their generation.

Indoctrination is an ever-present danger because the element of open enquiry is missing. Obedience is of paramount importance.

The Anabaptists, by and large, were not aware of the need for change. There was no room for doubt, and no place for evaluation and criticism. Even though obedience had to be willingly and voluntarily

enjoyed, one cannot escape the conclusion that personal faith was bound to be a matter of course rather than freely chosen. There is minimal interaction with outsiders. The individual is ideologically and emotionally bound up with the community.

In our present secular society, culture and religion can be separated and this presents parents with a complicated situation. How does one bring up the child, as it were, 'in two worlds'? The Anabaptist answer was separation. For them culture and religion were part and parcel of the same thing and thereby offered a total answer to the meaning of life, now and hereafter. The future was Christian to be sure, but a future already given and fixed by the past.

Anabaptists would not subscribe to the statement:

Christian faith is constantly critical of itself. Christianity itself is in the process of changing, and it always has been. There is no fixed and final form of Christian faith, and this is why there can be no fixed and final form of nurture in it... What is it then to seek to create a Christian future for our children? It cannot be to deny them their own distinctive contribution to it, or to close the future for them, or to seek to make little copies of ourselves. This would no longer be Christian nurture because it would not be true to the developing nature of Christian faith...³⁹

All this means that the process of Anabaptist child rearing was not a process of education in the modern sense of the word, neither was it a process of Christian nurture as we now understand that term. It was a process of religious socialisation based on an already established society and culture. Within that there was an authority pattern and an ordered way in which all and each had its place. There was no place for change. It is striking just how many times John A. Hostetler uses the word 'indoctrination' in his description and examination of modern day Hutterite Society.

Training is constant and continuous in all age groups. From early childhood to adulthood there is no relaxation of indoctrination within clearly defined age and sex groupings.⁴⁰

No private and personal interpretation of the scripture is allowed. The minister preaches sermons copied from 17th century texts, and no contemporary illustrations are allowed. No individual has any legitimate claim to interpret the Bible for himself, there is no 'inner light' to challenge the Bible or the Community. Learning ritualised prayers by rote and hymns correctly sung is such that these become a part of the person's way of life, where access to God is through the ritual.^{41, 42}

The learning experience was not so much a 'person-centred, critical, open-ended education' as an enculturation initiation or a socialisation. One cannot escape the conclusion that the child is indoctrinated in the values of the community.

Childhood prepares the infant for initiation into adult life and trains the child to identify with the society. Socialisation,

during adult life, reinforces this identification and prepares the individual for death. The pattern of socialisation is remarkably consistent from one colony to another, from one family to another, and from one individual to another.⁴³

Of the Amish education process, Hostetler observes:

the goal of Amish schools is to produce Amish Christians able to understand and contribute to the small events that will help perpetuate their community here and in eternity.⁴⁴

Of course such a socialisation process is not necessarily antithetical with the goals of society in general. The Anabaptists were concerned to produce God-fearing men and women who were law abiding responsible citizens. They held principles of religious freedom. The state had an authority in its own place. If all became God-fearing, useful and law abiding, then this world would be more like the world God himself had originally created. They stressed the development of virtues like humility, elimination of self pride, the development of a good conscience, persistence, patience during stress and strain, loyalty and courage of conviction and love for one another including those outside the community. Yet the educational goal is not so much personal fulfilment and individual development as social cohesion and social responsibility, which must be part of any general educational process. The Anabaptist teacher must teach the Anabaptist way and transmit the Anabaptist culture, by instruction, indoctrination and example, as well as teach basic educational skills. But the teacher and the school must be subject to the control of the colony and conform to the pattern of life laid down.

It seems reasonable to say on the evidence *that education became subservient to acculturation*. The various mutually supportive agents such as the family, marriage, work and the economy, provide a socio-cultural milieu largely inhibitive of social change, in which education is one of the major stabilising factors. There is no 'education for change' motif. If the major postulates of social change are individualisation, innovation, the systematising of ideals to serve political ends, and of course the growing phenomenon of secularisation, then only those cultures or societies which have within their systems an inbuilt resistance to these things can withstand them. Such societies depend on a system of education which keeps things as they are and conditions its young to withstand change.

The secular world is fundamentally selfish and often dishonest. The secular social citizenship emphasis on the public schools is far from satisfactory to a personally converted Christian individual. The civil influence of our day is so completely and entirely pragmatic that the national philosophy is satisfied with the theory of relativism which disregards all revelation and wholeheartedly accepts the notion that truth is what the majority wants. The typical, secular, behaviouristic, materialistic, social, economic American public school curriculum has been an underlying cause of the political and social unrest, juvenile delinquency and general moral breakdown prevalent in our country.⁴⁵

Thus the modern Anabaptist keeps faith with his forefathers and 'the way' is perpetuated. The child is educated in English because living in an English society it is important, but only those things needful are taught. Education is a socialisation into a society to which the individual makes his own contribution by perpetuating it.

In his recent research, Theodore W. Jentsch says of the Mennonite schools in the East Penn Valley, Pennsylvania:

Separation from the world is a fundamental tenet of the Mennonite religious faith. The principle of nonconformity to the world and separation from it is reinforced by the community's school system. My informants, without exception, view the community's educative system as a major bulwark of defense against encroachment of the surrounding culture.

The community's educative system is a major vehicle whereby the traditional values are transmitted and reinforced values which contribute to community stability and negate change...⁴⁶

Yet the modern day Amish are concerned about the tension caused by the perpetuation of their culture and the challenge of a new age. The real controversy is not so much the goals of their socialisation and educational practices, but the methods used to achieve them. In his review of the Amish Parochial School Movement, Levi A. Esh quotes the conclusion of a Court Ruling on 15th May 1972 regarding schooling, when Judge Justice Burger said:

There can be no assumption that today's majority is 'right' and that Amish and others like them are wrong. A way of life that is odd or even erratic but interferes with no rights or interests is not to be condemned because it is different.⁴⁷

Such a favourable decision appears to confirm the Amish Anabaptists that no changes are necessary in their schooling practices. However, Esh concludes with some words that indicate that considerations such as: what is education? what are we doing with and for children? and how? are critical to the whole culturalisation and educational process:

Our feeling is very well stated in a letter received from Noah Zook. In closing he wrote: 'By now I think the Amish are agreed that to avoid worldly influence we need our own schools. But how to operate them in a Christian way should be our foremost concern.'⁴⁸

A Christian view of education must surely be antagonistic to any form of indoctrination. It must be concerned as much about methods as well as goals. It must contain some element of change, respect for persons and living traditions. It provides dogma, but never leads into dogmatism. It is not intellectually dishonest, rather holds integrity to be a virtue. It will be open-ended because God himself is always 'coming', 'of the future'. It will require cohesion between curriculum content, curriculum method and the relationships and attitudes of the learner and teacher to each other. Example will be as important as

content, style as significant as area of study. Whether the Anabaptist expression and understanding of the Faith will lead them into this enquiry is doubtful. Their preoccupation with self preservation will yet dominate.

Aries and others show how in the Middle Ages, after a brief childhood, the infant entered the adult world. The emergence of a longer childhood had to do with:

... the success of the educational institutions and practices which they guided and supervised. We find the same men, obsessed with educational questions at the origins of both the modern concepts of childhood and the modern concept of schooling.⁴⁹

The Anabaptists made a contribution to the emerging state of childhood and human development. Like the pedagogues of the Middle Ages, they confused education with culture, though within the process they did take children seriously with the ultimate aim of leading them out of childhood into adulthood. Schwartz judges that this stress on adulthood, measured by the voluntary surrender in complete filial obedience to God in baptism, was in fact the Anabaptist understanding of what it was to grow up and become 'as a little child'.

The Anabaptists had many difficulties to overcome, and different views emerged amongst them. Some were given to accommodating themselves more to prevailing opinions than others. Some separated completely and became remote communities.

Roland Bainton's judgement is salutary:

Yet the lesson of cohesion was finally learned, and these communities have displayed an amazing capacity to hold their children and preserve their identity to this day.⁵⁰

NOTES

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7. *ibid.* p.234.
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