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# Theory of C.N.E.

by PROFESSOR J. CHR. COETZEE

CHRISTIAN National Education is based on a particular life and world view and is therefore applicable only in the case of people who profess this particular life and world view.

This statement is of fundamental importance in any discussion of the theory of C.N.E.

This is nothing new or strange. Any system of education is based on a theory of education. Theories of education differ for the simple reason that life and world views, or briefly philosophies of life, differ. Every philosophy of life leads to a distinct form, theory and practice of education. The theory and practice of education of a pragmatist, realist, idealist, naturalist, etc. is decisively affected by the fact of the thinker being a pragmatist etc. The philosophy of life of John Dewey is that of pragmatism, and hence his philosophy of education is pragmatistic. The philosophy of life of F. S. Breed is that of realism, and hence his philosophy of education is realistic. The philosophy of life of H. H. Horne is that of idealism, and hence his philosophy of education is idealistic. And so on, and so forth.

This close relation between philosophy of life and philosophy of education also applies in the case of a Christian philosophy of life and of education. A Christian philosophy of life demands a Christian philosophy of education: Christian philosophy and Christian education go together.

But as there are many pragmatistic or realistic or idealistic philosophies of life, so there are many pragmastistic or realistic or idealist philosophies of education . And as there are many Christian philosophies of life, so there are many Christian philosophies of education. I may just illustrate: Roman Catholic and Protestant, Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinistic philosophies of life with their particular philosophies of education. A Roman Catholic philosophy of life and of education does differ from a Protestant philosophy of life and education. Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists differ in their life and world views and hence also in their educational views.

But there is a second principle in the philosophy of education which is of fundamental significance. This is the so-called national principle. From a study of Comparative Education any unbiassed student will conclude that nationality plays a decisive role not only in the practice of education but even more so in the theory of education. There are distinct, even fundamental, differences between the British approach to and practice of education on the one hand and the American approach and practice. Western education differs essentially from Eastern education. Russian, German, French, Italian, Dutch, English education, with all the undeniable similarities, differ markedly, even fundamentally, one from the other. This is so much so that we may speak of a Russian, a German, a French, an Italian, a Dutch, an English education.

I hope that I have now indicated the fact that there can be Christian philosophies of life with their particular and consistent philosophies of education, and that there can be national philosophies of education.

But Christian and National may be applied to many particular philosophies of life and education. The British Nation is a Christian nation, hence its philosophy of life and of education is both Christian and National. And so the South African people, as far as the White sections are concerned, is a Christian and National people. We may therefore expect that in South Africa Christian and National philosophies of life and education will or may prevail. If we want to understand philosophy in South Africa, we must make a study of the South African European population. In the main there are two groups: the English-speaking section mostly Christian in general and Anglican in particular, and the Afrikaans-speaking section mostly Christian in general and Calvinistic in particular. There ought to be in South Africa at least two distinct educational philosophies. Let me call them the Anglican and the Calvinistic philosophies.

I must admit that in the history of education of South Africa very little has been done in developing a pertinent English South African philosophy of education, while much has been done in regard to the formulation and application of an Afrikaans, i.e. Calvinistic, South African philosophy of education. The main theory was formulated in the brief C.N.E. Policy issued by the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings in 1948. This has become the bone of contention in South Africa since 1948, and to my mind and knowledge unfortunately and wrongly. The C.N.E. policy of the F.A.K. is a policy for the Afrikaans Calvinistic section of our population. It was never intended for the English Anglican section, neither for any of the other Afrikaans religious or philosophical groups. This has been stated time and again by supporters of the

F.A.K.'s C.N.E. Policy but never fully accepted or appreciated by other people. And yet that is so, and fundamentally so, because nobody can formulate for any "andersdenkende" his philosophy of education with its consistent practice of education. The agitation against the Afrikaans Calvinistic C.N.E. policy is unfair and unnecessary. I, as one of the responsible members of the Committee who formulated the C.N.E. Policy of 1948, have time and again challenged "andersdenkendes" to formulate their particular philosophy of education, assuring them that our formulation (the F.A.K.'s) was never intended for the education of their children.

I hope this will be assurance enough.

I shall now proceed to state briefly the philosophy of C.N.E. in so far as it applies to the Afrikaans Calvinistic section of our population. In attempting to do so, I shall have to give our answer to the three fundamental problems of any philosophy of education, viz. what is education as such? Who is the educand? What is the aim of education?

Education is the process whereby the educand is directed in his growth and development by the educator towards an ideal end or goal or aim. In this definition we have to do with three things: a process, an educand, the aim. The process is a question of general and particular educational method. The educand is a physical and mental datum but also a philosophical problem. The aim of education is fundamentally and decisively a philosophical problem. On the process we may differ in particulars and even in head lines; as regards the educand we may agree on the physical and mental data but differ fundamentally on questions of his origin and nature; on the aim we will differ fundamentally, because this raises the question of the destination and destiny of the educand as a human being.

As regards the origin and nature of the educand, the Afrikaans Calvinist holds that man is a unique creature — creature in the strict sense of a being created by God and not of being a product of spontaneous evolution. Man is created by God fundamentally differing from all other creatures: man being created in the image and likeness of the Creator himself. Man is not an animal but a unique creature: man and animal are creatures of the same Creator, but man and animal differ fundamentally. Man is specially gifted in body and mind and is a proper object of education. The outstanding differences between man and animal lie in physical, mental and spiritual endowment: man is the image and likeness of God. But the Afrikaans Calvinist believes in the fact that this creature of God fell on his own account into sin and thereby lost his high status and excellent gifts, retaining through the grace of God a few small remains thereof. God, however, elected and redeemed some by the sacrifice of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Before and after the fall of man, his all embracing aim in life is to know, to serve and to love his God and this for a twofold purpose: glorification of God and salvation of his own soul. This is his destination and destiny.

A person holding such convictions cannot allow his child to be educated by anybody else than an educator holding the same views. Therefore, the Afrikaans Calvinist desires for the education of his child a pure C.N.E. But at the same time, he knows that people with other views exist and hold the same rights as he does. Therefore, he supports them in their wishes for an education of their children according to their philosophy of life.

The Afrikaans Calvinist holds as the ultimate aim of education the knowledge, service and love of God, and his wish is to educate his child in this knowledge, service and life. But he holds also immediate and remote aims. Amongst the immediate aims we reckon the physical, the mental and the social growth and development of his child. Amongst the remote aims he counts the politico-civic, ethical, aesthetic and even philosophical growth and development of his child. He wants his child to be taught all that is taught to any child: he must know man and world. But he wants this teaching to be founded on the teaching of Holy Scripture: to know man and world the child should know God. The knowledge of God is not only the ultimate truth (knowledge) but also the all pervading truth. The Afrikaans Calvinist, therefore, holds that the curriculum of education should embrace both nature and Scripture, with Scripture as the foundation and the leaven of all knowledge.

The theory of C.N.E. as seen by the Afrikaans Calvinist leads consistently to separate schools for separate religious and non-religious groups in the same nation or national groups. In a country like South Africa there should, therefore, be separate schools for non-believers and for Christians, separate schools for Roman Catholics and for Protestants, separate schools for each of the great religious groups, e.g. Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinistic, and separate schools for each of the national groups. This theory rejects any system of state schools and argues in favour of a system of state-supported schools, under which system any group of likeminded parents may under specific conditions have their special state-aided schools. These separate schools should not be church schools in the strict sense of the word church. They should be society schools, each school for a community of likeminded parents.