Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education
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Notes by John Mulholland

"The World for Which We Educate" - p. 87 – 7th chapter of this book

Introduction - p.87

"Education in general, and school education in particular, is a goal-directed enterprise; it's an intervention in the lives of people with the aim of effecting some alteration in their lives. If we as educators are to answer the fundamental questions concerning the education we offer, we must be clear about which alterations we are, and which ones we should be, aiming at. We also need clarity on, for example, the strategies most likely to achieve the goals we set for ourselves. But without clarity on goals, discussions on education get nowhere.

Let me add that sometimes we do not want our discussions to get anywhere. Our talks is not for the sake of clarifying what we are doing and steering us toward what we should be doing; it's to conceal from ourselves that we are doing, or make us feel good about what we are doing, or to develop resistance to changing what we are doing.

Models of Education - p.87

It is my impression that if those who teach in the Christian colleges today were asked to state what they regard as the proper goal of Christian collegiate education, their answers, with few exceptions, would fall into one of four types. Some would espouse what may be called *the Christian service model*; the goal is to train students to enter one and another line of so-called 'Kingdom work' such as evangelism, ministry, church education, mission –field medicine, and the like. Others would espouse *the Christian humanist model*; the goal is, from a Christian perspective, to induct the student into the great cultural heritage of humanity – its art, its science, its literature, its philosophy, its music, its theory. Yet others would espouse *the Christian academic-discipline model*; the goal is, from a Christian perspective, to introduce the students to academic disciplines, thereby putting them in touch with reality in the way in which theory does that. Most would espouse *the Christian vocation model*; the goal is to train students for whatever roles they will be entering, especially occupational or professional roles, and to teach them to conduct themselves as Christians within those roles. It will be noticed that the first model I mentioned, the Christian service model, is really a version of the last. On the Christian service model, the college confines itself to training for the narrow range of occupations which constitute so-called Kingdom work; on the Christian vocation model, the college trains for Christian life and action in a wide range of occupational callings.

My own view has come to be different from all of these. Originally it embraced the Christian humanist model. That was the dominant model in my own collegiate education; I embraced what I was taught. I moved from there to a blend of the Christian academic-discipline model and the Christian vocation model. In retrospect it is clear to me that the effect of my graduate school education was the main cause of my moving away from the Christian humanist model; whereas my graduate school education trained me to 'do philosophy,' as we called it in those days, the Christian humanist model seemed to be oriented entirely toward the past.

It was the slow and halting recognition that none of these models responds adequately to the *wounds* of humanity that led me to move beyond all of them. I continued to believe in the importance of being inducted into our cultural heritage. I continued to believe in the importance of engaging in the academic disciplines, and continued to believe in the importance of training in the knowledge-intensive profession; but I also came to believe that we must energize our students to pursue justice and to struggle against injustice."

Models of education - p.87

1. "… *Christian service model* …."

2. "… *Christian humanist model*…."

3. "… *Christian academic-discipline model* …."

4. "… *Christian vocation model* …."

5. "… *wounds* of humanity …." model

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6. "… *shalom* …" model

"The question that then confronted me was how to acknowledge the worth and relevance of all these goals without having just a grab bag of good things on my hands. **The answer I arrived at was that the biblical concept of <u>*shalom*</u> holds them all together** [**emboldened and** <u>underscored</u> by John Mulholland]. Justice requires shalom; one cannot read the poetic and prophetic literature of the Old Testament and miss that. **But when I looked carefully at how shalom was described, <u>it seemed evident to me that culture and theory also enhance shalom; they enhance our flourishing</u>** [**emboldened** and <u>underscored</u> by John Mulholland]. On this occasion I will assume that all of you, from your reading of the psalms and the Old Testament prophets, have a fairly clear idea of what constitutes that mode of human flourishing which the Bible calls shalom.

If we are going to teach for justice – justice being the ground floor of shalom – we will have to understand and enable our students to understand the society in which we educate. That is only marginally true for the Christian humanist and the Christian academic-discipline models of Christian collegiate education; for the shalom model, social analysis is indispensable. So what I want to do on this occasion is present to you an interpretation of our modern world,

and then make some comments on how we teach for justice if that is indeed the world in which our students will be living, and we along with them."

Our Enlightenment Legacy - p.89

Yes to "… progress in science, technology, the rapid destruction of inhibiting traditions, and recognition of 'rights of man.' ….

… true of the Western world today that religious institutions and officials have fewer sanctioned privileges, and enjoy less by way of legally grounded voice, than they did in medieval times. And it's true that there are now many spheres or sectors in society in which people typically make their decisions independently of their religions.

Furthermore – to move from the level of society to that of culture – its's true that so-called secular humanism has a much larger voice in the West today than anything of the sort had in medieval times.

But it's obvious that modernization as such does not destroy religion – not even particularistic revealed religion….. [**emboldened** by John Mulholland]

… our present day social world is different, profoundly different, from the social world from which it emerged. So what are some of its hallmarks? I myself do not believe that the desire on the part of secular humanism to implement their ideas accounts for very much I our present-day social world – in spite of the relative prominence of secular humanism, at least recently in elite culture in the West. But what then does? What are the dynamics of modernity?

A drama is a set of interlocking roles that persons can repeatedly perform. It proves illuminating to think of society as structured like a drama. Every society creates an interlocking set of roles, coherent and typical ways of acting, which members of the society then learn to perform."

Loss of Ethically Infused Social Roles - p.90

"In most of the world's societies a high proportion of the social roles that people played or were expected to play were simply *ascribed* to them rather than allotted on the basis of choice. …

Not only is the proportion of social roles allotted by ascription much lower in our society than it was in earlier ones; the roles themselves are typically both different and understood differently among us. …."

The Rise and Spread of Capitalism - p.91

"It seems to me indubitable that the principal cause of the decline of ascriptivism, and of the near disappearance in reality and consciousness of ethically infused social roles, has been the rise and spread of capitalism. A prominent feature of the spread of capitalism into new sectors of society is that more and more things are put on the market, with the result that the presence of contractual relations among human beings is increased enormously, and the loyalty, and expectations of loyalty, to persons and institutions characteristic of traditional societies is destroyed. . . .

Under capitalism, workers put their labor on the market and make contracts with owners of capital . . .

Under capitalism, land is put on the market and contracts are signed whereby title is transferred . . . .

Thus under capitalism the generalized ethic of contract becomes more and more the pervasive ethic of society. The range of that for which one *must* contract is expanded . . . what is morally required increasingly becomes just that one keep the contracts one has made."

A World-System Interpretation of Global Society

p.95   "The main alternative to modernization theory is *world system* theory. Where modernization theorists see the world as containing a number of distinct societies at various stages in the process of modernization, world-system theorists see the world today as containing just one society – or social system, as they prefer to call it…."

p.96   "It is characteristic of world-system theorists to argue that this domination of a periphery by a core is a necessary dynamic of the system, not an accident. The vision of the modernization theorist that we can all advance simultaneously into the glorious future of high modernization is a cruel illusion. There are deep and profound reasons why TV manufacturers have moved their production from the United States to China: what they find there are low wages and no strikes. If that ceases to be true, they will find some other place to produce TV's.

        World system theorists argue that this system has been in operation for roughly four centuries. Accordingly, there has been, in their view, a development of underdevelopment. Two centuries ago, Bangladesh was a relatively prosperous part of the world; today it is impoverished. What contributed to the change was the interaction of England with the Bengalis.

        Obviously there are issues of tremendous importance here that we cannot possibly discuss on this occasion. My own view is that the world-system interpretation is definitely correct in its general guidelines. A world in which a core dominates and exploits a periphery – that, it seems to me, is the world in which we find ourselves. I discover that a good many Christians are inclined to shy away from any theorist who discerns domination and exploitation in society. They immediately interpret that as Marxist and reject it out of hand. My own feeling is that Christians should be the last to be surprised by the presence of domination and exploitation of society and the last to be annoyed by anyone who bears news of this. They above all should expect that: and their response should be the opposite of rejecting such claims out of hand. 'Exactly what we would have expected,' they should say. 'Tell us the details of how it works.'

        This is the society in which we and our students live. It is for this society that we teach." [**emboldened** by John Mulholland]

Implications for Christian Higher Education - p.97

       "Suppose now that you agree with me that the goal of Christian education is to equip and energize our students for a certain way of being in the world, not just for a way of thinking, though certainly that, but for a certain way of being – a *Christian way*, not one of the standard American ways of being. Suppose further that you agree with me that this way of being can be described thus: To pray and struggle for shalom, celebrating its presence and mourning its absence. How do we do that? What is the pedagogy – and indeed, the curriculum – for an education with that goal?

       … First, our students do not come unformed by the dynamics of capitalism, nationalism, and religious pluralism; they do not come oblivious to the ideologies of progress, of individualism and of our modern turn to the world. They come formed by these.
So one thing we must do is teach them to hold up these practices and these ideologies to the scrutiny of the Bible."

"As far back as I began to think independently about these matters, it has been my conviction that Christian education is for life, not just for thought. For quite some time I thought individualistically, however: social analysis was not my cup of tea. And for a long time I assumed what my teachers assumed – namely that to shape life one shapes thought.

"Slowly and somewhat reluctantly I was led to take seriously this question: How does one responsibly and effectively shape how a person tends to act? I read all I could find on the topic, mulled it over, and wrote up my conclusions in my book entitled *Educating for Responsible Action*. My major conclusion was that the assumption I had imbibed from my teachers, that one shapes life by thought, represented an exceedingly naïve view on how tendencies are formed. By introducing students to high culture, we inculcate in them habits and tendencies relevant to engaging high culture; there is no evidence that we also, coincidentally, shape what they tend to do in life and society. What we all say to ourselves is that one has to know these things in order reflectively to engage the social issues facing us. I also said; and believe it, believe it still. But the point is that such learning does very little to energize action, other than the actions relevant to participating in culture and theory. Indeed, the study of theory is often *counter*productive; it makes us comfortable with things the way they are. For often it is ideological based, consciously or not."