



Education and Community Life

W. C. MULLENDORE

IN THE EXCITEMENT about our failure to beat the Russians to the launching of a satellite, our educational system is coming in for a share of the blame. To the issue as to "Why young Johnny can't read" is added that of "Why older Johnny didn't beat Sputnik."

At this juncture in human affairs, there is no more vital, far-reaching, rapidly developing, and baffling subject than that of "Education and Community Life."

Let us start with the general proposition that the aim of education is to prepare students to play their part in the human situation. The individual human being is an autonomous organism, in a limited physical sense, but this individual must live as a member of society and of interrelated groups within that society. Education in the broad sense should prepare the individual to live in both his physical and social environment.

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The continuity of the chain or stream of life in its lower forms — plant life, insect, and animal — is protected by Nature and the inherent safeguards of instinct. But, in human evolution, the stage was reached wherein there was no such built-in protection of the continuity of life. God gave to man as an individual the freedom to choose what he would do with the gift of life and his great potential faculties and capabilities. The price of man's freedom of choice was an enormous responsibility — a responsibility placed first upon the parents and family groupings, upon educational and other community institutions to impart knowledge to, and to train and discipline the growing child. Then, as the child grows to maturity, the burden of responsibility for his life and what he will make of it is transferred more and more to him or her as an individual.

Aim and Purpose of Education Is Orientation

The human being on his arrival in the world knows nothing. Even our grandchildren (*of course*, the most wonderful of all children) know nothing at birth. They arrive equipped with remarkable capacity and ability, but it is all potential. Aside from the built-in knowledge of the autonomic nervous system, which is unconscious, babies in

their earliest days are utterly helpless and utterly dependent upon mother and dad, grandparents, and others. In short, they must start from scratch. They have *everything to learn*.

The most remarkable capacity with which the baby is endowed is the capacity to learn. The rapidity with which the child learns is amazing. He or she sets out at a very early age to put this capacity for learning to use. They investigate everything. "Why?" — "What is that?" is their constant refrain. But they must learn fast because there is so much they must know.

What the baby, the child, the youth learns determines the fate of each culture and civilization. It is a most profound, basic, and significant fact that the continued existence of all human institutions is utterly dependent upon the communication or transmission of right knowledge from one generation to another. Break that chain of communication — let the torch of knowledge, understanding, and meaning go out, so that the minds of the oncoming generation are not enlightened with the accumulated right knowledge and wisdom of the older generation, and the culture or civilization goes into eclipse.

This problem of communication between generations is further complicated by the rapid addition

to the body of knowledge through discovery, invention, and growth in human preception and understanding of the universe in which we live. Accelerated change in periods like the present makes for difficulty and confusion in communication between generations. Let us here note just a few of the changes in environment during the past two-thirds of a century and the impact thereof on our lives and our institutions, with special reference to our educational institutions and community life.

The Problem of Change

We of the older generation whose memories reach back to the last decades of the nineteenth century can scarcely exaggerate the breadth and depth, the completeness and complexity of the changes which have occurred in our lifetime. In the physical world, the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with its development and application of steam power to factories, printing presses, transportation, and other industries, together with telegraphy and other improvements in communication, was superseded and eclipsed by the electric age, the internal combustion engine, the automobile, the airplane, and then by electronics, radio, radar, television, machines which "think," automation, and

the jet engine. Now comes the fearful destructive potential of the atomic age, space travel, intercontinental missiles, and other means and forces beyond our imagination. The *end* is clearly not yet—or is it?

Accompanying, and in part as a result of, these changes in the external order of things, human ideas, ideologies, ambition, desire, greed, and emotions have engendered war and world-wide revolution which have dethroned kings, destroyed empires, established ruthless dictatorships, changed autocracies into democracies, democracies into welfare states, and the tyranny of autocratic rulers into the more terrible tyranny and tortured enslavement of communism. Notably, and of greatest significance to us, government interventions in our lives have gone far toward destruction of individual freedom.

Wherein Are We Failing?

So we come to the next question: Are we now meeting our responsibility in this radically altered human situation? If not, wherein are we failing? Thus far, the facts reviewed would seem to point to two conclusions: *First*, that the aim and purpose and function of education should be to prepare the individual for life in the world, and to this end the child and youth

1. Both are accused of having lost sight of their ends and aims because they are absorbed in methods and means: The people as a whole are primarily concerned with consumption — their material standard of living. Industry is absorbed in improvement of technology, equipment, and productivity. Education, it is charged, largely emphasizes methodology at the expense of the quality and content of what is taught.

2. Both are emphasizing *the collective* rather than *the individual* — looking upon the individual as *a means* and the *collective product as the end and aim*, without having any clear idea of why they thus subordinate and sacrifice the individual to the crowd.

3. Both are neglecting the moral and spiritual values and are emphasizing progress in the physical field — growth in attendance, population and numbers generally, and improvement of equipment and of buildings and physical structures — at the expense of the real purpose of their existence, which is contribution to the development of finer and better human beings, spiritually and morally, as well as physically.

Means and Ends

Now, there is nothing wrong with new buildings, fine residences, the latest models in automobiles,

and other things. Transportation systems, water systems, sewage systems, school and office buildings, and other physical structures must be provided. But these are only *means* — means which should be designed and limited to the promotion of a higher aim — the attainment of a higher goal — better and finer human beings and human relations, and a more “beloved community.”

We have a right to be proud of our achievements in the control and modification of our environment so that the rigors of climate, the filth and disease, the extreme poverty and enslaving toil which made existence miserable and revolting for masses of the people through the past millennia, are in the process of elimination. There is good reason why those hundreds of millions in the underdeveloped areas of the world look with envy and hope to the United States of America. And we need not apologize for it.

At the same time, we must not become so absorbed in our admiration and enjoyment of our success in this one area of life, so enamored of our partial and comparative success in the material realm, that we lose sight of our failures and the perils which confront us elsewhere.

Just now we seem obsessed with the idea that nothing matters ex-

must, each for himself, learn what life is all about, its meaning, its values, and its aims. *Second*, this generation of humanity is confronted with a rapidly changing and confusing world, in the throes of humanity's greatest crisis, and an open conflict between two basic philosophies of life.

We might prefer not to be bothered. We may wish for the simpler and more peaceful days of the past. But we are living *now*, and merely to live requires that we face up to the problems and the powerful good and evil forces for change now rampant in our human world.

It does not necessarily follow that because we have learned how to make living more complicated, we have also learned how to adjust to the new complexities. The human mind is the most wonderful instrument on earth. God equipped us with it that we might make contact with, comprehend, and adjust to the physical universe in which he gave us life. But the individual human mind nevertheless has its limitations; and, in our egoism, we are prone to ignore those limitations. While our total human situation is the combined and cumulative result of the creative, productive, and destructive effort of millions of minds and billions of hands, it is the individual mind alone upon which each of us is

dependent for our own comprehension, understanding, and guidance in his situation. No one can perceive and understand the universe and your relation to it, for you. Perception, understanding, knowledge, and wisdom can be achieved by each of us only through our own effort and accomplishment.

The Whole Community Is Involved

The general conclusion drawn by many students of the situation is that the weaknesses and complaints and failures which are most frequently lodged against the schools and educators, are equally applicable to the aims, purposes, and achievement of the community as a whole (including our national and international communities in that finding). For example, Laura Huddleston Galbraith, in a recent article appearing in the *Los Angeles Times*, says:

"Public school education today finds itself the whipping boy of an undisciplined nation — a nation grown complacent by the productivity of its industrial genius. . . ."

And she agrees with many others also in this finding:

"A distorted sense of values has been the primary cause for the lag in American education."

A further similarity between criticism and complaints against education and against our culture as a whole appears in these points:

cept science, engineering, and technology. We are berating ourselves and blaming each other because the Russians succeeded where we had failed in launching a satellite; and we fear they may have an intercontinental ballistic missile, if not now, at least before we develop one. This, we say, is our greatest defeat since Pearl Harbor, an irreparable blow to our prestige, and, worst of all, a terrible threat to our safety.

Some of this may unfortunately be true. But are we not waking up a bit late? Are we not possibly getting our values and our perspective twisted? Is this really our basic and most serious failure?

The Failure in Our Time

We were enjoying prosperity, and we did not want anything to interfere with that enjoyment. We were enjoying our increasing leisure, and increasing automation which freed us from work; and we did not want to listen to any "sourpuss" or pessimist or alarmist who suggested that maybe there was an ultimate and overshadowing challenge developing in our world to which we should be paying more attention. Instead of responding as a nation normally does when its life is threatened in war, we employed to the full and as never before that dangerous power of the human mind to shut out facts

which we did not want to face. We tried to promote peace by spending money. We relaxed discipline not alone in the school, but in the home, in the workshop, and all along the line. We incurred such public debts and such private debts as to exhaust our credit resources. We lived for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

This has been the failure in our time — and it was a failure not alone in formal education, but also in the home, in office and factory, in the labor union, and in the development of the community. We became confused in our values and in the things we held to be most worth-while in our lives.

Essentially, the failure which threatens us is in the moral and spiritual realm. We have been devoting ourselves, if not exclusively, at least much too closely, to our material pursuits, pleasures, and leisure. Yes, we have been "fiddling while Rome burned." For too long a time, we have been neglecting the education of the whole person — the development of that insight, spiritual awareness, and moral courage, wherein lies the superiority of the free world of the West over the slave world of Russia and China.

We have created our own human system and environment. In doing so, we have frequently ignored and violated laws of the moral and

spiritual order. We have, for example, claimed rights before performing the obligations from which those rights are derived. We have chosen to change the natural environment, to build a man-made environment and system, upon the maintenance and operation of which our life depends. Then we have abused that system through self-indulgence, and through many excesses. Millions are trying to "get by" without doing their part in maintaining and contributing to the operation of this economic, social, and governmental system. In short, there has been widespread and prolonged cheating, lying, stealing, and other violations of the moral code to which we are all subject in this life.

A Crash Program

What, then, shall we do? There are many suggestions for "crash programs" — for the launching of a satellite, for the development of an intercontinental ballistic missile, and for the education of scientists in quantity and quality sufficient to overwhelm the Russians. There is much talk of our failure to match the Russians in scientific education and achievement.

We can all agree that we must not neglect this vital area of our defense. And thus far the evidence is that we are, from the over-all standpoint, still ahead both in our

knowledge and in our equipment, and we are properly determined to stay ahead.

But is it in science that the real "crash program" is called for? Dare we place all our reliance in science alone for our physical strength? Science is important. It must not be neglected, but it is not primarily on the scientific front that the enemy threatens us. We should not be misled. The communist leaders from Lenin to Khrushchev have openly avowed that their principal reliance in their campaign to destroy us is upon subversion from within. They have said they would destroy us economically by stimulating overspending and inflation, and the growth of class, group, and racial dissension which their agents would help promote from within; and that thus we would be so debilitated in physical strength that the force required to complete the job would be much reduced. And we should by now be aware that in this program of subversion, the enemy has not been altogether unsuccessful.

Our need today — our greatest and most urgent need — is for the regeneration of our American heritage and the rebirth of our Christian faith. We are hearing too much about the need for more science, and far too little about the need for more religion — for an

immediate, an intense, and an enduring revival of moral and spiritual life and strength. God has not forsaken us. We have forsaken him.

We cannot reclaim the Christian heritage nor the rights and blessings of a free people until and unless we have a rebirth of righteous and conscientious performance of our moral and spiritual obligations. Man cannot concoct a system under which he can escape the Higher Law. If we wish to regain our freedom, we must not only confess our error, but, by positive action, we must mend our ways. The blessings of liberty must be earned, and they can be retained only so long as we play the part of self-reliant, responsible human beings. The road back to a free

and secure America may be long and weary and dangerous, but we can find it if we will follow the directions written plainly in the records of our past.

The hour is very late; but we must be persuaded that it is not too late. Neither dare we despair, nor, while mending our slovenly ways, must we abandon our scientific and physical defenses. What we must abandon is our inordinate attention to pleasure and comfort — our ways of life which make us dependent and soft. We must indeed awaken and gird on that armor of truth and faith which the enemy spurns, and by such spurning gives us our greatest advantage and our certain hope in this hour of decision. • • •


IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Spiritual Freedom

A HUMAN BEING is a member of the community, not as a limb is a member of the body, or as a wheel is a part of a machine, intended only to contribute to some general, joint result. He was created, not to be merged in the whole, as a drop in the ocean, or as a particle of sand on the seashore, and to aid only in composing a mass. He is an ultimate being, made for his own perfection as the highest end, made to maintain an individual existence, and to serve others only as far as consists with his own virtue and progress....

No man, I affirm, will serve his fellow-beings so effectually, so fervently, as he who is not their slave; as he who, casting off every other yoke, subjects himself to the law of duty in his own mind.... Individuality or moral self-subsistence is the surest foundation of an all-comprehending love. No man so multiplies his bonds with the community as he who watches most jealously over his own perfection.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, May 26, 1830



Not Victories for Communism

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

THE OBVIOUS military threat from the launching of the Soviet sputnik is not the projection of an earth satellite into space, but the likelihood that capacity to do this implies capacity to launch an extremely formidable military weapon, the intercontinental ballistic missile. Along with this obvious threat, which has been widely canvassed in Congress and in public discussion, there are two more subtle and indirect dangers which have received less attention.

First, there is the unmistakable trend to use the Soviet earth satellite as an excuse for indiscriminate spending, nonmilitary as well as military. Grabs at the taxpayer's pocketbook are in prospect for everything, from federal aid to education to United States aid to subsidizing the socialistic economic development schemes of rather unfriendly neutralist nations in Asia. Some columnists and commentators sneer at the very idea

of a balanced budget as at something as obsolete as the Model T Ford. In taking this attitude they prove, not their sophistication, but their inability to learn from the long history of the disastrous consequences of inflation.

Second, there is at least the beginning of an assumption that, because the Soviet government beat us to the gun in launching an earth satellite, there must be some superiority in the Soviet political and economic system. Such a line of thinking, if pursued far enough, might suggest that compulsion is superior to voluntarism as a motivating factor in economic production.

So it may be a good idea to take a close look at those fields where Soviet success has been most pronounced in order to see whether these successes were achieved by methods that have any relation to communist egalitarian philosophy. These fields are (1) military pow-

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