

COMMUNICATION AND VALUES
IN THE GENERATIONS CONFLICT

by

LLOYD E. BARNETT

B.S., Kansas State University, 1965

5248

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education
Department of Administrations and Foundations

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1971

Approved by:

Herbert E. Kaiser

LD
2668
R4
1971
B32
C.2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION.	1
1. TODAY'S YOUTH: CONFUSED AND REBELLIOUS	8
CAUSES OF REBELLION	9
SOCIALIZATION	10
NEW CONDITIONS AND CONFUSION.	13
SEARCHING	15
2. ISOLATION OF THE ELDER GENERATIONS.	17
FRUSTRATIONS OF SOCIETAL CHANGE	17
PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUTH.	19
3. AREAS OF CONFLICT	22
PRIVATISM	22
EDUCATION	23
COMMUNICATION	26
VALUES.	29
Popularity.	29
Materialism	30
Anger	32
Love.	33
Right and Wrong	35
4. BRIDGING THE GENERATIONAL CONFLICT.	37
YOUTH AND ADULTS CONFRONT EACH OTHER.	38

Chapter	Page
GENERATIONAL ROADSIGNS.	39
BRIDGING THE CONFLICT	40
5. THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY, SCHOOL AND RELIGION TO YOUTH .	43
THE COMMUNITY AND HER YOUTH	43
THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL.	45
The School's Responsibility	46
Attitudes	46
College Preparatory Education	47
Vocational Education.	48
RELIGION AND SPIRITUAL VALUES	49
6. SUMMARY	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	56

INTRODUCTION

Man has always given the prophet special hearing. The more trying the times the more people have begged for someone who could see.

Ironically, the prophets have also been unpopular, because they have foretold what man did not want to hear. They have become iconoclasts, destroying the familiar. They have been disturbers of the peace, not defensive; terribly offensive.

The seer says things the ramifications of which he himself does not grasp. So it is with youth today. They are saying things to us today that we do not like because it disturbs us, and they are things that they do not fully understand. We often miss completely what they have to say. We either turn a deaf ear or find it more satisfying to get rhetorical about their manners.

The voice of protest, disturbing as it has been, is telling us a great deal-if we will listen. It has been so demonstrably right in an age where it is hard to be right or to know¹ what that means. If adults will listen today and especially parents, much can be learned.

Our despair over the failures of our own generation have led us to make wistful heroes of our youth. Having crowned them

¹
John P. Leary, "Youth: The Voice of Prophecy," America (September 20, 1969), pp. 190-192.

as saviors we withdraw from judgement and sit back to watch them play-until they happen to step on a sensitive toe.

"The rising generation never sees life with the same eyes as its elders-not even in times and places in which society is relatively static and in which the younger generation shares with its predecessors a wish to conserve tradition rather than break with it But in present-day America, and in most of the rest of the world too, the breadth of the generation gap is abnormally wide."²

Different cultures vary as to how each generation is to be raised. In some societies absolute rule is maintained by the elders, children are to be seen and not heard, some societies make way for the ideas and thoughts of each generation while in still other societies "each generation is expected to rebel-to flout the expressed wishes of the old men and to take over power from men older than themselves."³

In modern day America there appears to be a mutually threatening relationship between youth and adults. Each generation is seeking to establish its own life style. Adults are unwilling to accept the life-style of youth, and at the same time youth overreact toward adult values, creating a breach in relationships between adult and youth.

²
Alexander Klein, "Natural Enemies ? ? ? Youth and The Conflict of Generations," New Republic, Vol. 162 (February 28, 1970), p. 23.

³
Margaret Meade, Culture and Commitment (Natural History Press, Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1970), p. 19.

In the last decade we have been hearing more and more about the "generation gap." It has been discussed by the truly intellectual, the psuedo-intellectual and those who are limited in education. It has been talked about by the white-collar worker right down to the unskilled laborer. Not only do adults discuss it but also the young. It seems everybody has a theory about it but none have provided a solution for it. Although the literature is vast on the generation gap, it is poorly seasoned and highly sentimental. Analysis and insight have come to a dead end, and with it the realistic prospect for moving with the young from what they are to what they might be.

Does the "generation gap" exist as widespread alienation among youth, or only the revolt of a particularly vocal, energetic and strategically located minority?⁴

In most discussions of the generation gap, the alienation of the young is emphasized, while the alienation of their elders may be wholly overlooked.⁵

Klein in "Natural Enemies??? Youth and the Conflict of Generations" says "when we speak of a generation, we often mean a small group of innovators and leaders."⁶

In the course of this report it shall be pointed out that there is definitely a conflict between the generations and that this conflict serves to alienate not only the young but also the

⁴ Klein, op. cit., p. 24.

⁵ Mead, op. cit., p. 80.

⁶ Klein, op. cit., p. 24.

adults. In chapter one "Today's Youth: Confused and Rebellious", these questions were asked, what is at the heart of this confusion and rebellion? To what are youth committed? What are the new conditions which have brought about the revolt of youth, not only here in America but around the world? In chapter two "Isolation of the Elder Generations" was discussed. Why do elders react so violently to the rebellion of youth? What of the frustrations resulting from the changes of society? What of their responsibility to the younger generations?

Chapter three, the most important section, dealt with "Areas of Conflict" between youth and adults. Why do these conflicts arise? What are the precipitating factors? What in particular do some of the youth say about these areas of conflict? What are the adults reactions?

In the fourth chapter some suggestions and guidelines to help parents (adults) and youth in "Bridging The Generational Conflict" were presented. First was explored the complaints that youth and adults have about each other. What are some of the distinguishing features which can be used to either widen or bridge the conflict? And finally, what can be done to bridge the conflict itself?

A fifth chapter was devoted to the study of "the role of community, school and religion to youth." What responsibilities do each have to the growing lives of youth? What do youth want and expect from each of these groups? The final chapter was added to summarize the report.

There is indeed a definite conflict between old and young. It has always existed but only within the last decade has so much

been said about it that it has come to the fore of our social scene. The conflict has been badly handled and it is now being recognized that parents erred in the handling of the younger generation. As a result many have been unprepared for the rapid developments which have suddenly burst upon the scene.

Adults, not being properly prepared to handle the new, frustrating scientific and technological developments, have failed to respond with proper concern and attention, to the lives of their offspring and subsequently created frustration and confusion in their development. Recently, this has been recognized and more emphasis is being placed on the lives of those significant others. This then is part of the conflict, for most of this concern for others, is coming from the young. Adults are sluggishly responding but the youth are impatient and are rebelling against adults' failure to yield in displacing some of their most cherished outmoded standards and values. In turn adults have begun to rebel against the seemingly impulsiveness and impatience of youth. Because of the rebellion on both sides, a generational gap has developed, which has alienated youth and adults from each other.

The analogy between the generation gap that existed between immigrants and their children a few decades ago and that which exists between parents and their children today is a reasonably good one. Today's adults attempt to live in the culture of the "Old Country" (the America of their youth), and are now finding that the younger people are better able to adjust to that new environment and above all to understand it, than are their parents.⁷

⁷
Harrison Brown, "Why The Generation Gap," Saturday Review 52 (July 19, 1969), p. 20.

To put it another way, the prisoner who has slept on a hard bed for many years dreams of a soft bed but finds, when he comes out of prison, that he can sleep only on a hard one; or as an illfed people, who move to a place where better food is found, may still cling to the less nutritive and originally unappealing diets of their childhood, so also human beings seem to hold on more tenaciously to a cultural identity that is learned through suffering than one that has been acquired through pleasure and delight. Children who have grown up happily in comfortable homes can be more secure and adaptable under new circumstances, than⁸ those whose early lessons have been painful and frightening.

Webster gives two helpful definitions of generation, (1) a body of living beings constituting a single step in the line of descent from an ancestor, (2) the average span of time between the birth of parents and that of offspring.⁹ Gap, is defined (and will be used to mean)¹⁰ "a break in continuity." Conflict will be defined as "emotional tension resulting from incompatible inner needs or drives."¹¹ Adult is defined "of, relating to, or characteristic of adults (usually fully developed and mature)."¹² Youth, will be thought of as the "period between childhood and maturity, the time of life marked by growth and development."¹³

⁸

Mead, op. cit., p. 20.

⁹

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, (G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, Springfield, Massachusetts), p. 348.

¹⁰

Ibid., p. 344.

¹¹

Ibid., p. 175.

¹²

Ibid., p. 13.

¹³

Ibid., p. 1038.

Most information used in writing this paper has been a result of what others have written. Many authorities have been cited, much has been personal thought and feeling.

It is by no means a complete study, nor could it ever be. As long as there are adults and youth there will continue to be problems arise which require new and different procedures for handling and finding a solution. There will continue to be a conflict between the generations.

Chapter 1

TODAY'S YOUTH: CONFUSED AND REBELLIOUS

In a society like our own, in which there is great social mobility, there are inevitably generation breaks in education and styles of living. Nevertheless, young people, as they move up and out, encounter certain values that are shaped by most adults of the two older generations (parents and grandparents). Characteristically, these unchallenged beliefs, held by all adults, are unanalyzed.¹⁴

In some cultures it is the expectation that the young will accept without question the standards and values handed down to them by the adult generations. In a culture such as our own the young will not and cannot accept the society created by the adult generation and are loudly protesting and assaulting the structures that have been established seeking to tear them down, all too often with nothing better to take the place of that destroyed.

Included in this chapter (a) causes of rebellion as seen in the eyes of other writers and myself; (b) socialization which is characterized by the growing pains of youth; (c) new conditions which have bred confusion and (d) the searching of youth, very well expressed by a fifteen-year-old boy.

¹⁴
Mead, op. cit., p. 60.

CAUSES OF REBELLION

Some social critics point out that young people today are behaving as they are because of adults. Various sins of omission and commission committed by adults have instilled into our youth their present sense of uneasiness. Wars, the bomb, racial injustice, success measured solely in materialistic terms are the products of the adult generation. This is the legacy we have passed on to our young people. We cannot expect them to be grateful. Many young people who care about their future feel that they must repudiate the sick adult world, even though they usually have no blueprint for building a better society.

Young people of today are angry, protesting, rebelling against social orders, educational standards, family and society structures which they claim are obsolete and outmoded. They are asking for reforms and changes. They rebel against a society which lives by double-standards. The youth of today says "we are tired of hearing you, we want to see you put words into actions." The Bible speaks of it as "the Word was made Flesh."¹⁵ The age old adage "your actions speak so loud I can't hear a word you are saying" looms ever more persistent today.

Even the best taught young people by nature, rebel against the authority of God, country and family. They have a natural yearning for "forbidden fruit."¹⁶ To rebel seems natural.

¹⁵
¹⁵ St. John 1:14.

¹⁶
¹⁶ John A. Stormer, Death of a Nation (Liberty Bell Press, P. O. Box 52, Florissant, Missouri), p. 85.

SOCIALIZATION

"Every adolescent must pass through two crucial periods; one, when he identifies with a model-a father, a brother, a teacher-the second, when he disassociates himself from his model, rebels against him, reasserts his own selfhood.¹⁷

It has always been necessary for each generation of men to develop its own awareness and self-identity. Even in days of slow social change, when generation after generation could be described in similar terms, and when environmental and social conditions seemed to be static, youths became adults in the process of self-identification. No person becomes truly mature and responsible without this process. It has involved what sociologists and social-psychologists call "socialization" or the "internalization of social values and culture patterns." Perhaps this has never been easy. To a degree it has always involved conflict, even though it leads to accomodation, and finally to assimilation.

Obviously, accomodation and assimilation are facilitated when the people involved understand each other. The obligation to achieve understanding is a mutual one, but it goes without saying that the greater responsibility rests upon the parent generation. After all, this generation has lived through events and experiences known to the offspring only by report. It is to be assumed that there are some advantages in this longer span of experience and its resulting resources of thought and insight.

¹⁷

Mead, op. cit., p. 66.

Until very recently the experiences of the parents have been the connecting link for youth to the meaning of life. Until recently elders could say: "You know, I have been young and you have never been old." But today's young people can reply, "you never have been young in the world I am young in, and you never can be."

Today's eighteen-year-old born in 1950, (now 21) five years after the close of World War II, had scarcely begun to sit up when the Korean War burst upon the already divided United Nations. He saw daylight in the middle of President Truman's second term; he was a toddler when the nation elected its first Republican President since Hoover. He grew up amid an almost continuous succession of major national and world developments, technological and social. He was not yet three when the first hydrogen bomb was tested at Eniwetok. He was four when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its historic ruling on the inherent inequality of segregated education.

The struggle for civil rights, with its protests both peaceful and violent, has been part of the scene for as long as he can remember. He has never known a world without television. He has always been on wheels, and the older he grows the faster he seems to go. He was seven when Sputnik circled the globe in the unheard-of-time of ninety minutes. His parents bought him a space suit, and a new word was added to his vocabulary. "Astronaut" John Glenn became his hero. N.A.S.A.'s rockets summoned him to the moon and beyond. Musically, he responded wildly to the Beatles. The guitar became the badge of his culture.

He was ten when John F. Kennedy won the Presidency by a bare 119,000 votes, twelve when the missile crisis of 1962 took the country to the brink of war, and thirteen-old enough to remember it well-when its thirty-fifth President was assassinated. He has grown up through the cold war, the death of Stalin, the rise and fall of Mr. Khrushchev, and the arrival of the Soviet Union at a more placid stage of development. Communism neither frightens nor excites him. He has never known a major depression. His parents' income has doubled during his lifetime. His upbringing and education cost more and take longer than ever. He and his peers have ten billion dollars a year to spend, a fact of which the rest of the economy is acutely conscious.

In his lifetime the computer has appeared; data processing machinery has created both revolutionary new possibilities and a need for higher levels of education. The automation of industrial processes has leaped forward. The chances that he will go to college are much greater-as are the odds that he won't finish. That college education, the need for which exercises such a tyranny over him, represents an enormous national enterprise involving the expenditure of 16.8 billion dollars in 1966, up 12.7 billion from 1956.

His years have seen a steady crumbling of barriers between people, both nationally and internationally. He senses a bond with his fellows around the world; the notion of world citizenship attracts him; instinctively, he feels himself beyond anachronistic nationalism. He is cosmopolitan and urbanized, a child of the city, a breather of its smog, a contributor to its congestion-and its trash. His parents may have fled to the suburbs-or they may have tried and been turned back.

"Instant everything" is offered him by day and by night. The commercial has bred in him a thorough-going skepticism, yet he is seldom without his little transistor radio. The Dollar, the Job, Status, Leisure, and Sex are hawked on every side. He has arrived at the age of experimentation just at the time when the Pill has made the sexual relationship less risky. Beyond this beckons the intriguing, if dangerous, world of narcotics. Beside such possibilities, alcohol seems "kid stuff."

The Peace Corps, with its demand for sacrifice, attracts him, but he is skeptical about the Great Society. He was a high school freshman when the bitter election of 1964 divided the land. Since that time the name "Vietnam" has sounded ever more ominously in his ears. Associated with it is a clumsy draft which may thrust him into mortal combat with an enemy he doesn't know or hate. He has witnessed the rise of violence in America. His protests and counterprotests spread across the land. Moods of alienation, apathy and despair drain away much of his creativity.

Such is the world in which the (twenty-one)-year old finds himself. It creates his present and also the possibilities from which he must build his future. He understands, probably better than his elders, that change will remain a permanent and an accelerating phenomenon in his life. He is more open to social change than are his parents. "New conceptions of the family, of the relations between the sexes, of work, residence, leisure, of the role of government, and the place of America in world affairs" are the accustomed fabric of his thought.

He is in society, but not yet fully of it. He feels its effects, yet can stand apart from it. He is able to evaluate it with an objectivity, accuracy, and candor which can disconcert the most sympathetic adult. What he sees does not reassure him. He finds much to criticize in the world his elders

open to him, yet he has no great sureness within himself about what he would build in its place. He seeks commitment, but not yet ¹⁹

Commitment to what? And when? And where? How? These are questions of the gravest importance for the future-not just for the remaining years of the adult generation but for the whole lifetimes of today's youth and their own as yet unborn offspring.

NEW CONDITIONS AND CONFUSION

The key question is this: What are the new conditions that have brought about the revolt of youth right around the world?²⁰

One answer, possibly the main one, is the emergence of a world community. For the first time human beings throughout the world, in their information about one another and responses to one another, have become a community that is united by shared knowledge and danger.²¹ We in one country know what is happening in another country almost immediately via Satellite. The sharing back and forth has become a part of our lives. Because of it we know that the people of one nation alone cannot save their own children; each holds the responsibility for the other's children.²²

Today, suddenly, because all the peoples of the world are part of one electronically based, intercommunicating network, young people everywhere share a kind of experience that none of

¹⁹ Edward I. Swanson, "Ministry to the Armed Forces", Saints Herald 116 (October 1969), pp. 2-3.

²⁰ Mead, op. cit., p. 69.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, p. 76.

the elders ever have had or will have. Conversely, the older generation will never see repeated in the lives of young people their own unprecedented experience of sequentially emerging change. This break between generations is wholly new; it is planetary and universal.²³

The mere fact that our present situation is unique, with no parallel in the past does not serve to help answer the question. Recent technological change or the handicaps imposed by its absence, revolution or the repression of revolutionary activities, the crumbling of faith in ancient creeds or the attraction of new creeds, serve as only partial explanations.²⁴

No longer can we ask "Am I My Brothers Keeper?"²⁵ We now must acknowledge that it is so. With the world on our doorstep we can not ignore the struggles and conditions of other peoples in other lands. Their lives are to be as much a concern to us as the lives of our friends and families.

This is how the youth feel! They listen only half-comprehendingly to their parents' talk about the past. But this is not all that separates the young from their elders. Watching, they can see that their elders are groping, that they are managing clumsily and often unsuccessfully the tasks imposed on them by new conditions. They see that their elders are using means that are inappropriate, that their performance is poor, and the outcome very un-

²³ Ibid, p. 63.

²⁵ Genesis 5:19.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 68.

certain. The young do not know what must be done, but they feel
 26
 that there must be a better way.

SEARCHING

An essay written by Shannon Dickson, a fifteen-year-old Texas boy expresses how youth feel.

There is a mass confusion in the minds of my generation in trying to find a solution for ourselves and the world around us.

We see the world as a huge rumble as it swiftly goes by with wars, poverty, prejudice, and the lack of understanding among people and nations.

Then we stop and think: There must be a better way and we have to find it.

We see the huge rat race of arguing people trying to beat their fellow man out. All of this builds up, causing unrest between the nations and in the home. My generation is being used almost like a machine. We are to learn set standards, strive for better education so we can follow in our elders' footsteps. But why? If we are to be a generation of repetition, the situation will be worse. But how shall we change? We need a great deal of love for everyone, we need a universal understanding among people, we need to think of ourselves and to express our feelings, but that is not all. I have yet to discover what else we need, nor have I practiced these things as fully as I should. Because when I try I'm sneered at by my elders and those who do not hear, or look at it with a closed mind. Computers take the place of minds; electronics are taking over, only confusing things more.

I admit we should follow some basic rules but first you should look at who is making the rules.

Sometimes I walk down a deserted beach listening to the waves and birds and I hear them forever calling and forever crying and sometimes we feel that way but everyone goes on with his own little routines, afraid to stop and listen for fear of cracking their nut shell.

The answer is out there somewhere. We need to search for it.²⁷

²⁶

Mead, op. cit., p. 76.

²⁷

Ibid, pp. 76-78.

A student body president at a large university says "at the heart of the students problem is the lack of meaning for living. Students have goals, but no purposes, plans, but no convictions that they are proceeding in the right direction They even have causes; yet their lives are meaningless."²⁸

Youth today feel that there must be a better way and that they must find it. They are willing to rebel, to cause family splits to search for, find and establish the standards and values they feel do not exist in the adult society structure.

²⁸

Stormer, op. cit., p. 68.

Chapter 2

ISOLATION OF THE ELDER GENERATIONS

The elders are a strangely isolated generation. No other generation has ever known, experienced and struggled to incorporate such massive and rapid change-has watched while the sources of energy, the means of communication, the certainties of a known world, the limits of the explorable universe, the definition of humanity, the fundamental imperatives of life and death have changed before their eyes. Adults today know more about change than any previous generation. So they are separated both from earlier generations and from the young who have rejected the past²⁹ and all that their elders are making of the present.

In this chapter we shall deal with (a) the frustrations of societal change and the effect it has upon the adult populus, and (b) parental responsibility to the youth.

FRUSTRATIONS OF SOCIETAL CHANGE

The elders are living in a day where they must continually make a transition from a past-oriented society, dominated by one's grandparents and where all experiences were linked to the past through the experiences of the grandparents, to a rapid-pace

²⁹

Mead, op. cit., p. 79.

society in which there is no link with the past and where what you learn today is either already obsolete or soon will be.

While the elders are experiencing the frustrations of this transition the youth are unaware of the problems being confronted by their elders as they have never known anything other than the fast-moving pace of present day life. Because of having been born into this fast-moving age and knowing nothing but it they are much more capable and able to adjust. More so than the adults.

As a result there has been a break in the continuity of our culture. No longer are there three generations linked together in the community. Each generation makes its home and life separate and apart from the others. Youth are, subsequently, having experiences of their own which are unlike that of the older generations and their cultural values. Mead bears this out in her book "Culture and Commitment" when she states that "it is true that the continuity of all cultures depends on the living presence of at least three generations."³⁰ The transition to a new way of life, in which new skills and modes of behavior must be acquired, appears to be much easier for the young when there are no grandparents present who remember the past, shape the experience of the growing child and reinforce, inarticulately, all the un verbalized values of the old culture. The absence of the grandparents usually also means the absence of a closed, narrow ethnic community.³¹

³⁰

Ibid, p. 2.

³¹

Ibid, p. 44.

With the removal of the grandparents physically from the world in which the child is reared, the child's experience of his future is shortened by one generation and his links to the past are weakened.³²

When grandparents are absent or lose their power to control; the young may ostentaciously ignore adult standards or assume a mein of indifference to them.

As these generational changes take place in the structure of the family and as control is shifted, involvement in new groups takes place. Experimentation results with the undesirable experiences being discarded.

The more intense the experience of generational change in the family and of social change through involvement in new groups, the more brittle the social system becomes and the less secure the individual is likely to be. The idea of progress, which provides a rationale for the unstable situation, makes it bearable.³³

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUTH

When the subsequent break-down in the social system results, a breach between youth and their elders is inevitable. This breach becomes especially evident between youth and their parents. For it is within the family unit that values and attitudes are taught and the structure of the social system is developed. It is the family unit which develops the character of their young. The

³²

Ibid, p. 45.

³³

Ibid, p. 59.

experiences created by the family unit largely determine the ability of the young to adapt and adjust to the culture into which they are thrust. Youth are not prepared to understand the facts of life unless the experiences they have had in the family provide them with the framework, a working knowledge about life. Without this knowledge youth are left to grope about blindly searching for identity and meaning.

Without adult care, the infant will die in a few hours. Without adult care, the child will never learn to speak. Without experience of trust, the child will never become a trusting member of society who is able to love and care for others. The child is wholly dependent, and it is on this dependency that human culture has been built as, generation after generation for hundreds of thousands of years, adults have imposed on children through their care for them, their vision of what life should be. Dependency has made conscience possible and ethics are not external to nature but are crucial to human evolution.³⁴

The child who has been provided with experiences about life is better able to move from one situation to another, able to transform his earlier experiences, adapting and adjusting, without destroying his earlier learning. He is better able to understand what life is about.

Aristotle concluded that in order to understand the facts of life you have to have experiences; these facts cannot be compre-

³⁴

Ibid, pp. 89-90.

hended by the unexperienced.³⁵ Breakdowns in our social system, arising in conflicts between youth and adults (to be discussed in the next chapter), due to the lack of life experiences that our youth have had would lead us to believe then, that there is a definite "experience gap" between the generations . . .³⁶ and perhaps this is the greatest gap causing all the difficulties between youth and adults. Alexander Klein states "this college generation has grown up in an era when the rate of social change is faster than it has ever been" The result is not merely that parental experience seems irrelevant to youth, but that adults impose outmoded restrictions and demands on youth.³⁷ When this happens there arise areas of conflict.

³⁵ Robert M. Hutchins, The Conflict In Education (Harper and Row, New York, Evanston and London), p. 35.

³⁶ Klein, op. cit., p. 23.

³⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 3

AREAS OF CONFLICT

The rebellion of the younger generation is not against the principles we profess, but against the life we live. The source of their alienation is "hypocrisy."³⁸ Theirs is a reaction to an adult world that is standard-and-status conscious.³⁹ We refuse to provide what our children need most-our companionship, our communication, our understanding, our appreciation, our example.⁴⁰

Areas which appear to be of greatest conflict between youth and adults (parents primarily), and constitute points of breakdown in our social system, and which will be discussed in this chapter are, (1) Privatism, (2) Education, (3) Communication, and (4) Values. Among the basic values to be included are (a) popularity, (b) materialism, (c) anger, (d) love and (e) right and wrong.

PRIVATISM

Possibly one of the areas of greatest conflict between young and adult is that of privacy. Yet remarkably little atten-

³⁸ Robert Bowman, "Decay; Blessing In Disguise", America (September 5, 1970), p. 116.

³⁹ Edward J. Bloustein, "Why We Ought To Join Our Kids" Look 35 (January 26, 1971), p. 47.

⁴⁰ Bowman, op. cit., p. 115.

tion has been paid to the most distinctive and obvious trait that has been emerging: privatism.⁴¹ Some social critics have been reporting, often reluctantly, on the habit of privatization or the cult of personalism-that is, student withdrawal from institutions into the self-but the coined word privatism recognizes the whole ideology that is now so important. This generation rejects meaning or authority outside of the self.⁴²

Privatism's ideology is altruistic, for it acknowledges the privileges or private existence-as rights-to all men. But in practice this concession is less than heroic; true concern for others is diametrically opposite to the ethic at its logical extreme-self-indulgence, or a relatively simple form of old-fashioned romanticism.⁴³

EDUCATION

Education is a culprit guilty of much of the strife relating to the generational conflict or gap. It has created a gulf between those fortunate enough to be better educated and those who can make adjustments to change-or even induce it-and those less inclined or equipped to do so.

Many parents push their youth to acquire good grades in school so that they can then go on to college. A college education has become a symbol of prestige to be sought after.

⁴¹ Jeffrey K. Hadden, "The Private Generation", Psychology Today (October 1969), p. 32.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

The population today is made up of 40 million young people between the ages of 14-24 or 20% of the population as compared with 15% in 1960 and it continues to swell each year. At the same time there were 7.4 million college students in 1969-70 compared to 4.6 million in 1964-65. Of this total 7% were black.⁴⁴

Since 1940, the percentage of young adults with a college degree has risen from 6 to 16%, those who have at least one year of college from 13 to 31% and those who have at least a high school diploma from 38 to 75%.⁴⁵

Many students do not have the desire to go on to college. Yet each year the college ranks are flooded by those who cannot find a job due to a lack of skills, no desire to work, trying to evade the draft and those whose parents don't know what else to do with them.

Young people are getting more education today than their parents have. The fathers of nearly 2/3 of the present college students did not go beyond high school.⁴⁶ As a result the commonality gap between youth and their parents has expanded. Today, there is much more commonality between the educated young and the educated old than between the educated young and the less educated young, and the educated young and their less educated parents.

⁴⁴
G. B. Grannis, "Generation Gap-Education Gap", Publishers Weekly 199 (March 29, 1971), p. 36.

⁴⁵
Ibid.

⁴⁶
Ibid.

At the same time college attenders are generally more liberal in their attitudes toward politics, sex, child-bearing and religion than those non-attenders.⁴⁷

While the ranks are being swelled with the educated each year the ranks are also being swelled with the dropouts who increase by three-quarters of a million young men and women each year. They enter the job market without the skills and attitudes required by employers.⁴⁸

The failure of our schools to educate to the level of adequate employability nearly 25% of the young men and women who turn eighteen each year is a waste of money as well as human resources. At the heart of the problem is a national attitude which says that Vocational Education is designed for somebody else's children. This attitude is shared by business men, teachers, parents, laborers, preachers and students.⁴⁹

We continue to try to prepare our youth for college, for prestige and power, we have the young always preparing for something, waiting, but never quite becoming anything and fearing that what they might become-images of their parents-isn't worth becoming.⁵⁰

We have a "society divided"⁵¹ educationally.

⁴⁷

Ibid.

⁴⁸

"To Much Stress on College-An Official Report", U. S. News and World Report LXVII (October 13, 1969), p. 45.

⁴⁹

Ibid.

⁵⁰

Bloustein, op. cit., p. 46.

⁵¹

Grannis, op. cit., p. 36.

COMMUNICATION

A language consists of a set of interrelated arbitrarily formulated signs which have the same meaning for all members of the group using them and which communicate ideas (concepts) from members within the group to other members of the group.⁵²

Communications must always be a two-way hook-up. It is impossible for understanding to develop if we are not tuned in on the same frequency.

There is a failure to share in communications on the part of the older generation as well as the younger. The older generation is still hung up with life as it was, while the younger generation is living in the here and now time period.

The inability to communicate is evident in the lives of both young and old. Both are guilty. Listening is the foundation stone of genuine communication. To be listened to is one of our three basic needs.⁵³ In trying to establish good communications we need to:

1. Find the time to talk when young people want it.
2. Hear the adolescent out without interrupting his conversation.
3. Try to listen calmly.
4. Avoid being judgemental.

⁵² David L. Miller, Individualism (University of Texas Press, Austin and London), p. 21.

⁵³ Millard J. Bienvenu, Parent-Teen-Ager Communication (Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 438), p. 4.

5. Learn to listen "between the lines." Listening helps us "tune in the turned on generation."

6. Permit expression of feeling.

7. Avoid barriers to self-expression.

8. Develop a courteous tone of voice in communication.

9. Hold a family conference.⁵⁴

Many older people fail to understand the young and if the young fail to share, hoping to spare the older generation, they are in essence saying, "You're no longer in the ballgame; life has passed you by; you're not able to cope with life's process; you're moribund!"⁵⁵

In our failure (our inability) to communicate with the young we have deprived them with the most vital link with the emerging world-ourselves-and wonder that they aren't able to appreciate what we're up to.⁵⁶

Bienvenu, in questioning a large number of teenagers, found that family group activities are highly prevalent in families experiencing good parent-teen communication. The opposite is true in families with poor parent-teen communications.⁵⁷

⁵⁴

Ibid, pp. 4-7.

⁵⁵

Century 88 Robert A. McKenzie, "Let's Keep Talking", Christian (May 12, 1971), p. 593.

⁵⁶

Ibid.

⁵⁷

Bienvenu, op. cit., p. 1.

Miss Teenage America 1969 sums up the problem of parent-teen communication in this way:

"Lack of communication is the most pressing problem facing youth. It isn't so much talking as it is understanding. You have to have an open mind."

The first barrier to communication which I must cast aside is the attitude of turning off anybody over 30 years of age. If I expect my parents to tune in to me, then I must be willing to talk to them.

My generation is crying for understanding from our elders. In turn, it is only fair that we try to understand them—they have their needs, feelings and reasons for their decisions.

In order to get to know my parents and for them to get to know me I will spend time at home and encourage our family to do things together.

When my parents are trying to get a point across, I will listen with an open mind to see the situation from their point of view. This is what I would expect of them.

I will share more information about myself with my parents. They were teenagers once and may have experienced some of the same feeling and problems I have. I need to give them a chance to help me.

I will initiate discussion on topics which are hard for my parents and me to talk about. I realize that in their day they did not have the opportunity to express themselves the way we do now and to talk about the things we want to talk about.

I want my parents to express trust and confidence in me, to grant me more freedom and responsibility as I mature. It is necessary then, that I live up to their confidence. What I do reflects on them, and they are held accountable for how I act.

Exercising the right to criticize my family, school, or government includes the responsibility to suggest how practical and constructive improvements can be made. Constructive criticism is much more sensible than destructive criticism. To promote better communication in the family I will practice courtesy and consideration for others.

My parents need to know I care about them. They are affected by pressures and problems of everyday living just as I am. I will find nice things to do and say to cheer them up when they need a lift.⁵⁸

As elders our actions have not lined up with our words and thus another element of the generational conflict has been created. Young and old alike can learn from Miss Teen-Age America, 1969.

VALUES

Adults are not pals or playmates of teenagers, but friendly guardians, concerned enough and strong enough to endure their temporary animosity when they must uphold standards and values that protect them and society.

As adults our responsibility is to set standards and demonstrate values. Teenagers need to know what we respect and what we expect. They will oppose our standards, resist our rules and test our limits. But no one can mature by blindly obeying a set of standards imposed by another generation or group of individuals.

Our values should support faith in ones own feelings and the courage to stand alone when necessary.

Our message to children should be: "We value integrity more than popularity. We put decency above social success. Loyalty to a friend should take precedence over popularity."⁵⁹

Popularity

It is a credit to our teenagers that they reject phony popularity. They know that popularity can be costly when it requires compromise of character. Popularity should not be pursued.⁶⁰ It can only be a by-product of life; not a goal.

Many parents place a premium upon popularity, resulting in value conflicts between parents and teenagers and subsequently,

⁵⁹
Dr. Haim Ginott, "Between Parent and Teenager", McCall's 96 (May 1969) p. 79.

⁶⁰
Ginott, op. cit., (June 1969), p. 48.

strife arises. Many adults are social climbers attempting to gain popularity and position in life while all the while sacrificing happiness as a result. Youth see this and tend to reject it as one of the adults' phoney values.

Materialism

Robert Bowman in an article entitled "Decay: Blessing In Disguise" says about materialism:

We have deluded ourselves into believing that our substitution of the pursuit of money for the pursuit of happiness is a necessary and self-sacrificing service to our family.

We refuse to provide what our children need most-our-companionship, our communication, our understanding, our appreciation, our example.

We pursue the almighty dollar out of compulsion, not out of compassion.

We tell our youth they'll never make a lot of money unless they go to college.

Is it any wonder that college-age sons and daughters of the upper, middle-class money-chaser are rebelling.

Money cannot buy the love, respect and happiness of children.⁶¹

Those who are being turned off today are white students who belong to the mid-to-upper class in society. Theirs is a rejection of the life-styles, of an older generation, which they see as favoring one socio-economic group.

Youth today vision society as dominated by machinery of mass production and computerization-the individual does not count.⁶²

In the face of this materialism, youth see an adult society possessing these distinguishing features:

⁶¹

Bowman, op. cit., p. 115.

⁶²

Bloustein, op. cit., p. 46.

1. A world dominated as never before by bureaucracy and technology.

2. A world in which science and rationality have become gods for men to worship rather than tools for men to use.

3. A world in which creature comforts and material goods have been sought, produced and accumulated out of all proportion to their appropriate place in the life of man.

4. A world in which the adult population has suffered a failure of nerve, a failure of confidence in its capacity to succeed according to its own lights.⁶³

Youth are deprived of the luxury of wanting and hungering after things, they are never given the chance by consumer society to produce or to do honest, human work.

It is the upper and middle class who display the worst features of society corrupted by materialism. As we look at the face of the rebelling youth and probe his background it is the upper and middle class youth whom we find to be the most verbal and most violent in their attacks on and denunciation of materialism.

Youth are finding that money cannot buy everything, that there are many free things; the smell of an ocean breeze, the feel of grass on bare feet, sight of a sunset, sounds of baby birds in the nest, warmth of a friendship built through sacrifice-not of money but of one's self.

Anger

The period of adolescence is a time of rebellion. It is natural for children to rebel during this stage of life and many teenagers have an inner radar that detects what irritates their parents and elders most. This irritation soon becomes bewilderment.

Bewildered, parents respond with a predictable sequence of desperate measures. First, they get tough. When this fails they switch to kindness. When no results follow, they try reasoning. When gentle persuasion falls on deaf ears, they resort to ridicule and rebuke. Then they return to threats and punishment. This is the modus operandi of a mutual-frustration society.⁶⁴

Parents usually react to their child in one of two ways: approve or disapprove. The most helpful response, however, is non-judgemental. It contains neither criticism nor praise. It identifies feelings, recognizes wishes and acknowledges opinions.

Criticism, on the other hand, creates anger, resentment and a desire for revenge. When a teenager is constantly criticized he learns to condemn himself and find fault with others. He learns to doubt his own worth and belittles the value of others. Most criticism is, at best, unnecessary.

Helpful criticism has one main function; to point out what has to be done in a situation. It does not insult personality, it deals with a difficult event. It does not attack the person, it talks to his condition.⁶⁵

⁶⁴

Ginott, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

⁶⁵

Ibid.

Sarcasm creates resentment, evolves hatred, and provokes counterattacks.

Don't attack personality attributes.
Don't criticize character traits,
Deal with the situation at hand.⁶⁶

People can feel anger and express themselves without being insulting.

"I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow."⁶⁷
-William Blake

It is best not to be too patient too long. When we start feeling anger but continue to be nice we are showing hypocrisy-not kindness. Adults should use anger effectively instead of trying to hide it. More often than not the mere statement of our feelings will bring the desired results.

Anger has a real purpose-it shows concern. Failure to get angry at certain moments shows indifference, not love. Those who love cannot avoid anger.

Love

Children learn what they live. Kindness can be taught only kindly. Love can be taught only lovingly and compassionately.

A child from the beginning of its life learns and knows love or the absence of it, concern or its lack. From the first day a child must have loving care. Without adult care, the infant

⁶⁶

Ibid.

⁶⁷

Ibid.

will die in a few hours. Without adult care, the child will never learn to speak. Without experience of trust, the child will never become a trusting member of society, who is able to love and care for others. The child is wholly dependent.⁶⁸ The only way a child can learn these traits is if he experiences them from early childhood.

"Dr. Edward M. Litin, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, at the Mayo Clinic, says parents are afraid to say no, afraid to give orders, afraid to punish, because they fear the loss of love." He continues by saying, "the shakier the marriage,⁶⁹ the more marked the abdication of parental responsibility."

Parents are to be loving, caring guardians concerned to the point of saying no and enduring the animosity of youth, when standards and values must be protected and upheld against the assaults launched by youth.

When we try to buy love the price goes up. Children learn quite promptly that emotional blackmail can be a profitable business. But what the best majority of American children need is an end of being pampered, of being indulged, of being chauffeured, gifted, catered to and made to feel that the world belongs to them.⁷⁰ They need to be made to feel that they are loved, other-

⁶⁸ Dr. Haim Ginott, "On Becoming Human", McCall's 96 (April 1969), p. 40.

⁶⁹ Ann Landers, "Say No To Your Child", Readers Digest 93 (October 1968), p. 145.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 146.

wise they shall grow up having warped lives and without the ability of feeling love and returning it.

Right and Wrong

The distinction between feelings and acts is the cornerstone of the new approach to teenagers. We are permissive when dealing with feelings and wishes. We are strict when dealing with unacceptable behavior.⁷¹

In dealing with children, the best weapon is calm authority. Effective discipline, (and discipline is the key word),⁷² requires that in moments of crisis, parents remain laconic. Strength is seldom conveyed by long explanations and bitter arguing. To be firm is to be succinct.⁷³

Rules should be stated firmly without long justifications. It is best to assume that our child is not stupid and can figure out obvious reasons for himself.⁷⁴

Juvenile Delinquency is at an all-time high. Teenagers have no respect for authority. They fear no one. They grew up sassing their parents, talking back to their teachers, and finally they find themselves afoul of the law.⁷⁵

⁷¹

Ginott, op. cit., p. 146.

⁷²

Landers, op. cit., p. 146.

⁷³

Dr. Haim Ginott, "Dramatic Language and Laconic Language",
McCall's 96 (July 1969), p. 40.

⁷⁴

Ibid.

⁷⁵

Landers, op. cit., p. 146.

To fear is to respect. Fear is healthy and desirable under
⁷⁶
 certain circumstances.

Teenagers characters are shaped by experience with people and situations. Character traits cannot be taught directly, loyalty cannot be taught by lectures, courage by correspondence nor man-or-womanhood by mail. Character education requires presence that demonstrates and contact that communicates.

A teenager learns what he lives and becomes what he experiences. Our mood is the message, the style is the substance, the process the product.

Parents want their children to become a human being with compassion, commitment and courage, a person who is guided by a core of strength and a code of fairness.

To achieve these humane goals we must use humane methods. Love is not enough. Insight is insufficient and good parents need skill. Above all parents and adults need to demonstrate the way of life they tell their children to live.

One teenager sums it up this way, "I am a human being. See me. Hear me. Please help me to find out who I am. Help me
⁷⁷
 to discover what life is all about. Soon!! They will learn only when we set the example and show them the way. When we take time to help them by giving of ourselves.

⁷⁶

Ibid.

⁷⁷

Abby Chapkis, "Relevance or Revolt", Ohio Schools (September 26, 1969), p. 24.

Chapter 4

BRIDGING THE GENERATIONAL CONFLICT

As parents our need is to be needed. As teenagers, their need is not to need us. A father says "our relationship is a tragedy of errors. I am his friend. He considers me his enemy. I want his respect. I get his contempt."⁷⁸

Slyvie Riece in an article "The Trouble With Parents Is" quotes a teenager as saying "parents are looking for a safe kind of life for you, and you're looking for an alive kind of life for you."⁷⁹

Parents are a child's advocate. Like a lawyer he does not condone misbehavior or misconduct, but he tries to see the extenuating circumstances and to provide aid and hope instead of prosecution.

In the preceeding chapter we talked about "areas of conflict" between adults and youth, touching upon what seem to be the main areas of the problem. In this chapter, some suggestions will be offered as to ways that the "generational conflict" can be bridged. Certainly not all the answers will be given, nor will these suggestions apply in all circumstances. Each situation is

⁷⁸

Ginott, op. cit., (July 1969), p. 55.

⁷⁹

Slyvie Riece, "The Trouble With Parents Is", McCall's 96 (September 1969), p. 70-71+.

different, no two youth or parents are alike, and no two solutions will fit the other's problem.

First, some complaints that youth have about their parents will be considered. Then, some generational roadsigns leading to the bridge and some guidelines to bridging the generational conflict itself will be presented. Helping parents to understand and help their teenage youth should result in the teenagers better understanding of the adult generation.

YOUTH AND ADULTS CONFRONT EACH OTHER

Harrison Brown in "Why The Generation Gap" quotes a Gallup Survey on gripes of parents and students. Students' gripes about parents are:

1. Too set in their ways.
2. Lack of communication (they won't listen to us).
3. Too conservative, indifferent, apathetic, materialistic.
4. Too strict.
5. Racial prejudice.

Parents' gripes about youth run something like this:

1. Undisciplined behavior.
2. Lack of respect for authority.
3. Youth are over indulged.
4. Just plain irresponsible.

5. Smug. 80
6. Too self-assured.

More than one commentator on society in the United States, have noted that the real shortcoming of young people, and a cause of further puzzlement in dealing with them, is that they have no knowledge of history. They are quite sure that any attacks they make on tradition are the first attacks, and they are truly unaware that many of the people whom they consider establishment now⁸¹ were really radicals of their day.

Generational Roadsigns

Young people are more alone than ever before, more forced to discover for themselves a mode of life than have been other generations. The paradox is that at the same time they reach out more to others of various ages, and, alert to the many kinds of communication available to them, are more than ever frustrated⁸² when the private links of communication do not function.

Adults underestimate young people when they think they must explain or introduce communication which is an effective medium of its own. The gap between adults and youth begins to widen when this is done, or for that matter when adults attempt to shape youth responses in set terms. The gap widens when adults are more interested in giving them what they (adults) have

80

Harrison Brown, "Why The Generation Gap", Saturday Review 52 (July 19, 1969), p. 22.

81

Peggy Sullivan, "Gapping Across The Gap", Library Journal 96 (May 15, 1971), p. 1769.

82

Ibid.

decided they should have, without reference to what youth need and
⁸³ want.

Too often the role of the teacher, the role of the school,
indeed the role of the librarian or parent, has been to provide a
⁸⁴ filter for experience. Adults have as a result closed the lines
of communication and experience to many of the very "things" which
bring meaning to the lives of adult and youth.

The paradox behind it all is that children have a way of
learning these things despite the seeming indifference of adults
to them. It is a shame that youth and adults do not learn to
enjoy them together. These joys and the spiritual values from
which they spring, (contrary to popular belief, only a small minor-
ity of teenagers do not believe in God) become a part of the gener-
⁸⁵ ation gap, instead of its bridge. In his urge for self-direction
the adolescent searches for the meaning of life. A new means of
religious communication seems to be the quest for youngsters as
they struggle to see the relevance of religion to their lives-to
⁸⁶ the here and now.

BRIDGING THE CONFLICT

Adolescence is a period of curative madness, in which every
teenager has to remake his personality. He has to free himself

⁸³
Ibid., p. 1770.

⁸⁴
Ibid.

⁸⁵
Bowman, op. cit., p. 115.

⁸⁶
Bienvenu, op. cit., p. 12.

from childhood ties with parents, establish new identifications with peers and find his own identity.

A teenager's task is tremendous, and the time is short. Too much is happening at once. There are bodily spurts, psychic⁸⁷ urges, social clumsiness, and painful self-consciousness.

His personality fits his development. His personality is undergoing the required changes: from organization (childhood) through disorganization (adolescence) to reorganization (adulthood). He disobeys and rebels not to defy his parents but to define his⁸⁸ own identity.

Even if he does not acknowledge it he needs the help of his parents. Parental aid must be subtle and sophisticated. Following are some suggested guidelines.

1. Accept his restlessness and discontent. Parents can best help by not prying. As the poet Kahlil Gibran put it: "For the truly good ask not the naked, where is your garment? nor the houseless, what has befallen your house?"

2. Don't try to be too understanding. Teenagers need to feel unique in their problems. No matter how wise we are we cannot be right for any length of time in the teenagers eyes.

3. Differentiate between acceptance and approval. "Your sons and daughters are beyond your command" (sings Bob Dylan). One father, irritated by his sons long hair, said "I'm sorry, Mike. It's your hair, but it's my guts. I can stand it after breakfast, but not before. So please have breakfast in your own room." Parents of teenagers must flow with life, but be alert to opportunities for safe contact.

4. Don't emulate his language and conduct. Children are childish, so adults must be adultish. Teenagers deliberately adopt a style of life that is different from ours. When we imitate their style, we only force them into further opposition.

5. Don't step on corns. Insults cut deeper and last longer when it comes from parents. The damage may be permanent. Teenagers hate to be reminded of their babyhood. They

⁸⁷

Ginott, op. cit., (July 1969), p. 56.

⁸⁸

Ibid.

want to put distance between themselves and childhood. They want to be considered grown-ups. Parents should support this desire.

6. Don't invite dependence. A wise parent allows his teenagers to make their own choices and to use their own powers. His language is sprinkled with statements encouraging independence;

"It's up to you."

"If you want to."

"It's your decision."

"Whatever you choose is fine with me."

A teenager needs a voice and a choice in matters which affect his life.

7. Don't hurry to correct facts. Often a teenager responds to correction where facts are concerned with obstinacy. He then becomes unreachable and unteachable, determined not to be influenced by any one or forced into anything.

"Truth for its own sake can be a deadly weapon in family relations. Truth without compassion can destroy love." When attitudes are hostile, facts are unconvincing.

8. Don't violate his privacy. Privacy allows a teenager a life of his own. By providing privacy we demonstrate respect. We help them disengage themselves from us and grow up. With all their good will, parents often intrude and invade. For respect to flourish parents and teenagers must keep some distance between them.

9. Avoid cliches and preaching. "When I was your age" brings instant deafness to teenagers.

10. Don't talk about him in his presence. Parents often talk about their children as though they were objects. They evaluate their past and predict their future. Labeling is dangerous-children tend to live up to roles cast for them by their parents.

11. Don't send contradictory messages. Teenagers suffer greatly from parental messages that are confused and contradictory. A parent's statement should carry one message; a clear prohibition, a gracious permission, or an open choice. Don't damn the teenager if he does and damn him if he doesn't.

12. Don't futurize. We cannot really prepare a teenager for the future. We can only help them deal with the present. Every teenager must make his way in life facing each crisis as it is encountered. Our silent love is his main support.⁸⁹

Chapter 5

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY, SCHOOL AND RELIGION TO YOUTH

In this chapter the intent will be to discuss the relationship of the community, the school and Christianity to the lives of youth. The responsibility lies heavily upon each of these. They too have failed badly in their relationship and duty to the youth who are born and grow up and take their place in society.

What is the community's responsibilities to its youth? What kind of atmosphere can youth expect and what kind should they expect? What type of attitude should communities hold toward their youth?

What of the school and its function in the lives of youth? What part do teachers play? Are they doing their job or merely drawing their paycheck while baby sitting? What do youth have a right to expect of educators?

Where does the church fit into the scheme of life? What part has it played in the past? What is it doing for the lives of youth today? What can adolescents' future hold in expectations from religion and the spiritual values of religion?

THE COMMUNITY AND HER YOUTH

What exactly is the role of the community to the youth that are raised there? This question has undoubtedly received much thought and discussion. Much of the time, probably too much,

talking has been done and not enough action taken. Like everything else, people are aware that problems exist and are quite willing to discuss them and have someone else take care of them but leave them out of the work process itself.

People living in a community do have an obligation to the youth who are growing up there. It is their responsibility to provide a setting, outside the home, for youth to engage in wholesome, character building activities. Regardless of the age in which adults have grown up; this has been a must. People learn, grow and mature by the experiences they have had and are continually having. When the experience of living ends, life itself will end.

A child from birth is self-centered. Many things are happening around infants but they are interpreted according to the effect they have upon the I or self. As children grow, a certain amount of this self-ish-ness will and must persist. For a child to grow and develop into a well rounded, versatile person, capable of decision making without loss of equilibrium, this same child must learn that to give of himself is as much a part of living as receiving.

For the most part this is an obligation on the part of the family; however, the community must share in this training program. The community may be thought of as a larger extension of the family. A family sets down guidelines for the members of the family to follow and must maintain a discipline when these guides are broken. Even so a community must establish guides which increase with the scope of life. The community must above

all else establish a pattern of ideals to guide the lives of its people. These ideals must be followed by each member. If one member breaks the ideal (the guide), others see. If correction is not forth coming immediately the idea is planted in other minds.

People learn by experiences and by trying what they observe others doing. If in these trials success is the case and the success brings a feeling of satisfaction more daring feats are to be tried. If failure is met with and dissatisfaction results then another avenue will be tried. The community is therefore the example by which youth learn and achieve. The community must do its part to provide those wholesome, learning, growing experiences for its youth. Success must be tempered with failure and these channeled so that youth grow to lead constructive, beneficial lives, furthering the growth of community and members and making it a desirable location to live and grow.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

Schools find themselves in a unique position. They have youth to deal with on a multiple-basis for approximately eight waking hours, five days a week, nine months a year. As a result, the classroom teacher is in direct contact, with youth, for an extended period of time. Consequently, a large burden falls upon the shoulders of the teachers.

The School's Responsibility

The responsibility of the school is to provide an education for her youth, enabling them to pass out the doors with marketable skills and prepared with the ability to apply problem-solving devices to the many problems they will be confronted with. This responsibility is great indeed, for all know that it is much easier and less painful to have someone else solve the problems for you.

Teachers then do have a great burden. It falls to the lot of teachers to teach and instill the basic values and skills involved in learning and problem-solving; to motivate youth to want to learn and to work diligently to learn and acquire the knowledge provided by the schools.

Knowledge is not easily obtained, and each has a different potential for obtaining and retaining. Once obtained, true learning comes through the application of the principals of knowledge. Practice in these applications develops skills which become useful, sale-able skills. The progress one makes from the acquiring of knowledge to the acquiring of skills requires many long hours of practice. A person poorly motivated (lacking motivation) will not progress well, will develop skills poorly and will fall far short of being supplied with adequate marketable skills.

Attitudes

The attitude with which teachers approach the teaching of knowledge determines in large measure the attitude with which youth set about acquiring understanding and learning of knowledge.

A teacher who is critical of everything will develop critical attitudes in students. A teacher with a positive attitude will develop healthy, positive attitudes among the youth they come in contact with. Granted that there are some exceptions to this rule.

Youth need to be aware that life is meaningful. They need to be provided with meaningful experiences. They need to have a feeling of worth and belonging. They need the awareness of being significant and valuable.

Youth today are different than youth of two decades ago. Today, they question everything. Their impatience tends to be their undoing. Teachers should never feel that they must justify everything they teach but should still be able to explain the value to be gained from the study of the subject. Meanwhile, youth must learn to temper their impatience.

College Preparatory Education

We have progressed far in the educational field. New scientific and technological developments created a re-emphasis upon education from a typical general education of the three R's to a more sophisticated form preparing youth for college and professional careers.

All of a sudden this new thrust became somewhat mired and stagnated. Every high school was preparing its youth for college even when many of those youth were not fitted for college and many had no desire to attend college. Our emphasis was not upon the individual needs and wants. All were grouped generally. Soon this was recognized to be inadequate and other forms developed.

Next came the ability groupings. Students were placed homogeneously, according to certain selected criteria scores. Soon the underachiever recognized himself at the bottom of the pile and the fast learner recognized his superior ability and so inequality became common. The poor soon did poorer because he was expected to and the fast learner did better because he was expected to and recognized his ability to secure a better position. This attempt at recognizing individual differences did not prove to be totally a success.

As further attempts were made to meet the peculiar needs of individuals the idea of vocational training (which had been in practice in some fields, agriculture in particular, for several years) came to the fore and is now the vogue.

Vocational Education

The idea that youth learn by doing has been stated earlier. The idea here is that educational programs must not only teach facts and principles but must also demonstrate these. Learning does come through the experiences of application. Educators are seeing more vividly than ever before, the value of vocational type education.

Vocational education, was in the beginning, the application, in a laboratory setting, of the basics learned in the classroom. It has been expanded to now include on-the-job- training for youth who are interested in specific fields of study. From this have grown Vocational-Technical Schools where youth can in two years time or less, acquire skills fitting them for immediate

employment upon completion of their training program. This type of program is continuing to receive emphasis and is now growing into the secondary school.

Education, the learning of knowledge, has taken on a new look. There can be no doubt that this new look will lead to even better things. Schools must continue to improve and to keep pace. It is their obligation, their responsibility to the development of their youth. If the schools fail, so do their youth and their community. Who knows how far the rotten part may spread its influence?

Schools have a unique opportunity. They must respond by supplying quality educators to supply quality education to develop quality people.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

It is a well established fact that without love a child will die. To carry it further, without love the world will become so corrupt that decay sets in and life is bled out until death takes over.

The lot of Religion is to teach the world about love and how to give love in return for love.

A child's first love is himself. As he grows his world enlarges and if love is given him he learns to love the giver and his ability to love enlarges. If he continues to receive love, as his world expands he meets more opportunities for love, his ability to love also grows. If this continues his love becomes all encompassing. However, the sad part seems inevitable and love

fails to be given and as a result is not returned and the breach is established.

Religion has its foundation in love. And while love for the fellowman existed, a concern was shared for the welfare of all. All things were shared in common, each had his wants and needs taken care of. A condition of high moral regard for each other existed.

Somewhere a breach occurred and with it came distrust, corruption, lust and a lack of concern for one's fellowman. As these conditions continued more people were drawn to them. Conditions worsened until the only love existing in the lives of many was for themselves. Moral decay became prevalent, struggles arose and destruction resulted. Once again a period of quiet concern and love existed.

Today, history continues to repeat itself. Religion (particularly as we know it) has once again seen the progression from brotherly love, through moral decay, struggles and wars for gluttonish possession and destruction resulting.

Needed in the lives of people is a religion born of love, concern for fellowman, sharing in common the idea that we are our "brothers keeper." Instead of experimenting with drugs, sex, high speed and danger for kicks and to be turned on we need to once again experience the "turning on" and the "high" of the spirit of Christ instilling love for fellowman into our lives.

Religion, characterised by love and concern bears the responsibility of leading people to provide meaningful, worthwhile experiences for youth, taking active part in their lives

and loving them to death. Christ's principles, commandments and teachings need to come alive in the lives of people. People need to throw off their Sunday piety and put on the cloak of spirituality seven days a week. Businessmen must become Christ like in their dealing with the public instead of bleeding them. People in general must live love and concern for their fellowman every day and not take it off and put it on with their Sunday suit.

Love in the hearts of people can do wonders for the ills and decay of the world. But all people must give true love a try. It must be put into practice where people can see it at work. People must quit living lives of double-standards and set the true example for the youth.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY

Each generation of people no matter how similar in their cultural upbringing never see life through the same eyes and in the same way as the generations before. Thus a gap between older and younger generations always exists.

Today, in American culture this gap has widened. Even though there has always been a gap between the generations it appears to be abnormally wide at this point in time.

Much has been written about the "generational conflict." Many theories with many solutions have been written, discussed, explained. None, however, have solved the problem or seemingly narrowed the existing gap.

Youth today are living in an age when technological and scientific change are accepted parts of life. They are used to the rapid movement from one development to another. Newness, experimentation, fads are all accepted as nothing to be "hung up" about. Their hang-ups are on the adult generation whom they see as unable to cope with the evolving culture, floundering about and professing one thing but living another.

At the same time adults are attempting to make the transition from a culture dominated by their elders into a culture where no generation dominates. The frustration created by the required changes have served to disturb their relationship with

their young who for all their freedom still need the guidance of the older generation even though they may be unwilling to acknowledge the need for dependence.

There are, however, some very definite areas in which conflict has arisen between youth and adults and more particularly between children and their parents.

One of the very main and most important areas is that of communication. The art of listening is the foundation upon which communication is built. It is one of the three basic needs and must be practiced by young and old alike. When one is truly listening, he is tuned in to the other person and making a definite effort to understand. Communication entering the picture in various ways creates, perhaps, the first breach in the "generational conflict."

The area of "privatism" exists as a result of a lack of communication. Youth, withdrawing from institutions as well as within themselves, indicate a desire for a time or a part of life to themselves. Intrusion into this life by adults may be unintentional but yet creates a lack of privacy.

Adults transmission of their desire for an education through their youth in which this education becomes a prestigious situation is a form of communicating adult desires, right or wrong. The fact that about 2/3 of the young people today are better educated than their fathers creates an education gap which also results in the inability to communicate.

The transmission or attempt to transmit adult values is a major sore spot in this conflict. Youth are not against the prin-

ciples of adult lives but against the lives adults live. They see that adults are telling them one thing about how to live their (youth) lives while they (adults) are living a different style of life. Thus, youth are seeing the discrepancies and rebel against the adult double-standards and hypocrisy.

The adult materialistic values come under particular fire. Adults (many) have sacrificed the love of the family for the love of the almighty dollar and the pursuit of it. Subsequently sacrificing the whole value and standard system which youth are rebelling against.

There are gripes on both sides and both sides are legitimate in these gripes. This is when effective communication is important, to be able to overcome the tensions which exist and relate to each other as a family unit.

The primary responsibility is with the adults. They are to teach and lead youth into avenues of life which provide them with character building experiences. At the same time adults can learn from the experiences of youth, for they are living in an age where their elders have never been young nor had their experiences.

Persons in communities where youth live and grow, in schools where youth go for education, in churches where all too often parents fail to take their young are areas where adults need to work at having an effective influence for good in and on the lives of youth.

Adults need to (1) set examples, (2) supervise and guide, (3) take an interest in their child's activities and friends, (4)

respect the adolescents' desire for individuality and independence, (5) communicate in words and actions what is expected of their child and (6) don't overreact.

Youth need to curb their self-righteousness and remember they can not be right all the time, that there is much they can learn from adults, by tempering their impatience and working together with adults instead of opposing them, that much can be accomplished.

We need to wed the experience of the old with the energy and imagination of the young. Together as a team they can solve many (most) of the cultural problems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bienvenu, Millard J. Parent-Teen-Ager Communication. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 438.
- Bloustein, Edward J. "Why We Ought To Join Our Kids," Look, 35 (January 26, 1971), 46-47.
- Bowman, Robert. "Decay: Blessing In Disguise," America, (September 5, 1970), 115-117.
- Brown, Harrison. "Why The Generation Gap," Saturday Review, 52 (July 19, 1969), 20-22.
- Chapkis, Abby. "Relevance or Revolt," Ohio Schools, (September 26, 1969), 24.
- Genesis 5:19.
- Ginott, Dr. Haim. "Between Parent and Teenager," McCall's, 96 (May 1969), 78-79+.
- _____. "Dramatic Language and Laconic Language," McCall's, 96 (July 1969), 40-56.
- _____. "On Becoming Human," McCall's, 96 (April 1969), 40.
- Grannis, G. B. "Generation Gap-Education Gap," Publishers Weekly, 199 (March 29, 1971), 36.
- Hadden, Jeffrey K. "The Private Generation," Psychology Today, (October 1969), 32.
- Hutchins, Robert M. The Conflict In Education. New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row.
- Klein, Alexander. "Natural Enemies??? Youth and the Conflict of Generations," New Republic, 162 (February 28, 1970), 24.
- Landers, Ann. "Say No To Your Child," Readers Digest, 93 (October 1968), 145-146.
- Leary, John P. "Youth: The Voice of Prophecy," America, (September 20, 1969), 190-192.
- McKenzie, Robert A. "Let's Keep Talking," Christian Century, 88 (May 12, 1971), 593.
- Mead, Margaret. Culture and Commitment. Garden City, New York: Natural History Press, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1970.

Miller, David L. Individualism. Austin and London: University of Texas Press.

Riece, Slyvie. "The Trouble With Parents Is," McCall's, 96 (September 1969), 70-71+.

St. John 1:14.

Stormer, John A. Death Of A Nation. Florissant, Missouri: Liberty Bell Press, P. O. Box 52.

Sullivan, Peggy. "Gapping Across The Gap," Library Journal, 96 (May 15, 1971). 1769-1770.

Swanson, Edward I. "Ministry to the Armed Forces," Saints Herald, 116 (October 1969), 2-3.

"Too Much Stress On College-An Official Report," U. S. News and World Report, LXVII (October 13, 1969), 45.

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, (G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, Springfield, Massachusetts), 13, 175, 344, 348, 1038.

COMMUNICATION AND VALUES
IN THE GENERATIONAL CONFLICT

by

LLOYD E. BARNETT

B.S., Kansas State University, 1965

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education
Department of Administrations and Foundations

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1971

AN ABSTRACT OF
COMMUNICATION AND VALUES
IN THE GENERATIONS CONFLICT

The problem of the "generational conflict" stems from a lack of communications between adult and youth. Adults are busy learning to adjust from an adult dominated culture to a culture in which no generation dominates. Youth, living in an everchanging world, don't feel that adults are doing too well in their transition and point out problems which they believe to be double-standards growing from an unclear set of adult values. They feel that they are being put down and rebel. Alas the "generational conflict!"

Charlie Brown is credited with saying "but adversity is what makes you mature. The growing soul is watered best by tears of sadness."

It is only natural to expect (and hope) that at times the adolescent will want to assert himself and try out his own competence while he tests adult authority. This is part of his "breaking away" and learning what life is all about. Sometimes youth must make their mistakes-but adults must be ready to help them up!

The young and the old should be teaching and learning from each other, because each generation has a level of experience that the other has not had and should benefit from.

Young people need to curb their self-righteousness and remember that they are certainly not going to be right all the time. Youth can provide moral vision and perspective. They can provide adults with the political and social leverage that will remake the world in the latter part of this century.

Edward J. Bloustein says that adults need to:

1. Set the examples.
2. Supervise and guide.
3. Take an interest in their children's activities and friends.
4. Respect the adolescents' desire for individuality and independence.
5. Communicate in words and actions what you expect of your children.
6. Don't overreact.

Adults must wed their experience, learning, technique and political convictions to the energy, imagination, impulse and moral institutions of youth.

Robert Bowman suggests that "the only thing which is decaying is the old order, the old double-standards, the old hypocrisy, as youth do adults one better and instill new life into mankind." He goes on to say that adults must "return to the youths world of simple joys, exploration, adventure and discovery, of caring, of idealism and truth, of simple faith and faithful simplicity, by showing them that this is an adult world, also; by showing them that adults believe in the Gospel message and are prepared to live it. People will continue to

fall short in their striving for perfection but falling short is human, they become hypocrites because they refuse to acknowledge their shortcomings. . . . Perhaps the cure to the generation gap, i.e., the generational conflict, is the cure for hypocrisy-humility.