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Cherishing as a model of education: A spiritual journey

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The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1993

CHERISHING AS A MODEL OF EDUCATION:

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

by

Annette Ayers

A Dissertation Submitted to
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This critique examines the dominant consciousness of
contemporary schooling and society while discussing how
competition, standardized testing, and the effective schools
movement continue to diminish and depersonalize students.
This study addresses the issues of students' and teachers'
suffering and alienation and focuses on the need for healing,
connection, and wholeness in our lives and in our society.
A model of schooling, based on the concept of cherishing
and grounded in a spirituality of love, justice, mercy and
compassion, is proposed based on the personal journey of the
researcher and linked to one's basic assumptions about
humanity and the universe. Religious and spiritual language
are used to gain a new perspective and awareness of educa-
tion. Reflection, by teachers, on one's basic beliefs and
practices in schooling is urged. Selective literature, on
caring, interpersonal relationships, global interdependence,
the need for social and political reform, and the need for
an alternative consciousness, is examined as a foundation
for a paradigm of cherishing in schools and society. The
writings of Nel Noddings, Alfie Kohn, Martin Buber, Paulo
Freire, Rita Brock, David Purpel, and Walter Brueggemann
are examined extensively. The researcher envisions a society
based on love, justice, and compassion where each individual

is valued, cherished, and respected, regardless of ability or achievement. Specific and general classroom and school practices are described which reflect this vision.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following

committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The

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CHAPTER I

THE CARING TEACHER . . . A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I Begin My Journey

As I continue my journey to develop a point of view
regarding education and schooling, I also search for a voice
to express my self. I find it necessary to share part of
"my story" with the reader so he/she can understand how I
developed my perspective on children, education, and the
schooling process. This background information will enable
the reader to better understand how I developed my percep-
tions as a person and how these perceptions have influenced
my evolution as a teacher. From my family and culture, I,
like others, have "learned to see, hear, speak, think, and
act in ways that are different" (Finders, 1992, p. 60) from
others. In my rural community, it is essential to focus on
one's family since lineage and family connections continue
to identify who the person is, what she stands for, what she
values, and how she will encounter the world. Individuals
in my community continue to trace their cultural and physi-
cal heritage through the stories the family relates to each
generation and the aspects of our lives we value through
relating these stories to others. By embracing the family's
geographic, economic, and historical background, the family's
narrative begins to form and to connect the individual to

her culture through shared experiences. It is this understanding of family narrative that has influenced my understanding of mankind and the world around me. Narrative has also led me to reflect on my perceptions and treatment of others who are different in our pluralistic society. It is this understanding which enabled me to develop my own personal identity which is the lens through which I view teaching, students, and classroom practices. Thus, I begin with "my story."

I was born on December 8, 1946, to Henry Leroy and Roxie Bullin Ayers. My parents were married five years before I was born and, since an older sister died in infancy, I was reared as an only child. I am the oldest grandchild on the paternal side of my family. For sixteen years, I was the youngest grandchild on the maternal side. My parents were reared on a farm and, throughout their marriage, they continued to be engaged in diversified farming, with tobacco as the cash crop. In looking back at my childhood, I now realize that I grew up in a relatively privileged situation for our community. At the time, however, I was never made to feel that I had more than others.

Our family roots are deeply entrenched in American history. My ancestors emigrated from England and Northern Ireland to Virginia before the Revolutionary War and several of the men fought, as Patriots, in the American Revolution.

Following the Revolution, my ancestors moved south from Virginia into the northern Piedmont region of North Carolina. Two of my ancestors, Isaac Bullin and John Mabe, received land grants in Stokes County from the government for service during the Revolution. The men in my family all fought for the Confederate government in the Civil War. Moses Mabe, my great-great-grandfather, contracted measles and died at the Confederate hospital in Raleigh before the birth of his son and only child. His widow would rear her child alone, never remarrying, while farming the land and plowing the fields with oxen. My great-grandfather, Martin Van Buren Bullin, fought throughout the war, including the Battle of Gettysburg, without suffering a wound. Joseph Winborn Mendenhall, a great-great-grandfather, was killed in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg leaving behind his widow and young daughter. Joel Ayers, a great-great-grandfather, was wounded and received a medical discharge. John Ashburn, my great-great-grandfather, was wounded in the hand, arm, and shoulder at Sayler's Creek, outside Petersburg, Virginia, and was captured by Union forces. He was held as a prisoner of war at Fort McHenry, Maryland, until July, 1865. Numerous uncles and cousins, who also survived, returned home to dev- astation. My paternal grandfather fought in France during World War I, and my father and two uncles in World War II. Two cousins, the same age as I, fought in Vietnam, with one, a medic, being killed.

There has always been a sense of being connected to the land in our family. The land I live on today has been in our family for several generations. Aunts, uncles, and cousins still live within walking distance of my house. Religion has also been an important part of my heritage. My maternal grandparents attended a Primitive Baptist Church in Stokes County, and I return there to worship periodically. My paternal grandparents were active members of Mount Zion United Methodist Church in Pinnacle, where I serve as church treasurer, as treasurer of the United Methodist Women, as an assistant Sunday School teacher, and as a member of the Administrative Council. I have previously served on the church building committee, on the parsonage committee, and as vice-chairperson of the Administrative Council. I definitely have a history in the church since five generations of my family have been members of this particular church. This small country church is the place where I remember standing on a pew beside my grandmother singing hymns, where I practiced repeatedly for the Christmas pageants each year, and where each summer I enjoyed a full week of Bible School filled with wonderful stories from the Bible, learned Bible verses to recite, memorized songs, made the most beautiful crafts from ordinary materials to take home to show to my parents, and played games with my friends. Organized religion and church-related committees have occupied much of my

time, as it did my grandparents. When I became an adult,
the church officers seemed to expect me to follow in my
grandfather's footsteps and to accept church offices and
responsibilities. I have felt impelled to follow the vows
of the church to give of my time as well as to provide finan-
cial support. My father, however, never served on any church
committees. He was involved in spirituality and had no
interest in the daily interactions of organized religion.

As I matured and developed my own religious sensibility,
I came to believe, as did John Wesley, the founder of Meth-
odism, that one should do good whenever one can, using all
the opportunities one has, in whatever ways are possible,
and one must show mercy and kindness to all (Patterson,
1984).

My childhood memories are of pleasant play experiences,
usually involving my parents. Coming from a hard-working
farm family, I was impressed as a child that both my parents
made time to play with me, to read to me, to teach me to
write, to add and to subtract, and allowed me to follow them
around as they were doing their chores. I was always "Daddy's
little girl" and we were best friends. Whenever my father
had to go to the community store, he always made time for
me to hop into the truck to go with him. My parents and I
were extremely close, and this feeling of closeness continued
throughout my adulthood. My deepest regret is that I did
not have the opportunity to know my maternal grandmother nor

have many years in my relationship with my maternal grand-

father. My grandmother suffered from chronic asthma and

died at the age of 61 when I was 6 months old. My grand-

father and I were close, but he died when I was 8. While I

have fond, loving memories of him and the times we spent

together, our time together was brief.

I entered first grade at the age of 5. This was before

kindergartens were a part of the public schools in North

Carolina. The principal was a close family friend, and my

parents had taught me how to read, write, add, and subtract.

I remember wanting to go to school, because my teenage aunts

did, and the principal thought I was ready for the first

grade. Since the law was not rigidly enforced in the 1950s,

I was allowed to enter school a year early. I loved school,

I was successful in my classes, and my parents supported me

and assisted with homework. I was unique among my neighbors

and friends, since both my parents had graduated from high

school. Although they did not pursue their formal education

any further, my parents had a deep respect for education.

My paternal grandfather had graduated from a private academy

and had taught school prior to his service in World War I.

He did not like teaching, indicating he had trouble disci-

plining the female students since he was a single male

teacher. After the war, he chose to farm, eventually pur-

chased four farms, and served his community on the local

school board for approximately 30 years. He donated lumber during the Depression to build a gymnasium that is still in use at our local elementary school.

My life evolved without any traumatic events. Having grown up in a small, rural community, I had acquired a history with the other students and the faculty from the first day at school. Everyone knew my maternal and paternal grandparents, my parents, my aunts and uncles, and many of my classmates' parents had been classmates of my father. Adolescence was uneventful for me with no traumatic experiences occurring. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, my friends and I were unaware of any problems due to adolescence. A certain naivete existed for us. If we went anywhere, we were driven by our parents, and all of our activities were either family, church, or school related. As a teenager I enjoyed participating on our eighth-grade girls basketball team and softball team and playing against a few other small schools. Our school was so small that anyone who wanted to could play on a sports team. Everyone was encouraged to play, everybody cheered for everyone else, and we played for the fun of participating.

My parents provided a nurturing environment for me. I was affirmed in every positive way and continuously told that I could do anything if I tried. My parents encouraged me to be independent. They wanted me to be able to make my own way in life and to pursue my academic interests. My

parents encouraged me to pursue teaching because I had wanted to be a teacher since I was a very small child. This support was unusual in our community, since other parents expected their sons and daughters to marry as soon as they graduated from high school and go to work in a factory. My father often told how his friends said it was a waste of money to send me to college since girls usually married. Neither of my parents supported this narrow view of the female's role in society.

My father and mother both possessed a great sense of justice and high moral standards. I remember my father always stating that women were often mistreated by society in that they were denied opportunities. He had great respect for his mother, wife, and daughter, and women in general. He believed everyone should have the opportunity to pursue their interests, especially women who had been deprived of this choice by society.

One important incident in my life occurred when my paternal grandmother became seriously ill and died when I was an adolescent. We were extremely close, and her year of illness made her dependent on the family and hurt her pride. She was only 58 years old at her death and had a hard time coping with her medical problems. She suffered from high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, and diabetes. Fortunately, she was able to remain in her own home, except

for the times she required hospitalization. When reflecting on my childhood, I think this is when I first became aware of feeling compassion for someone. My grandmother became impatient to have things done since she was not able to do them herself. I remember my father, being the oldest child and very close to his mother, doing many household tasks for her because she wanted them done immediately. My mother was always there during her mother-in-law's illness doing whatever she could to be of assistance. Years later, I asked my parents how they were able to provide this care for my grandmother and complete all the farm tasks that could not be ignored. Both parents answered that they did what needed to be done and that one can always find a way to meet family needs. I was brought up with this sense of family, to order my priorities, keep my perspective, and maintain my sense of humor whenever possible.

If I had to select one year of adolescence that brought many adjustments to my life, it would be the year I was 17. As an only child, I graduated from a small, consolidated high school, of 500 students, in a rural county and entered UNCG to major in history. I had great difficulty making the transition from high school to college. Yet, I would not want to erase that year from my life for anything. I remember the convocation held for the freshman class and the Chancellor, Dr. Singletary, telling us to look to our left and then to our right. He said one of you three will not be

here by the end of the year. Having graduated from high school as an honor student, I had a rude awakening my freshman year at college. I studied, but I did not have the study skills necessary for college. I had two different roommates who gave up and returned home. Miraculously, I grew up that year, learned to study the correct way, and met new friends from diverse background. I survived that year and probably learned more than I have in any other year in my life!

Although much of the country faced racial tensions in the 1960s, I grew up in an area where racial discrimination was not touted or practiced. Perhaps it was due to the small number of black families in our area, many of whom were landowners, but I heard blacks addressed and treated with respect. I was in high school during the peaceful desegregation of our rural school system. Violence was not a problem from either Whites or Blacks. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro was integrated when I entered as a freshman. As a teacher, I have always taught in integrated schools. I have read about discrimination, viewed it through television newscasts, and studied it through primary and secondary sources. However, to my knowledge, I do not personally know anyone that has ever belonged to an organization that promotes racism. At the same time, as a child, I recall my father discussing how unfair it was for Black students in our community to be forced to make a 40-mile round trip per day to the one Black high school in

the county. He and other adult family members would discuss
how little time these students could spend in class since
they arrived at school so late in the morning. I even remem-
ber seeing school buses, carrying Black students, pass near
our house at 5:00 p.m. or even later. Discrimination existed
in our area, at least in the schools, but I do not recall
the hatred between the races that was shown on television
newscasts in the 1960s.

A strong work ethic has been instilled in me. I worked
part-time at the UNCG library as an undergraduate, helped
my parents farm in the summer, worked one summer in the Head
Start program, taught for five summers in the Migrant Educa-
tion summer school, and have taught for the past seven sum-
mers in the state summer school program and taught classes
at Surry Community College. I have taught social studies
in the middle school, for the past 25 years, in Surry County.
I chose to teach in the northern section of the county,
since my home is in the southeastern section and I have many
relatives still in school.

My parents insisted I treat everyone with respect,
regardless of race, social class, age, or moral behavior.
They stressed that everyone is human and must be treated
with dignity. As I entered my teaching career, I became
aware of the overwhelming importance of this philosophy. As
I teach students from all social and economic backgrounds,

religions, abilities, and value systems, I have found treat-
ing everyone with genuine respect has made my job easier and
more fulfilling. I am ashamed to admit, however, that I
have seen other teachers and administrators treat less afflu-
ent or uneducated parents with thinly-veiled contempt. When
I am present on these occasions, I attempt to fill in the
gap and hope the parents realize all educators do not prac-
tice or approve of this treatment. When I become exasperated
with a student in the classroom, I recall my father con-
stantly reminding me, when I began my career, that some chil-
dren do well considering the home life they have, and that I
should make the extra effort, as a teacher, to help and
cherish that student so he/she will feel accepted by others.

My parents also stressed how strong one must be to
accept and face the challenges of life. Our family seems to
have been plagued with health problems. Because of poor
health, my father died at the age of 49. I had taught
school for 3 years and never had made any business decisions
alone. However, from the day I graduated from college, my
father insisted I be informed and assist with financial
matters, so he coached me as I made major decisions. Sud-
denly, after his death, I had to become the head of the
household and had to manage the financial affairs of both my
mother and myself. I realized the reason my parents had
wanted me to be prepared to make my own way in life finan-
cially. I also understood that being emotionally strong is

an important attribute in meeting the transitions in life.
Values instilled in me, such as emotional strength to stand
firm in my own convictions, compassion for others, persever-
ance in attaining goals and meeting life's challenges, a
sense of justice and respect for others, and a faith in my
own ability have served me as guideposts as I have acquired
my sense of consciousness.

I probably became a teacher because I loved studying
history and wanted to teach this subject, I enjoyed school,
I like children, and it was a career open to women in the
1960s. Once I began teaching, I quickly realized how much
I enjoyed teaching and interacting with adolescents. As I
encountered students whose background and attitude toward
life, others, and school differed from mine at that age, I
began to reflect on my childhood to define what I considered
to characterize it. I remember my childhood as being a
safe, loving environment. As an adult, reflecting on my
childhood, I believe the best way for me to characterize it
is that it was a time of cherishing. In fact, I have come
to see that my life is grounded in the concept of cherishing
as it defines who I am as a person and a professional. For
me, cherishing is essential for the whole person to develop
and emerge. Regardless of the occupation I chose or the
position I filled, as my life's work, I would find it neces-
sary to cherish others and to provide a nurturing environment
through cherishing.

Cherishing and Memories of Cherishing

As I reflect upon the concept of cherishing, I must determine how I define and interpret this phenomenon. Cherishing is the most important word in my life. It is more than a word. It is an emotional concept that brings a smile to my face, a gleam to my eyes, a warmth to my heart, and joy to my soul. It is a personal history that brings back a flood of memories of a happy, carefree, bubbly childhood, an adolescence devoid of emotional turmoil, and the stability to enter adulthood. It is a feeling of being deeply and truly loved each and every day and an awareness that nothing I did would destroy this love. Cherishing created an empowering environment, for me, that always seemed to provide a light shining down an unknown path where I could travel to explore new ideas, thoughts, and concepts without fear of losing my way, identity, family, and security of belonging.

The concept of cherishing is also my first recollection of sorrow when I, at a very young age, realized that all my relatives, neighbors, and classmates did not share this understanding and experience of being cherished. From those first days of awareness of this emptiness among some of my peers, I began to develop concern as to why cherish does not describe all children and their relationships with others. How was it possible that some children lacked this experience of being cherished in their daily living?

Cherishing means to hold dear to one's heart, to regard another being as precious. Cherishing builds upon the concept of love. It means to love someone deeply and hold that person close in your heart. Cherishing another empowers one to take care of someone, to love someone enough to allow them to express their own thoughts and ideas, to explore their own interests, to develop their own talents, regardless of the differences in the thoughts, ideas, interests, and talents one values. To cherish is to anticipate needs and nurture with great care and then to let go, in spite of the reservations one may have, to allow the cherished one to develop into his/her own self.

Cherish is to accept and affirm others. It is to realize we are all children of God, our Maker, our Creator. As such children, each is important and a part of the whole. When one is not cherished, the whole is incomplete. God did not intend for his children to be fragmented, but to care for and affirm each other as part of the whole universe. Those who are cherished learn self-acceptance and are thus empowered to accept others.

Cherish means to support others in their endeavors for fulfillment. If one of us stumbles and falters, we should reach out a supportive arm to embrace the one in need. If we can do anything to make the journey smoother, we answer this need with joy for our spiritual brother or sister. We

search for opportunities to assist those in need, seeking to constantly be in relationship with others as part of mankind.

Cherishing can bring pleasure to the giver. It is an opportunity to share our love and concern. It empowers us to reflect and commune with others while establishing a bond between individuals, organizations, and institutions. It provides a continuing opportunity for selflessness and inter-connections with others. To cherish another is to encourage and provide opportunities for creativity. Traditional methods and materials, and the accompanying pressure to con-form, are not sacred. Creativity must be respected as we embark on our journey to connection and feeling that enriches our existence. Cherishing can be defined as permitting a child to wake up to the world around them, to savor its sub-stance, and to address its needs and challenges.

As the child grows and matures in a cherished environ-ment, he/she becomes willing to take chances, to charter new journeys, to face new challenges, and to encounter disap-pointments and sorrows. The resulting strength from cherish-ing adds resiliency to one's life and provides the individual with an inner reserve to continue one's journey in times of trials, tribulations, and unchartered situations.

Cherishing, for me, is a way of living a meaningful existence. It creates a setting for one to "be what we are meant to be, to live life in such a way as to fulfill the potential which is ours as humans" (Erickson, 1983, p. 896).

By an authentic existence, one becomes capable of making choices, and accepting responsibility for one's action and lack of actions (Erickson, 1983).

The concept of cherishing is a key to providing children with a loving environment and sense of connectedness with mankind. Many students experience alienation within their families, schools, and society. This sense of connectedness is needed in education, especially in those systems which have depersonalized the schools through implementation of the effective teaching model of education. A cherished child will have the opportunity to reach fulfillment, instead of being consumed by the present-day environment of authority and obedience that stresses control over students and teachers.

I recall my memories of childhood as my earliest experience of cherishing. As a child born into a farm family, I experienced the typical daycare center of the tobacco field. Children in our neighborhood accompanied their parents wherever they happened to be working on the farm. Mothers worked in the fields beside their husbands, as did grandmothers. It was a way of life that provided close family contact and provided me with many instances of feeling cherished, rather than a cumbersome burden to be supervised. I was made to feel I was precious to them because I was me. I was valued as a person, not as a possession or an extension of my parents.

I remember, at the young years of 2 or less, being placed on a quilt, at the end of the tobacco field, under the shade of two oak trees while my parents worked in the adjoining field located on the back acreage of the farm. My parents would hoe tobacco while I remained in the shade. However, I was not allowed to take a nap because they feared a snake would crawl near my quilt pallet. Instead, my parents chatted to me constantly from the field to keep me awake. Neither my mother nor father ever hoed a row from one end of the field to the other! They divided each row at the middle so one would always have me in their sight and would keep me awake and alert. I remember watching the ants play in the nearby farm roadway. I remember the heat and my eyes growing heavy as I forced them to stay open. I remember being tired and cross when I was talked into staying awake. However, I never experienced any fear of snakes or other creatures I was supposed to watch for. I knew Mama and Daddy were there and I felt safe and protected. I knew they would be at my side if I voiced any wants or fears. I remember how they would take a break and come and sit near me and make me laugh. Being cherished is feeling others' love and attention and sharing laughter and conversation. To be cherished is to feel safe and secure in all circumstances.

I always felt cherished when I was at play. Although Daddy and Mama worked hard each day, they were never too tired to play with me. Although two of my aunts were close

to my age and I had cousins that lived nearby, my favorite memories of being cherished came from playing at home. My parents usually carried a snack to the fields so they could work there into the early afternoon. When we came home from the fields for lunch, my father usually supervised me while my mother baked bread and finished up the large lunch she always prepared. After lunch, my parents would rest in the heat of the day and wait until late afternoon if they needed to return to the field. During these hours of rest, I naturally wanted to make up for all the inactivity I had spent playing with my dolls and other toys on my quilt in the shade. My favorite place to play was at my playhouse at the edge of the woods near our kitchen. It was shady and cool and I could always feel a breeze there, even on the hottest day. I had equipped my make-believe kitchen with all the broken dishes I could collect from my mother. I also had a collection of red plastic dishes Mama had purchased at the variety store for me to use in my playhouse. I was never allowed to play at my playhouse alone. As Mama washed the dishes and cleaned the kitchen, Daddy would stay at the play-house with me. He would take a discarded broom left there for this purpose and would sweep the ground so there would not be anything of danger around. He would rest on the ground as I played, always watching over me and protecting me. My memories of being cherished, therefore, are ones of

being in relationship with my parents, spending time together
at work and at play, being provided with toys, being pro-
tected from accidents and danger, and being treated as a
person with wants, needs, and pleasures. Most of all, cher-
ishing to me meant being valued, accepted and loved.

When I was about 5 or 6, I enjoyed playing with tea
sets. I loved to have tea parties and I liked to have real
food for my dolls and Daddy. I had a set of baking pans
which made cake layers about 4 inches in diameter. At that
age I enjoyed "helping" in the kitchen. I wanted to wash
dishes, wash canning jars, and help bake cookies and cakes.
When my mother had the time, she would help me bake cakes in
my small baking pans and help me make icing for these minia-
ture cakes. I would then invite my cousin, who lived next
door, to my tea parties where I served cake and soft drinks.
I can visualize those small chocolate cakes and banana cakes
I took such pleasure in baking. So as I recall moments of
cherishing, I have to remember the time my mother made for
me from her busy schedule on the farm. Cherishing was shown
through the immense patience she had in letting me explore
my environment and my interests. It is shown in the love
she demonstrated by letting me measure, mix, and spill in
her kitchen. Although my "baking" and tea parties created
more work for her, it was never mentioned. The smiles and
laughter she bestowed on me during those mornings and after-
noons of baking have remained with me as if they occurred

yesterday. So I think of cherishing as pleasant memories of togetherness.

Memories of my paternal grandmother also recall moments of being cherished. My grandmother was 44 years old when I was born. She was only 4 feet 10 inches in height, but I never realized it as a child. I just remember wanting to be as tall as Granny, never realizing she was short in stature. Although I was the oldest grandchild, I do not think this accounted for the special bond we shared. We simply liked each other, as well as loved each other. Plus, I was not a destructive child and this was important to her. Although she worked in the field with my grandfather and aunts, her health was not good. Occasionally, she stayed at the house and cooked while the rest of the family worked in the field. At those times, she persuaded my parents to let me stay with her, rather than going to the field with them. Since I was about 5 at the time, I followed in her footsteps as she prepared lunch. She would let me "help" in the kitchen and I can remember crying as I tried to help her peel onions for potato salad. After her work was done, she would plait my long hair into a braid and wind it around my head securing it with long hairpins, identical to the style she wore her hair. Then, she would open the chest of drawers and remove a pair of her discarded wire frame glasses for me to wear and tell me I looked like "little Granny." To me, this was the highest compliment I could ever receive. If I was

bored, she allowed me to rummage through the top drawer of her chest of drawers which was considered the "junk" drawer. This exciting activity always ignited anger in my two younger aunts who, I suspect, were jealous of the freedom I was allowed to have at Granny's and of the love and attention she bestowed on me. Since they were adolescents, I ignored them and basked in the attention I received when I spent the day with Granny. As we waited for everyone to come to lunch, Granny would sit on the front porch and swing with me by her side. She would tell me fascinating stories of history and of our family which is probably why I became intrigued with history, at an early age, and pursued it as a major in college. These memories of cherishing were based on rela-tionship, love, being given freedom to explore and experiment, to express my feelings and love, and to be accepted for myself and affirmed.

As a teacher, who had a safe, secure childhood, I find myself centering my thoughts on education. Children become my focus: their thoughts, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and experiences. Educators must provide for the emotional and physical needs of children to center education around the students and validate each child. If each educator cher-ished each child and if the institution of schools cher-ished children, each child would feel connected to the schools and would be a part of the sense of community neces-sary to promote communion, compassion, healing, affirmation,

cooperation, and wholeness. This sense of community would transcend the political boundaries imposed by mankind to be in community with our planet and universe.

School Reforms of the 1980s

When I began my teaching career in 1968, I had great expectations for the students and for myself as their teacher. As I began to teach a combination class of fifth- and sixth-graders in a K-8 school of 450 students, I quickly became aware of the realities of teaching. There seemed to be so much to do, the students' needs were almost overwhelming, basic supplies were limited, it was a major accomplishment to acquire textbooks for each student, and teacher's editions of basal texts had to be shared by three or more teachers. However, undaunted and armed with the optimism and enthusiasm of youth, I was willing to march forward to lead my students to master knowledge and acquire the skills they would need as lifelong learners. At the time, I realized I was fortunate to begin my teaching career in a school culture where the local school administrator talked with and listened to the teachers with respect, consulted the teachers about management, instructional, classroom, and curriculum problems, permitted the teachers to plan cooperatively, and discussed students' academic and behavioral problems. This veteran principal was completing his last year as a principal at a school where the faculty had changed very little

over the years and new personnel resulted from either retire-
ment or a newly-allotted teaching position because of increas-
ing enrollment. The principal demonstrated a kindly, fath-
erly, if not paternalistic, attitude toward his faculty, the
students, and their parents. Many of the students' parents
and grandparents had been educated at this same school with
the same principal in leadership. The informal school cul-
ture, that is the way things had always been done, was very
important for a beginning teacher to learn then, as it is
now. A county handbook and a school handbook listing poli-
cies, procedures, responsibilities, and rules and regulations
did not exist in this school system in 1968. As a new
teacher, I could have had to rely exclusively on trial and
error to adapt to the school culture. However, the caring
attitude of the principal and the unified attitude of the
veteran faculty made the difference. The faculty were will-
ing to answer any questions from this new teacher. The prin-
cipal was always supportive and approachable. In fact, at
the faculty meeting in which the principal announced his
retirement, he graciously referred to this first-year teacher
as "an angel from heaven." Kind words, such as these, are
long remembered by hardworking teachers! Although this
teaching experience occurred before the publication of
"effective schools" research, the collegiality, trust and
confidence, tangible support, appreciation and recognition,

caring, and humor, traditions, and honest, open communication were present and actively demonstrated (Saphier & King, 1985).

The second year of my teaching career began with the appointment of a young principal with whom this educator would work for the next 18 years. During the first 7 years of this working relationship, an atmosphere of caring and concern for students and faculty and an atmosphere of collegiality among the faculty characterized the school culture. As an educator, who, without being aware of it at the time, I was able to cherish the students and be in relationship with the students and faculty. I concentrated on acquiring and perfecting my teaching skills as I realized that the more expertise I acquired, the better resource I would be for the students. I was teaching in a community where most parents worked in either textile factories or the local granite quarry. Few students, or their parents, even considered the idea of college as a possibility. I tried to provide a nurturing environment for the students and make them aware of the available dreams, choices, and possibilities. Feeling the need to acquire more expertise as a teacher, I enrolled in graduate courses and earned a Master's Degree in Education and Social Studies in 1975. The prevailing philosophy of education, that I was exposed to during this decade, was that every teacher is a teacher of reading and that behavior modification would motivate students to

learn and would solve classroom problems. By the end of the decade, behavior modification had lost its momentum in the education community. Since I viewed behavior modification as manipulative and focusing on control of the student, I never embraced this concept. In fact, as a teacher grounded in cherishing, who had few classroom discipline problems, I saw little need for behavior modification. At that time, I thought it more important to concentrate on my teaching skills so I could make my classes more interesting for my students. Looking back, I think I dismissed behavior modification as a guiding philosophy because I was in a caring, trusting relationship with my students and the academic needs of my students were the greatest concern.

After 7 years, both the principal and I were transferred to a new middle school, for Grades 7 and 8, created from the five feeder schools in the district. No consolidated school could have initially opened its doors under more trying circumstances, all of which were out of the control of the administrator and the faculty. It was the first school to be built in our administrative unit in 15 years. The "powers-that-be" did not plan for the opening. The building was constructed for open classrooms, but the county school system had not implemented any training for the administrators and teachers. We had a building, desks, chairs, and books. Nothing else! Bookcases, file cabinets, pencil trimmers,

pencils, and consumable supplies had not been ordered. Books, filmstrips, records, and equipment to stock the media center were nonexistent. A relatively young faculty, several were first-year teachers, from diverse school cultures and a principal, who did not really know his personnel, had to cope and build a school culture. As in all schools, some decisions were unpopular with the faculty and goals were changed to meet the challenges of a particular time and the needs of a particular group. However, from the first day, we treated each other with mutual respect, we were on the same team, everyone pulled together to make the school a success, we shared meager supplies, we approached negative situations in a positive manner, we brainstormed over supposedly insurmountable obstacles, we supported and cared about each other and our students, we were involved in the decision-making, we communicated often and openly, and we laughed together. The students were the primary concern of the school and they knew it. The students were given time, through a morning and a lunch break, to mingle with each other and with the faculty. Looking back, I realize that the vitality of the students and the faculty came from the connection they had with each other and the caring relationships that were nurtured. The students realized they were valued and they responded to the interest of the faculty. A feeling of interconnectedness permeated the school.

In the early 1980s, the local administrative unit, following a national trend, began to apply pressure on principals and teachers, in our system, to increase students' performance on achievement tests. Regardless of our local school scores, they were never high enough. We were constantly reminded and given "inspirational" talks to meet and/or exceed the national achievement test norms. I continued to enroll in local workshops as I searched for ways to make my students' learning meaningful and my lessons interesting to the students. Instead of honing my teaching skills, however, I found I was being trained to teach my students to become good test-takers. Because of the pressure to increase students' achievement test scores, the state and local workshops changed their focus to increasing test-taking skills. I found myself overwhelmed by the movement to increase students' test scores. I was being immersed in short-term solutions that did not make significant changes in the students' learning. I discovered that I had questions that were not being addressed on the local or national level. I wanted to know what we were doing to the students by concentrating on test-taking skills. I felt uncomfortable with the time and effort I was expending to increase achievement test scores. I felt the schools were cheating the students and were not even educating them. I became increasingly concerned that we were labeling children, telling them they had special needs if they did not meet the

evaluative criteria of the standardized tests, and were low-
ering their self-concepts. Students whose eyes sparkled as
they interacted in the classroom and encountered new subject
material and learning experiences became dulled as they
realized they would be tested and evaluated by a standardized
test. While the students were unaware they were being objec-
tified and reduced to a statistic, they were aware that they
did not like school very much and they began to describe
school as being a "jail." Their language and attitude
expressed a desire to "get out of this prison," as many stu-
dents openly phrased their thoughts. Discipline problems
within the school increased and this behavior and attitude
carried over into the classroom. For the first time, as a
teacher, I began to see myself as spending time controlling
students, rather than using my time to teach students. Local
administrators indicated that the effective schools movement
was the answer to my concerns. With the implementation of
effective schools, teachers would be able to continue a car-
ing relationship with the students and increase student
performance simultaneously. Therefore, when the effective
schools movement was proposed as the school reform movement
of the 1980s, I believed it could be the solution to prob-
lems in the schools. I was willing to listen and learn.

As a classroom teacher, interested in increasing my
students' learning and developing my teaching skills, I was
impressed with the effective schools research which dominated

the decade of the 1980s. As a caring teacher who likes and loves her students, I was willing to embrace any new research which would positively affect my students and their learning. At this period of time, the public schools were being attacked across the United States, by the media, political leaders, and community groups, because of low achievement test scores. As a classroom teacher, I felt my teaching ability was being questioned, by parents, administrators, and the public at large, because I belonged to the group of professionals who were being held accountable for low test scores, students graduating from high schools with marginal skills, and students being promoted who had not mastered grade-level competencies. Overall, society had lost confidence in both the public schools and educators. The effective schools research and its promise of integrating a caring approach to increased performance seemed to be the answer to much of the schools' dilemmas, and I latched on to this research with relief and gratitude as a drowning person would reach for a lifeline. Because of the increasing local pressures to increase test scores, I was beginning to feel increasingly frustrated and overwhelmed by the lack of confidence in the public schools. I believed teachers were competent professionals who were trying to meet the students' needs, affective as well as cognitive needs, and that educators were being unfairly attacked. I was convinced that I

could incorporate time-on-task, guided practice, and a fast-paced instructional delivery system as enthusiastically as other teachers across the country. If this would make a difference in my students' learning, I was ready to embrace the latest research.

The effective schools movement received national attention and was heralded by renowned educators which include David Berliner, Jere Brophy, Ron Edmonds, Madeline Hunter, Thomas Good, and Barack Rosenshine. These advocates of effective schools focus on an industrial model based on control and meeting objectives. The effective schools movement is characterized by time management strategies, student time-on-task, fast pacing of learning activities to "cover more" objectives (Berliner, 1984, pp. 54-55), "success rate, academic learning time, monitoring, structuring, and questioning" (Berliner, 1984, p. 57). The effective schools advocates base their beliefs on the premise that research should be used to identify procedures to train teachers, and that implementation of these procedures/practices will positively impact both the behavior and achievement of students (Berliner, 1984, p. 74). Brophy and Berliner designed observation systems, with generic features, to be used throughout all schools and subjects to distinguish between superior and inferior teaching. These observation systems focus on teacher behavior that influences students' academic achievement (Hilliard, 1984, p. 126).

Proponents of effective schools believe four factors are necessary to create a classroom environment to positively influence achievement: (a) communicating academic expectations, (b) developing a safe, orderly, academic environment, (c) quick, fair attention to class disruptions, and (d) developing cooperative learning situations (Berliner, 1984, pp. 65-66). North Carolina embraced the effective schools movement by adopting Madeline Hunter's model of explicit teaching and formalizing its structure. North Carolina has tried to develop a fail-proof generic formula to use in every classroom through the state. From its adoption and introduction in 1985, it has not changed.

As a teacher in North Carolina, I welcomed the state-mandated Effective Teacher Training (ETT), thinking it would provide me with information that would improve my teaching skills and increase the students' learning. If research indicated changes in my presentation, increased wait time, more guided practice, or closure, would benefit my students, I was prepared to follow the recommendations. I believe I am an excellent teacher, but I have always been willing to listen to new ideas and try new techniques if they will improve my teaching and/or student learning.

After completing ETT, I wanted to broaden my knowledge of effective teaching, so I completed the Mentor Training and Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument workshops. As

I attended these classes, I was alarmed to learn that some administrators expected every lesson and every classroom experience to follow the effective teaching format. Instead of practical hints that might improve teaching and learning, I soon realized that, to some administrators, effective teaching had become the "one" acceptable teaching method in North Carolina. Everything else was supposed to be omitted because it was not "the" model which had identified all there was to know about teaching. These administrators stated that teachers must never deviate from the planned lesson or the objectives printed in the Standard Course of Study or they would receive a low evaluation for the academic year. From these sessions, I was made to feel that, as a classroom teacher, I was never to reflect on my teaching, my materials, or my techniques, because the state had preordained these components of teaching. The Standard Course of Study was my curriculum, the state-adopted textbook, which matched the narrow objectives in the Standard Course of Study, was to be my resource, and I was to use the effective teaching format to teach each and every lesson. Realizing that all my students are individuals, graced with unique talents and skills, I resented the state and local school agency trying to suppress the individuality, of the students, to mass produce an aberrant student who would score in the top 50th percentile on the standardized tests. It

was frustrating to see teaching and learning reduced to a
narrow paradigm which depersonalizes and dehumanizes stu-
dents.

I also began to resent the renewed interest in stan-
dardized test scores, since I realized they only measured
certain aspects of learning. As a social studies teacher,
I was dismayed that all indications of learning were sup-
posed to be found on a printout of a standardized test. What
about the students in my eighth-grade classes who are read-
ing at the third- and fourth-grade levels? I make provision
in my classes to accommodate this difference, but I was not
allowed to read the standardized tests to these students.
What did the test measure anyway? Basically, the best read-
ers and those who are good test takers will score highest
on standardized tests. So, why use these tests? I incor-
porated creative projects and supplementary reading materials
in my teaching. I stressed cooperative learning and posi-
tive interaction between students. These were not measured
by standardized tests. Therefore, these learning experi-
ences were not valued by the state. The students' worth
became confused with achievement test scores in the eyes of
the student, parents, educators, bureaucrats, and the public
at large.

As administrative changes were made on both the local
and school level, the effective teaching model eroded our
school culture. Because of the emphasis on time-on-task, two

or more teachers could only meet with the permission of the administrator. Thus, the informal planning sessions, the running in and out of each other's rooms in the after-school hours, the shared collegiality and mutual concern for the students were no longer a part of our school culture. Teachers were isolated in the name of effective teaching. I began to seriously question the dull, sterile classroom atmosphere that resulted from effective schools research and the rigid effective teaching model adopted in North Carolina. Only those elements in the lesson plan can be acknowledged. There was no longer a place for laughter, interaction, and community, nor time and inclination to address students' problems and concerns. Relationships among the students and between students and teachers almost disappeared. There was no longer a place in the schedule to incorporate caring about the students. Students became more discontented, and I felt helpless as I saw their needs being ignored by the effective teaching model. Everyone must be on task at all times, everything must be planned, and the plan followed, regardless of special situations or unusual circumstances. The mandated model had become institutionalized and become more important than the students.

As administrators moved in and out of the schools, I realized many were not trained in supervision and had only completed the state-sponsored workshops on Effective Teacher

Training, Mentor Training, and Teacher Performance Appraisal
Instrument. They have been immersed in direct teaching and
ignored the quality of life in the classroom. Instead of
becoming pedagogical specialists, some have only mastered
script taping, a written record of the lesson sequence, stu-
dent and teacher comments and movement, and anecdotal obser-
vations. Some of these administrators are unsure about the
process of interpreting and evaluating what they have script
taped. While North Carolina has trained thousands of admin-
istrators to script tape, one must question how many educa-
tors have been trained to interpret and evaluate the data.

Aware that instruction changes from day to day and year
to year because our students change and each student's needs
vary, I continue to become more dissatisfied with the effec-
tive schools movement which has depersonalized students,
teaching, and the schools. From experience, I am convinced
that the instructional methods that work with one class may
not work with another. A project or activity that is highly
successful with one class may be ineffective in another.
Learning is more than rote memory, and I felt an increasing
need to read and study the writings of educators who reject
the effective schools movement. Thus, I turned to the aca-
demic world to find new meaning and knowledge in teaching.
I began my studies in the doctoral program at The University
of North Carolina at Greensboro in the summer of 1988 to
question the changes taking place in education and schooling.

Immediately, I began to study with professors and other
students who voiced similar concerns about the effective
schools movement. My readings led to the works of Art Costa,
Elliot Eisner, and Vincent Rogers. Art Costa and Elliot
Eisner offer alternatives to the effective schools litera-
ture. Both Costa and Eisner promise their model of teaching
would integrate a caring approach to teaching with increased
student performance. Costa reminds the reader of the sig-
nificance of indirect teaching. He reminds educators of the
contributions of other instructional leaders, with different
agendas, who used alternatives to Hunter's model, including
Jesus, Socrates, and Buddha (Costa, 1984, p. 196). Costa
describes teaching as inquiry, "as a process that employs
scientific methods in the solution of instructional problems"
(Costa, 1984, p. 197). He disagrees with Hunter's insinua-
tion that theory has finally been translated into practice
and a complete list of teacher behaviors that determine
learning have been identified (p. 197). Costa believes there
is not one ultimate answer to teaching and learning. The
art and science of teaching is complex and cannot be defined
using Hunter's "three decisions, seven steps, and six types"
(p. 196).

Costa describes "the science of teaching and learning
. . . [as] a complicated web; an infinite number of inter-
actions between learning probabilities, teaching processes,

and environmental conditions" (Costa, 1984, p. 198). During
a lesson, with numerous interactions taking place, teachers
rely on tacit knowledge as they use an eclectic style of
decision-making that blends planned decisions and spontane-
ity (pp. 199-200).

Costa maintains that teaching is a synthesis, "a dynamic
interaction between . . . the exterior world of the class-
room and the interior meaning of the teacher" (1984, p. 202).
Instead of one practice being superior, the practices of
good teaching complement each other and provide for differ-
ent learning styles. Children should learn of the inter-
connectedness that binds all of us together and that is
reflected in the process of teaching and learning (p. 202).

Elliot Eisner, creator of "artistic supervision,"
acknowledges the subtle interactions taking place within a
classroom and designed a model of supervision to recognize
these interactions. He recognizes a teacher must use his/
her senses, perceptions, and knowledge to appreciate class-
room teaching (Glatthorn, 1984, p. 11). Creative teaching,
proposed by Eisner, focuses on content and process and allows
students to engage in problem-solving activities. Eisner
recognizes that good teaching depends on the context and
that the dynamics within a classroom change from year to
year. Eisner is holistic in his view of the classroom val-
uing the interrelationship of those present and their inter-
pretation of the learning process (Glatthorn, 1984). Vincent

Rogers also realizes the complexities of teaching, learning, and life in the classroom. "The experiences and attitudes of teachers and children both in and out of the school setting all have a bearing on what occurs within the classroom or school" (Rogers, 1984, p. 86).

While agreeing with the writings of Costa, Eisner, and Rogers, I felt there were other dimensions of teaching that had not been addressed. I was experiencing heartache and pain as I viewed my students and the way they were being treated, objectified, and taught to perceive themselves as failures. As I remembered my experiences of cherishing within my home and school environments, I suffered for my students. I realized I had become part of the problem and this disturbed me deeply. In the name of professionalism, I was betraying what I believed and who I was. I had to find a better way of teaching. I had to find a way to reconnect my students to the schooling process and to the teachers. I had to find a philosophy of teaching which would encourage the building of relationships between teachers and students. I felt compelled to delve into professional writings to find a model of teaching that would reconnect students to the teacher, to the school, and to society. I wanted to alleviate my students' pain so they would view school as a place where they were cherished and nurtured, not as a "jail" where they were confined. I focused my readings on the literature addressing active learning in the discipline of

social studies. This literature broadened the scope of teaching by including the need for affective as well as cognitive learning experiences (Shaver, 1981). The need to implement multiple resources is also a concern. Morrisett (1981) states that students must have access to areas in the school besides the classroom, must take learning into the community, and bring the community into the school as resources to enhance the learner and promote growth.

Piaget and other developmental psychologists maintain students must be actively engaged in learning (Mehaffy, Atwood, & Nelson, 1981). Piaget states that the teacher must organize and create situations to provide students with useful problems that will lead to student reflection (Bell-Gredler, 1986). Wadsworth also stresses that action must be coupled with reflection through reading, imitating, and in conversation with peers and adults (Mehaffy et al., 1981). Active learning should provide students with opportunities for analysis and evaluation (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1990). Active learning can bridge "the gap between learning and life, school and community, individual and society" (Mehaffy et al., 1981, p. 202). It is this focus on the linking of the student's background knowledge to new information that is vital to active learning strategies.

Holistic learning must be encouraged. Students will have to solve problems that have not been identified at this

time and master skills for jobs which have not been created. New instructional strategies promoting problem solving and thinking and reasoning skills will have to be implemented. Students must be prepared to focus on the new area of problem anticipation (Ramler, 1991) to prepare society for the continued changes that will occur.

The social studies literature reminds the reader that cultural diversity, locally, nationally, and globally, must be recognized and valued. As we recognize the pluralism that was long ignored by curriculum planners, we know that teachers should care about students, teach them to accept and take care of each other, teach that hatred hurts others, enhance critical thinking skills, enrich their lives with new, creative learning experiences, create community within the classroom, stress the interconnectedness of all mankind, and teach them the tools of change and how to cope with change (Bullard, 1991). By recognizing pluralism in society, we validate all human experiences and accept that humanity has struggled to develop the human culture (Hilliard, 1984). We must teach our students to see "through the eyes, minds, and hearts of others" (Ramler, 1991, p. 45).

It was at this point that I realized that my basic beliefs in children and teaching had subtly been replaced by effective teaching practices. I had lost my personal perspective on teaching and had replaced it with the prevailing

educational philosophy. My confusion, my sense of heartache
and pain, resulted from knowing there was more to teaching
than the practices I had been subtly coerced into accepting
and perpetuating. I felt remorse that I had contributed to
the system which objectified students. I realized that I
must reflect upon what I had become as a teacher and recon-
nect my actions to my basic beliefs about children and life
in the classroom and schools. I knew it was my teachers who
had made a difference in my educational experiences. I rea-
lized it was the interpersonal relationships I shared with
my teachers, the experiences and attitudes they provided
that made me feel accepted and cherished, and the relation-
ships I had with my students in the decade before effective
teaching that made a difference in teaching. As one grounded
in the principles and practices of caring and cherishing, I
had to reconnect with my innermost beliefs and convictions.

As I increased my awareness of the flaws in our present
educational focus, I began to examine my beliefs to determine
what I, as a classroom teacher of eighth-grade adolescents,
considered to be the true concerns of education. In this
decade of the 1990s, I believe children in our culture are
involved in a complex and conflicting struggle between home,
school, and society. Competing beliefs, values, needs,
ideas, experiences, resources, and loyalties constantly bom-
bard and tear at the very soul and inner being of the child.

Children often experience inner turmoil as a result of the
physical, social, and emotional conflicts they experience
daily. When children from loving, supportive families
encounter school and society, they may be thrown into environ-
ments that do not reinforce the love and support in the home.
Children, from homes where love and family are neither valued
nor provided, may never realize school and/or society can
provide them with love, attention, and encouragement. Chil-
dren who suffer physical or emotional abuse at home are sus-
picious of strangers and may either withdraw or become aggres-
sive in encounters at school or society. Thus, these chil-
dren, who are emotionally torn between home, school, and
society, experience feelings of inadequacy, dependency, help-
lessness, and isolation that lead to a general attitude of
alienation from others, from relationships, and from society.
Part of the problem is that schools often view children as
impersonal objects to be manipulated to achieve desired
outcomes. Unfortunately, the majority of children succumb
to the treatment accorded them in school and adapt to the
suppression that schools and society practice. This treat-
ment has left children vulnerable with few educators speak-
ing out against this type of victimization.

As national attention focused on the decline of chil-
dren's test scores over the past two decades, this nation
determined schools were in serious trouble. Instead of

addressing the consequences of the child's struggle between home, school, and society, the educational community attempted to meet the challenge by proposing particular institutional reforms. These reforms resulted in the effective schools movement that has engulfed public education in North Carolina for the last decade. While the effective schools movement, legislated through the Basic Education Plan and mandated through the Standard Course of Study, offered promises of success to students through improved test scores, it has not responded to and may even have increased the plight of many children. It has not reduced the struggles of students nor resolved their feelings of disconnectedness. Instead, it has reinforced the practice of sorting and labeling children and instilling a perception of failure to many children. To achieve the goal of raising test scores, the effective schools movement has sought additional control of both students and teachers by limiting flexibility of teaching strategies, materials, and objectives.

The six-point lesson plan, which has evolved as a significant component of North Carolina's effective schools movement, has also mandated and legitimated alienation between the teacher and the students. As a teacher who believes in the interconnectedness between the teacher and the student, I have struggled to understand the contradiction between the interconnectedness, which I believe exists, and the

alienation the Basic Education Plan mandates. To heal this alienation between the student and the teacher, between home, school, and society, educators must replace alienation with caring and concern. To introduce an educational paradigm based on caring, we must redefine teaching. We must ignore present curriculum mandates, the limitations of textbooks, the lack of materials and supplies, the inadequate funding, understaffing and overcrowding of schools, the lack of administrative and community support, and ask what should schools and teaching be about?

While accepting that artistic teaching and active learning strategies are important, I remain convinced there is a deeper dimension to teaching. Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, David Purpel, Carol Gilligan, and Nel Noddings broadened my views as they challenged the effective schools movement and focused on the hidden curriculum and moral education within the classroom. Literature emphasizing feminist and theological views was provided by Rita Brock. Paul Tillich also provided a theological framework as I examined my beliefs about teaching.

There is more to teaching than the present definition of someone who directs educational experiences and serves as the instructional leader in the classroom. There is more to teaching than calling the roll, enforcing policies and procedures, making assignments and grading papers, evaluating

students' progress and contacting parents. There is more to
being a teacher than graduating from college and receiving
certification from a state agency. Teaching is more than a
profession, much more than an occupation.

What then is teaching? To me, teaching is a calling
connected to my spiritual self. It is a ministry, a respond-
ing to an inner voice that invites one, insistently, without
the possibility of declining, to reach out to a child and
accept the child as he/she is and guide the child to sample
his/her world. It is this spirituality which is manifested
through the cherishing of each child a teacher encounters.
As I journey toward wholeness and spiritual growth, I provide
opportunities for the student to journey towards wholeness
as a result of being cherished. I view the role of teacher
as one of nurturer and child advocate. "A child requires a
validating presence and the agreement of others--people it
can trust for their wisdom and affectionate support so it
can grow toward its own wisdom and generosity" (Brock, 1988,
p. 27). I believe teaching is being in communion and rela-
tionship with both the supernatural and the child simultan-
eously. To me, teaching is that which allows being with
purpose. Brock states that it is this being/becoming which
emphasizes connectedness through "intimacy, generosity, and
interdependence" (1988, p. 37). For me, teaching gives mean-
ing to life and it is this ultimate meaning which becomes
life for the teacher.

Robert Fulghum relates a conversation he had with Dr. Alexander Papaderos regarding the meaning of life.

> When I was a small child, during the war, we were very poor and we lived in a remote village. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A German motorcycle had been wrecked in that place.
>
> I tried to find all the pieces and put them together, but it was not possible, so I kept only the largest piece. This one. And by scratching it on a stone I made it round. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine--in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find.
>
> I kept the little mirror, and as I went about my growing up, I would take it out in idle moments and continue the challenge of the game. As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was not just a child's game but a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of light. But light--truth, understanding, knowledge--is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it.
>
> I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world-- into the black places in the hearts of men--and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is what I am about. This is the meaning of my life. (Fulghum, 1988, pp. 174-175)

As I reflected on what makes life meaningful for me, I realize that teaching is a significant part of my life, but that I must examine my being, my basic beliefs about God, the universe, mankind, and children before I can discuss my beliefs about teaching. For me, my basic beliefs are rooted in my spirituality, my faith in God. As Paul Tillich (1957)

states, "the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern" (p. 1). Man's

> ultimate concern is the integrating center of the personal life. . . . The center unites all elements of man's personal life, the bodily, the unconscious, the conscious, the spiritual one. . . . They are dimensions of man's being, always within each other; for man is a unity and not composed of parts. (Tillich, 1957, p. 106)

Thus, all my beliefs and concerns, from social and political to aesthetic, reflect my ultimate concern. My being, my total personality, my centeredness is united in the evidence and expression of my faith (Tillich, 1957, pp. 4, 6).

> The concern of faith is identical with the desire of love: reunion with that to which one belongs and from which one is estranged. In the great commandment of the Old Testament, confirmed by Jesus, the object of ultimate concern, and the object of unconditional love, is God. From this is derived the love of what is God's, represented by both the neighbor and oneself. (Tillich, 1957, p. 112)

How I define truth and ethical values are statements of my faith in God, the Creator. This awareness of faith can be expressed as a striving toward perfection with perfection defined as unattainable wholeness. Tillich discusses this revelation of faith as an experience in which humans desire to create a community which "expresses itself in symbols of action, imagination, and thought . . . internal and mutual conflicts are conquered, and estrangement is replaced by reconciliation" (p. 78).

As I journey toward reconciliation, community, and wholeness, the following verses of Scriptures guide me toward being and defining my basic assumptions of the universe.

Then spake Jesus again unto them saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
John 8:12

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither-he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that. ye may be children of light.
John 13:35-36

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.
John 13:44-46

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.
John 14:6-7

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.
John 14:11

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.
John 14:12

There is a Protestant legend about truth as wholeness which demonstrates the significance of understanding our assumptions about the universe, mankind, and children to understand our philosophy of education and what guides our daily interactions.

The legend tells of Hermann, a rather inept and clumsy angel, who was asked to assist in the creation of the world.

Hermann's assignment was to bring the "mirror of truth" to the conference room. Hermann was quite short and plump, and the mirror was longer than he was tall. Nevertheless, Hermann set out to transport the precious mirror with great care. But even though he was very careful, Hermann caught his robe under his feet, tripped, and fell. The mirror crashed to the floor, shattering into a thousand pieces.

As the legend goes, these pieces eventually fell to the earth. Hermann was grief stricken and full of guilt. God consoled Hermann, saying that there were many humans on earth and that some might find the pieces of the mirror and put it back together.

So Hermann sat and watched the earthlings. Through his observations he discovered four types of human beings. First, there were those who simply failed to notice the bright, shiny fragments lying around. Second, there were those who were attracted by the pieces, studied them for a while, and then discarded them as worthless. Third, there were those who found an individual piece that they liked but who failed to think in terms of the whole. Consequently, these people valued their fragment to the exclusion of the others. Fourth, there were those who not only recognized the beauty of the pieces but also realized that they were parts of the whole. These persons worked continually to put the whole back together again, to get the big picture.

This legend illustrates the condition of human beings in regard to that which is true. Not to pursue the truth, even when doing so is difficult, is to miss the essence of what we are about as human beings. To spread a teaching based only on one jagged piece of truth without ever looking beyond is to lack integrity, to take a part for the whole. Only by working for the realization of the whole can we experience the wonder of truth. (Gossai, 1992, pp. 58-59)

Thus, I view teaching as a journey, a pilgrimage, which the teacher makes to become whole and to provide the child with the opportunity to become whole. Our society, culture,

and educational system have created dilemmas for teachers as they have tried to separate the teaching self from the whole person. How does a teacher who has a religious sensibility respond to the dominant educational philosophy of effective schools and its institutionalized components? In talking with other teachers, I have determined this is a dilemma for them as it is for me. As educators, we desire to be whole and to bring our entire entity into the classroom. Instead, we suffer as the educational hierarchy tries to separate our consciousness from us and have us function as impersonal, disconnecting purveyors of preconceived knowledge. I, as others, have conformed to the mandated practices of the state and have often had to ignore my religious consciousness as I implemented practices which were impersonal and promoted competitiveness among the students. When conforming to these secular requirements, I feel guilty and frustrated. As North Carlina's Basic Education Plan has become firmly entrenched, the sense of hopelessness has increased. This has led to a sense of helplessness as the teacher, who views herself/himself as nurturer, examines policies and practices which estrange the student and create a chasm in the development of the whole chid. This paradox, between teacher, as nurturer, and the prevailing educational practices of alienation and estrangement, is causing the teacher to suffer. For teachers to silently suffer from this dilemma

is to accept the present practices. I must speak out and voice my dissension. By recognizing, examining, and challenging the alienation that is being mandated, I can begin to redeem myself. Through this dissertation, I must challenge the dominant consciousness in education. I will use analysis and educational criticism, based on my concept of spirituality and being, to explore an alternative educational consciousness valuing students through caring and cherishing.

The present emphasis on testing and test scores in our schools diminishes both the students and the teachers. Students enter the schools with innocence and schools immediately begin to compare and treat the students impersonally. Defenseless and vulnerable, the students become victims of the system from the initial enrollment in kindergarten. Schools, as perpetuators of society, view students as objects to be acted upon, to be molded and shaped. Thus, students are caught up in the struggle between the expectations of home, school, and society and experience confusion, failure, and hopelessness under the stringent guidelines of the Basic Education Plan. Teachers who believe there is more to teaching than improving test scores also experience distrust, frustration, and discouragement. The educational community, the home, and society at large must be transformed to see there is a higher purpose to teaching than testing,

evaluating, and making comparisons. Children must come to know there is more to school and education than obtaining a job, meeting minimum state competencies, meeting or exceeding state and national test norms, or even learning for its own sake. Educators must insist more attention be given to building a strong relationship between the teacher and the student. It is this concern, caring, and connection that provides an accepting environment for students to learn self-acceptance. Teachers and students must experience wholeness and fulfillment. Teachers must experience satisfaction from their work, and believe they have a higher purpose in life to become whole. For me, this higher purpose, this meaning of life, has been ordained by the Divine. I understand this meaning as a surrender to and acceptance of a calling from the Creator to care for and love children, as neighbor, and to allow my spiritual life to guide my daily interactions in the schools.

CHAPTER II

CHERISHING IN EDUCATION

As I pursued the topic of cherishing and its relation-
ship to public education, I searched the current professional
literature and found that few writers discussed cherishing
within schools, or classrooms, at least in the sense that
I discussed in Chapter I. The closest to this notion of
cherishing that I found in the educational literature was
material on "caring." The literature described caring vari-
ously as empathy, healing, charity, relationships, coping as
a response to stress, helping others, cooperating, compas-
sion, sensitivity to and awareness of others, living morally,
caring for oneself and others, or addressed the importance
of caring in the realm of health care. Since all of these
descriptors did not define caring, or cherishing, as I per-
ceived this concept, I began to examine and sort the litera-
ture according to my own interests. I wanted to discover
literature which spoke of cherishing as a meeting of the
heart, mind, and soul; which described cherishing as accep-
tance through unconditional love, providing opportunities
for wholeness, and being in communion one with another. I
discarded the materials which related to health care since I
was more interested in the affective and spiritual aspects

of caring in education, rather than the physical. The literature which referred to coping with stress, cooperating, and helping others failed to provide a rich analysis of the concept of cherishing. As one who believes cherishing students is the most important model for education, I wanted to research others' perspectives on cherishing, or caring as they refer to this concept, and delve into the literature which would enrich my understanding of this concept. I pursued the literature which addressed cherishing in a deeper, spiritual context. I focused on the literature which addressed relationships with self, others, and the Absolute, and viewed caring as empathy, compassion, and moral ethics. Major philosophical sources who address caring are Martin Buber, who focuses on relationships, and Paulo Freire, who writes about the social and political aspects of caring. Matthew Fox and Rita Brock address caring in a spiritual context. Milton Mayeroff and Carl Rogers depict caring as a helping relationship between self and others. People who write specifically about caring in education include Parker Palmer, Clark Moustakas, Nel Noddings, and Alfie Kohn. The literature, which applied to education, generally spoke to specific situations, such as caring and appreciation, the development of prosocial behavior, caring as a source of personal growth and developing one's identity, or becoming an authentic teacher, rather than addressing caring as a new philosophy

for teaching. I searched the literature for a broad theo-
retical framework which included a spiritual context, that
provided a richer analysis of cherishing and was meaningful
to me, which could positively influence how children are per-
ceived and treated, that valued the quality of life in the
classroom, and examined society's expectations of the school-
ing process. I began with Matthew Fox's A Spirituality Named
Compassion and the Healing of the Global Village, Humpty
Dumpty and Us and Rita Brock's Journey by Heart. Both books,
grounded in spirituality, address the suffering that exists
in contemporary society for mankind, including children.
Fox uses "Jacob's Ladder" to describe the competitiveness
that exists within our culture and suggests we move toward an
inclusive philosophy of living based on our interconnected-
ness, which he terms "dancing Sarah's Circle" (Fox, 1979,
p. 37). Fox views the paternalistic, hierarchical model of
society as destructive and asserts one must embrace compas-
sion as a method of healing society. Brock describes society
and children as brokenhearted and suffering (Brock, 1988).
Fox and Brock expect religious people to cast off the burden
of perseverance and to embrace a life which strives "to make
whole our suffering world" (Brock, 1988, p. xi). We must
reach out to children to establish relationship so these
children can move toward healing as they "journey by heart"
(Brock, 1988, p. 17) toward wholeness. We must solve the
problems of children in education through a feminist ideology

that recognizes "no one person alone can overcome brokenness" (Brock, 1988, p. 103). Clark Moustakas, who did much of his writing in the 1960s, speaks of the importance of caring through sensitivity to and awareness of children, the impor- tance of play therapy and listening to children, and the interacting forces within the classroom. While these writers gave insight into problems of our society and spoke of alter- native perceptions of others, rather than the prevailing dominant consciousness that enables suffering and compet- itiveness to flourish, they did not speak specifically to the issues of caring in the classroom.

My search of the literature on caring in the schools led me to Nel Noddings and Alfie Kohn who seem to be the major contemporary writers who speak in some detail on the issue of caring in education. It is the voices of Noddings and Kohn who seem to reflect the existing ideas on caring in the educational community. Their writings incorporate the inter- connectedness between the teacher and the student. In con- trast to the effective schools movement, these authors stress relationships rather than product and/or performance. These authors speak of caring, which is related closely to the concept I call cherishing, and its importance in schools and they provide answers to some of my concerns. However, while they come close to addressing my concept of cherishing, or caring, they lack a spiritual orientation which I believe is

necessary to provide the lens to cherishing, or caring,
within the classroom. In this chapter I will be examining
and critiquing the literature that seems to be related to
cherishing.

The Views of Nel Noddings

Nel Noddings is a professor in the Department of Education
at Stanford University. She is a philosopher of education,
a former high school mathematics teacher, a psychological
theorist, and a humanistic-feminist scholar. She ties her
interests in humane behavior (Nower, 1984) with her commit-
ment to caring, as a feeling, instead of as an emotion (Kuh-
merker, 1984), as the primary goal of education. Her major
works on caring are published in two books, Caring: A Femi-
nine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education and The Challenge
to Care in Schools.

The basis of Nodding's critique of education is her view
of paternalism as the dominant philosophy of public school-
ing. Noddings proposes a "feminine" model of education as
the answer to the problems of education and schools. She
believes schools must be restructured from a feminist per-
spective that "is rooted in relation, in the joy of caring"
(Goldstein, 1989, p. 48). Noddings appeals for an

> ethical idea of relatedness . . . that all of us possess,
> to some degree, a dimension of natural caring that goes
> beyond adherence to laws and governmental rules and even

goes against a masculine created God who demands of
Abraham that he sacrifice his son in obedience to God's
will. (Masny, 1984, p. 411)

Noddings calls for the abandonment of a world in which people
and relationships have been reduced to abstractions (Mastny,
1984). Education must abandon its traditional paternalistic
view stressing the principles of "justification, fairness,
justice" (Noddings, 1984, p. 1) and embrace a feminist view
based on caring, memories of caring and receiving care, and
stressing "receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness"
(Noddings, 1984, p. 2). This alternative view of education,
focusing on the concept of caring as a care-giver and a care-
receiver, is based on "the moral attitude or longing for
goodness and not with moral reasoning" (Noddings, 1984, p. 2).
Educational practices are designed to appeal to the affective
experiences of the students.

Noddings bases much of her theories on existentialist
literature referring to the terminology of Satre ("for-itself
and in-itself"), Heidegger ("being-in-the-world"), and Buber
("I-Thou and I-It") to develop the terms "one-caring" to
describe the care-giver and "cared-for" to describe the care-
receiver. Throughout her book, Noddings refers to the "one-
caring" as "she" and the "cared-for" as "he"; however, Nod-
dings denotes these are non-sexist terms and "they may be
both male, both female, female-male, or male-female" (Nod-
dings, 1984, p. 4).

The paternalistic philosophy prevailing in our schools has, according to Noddings, long paid lip-service to universal principles. She decries this practice and suggests replacing it with the concept that human encounters are unique and each one's subjective experiences differ from another's. We cannot dictate what one should believe and do in all situations. We rely on each other and our interactions to determine outcomes in the transitions of our life.

Noddings maintains that the purpose of education should be the "nurturance of the ethical ideal" (Noddings, 1984, p. 6) which permits one to make moral decisions as dilemmas occur and life-affecting decisions are made throughout one's lifetime. Noddings believes life and decision-making cannot be reduced to living by routine and predetermined rules. Following rules, while ignoring others' natures, lifestyles, needs, and wants, does not demonstrate caring for others (Noddings, 1984). We must move from our own reality into the reality of others to be able to actually care for others.

> When we see the other's reality as a possibility for us, we must act to eliminate the intolerable, to reduce the pain, to fill the need, to actualize the dream. When I am in this sort of relationship with another, when the other's reality becomes a real possibility for me, I care. (Noddings, 1984, p. 14)

As one develops relationships with others, Noddings says one is empowered to care for others, and ultimately, to care for oneself (Noddings, 1984). However, Noddings's

explanation of the evolution of caring for others and oneself
can be understood as a continuous circle. As one understands
one's personal causes of pain and pleasure, one is more able
to care for others. As one then cares for others, the indi-
vidual develops into a caring person able to accept and care
for himself/herself (Noddings, 1984).

Noddings uses the term "engrossment" to describe caring
for someone. She states that caring for others is a commit-
ment that can lead to conflict and guilt because one is in
relationship with others (Noddings, 1984, p. 18). To care
is to become vulnerable, to open up to others without any
guarantees of the end results. To care is to take risks,
to live a rich life fraught with emotions and experiences
because one stays in relationships with others, rather than
withdrawing from situations where hurt, pain, and rejection
may result.

A caring relationship requires two parties contributing
to the relationship. Caring is reactive, responsive, but
more importantly, receptive to another. The engrossment,
Noddings ascribes, reveals itself in an attitude of warmth
and comfort towards another. The warmth is manifested through
concern, delight, and interest and is communicated through
verbal and body language (Noddings, 1984).

Why does one care for another? To enhance, protect, and
promote the welfare of another, Noddings maintains. To care,

she states, one must step out of one's personal frame of
reference into that of the one "cared-for." The "one-caring"
attends to the "cared-for's" views, needs, and expectations.
Rules and regulations do not guide one's behavior and actions.
Instead, affection and regard motivate actions when one is
involved in caring. Actions will vary according to a partic-
ular person and a specific situation and will benefit the
"cared-one." It is this variation that identifies caring
from pretense. It is this human judgment regarding an indi-
vidual and a concrete situation that relies on faith and
commitment, instead of judgment based on impersonal logic
(Noddings, 1984, p. 25).

To understand and appreciate human existence, one must
be receptive to others with a heightened awareness of others.
This awareness of others is displayed by a responsiveness
manifested through expression, planning, and action (Noddings,
1984).

> When we fail to do this, we can climb into clouds of
> abstraction, moving rapidly away from the caring sit-
> uation into a domain of objective and impersonal
> problems where we are free to impose structure as we
> will. (Noddings, 1984, p. 36)

Caring, according to Noddings, emanates from our posi-
tion in the center of concentric circles. We move from
ourselves encountering our family and friends for whom we
have great regard. Our caring is motivated by our feelings,

others' expectations of us, and the requirements the situational relationship expects of us. We can care because we are confident of the structure of caring. Where, asks Noddings, does the stranger to us fit into this schemata? We must ask how we can prepare for encounters with the stranger and can remain receptive to him (Noddings, 1984). This question is especially relevant to educators. As we encounter new students, how do we care for the student and become receptive to his/her wants, needs, and concerns?

The caring provided by the teacher is not reflected in permissiveness, irresponsibility, or lack of achievement. Caring provides an environment for the teacher to maintain and increase the student's receptivity. Instead of molding and manipulating the child, the teacher is receptive to his talents, abilities, interests, and needs. This empowers the child to accept himself and, in turn, accept others (Noddings, 1984). Whenever affection and support are provided to a child by a teacher, even if the child does not know love, he will have received attention and may someday respond to others and give encouragement to others. Thus, we can break the cycle of suffering and empower unloved, ignored children to reach out and show the love to others they have been denied (Noddings, 1984).

Noddings cites the writings of Martin Buber in her theory of caring. Buber goes beyond Noddings's definition of caring and calls this practice of receiving others "inclusion." He

says the "one-caring" develops dual lens and can perceive
from both the position of the "one-caring" and the "cared-
for." Buber says the child, as "cared-for," undergoes "con-
firmation." As the parent sees the best-self when viewing
the "cared-for," he strives to provide opportunities and
experiences to actualize, or confirm, the best-self as a
reality for the child (Noddings, 1984, p. 64).

Noddings concurs with Buber that it is the subjective we
must adhere to in our relationships with others. In fact,
she defines much of the current failure of schools as a
breakdown in relationships. She charges schools with objec-
tifying the students and defining children as types, rather
than individuals. Educators separate and categorize chil-
dren into "cases" denying their identity as persons (Nod-
dings, 1984, pp. 65-66). Educators must move towards Buber's
concept of inclusion Noddings maintains. "Achieving inclu-
sion is part of teaching successfully, and one who cannot
practice inclusion fails as a teacher" (Noddings, 1984, p. 67).

Caring is not a simplistic formula to adopt and apply.
It takes personal strength, courage, and joy to instigate
caring as a way of life. The "one-caring" must maintain
herself to be able to maintain others whether the caring is
a personal or professional lifestyle (Noddings, 1984, p. 100).
However, caring as an ethical ideal results from the sympathy
human beings have for one another and

> the longing to maintain, recapture, or enhance our
> most caring and tender moments. . . . We must recognize
> our longing for relatedness and accept it, and we must
> commit ourselves to the openness that permits us to
> receive the other. (Noddings, 1984, p. 104).

The joy involved in caring contains a feeling of connected-

ness and results from an awareness of caring (Noddings, 1984).

To Noddings, caring in education and in schools leads to

a transformation of the relationship between teacher and

student. This intangible transformation cannot be specified,

but is actually an attitude that develops from the relation-

ship.

> Among the intangibles that I would have my students
> carry away is the feeling that the subject we have
> struggled with is both fascinating and boring, signifi-
> cant and silly, fraught with meaning and nonsense, chal-
> lenging and tedious, and that whatever attitude we take
> toward it, it will not diminish our regard for each
> other. The student is infinitely more important than
> the subject. (Noddings, 1984, p. 20)

Teaching is a coming together of the teacher as the "one-

caring" and the student as the "cared-for." Teaching results

from the giving of oneself and the receiving of another

(Noddings, 1984).

Noddings advocates using creativity in the classroom to

promote aesthetic caring which is "caring about things and

ideas." She cautions that as teachers we must strive to

bring creativity into the classroom, to provide opportunity

for students to let go and express their innate emotions, and

refrain from becoming infatuated with the activity (Noddings, 1984). The light, the happening, that is revealed to students is the onset of creativity. It is through creativity that understanding begins and expands. It is this creativity which Noddings describes as receptivity (Noddings, 1984). From interviews with creative thinkers in all disciplines and the arts, Noddings reports their acknowledgment of "the power of the receptive phase in their creative work" (Noddings, 1984, p. 145).

While attributing much learning to receptivity and creativity, Noddings deplores the current focus to turn to more and more direct teaching of subjects in schools. While acknowledging that specific skills can be taught through direct instruction and a focus on drill, these skills are to be used to free the student as he/she explores the disciplines. Affective learning is as important as cognitive learning.

> Subject matter should not always be a thing to be analyzed and mastered. It may be possible for almost all students to have at least occasional I-Thou relations with subject matter--occasions in which student and subject meet without prestated objective and in which the subject speaks to the student. . . . there is the instrumental value attached to learning more thoroughly when one is deeply engaged, and there is the consummatory value attached to the joy we feel in genuine relatedness to the object of the study. (Noddings, 1984, p. 145)

Educators often, mistakenly, focus on the activity and become entrapped with the evaluation of creativity. Noddings

advises educators to rely on their faith in creativity and not become entwined with objective evaluation (Noddings, 1984). Caring and creativity permit students to experience perceptive and creative modes as well as the traditional judgmental and evaluation modes (Noddings, 1984). Together these give students a more complete set of educational experiences.

Noddings describes the primary purpose of education as "the maintenance and enhancement of caring" (Noddings, 1984, p. 172). The teacher, as the "one-caring," broadens the student's world and, through a cooperative effort, prepares the student to live competently within his world. The teacher serves as a model and uses dialogue as a technique to impart the ethic of caring (Noddings, 1984). While learning a specific discipline, the student also is learning how to become a "one-caring" individual. Traditionally, the school has concentrated on developing the student's cognitive abilities and the home and/or church attends to the student's moral development. Noddings states we can no longer divide the responsibility. The student is a whole being and all institutions must accept responsibility for his/her entire development (Noddings, 1984). Therefore, the moral sense of the student is developed, in the classroom, at the same time the disciplines are being studied (Noddings, 1984).

How can a teacher respond as a "one-carer" to each and every student? First, the teacher must attend to the student

and be present with the student (Noddings, 1984). Educators must focus on the student as a person, instead of objectifying him/her as another statistic, an aberrant student to be compared to other aberrant students in national and state reports. School cannot care directly. School structures must be changed to form smaller schools designed to promote a caring environment with caring individuals. Noddings's paradigm would focus on dialogue, practice, and confirmation as strategies to nurture caring (Noddings, 1984). Parents would be incorporated into the school structure to initiate dialogue between educators, parents, and children. The dialogue would encompass talking, listening, sharing, and responding. Noddings suggests teachers and students be paired for protracted periods of time, such as 3 years in the elementary school between a teacher and one group of students. In high school a student would have the same subject-area teacher throughout the high school experience. An environment of connection would develop and students would have time to form a caring relationship with one specific teacher. In our present period of suffering and brokenheartedness within many families, this caring relationship is crucial to many students. With the nation's dropout rate rapidly escalating, Noddings's proposals offer hope to the crisis in education. The public schools have problem students and we must recognize their suffering, disconnection, and lack of relationship

at school. It is not enough for private companies to assume management of schools in specific areas. These companies, like the private schools before them, will not accept or educate problem students. It is in the public schools where the inclusion must occur to form relationships enabling students to succeed and become enhanced.

An organization of schools into K-7 and 8-12 is another proposal offered by Noddings. This organizational model of schools would keep children of all ages in contact with each other, as opposed to the isolation, by ages, now in widespread practice. By attending only two schools, instead of the four or five that students presently attend, students feel a stronger sense of ownership and of belonging to the school community. Students, parents, and teachers would decide together when a student would move into high school. Readiness would be determined by all three parties and the flexibility of skipping a grade or remaining in a grade for an extended time would be available. Physical, social, and emotional readiness, not academics, would determine entrance to high school. The curriculum would include opportunities for caring through service activities in addition to the regular disciplines. Students would learn to care about others and acknowledge the contributions of others through these service areas.

Noddings despairs over the practice of grading children and suggests we allow students to redo assignments and retake

tests until they have mastered specific tasks. She recognizes we need standards, but is adamant that we encourage students in their studies, rather than tear them apart with formalized announcements of failure.

Administrators would no longer have career positions in the schools Noddings proposes. Instead, teachers would rotate from 3 years of teaching into 1 year of administrative work and then return to teaching. Present administrators would return to the classroom and rotate within the new framework of classroom and office work with teachers.

Noddings addresses many issues that are important to me, as a classroom teacher whose primary interest in teaching is the relationship between the teacher and the students. As a teacher who values and is concerned about her students, their emotional needs, and the educational practices they experience in schools, I found Noddings's writings both useful and thought-provoking. Her concerns about current educational practices, based on a paternalistic model, help educators clarify our thoughts and beliefs about students' experiences in the classroom and the challenges teachers encounter daily. Noddings's concerns parallel my personal interest and concerns as educational practices currently emphasize depersonalization of the student and a focus on using effective teaching strategies to meet standardized objectives.

Noddings consolidates many items of concern for me. I concur with her proposal to focus on caring, receptiveness,

relationship, and creativity in the school and classroom culture. Noddings's goal for teachers to care for students "to eliminate the intolerable, to reduce the pain, to fill the need, to actualize the dream" (Noddings, 1984, p. 14) is commendable and one that should inspire each teacher who believes a positive relationship can exist between the teacher and student. I identify with this goal and believe it is vital for teachers to eliminate intolerable practices and situations, alleviate students' pain, meet students' needs, and enable students' dreams to be actualized. Noddings's proposal to use dialogue, practice, and confirmation as strategies to nurture caring are important tools to be integrated into the educational community.

As I examined Noddings' proposals, I reaffirmed my personal belief that a strong, positive, loving relationship between student and teacher is essential for both the teacher's and the students' emotional well-being. However, her analysis did not wholly respond to my search for an educational outlook rooted in cherishing. While Noddings acknowledges the need for a relationship between teacher and student, she speaks of caring with cool, detached language. Her conception of caring is one of feeling and yet devoid of concern for emotion (Kuhmerker, 1984). I believe feeling and emotion are interconnected and cannot be discussed as separate aspects of consciousness. Noddings, however, describes

"emotion" as an irrational and nonreflective aspect of one's consciousness (Noddings, 1984, pp. 34-35). She describes "feeling" as superior to emotion because feeling accepts the "other" without evaluating or assessing. In a "feeling" mode, we are involved in relation; "we are not attempting to transform the world, but we are allowing ourselves to be transformed" (Noddings, 1984, p. 34). My disagreement with her rests on my belief that we do attempt to transform the world when we commit ourselves to caring and to being in relationship with others. We are attempting to transform the world through our acceptance of and commitment to unconditional love. Moreover, Noddings does not interpret caring as characteristic of universal love (Kuhmerker, 1984) nor does she discuss "the social and political context of the [caring] relationship" (Mullett, 1987, p. 493). Noddings does not apply her concept of caring to the daily interactions of the classroom or the culture at large. She seems to retreat from the possibility of controversy by avoiding any discussion of political implications for children and schools.

While Noddings attempts to infuse caring into the school environment, her suggestions are narrow in scope. For example, she refrains from acknowledging and discussing the interpersonal relationships that must exist between administrator and student, between administrator and teacher, and between students themselves. While purporting to speak of relationships and moral development, her recommendations are

conservative in that they are limited to the organizational
framework of public schools. She limits her classroom reforms
to organizational recommendations while ignoring classroom
climate and the interpersonal relationships within the class-
room. She fails to discuss the cognitive and affective
experiences of students within the classroom and how these
experiences could be enriched through a paradigm based on
caring. Instead, Noddings suggests placing the same group of
students with one teacher for 3 years. During the second
3-year term with another group of students, a newly-certified
teacher would work under the supervision of the master teacher.
Both of these instances assume an extended period of time
with one group will result in caring or that a veteran teacher
will automatically model caring for the new teacher. This
type of organization will not necessarily perpetuate caring
since status is the main consideration and personalities and
philosophies are being ignored.

When I first encountered Noddings's <u>Caring: A Feminine</u>
<u>Approach to Ethics and Moral Education</u>, I saw her concept of
caring as contributing an important and helpful response to
the struggles of children in the schooling process. I now am
disappointed with Noddings's discussion of the implementation
of caring in the schools. Noddings advocates that students
learn to care through practice and that this can be accom-
plished such as participating in service activities on a
regular basis. These activities could involve custodial and

maintenance duties, landscaping, or office assistance within

the school. Noddings suggests students could be assigned

community service activities at "hospitals, nursing homes,

animal shelters, parks, botanical gardens" (Noddings, 1984,

p. 187). While this concept of compulsory community service

is being examined in school systems around the country, it

has become a requirement for graduation in some systems in

Pennsylvania and Maryland. I have reservations about this

concept of caring. By partially defining the concept of

caring as the completion of a particular job and/or complet-

ing a specific number of hours of community service, I think

the actual act of caring and the concept of caring could be

diminished. I believe job completion and fulfilling gradua-

tion requirements could become the student's goal and the

concept of caring could be totally ignored. One cannot force

another to care by assigning the student a task. Cherishing,

or caring, involves one's entire being, and cannot be reduced

to task completion. If it is measured as task completion,

to meet an objective goal, such as a graduation requirement,

then we are not discussing an innovation in education. Task

completion is a characteristic of our present model of effec-

tive schools which measures all learning experiences as

either product or performance. Noddings's idea of introduc-

ing caring by removing the career status of administrators

is weak. The practice of rotating teachers between the

classroom and administrative duties and forcing administra-
tors to return to the classroom and participate in the rota-
tion is a feeble attempt at revising present educational
practices. In Noddings's suggested practices to reform
schools through caring, she has created what Martin Buber
would call an "I-It" relationship, as opposed to Buber's
desired "I-Thou" relationship. Her suggestions, for restruc-
turing the schools, appear to speak of the school as insti-
tution as of primary importance and the individual student as
secondary. She seems to treat the student as object, not
subject, by her suggestions. Although Noddings acknowledges
the student's role in the concept of caring as one of active
involvement, her language and suggestions speak to me as
perceiving the student as a passive participant who must be
acted upon. I perceive Noddings's suggestions for school
reform as falling short of her commitment to implementing a
feminist model of schooling through her lack of infusing
emotions and unconditional love within the total school
environment. Her strong denial of emotion as an integral
aspect of feeling seems alien to me as a veteran classroom
teacher who experiences feeling and emotion in daily encoun-
ters with her students.

While Noddings promises hope for the schools with her
concept of caring, I am disappointed by her timid proposals
at restructuring the schools. School reform cannot simply

remold old ideas and practices. School reform must begin

with the thoughts, dreams, and aspirations of the reformer

as he/she envisions his/her basic assumptions about the type

of world we want to create and live in and the role of chil-

dren in this newly-constructed world. Our assumptions should

be reflected in how the child is treated, what the child

studies, how the child is taught, the types of learning

experiences he/she is offered, the materials made available

to the child, and the physical and emotional environment of

the students from the buses and classrooms to the quality of

food and planned breaks.

I oppose Noddings's characterization of teachers as

separate beings. Teachers bring their entire being into the

classroom as they encounter and interact with students. It

is this emotional involvement with the students that allows

teachers to develop a point of view about students, teaching,

and education and leads to the affirmation of students.

Noddings's description of caring in teaching lacks

analysis or discourse of authenticity and meaning. There is

much more to caring and the personal relationship between

teachers and students than Noddings acknowledges. For a

teacher to view caring as duty and to deny his/her emotional

involvement with students is to live an inauthentic existence

without meaning. By acknowledging the emotional aspect of

caring, rather than viewing caring as impersonal and

instrumental, the teacher accepts responsibility for acceptance of each student as a unique individual and attempts to build emotional bonds with the student. It is this total involvement of the teacher that gives meaning to caring, teaching, and life. It is this total interaction which lends authenticity to the lives of both teacher and student. It is this authenticity which enhances the student's life and leads to self-exploration and lifelong learning (Kneller, 1965). Caring and connection to students can be problematic. The teacher must accept responsibility for developing an emotional bond with the student and not betray the trust that evolves in an emotional relationship. The teacher must not withhold his/her emotions to manipulate the student into desirable behavior or academic performance. The teacher must also be able to let go emotionally when the student moves into another grade or classroom so that the student can be free to move onto other student-teacher relationships unencumbered, and without guilt, and also so that the teacher can enter new teacher-student relationships. Moreover, the emotional bonding can become physically and mentally exhausting to a teacher.

Noddings's research, as valuable and helpful as it is, leaves a void that I want this dissertation to fill. I want to add a spiritual dimension to caring by exploring the importance of the teacher's emotional involvement and commitment to students. I want to delve beyond caring and include

the spiritual dimension by adding the concept of cherishing
students in the classroom. I will speak to the concept of
cherishing in relationship to caring and discuss how cherish-
ing will enhance the students' self-perception, life, learn-
ing experiences, and educational encounters. I believe
spirituality will enhance the interpersonal relationships and
the connection to others in the classroom. It will add authen-
ticity and meaning to teaching as we deliberately choose to
care, to cherish, to become emotionally involved through our
spirituality. The addition of spirituality will alleviate
the present alienation many students and teachers experience
in schooling and education.

Noddings ignores the spiritual motivation of caring and
connection to others. She is vehement in denying the need
for God or God's love. She accuses God of being punitive
while ignoring His love, mercy, compassion, and grace. Nod-
dings's discussions of the following passages illustrate her
harsh concept of God.

> And they came to the place which God had told him of;
> and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in
> order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the
> altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his
> hand, and took the knife to slay his son.
> Genesis 22:9-10

> Out of duty to God, we may be required to do to our
> neighbor what is ethically forbidden. . . . But for the
> mother, for us, this is horrendous. Our relation to our
> children is not governed first by the ethical but by
> natural caring. We love not because we are required
> to love but because our natural relatedness gives birth

to love. It is this love, this natural caring, that
makes the ethical possible. . . . Abraham's obedience
fled for protection under the skirts of an unseeable
God. Under the gaze of an abstract and untouchable
God, he would destroy this touchable child whose real
eyes were turned upon him in trust, and love, and fear.
. . . The one-caring, male or female, does not seek
security in abstractions cast either as principles or
entities. (Noddings, 1984, p. 43)

But what ethical need have women for God? I do not
mean to suggest that women can brush aside an actually
existing God but, if there is such a God, the human
role in its maintenance must be trivial. We can only
contemplate the universe in awe and wonder, study it
conscientiously, and live in it conservatively. . . .
What I mean to suggest is that women have no need of a
conceptualized God, one wrought in the image of man.
All the love and goodness commanded by such a God can
be generated from the love and goodness found in the
warmest and best human relations. (Noddings, 1984,
p. 97)

In Luke 16, we hear the story of a rich man who ignored
the suffering of Lazarus, a beggar (Noddings, 1984,
p. 97). After death, Lazarus finds peace and glory,
but the rich man finds eternal torment. He cries to
Abraham for mercy:

Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that
he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my
tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
     But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy
lifetime receivedst thy good thing, and likewise Laz-
arus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art
tormented.
     And beside all this, between us and you there is a
great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from
hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that
would come from thence.

But what prevents their passage? The judgmental love
of the harsh father establishes the chasm. . . . Now,
I ask again, what ethical need has woman for God?

Noddings never addresses caring as being more than

feeling, as being unconditional love from one's heart that

reaches out to another. She seems to sterilize the concept of "caring" and packages it neatly to describe the best that can take place in schools. The concept of tolerance, compassion, and cherishing are excluded in her discussion of a caring environment within our educational institutions.

When I reflect on the caring expression that I have come to call cherishing with the concept of care that Noddings describes, I cannot but feel that something is missing in her concept. As a career educator, her discussion is devoid of reflections and examples of "her story" of caring in schools. She fails to share her personal experiences and reflections upon caring within the classroom, of the pains, joys, hopes, and fears involved.

Noddings portrays caring as a concept devoid of emotion, while stating that it is based on relationship. I believe relationships involve emotions, expressed in laughter, joy, tears, and even temper, rather than cold, impersonal interactions. The effective schools model, which Noddings disagrees with, also expects the students and teachers to interact without the existence of an interpersonal relationship. For me, caring is personal and dynamic; an active and vibrant relationship between the teacher and the student. Caring is unconditional, both a feeling and an emotion that is inclusive. It comes from the heart, rather than from a teaching manual; it is an expression of the teacher's "being." Caring

is the bond that recognizes and strengthens self, that of the teacher and the self of the student. Only as we cherish the student, can we practice tolerance toward our fellow human being and reach out to him/her in compassion. It is through cherishing that we are able to treat the student as subject, instead of as object.

As for Noddings's harsh concept of God, I cannot agree with this image. While God did test Abraham's faith, Noddings fails to acknowledge that God did not cause Abraham to do any harm to Isaac. Abraham was not required to behave unethically, as Noddings charges. As for Lazarus, God's mercy, forgiveness, and salvation were rejected by Lazarus until the last hour. Only after the Day of Judgement had passed was Lazarus pleading for relief, and never did he plead for forgiveness. Instead of viewing God's response to Lazarus, through Abraham, as one of harshness, I view it as a guide to seeking forgiveness before the last hour. I interpret God as a merciful God who would have forgiven Lazarus and embraced him as one of His if Lazarus had only come to God and asked. The ultimate responsibility to accept the unconditional gift of salvation lies with each of us. God will only bestow that which we ask of him. Lazarus never asked for mercy, forgiveness, or salvation until he departed this earth and then it was too late. My vision of God is that of the Good Shepherd who is inclusive and welcomes everyone unto Him. As Jesus said,

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). I see God as caring, compassionate, kind, affirming, healing, merciful, and forgiving. For me, God is the One to whom I can turn with every need and concern and the One who gives me strength to carry on in times of adversity. God is the One who lifts me up and has me reach out to others with a caring, connecting hand.

The Views of Alfie Kohn

Alfie Kohn is an independent scholar of human behavior who opposes competition in schools and society and is a proponent of cooperative learning in the classroom. Alfie Kohn also views caring as the model for teaching. Unfortunately, like Noddings, he seems to stress caring as more the means to an end, rather than the end result. His goal for education is to build character in students to produce caring adults who are good people. While Kohn does not define what he considers to be "good," he implies these are adults who respect others and provide assistance to others when needed. His major work is reflected in two books: The Brighter Side of Humanity: Altruism and Empathy and No Contest: The Case Against Competition.

Kohn recognizes the misplaced priorities of the present educational practices throughout the United States that focus on molding students into good test-takers. He challenges the

present emphasis on testing in schooling by describing the
universal problems in American culture and schools that, he
believes, are a result of the concept of character being
ignored. Kohn believes the widespread use of drugs, the ever-
increasing teenage pregnancy rate, the confusion between com-
petitiveness and excellence that results in the desire to
succeed at the expense of others, and the selfishness of a
culture that ignores the needs of others are indicative of a
schooling process that is indifferent to the concept of shap-
ing character (Kohn, 1990). Kohn claims the hostility
present in some students and adults results from "living in a
desperately competitive society, most Americans at some point
find themselves working against the interests of other people"
(Kohn, 1990, p. 12). Those who have absorbed this competi-
tive aspect of American culture do not view caring, helping,
or altruism as an important psychological, economic, or ideo-
logical goal for themselves or their children (Kohn, 1990).
According to Kohn, the average middle-class American child
has learned, through observation of life in our culture,
that others' misery is not his/her concern and that charities
and organizations will see to the needs of marginal members
of our society.

Kohn invokes the writings of Martin Buber to suggest that
the purpose of schools should be to build character in chil-
dren by enabling children to become caring adults who are

also good people (Kohn, 1990). He implies goodness is the
commitment to the unity of mankind where everyone is accepted,
accepts others, and works together for the common welfare of
society. Kohn believes one must examine one's basic assump-
tions about self and other to gain understanding about one's
relationships with others. Kohn credits one's environmental
influences and exposure to nurturing experiences as the foun-
dation of one's beliefs and assumptions regarding human
nature. It is the respect for those who are different as
well as those who are like oneself that instills a "sense of
inclusiveness with which the parent views (and encourages the
child to view) others" in our shared humanity that results in
the adoption of what Kohn refers to as "prosocial" values
(Kohn, 1990, p. 88). This commitment to the unity of all
mankind is a philosophy, a guiding force in one's life, "a
mode of being in the world, a way of living" (Kohn, 1990,
p. 142). Kohn recognizes the tremendous responsibility and
commitment of parents to take "the child seriously, treating
her as a person whose feelings and preferences and questions
matter . . . who give the child a chance to experience her-
self as a caring person as well" (Kohn, 1990, p. 95) as the
child develops his/her own consciousness. Mankind and society
will both be enhanced whenever "shared humanness and individ-
ual uniqueness can be emphasized over group membership"
(Kohn, 1990, p. 149). When we reduce others to a label, view

them as part of a category, when only one feature defines those we encounter, we are perceiving others "as less than a whole and therefore less than a human" (Kohn, 1990, p. 138). Often, Kohn accuses, we fail to intervene when others are suffering. We rationalize our disinterest and unconcern with our fellow man by maintaining "she brought her problems on herself, that she is evil or lazy and generally unworthy of our prosocial efforts" (Kohn, 1990, p. 241). Because of our unwillingness, inability, or ineffectiveness in alleviating another's suffering, we defensively deny the reality of the situation that exists. Through physical, mental, or emotional disconnection to others who are suffering, we perpetuate suffering. Albert Bandura, a psychologist known for his social-learning theory, and his associates have confirmed that "the farther one moves in the direction of stripping an individual or group of humanity, the more license one feels to do harm; the more violent one becomes, the more likely that one will dehumanize" (Kohn, 1990, p. 139).

Kohn emphatically reminds one that schools and the practices of the schooling process are directly connected to one's basic assumptions regarding human nature. Unfortunately, he surmises, Western culture tends to focus on the darker side of human nature and dismisses man's and woman's generosity and goodness as being incidental and extraordinary. Kohn believes the time is opportune for mankind's hopeful nature

to be discussed (Kohn, 1990). Man and woman, as a helpful, caring creature, seems to be ignored in society and literature because one is not benefiting at the expense of someone else. Mankind is not innately selfish or aggressive, Kohn maintains. Kohn cites research studies conducted by the military to explain that young men have to undergo extensive training to become dehumanized and desensitized to obey orders and take the life of the enemy. Research focusing on fighting units in the American army in World War II maintains that many soldiers never fired their weapons in battle and that only 25% of aggressive battle-seasoned troops fired their weapon at least once during a particular combat action. While Americans were ideologically committed to World War II, Marshall's research indicates it was just as natural for men to resist killing as it was to kill (Kohn, 1990). To introduce caring in the classroom, Kohn suggests that educators must begin with a commitment to building each student's self-concept. Research findings from Berkowitz, Rosenhan, and Isen substantiates that contented people are more receptive to other individuals (Kohn, 1990). Those who feel good about themselves are more willing to reach out to others with generosity and kindness. Individuals, whether children or adults, who have a poor self-image usually do not respond generously towards others (Kohn, 1990). By building a student's self-image, educators can then model and stress the

importance of treating others with respect. By respecting others and recognizing similarities between them and ourselves, the probability of helping others, through prosocial behavior, increases. By recognizing others' misery, one is less able to ignore or dismiss it and more apt to respond by helping (Kohn, 1990). Kohn suggests that students with positive self-concepts are usually more helpful to others "because they have the psychological wherewithal to act" (Kohn, 1990, p. 77).

Kohn ascribes the reluctance of educators to address the issue of caring as a means of avoiding the teaching of values in schools, the concern that children who are taught to care about others will become gullible and will be victimized by others, and the time needed for teaching students to care will interfere with academic learning time (Kohn, 1990).

Kohn discusses the problematics of caring by reminding the reader that schools teach values either directly or indirectly. The teacher's presence, behavior, instructional materials and strategies, and classroom management practices are value-laden. By structuring classrooms to encourage "caring, sharing, helping, and empathizing . . . is to examine the values already in place and to consider trading them in for a new set" (Kohn, 1990, p. 499). While admitting that he, along with educators and experts in the field of child development, agrees that moral and social instruction should

be taught at home, Kohn is quick to remind the reader that this instruction is often lacking in some homes in our culture. These same homes sometimes do not provide the child with nurturance, warmth, a model for altruism, or caring experiences. Kohn reminds the reader that some homes make affection toward a child contingent on the child's behavior and the parent's mood. "Children are often treated as objects of and for the parent, and are exposed to decidedly aggressive and selfish models" (Kohn, 1990, p. 95). He also recognizes that other parents are distracted by personal needs, psychological and/or financial, and are not able to provide a child with the opportunities to develop as a caring individual (Kohn, 1990). Thus, the school must fill the void. In response to those critics who remind Kohn that many homes do provide this instruction, Kohn states that encouragement to develop these relationships with others cannot be overemphasized.

As for becoming vulnerable and victimized because one is taught to care, Kohn responds that those children reared to be self-centered "are actually at a greater disadvantage in any sort of society than those who are skilled at working with others and inclined to do so" (Kohn, 1990, p. 499). It is competition and self-interest that are counterproductive to living and interacting within society (Kohn, 1990). In fact, caring children are likely to be assertive. "Characteristics

that promote positive behavior seem optimal also from the standpoint of how effectively a person pursues his or her own interests" (Kohn, 1990, p. 78).

Kohn is adamant in stating that it is possible for students to be able to care and to think simultaneously in an academic setting. Kohn proposes that educators model and teach perspective-taking for students as a strategy for teaching students to care. Perspective-taking allows the student "to imagine how someone else thinks, feels, or sees the world" (Kohn, 1990, p. 499). It also develops cognitive problem solving which enhances academic development. Kohn suggests educators integrate prosocial strategies into the regular curriculum, select texts designed for perspective-taking, and use cooperative learning within the classroom. He states that "hundreds of studies have shown that cooperative learning, which has an important place in a prosocial classroom, enhances achievement regardless of subject matter or age level" (Kohn, 1990, p. 500).

Kohn maintains that it is the role of the schools to attend to both behavioral and social issues, and to teach values and character for the betterment of mankind. He is concerned about the schools' treatment of the issues of discipline, grading, and student interactions. He accuses the schools of ignoring character by reducing the issue of character to the elimination of discipline problems. He states

that schools further damage students' self-concept through the practice of grading and he is amazed that student interaction is largely ignored in the learning process, rather than being incorporated as an essential element (Kohn, 1990).

Instead of investigating strategies to control negative behavior in classrooms, Kohn challenges the educational community to address strategies that will promote positive behavior. Instead of viewing children as selfish individuals who must be coerced and controlled, Kohn's perspective of human beings is one of sensitive, caring, decent individuals who are concerned about and willing to relieve others' pain. Kohn cites numerous studies of infants who respond emotionally to the distress of other infants. He also discusses studies of pre-school and kindergarten children who respond to others through comforting, sharing, and caring (Kohn, 1990). Kohn believes that it is human nature for a child to help others because they need help and he supports this with research from studies by Eisenberg-Berg and Neal. Kohn describes helping others simply because they need help as "altruism." He believes altruism is innate to children and this sensibility should be nurtured and practiced within classrooms since this is the logical setting for children to care about, empathize with, and help others (Kohn, 1990). Kohn urges the schools to move beyond altruism to "a model of relatedness that ripples out concentrically from our loved

ones to those we know to everyone else [which] has the poten-
tial of creating even sturdier bonds" between students, stu-
dents and teachers, students and other adults, and unto all
humanity (Kohn, 1990, p. 266).

Kohn suggests the concept of group ownership within the
classroom as a positive strategy to encourage the entire
group to become committed to values and to "internalize . . .
the value of community" (Kohn, 1990, p. 502). Once the child
determines the kind of person he/she wants to be, then "the
child wonders: 'How do we want our classroom (or school)
to be?'" (p. 502). Adults definitely influence how children
see themselves and others.

> Is life a contest between Us and Them, with most people
> seen as Them? Or . . . encounter another person with an
> emphasis on the humanity they share. . . . These atti-
> tudes about whether we meet others with our hands
> extended or clenched in fists, or how we are inclined
> to perceive those others relative to ourselves, are
> evident to our children. (Kohn, 1990, pp. 88-89)

Kohn states that educators, who are ready to accept the
students' input into establishing norms and goals in the
classroom, must reflect on their basic assumptions in five
areas: "what they believe, what they say, what they do, how
they relate to students, and how they encourage students to
relate to one another" (Kohn, 1990, p. 502). Those educators
who have positive feelings towards their students and believe
students will respond to a caring environment are helping

students to develop good values. Kohn describes good values
as "a plan to raise children to be nicer and more caring
people" (Kohn, 1990, p. 166). Those educators who expect
"doom and gloom" usually find it will appear. When educa-
tors explain the reasons for particular rules and policies,
Kohn states that students respond positively in contrast to
those rules and policies which appear to be autocratic.

> Pointing out how their actions affect others sensitizes
> students to the needs and feelings of others and tacitly
> communicates a message of trust and responsibility . . .
> once children understand how their behavior makes other
> people feel, they can and will choose to do something
> about it. (Kohn, 1990, p. 502).

Kohn reminds educators that actions speak louder than words.
A teacher models behavior in day-to-day contact with both
students and other personnel in the school. A teacher, who
respects and values others, can assist children in valuing and
forming relationships with others. By using and discussing
texts that incorporate perspective-taking, teachers provide
students with both moral and academic instruction. It is
desirable for children to view the world from another's
vantage point, that is perspective, and to share in another's
feelings, to practice empathy, according to Kohn. He asks a
soul-searching question when he asks what is the perspective
"of students who are tested and compared to others each year"
(p. 100). Kohn stresses that teachers need to meet the emo-
tional needs of students so the students can meet the needs

of others. Kohn believes a classroom environment should be warm and caring and the teacher should be the students' ally. In a caring environment, students should be encouraged to work together in a helping, learning atmosphere. Unfortunately, Kohn states, American classrooms are usually structured so students compete against each other or work individually in their learning.

The subject of student interaction is discussed at length by Kohn. He suggests teachers either pair students or divide the classroom into small groups for learning. Research indicates that cooperative learning creates interdependence, provides an opportunity for students to both give and receive help, provides an opportunity for students to view themselves and others in a positive manner, enables students to enjoy the academic subjects and tasks, and enhances academic learning (Kohn, 1990). Cooperative learning builds group cohesiveness, teaches acceptance of those who are different, and broadens the students' sensitivity to others' views (Kohn, 1990).

Kohn describes an innovative educational program, the Child Development Project, currently being implemented in California. The purpose of the project is for teachers and students to join forces to recreate their classrooms as warm, caring communities. Components of the program include nongraded cooperative learning; "a literature-based reading program that stimulates discussion about values and offers

examples of empathy and caring even as it develops verbal skills" (Kohn, 1990, p. 505); classroom management emphasizing intrinsic motivation; warm, caring teacher-student relationships; scheduled class meetings for student input into planning and problem-solving; and pairing students across grade levels; involving students in community service work; assigning some homework activities that require parental involvement, to enhance communication, and involving the entire family in schoolwide activities (Kohn, 1990). The entire project emphasizes caring for other individuals, both peers and adults.

I find Kohn's perspective on human nature and the ways it can influence the schooling of children in American society to be refreshing. At a time when many educators are exploring methods for raising test scores and competing with other nations in achievement, Kohn addresses the issue of which specific values our society and schools are instilling in children. He attacks the prevailing concept of competition and suggests that schools and classrooms focus on caring and the formation of character. His suggestion of using cooperative learning as a strategy for communication and forming relationships is useful. Previous advocates of cooperative learning have considered it as a method of increasing student achievement and do not usually speak of its impact on building relationships among the students. He responds to

potential critics by reminding them that schools and class-
rooms, like society, are value-laden. However, he warns,
some educators do not reflect on the messages they are trans-
mitting to students. Other educators send mixed messages as
they allow their personal moods and individual situations to
affect their interactions with students. Students definitely
know when an educator is interested in them and when the
school and classroom practices are designed to be controlling.

Kohn does not suggest the schools replace the role of
parents and the home with instruction in values and respect
for humanity. However, while he considers schools as a place
to reinforce the values of the home, he is a pragmatist who
realizes every home is not teaching children to interact
positively within society or to value themselves as well as
others. Kohn is charitable towards those parents who are
not meeting what he describes as their children's "prosocial"
values. He recognizes that some parents have difficulty
meeting their children's needs because of their own over-
whelming needs. In our complex Western culture, some parents
cannot meet the financial demands of their families or the
social, emotional, and psychological needs. Kohn recognizes
the interconnection of humanity and relies on that unity as
the basic reason that schools should provide children with
modeling and instruction in caring. Should schools continue
to abandon those in need and only educate those who appear

at school socially, emotionally, psychologically and finan-
cially intact? No. Kohn believes educators must use the
schools to teach the connectedness of mankind so we can reach
out to and embrace others. As long as one of us is hurting
or suffering, none of us can fulfill our potential and our
shared humanity will be diminished. I agree that schools
must assume this role because students and their welfare
should be the top priority in each and every school.

Kohn's mandate to the schools definitely challenges the
status quo. It requires everyone involved in education to
reflect upon his/her individual belief system regarding man-
kind, the importance of nurturing in school, and the effects
of environment upon children. Many educators will suffer
discomfort as they read and reflect on Kohn's challenge to
both school and society. While I embrace his view that
schools are objectifying and diminishing students, it will
cause much consternation in educational circles. As he
states, it is much easier to accept the status quo than to
face the realities, problems, challenges, and responsibil-
ities that a new philosophy of caring will bring to schools
and educators as they interact with children.

Kohn's discussions on the values within the present
schools and classrooms are thought provoking. Everyone in
the educational hierarchy, from those making the laws and
policies that structure our educational practices to the bus
drivers and custodians who interact daily with our students,

assigns values to the students and influences how the stu-
dents perceive themselves. Everything that happens within
the school, from requiring students to take standardized
tests to be compared to other students in the school, state,
and nation to requiring students to work alone on new tasks
without the reinforcement of his/her friends describes how
our society, and the educators within it, perceive children.
I agree that we are sending a negative message to students
and that we must confront the mistakes we are making. Kohn
is correct when he calls for the abandonment of labeling,
categorizing, and grading children. The school and class-
room environment must be restructured to nurture, not objec-
tify students. Schools must teach about mankind's shared
humanity and embrace the formation of an environment which
promotes the interconnection of man.

Kohn has produced a stimulating book that is steeped in
research studies to reinforce his perspective on humanity and
society. The inferences he makes are supported by his
research. Kohn's recommendations to educators and schools
are both optimistic and realistic. They offer hope and
encouragement to those of us who believe education has a
higher calling than the currently prevailing philosophy of
effective schools. His philosophical foundation based on
Buber's writings speaks convincingly toward the prospect of
focusing on individual and group excellence in education, in
contrast to individual competition in a win-lose environment.

As an educator, who cares about children and who believes the schools are missing an opportunity to transform society into a more caring, humane environment, I was encouraged by Kohn's views. I support his suggestion to reason with students, rather than treat them autocratically. His paradigm of a classroom which values community is valuable. I especially identified with his description of how a child encounters others: either with hands extended or fists clenched! I think Kohn should be aware, however, of the need to change schools, as well as classrooms, and to change the perspective of those who mandate the policies and practices being implemented within the classroom. We must abandon the industrial model of schooling and adopt caring for students as our model.

Kohn's discussion of the Child Development Project in California is enlightening. While he cited much data from the affluent, white suburb, he needed to give more attention to the later project, involving a more ethnically diverse population, which is now 5 years old. Caring is needed across all socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural boundaries.

Kohn's Viewpoint Compared to Noddings's

Kohn's and Noddings's basic difference regarding caring is seen in the areas of scope and implementation. While both Kohn and Noddings agree that public education must be restructured to reflect a model of schooling based on caring,

Kohn believes the schools must also serve as a change agent to transform our culture into a caring society. While Noddings refers to caring as a feminine viewpoint of education, Kohn describes it as a philosophy that develops students' character to become caring adults. Kohn and Noddings agree that the current focus in schooling is misguided. While Kohn attacks the goal of turning students into good test-takers, Noddings is appalled at the prevalence of direct instruction in our educational agencies. Both writers agree that schools and society are committing a great injustice to children by objectifying them. We must, Noddings and Kohn maintain, encounter others as subjects, not objects, and be present to them in relationships, not just encounter the student as part of the job. Both writers believe the educational practices within the schools should be based on affective experiences for the students, although they have different strategies for implementation. Noddings suggests creating small schools, limiting a student's school experiences to no more than two schools, and pairing teachers with students for prolonged periods of time. Kohn focuses on restructuring life within the classroom and urges teachers to focus on the building of students' self-esteem. He maintains that cooperative learning experiences and perspective taking should be continuously utilized in K-12 classrooms to open dialogue between students for communication and interaction, to connect students to each other both affectively and cognitively, and to learn to

care about others by being in relationship. Noddings sees
the development of the students' self-esteem as a result of
receptivity, not as a separate educational goal. Both writ-
ers expect the individual teacher to be present to students,
to form a relationship, based on communication, with the
students, and to implement change within the classroom.
While Noddings and Kohn believe values are already taught in
schools, and should be, they want the teacher to model and
develop the student's morality while teaching morality.
While accepting the plurality of our culture, both writers
believe the schools must focus on the development of each
student as a caring entity, regardless of ethnicity, socio-
economic class, or religious orientation. While they do not
view the teacher's role as one of permissiveness, both quote
Buber in citing the need for the teacher to influence and
nurture the student's development of the ethical self.

While Noddings describes the present model of education
as paternalistic and sees professional administrators as
impediments to the implementation of a caring philosophy of
schooling, Kohn fails to address this issue. He blames the
schools' problems on a competitive culture that embraces a
win-lose mentality. Yet, Kohn places the total responsibility
for change in schools on the classroom teacher and ignores
the message that state and local policies and practices send
to teachers and students. Perhaps Kohn's lack of experience
in education accounts for his naivete regarding an awareness

of pressures applied to classroom teachers to conform to policies that advocate control of students, instead of a nurturing environment that promotes caring. While his motives and ideals are admirable, his awareness of external forces influencing classroom environment should be broadened.

Both Noddings and Kohn trace the problems of the schools to a breakdown in the relationships between members of society, between students and teachers, and between students. Since both believe students do not experience the interconnectedness of mankind, nor do their adult contemporaries, they suggest educators must fill the void and provide a setting for individuals to meet the "other" as moral, ethical, caring entities. Both Kohn and Noddings rely on existentialist literature to discuss the concept of caring. Noddings bases her theories on the writings of Sartre, Heidegger, and Buber; Kohn quotes Buber extensively. Noddings and Kohn value reciprocity as an integral part of caring, in which each individual depends on another as either care-giver or care-receiver, when in relationship with the other.

Kohn accuses the schools and society of using the labeling of children as a way of avoiding responsibility for students' failure. By depersonalizing the child, through labeling, we can excuse our lack of providing nurturing experiences in society, the home, and the school. Thus, we can dismiss students' failing experiences as a result of heredity, of nature, and attempt to escape responsibility. Noddings and

Kohn urge schools to involve the students in service activ-
ities within and outside the school as a way of developing
relationships with others by opportunities for caring to
evolve.

Noddings and Kohn both enlighten the reader to problems
within the present practices of schooling. While both see
caring as a solution to the problems of schooling, neither
accepts caring for its own importance. While Kohn describes
the importance of caring in education as a vehicle for trans-
forming our society and culture, I view caring in education
as important because it provides for the unconditional accep-
tance of others. While caring has the potential to transform
society, it should be implemented as a philosophy to value
the individual and never diminish the individual for the sake
of the culture at large.

Other Perspectives

As I reflect on the writings of Nel Noddings and Alfie
Kohn and their perspectives on cherishing, or caring, in the
schools, I realize I must credit other writers who spoke to
cherishing, as caring, and whose contributions to this con-
cept I found to be most insightful. One who speaks of caring
from a global orientation is Milton Mayeroff. Mayeroff
realizes the interconnectedness of humanity and our impact
upon each other regardless of our world situation. Humanity,
according to Mayeroff, seeks renewal and completeness in

his/her struggle for wholeness in life. This wholeness is manifested as "the organization of human communities and the establishment of freedom and peace . . . spiritual and moral achievements as well, demanding a cherishing of the wholeness of human personality" (Mayeroff, 1971, p. xix). Mayeroff categorizes the components of caring as knowing, patience, honesty, trust, humility, hope, and courage. He perceives caring as helping others and self to grow and as giving meaning to one's life. Through caring, one is able to develop his/her autonomy, faith, and gratitude. "In order to live 'my own life' I must make it my own through caring and taking responsibility for it. . . . I am not autonomous to begin with; autonomy is an achievement like maturity" (Mayeroff, 1971, p. 56).

> Faith as a way of being, as a basic trust in life, goes with confidence in going into the unknown in the course of realizing ourselves and caring for others. It is the antithesis of closing ourselves off through fear of the unknown; instead of avoiding life, we are more accessible to it. (Mayeroff, 1971, p. 61)

As for gratitude, "Caring becomes my way of thanking for what I have received; I thank by caring all the more for my appropriate others and the conditions of their existence" (Mayeroff, 1971, p. 62).

Carl Rogers, the renowned philosopher and psychotherapist, gives insight into the importance of helping relationships and student-centered teaching. He defines a helping

relationship as one "in which at least one of the two parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improved coping with life of the other" (Rogers, 1958, p. 199). As he interacts with others, enables others to grow, as well as himself, Rogers asks,

> Can I meet this other individual as a person who is in the process of becoming, or will I be bound by his past and by my past? If in my encounter with him, I am dealing with him as an immature child, an ignorant student, a neurotic personality, or a psychopath, each of these concepts of mine limits what he can be in the relationship. . . . If I accept him as a process of becoming, then I am doing what I can to confirm or make real his potentialities. (Rogers, 1958, p. 201)

Rogers also speaks of caring as "gentle, subtle, nonmoralistic, nonjudgmental" (Rogers, 1980, p. 351). Rogers's philosophy of education centers on student-centered, whole-person learning in which experiential and cognitive learning are integrated (Rogers, 1980). Rogers maintains a classroom and school climate providing "acceptance, understanding, and respect" (Rogers, 1951, p. 384) is necessary for student-centered learning to occur. While most schools and classrooms operate on the premise that one cannot trust the student, Rogers disagrees vigorously. Rogers calls for the teacher to practice a model of education

> which respects the integrity of the student . . . accepts himself as being a member of a learning group, rather than an authority . . . makes learning resources available . . . in this atmosphere which he has helped to create, a type of learning takes place which is

> personally meaningful and which feeds the total self-
> development of the individual as well as improves his
> acquaintance with a given field of knowledge. (Rogers,
> 1951, p. 427)

Parker Palmer speaks of cherishing as he discusses education from a spiritual perspective. While his writings do not speak to me as forcefully as the writings of Buber and Freire, Palmer provides insight by suggesting we view life and learning from what he describes as "wholesight," "a vision of the world in which mind and heart unite" (Palmer, 1983, p. xi). Palmer calls for a model of education based on Christian spirituality in which

> we come to know the world . . . as an organic body
> of personal relations and responses, a living and
> evolving community of creativity and compassion. . . .
> Education of this sort . . . means being drawn into
> personal responsiveness and accountability to each other
> and the world of which we are a part. (Palmer, 1983,
> p. 14)

Palmer recognizes the importance of community and being in community, one with another. All living things belong to God's community, according to Palmer, and "We are but one link in that chain and our knowing must take account of all other links" (Palmer, 1983, p. 57). Like many of the other philosophers I have included in this chapter, Palmer recognizes that education involves the whole person, relatedness with others and the world, and includes affective, as well as cognitive, experiences (Palmer, 1983).

Clark Moustakas also values the student-teacher relationship within the classroom. It is the teacher's acceptance of the student and his/her personal sense of self which enables learning to take place. This learning is manifested through the teacher's treatment of students: "respect for his individuality, recognition of his particular interests, needs, and directions, encouragement of honest expression of feelings and growth in self-identity" (Moustakas, 1967, p. 7). Moustakas expresses concern for alienation which results from subjecting students to the practices of grading and measuring the student by standardized tests. Moustakas calls for encounters, or true meetings, between the teacher and the students to enable learning to occur. When teachers provide accepting classroom environments, they are providing opportunities for students to discover meaning within learning (Moustakas, 1967).

Critique

Although I value the works of Noddings and Kohn because they speak so well to our time and situation, I find it necessary to probe into their work more deeply. What seems missing from their analysis is a concern for both the political and the spiritual. In order to gain further insight, I have chosen Martin Buber to help in a spiritual analysis and Paulo Freire to help in a political analysis.

In this section, I am going to analyze the concept of
caring as proposed by Noddings and Kohn from the perspectives
of Martin Buber and Paulo Freire, philosophers who provide
profound perspectives on caring. I selected these two writ-
ers because of their devotion to and respect for humanity,
their acceptance of humanity's incompleteness and growth
toward wholeness, and their spirituality. I was also impressed
with these two writers because each of them embodied cherish-
ing, or caring, as both made a public stand against injustice
and oppression in situations where their own lives were
endangered. Disregarding personal danger, Buber spoke out
against oppression in Nazi Germany in the 1930s as did Freire
in Brazil in the 1960s. Martin Buber provides a philosoph-
ical framework of caring based on the importance of relation-
ships while Paulo Freire's philosophy emphasizes both social
and political contexts. Of major significance is Buber's
I and Thou and Between Man and Man. Freire's major works
are Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Learning to Question.

Martin Buber

Both Nel Noddings and Alfie Kohn quote Martin Buber
extensively in their writings on caring and state their view-
points are based on his philosophy of dialogue. Martin
Buber, a Jewish theologian and humanistic philosopher, bases
his beliefs upon the importance of relationships. Buber
believes that "man is able to achieve his true humanity--his

real place in the world in relation to God--only in terms of a genuine relationship with others living their everyday lives" (Panko, 1976, p. 24). Buber's teaching can be centered on his philosophy of dialogue which maintains that "all real living is meeting" (Friedman, 1983, p. 21). It is man's whole being, his entire situation that concerns Buber (Panko, 1976). Instead of the traditional "either-or" dualism that dictates universal principles, Buber sees his philosophy of dialogue as dialectic, as uniting the "either-or" alternatives to consider the paradox and contradiction of the immediate problem (Friedman, 1960, p. 3). Buber uses his philosophy of dialogue to describe the encounter that occurs when humanity comes "face to face" in the everyday situations of real life (Panko, 1976, p. 46).

Buber categorizes encounters between humanity or between humanity and anything else as either "I and Thou" or "I and It" (Panko, 1976, p. 48). "I and Thou" refers to the meeting between humanity or between humanity and anything else as being present to each other, as being whole and involved in an intense meeting (Panko, 1976). The "I" in "I and Thou" can only exist when humanity has met the "Thou," the "other" (Panko, 1976, p. 48). When the "I" and the "Thou" both experience the meeting, then a genuine encounter results in mutuality with subject embracing subject. While one cannot plan a genuine "I and Thou" encounter, the "I" must initiate

the meeting by transcending himself/herself to reach out to

the "Thou" which connects and responds to meeting of the "I"

(Panko, 1976, p. 49). Instead of paying homage to the con-

cept of universal principles guiding one's life, Buber states

that within every person there is a narrow ridge where the

only certainty is that the "I and Thou" and "We" can meet in

community. This narrow ridge is the "region within yourself

where you cannot be touched. Because there you have found

yourself: and so you are not vulnerable" (Panko, 1976, p. 56).

> This is where man can meet man in community. And only
> men who are capable of truly saying "Thou" to one
> another can truly say "We" with one another. If each
> guards the narrow ridge within himself and keep it
> intact, this meeting can take place. (Panko, 1976,
> p. 57)

There is never a guarantee an "I and Thou" encounter will

take place, only a chance that a meeting will result in an

"I and Thou" encounter (Panko, 1976). When a meeting between

humanity or between humanity and nature results in an "I and

Thou" encounter, then man has encountered God (Friedman,

1960). Thus, Buber's philosophy defines what man can and

should become--"a real person involved in real dialogue with

his fellowmen and with God" (Panko, 1976, p. 119). Buber

cautions the reader against confusing emotion and feeling

with the act of relations. "Pure relation is love between

the I and the thou . . . Feelings dwell in man; but man

dwells in his love" (Friedman, 1960, p. 59). Thus, Buber

states that while love is not an emotion, it is the "respon-
sibility of an I for a Thou" (Friedman, 1960, p. 59). When
there is detachment in the meeting, the meeting is shrouded
in objectivity and the two entities are not "present" to each
other, then the relationship has never become more than an
"I and It" situation of object meeting object (Panko, 1976,
p. 48). An "I and It" meeting lacks involvement of the whole
being (Friedman, 1960, p. 57). Furthermore, Buber cautions
humanity against the cardinal sin of treating another with
indifference. It is better to hate humanity, according to
Buber, than to treat humanity "as objects to be known or
made use of" (Friedman, 1960, p. 60).

Buber's concept of education is founded upon his state-
ment that "all real living is meeting" (Friedman, 1983,
p. 21). In education, Buber believes the meeting is cumula-
tive of mutual contact and trust, but that it lacks "the full
mutuality of reciprocal 'inclusion,' or 'experiencing the
other side of the relationship'" (Friedman, 1983, p. 21).
Buber understands education as being dialogue in which the
teacher's role is "to meet, draw out, and form the pupil"
(Friedman, 1983, p. 23). The teacher must put aside his/her
personal interests and likes while he/she "accepts and
receives them all" (Friedman, 1983, p. 24). Buber reminds
the teacher that trust between the teacher and the child must
be established before the possibility of mutuality between

teacher and student can exist. To be "present" to the child, the teacher must be in communion with him/her as part of the teacher's world and focus on the student as partial fulfillment of the teacher's responsibility of the world. Buber describes this experience of "inclusion," which is reoccurring, as essential to dialogue. Inclusion excludes arbitrary and/or willful behavior by the teacher. Inclusion is not an equal relationship. The teacher discovers the "otherness" of the student, but the student does not experience the "otherness" of the teacher (Friedman, 1983, p. 24). In Buber's understanding of education as dialogue, the student learns and grows as a result of his/her encounter with the teacher as "Thou." It is through this involvement with the student that the teacher becomes educated (Friedman, 1965). Buber views the purpose of education as preparing students to respond to the challenges and problems of the particular situation in which they live. He values knowledge for its ability to transform students into whole persons who are able to influence others. He rejects the idea of univeral principles believing humanity must be selective and choose those educational materials which will enable one to respond to and meet the challenges of his/her immediate life situation (Friedman, 1983). Buber also believes there is not a preformed world for children, but a world that each child must find for himself/herself "through seeing, hearing, touching, and shaping it" (Friedman, 1960, p. 60). It is "the

reciprocal relationship of whole and active beings" which

emerges from an "I and Thou" relationship between the child

and his/her world (Friedman, 1960, p. 60). Buber believes

that a child's personality is formed the same way the child

forms his/her world. Therefore, schools are to provide the

opportunities for encounters between the "I and Thou" for a

child to form his/her personality and his/her world. The

student forms his/her values while being influenced by those

of the teacher through encountering the teacher's attitudes

and actions (Friedman, 1965). The purpose of education,

according to Buber, is to educate character in order for the

child to move towards wholeness (Friedman, 1965). It is

through this opportunity to grow toward personal wholeness

that he/she is able to fulfill his/her moral responsibilities

within the larger community of humanity (Panko, 1976). It is

this wholeness that enables one to move toward social respon-

sibility, which he defines as responding, and communion with

others (Friedman, 1960). Noddings and Kohn are in agreement

with Buber that schools must abandon the paternalistic model

and that education must be rooted in relationship. While

Noddings defines caring as a feeling, as opposed to an emo-

tion, Buber sees it as neither. Buber believes that rela-

tionships are based on an intense meeting of two entities.

Buber transcends the perspectives of Noddings and Kohn in

that he believes one must become immersed in relationship in

order to be educated and/or made whole. Buber and Kohn
believe all encounters can be categorized as either "I and
Thou" or "I and It" relationships. They also believe in the
inclusiveness of shared humanity. Noddings believes it is
through a heightened awareness and caring for others that one
learns to care for oneself. Kohn moves beyond Noddings to
discuss the need to use perspective-taking strategies to
connect oneself to others and to discuss instances of man's
inhumanity to man. While Noddings concedes that she opposes
reducing people to the abstract, Buber moves beyond this per-
spective to decry indifference toward the "other" as worse
than hatred. Noddings is closer in agreement with Buber's
assertion that universal principles cannot guide one's life
than is Kohn.

Buber believes in situational morality wherein "one
responds as a whole person, one can have confidence in one's
response as one cannot have confidence in any objective know-
ledge or universal prescriptions of morality" (Friedman,
1960, p. 94). Man must always be committed to his/her per-
sonal responsibility, to humanity, and to the individual
(Friedman, 1960). Buber "was not a man of formulas, but one
who tried to meet each person, each situation, and each sub-
ject in its own way" (Kaufmann, 1970, p. 16). It is by meet-
ing the "other," through encounter with the "other" that
morality emerges. Buber's philosophy describes an individual

meeting the "other" as part of a larger community. "Man's dedication must be to God and his commitment must be reflected in his everyday life" (Panko, 1976, p. 97).

Noddings supports situational decision-making while rejecting universal principles

> as ambiguous and unstable. Wherever there is a prin-
> ciple, there is implied its exception, and too often,
> principles function to separate us from each other. We
> may become dangerously self-righteous when we perceive
> ourselves as holding a precious principle not held by
> the other. The other may then be devalued and treated
> "differently." Our ethic of caring will not permit this
> to happen. . . . Our efforts must, then, be directed to
> the maintenance of conditions that will permit caring to
> flourish. Along with the rejection of principles and
> rules as the major guide to ethical behavior, I shall
> also reject the notion of universalizability. Many of
> those writing and thinking about ethics insist that any
> ethical judgment . . . must be the case that, if under
> conditions X you are required to do A, then under suffi-
> ciently similar conditions, I too am required to do A.
> I shall reject this emphatically. First, my attention
> is not on judgment and not on the particular acts we
> perform but on how we meet the other morally. Second,
> in recognition of the feminine approach to meeting the
> other morally--our insistence on caring for the other--
> I shall want to preserve the uniqueness of human encoun-
> ters. Since so much depends on the subjective experience
> of those involved in ethical encounters, conditions are
> rarely "sufficiently similar" for me to declare that you
> must do what I must do. There is . . . a fundamental
> universality in our ethic . . . the caring attitude
> . . . is universally accessible. (Noddings, 1984,
> p. 5)

Noddings recognizes that things are not usually equal for two individuals who are struggling to make a moral deci-sion since each has different life histories, agendas, and ideals. This is an acceptable goal to Noddings who believes

the only universal component is the "Maintenance of the caring relation" (Noddings, 1984, p. 85).

Kohn agrees with Noddings that caring is essential for humanity. "Our obligation, as Rescher reminds us, is not merely to treat individuals in a certain fashion but to work together to make structural changes that will facilitate caring" (Kohn, 1990, pp. 266-267). Kohn urges humanity to go beyond the concept of universal principles to "emphasize both justice and caring, principles and empathy" (Kohn, 1990, p. 266). He cautions that one must not abandon the concept of principles or of caring. "As one legal scholar puts it, 'Abandonment of the rules produces monsters; so does neglect of persons'" (Kohn, 1990, p. 266). Kohn urges humanity to remember that morality is a collective effort. "As Carol Gilligan and Grant Wiggins have emphasized, 'Strong feelings and clear principles are dependent on "authentic" relation-ships' rather than being self-generated" (Kohn, 1990, p. 266).

Buber, Noddings, and Kohn agree that education is vital to nurture the ethical ideal to make moral decisions. As Buber states, education enables one to react to the partic-ular historical situation in which he/she is enmeshed. Nod-dings describes the teacher's role as one who is receptive to the child's talents, abilities, interests, and needs. Nod-dings views the teacher as a separate being from the self, whereas Buber sees the wholeness of the teacher enhanced

through encounters with the student and as a result of the
teacher assisting the student as he/she moves toward whole-
ness. Buber and Kohn surpass Noddings's description of the
teacher's role by describing the teacher as one who molds the
child's character through the modeling and teaching of values.
These values may be taught through mannerisms, inflection, or
even explicitly. They are taught, however, in the daily inter-
actions of classroom life.

Buber, Noddings, and Kohn value active participation by
students, while revealing that the teacher must be "present"
to the student. Yet, Noddings portrays the teacher as the
active participant while the student accepts a more passive
role within the relationship. Kohn and Noddings refer to the
need for affective experiences for students. Yet, Buber
speaks to a higher level of participation when he recommends
active learning experiences that involve students through
use of the senses in "seeing, hearing, touching and shaping"
(Friedman, 1960, p. 60).

A basic difference in the views of Buber, Noddings, and
Kohn is Buber's recommendations are grounded in philosophical
and spiritual foundations while Noddings's and Kohn's sugges-
tions enumerate specific strategies for student interactions
within the school and community. Buber's writings also
include a spiritual awareness that Kohn recognizes and Nod-
dings rejects.

Buber looked to spirituality as a source of joy and
wonder in the day-to-day occurrences in life. He saw the
meeting and worship of God as a direct result of showing acts
of love to humanity (Panko, 1976). Buber's insight to spir-
ituality is summarized in his belief that "man is able to
achieve his true humanity--his real place in the world in
relation to God--only in terms of a genuine relationship with
others living their everyday lives" (Panko, 1976, p. 24). He
concurred with his friend Dag Hammarskjold who said, "In our
age, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the
world of action" (Panko, 1976, p. 39). Buber was a devout
believer in the existence of an absolute.

> One must take a stand on the "narrow ridge" believing
> in the existence of an absolute while at the same time
> denying that man can in any way fully express the nature
> of this absolute. We are able to discover the meaning
> of life and human existence when we encounter the
> "I-Thou" but there is no way that the truth discovered
> in the encounter can be presented objectively. (Panko,
> 1976, p. 57)

Buber's concept of redemption meant "that this world will
become the Kingdom; that this world will be made perfect"
(Panko, 1976, p. 92). Buber believed one's spirituality was
interconnected with humanity. Buber believed

> man cannot live two separate lives, a secular one and
> a religious one. Man's dedication must be to God and
> his commitment must be reflected in his everyday life.
> It is when man establishes the truly human community
> that he is showing his commitment to the greatest
> degree. (Panko, 1976, p. 97)

> To meet the eternal Thou a man must become a whole being,
> which means that he is fully able to accept the present.
> . . . He is not expected to give up the I, as many mys-
> tical writings suppose, but rather the I must have
> already met finite Thou in everyday relationships.
> Then it is able to meet the eternal Thou. (Panko,
> 1976, p. 60)

When one does not know the absolute or is separate from Him,

Buber says that person is alienated and is living in a world

of "It." It is through becoming a community of humanity that

one meets the absolute (Panko, 1976). While Kohn recognizes

a supernatural and relates caring to a religious perspective,

his writings are not generated from a spiritual foundation.

He refers to religion, rather than spirituality, from a

clinical perspective.

> In a society that teaches us to associate morality with
> religion, one naturally assumes that a strong relation
> exists between piety and pity, between God and good.
> After all, the sacred texts of Judaism and Christianity,
> like those of most supernatural belief systems, contain
> reminders to be compassionate and charitable. (Kohn,
> 1990, p. 79)

However, Kohn states that his investigation of research con-

cludes, "The presence or absence of religious belief, mean-

while, tells us absolutely nothing about the likelihood of

someone's engaging in prosocial activity" (Kohn, 1990, p. 80).

While Noddings speaks of "spiritual and ethical growth of

the community's children" (Noddings, 1984, p. 184), she lacks

spirituality in her writings and refers to religion as an

enemy of a caring philosophy.

> Even religious organizations often tend to diminish
> the ethical ideal. . . . Cruelty and judgment are not
> strangers to religion. Further, the frequent insistence
> on obedience to rules and adherence to ritual con-
> tributes to the erosion of genuine caring. . . . If the
> church wills it, I behave benevolently toward him and
> win stars in my crown; if the church wills it, I destroy
> him and, again, find my reward in paradise. Only if
> the church allows and promotes unlimited freedom of
> caring can it be an instrument of ethicality. (Nod-
> dings, 1984, p. 117)

Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire believes students should be treated as

subjects, not objects, that the teacher must establish an

interpersonal relationship with the students and this rela-

tionship should be based on partnership, and that communica-

tion is what gives meaning to life (Freire, 1983). Yet,

Freire transcends Noddings's and Kohn's view of education

and the teacher-student relationship through his recognition

of the importance of the teacher's personal growth and devel-

opment.

> The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches,
> but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the
> students, who in turn while being taught also teach.
> They become jointly responsible for a process in which
> all grow. (Freire, 1983, p. 288)

It is through the process of education that Freire believes

mankind can continue his/her quest for self. "Problem-posing

education affirms men as beings in the process of becoming--

as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise

unfinished reality" (Freire, 1983, p. 290).

Freire expresses concern for the educational practices which lead to the suppression of students, although by different means, in Western nations as well as in Third World countries. Freire views education as revolutionary in that education frees one to become aware of self and to examine critically the society in which one lives. He describes the suppressed of any culture as belonging to the "culture of silence" that is characterized by lethargy and/or apathy (Freire, 1992, p. 10). Freire realizes these politically, economically, and socially deprived populaces are kept silenced through the denial of educational opportunities which would heighten their awareness of both self and the world in which they exist. The dominant consciousness, controlled by the "haves," perpetuate the injustices that exist for the "have-nots" to maintain the political, economic, and social monopoly enjoyed by the "haves." The recognition of the oppressiveness of this dominant consciousness has led Freire to devote his life's work to education. He, in turn, has suffered by imprisonment over several months in 1964 in his native land of Brazil and was forced into exile. His basic assumption is that humanity's and the individual's vocation is to be the subject which "acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (Freire, 1992, pp. 12-13).

> This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed
> by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustice,
> exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the
> oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the
> oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle
> to recover their lost humanity. (Freire, 1992, p. 28)

Freire cautions the oppressed to refrain from becoming
oppressors of those who have oppressed them as they regain
their humanity. Instead, Freire urges those who have been
oppressed to restore humanity to both the oppressors and
themselves as they continue to create the world (Freire,
1992). In the struggle for recovering lost humanity, the
oppressed, Freire states, have the opportunity to demon-
strate generosity and love to their oppressors. Unfortunately,
oppressed people usually fall into the trap of becoming
oppressors like their role models, their oppressors (Freire,
1992). No one can make the struggle for humanity for the
oppressed; the oppressed must be actively involved in the
struggle for humanity to succeed (Freire, 1992).

Kohn is in agreement with Freire that education enables
one to recognize the humanity that must encompass our uni-
verse and enables one to transform his/her world. Yet,
while Freire has a social agenda, Kohn does not. From the
viewpoint of one grounded in the concept of cherishing, I
find Freire's philosophy of education empowering. To some-
one who has long recognized the injustices in our society
based on one's social or economic status, sex, race, and/or

religious affiliation, Freire's views are inspiring. He affirms and restores one's faith in the possibility of a just world where oppressors are transformed, as are the oppressed, and everyone, because of his/her differences, is valued individually as an important member of humanity.

Noddings and Kohn agree with Freire's rejection of the dominant paternalistic model of education currently practiced and his commitment to replace it with a model grounded in teacher-student relationship. Freire views the teacher-student relationship to be more reciprocal than either Kohn or Noddings. However, Noddings and Kohn are in consensus with Freire's assessment that current schooling practices are objectifying and dehumanizing students. Freire, Kohn, and Noddings believe teachers must encounter students as subjects and constantly be present to the students through relationships. Freire differs somewhat from Noddings and Kohn in that he believes the students should use firsthand experiences as strategies for learning academic subjects. In fact, his proposals are similar to the practices employed by Sylvia Ashton-Warner in her teaching of Maori children in New Zealand. Ashton-Warner and Freire, with very different orientations, both used the students' personal lives as an integral foundation of the curriculum, instead of using a standardized curriculum that stressed cognitive experiences while ignoring affective experiences. Ashton-Warner and

Freire differ in that Freire is involved with the struggle
for social justice and Ashton-Warner is not.

Freire views the world as incomplete, as an ongoing
entity that constantly evolves. Freire's writings demon-
strate love, respect, and optimism for all humanity regard-
less of one's lack of education or immersion in the "culture
of silence." Because of this love, respect, and optimism,
he believes everyone can examine and deal critically with
his world through the use of dialogical encounters with
others (Freire, 1992). Freire believes the traditional,
"paternalistic teacher-student relationship" must be aban-
doned as educational experiences become personal and inter-
active and the participants begin to "name the world" (Freire,
1992, p. 13). Previously-accepted myths, which were created
as tools of the oppressors, must be dissolved as a "humanist
and libertarian pedagogy" evolves which allows humanity to
become fully human (Freire, 1992, pp. 40, 42). The partici-
pants gain a sense of dignity and experience hope as they
set about transforming the world as participants, rather
than accepting the world others have created for them and
remaining observers (Freire, 1992). The teacher and student
view themselves and each other as subjects. As subjects,
the teacher and student join together to create reality
through a committed involvement by each (Freire, 1992).
Freire believes the quest for education is the political

action the oppressed must take. He cautions against exploi-

tation of the oppressed by those in sympathy with the

oppressed.

> Those who work for liberation must not take advantage
> of the emotional dependence of the oppressed--dependence
> that is the fruit of the concrete situation of domina-
> tion which surrounds them and which engendered their
> unauthentic view of the world. Using their dependence
> to create still greater dependence is an oppressor
> tactic. (Freire, 1992, p. 53)

This advice is equally applicable to educators who are com-

mitted to cherishing their students. Educators must provide

an atmosphere for cherishing that does not create an emo-

tional dependence for students, especially those who are

suffering, alienated, or distanced from their educational

experiences and are most vulnerable. Educators must strive

for unconditional acceptance that promotes growth without

permissiveness, that provides opportunities to become whole,

without emotional exploitation.

To institute dialogue within schools, Freire believes

students must be taught and encouraged to ask questions. He

believes that a society or institution which represses ques-

tioning indicates repression on a larger scale. It portrays

"the repression of the whole person, of people's expressive-

ness in their relations in the world and with the world"

(Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 36). Freire believes all know-

ledge is conceived from the process of questioning. Unfor-

tunately, he states, contemporary teaching is practiced as

giving answers, rather than asking questions. Freire refers

to this practice as the

> castration of curiosity. What we see happening is
> a movement in one direction, from here to there, and
> that's it. There is no come-back, and there is not
> even any searching. The educator, generally, produces
> answers without having been asked anything. (Freire &
> Faundez, 1989, p. 35)

This practice results, Freire maintains, from the authori-

tarianism that pervades our educational experiences. To

question, in such an environment, appears to be attacking

the authorities. At the least, Freire states, we regard

questions as inconvenient and bothersome (Freire & Faundez,

1989). Freire responds to this dilemma by suggesting "the

authoritarian educator is more afraid of the answer than of

the question. He is afraid of the question because of the

answer it should give rise to" (Freire & Faundez, 1989,

p. 36). The outstanding challenge for an educator who

believes in the practice of questioning is how "to create

with the students the habit, the virtue, of asking questions,

of being surprised" (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 37). Freire

challenges the educator to "link question and answer to

actions which can be performed or repeated in future" (Freire

& Faundez, 1989, p. 38). This enables the student to "dis-

cover the living, powerful, dynamic relation between word

and action, between word, action and reflection. . . . Acting,

speaking and discovering would all belong together" (Freire

& Faundez, 1989, p. 38).

Freire, like Buber, transcends Noddings and Kohn with
his belief that dialogue enables humanity to become whole
and to reach out to others to enable them to become whole.
Freire also believes dialogue and the journey towards whole-
ness enables one to meet his/her social responsibility and
be in communion one with another. Freire's educational
philosophy is grounded in social, political, and spiritual
foundations. While he is best known for his social and
political stance as he endorses a pedagogy of liberation,
his spiritual orientation is also apparent. While he delib-
erately ignores the role of religion in society, his spir-
ituality emerges in his constant urgings for a society based
on humanity's love for one another. He probably agrees most
closely with Kohn's and Noddings's indictments of the con-
servative stances and actions by religious organizations in
suppressive environments. However, Freire's spirituality
is apparent in his valuing of love for and commitment to
humanity in his writings in contrast to Noddings's obvious
omission of her spirituality. While Freire does not specif-
ically speak of an Absolute, I find his spirituality as evi-
dent as that of Buber's. He calls attention to religion
when he gives examples of the increase in the study of the
Gospels, led by priests and nuns, in Brazil when suppression
is most widespread. He discusses this seeking of meaning,
through questioning of the Gospels, as an outlet for the
oppressed's need for knowledge (Freire & Faundez, 1989).

Too often, according to Freire, a "banking" concept of edu-
cation has been the dominant model. Through the banking
model, students become automatons which negates their "voca-
tion to be more fully human" (Freire, 1992, p. 61).

> Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques
> and makes deposits which the students patiently receive,
> memorize, and repeat . . . . It is men themselves who
> are filed away through the lack of creativity, trans-
> formation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided
> system. . . . Knowledge emerges only through invention
> and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, con-
> tinuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with
> the world, and with each other. (Freire, 1992, p. 58)

Thus, Freire recommends a "problem-solving" model of educa-
tion, rooted in consciousness, that embraces communication
between humanity and the world (Freire, 1992, p. 66). Edu-
cation, steeped in the problem-solving approach, searches
for the constantly-evolving reality. The teacher, in this
model, is a partner with the students as they join forces
as "critical co-investigators in dialogue" (Freire, 1992,
p. 68). Thus, the teacher becomes a learner, through the
practice of reflection, as he/she considers the new reality
and compares it to his/her conception of the old reality.
Through this model, Freire believes the purpose of education
is for one's consciousness to emerge and be the basis of
"critical intervention in reality" (Freire, 1992, p. 68).
Therefore, to Freire, the purpose of education is to teach
critical thinking to enable the student, and the teacher as

student, to become socially and politically involved in
society and with humanity (Freire, 1992). Thus, education
is viewed by Freire as a vehicle constantly in motion that
allows one to "become" (Freire, 1992, p. 72). This recurring
theme of personal growth and wholeness is reminiscent of
Buber's philosophy of education. Kohn and Noddings would
agree with this agenda in that they believe schools should
model and transmit personal values; and while they frequently
refer to transforming the personal values of society, they
never discuss a political agenda. Noddings and Kohn support
Freire's belief that schools must provide students with
opportunities for encounters with individuals and ideas that
will allow the self to emerge. They, like Freire, affirm
all humanity and believe educational opportunities must
transcend present social, economic, racial, gender, and/or
religious boundaries imposed by a suppressive society. How-
ever, Freire transcends Noddings's and Kohn's concept of
caring by unconditionally valuing the individual and placing
the importance of the individual over the importance of
society.

Freire describes money as the focus of the oppressors,
the "haves." It is through objectifying everything and
everyone that they reduce humanity to an existence immersed
in materialism. The guiding goal in life for these "haves"
is money. However, they do not extend this concept to, nor

see it as a prerequisite for, all members of humanity (Freire, 1992). They neither grasp the interconnectedness of humanity nor extend this goal of "having more" to all humanity. If "having" is necessary to "being," it should be unconditionally available to everyone in society. To the oppressor, those who do not have are lesser people than those who own material objects.

> If they do not have more, it is because they are incompetent and lazy, and worst of all is their unjustifiable ingratitude towards the 'generous gestures' of the dominant class. Precisely because they are 'ungrateful' and 'envious,' the oppressed are regarded as potential enemies who must be watched. (Freire, 1992, p. 45)

As someone interested in the concept of cherishing, I find Freire's commitment to love for others and for the world offers hope to those of us who believe in the affirmation and enhancement of all humanity. As one who believes in cherishing and unconditional love, I find Freire's writings to be immersed in spirituality, as well as committed to the social and political dimensions of life. Freire bases his beliefs on universal love for humanity that paves the way for an educational pedagogy that recognizes the marginal and enables the oppressed to cast off the yoke of oppression and to meet his/her fellow beings as equals, not as oppressors of another segment of the population (Freire, 1992). As one engages in dialogue with others, he/she is in communion with others as they join together to strive for personal wholeness, or completion (Freire, 1992).

CHAPTER III

A SPIRITUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHERISHING IN EDUCATION

If you can imagine it, you can achieve it.
If you can dream it, you can become it.
                            --William Arthur Ward

After reviewing some of the significant contemporary literature, which focuses on caring, or cherishing, in education, I believe Ward's quotation and philosophy empowers both teachers and students to remold and transform, not only schools, but society, and to value, cherish, love, and accept others without condition. If those who care about humanity, will open up to our inner spirituality, our minds to our hearts, and inner voices, we can begin our personal journeys to wholeness. By recognizing the significance of journeying to wholeness for "self," we will then be able to create a society whereby everyone can be empowered to journey toward wholeness and society, including schools as agents of society, and will become vehicles that heal, encourage, support, and enable wholeness to be achieved.

My Spiritual Awareness

As an educator who cares for children, who is interested in the concept of cherishing, who believes there is another dimension to education based on spirituality, I am

struggling as I look for language to express my thoughts and
concerns about cherishing and how cherishing integrates a
life of meaning. When speaking of the spiritual dimension
of education, I find language to be difficult since spiritu-
ality is an elusive concept that, while guiding my life and
giving it meaning, is difficult to explain. I believe, to
bring a spiritual dimension to education, is to purify, or
make holy, the present practices from the corrupting influ-
ences of the secular culture. I believe educators must
incorporate spiritual values with secular practices as we
recognize the dialectic of the spiritual and the secular.
Unfortunately, the dominant educational consciousness, which
endorses the alienation of students through the practices
of effective schools, views the schools in the limited per-
spective of dualism in which everything in education is clas-
sified as either good or evil and the state, or its desig-
nee, determines what is "good" or, in this case, "effective"
and what is evil. This "royal consciousness" (Brueggemann,
1978, p. 28) accepts secularism, or materialism and the dic-
tates of the state, as the guiding philosophy and ignores
the acknowledgment and inclusion of the dialectic of the
spiritual and that mandated by the state in our culture and
our schools.

In my search for language, I looked to religious lan-
guage to gain new perspective and awareness of education.
I found it impossible to discuss my concerns in education

and my intense belief that society, and educators as a vital

segment of society, must cherish each other, and therefore

children by limiting myself to secular language. I came

to find that I needed to use religious and spiritual lan-

guage to express my thoughts, concerns, hopes, and dreams

of a society which values, cherishes, and respects each

individual, regardless of ability, achievement, or perform-

ance criteria. I needed to express my inner spirituality,

my basic conviction, that the beliefs from my heart and soul

regarding the need for connection, healing, and wholeness

must be connected to my outer spirituality, to my belief

in God and to my interactions with humanity. As Dwayne

Huebner explains, the prevailing language used in educa-

tional discourse today is a result of secularism which

focuses on materialism and includes metaphors based on an

industrial model and stresses terms such as growth, produc-

tion, and politics. Huebner believes this type of language

deceives us, as educators, from understanding our role and

our mission. As I became aware that Huebner believes educa-

tors must embrace religious language as the natural language

to use to describe education and the work we are to accom-

plish as educators, I felt I was granted permission, by

another educator, to use religious language to express my

views. Feeling comfortable with religious language, which

best expresses my heart and soul and my belief that individ-

uals must be cherished, I felt empowered by Huebner to speak

in religious terms to education and also to society in this
chapter. In my search for spiritual language, some of the
literature spoke more to me than did other selections. Three
authors, Rita Brock, David Purpel, and Walter Brueggemann,
resonated with my spiritual calling. Each of these writers
has a spiritual orientation and speaks to the spiritual and
political aspects of education. All have contributed to my
struggle to understand my own spirituality and how it affects
my perspective on children, education, and society. In this
chapter, I will discuss three books that are particularly
helpful to me because they address spiritual, social, and
cultural issues of the 1980s and 1990s that affect education.
From these three authors' writings, I have been energized,
restored with hope, and given a vision of what the process
of education could become for children. I will examine
Brock's feminine perspective of spirituality as discussed in
Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power. I want
to apply Purpel's thoughts from The Moral and Spiritual Cri-
sis in Education to my own journey toward spirituality and
understanding of cherishing in education. Brueggemann's The
Prophetic Imagination will be used to show the need for an
alternative model of education for those who are helpless
and/or alienated in the dominant consciousness that prevails
in the educational community and the culture at large. A
prophetic imagination will serve as a stimulant to awaken
us from our present numbness and acquiescence to the

struggles children encounter within school, home, and society. From Brueggemann's prophetic imagination, a prophecy of hope can lead to healing through spirituality.

As an educator who has fallen into the secular trap of dualism, in which the dictates of the state are the "correct" methods of educating children, I have suffered from the resulting emotional turmoil of guilt for isolating and separating my spiritual self from my wholeness as a person, who also happens to be a teacher. I found the writings of Rita Brock, David Purpel, and Walter Brueggemann to be personally transformational, rather than educational jargon urging me to conform to the dominant educational philosophy currently being practiced. As I read their books, I felt an overwhelming desire to abandon and deny my former professional life, as an educator, and to stand before my peers and humanity, itself, and publicly declare my conversion to a new framework of spirituality in education. I felt as if I had been wandering around in the wilderness, as did God's "Chosen People" in Biblical days. However, instead of being protected by God, I felt I was being fragmented and was floundering without direction. By separating my spirituality from my professional self, I felt I was denying my inner voice, my voice of consciousness, that the will of the society was suffocating the grace I had been given by the Absolute. I came to realize the experiences, trials and tribulations, that each of us experience daily are the wilderness

experiences of life. We will never escape nor be spared wilderness experiences, but developing our sensitivity will empower us to transform these experiences into opportunities to reach out to others, to connect our lives and experiences with theirs in healing, helping relationships. As we listen to our inner voice, we become empowered to find our way through the wilderness to the Light of Truth, Meaning, and Purpose which is enacted as Love, Grace, Justice, Mercy, Cherishing, and Acceptance of others. As Dr. Bernard Fitzgerald, a Methodist minister, states, "The wilderness is either something you pass through or perish in" (Fitzgerald, 1993). It is through love, trust, grace, and cherishing that we can find our way out of the wilderness. After reading the affirming words of Brock, Purpel, and Brueggemann, I felt as if I had received an "altar call" from a Supreme Being to stop being blindly led by the dictates of society and instead focus on the Ultimate. From these writers' inspiring paradigms of society and education, I felt as if I was experiencing renewal, as if I was publicly denouncing the practices of secular education. I came to see that I had been denying the essence of my being by accepting the dominant consciousness present in the world, of which I had been a part. As I accept the "altar call" and publicly kneel at the altar of the Supreme Being, to make a profession of faith, I have reached a turning point in my life. My personal, spiritual, and professional conversion and empowerment,

my metanoia or "direct knowing of the highest, of God"
(Senge, 1990, p. 13) through the hope, energy, and visions
of these writers is as dramatic as Paul's religious conver-
sion on the road to Damascus. As Paul had a change of heart
and accepted a new way of life, as he refocused his thoughts
and actions to follow the ways of the Almighty, so did I.
I felt a spiritual transformation from reading the inspiring
words of Brock, Purpel, and Brueggemann as I saw an alterna-
tive way for children to be educated. Because of this
renewal, I feel compelled to help children as a teacher and
to witness to other teachers. I have come to "reperceive
the world and our relationship to it . . . to be part of the
generative process of life" (Senge, 1990, p. 14). I feel
transformed by grace and eager to accept an overpowering
mantle of responsibility to become a part of this alterna-
tive consciousness, of which Brueggemann speaks. I feel
connected to others who share Brueggemann's alternative con-
sciousness and draw strength from this connection, as I
believe others do. Because of the grace we each share, we
can unite as One Spirit. Cherishing others, as we express
our acceptance of, respect for, and love of others, is part
of the process of becoming whole, and thus holy. Therefore,
we avoid living a life without purpose, meaning, or hope.

Brock, Purpel, and Brueggemann allowed me to struggle
with the idea of personal responsibility on my journey, to
being fulfilled and made whole, as a person, then as a

teacher, through a life of meaning. As a person with a
spiritual orientation, who is also an educator living in a
secular world, I am firmly convinced that a pedagogy based
on cherishing can transform the public schools into a haven
of hope through the affirmation and acceptance of students,
as well as teachers. Educators, and the culture at large,
must accept the responsibility of educating children as a
sacred trust which must be honored and respected, as well
as achieved. Through cherishing, our actions can transform
our culture and, thus, our reality. I am aware there is a
segment of our culture and of the educational community which
will oppose a framework of education based on spirituality.
These individuals and forces are committed to a secular
world, to the mandates of the state, and support an imper-
sonal educational structure devoid of emotions.

Problematics of a Framework of Education Based on Spirituality

As I search for a model of teaching that will provide
for student needs and enhance student growth, I question how
close I can develop a model of teaching that develops the
spiritual, emotional, cherishing, and caring aspects of edu-
cation. As I examine this model, I anticipate problems and
questions from educators, parents, and the public.

Many of the problems will arise from the pluralism that
exists within our society. We are a diverse people, with

diverse cultures, ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes,
languages, customs, social views, life experiences, and
religious beliefs. As individual teachers and students enter
the classroom, they bring preconceived ideas into the class-
room and learning environment. Distrust of others, from
different backgrounds, often leads one to be wary of the
motives and behaviors one encounters.

Parents may not want a teacher, a stranger, to form emo-
tional bonds with their children. They may resent or dis-
trust teachers who demonstrate caring and cherishing in the
classroom. If the parent is not well acquainted with the
teacher, the parent may fear the teacher's motives. If the
parent is emotionally insecure, the parent may be jealous of
a caring relationship between the teacher and the child.
The parent may believe the teacher is supplanting the parent
in the child's heart. It will be a challenge for teachers
to break down the barriers between students/parents and the
teacher to enable trust to develop. Teachers must be con-
scious of their attitudes towards the students to establish
trust and gain respect before students are willing to risk
emotional involvement.

Many parents have participated in traditional education
experiences devoid of cherishing, caring, and emotional rela-
tionships between the teacher and the student. These parents
may retain a traditional view of the teacher-student rela-
tionship and may believe learning cannot flourish in a

different environment. An authoritarian model of the class-
room, with the teacher presiding, with the teacher doing all
the talking and making all the decisions, monitoring all
movement, and expecting children to be seen and not heard,
is hard to dispel. With a history of corporal punishment as
part of our inheritance, it is difficult to convince some
parents that all schools, classrooms, and teachers do not
operate within these guidelines. Quite often, parents may
insist that schools need to practice more use of corporal
punishment. The parents' expectations of life within the
classroom can interfere with the implementation of a new
model of teaching based on cherishing, caring, emotional
relationships, and spirituality.

Some students are very private individuals and do not
choose to respond to an environment of cherishing and caring.
Perhaps these students are from a different religious, eth-
nic, cultural, or socioeconomic background. They find it
hard to set aside the barriers they have created to protect
themselves from rejection and hurt. They are products of an
environment of alienation that does not require emotional
risks. They prefer the cold, impersonal routine they know
and understand. For some, there is comfort in conformity to
the norm.

Administrators might resent or question the motives of
teachers who stress cherishing and caring in their class-
rooms. The administrators could believe the teacher's

authority will be diminished, chaos that interferes with learning might result, or injury to students could occur in a classroom setting that focuses on emotions.

Teachers could abuse the students emotionally by using cherishing and caring as a manipulative to control students' behavior or attitudes. Instead of cherishing and caring being characteristics of unconditional love, a teacher might deliberately withhold these emotions from a student to manipulate the student. This attitude would treat the students as a means to an end and is very damaging to the students' self-concept. If caring and cherishing are reduced to instrumentality, they lose their meaning, their authenticity, and diminish both student and teacher. The opportunity for teachers to practice favoritism to those students who are the most attentive, obedient, affluent, or share the same ethnic, religious, or cultural background is present.

In our culture, we have a heritage of religious diversity and an ever-increasing trend towards a secular society. While I believe teachers must have a spiritual dimension to their encounters and relationships with students, all educators do not have an orientation toward the spiritual. How do we deal with those educators who lack a spiritual dimension in their own lives? Can we interact with students who are from another religious background or who reject religion without imposing our spirituality on their belief system?

How can a teacher risk emotional involvement with his/
her students on a daily basis? It is emotionally and physi-
cally draining for the teacher to risk his/her emotions to
cherish and care for all his/her students. How can a teacher
interact and form relationships with the students without
exhausting one's emotional and physical reserves?

Another problem of a teaching model based on caring
and cherishing is rooted in the diversity among teachers
in their attitude toward children. If a teacher views his/
her involvement in education as only a job, he/she will not
become emotionally involved with the students and will
refrain from developing relationships in the classroom. Some
teachers are more attracted to the disciplines and are inter-
ested in teaching subject matter, not students. For these
teachers, caring and cherishing is not a priority.

As a diverse and pluralistic culture, all of us have
different orientations. My previous statements have been
addressed to those individuals who value and are connected
to their inner and outer spirituality, to those who hear the
voice from within and also the voice of God. If spiritual-
ity is the basis of my concern and caring about children,
what defines those educators who do not value spirituality?
Each educator has definite beliefs about educational policy,
whether these beliefs are compatible with the dominant phi-
losophy or promote an alternative philosophy. One's educa-
tional philosophy, either formal or informal, is grounded in

one's basic beliefs and assumptions about children, mankind, and the universe. Educational philosophy does not rise from ashes like a phoenix. It materializes from one's innermost consciousness and is reflected in practice. The theory and practice are intertwined as components of the whole and are not viewed as theory put into practice. Therefore, when one speaks of education, one is reflecting larger issues in life.

Since education reflects the basic assumptions of the educator, reflection must become a constant process for the educator. Educators need to constantly reconnect the daily practices and policies in the classrooms and schools and the treatment of students to analyze and evaluate how closely they reflect our professed beliefs and assumptions about children, mankind, and the universe. Whether one has a spiritual orientation or not, one's beliefs about education should be examined in relationship to one's basic assumptions about the universe. Educators ought to reflect on their roots, spirits, and who they are as they make a recommitment to return to their basic beliefs about humanity. Every educator ought to have an agenda he/she wants to achieve and reflect on the methods he/she is using to bring this agenda to fruition, to create meaning in life. Therefore educators need constantly to reflect and meditate on their educational praxis, the way in which their theories and practices connect. While reflection may lead to more soul

searching and we may become uncomfortable as we examine our actions and attitudes, we will be journeying toward awareness and meaning in our lives. It is only through this constant reflection that educators can heal themselves, the students, and the schools from alienation, a lack of relationship, and the lack of ultimate meaning in their lives. Such healing will then have the opportunity to reach into our society and culture to heal the alienation found there.

We live in a diverse society and a pluralistic culture. We have different philosophies about our culture, its role, responsibilities, and expectations, and we bring past experiences into all of our relationships. All of our stories are unique. Therefore, this process of reflection will differ for each of us, just as our basic assumptions differ. While we are different and the process will be different, reflection will be valuable for each educator. As we reflect upon our actions in the classrooms and schools, we must ask how we want children to feel, what we want them to experience, how we should interact with the students, and what kind of adults we want them to become. I have, in an early chapter, presented part of my story and reflections and will, in this chapter, reflect on how I might respond as a professional to our present problems. Three books, in particular, have helped shape my response: Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power, The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education, and The Prophetic Imagination.

Rita Brock's Spiritual Perspective

Rita Brock's book, Journeys by Heart: A Christology
of Erotic Power, broadened my view of the suffering and
alienation that exists in our society and how both charac-
terize a materialistic society which depersonalizes and
devalues its members. Moreover, Brock's writings also
reaffirmed my belief in the goodness which exists in the
members of our culture and strengthened my faith in human-
ity's ability to heal itself through connectedness and the
journey to wholeness. Brock uses the term "brokenhearted"
to describe a society characterized by widespread suffering.
While accepting the technological advances and affluence
that prevail throughout our society, Brock focuses on the
ever-increasing environmental and political destruction that
threatens the Earth and the life-threatening poverty that
increases annually (Brock, 1988, p. xi).

> Our current age faces large-scale suffering deliv-
> ered by the structures of our global political and
> economic systems, of which some of the most destructive
> are malnutrition, despair, depression, suicide, sub-
> stance abuse, family violence, radiation poisoning, and
> the effects of terrorism, totalitarianism, and warfare.
> Our scientific age has brought us to the brink of a
> capacity to kill virtually all known life on our
> planet. (Brock, 1988, p. 75)

It is patriarchy, according to Brock, which has perpet-
uated much of the suffering in our culture. Brock also
believes that Christian theology is partially responsible
for the pain in our culture because it has ignored the

abuse and pain at the heart of our society, the family,
which is one of the social institutions most important
to the maintenance of male dominance. . . . In uphold-
ing as normative the patriarchal family and its struc-
tures, Christianity has ignored the suffering of women
and children at its very center and has not understood
the implications of patriarchy for those who live within
such structures. (Brock, 1988, p. 3)

Brock, viewing the American home as representative of a sup-

pressive, oppressive patriarchal culture, describes the

family as a place of violence and quotes alarming statistics.

In the United States suicide is the second most common
form of death among teenagers; one in every five chil-
dren grow up in poverty; one in every three women will
be raped as an adult; one in every four daughters and
one in every eight sons are molested by the age of
eighteen; and every thirty-nine seconds a woman is bat-
tered in her own home. Homicide is the fifth leading
cause of death for American children ages one through
eighteen and 1.4 million children ages three through
seventeen, are physically abused. (Brock, 1988, p. 3)

Brock, as a staunch feminist, states one must reassess

the patriarchal family and abandon its nostalgic and untrue

depiction. She endorses Adrienne Rich's views of patriarchy

by describing "the family home [as] the most dangerous place

in America for women. Violence is more common than love and

respect" (Brock, 1988, p. 3). Brock believes that it is the

family wherein our society can be transformed to become one

of healing, rather than one which perpetuates suffering. It

is within the family, Brock says, that "our consciousness

and knowledge of race, gender, and class, for good or ill,

are born" (Brock, 1988, p. 3). The family can become a

change agent for our culture to focus on healing, rather
than perpetuating the existing suffering and alienation
through acculturation.

> Hence healthy, loving, and supportive families are
> crucial to nurture compassionate, ethical persons and
> create sane and just societies. Family is the funda-
> mentally necessary factor for the building of human
> character and for the development of all societies,
> including ours. (Brock, 1988, p. 4)

If, as Brock suggests, we begin to reform and restructure
society through the family, it is obvious that the schools
will also need to be restructured to reflect the newly-
created values and practices of a more loving, just, and
merciful society which cherishes all of its members, includ-
ing children.

Historically, brokenheartedness, or suffering, has
neither been recognized nor addressed as a problem of society.
Brock says that prior to the twentieth century, Christian-
ity's message to the poor and downtrodden was to meekly
accept their suffering and deliverance would come to them,
through faith, in the form of eternal life (Brock, 1988).
Brock maintains that, as we enter the 21st century, we must
refocus our theological concepts and abandon Christianity's
traditional view of "resurrection" as perseverance through
suffering and redefine the concept. I believe we can also
view society's traditional expectations of students and
teachers as one of docile compliance and unquestioning

obedience. Brock suggests we acknowledge, but not accept
as morally and ethically right, the suffering that is occur-
ring in society and redefine resurrection as our belief in
"our ability to make whole our suffering world" (Brock, 1988,
p. xi). As we recognize the suffering and "brokenhearted-
ness" that exists in our society, we will be able to begin
our journey away from the oppression of our culture towards
liberation through "forgiving, healing relationships with
the world" (Brock, 1988, p. xiii). Brock calls for each of
us to develop an inner consciousness, an awareness that
causes us to look inward and ask ourselves, "How do I feel
right now, how are others feeling, and what can I do to
lessen all our pain and suffering in this context?" (Brock,
1988, p. xiv). It is this question which focuses on "heart--
toward self-possession, profound relationality, and the emer-
gence of creative caring" (Brock, 1988, p. xiv). Applying
Brock's thoughts to education, I believe it is possible to
develop an educational environment, grounded in healing
relationships, which is based on forgiveness, caring, and
cherishing. Brock goes on to define heart "as a metaphor
for the human self and our capacity for intimacy" (1988,
p. xiv). It is heart, according to Brock, that unites "body,
spirit, reason, and passion through heart knowledge, the
deepest and fullest knowing" (p. xiv). It is our intercon-
nection which both creates and sustains heart, the essence

of our being "the emotional and spiritual dimensions of our lives" (Brock, 1988, p. xiv).

Journeys by Heart examines the concepts of love and redemption from a feminist theology (Brock, 1988) and contrasts it to traditional Christianity. Brock examines the theology and practices of traditional Christianity and concludes they are based on a patriarchal model. According to Brock, this patriarchal model has promoted male ideologies causing society to misunderstand the definition of love and propagating world suffering. Brock believes this male ideology has falsely elevated self-sacrifice as the most important model of love (Brock, 1988). She also believes this male ideology has caused children and women to be victimized by the rules, regulations, and practices accepted in both our historical and contemporary societies. Without a voice or an advocate, women and children have either been passive victims to unfair laws and practices in our society or, without legal standing, have struggled futilely to break the chains of suppression and oppression. Society has been significantly diminished because the contributions of women and children to create a society embodying love, justice, and mercy have been restricted. Our culture has evolved as a result of male consciousness, according to Brock. Thus, children are to accept their fate and suffer silently in this ideology. Women have been reduced to an inferior position and have been mandated, in religion, to "enter

Christianity through male action and authority" (Brock, 1988, p. xii). It is through patriarchy that "men hold power in all the important institutions of society and . . . women are deprived of access to such power" (Brock, 1988, p. 2). When the churches have responded to the ills of society, this action has taken the form of "the superior helping the inferior, which locks paternalism into the relationship" (Brock, 1988, p. 8). Brock believes that we, as the church and as individuals, must focus on our interrelatedness "to find grace and to embrace and to heal the damage and suffering of our deepest selves and our society" (Brock, 1988, p. 8). Realizing the goodness each of us possesses, Brock maintains we must also accept responsibility for the evil we commit. She believes "self-acceptance and attention to all our feelings and impulses empower us to change, to heal ourselves, and to understand the roots of evil" (Brock, 1988, p. 9). This introspection and self-reflection allows one to grow and to heal. "The self, the heart, therefore is recreated continuously through feeling, connectedness, and memory" (Brock, 1988, p. 17). Brock believes it is our culture's responsibility to provide a safe, nurturing environment for memory, for experiencing the pain of brokenheartedness, for anger and grieving over the brokenheartedness, so that we can open our selves to grace and to healing. Unfortunately, the traditional institutions within our culture, including the church and the school, have encouraged

the individual to repress his/her memory and pain and to con-
form to society (Brock, 1988). Brock believes it is vital
for the individual to listen to his/her memory, pain, and
suffering to transform society.

> To act well, we must be willing to listen to our
> deepest needs, urges, and feelings and to transform
> ourselves and our world through the healing energy of
> heart, which is the only energy capable of touching
> the hearts of others. (Brock, 1988, p. 24)

Brock states that, with the power of self-acceptance and
interdependence with others, "a new sense of power emerges,
one that does not require status and control of others and
that does not require using the power of others" (p. 24).

Brock suggests our society must redefine the concept of
power. "We must move from seeing power as a commodity pos-
sessed by a self toward seeing it as the bonds which create
and sustain, and are recreated and sustained by relational
selves" (Brock, 1988, p. 34). Brock suggests we look to
erotic power, the "power of being/becoming" (p. 41) which
emphasizes connectedness through "intimacy, generosity, and
interdependence" (p. 37). "Erotic power integrates all
aspects of the self, making us whole. . . . Erotic power
resides in the matrices of our connectedness to self, to the
body, to others, and to the world" (p. 39). I, like Brock,
envision society, and therefore education, as reflected by
the society, being connected through erotic power and emanat-
ing closeness, kindness, and mutual concern. Erotic power

can lead to wholeness of self in education rather than the current fragmentation and disconnection to which students and teachers are presently subjected.

Brock recommends healing both individuals and our society through introspection, connection, and mutual efforts. She quotes the New Testament of the Bible to support her beliefs in connectedness and healing. As both individuals, and as educators, we look to the example of Jesus, the Master Teacher for guidance in practicing acceptance, love, and mercy. Just as Jesus visited Capernaum for support and nurturing, we must offer support and nurturance to each other to enable each individual to experience wholeness (Brock, 1988). Educators must begin to teach the "whole" child as we convert our society to acknowledge and provide for wholeness. Brock uses the Gospel of Mark and Jesus's encounters with women during his ministry to illustrate the feminist concept of power. Brock understands power as an energizing force that develops between the two parties involved. As the hemorrhaging woman reaches out to Jesus and touches his robe to be healed, power flows from both Jesus and the woman. It is the faith and connectedness of both that result in the healing. As educators, we can reach out to our students and the power that flows from the con- nectedness of both the students and the teachers can heal the suffering that has resulted from the depersonalization of the effective schools movement.

The Gospel of Mark insists that those who would travel
in the territories of erotic power must risk living
their new vision. This risk is the process of being
on the way . . . always on the journey of expectation
that comes from the courage of living by heart. (Brock,
1988, p. 105)

Brock states we must embrace the "feminist redemption

of Christ . . . [to] . . . move us beyond a narrow focus on

Jesus and the tyranny of the past toward forgiving, healing

relationships with our world" (1988, p. xiii). Brock believes

"the feminist vision of healing, wholeness, and spirituality

must save Christianity from its patriarchy . . . and that

the community of divine power is one of justice and peace"

(p. 50). She states we must move "toward heart--toward

self-possession, profound relationality, and the emergence

of creative caring" (p. xiv). Brock defines "heart" as "the

seat of self, of energy, of loving, of compassion, of con-

science, of tenderness, and of courage" (p. xiv). Heart,

she states, emerges from interconnection, from relationships.

We must look inward to identify the anger, hurts, and oppres-

sions we have experienced so we can be set free and move

toward wholeness. Introspection "allows us compassion for

others as we take responsibility for our own woundedness"

(p. 11). This reflection and self-cleansing must be the

initial step taken toward the healing of self and society.

By valuing ourselves and others, we become empowered to

eliminate suffering of ourselves, others, and society at

large (Brock, 1988).

No one else can stop the suffering of brokenheart-
edness in our world but our own courage and willingness
to act in the midst of the awareness of our own fragil-
ity. No one else can die for us or bring justice,
liberation, and healing. The refusal to give up on
ourselves and our willingness to struggle with broken-
heartedness, involve us in healing the powers of destruc-
tion, which must be taken into our circle of remembrance
and healing if we are to understand and love the whole
of life. Our heartfelt action, not alone, but in the
fragile, resilient interconnections we share with
others, generates the power that makes and sustains
life. There, in the erotic power of heart, we find
the sacred mystery that binds us in loving each other
fiercely in the face of suffering and pain and that
empowers our witness against all powers of oppression
and destruction. (Brock, 1988, p. 106)

Brock realizes her words are dangerous, and even revo-

lutionary, because her beliefs challenge the status quo of

our culture.

To challenge the powers of exploitation and destruction
with love, care, and compassion is an act of monumental
courage. Traveling with heart is fraught with diffi-
culties. . . . It is alive in the daily actions of
those who, in small acts and large ones, live with
courage, with heart. (Brock, 1988, p. 107)

As educators, we must find the courage to obey Brock's

challenge to live with "heart."

Purpel's View of the Spiritual and Moral Crisis
in Education

David Purpel's The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Educa-

tion speaks specifically to the demise of spirituality and

morality in education today. Furthermore, Purpel offers

educators an alternative viewpoint to the contemporary empha-

sis on effective schools. I found Purpel's writings to be

timely to me in that I, as both a person and an educator,

reject the dominant consciousness of effective schools which

is firmly entrenched in testing, measuring, and comparing
students with each other, practicing conditional love based
on obedience and performance, and absolute control of teach-
ers' and students' consciousness. More than anything,
Purpel's writings give me hope and reaffirm my faith in
humanity. I believe hope is desperately needed for those
educators, like myself, who want to see children, and soci-
ety, elevated to pursue ultimate meaning in our existence
and to transform this existence into a vibrant life. Purpel
reaffirms my faith in humanity by describing our culture as
being habitated by "caring" people who are "concerned about
the welfare of others to the point of helping and nurturing
them" (Purpel, 1989, p. 42). Purpel, like Brock, believes
that we can heal the hurt that exists in our society and can
become whole. Purpel states that each of us can "partici-
pate in the healing process . . . [and] help other people's
lives become whole" (p. 44).

Purpel's view of education, as a vehicle to transform
society into a more loving and saner world, is both enligh-
ening and invigorating. His views offer hope, promise, and
inspiration to those of us who believe the public schools
have a higher calling for humanity than present practices
reveal. Present society and its process of schooling has
excluded both a moral and spiritual dimension which has
resulted in an educational system immersed in triviality and

technicality. Purpel laments at the emphasis on "class elec-
tives, schedules of testing, length of school year, and mode
of funding" (p. 3) when the schools should be devoting their
time and energies to addressing the "issues of moral numb-
ness, spiritual alienation, social injustice, nuclear arma-
ments, and terrorism" (p. 3). Schools, educators, and edu-
cational research and literature seem to be overly concerned
with trivial issues such as standardized tests, increasing
homework, lengthening the school year, and merit pay when
Purpel says we should devote our interest, concern, and
energy to addressing "what is fundamental to life, liberty,
and the pursuit of happiness" (p. 22). Purpel calls for an
educational system which incorporates "meaning, purpose, and
ultimacy" (p. xi). He defines "moral" as "a term that
focuses on principles, rules, and ideas that are related to
human relationships, to how we deal with each other and with
the world" (p. 66). Religion is defined as

> ideas, principles, and tenets that have to do with
> our relations with forces beyond the known world. . . .
> Religions serve to explain fundamental questions of
> origin, meaning, and ultimacy and to generate human
> responses to these formulations. (Purpel, 1989, p. 66)

Purpel supports "key principles and formulations that cut
across religions, sects, denominations, and ideologies"
(p. 67), rather than endorse any particular religion. It is
from these moral and spiritual principles and formulations

that schools must redirect their curriculum to develop the
students' creativity and imagination

> which enable us not only to understand but to build,
> make, create and re-create our world. . . . We are
> here talking about a vision that can illuminate what
> we are doing and what we might work to achieve . . .
> the language of this vision belongs to the moral and
> religious family of language, for it is the function of
> moral and religious language to provide the essential
> dimension of education--the language of meaning.
> (Purpel, 1989, p. 27)

Purpel (1989) bases his paradigm on the Socratic and Prophetic
traditions and Liberation and Creation Theologies. He
attributes most of his perspective to that of Prophecy and
consciousness. Purpel values these foundations which ener-
gize and criticize and which accept the dialectic of man and
God. It is Prophecy, Purpel states, that "holds us to our
deepest commitments, chides us when we do not meet them,
and provides hope for us when we think we cannot" (p. xi).
Educators, he maintains, can make use of Prophecy as they
seek purpose and direction in their lives and work while
they transform education to promote "love, justice, com-
munity, and joy" (p. xi). Furthermore, he maintains that
Americans have a moral heritage which "includes an intense
concern for justice, equality, forgiveness, mercy, and, most
important, an aspiration for a community infused with love"
(p. 71). Americans pay homage to the moral principles rep-
resented in both our Biblical and historical documents as
we practice our religious diversity, although we often fail

to respect the religious freedom of those who differ from us (Purpel, 1989). However, Purpel believes our nation's religious diversity should not impede the formulation of a spiritual framework emphasizing meaning for our society. As people who basically value goodness and believe there is meaning to our existence, Purpel is convinced our culture supports a spiritual framework that provides meaning to our lives. From a spiritual framework, whose purpose is to activate a vision of life devoted to meaning, society can embrace and practice critical reflection of its goals, aspirations, and context, as well as its principles, rules, and regulations (Purpel, 1989). We can develop a social consciousness reminiscent of the Biblical Prophets who acted as social critics as they "applied sacred criteria to human conduct and, when they found violations of these criteria they cried out in anguish and outrage" (Purpel, 1989, p. 80). As educators, with a spiritual sensibility, we can practice critical reflection to raise the awareness and consciousness of our profession and our society to the present structure of schooling that is causing our children to suffer and remain alienated when we should be providing schooling that enables each child to journey toward wholeness. As the prophets of ancient times, educators must cry out for "justice, compassion, and concern for the oppressed" (Purpel, 1989, p. 81). Purpel's writings are inspiring as he charges educators to practice critical reflection, focus on our transgressions,

and then go forth with a message of hope as we focus on ways
to transform schools to create a haven for children so they
can grow and develop and relate in community with each other
and with the culture at large. It is this hope, this com-
passion focusing on "love, mercy, and forgiveness" (Purpel,
1989, p. 82) that energizes educators, that refocuses the
meaning of their lives, that enables a meaningful curriculum
and an environment of unconditional love and cherishing to
be imagined and then fulfilled. It is this hope which evokes
nostalgia as we remember why we, as educators, embarked on
this journey when we were young adults and why we remain
faithful to our mission, to our calling to live a life of
meaning in relationship with one another as we are in rela-
tionship with the Almighty. As educators, we must fight
political battles, as well as social battles, to bring forth
a way of life that is conceived and fulfilled in meaning.
As one devoted to the concept of cherishing, I applaud Pur-
pel's adaptation of Walter Brueggemann's "prophetic ministry"
to "prophetic education."

> This mission (goal, concern, dimension) 'is to nurture,
> nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception
> alternative to the dominant culture.' This 'ministry'
> (education) involves the dimensions we have described--
> sharp criticism, dazzling imagination, a sacred per-
> spective, commitment to justice and compassion, hope,
> energy, and involvement. Freedom does not come, accord-
> ing to the prophets, from adaptation and acceptance,
> nor does freedom emerge out of numbness and callousness
> to injustice. Freedom for the prophets emerges from
> caring, and lies in hope, possibility, and commitment.
> (Purpel, 1989, p. 85)

Purpel also addresses liberation theology which is
derived from the prophetic tradition. This theology traces
its origins in Jesus's humanity and ministry as He crit-
icized "a society that is more concerned with the accumula-
tion of wealth and the exercise of power than with the suf-
fering of the needy" (Purpel, 1989, p. 86). The parallel to
dominant consciousness of Jesus's time and contemporary
society is painfully obvious to those of us who seek a life
of meaning and relationship. We see ourselves as sinners
when we participate in a schooling process that demeans and
alienates the young and teaches them to measure their own
worth with their achievements. Even those educators who
lack a spiritual orientation should be able to accept the
recreation of public schools founded on "love, compassion,
justice, and mercy" (Purpel, 1989, p. 87). When faced with
statistics that report 30 million Americans are hungry, that
America's infant mortality rate ranks 17th in the world, and
that our annual budget reports America's military expendi-
tures are higher than any other nation's on Earth, how can
anyone not listen to the prophetic cries of educators prac-
ticing social criticism and critical reflection (Purpel,
1989). Those who fail to listen have hardened their hearts
to humanity as they have to the Supreme Being. One cannot
be in relationship with a Supreme Being and know truth while
ignoring the cries and suffering of our children and our

culture. As Purpel reminds us, "we are one people, one world, . . . we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers (p. 88).

From Matthew Fox's writings, Purpel addresses creation theology which emphasizes social justice, optimism for the future, and "celebrates joy, creation, and responsibility" (p. 89). Creation theology is rooted in Prophecy, Jesus's life and teachings, and in mysticism (Purpel, 1989). This theology credits the sacred with energizing its followers to recreate a secular world whose emphasis is on joy and justice (Purpel, 1989). Creation theology views creativity as "the process of integrating the true, the good, and the beautiful, which means an esthetics of wholeness in which we are free to revel in the creations that represent this wholeness" (Purpel, 1989, p. 91). This esthetic of wholeness can be utilized to transform our institutions, such as the public schools into sites where respect, community, and relationships set the tone for learning as we journey toward wholeness (Purpel, 1989). The public schools and our culture at large can be transformed, according to Purpel, when we decide to make a commitment to enacting a moral and spiritual framework for education and commence to live by moral and spiritual principles.

Purpel voices concern over the present domination of public schools by educators and politicians, belonging to the political right wing, who support

an elitist view of schooling based on a celebration of
cultural uniformity, a rigid view of authority, an
uncritical support for remaking school curricula in
the interest of labor-market imperatives, and a return
to the old transmission and acculturation model of
teaching. (Purpel, 1989, p. xv)

Instead of this dominant consciousness, Purpel calls for a

model of schooling which promotes democratic community and

social and moral responsibility. The present system of edu-

cation in America, according to Purpel, attempts to ignore

moral dilemmas by labeling them educational practices. Yet,

he maintains our morality is obvious when we consider the

"educational issues" of "school segregation, tracking, grad-

ing, and selective admission" (p. 8). For example, we prac-

tice grading students because our culture "puts enormous

stress on success, achievement, and individuality and . . .

[our] system . . . requires social and economic inequality"

(Purpel, 1989, p. 9). This practice of valuing grades "is

to value competition and to accept a society of inequality

and a psychology that posits external behavior rather than

internal experience as more important" (Purpel, 1989, p. 9).

Instead of educating for personal growth, we tout the word

"excellence" as we sort and measure students through the

practice of testing (Purpel, 1989, p.17). Educators and

schools practice conditional love based solely on student

achievement/performance and obedience. Thus, those who fail

to achieve or who fail to obey the rules, regulations, and

policies are perceived as unworthy and are made to feel
unworthy (Purpel, 1989). School is now a place where teach-
ers and students can be successfully monitored and controlled
through the implementation of competency tests which are
camouflaged as providing "accountability" to the culture at
large (Purpel, 1989, p. 18). As Freire would claim, Ameri-
can schools have become the site of and the training ground
for oppression of both students and teachers. Instead of
being a place for personal growth and development and a
place of connection and interaction, schools have focused
on acculturation and authoritarianism. We have become a
society where socioeconomic status determines the degree of
freedom and equality we enjoy in a society propelled by com-
petition and greed (Purpel, 1989). Yet, each one of us
yearns to be accepted and loved unconditionally and to love
others (Purpel, 1989). Purpel's model of education would
accept, honor, and value our diverse, pluralistic society
by allowing "people to speak out of their own histories,
cultures, experiences, and traditions" (p. xvi). This recog-
nition of each individual's unique "story" would embody the
spirit of democratic community. Purpel would have our cul-
ture reconnect "the spheres of politics, ethics, and educa-
tion" (p. xvi). Purpel maintains that a democratic community
recognizes

> that all people are capable and desirous of living a
> life of meaning and that all can be educated to be free
> and responsible. . . . It therefore becomes the task

of educators to provide the conditions under which all
people can express their full human potential. (Purpel,
1989, p. 10)

Purpel would seek to make our society whole by enabling each
individual to achieve wholeness through the linking of our
spiritual and moral lives to our secular world. It is his
conception of the unity of one's life and one's society that
makes Purpel's writings unique, revolutionary, and rejuvenat-
ing. Purpel's conception of a society linking the spiritual
and moral dimensions of life with politics, ethics, and edu-
cation is reminiscent of the Biblical prophets who reminded
humanity of our commitments, transgressions, and blessings.
As one reads Purpel's persuasive arguments for a more respon-
sible society, one wonders, with amazement, how humanity
abandoned the call of prophecy to follow a secular world and
laments at the wasted time and unfulfilled lives that have
ebbed away.

Purpel addresses middle-class Americans in his writings
because he believes they have the potential to become change
agents for our society. As those privileged members of
society, Purpel believes the middle class can transform our
society into one that practices the "politics of compassion
and hope that makes all of us more attentive to the experi-
ences and emotions of pain, joy, suffering, and human con-
nectedness" (p. xvii). Purpel's writings are imbedded in
optimism as he acknowledges the "vast and influential group

in America who would very much like to choose a way of life

that is right, just, and loving" (p. 30). Unfortunately,

these same people are presently caught up in confusion and

frustration which results in actions that inadvertently hurt

and oppress others (Purpel, 1989). Because this hurt and

oppression is inadvertent, "we can put our hope in educa-

tion" (Purpel, 1989, p. 30). We must, he maintains, unite

our political and pedagogical struggle in our quest for a

world that views learning, justice, compassion, and hope as

intertwined and indivisible (p. xvii). Only in such a newly

created world, Purpel states, can all members of society be

liberated "from hunger, disease, fear, bigotry, war, igno-

rance, and all other barriers to a life of joy, abundance,

and meaning" (p. 30).

Purpel provides great insight into our culture and

schooling process when he speaks of our "loss of a divine

perspective" (Purpel, 1989, p. 54) which should be a humbling

experience for each of us. By abandoning our "religious and

spiritual frameworks" (p. 54), we have lost "our meaning and

direction in life" (p. 55) and permitted the state to rule

our lives as the Supreme Being. One's faith is immersed in

"what and to whom . . . we commit our trust and our loyalty"

(p. 59). As a result of losing life's meaning and direction

from the Creator, this loss of faith, or alienation, or

"absence of a law higher than man's, led, however inadver-

tently and unintendedly, to Auschwitz" (p. 54). Purpel

examines public schools with great consternation as he

reveals the schools' emphasis is on competition, greed, and

financial success. The schools fail to address the issues

of "higher truth, higher meaning, or wisdom . . . [nor]

present education . . . as an endeavor to create a vision of

meaning" (p. 60).

Walter Brueggemann's Views of Spirituality and Its Relationship to Social and Political Reform

Walter Brueggemann's The Prophetic Imagination explores

the concept of spiritual and political reform and how it has

materialized in society from Biblical times to the present.

From Brueggemann's writings, I gained a new perspective of

how the entrenched dominant consciousness of some societies

has been dissipated throughout history when, outwardly, it

appeared the dominant consciousness was so strong that it

could not be challenged or replaced. For reform to occur,

Brueggemann attaches great importance to the grieving process

which begins by recognizing the suppression and oppression

that exists in the dominant consciousness of a culture. He

states that we are encased in emotional numbness that results

from acculturation to accept the existing oppression and

suppression of the time period as a cultural norm. After

recognizing that suffering exists, the suppressed can crit-

icize the dominant consciousness and recognize the possibil-

ity of an alternate consciousness. Brueggemann believes

once suppressed people visualize an alternative conscious-
ness they can become energized, through their spirituality,
to bring about a new consciousness that enhances and pro-
motes growth for everyone. From Brueggemann's comparisons
of cultural dynamics, I felt a new sense of awareness of
cultures that enhance its members while others suppress
theirs. Brueggemann's writings awakened me to my overwhelm-
ing need, through my spirituality, to be part of the con-
sciousness that promotes a better life and better circum-
stances for everyone within the culture. From his writings,
my hope and confidence in humanity continues to be restored
and my belief in the power to heal humanity is strengthened.
My belief that things do not have to remain the way they are
in our culture and in the area of education is reinforced.
I visualize a society that will cast off the garments of
suppression to reveal a society that cares for and cherishes
each of its members. Brueggemann speaks to the inner con-
flict that an individual suffers as he/she complies with
societal and cultural practices and dogmas that are alien to
one's inner consciousness and betrays one's essence. Brueg-
gemann uses Biblical prophets as historical examples of those
who understood the incompatibility of one's public position
with one's deepest yearning. Brueggemann credits the proph-
ets with an awareness of the necessity of using the language
of newness to bring meaning to lives and to bring about a

new socially-constructed reality. This language of newness can be applied to bring about a new reality, whether it is defined in a ministerial, societal, or educational context. Brueggemann cautions that a lack of newness in language diminishes one's humanness and provides a setting for a suppressive government to rule (Brueggemann, 1978).

Brueggemann devotes his book to exploring alternative communities to those where we are encultured and suppressed and to promoting an embracing of a prophetic ministry to renew us. Brueggemann defines an alternative community as one in which its members consistently evoke, form, and reform itself to criticize the dominant consciousness while it energizes itself "by its promise of another time and situation toward which the community of faith may move" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 13). Brueggemann believes the church will only become empowered again when it returns to its tradition of faith as a guide to retreat from its encultura-tion in consumerism. He believes it is by prophetic minis-try that the church can live in our present culture while embracing the tradition of faith. "The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and percep-tion of the dominant culture around us" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 13).

Brueggemann attributes the alternative consciousness with empowering one to criticize the dominant consciousness

through rejection of the dominant culture. This concept is revolutionary in that Brueggemann wants to bring about a fundamental change in our culture. Brueggemann's concepts are reminicent of the writings of Paulo Freire in that Brueggemann also has a spiritual, a political, and a social agenda. Brueggemann, like Freire, places a great emphasis on reforming the political and social aspects of supressive cultures. Brueggemann speaks directly to the issue of spirituality, while Freire, however, refers to it indirectly in his discussion of humanity. According to Brueggemann, an alternative consciousness energizes its advocates through promises of a better life and better circumstances secured through the faith community. Through faith, the newness God promised to humanity will be fulfilled. Brueggemann emphasizes that all acts of a prophetic ministry should be concerned with "evoking, forming, and reforming an alternative community" (p. 14). Brueggemann cautions against separating and isolating a prophetic ministry into individual acts which dilute the total ministry. Examples of this are the separation of the ministry into areas of administration or counseling (Brueggemann, 1978). A prophetic ministry embraces all areas as parts of the whole and focuses on responding to the wholeness of the individual. Followers of the community of faith must practice the "dialectic of criticizing and energizing" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 14) to be faithful followers.

As a Biblical example of an alternative consciousness formed to criticize the status quo and energize humanity to bring about positive changes for everyone, including the oppressed, Brueggemann traces the alternative community of Moses and contrasts it with the oppressive rule of Solomon. Moses emerges with an alternative consciousness that proposes a "politics of justice and compassion" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 16), instead of the dominant consciousness of "oppression and exploitation" (p. 17) of Egypt under which the Hebrews suffered. The dialectic of "haves" and "have-nots" could no longer be ignored as Moses described the oppression that existed. Through Moses and the alternative consciousness, criticism of the Egyptians identified their "false claims to authority and power" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 20) and prevented the keeping of their promises.

Brueggemann describes the beginning of criticism as grieving over the conditions that abound in a suppressive culture. By focusing on this hurt, by giving it public attention, the setting for a new reality is prepared. As people who live in several communities simultaneously, individuals are not restricted exclusively to membership in political communities. Thus, the people are free to turn to God who can help, rather than to the rulers who are indifferent and fail to listen (Brueggemann, 1978). It is here a new history is woven as God's people return to Him for help and strength and build a new community based on His beliefs.

From here, the community of faith is energized to create a
new reality and hope results. Hope frees one to see newness,
experiment, explore, engage in new expression, and use new
language in the alternative community (Brueggemann, 1978).

A prophetic imagination depends on three areas of ener-
gizing. First, energy results "from the embrace of inscrut-
able darkness" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 23). Brueggemann uses
the hardness of the Egyptian Pharaoh's heart against the
people of Israel as an example of embracing inscrutable dark-
ness. God is at work among Israel's enemies to bring about
a newness the people of Israel desire, but cannot visualize.
Second, Brueggemann reminds the reader a prophetic imagina-
tion is possible because God is involved in the lives of His
people. God takes sides (Brueggemann, 1978)! His love,
mercy, and compassion are present with His followers, even
when they sometimes believe they are alone. Knowing God is
on our side energizes the faithful. Third, a doxology, which
is a public act of worship praising God, energizes as the
faithful embrace God's freedom as their freedom (Brueggemann,
1978).

Brueggemann states that, in contrast to Moses's alterna-
tive consciousness, whereby the community experienced scar-
city, Solomonic Israel practiced satiation which resulted
from an oppressive social policy. A hierarchical class
system prevailed enabling some to live in extravagance, while
others did without. Exploitation flourished as the underclass

was suppressed to serve the state as unpaid workers (Brueg-

gemann, 1978). God did not sanction Solomon's actions,

therefore, they were doomed. God, under Solomon's rule,

was given token obedience, as a formality, rather than an act

of worship. During Solomon's rule, criticism against the

state was effectively silenced by turning a deaf ear to

critical words. Without a listening audience, criticism is

ignored (Brueggemann, 1978). At this time, messianism

emerges. The prophets talk of a Davidic king who will serve

as advocate of the marginal ones (Brueggemann, 1978). Such

a messiah will bring passion "as the capacity and readiness

to care, to suffer, to die, and to feel" (Brueggemann, 1978,

p. 41) as a weapon against the dominant culture where numb-

ness pervades among those suppressed.

As we consider alternative consciousness versus the

royal, or dominant, consciousness, Brueggemann reminds the

reader that each of us is entangled with the values of the

dominant consciousness through deep commitments. How, then,

can we imagine newness? Do we lack courage and power to

think of an alternative consciousness? He says we are a

people of implementation who do not imagine. Why? Because

imagination is dangerous to the dominant consciousness. If

we imagine, we will challenge the dominant consciousness and

conflict will result (Brueggemann, 1978). By silencing

imagination, control is exercised over the populace.

Prophetic ministry and imagination can "bring people to engage their experiences of suffering to death" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 46). The dominant, or royal, consciousness expects numbness from its people. Numbness prevents reaction, questions, reforms, and newness. We become numb when we lose our passion; we no longer care or suffer (Brueggemann, 1978). We allow abuse to perpetuate. Power remains in the hands of the abusers. Prophetic imagination can lead to feeling, to renewal, and to an awareness of abuse.

Brueggemann offers three ways prophetic imagination can end numbness. First, it offers symbols of our historical past to awaken us to the abuse in our time. These symbols stimulate the people's memory and free them to use hope. The symbols also remind us of the significance of words and language to mold consciousness and redefine reality (Brueggemann, 1978). Second, it verbalizes, through the language of metaphor, the fears and terrors we have suppressed. The fears and pains of individuals in the community of faith must be verbalized to allow the believers to embrace and experience these fears and pains so they can be healed. From this grief, healing and hope emerge (Brueggemann, 1978). Third, prophetic imagination speaks, through metaphors, to the deathliness that consumes us and is depicted through alienation, a desire for things which will never satisfy us, and the loss of our religious heritage. Prophetic imagination frees us from our selfishness and our obsession with

selfmadeness (Brueggemann, 1978). Brueggemann calls this language of prophecy, based on hope, the "language of amazement" (p. 69). It speaks to despair and rekindles the joy that was dormant in the lives of those oppressed. It is newness from God that replenishes us with energy. From God's newness man will once again receive joy and justice (Brueggemann, 1978).

According to Brueggemann, it is through Jesus of Nazareth that prophetic imagination is perfected in the New Testament. It is the embodiment of Jesus, as God's change agent, who manifested "the ultimate criticism of the royal consciousness" (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 81). His criticism emerged as he embraced the marginal and suffered because He aligned Himself with the helpless (Brueggemann, 1978). As Brueggemann traces Jesus's life from birth to His ministry, he points to the marginality that marks His journey. The marginality is found geographically as Jesus is born a Nazarene, religiously as He opposes the dominant reality, and the announcement of His birth was made to shepherds who were marginal members of society. While addressing the marginal, Jesus was aware that it was oppressors who kept the marginal oppressed (Brueggemann, 1978). The marginal had reached the stage of numbness in which each accepted his/her social, economic, religious, and/or political situation without question. In the Bible, the Gospel of Luke speaks of newness,

while Matthew's Gospel emphasizes grief. Grief is discussed because the end of Herod's regime is ordained with the birth of Jesus (Brueggemann, 1978). Herod was quick to recognize the threat to his reign and he decreed The Child must die.

Jesus used the language of amazement to forgive sin. This forgiveness undermined the authority of the dominant culture because forgiveness reduces the social control that man-made governments exercise over the populace.

> Hannah Arendt has discerned that this was Jesus' most endangering action because if a society does not have an apparatus for forgiveness then its members are fated to live forever with the consequences of any violation. (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 83)

Forgiveness freed the people emotionally from authoritarian domination and opened up an alternative consciousness to them of a world of meaning and relationship (Brueggemann, 1978).

Jesus also questioned the social valuing permeating the society in which He lived. The law of His time was designed to protect those with economic and political power. He was moved to compassion and suffering with and for those who suffered under the yoke of oppression. His compassion was the language of criticism which admitted things were not right throughout the earthly kingdom and that suffering existed. Before the birth of Jesus, the people were numb (Brueggemann, 1978). With His birth and ministry, He showed

others compassion and taught them to express suffering and grief so newness would emerge. Through parables, Jesus taught the people to shake off their numbness, grieve, hurt, and then journey toward healing (Brueggemann, 1978). It is this participation in their own liberation that I find to be energizing. This belief in the necessity for the oppressed to participate in their own liberation is also held by Freire, as well as Brueggemann.

John describes how Jesus leads one from hurt to healing to a new life. Jesus is described as one who was seen weeping. He suffered, He grieved, and He was healed and gave us newness of life as He died to transform others. This transformation led to an alternative community with an alternative consciousness (Brueggemann, 1978). The dominant culture cannot accept Jesus's teaching that life comes from death and power comes from suffering because such an admission would erode their power and control of the culture. The idea of fullness resulting from self-emptying is foreign to the comprehension of the dominant culture. The dismantling of the royal consciousness is ordained by the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus's life and death call for justice, compassion, and an economic policy where no one is oppressed in order for a few to enjoy the labor of many (Brueggemann, 1978).

God, the Creator, gave Moses, as described in the Hebrew Bible, the vision of an alternative community so mankind can

begin again. God's freedom, justice, and compassion con-
tinue to be open to the community of faith (Brueggemann,
1978). From Zechariah, the believers are promised the "pos-
sibilities of salvation/forgiveness/mercy/light/peace"
(Brueggemann, 1978, p. 99). From the birth of Jesus, one
receives hope. From Jesus's ministry, hope meets the despair
of the culture. It is from his life and ministry that one
is energized as one learns of the newness available to all.
From this newness, one is amazed, marvels, and reacts with
astonishment to His ministry. We become inspired to accept
personal responsibility to bring about change. He causes us
to reexamine old values and morals and abandon the social,
political, and economic inequities we have practiced (Brueg-
gemann, 1978). Jesus reintroduced passion and energy to a
people who had forgotten these actions in their suppression
by the dominant consciousness (Brueggemann, 1978). His
teachings shatter the old reality, while opening and inviting
the marginal to receive the blessing of newness and par-
ticipate in the alternative reality made possible through
God's freedom. New possibilities are envisioned where
dreams were previously destroyed and numbness prevailed
(Brueggemann, 1978). Jesus's criticism is addressed to, but
never heard by, the dominant community. If the dominant
community acknowledged the message of Jesus, they would be
making a public admission that a higher calling, a deeper

commitment to humanity, existed. His prophetic energy is
given to the marginal people. The future yearned for by the
marginal, who have suffered suppression, will result from
Jesus's ministry (Brueggemann, 1978). Those who believe in
a future given by God receive the human gifts of singing,
dancing, healing, and forgiving (Brueggemann, 1978). The
resurrection is the result of newness from God. Those who
are resurrected through God are empowered to receive a new
future from a life of despair (Brueggemann, 1978). The res-
urrection can be connected to

> earlier appearances of an alternative future by the
> prophetic word. The resurrection of Jesus made pos-
> sible a future for the disinherited. In the same way,
> the alternative community of Moses was given a new
> future by the God who brought freedom for slaves by his
> powerful word, which both dismantled and created a
> future and which engaged in radical energizing and
> radical criticizing. In the same way the resurrection
> of Jesus made possible a future for the disinherited,
> as did the newness announced by Second Isaiah. The
> nonpeople in the nonhistory of Babylon were given a
> homecoming like the poor, hungry, and grieving in the
> history of Jesus. (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 107)

Brueggemann recognizes that the resurrection speaks to impor-
tant political, as well as religious, issues. The Gospel of
Matthew discusses the political dimensions by viewing the
resurrection

> as a threat to the regime (Matthew 28:11-15), whereas,
> on the other hand, the risen Jesus announces his royal
> authority. He is now the king who displaces the king. .
> His resurrection is the end of nonhistory taught in the
> royal school and a new history begins for those who

> stood outside of history. This new history gives
> persons new identities (Matthew 28:19) and a new ethic
> (v. 20), even as it begins on the seashore among the
> dead enslavers (Exodus 14:30). (Brueggemann, 1978,
> p. 108)

Brueggemann's concept of the "prophetic imagination" shows how the ministry of Jesus, as well as the prophetic tradition reflected in the Jewish Bible, was a prophetic ministry which transformed an oppressive society into newness which had not been previously envisioned. Brueggemann proposes the use of a prophetic imagination to connect one's religious traditions to the socially-constructed realities of society. As educators and the public lament the conditions of schools and education in America today, we must follow Brueggemann's concept of a prophetic imagination by examining the present attitudes, policies, and practices which perpetuate the problems. Reforms will not be made, regardless of the numerous articles and books written, speeches given, and conferences scheduled, until the dominant consciousness of education in society is addressed, agonized over, rejected, and a new consciousness developed which will be based on the tenets of love, justice, mercy, caring, and cherishing to become people centered and to develop an educational consciousness that values and focuses on students and their needs.

Education and Spirituality

As America's schools mirror our culture and concern themselves with materialism, competition, and domination, a crisis in education has resulted. Schools, reflecting the royal consciousness of our culture, depersonalize and alienate students in a system which treats the students as products and teachers as production workers. As terms, such as time-on-task, management by objectives, effective schools, standard course of study, six-point lesson plan, and standardized testing, become the language of the dominant culture in educational circles, students are ignored in favor of a depersonalized, dehumanized student. This depersonalized student learns state-mandated content from watered-down textbooks, focusing on objectives and measures filtered down from a centralized bureaucracy, taught in monotonous, sequential steps, and tested by a prewritten test that basically measures one's reading and test-taking skills. These procedures and methods have become the dominant consciousness in our schools and educators and students are both succumbing and becoming numb to the dominant culture. This numbness destroys memories of other times, when education and schooling reached and connected with the students, and it destroys dreams of what schools could be like for each child who enters a classroom door and encounters an environment ingrained in love, cherishing, and justice and what the

culture might become as the result of love, cherishing, and justice extending from schools to the culture at large. This numbness obliterates the innocence and joy each child brings to school as he/she embarks on the quest for learning and, shockingly, loses as he/she is suddenly measured, compared, and valued with each other and with the aberrant student. The spark in a child's eyes is replaced with a look of wariness and eagerness is replaced with endurance. Older students react by retreating into themselves and refusing to take a chance and participate. They have learned, at a tender age, to react with hardened hearts to schools and education which will attempt to diminish them. The singing, dancing, laughter, and joy is pushed aside by mistrust, defensiveness, disinterest, and alienation from the schools.

Experienced teachers retain memories of seizing the "teachable moment," experiencing joy in learning subject matter, interacting as community in educational encounters, laughing over shared experiences in the classroom, and being in relationship with the students. However, those teachers who have completed their college coursework and begun their teaching career under the philosophy of the effective schools movement, have no teaching memories upon which to reflect, form their values, and measure present practices. They are falsely led to believe the effective schools movement is "the" answer to education and schooling. Therefore, the

latest generation of educators are enticed, through accul-
turation, to become supporters of the royal consciousness.
This royal consciousness is reflected in education through
the effective schools movement. Education and learning has
been reduced to teaching by a formula, measuring students by
standardized tests which are considered to be all encompass-
ing, and completing a course of study which is considered to
be comprehensive.

Effective teaching, which reflects the royal conscious-
ness, has escalated the current crisis in education and
schooling which, I believe, is the disconnection between the
school and the students, between the teachers and the stu-
dents, and among the students. Contrary to the prevailing
royal consciousness and the resulting educational practices,
I believe there is more to education than rote learning
through a prescribed formula. The anticipation and joy of
encountering new experiences, ideas, concepts, and skills,
in an atmosphere of love, cherishing, and justice, cannot be
replaced by insipid, programmed instruction.

What course, then, should reforms in education follow?
Education has to have a new vision. The old remnants that
are inadequate cannot continue to be refined to work more
efficiently. A new beginning, by creating a new paradigm,
must be introduced. Students must be the focus of schools,
rather than an inconvenience to be moved about quietly and

orderly, controlled and closely monitored at all times, and
scheduled so that every minute of the day is structured to
complete mundane tasks.

Upon what grounding shall we create this paradigm? I
fervently believe, as a culture, we must turn to a spiritual-
ity of love and affirmation of our model. Such a spirit
provides a new vision of education in which each student is
worthy because he/she is a child of God. I feel it is my
responsibility, as a member of the culture, to help create
and manage each school system and classroom as though it
were created and implemented for the children of God. Edu-
cators must cherish and reach out to all students with love,
mercy, and compassion. Schools must focus on cherishing
each child through unconditional love. We must welcome and
affirm all the children, instead of sorting and valuing some,
while rejecting others.

With the perspective of a prophetic imagination, educa-
tors and the laity would remove the blinders of defensive-
ness from our eyes and view the problems and conflicts that
pervade the ranks of education today. From this newness of
sight, we could express our anger, hurt, and pain for our
students' suffering. As we become immersed in this suffer-
ing, we would be empowered to grieve over the injustices and
inequalities that exist. From this grief, we could make a
commitment to begin to heal the schools of America. Through

commitment it would be possible for the present numbness to fall away and we could express ourselves through tears and cries of agony. From the grief, we could open our minds and hearts to a prophetic imagination which could revive us and lead us to an alternative community of education. Such an alternative community will abandon hurtful practices such as comparing, sorting, and discarding children. An alternative community, based on spirituality and committed to love, compassion, and justice, will cherish each child because each child is valuable and unique. Uniqueness will be acknowledged and affirmed, while conformity will be abandoned. Cherished children will cherish others, from the school, to the neighborhood, to other areas around the globe. Sounds of joy and laughter will enter the classrooms, a sparkle will gleam from a child's eyes, and teachers and administrators will be perceived as mentors, partners, and friends. The curriculum will focus on global issues such as interdependence, scarcity, change, culture, conflict, environmental awareness, and social responsibility. Students will focus on compassion, cooperation, affirmation, and the building of community, while abandoning the current focus on self. Ethics and morality, currently isolated from schools by a secular society, will receive attention in the alternative consciousness. Students will confront the challenges that face humanity and will strive to find meaning in life.

Students will practice decision-making and problem-solving and involvement in an alternative society where cherishing is valued.

CHAPTER IV

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

As I reflect on this research study and my personal
educational praxis, I feel compelled to reevaluate my focus
and practices. As I allow my spirituality to guide my
praxis, I must begin by acknowledging that I live and teach
in a world and a culture embroiled in turmoil and plagued by
homelessness, poverty, racial conflicts, the international
drug trade, violent crime, disconnection, pain, and despair.
While I earnestly believe that I must make a difference to
alleviate the pain and help heal the suffering in the world,
I have come to realize there always have been others who have
shared and continue to share this commitment to transcend
beyond their own wants and needs to reach out to others. I
receive sustenance from my spirituality, faith, and hope. I
also believe others can be lifted up through their spiritual-
ity, faith, and hope to reconnect with their brothers and
sisters and that we must come to cherish each other in order
to form a more healing and loving culture which will lead to
a more healing and loving world.

In this chapter I will focus on three issues. First, I
will focus on the implications of this research study for
the classroom. I will discuss issues and methodology affect-
ing student learning and connect these to my basic beliefs

about humanity. Next, I will discuss the application of
this research to my classroom and speak to other classroom
teachers who share my concern about the alienation and limi-
tations of effective schools being imposed on our students.
I will, in contrast to effective schools, propose classroom
teaching practices which have the potential to enable,
empower, enhance, and connect our students to their peers
and contemporaries in the classroom, the culture, and the
universe in order to bring about social, political, and
spiritual reform. The last section will focus on new chal-
lenges and concerns that I must begin to reflect upon as I
move into a new dimension of thinking and questioning.

Implications for Education

My first thought, as I continue my journey to wholeness,
concerns where we, as a culture, need to go from here. In
this study, I have come to recognize and acknowledge the pain
and suffering in our world as we examine the quality of life
that exists for all of our people. I have come to a more
intense recognition of the interdependence of our world as
we are confronted with personal, economic, political, cul-
tural, and social changes that constantly challenge us to
respond as loving, just, caring, merciful people in a loving,
just, caring, and merciful society and world. I am committed
to the resolution of conflict within and among ourselves in
a loving, just manner. As we indulge in and become satiated

as a culture of "haves," I am recommitted to recognize the
scarcity of human resources and the needs of the "have-nots."
I, and, I fervently hope, members of my culture and world,
feel the need to develop a spirituality and ethic which
enables each of us to assume social responsibility for human-
ity and the environment we share. I am committed to holis-
tic learning for the individual and support the recognition
of pluralism through the acknowledgment of local, national,
and global cultural diversity. In such a world, children
can then be valued, cherished, and empowered to imagine and
achieve their dreams as they, in turn, will be able to
empower others to imagine, dream, and be fulfilled. I feel
the responsibility to help others find meaning in life.
Therefore, I must examine classroom policies and practices
which alienate and destroy connection and meaning to the
children in our schools.

I experience emotional turmoil as I must comply with the
policies and practices of grading students. As a student
studies a new skill or a new subject/topic, I view my role,
as teacher, as one who directs, supports, and facilitates the
student in his/her inquiry. It concerns me that I am wound-
ing the student and causing him/her pain by measuring his/
her research, composition, project, or ideas with either
that of another student or school/system/state expectations.
I believe I should play a supportive role by helping the
student analyze his/her work for its strengths and/or

weaknesses, by providing guidance to enhance a particular
section through an exchange of ideas and/or by assisting in
the location of new materials, by modeling and providing
examples of high-quality work samples, and by providing
opportunities for teacher-student discussions of student
growth through use of portfolios in the classroom. I believe
I must provide opportunities for recognition of student
learning through sharing sessions, such as seminars and exhi-
bitions. I must provide opportunities for multimedia learn-
ing as all students, not only the affluent ones, experience
learning through utilization of computers and camcorders.
Instead of grading students, I want to provide students with
opportunities to experience and interact with each other,
with learning situations, and with learning materials.

I continue to struggle with the sorting of students
within the school, both formal and informal. The practice
of tracking has become a status symbol and an informal way
of sorting the economic "haves" from the "have-nots." To be
sorted by the school system, to be shuffled aside by the
institution as one who will "end up in a mill, anyway" is,
I believe, judgmental and morally and ethically wrong. I
believe every child should be able to enroll in any class
he/she wants to take without limitations. I do not under-
stand how we, as educators, can lock the doors on any stu-
dent and his/her dreams and aspirations and allow ourselves
to be influenced by social or economic factors. I believe

all students are worthy and should be recognized and valued by the schools. Schools should be open and inviting to enable any student to explore any course or topic to actualize the student's interests and aspirations. We are often guilty of "making the schedule work" when we should be concerned with building an atmosphere that is child-centered in a society that is people-centered where cherishing and nurturing is a high priority.

Cherishing in the Classroom

As a classroom teacher, I need to share with other teachers the classroom practices I intend to implement to cherish, connect, and affirm my students. I feel compelled to use portfolios for students to assess their strengths, weaknesses, and growth. Students will be able to experience growth, to compare their work samples, and to reflect on their accomplishments in an accepting, nonthreatening manner. A portfolio can almost serve as a portrait of the student as it offers evidence of the student's experiences without comparing the student to others or measuring the student by standardized tests.

I will also continue to implement active learning strategies that will involve students in their own learning, will permit students to practice decision-making, problem-solving, and problem anticipation and will allow students to connect with each other, their culture, and the world in which they

live. I believe journaling in social studies will be bene-
ficial to the students as each begins to recognize his/her
thoughts and reactions, opinions and possible solutions, and
integrates and internalizes knowledge as meaning. By jour-
naling the student will be able to express his/her innermost
thoughts in confidence without censure, measurement, or eval-
uation and be affirmed through this practice.

I will provide opportunities for students to use narra-
tive and dialogue to lead to empathy which can dispel preju-
dice, contempt, abuse, stereotyping and acts of social injus-
tice. Young adult historical fiction can be a vibrant
motivator to understanding human experiences. When teachers
use literature to complement the social studies curriculum,
a connection will be experienced by the students. Students
can open up their hearts, minds, and souls to others. Narra-
tive in the classroom can be modeled by using the student's
family. The student can connect with the concept and appli-
cation of narrative since he/she is identified, in the com-
munity, through his/her family. One's family, used as nar-
rative, identifies who the student is, where he/she is from,
what he/she stands for, and the way in which the student
will behave in the world. Family, as narrative, can be used,
as an introductory activity with the students, to identify
genealogy. One's cultural and physical heritage can be
traced through the stories the family relates to each genera-
tion and the aspects of our lives we value through relating

these stories to others. We can use genealogy to connect
the adolescent to his/her family and to society at large.
Through the completion of family trees and interviews, we
can enable students to determine their ancestry and geo-
graphic, economic, and historical heritage. As grandparents
and parents use narrative to share personal experiences,
students begin to feel connected and to understand the bene-
fits of narrative. From oral narrative, teachers can provide
students with written narrative experiences. Teachers can
use narrative to discuss human emotions, such as pain, fear,
and hope, how events affect people in different ways, and
how people respond to different events. I will use adoles-
cent literature in my social studies classroom to enable the
students to view events and dates through the eyes of par-
ticipants, whether historical or fictional. The use of ado-
lescent historical fiction provides students with empathic
experiences to enliven the subject matter and allow the stu-
dent to engage in conflict, conflict resolution, problem-
solving, and decision-making. By reading and discussing the
same literature, the students are sharing experiences.
Shared experiences lead to a common history and to community
building. As students, who shared laughter, joy, sadness,
and tears, learn to empathize together, they will develop a
sense of belonging together. By encountering problems and
uncertainty, they will gain more understanding of life and
the world and will develop personal identity. The use of

narrative can lead students to reflect about their own per-
ceptions and treatment of others who are different. Students
can learn compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness of others.
Narrative and dialogue in the classroom allow students to
realize they are not the only ones who have experienced hurt.
By concentrating on events that happen to a fictional char-
acter, the student can reflect on his/her personal experi-
ences and realize it is often the adult, not the child, who
has problems. This realization can allow the student to
value himself/herself and to begin to trust adults.

I must also speak to the problems and concerns I raised
in Chapter III that refer to the diverse student and teacher
population in our society. While I cannot anticipate all
situations or solve these problems, I am committed to the
concept and practice of cherishing students and to the devel-
opment of a spiritual, emotional, cherishing, and caring
framework of education. As for our plurality and diversity,
I believe mutual respect and acceptance of each other can
lead to trust, valuing, and connecting with others. Without
this respect and acceptance, the violence and suffering that
has spilled over from our society into the schools will
escalate. I believe we should accept our differences with
grace and focus on our commonalities as members of humanity.
While everyone will not embrace this concept, there are many
educators and students who are seeking wholeness through
connection, trust, kindness, mercy, and justice. We must

begin somewhere or we will escalate and perpetuate the aliena-
tion which permeates our present educational structure and
society.

Parents, who distrust teachers and other school person-
nel and are leery of these individuals forming emotional
attachments to their children, need to become more aware of
this alternative framework of teaching based on a spiritual
dimension. Educators and parents need to come together, with
an open mind, with concerns for the child as their focus,
to transcend old grievances and biases to work to establish
a new covenantal relationship between home and school to
support an alternative framework of education which will pro-
vide meaning and purpose for the child. While some parents
may never feel comfortable with this paradigm of cherishing,
others may also embrace the concept and practice. It is
plausible that parents, who become involved through their
presence and the sharing of their talents and time as com-
mitted members of the school community, may become advocates
of this paradigm which leads to a commitment to become mem-
bers of the community of humanity. In the absence of trust,
other parents may not be able to embrace trust and acceptance
even if it is offered unconditionally. As for the teacher
who is unwilling to give or receive trust, and who views
teaching as a job, I cannot answer these people. I can only
be in prayer for them that they will come to realize they
have an opportunity to connect, accept, uphold, and enhance

the students entrusted to their care. This teacher-student
encounter might be the first time a student has had an oppor-
tunity to be in communion with an adult. I can only continue
with the hope that other educators will encounter each stu-
dent as a special opportunity for acceptance and cherishing,
instead of an opportunity to demoralize and diminish another
individual.

For those parents and teachers who expect and admire
an authoritarian model of the classroom, educators will be
challenged to reeducate their perceptions of the schooling
process and schools. While I do not have an answer to this
dilemma, I am aware that communication between school and
home, between teachers and parents, must be maintained and
must be cultivated. Communication, in this sense, is defined
as engaging in dialogue, where both teachers and parents
come together, with open minds and inviting attitudes, focus-
ing on mutual concern for the child. The teachers, in this
type of dialogue, share their spirituality through their
reflection of the educational practices and policies and
the parents may be able to detect the authenticity of the
teachers. Those parents, who are critical of a spiritual
framework of education based on love, caring, and cherish-
ing, may be willing to meet with teachers and listen, even
if they have serious reservations about the orientation.
What is valuable and precious is good faith, dialogue, and
an exchange of ideas. Communication as dialogue will be a

step in the right direction to building community between home and school, rather than parents receiving directives from the school in the guise of "communication." Instead of ignoring parents, issuing directives to parents, or speaking to them in educational jargon, teachers might better plan and instigate opportunities for parents to interact within the school environment in one-on-one situations with teachers. Educators can work to attract parents to the school to demonstrate an authentic model based on cherishing, acceptance, love, mercy, and justice rather than depend on rhetoric to convert the parents to a model based on a spiritual framework.

To those students who are private individuals and seem withdrawn from emotional involvement with teachers, I am convinced educators must respect the student's preference for privacy while making every effort to reach out to the student in a caring manner as teachers attempt to establish a trusting relationship. Some educators may be skeptical of the concept of cherishing, but I ask them to survey the society and world which surrounds us and focus on the violence, hatred, suppression, and oppression which results from a world that recognizes and relies on distrust, disconnection, and discrediting others. As a proponent of cherishing, I challenge critics to discredit the effort to work for a world where individuals are enhanced and love,

justice, mercy, kindness, compassion, unconditional accep-

tance, and concern and involvement in humanity prevail.

Some, obviously, cannot resolve these differences in

philosophy and basic beliefs about humanity and the world

around us but strongly believe both teachers and adminis-

trators must build authentic relationships with students

and that most, if not all, so-called discipline problems can

be alleviated through the forming of genuine relationships

based on caring, respect, and trust. School may be the

first environment for some students to experience a caring,

accepting atmosphere. I believe it should be a haven, a

refuge, for all students to blossom, flourish, be affirmed,

and enhanced.

I acknowledge the risk that cherishing could become a

manipulative to control student behavior and/or attitudes.

Yet, I am aware existing models of education are presently

manipulating students. While the potential to damage stu-

dents is present in a model of education based on cherish-

ing, the concept of universal acceptance of students merits

taking the risk. I consider the possibility of caring or

cherishing being reduced to instrumentality to be a very

serious problem. Just as one cannot mandate or legislate

morality and ethics, one cannot mandate cherishing. It must

be authentic and must originate in the heart and soul of the

educator. Recently, the media has reported that the Univer-

sity of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will require all

students to enroll in a course that will study other cultures
in the hope that students will respect those who are differ-
ent from themselves. While the concept is desirable to
create understanding of diversity and appreciation of those
individuals who differ from us, in reality students may view
this course as a "requirement." They may view it as another
item on their checklist to complete in order to receive a
degree. If so, this course has been reduced to instrumen-
tality and any authenticity of the experience has been lost.

The problem of those educators who have not reflected
on the spiritual dimension in their lives causes me grave
concern. I know the significance of spirituality in my life,
that it gives me authenticity, meaning, and purpose, and
this compels me to be concerned about my contemporaries.
Because of my commitment to a particular spirituality, I am
confronted with the dialectic between the need for relation-
ship with and acceptance of those teachers who lack a spir-
itual dimension to their lives. While I believe that I must
accept others with and without a particular spiritual orien-
tation, I believe reflecting on one's spiritual dimension to
a teacher's encounter with a student provides an opportunity
for a deeper teacher-student relationship to develop. To
those educators who do not have an inner and outer spiritual-
ity based on goodness, love, mercy, justice, and cherishing,
I find it difficult to understand their orientation toward
children. I believe we must attempt to be in communion with

others while holding steadfast to a belief system which enhances humanity, rather than become entangled in a philosophy that suppresses and oppresses others as we struggle to dominate others. While I may not be able to convince critics that an alternative spirituality is needed in education and in society which is grounded in cherishing, I believe those of us who care must continue the struggle and draw strength from our shared commitment. Our journey toward wholeness, a life of meaning, can only be made in relationship with others or we will perish in the wilderness.

The teachers who are committed to teaching a specific discipline, rather than students, also causes concern for those teachers who are committed to the students. Teachers committed to students must persevere as other school personnel, policies, and practices continue to be implemented which promote agendas, rather than students. Teachers who cherish and care about students may bring about a change in our society and world by continuing to model their spirituality in their daily interactions with students.

The physical and emotional exhaustion that results from the teacher's emotional involvement in cherishing and caring for his/her students is strenuous. Yet, I believe this is a healthy type of exhaustion which does not harm the teacher. This emotional commitment to students can make life more meaningful for both the teacher and the student. The exhaustion of day-to-day life in the classroom may be a result of

the disconnectedness some teachers are experiencing. I
believe that cherishing a student is less stressful compared
to being alienated from the students.

New Challenges and Quests

After coming to terms with my story, my basic beliefs
and assumptions about the universe, my concern with children,
teachers, and schooling, the need for reflection, and the
renewal of my commitment to cherish children as both an indi-
vidual and an educator, I need to assess my present status.
I must look inward to my new challenges and struggles. I
believe, now that I have looked at the schooling process and
its diminishing effect on children, I must become more
involved in changing our culture. I need to understand the
role I can take to bring about a culture based on cherishing
which will enhance everyone from the youngest child to the
most mature senior citizen and make the journey to wholeness
attainable for each individual throughout the world. I need
to reflect on the problems of diversity throughout our
society and world and contemplate the causes of our divisive-
ness. I also am concerned about how I can make a difference
and bring about a change of heart in those who seem uncon-
cerned about humanity, other than their nuclear family, and
continue to live an opulent, and often wasteful, lifestyle
while so many of our brothers' and sisters' existence seems
in jeopardy. I am challenged to help meet the needs of my

brothers and sisters on our planet, regardless of their history or culture, but because we are all interconnected through humanity. I pray that my eyes will be opened and that I will have the strength and courage to do right, where wrong exists, and to help lead the cause of humanity where everyone will receive grace because he/she has inherent worthiness as a child of God. My journey toward wholeness compels me to be in relationship with and assist my brothers and sisters on their own journey to a life of meaning and purpose.

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