

INTRODUCTION

From the first day a child enters into a formal large group experience on a regular basis (preschool/school) he or she is confronted with social forces which tend to encourage modification towards the mean of the group.(Fatoyuros, 1992)

Today school is one of the major socialising agents of our society and its effects are profound on the social development of all children. Most people accept schooling as a normal and inevitable part of the way a student learns but the school as we know it is a relatively recent innovation and it may not always be the best way of socialising students or of educating them. The interest in “home schooling” is clearly a challenge to the assumption that school is normal for children. The Bible neither endorses nor criticises the concept of schooling. It does clearly teach that the education of children is a parental responsibility (Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:6-12). Since parents have this responsibility they need to exercise their choice of how to educate or bring up their children wisely. If parents choose to send a child to a school they need to consider who will be acculturating their children and with what agenda. What worldview will be assumed in the school where the child attends and how will this affect their child’s development? If they decide to send a child to school, for better or worse, it will be a powerful influence on the enculturation of their children. The power of the school to socialise raises a number of questions of key concern to Christians including:

- Should we be sending children to preschools or keeping them at home as long as possible?
- Is home schooling an advantage or a problem for children?
- Should schools be organised on a horizontal age basis using a family structure?
- Should Christian schools have pre-schools attached?

- Is it really optional for Christian parents to send their children to a secular school to be socialized as a non-Christian?
- Does the Church really have the option of not being involved in Christian schooling?
- Will children suffer for being at a Christian school where they have a different type of socialising to the rest of society?
- How can a Christian school provide a positive school community to enhance the education of a child?

While I will not be attempting to answer these questions in this paper they are questions that do need answering.

BIBLICAL RELATIONSHIPS

NORMS FOR RELATIONSHIPS

The Bible provides norms for relating to others. This paper will consider some of these and their application to classroom situations.

1. Live in relationship.
2. Love one another
3. Live in Unity
4. Forgive each other
5. Have a servant heart
6. Submit to each other

Live in relationship.

When God made man, he demonstrated to him his need for companionship and Adam had to learn that "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). God made people to live in **a free and equal** relationship which Adam and Eve shared. When Adam and Eve sinned the nature of the relationship changed; and sin affected all relationships thereafter. Relationships were now neither free nor equal. Conflict came as one person sought to control another. As a result there was a need for authority and thus leadership. Jesus came to redeem people from the effects of "The Fall" and to establish new relationships in which each is free to use their God-given office to serve the Lord and to serve each other. Because of human sinfulness and people's desire to please themselves there is still a need for leadership. But leadership is not given in order to control but for the good of the whole body in order that it might be built up.

The spirit of the world is a spirit of independence and self assertiveness which can easily influence even Christians if they conform to the patterns of the relationships around them. Only obedience to biblical principles can change this. The professional approach and indeed, the approach of much of academia found in most schools enshrines this spirit of independence and competitiveness.

Love one another

According to the Bible, people's responsibility to God may be summed up in the commandment to love God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:38-40). Jesus Christ also commanded his disciples to love one another as he loved them- a self sacrificing love that puts the interest of the other ahead of one's

own interests (John 13:34-35). The Apostle John pointed out that if Christians do not love others they cannot claim to love God (1 John 4:19-20). In their dealings with children teachers need to speak to them from a real love and concern.

To love another person as oneself is to put their interest above one's own personal interests. Paul says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3 NIV) and again in Ephesians 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ".

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul sets out the full implications of what godly love is all about. If members of a school community attempt to love like this the whole school community will be changed.

Live in Unity

A relationship based on love has very practical outcomes in people's attitudes to others (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). These derive from the fact that Christians are indwelt by Spirit of God and the fruit of the Spirit is demonstrated in humility of heart, harmonious human relationship (Galatians 5:22-23) that are marked by love and unity and by a willingness to put the interests of the other before one's own interest. (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Unity is a key Christian value. Jesus, in his great high priestly prayer in the garden prayed for his disciples, including people today "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: (John 17:21-22 NIV)

Unity must have practical outcomes. The New Testament teaching is both practical and very applicable to learning and teaching in schools. If schools are to be genuinely Christian, relationships in the classroom will show evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) as Christians relationships are marked by love and unity and by a willingness to put the interests of the other ahead of one's own interests. (Ephesians 4:1-6 and compare Philippians 2:1-50).

Forgive each other

Forgiveness is at the heart of all godly relationships. Those who have been forgiven much, love much (Luke 7:40-48). That love should be displayed in forgiveness to others. An unforgiving heart is at the base of most spiritual problems. Jesus said, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15). He also told the parable of the unforgiving servant who though forgiven much himself, could not forgive a fellow servant. Jesus concluded that parable with the servant being turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. He then added these telling words, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:35 NIV).

Many people carry grudges and grievances from the past, some from their childhood-unless they learn to forgive those who mistreated them from the heart there can be no true spiritual maturity and no spiritual community. Many Christians have an unforgiving heart towards others; children, fellow teachers or parents who they

believe have wronged them. But unless they forgive from the heart they cannot be truly children of God who freely forgives those who sin against him.

Have a servant heart

We must have the mind of Christ among us- i.e. in our corporate ethos and governing our relationships and actions. Our example is to be the Lord Jesus Christ who humbled himself to serve others (Philippians 2:1-7).

Paul said, "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" (Philippians 2:1-2).

People often talk about "having the mind of Christ". The "mind of Christ" refers to our corporate understanding, the way we think and act in community. Philippians 2 shows that to have the mind of Christ involves seeing oneself as a servant to others (verses 1-2). It involves an attitude that puts the interest of other people above self-interest.

How does your attitude in general compare with the mind of Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5)? Teachers and students both have to learn to "do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).

Jesus himself gave us the best example of what it means to thus live and work for "others". He:

- Did not grasp after equality (Philippians 2:6).
- Made himself nothing and took on the form of a servant (Philippians 2: 7).
- Humbled himself and became obedient (Philippians 2:8).

He taught us to love all men and introduced a new concept of the servant-leader (Mark 10:42-45). The Lord Jesus himself is our example and he humbled himself to serve others (Philippians 2:1-7). Where a person is placed in a position of authority, that authority is only to be used for the good of another.

Submit to each other

In Ephesians 5 and 6 Paul deals with a number of key relationships, husband-wife, parent-child, and master-servant. He introduces these with what would seem to be intended as an overarching principle the principle of mutual submission:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

This principle shows that all relationships are to be seen in the context of the Christian's role as part of the body of Christ. Because he is the Head, his people need to submit to him. They should recognise that they are part of his body and his Bride, and so submit to the interests of others above their own interests.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES

This paper attempts to apply these norms to the relationships within the school. In doing so it is important to remember that though redeemed by Christ's blood from the judgment that followed Adam's sin, Christians still live with the consequences of the Fall, and while they are new creatures in Christ Jesus they still have an earthly nature and thus can still follow the desires of the flesh which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). Thus Christians need to be aware that:

- Following the earthly nature will bring the fruit of disharmony in relationships (Galatians 5:19-21).
- Those led by the Spirit will make no provision for the flesh.
- They need to walk in the light as He is in the light so that the darkness of the earthly nature will not rule their lives. When relationships are in the light people are transparent to others
- If they sin against others they need to seek forgiveness first from God and then from the person who was offended.
- If there are problems between members of the community then each person should apply the principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-22 to the relationships.

STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

The relationships between staff members will be a critical factor in the ability of teachers to build biblical relationships with their students. If teachers are out of relationship with their brothers and sisters in Christ they will be out of relationship with the Lord and thus will be ineffective in building good relationships with the students. This may sound idealistic but it isn't; it is what is required of mature Christians. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone (See Romans 12 9:21 and especially verse 18).

The teachers both individually and as a team need to work on maintaining relationships that are governed by the norms spelt out above. If these relationships are healthy then the whole school community may function as the Lord would have it. Staff members will discover new strengths as they are assisted by each other and the normal competitiveness and academic independence is replaced by a spirit of cooperation and humility.

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CLASSROOM

Teacher student

Live in relationship.

The relationship between teachers and their students is without doubt the prime relationship in a school. But teachers must also be concerned with the relationships that exist between the students. Not only must teachers be committed to their students and care for them and encourage them but the classroom needs to a place where the members are equipped, encouraged and challenged to do the same.

Love one another

Paul in his great treatise on love (1 Corinthians 13) makes the amazing statement, "Love never fails." While he is primarily referring to the eternal consequences of love

it also encompasses the power of love to change others. When teachers love a student it always has positive consequences. "Love" here is distinguished from warm and affectionate feeling of friends or the romantic feeling towards a lover. The love Paul talks about is a tough love that puts the interest of the other person first not just their feelings. An experienced Christian educator recently suggested that I should stop referring to teachers loving their students as this might be misunderstood as a form of sexual harassment. I was shocked at the suggestion! To stop using a term that is of such critical importance in the Christian life would be to allow Christian thinking to be conformed to the thinking of the world. (Romans 12:2) Loving others for Christians is not an option it is a commandment. (John 13:24-35)

Live in Unity

The class in a Christian school should be a Christian learning community. Unity is the heart of true community. Unity comes about when each person seeks as far as possible and as much as it depends on them to "live at peace with everyone" else (Romans 12:18). Unity grows out of humility. It is this characteristic that a teacher needs to display before their class if true unity is to be developed.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

Where there is conflict and disunity there is an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work through the teacher to bring unity that is based on love and forgiveness and a willingness to put others first.

Students need to be taught how to handle conflict and anger without developing destructive attitudes. (See Romans 12 14-21)

Forgive each other

Peter asked Jesus a question that is important to every teacher, particularly Christian teachers. (Mat 18:21 NIV) Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

What a challenging reply this is. True forgiveness allows the person who has repented to be restored- forgiveness from the heart means that no personal grudges are held. A forgiving spirit seeks no vengeance.

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19) Yet sometime a teacher is more motivated by a desire to punish than a desire to correct and change a students- this is a form of vengeance that is both unspiritual and unchristian.

Have a servant heart

Teachers should use their position of responsibility and authority to care for children, not to control them. When teachers seek to control students they may believe they are doing it in their best interests but those who manipulates others do it for their own good ultimately though they may even convince themselves they is doing it for the student's good. Teachers are called to minister to children not to manipulate them. In Ephesians 6:1-4 Paul outlines the principles that should govern the relationship between parent and child. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring

them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Children have a responsibility to obey but parents have a counter balancing responsibility to ensure students are not exasperated. This same principle should equally apply to the relationships between students and teachers.

Submit to each other

Since students are told to obey their parents in the Lord because it is right (Ephesians 6:1) and thus by delegation their teachers why do teachers need to submit to students out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21)? If teachers think of a class in terms of the secular schooling-instructional paradigm it indeed makes no sense. They would assume that they stand in danger of losing control.

But in a Christian learning community "control" is not the aim, growth is. Growth occurs when each part plays its role fully. As they recognise that the students as much as the teacher are part of the Body and thus part of the growth process they will treat children with the respect due to another part of the Body while still remembering the gifting they have as teachers and the authority given them from Christ.

The Class as a Community

The teacher needs to be aware of the classroom dynamics and to seek to discern what is happening socially in the class community. A better understanding of these dynamics will help teachers to understand the students they teach and to better understand what the group is up to, as opposed to what the individual is up to. Information about social interaction may be best gained by careful observation and by listening to what students say about each other. Sometimes it is good to gain information by more formal ways such as questionnaires, formal interviews and the like but if such approaches are used care is needed to maintain confidentiality, not to pry into the privacy of the child or his family, and not to impact the students adversely by confronting them with information that they are not ready to handle.

Student to Student

The students need to observe the "norms of relationship" as much as the teacher does. If teachers model and apply biblical principles and use them in their leadership the students will very likely adopt these and thus the class room climate would be governed by these norms.

The group of children with whom a child regularly associates will exert immediate, constant and profound influences on his or her social, academic, moral and later vocational development. The Bible teaches us not to be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Corinthians 15:33). The group will have very clear, but usually unstated values about a wide range of issues. These are generally only articulated when a child comes into conflict with school, home or church values.

For most children and adolescents the peer group is a primary social group that will often have more influence on their behaviour than will the family. This poses a problem for the Christian church because the family ought to be the prime influence on the development of the child. On the other hand, it also offers an important role for a Christian school, which can provide a genuine Christian peer group for the child.

The first thing to note about the peer group is that it does not consist of one group but many. The more homogeneous that group, the more powerful its influence is likely to be. Most children will have a number of different levels of peer group influence:

- Siblings
- Neighbourhood/church friends
- School classmates
- Older children at school or church or in other social settings (eg students from nearby schools) whose example they emulate.

Peer group influence normally refers to the influence of neighbourhood/church friends and school classmates. The norms of the peer group will strongly influence the individual. These norms are not determined by any one child but are themselves the effect of values and attitudes gained from others, portrayed through the media and passed on to children through the home and school. These norms change over time but many norms seem quite enduring.

The peer group, to some extent, acts as a leveller. While it will supplement and reinforce what is learnt at home, it does so in a much more tolerant and less emotional way and its norms will not be identical with those of the home. Students will tend to adopt the norms of the dominant peer group at school. As the ties of home become less strong the peer norms become more influential. Where there is a great difference between home and school the child has a chance to learn the values that others have. This can lead to a rejection of home values. But as a student grows to maturity he or she should develop a set of values that are built on the values learnt at home but are modified by his or her own experience. The Christian teacher has the privilege of helping the student along the path to maturity by presenting biblical truth as a moderator of other norms.

Teacher-Parent Relationships

Although, at first sight parents may not be considered to be part of classroom community their role as core educators of their students will, especially with younger students mean that the relationships between teacher and parents will have important ongoing implications

In fact if teachers recognise their key role in all stages of the education process and ensure that relationships are developed along biblical principles there will be far healthier relationship between parents and teachers and teachers will not be guilty of seeking to replace their authority.

THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Functions of the Peer Group

Perhaps the prime function of the peer group is in social development. While early social development is learned in the home, students need a wider group to enable them to be socialised and to develop an ability to relate to other people who are different from them. In the peer group, students interact with each other and practice and develop their social skills and behaviour including aspects such as:

- Cooperation and competition
- Sex-typing and courting behaviour
- Autonomy and independence
- Leadership or 'followership'

The peer group has a profound influence on the moral development of young people. Students get their values from the home but in the peer group these are modified and, in the modified form, adopted as the student's own values. The peer group can be positive or negative from a Christian faith perspective.

Young children are moral absolutists and rules that have largely been accepted uncritically from the home are seen as absolute and unchangeable. The levelling function of the peer group described earlier soon comes to affect their moral values. For a student to be accepted by his/her peers (and this is a crucial condition for social development) he/she soon understands the need to be less rigid and to allow for the moral values of other children to be taken into account.

This reciprocity leads to mutual acceptance and at the same time it subtly influences the values of the child, which may now be based on consensus rather than on absolute values previously accepted. The Christian school has a special responsibility to help children through the conflict caused by the differences between peer group and home values.

Teachers need to help children understand that:

- While it is right for children to obey their parents in the Lord, parents' values and opinions are not absolute;
- God has values that he has revealed and these are absolute although how they are applied may vary in different social settings;
- In interaction with others, there is a need for reciprocity and mutual acceptance. This may lead to some change in family values. Where these are cultural and not based on God's absolutes this may be acceptable and useful. There is a problem if peer values lead to a rejection or change to values that God has made absolute.

It would appear from studies made by C B Keasey (1971) that both the quality and the quantity of the child's social participation facilitate moral development. This has important implications in Christian schools since Christian moral development is one of the aims. This would indicate that moral values are formed in community and not in isolation. It would also indicate that there is very little achieved if teachers simply teach children what they think is right or wrong. Instead teachers must find ways of developing godly peer attitudes and norms. The teacher will need to form relationships with the students, to use prayer and to depend on the work of God's Spirit to make changes in the peer group attitudes. Discussion and working through issues in a class setting will also be more important than simply telling them what is right or wrong. Students need to learn to use the scripture for themselves to know God's will. This is the possibly process that Paul in Ephesians refers to as "unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians 4:13 NIV)

Peer groups are informal groups as distinct from formal, adult-determined groups such as the class, the team etc. In an informal group there is almost complete freedom in determining group membership, leadership and activities. Inevitably there are norms of behaviour that are established that act as guidelines for group acceptance and status. So for example in some groups a boy may have to show himself "tough" or able to "shop lift" or undertake some such activity to prove he is a member and to demonstrate his status within the group.

Within the peer group, the intimate group of friends will have the most significant impact. This could, in some instances, be much more powerful than the family. The reason it is often less powerful is because it tends to change more quickly than does the family group.

The gang is a larger group that may have more rigid norms, which may have quite powerful effects on a child's behaviour though they may not determine his own personal values except while a member of the group. A class is a formal group but even in this group the group norms that are accepted by the students may very well be in opposition to what the teacher wants. A wise teacher is aware of this and does not attempt to solve problems that arise from class norms by simply dealing with an individual who may be conforming to those norms. The classroom norms must be approached and to do this we again will need the guidance of God's Spirit, the power of prayer and the wisdom that come through shared discussion.

Cooperation and Competition

Competitiveness and willingness to cooperate will vary among children depending on family, cultural background, age and sex. Group activities can be used to increase cooperativeness and reduce competitiveness. Cooperation is an important Christian value but it does not exclude some competition. Competition becomes a problem where it comes from the lower nature (lower room) and is demonstrated in self-assertiveness and a desire to put another down. Some competition can be useful if it provides an incentive to all members of the group achieve higher standards, but if it leads to some members feeling useless, the competition is out of balance. For the Christian the answer is not to be found in some balance between competition and cooperation but in allowing both to operate in ways that enable members to love others and to put their interest above self-interest.

Sex Typing and Courting

Sex typing refers to the way a person is influenced in his understanding of his/her gender, sexuality and what are considered appropriate roles. The father in a family plays an important role in sex typing and the presence of a father in the home seems to be helpful in the development of both boys and girls. Much of the modern movement to destroy sex typing and to promote a unisex view of people may be harmful to the self-concept of the children. That is not to say that teachers should encourage rigid sex stereotyping, but they need to be careful that children develop an appropriate sex role typing. The Christian school teacher should not attempt social engineering, as is the case with many secular educators. The results of this type of social engineering on the development of our youth is unknown but there is little about the social conditions of today to indicate that we are moving towards greater social stability health and cohesiveness. Christian schools should be involved in seeking biblical answers to social issues such as the role of women and girls in society, male/female roles and relations between husband and wife.

A male teacher, or an older male in a peer relationship, would seem to have the ability to ameliorate some of the deficiencies presented in male-absent homes. Likewise, in the case where there is no mother figure, a female teacher or an older girl may to some extent provide a female model otherwise lacking. In this area the church as well as the school ought to be taking more action.

Courting activity includes a wide range of socially accepted activities whereby young people form couples some of which will lead to marriage or other semi-permanent relationships of a sexual nature. In Australian society, the peer group has important input into courting activities. Much of the arranging for courting is done at a group level, particularly in younger students. Some students seem to accept roles as brokers for boy or girl friends. In some groups steady relationships are considered the norm and most members form couples, in other groups there may be a preference for informal or shifting pairings. Influential values for courting behaviour are often set by the group rather than by the parents. For example among young people in some church youth groups premarital sex is considered normal for courting couples and in these the numbers involved in premarital sex will be similar to those occurring in general society. This should be a matter of concern to Christians. Unfortunately the church and the home do too little in any specific training in courting activities. The students are often left to the guidance of the peer group.

The teacher can work with the group or against it in dealing with these matters but the group is likely to be more powerful than the opinion of the teacher. Where there are strong relationships of love between the teacher and the members of a group, much more effective influence is likely. Once again the levelling influence of the group will be evident in the area of sexual practices and courting behaviour. For the church, school or home to be effective in setting standards for courting behaviour, values need to be taught in the pre-adolescent stages of social development. Even so the impact of the media on the peer group will have powerful influences towards the dominant cultural norms. These need to be firmly resisted.

Autonomy and Independence

Parents are generally slow to grant autonomy and independence to children thus the peer group is a valuable ally in obtaining it. A statement like “all the kids are doing this” is an example of the use of the peer group to obtain autonomy and independence. The group also provides emotional support for the child in rebelling against home norms and values that are seen by the group as being too restrictive.

In the group, a student who is not allowed independence at home can begin to discover some self-confidence in making her or his own decisions. If teachers are aware of this function they can work using group dynamics towards finding suitable expressions of autonomy and independence and they can also help parents have more realistic ideas about how much autonomy or independence is safe. In general, in Australian society, young people have excessive amounts of independence and autonomy, which makes it very difficult for parents who want to protect their child by restricting autonomy until the student, is maturer. The school has a responsibility to supporting parents in resisting the less desirable values of the broader Australian community.

Conformity

Conformity to peer group expectations will vary with age and the physical and social development of the children; it will peak in intensity during early adolescence and thereafter decline. Perhaps the decline is due to the fact that it has served its purpose in helping the adolescent develop his independence from his parents in a safe way and is then no longer needed. The need to conform seems to be related to fear. At some stages in the student's life, fears are more powerful than in other stages. As the individual's security is strengthened so the need to conform is less evident. It is

noticeable that in secure and loving homes where children are not criticised there is a tendency for less conforming behaviour. This may suggest that teachers can help students in critical stages more by loving acceptance than confrontation. It is also likely that children brought up in homes where there is Christian liberty rather than authoritarian legalism will be more likely stronger in resisting conformity to behaviour that they do not believe in.

The need to conform to group norms may be so strong that young people will do what they know to be wrong simply because of peer pressure. Conformity of a group is not always a bad thing. Schools utilize conformity in areas like uniform wearing, team sports to develop a cohesive social group. Conformity to the group often acts as the levelling agent against the values of the home. Within limits this is helpful. Students need to think through and be guided through some of these issues. Merely confronting group values is counterproductive. Comments like "Why do you listen to such rubbish?" will generally be counter-productive. Thoughtful discussion and an appreciation of the views of the students will be more helpful.

The Bible tells us not to conform to the world's values (Romans 12:1-2). The problem most young people face is that their peer group's values are based on the values of the world. If teachers want to change this the school, home and church they will need to work cooperatively with the students in developing Christian peer values that are accepted by the group. Growth towards spiritual maturity should eventually help the individual to develop the ability to exercise proper judgment (Proverbs 10:13; 19:33 1 Corinthians 2:14 Hebrews 5:14).

Leadership- and “Followship”

Teachers can help students gain proper perspectives by training them in leadership. A school, which makes sure that all, participate in leadership and “followship” will be helping the students learn to make decisions and to listen to others in doing so without blindly following peer group values.

All groups offer the potential for development of leadership. Some students will have attributes that make them more likely to be leaders. Sometime leadership is specific to a certain situation or time while in other cases, leadership may be a more generalised form. Qualities likely to be deemed necessary for leaders will vary but may include helpfulness, fairness, sociability, confidence and expertise. Among adolescent males physical strength and fearlessness may also be deemed to be important. Leadership and popularity are not identical though there is considerable overlap in their characteristics. Leaders generally believe in themselves- i.e. they have a positive self-image. Good leaders are usually those who have been good followers too. Paul was able to say to his disciples follow me as I follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11.1). The qualities for “followship” are not the opposite to those of leadership. Secure and well-adjusted people will make better followers than someone who is a loner and withdrawn. The quality of “followship” may be seen as a positive quality if used wisely in a relationship (Ephesians 5:21). Ultimately only those who have learnt to follow can successfully lead.

Too often leadership in a school is seen by the students as an opportunity for the use of power or as an exercise in gaining the esteem of others. True leadership should be seen in terms of servant leadership with the motive being to use ones gifts to build up the body. Many of the election processes used to choose student leaders turn the choice of leaders into a popularity contest.

Issues

- In the peer-versus-parents confrontation, what can a Christian teacher do to help?
- Can we have a Christian peer group that is helpful?
- How can and should we understand youth culture?
- What influence can a teacher have on the peer group?
- How does enrolment policy impact on the peer group and student socialisation?

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