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EDITORIAL

The True “Confrontation”

Recent so-called liberation movements have transmogrified the good word *confrontation*. In the minds of the younger generation it carries all the connotative baggage of social protest: sit-ins, placard-waving marchers shouting slogans charged with invective. It has become almost an angry word, perched at the thin edge of violence.

That's a shame, for it's really a very good and decent word, hailing from an established tradition of positive association. Long a favorite of preachers, statesmen, and practitioners of the counseling professions, it has usually implied a skillful nudge toward reality, helping people face up to their present circumstances and approach the future with a degree of hope. Moving them one step closer to genuine *liberation*, that is.

Teachers have historically been the heroic “confronters” of all time. Many of them are remembered by posterity as prophets; for they have confronted with a selfless, authentic love that dared to risk offense. Over the centuries mindless mobs frequently martyred these noble souls, so fearful are human beings of having to see things as they really are.

Christ's followers also have a mandate for confrontation. Despite the unpopularity of this assignment, the church has not pulled back from grappling with it. That's why committed Christian teachers consciously confront, all the time, in their encounters with students. They comprehend fully that *this* is the opening wedge to their redemptive ministry in the classroom, and beyond. A truly Christian school is a confrontive place

indeed—warm, affirming, loving, engagingly challenging, irresistible.

Since the medium in which teachers work is the conventional school curriculum, their role may appear to be secular. Nevertheless, trained and artful Christian teachers are training their students (of whatever age) how to think Christianly when they teach them how to think critically.

Is this a quantum leap in logic? Not at all. When we teach and model critical thinking, we show our students how to go beneath the surface, to assess ideas against the true reality of divine revelation. By so doing we put in their hands the key to a mental emancipation that knows no boundaries. If our students ever rise up and call us blessed, it most likely will be for this imparted gift.

Confrontation, critical thinking, and Christian education go hand-in-hand, for Christian teachers and their students are committed to confront together all instructional information, measuring it against the claims of the gospel, and tough-mindedly passing it under Christian critique. They are not afraid to project it against the backdrop of the great struggle between good and evil and test it for cosmic verity—and *pass judgment* (Very important!).

Such normative teaching/learning is truly prophetic in nature, mind-stretching and life-transforming. Parents the world over are sacrificing to get this priceless experience for their children.

Truly, a Christian school should be a place where students learn confrontation, in the highest sense, as well as critical thinking, and what constitutes true liberation.—G.H.A. □