THE appropriate relationship of schools and colleges to the growing value problems within the United States poses a crucial issue for educational leadership. Ours is an open society, caught up in a revolution, and increasingly in conflict with itself. In periods of such deep anxiety and rapid social change, efforts to preserve or to overthrow value orientations become more intense. With its massive access to the young, education must by default or intent become embroiled in the turbulent efforts within the nation to reconcile old and emerging values.

Since McCarthy and, more recently, since Sputnik, the schools and colleges generally have shown their unreadiness to cope constructively even with those youth problems which spill directly onto their campuses disrupting the "normal" program. In response to public pressure, we have chosen in education to center our attention too narrowly on the formal academic curriculum, achievement standards, school management, provision of facilities and the like. While most of our concern has been centered on these matters, we have failed to devote needed attention to the storm clouds gathering in the personal-social value dimensions of young people's lives. Some have argued that these areas are not the proper concerns of education.

Recently a remarkable sermon came to my attention in which Rabbi Gerald Raiskin¹ raised, in a dramatic way, some of the gravest questions facing this society. He described a classroom scuffle, a challenge, the ensuing after school fight, and its aftermath. Thus he provided the springboard for a disturbing analysis of the values we are nurturing, often by default, in the nation's youth. Rabbi Raiskin reported:

When the two antagonists met in the area not far from the school, 80 young people gathered to watch the fight. The student's friends had suggested he ask his opponent to remove his shoes to avoid being badly hurt. He did ask, and started to take off his own when he was hit, and before he knew what occurred, he was stretched out on the ground.

The opponent kicked him in the mouth, chipping teeth. He was kicked in the eye, causing it to hemorrhage. He was kicked in the head, and his fingers were stomped, crushing the thumb. Many of the spectators shouted, "Stomp him!"

The young man managed to get up. His opponent took him and banged his head against a concrete pole. No one tried to stop the fight. An adult nearby, seeing the crowd, had called the police. They arrived at this point and everybody scattered.

Eighty teen-agers watched, some of them friends of the injured boy—and not one voice was raised in protest. There was no horror or indignation.

Subsequent to the one-sided fight, the

---

¹ From a sermon delivered by Rabbi Gerald Raiskin of the Peninsula Temple Sholom, Burlingame, California.
beaten boy was threatened with further violence for "finking," or informing, which he had not. Friends of the opponent offered to say that the victim had started the fight. Only two of his friends were willing to commit themselves to stating the facts. The principal wished not to make a public issue of the event lest the boys involved become heroes before their peers. Other adults who knew what had taken place said nothing.

Rabbi Raiskin indicted the schools, the churches, and the community's adults for refusing to lift a hand in stemming such violence and brutality, in refusing to report and speak on what they knew. Thus, in a highly "teachable moment," brutality is sanctioned as a substitute for empathy and the age-old question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is answered by youth and adult alike in the negative.

Coercion by Schools

Under severe pressure from many quarters the schools are failing seriously in maintaining supportive relations with children and youth, especially since Sputnik. We have moved dangerously close to a kind of "child-buyer" syndrome in which the young indeed are induced, cudgeled and coerced under threat of failure toward ends they themselves cannot perceive or understand to be their own. Somehow, we tell ourselves, this is necessary in the national interest, in the interest of the student as well, and it is also what the public wants.

Well intentioned and needed efforts to strengthen and revitalize the traditional academic disciplines and emphasize the intellectual aspects of education, mainly for the talented student, have gone awry in grave measure. By default we have seen the narrowing of the values formerly nourished by the comprehensive school programs, and a narrowing as well of the range of student talents and interests well served by the schools.

These trends have paralleled and abetted the continuing pyramidng of youth problems in our communities. Alienation of youth from adults and from adult sanctioned community norms has increased. Dropouts are again a cause for national concern, unemployment among adolescents and young adults becomes increasingly severe, and the tempo of ethnic and racial conflict mounts, corroding our central value system.

Highly motivated and talented youngsters feel driven and increasingly reflect impatience with those who move with less alacrity through the school program. The less motivated and less talented suffer discouragement and reflect a growing sense of alienation and unworth expressed by withdrawal and aggression. Neither argues well for the sustenance of an open society, in which two key conditions, acceptance of divergence and active search for consensus in mutual respect, are basic requisites to its perpetuation.

In our communities and our schools, we may be driftng toward a breakover point in our values and attitudinal postures. We seem to waver between sets of premises which transvalue each other and highlight the root differences between motivations in democratic and totalitarian societies:

Sophisticated capacity to trust vs. Cynicism and distrust
Optimism and commitment beyond self vs. Pessimism and retreat to privatism
Sense of fraternity in a common enterprise vs. Everyone for himself
Commitment to service vs. Commitment to power over others

Educational Leadership
Restraint and empathy vs.
Urge to discredit, coerce or destroy
Capacity to express affection and love vs.
Projection of hostility and hate.

It would be silly to assume that schools deliberately move to enhance negative or anti-democratic values. Nor can we overlook the stubborn efforts of youth and young adults to seek out constructive, maturing experiences which involve commitments beyond themselves to humane goals. Symptomatic of such yearnings are their responses in such movements as the Peace Corps, Civil Rights activities, volunteer work in educational programs for the disadvantaged, in political campaigns, and wide ranging efforts to seek out-of-school employment. The fabric of community educational institutions should deliberately make available both tactful support and guidance for such efforts and aspirations.

Our adult leadership of youth in community and school could do with less ambivalence. We suffer a measure of despair and defeatism mixed with sweeping moral judgments when confronted by negativism in youth. We also reflect unbecoming nervousness when youth attempt to move with zest into the preserve of adult roles.

We are overdue for a resurgence of interest in a multivalued school system, which in itself provides institutional models for a democratic, open society. School leaders and responsible community and national leaders must salvage again the persistent central theme of a liberal society. Perennially they must ask what education is of most worth and must stubbornly seek to develop a curriculum design expressing the tentative answers to the deepest questions a revolutionary democratic society can pose.

The critical analysis of our deepest traditions must be joined with analysis of living experience in an educational framework, which is as unequivocal about the importance of growth in the value dimension, as it is demanding of intellectual rigor. The value premises by which we live are learned in the social context of our lives. Can they not be refined and be made explicit through education directed to that end with means appropriate to that purpose?

**Growth in Value Dimension**

The mature, adult members of any society dare not turn for whatever reason from the responsibility for inducting the young successfully into the value system they wish to sustain and extend if the core values of that society are to be preserved in the lives of its people.

The widespread notion that values cannot be taught must be labeled as archaic. Pretechnical and preliterate societies have mastered the process with a high degree of predictability through intuitive means or through deliberate shaping of the maturation process spanning many generations. Authoritarian societies, which rise during periods of massive frustration, have shaken us with their success in building fanatical commitments to an explicit, simplified ideological catechism of totalitarian ends and modes of behavior which become dogma, and which are turned against others without equivocation or remorse.

Our own task is rendered difficult by our very commitment to an open society which assumes that strength accrues from pluralism, from loyalties freely given, after critical examination of alternatives. Openness, of course, is risky business, rooted in optimism about the nature of man and the efficacy of democratic values and ways. We deny ourselves blunt, coercive indoctrination of the young, typical of nondemocratic societies. This we
do on some combination of historical evidence, empirical data, and social faith.

We assume, further, that as the root tenets of democracy become value criteria by which individuals live and groups function, maturing experiences ensue which are satisfying and which in turn enhance commitments to those guiding values. Yet in certain periods of stress, we tend to leave such hopeful, generative fires untended as we set our priorities in other directions. The McCarthy period and the post-Sputnik years have provided a decade and a half of skewed emphases. I am urging that we do more to assure the continuation and extension of democratic ways. Can we afford not to bring to bear on the educational process for this purpose the appropriate resources of the humanities, the arts, and the sciences, particularly the behavioral and life sciences? We have learned to focus massive resources on the solution of other complex problems.

In the value dimension shall we say our uncertainties and the admitted complexity of the problem put it beyond reach, or, shall we say that the difficulties define the dimensions of the challenge? Can we afford to concede, as some stridently argue, that one value system is as appropriate for youth as another, or shall we accept a bias in support of our humane traditions? Shall we say democracy is an undefinable morass, an illusion, a threat, or shall we set about the task of analysis, explication and adaptation of that value system in ways appropriate to our times and circumstances?

I want it both ways. I want us to hold and extend the major gains we have made in shaking down the curriculum in relation to new knowledge and innovations in techniques. But we must also sort out and assess the value implications which stem directly from those activities and indirectly from the decision to place less emphasis on other dimensions of the curriculum. We have the traditions, the wealth, the creativity and research potential to do much more. Can we afford to do less?

—Robert R. Smith, Dean, School of Education, San Francisco State College, California.