

CHAPTER 6

6. THE SCRIPTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOLING AS AN ANSWER TO THE ALLEGED CRISIS OF THE SCHOOL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding four chapters, the crisis line of the school was discussed. To recapitulate briefly: a broad outline of the school's history was given in chapter 2 of this study in order to see and understand properly the alleged present-day fundamental crisis of the school. Next, in chapter 3, the alleged problems or crisis of the school were sketched in the modern/contemporary North American regional context. For this purpose, Dewey's pragmatic educational and school theory was first discussed and then attention was paid to three so-called reaction formations, namely the scientific reformational view of the school, the countercultural view, and the return-to-basics movement. Chapter 4 was intended as an exposition of the present-day left liberal criticism of the school. In other words, in chapter 4 special attention was given to the school ideas of those who want to reform school on the basis of the ideal of the free human personality and of individuality. Chapter 5 supplied the left radical criticism of the school which began to query the very right of existence of the school itself as an educational institution and have called for the de-establishment of the existing system of schooling.

What has to be done now in this chapter is to view the problems or crisis of the school as discussed in the previous chapters from a Scriptural perspective and to diagnose the future of the school from this perspective. For this purpose, the main or fundamental problems or crisis of the school, which were indicated in the preceding four chapters will firstly be profiled, and then the Scriptural perspective on these alleged problems or crisis of the school will be supplied in order to evaluate the legitimacy of the various points of criticism.

The future of the modern school will repeatedly be briefly diagnosed on the basis of the evaluation of the various facets of the school criticism.

This is not an effort to derive from Bible texts only a full answer to all the alleged problems or crisis of education and of the school. The Bible does not offer any systematic treatment of such issues as education and the school. As has already been indicated in the introductory chapter (cf. paragraph 1.6.5), using only the Bible as a source in scientific work leads to biblicism. To answer the basic questions of education and the school, however, one actually needs insight into God's creational ordinances that He instituted in the cosmos. However, on the other hand, investigating only created reality, apart from Scripture, leads to secularism. The Bible, besides teaching us the way of salvation, provides us with the principles which must govern the whole of our lives. Therefore, an effort will be made in this chapter to bring the problems or crisis of the school under the light and direction of Scriptural truth and an attempt will be made to seek real answers to the alleged problems of the school from the Scriptural perspective.

6.2 A PROFILE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL (ACCORDING TO ITS CRITICS)

6.2.1 Orientation

Although the alleged problems (or crisis) of the school which have been discussed in the previous four chapters do not reveal a homogeneous character, the following may be outlined as the central or fundamental problems or crisis of the modern school according to its critics: these are ontological, anthropological, epistemological by nature, and they pertain to societal relations, and to ethical and religious matters.

6.2.2 Ontological considerations

6.2.2.1 The ontological "problem" of the school (according to its critics)

Attention should be paid, first of all, to the ontological "problem" of the school. The school as a social institution in itself had, up to the time of the left radical critics, never been questioned throughout the ages. In primitive society, the so-called "initiation school" was accepted by the adult members of the society as an important agent or an occasion to train the future members of the society although it functioned only on occasion, usually at initiation times (cf. paragraph 2.2.1). Later on, however, as the home and the community became ineffectual, even incompetent, in training the young for adulthood through informal contact, the school as a social institution became a necessity. In this way, throughout the ancient and classical times as well as in mediaeval and modern/contemporary times (up to the time of the left radical critics), the school has been accepted and regarded as an indispensable social institution for transmitting knowledge and skills regarded as necessary to the ensuing generation (cf. chapters 2, 3 & 4).

The left radical school critics in contemporary times, however, began to query the very right of existence of the school. Critics like Holt, Reimer and Illich (who belong to the left radical camp) define or describe the school merely phenomenologically (cf. paragraph 5.4.3.2), and they are convinced that the school can and should be abolished.

This ontological problem, namely, whether the very right of the existence of the school may be questioned, should be viewed from a Scriptural perspective, and will be done in the following paragraph.

6.2.2.2 The Scriptural perspective on the ontological
"problem" of the school, among others the
origin of the school

The school as a social institution emerged from the cultural, historical development of man. From the earliest times the parents themselves transmitted all the necessary knowledge and skills to their children. But with the advancement of the cultural development, of the knowledge and skills which had to be transmitted to the children, and with the growth of the complexity of the human society, the parents could no longer meet the demands and duties of teaching their children. The parents lacked the necessary time and skills to give proper teaching to their children. The result was that they began to organize a new structure to meet the new needs (Coetzee, 1973:283 - 284; Jaarsma, 1953:343; Schoeman, 1980(b):39; 1978(b):117 - 118; Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:96; Barnard, 1982:7). Thus, it may be said that the school came into existence by way of man-in-society to meet a certain need, namely the teaching of specialized contents of knowledge regarded as necessary to the following generation (cf. paragraph 2.2).

This, however, does not mean that the school has a human origin. Everything in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, was created by God. He created the whole universe by His Word. Not one thing in all creation was made without the Word (Gen. 1:1; John 1:3; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16). Therefore, the school owes its whole existence to God. The school is a creation of God over which His sovereignty is proclaimed. It is subjected to God and in it as a form of communal life, also, the everlasting power of God can be seen (Rom 1:20).

But the school is not an institutionary social relationship in the sense that it was not given as an institutional form (as it exists in current society) directly at creation. It is also not a natural community like marriage and family. It evolved in the course of history as something which was given in principle at creation but only came into existence in the course of time with the unfolding of the Council of the Providential God. In other words, although the school as a so-

cial institution was not directly instituted by God as in the case of the marriage, the principle (Stone, 1974:89), the framework (Mechielsen, 1980:63), the ontic structure (Schoeman, 1980(b):39), the ontic law (Taljaard, 1976:118, 194; Van der Walt, 198 :36), or the structural norm (DeGraaf, 1968:114; Spykman, 1981:158 - 159) valid for the school was given to it by God, as Paul (Rom. 1:20) puts it, "ever since the world began" (Taljaard, 1976:118).

This ontic law or structural norm for the school can and must be discovered or recognized, and be given positive form by the scientific and cultural (esp. organizing) activity of man. It must be positivized in keeping with the cultural situation and historical development in order to function properly and to be meaningful and binding on the subject-side (De Graaf, 1968:115). According to Schoeman (1979:112; cf. Schoeman, 1978(b):118), it has been ordained in this way from the beginning of the world by the Creator, so that man - in order to fulfil his cultural task properly - will proceed to "school-forming" or "school-founding" in order to establish a specialized (and professional) institution which is able to unlock the child's innate potential for God's glory.

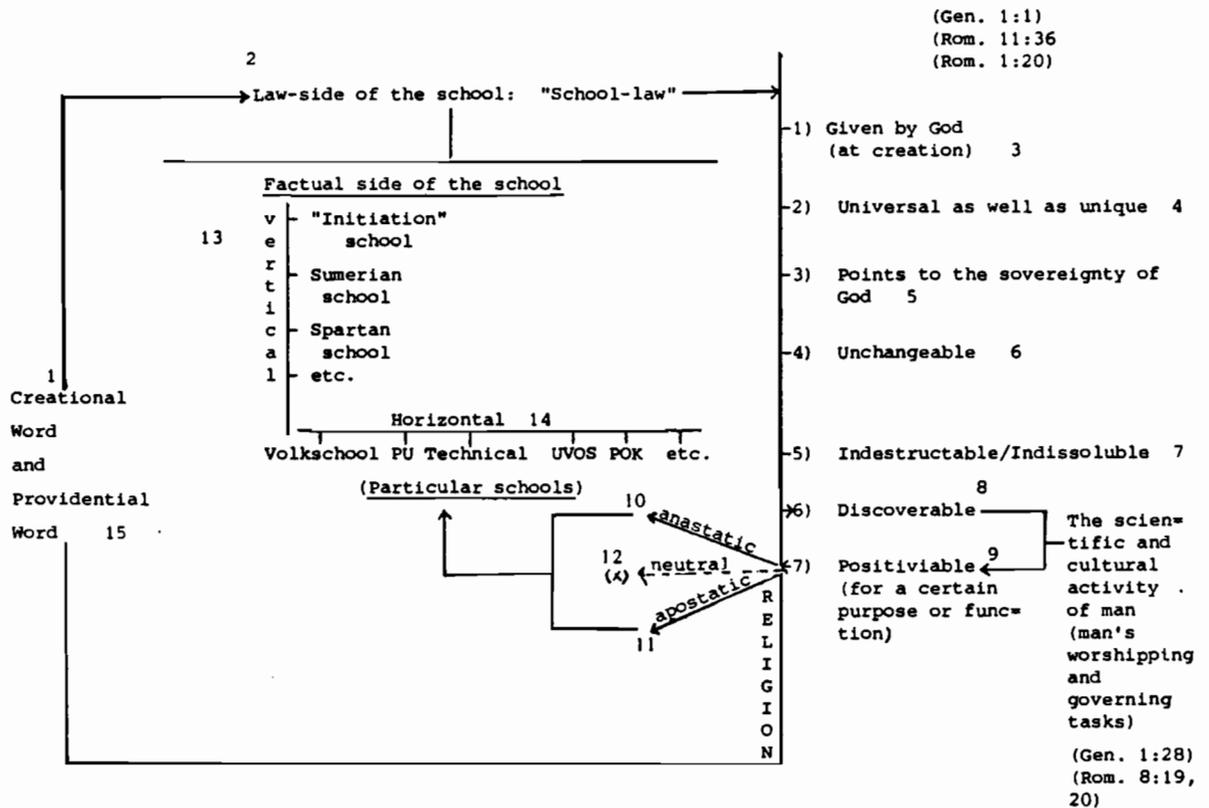
The process of positivization may take an anastatic direction or an apostatic direction according to men's heart or religion, but may never go in a neutral way (cf. diagram on page 264), since human beings as religious beings positivize the ontic law or structural norm for the school into an actual or real form of social institution in the cultural and historical context concerned. The school can only be effective if it is positivized in an anastatic way and only if it is in harmony with God's will for the school. Hence, one finds here the sound and solid framework within which the school as a social institution should be reformed.

The school as a social institution, therefore, is not an arbitrary establishment or a mere product of historical coincidence. It is a form of concretization, actualization, or positivization of the ontic law or structural norm for the school, which was given by God at creation in the cultural and historical context of man. School is, thus, historically founded but is not historically determined/destined. It is

consistently determined by the specific ontic law or structural norm guaranteeing the uniqueness of the school (Taljaard, 1976:194). In this sense, the school does not have a pedo-origin, nor a parent-origin, nor a community-origin, but a "theo-origin".

Diagram 6.1 shows how the school as an institution originated in human society.

Diagram 6.1: Flow-chart to explain the origin of the school in human society



(Explanation of diagram 6.1)

* The ontic law valid for the school was instituted by God, namely by His Creational Word (1).

- * The ontic law for the school (2) is characterized by several properties: it was, first of all, given by God at creation (3); it is universal as well as unique (4); it points to the sovereignty of God (5); it is unchangeable (6); indestructable and indissoluble into the factual-side of reality (7); it can and must be discovered and be given positive form by the scientific and cultural activity of man (8, 9) (cf. Gen. 1:1; Rom. 1:20; 11:36; Gen. 1:28; Rom. 8:19 - 20).
- * The process of positivization of the ontic law for the school may take an anastatic direction (10) or an apostatic direction (11) according to men's heart, but is never neutral (12).
- * Particular schools (the historical line) (13) and the diversity of school (the horizontal line) (14) are therefore various forms of concretization, actualization or positivization of the ontic law for the school, which was given by God at creation, in the cultural and historical context of man.
- * The process of positivization is maintained by God's Providential Word (15).

6.2.2.3 Evaluation of the ontological "problem" of the school

Since the ontic law for school was given by God Himself, it can not be changed, ignored or discarded by man. It is man's calling, however, to positivize the ontic law into a certain concrete form. For this reason, one finds schools in some or other form in every society, however primitive. The concrete form of the positivized ontic law for the school can differ, change or be continually reformed in order that the school may function properly in a certain cultural and historical human context.

The left radical critics of the school regard the school merely as a historical phenomenon and they over-look the ontic law for the school.

For this reason, they do not acknowledge the fact that the school has its own unique law side. In the theories of all (non-Christian) school-critics throughout the ages, and especially in the theories of left radical school-critics in contemporary times, the ontology of the law which God gave for the school has never been acknowledged (cf. paragraph 5.5.16).

In view of these findings, it can be said that the pronouncement of the death sentence on the school as a phenomenon is nothing more than empty words without any hope that school will actually disappear from human society. On the contrary, the school as a form of social institution will exist in future on condition that it is continually willing to be reformed to comply with and in acknowledgement of the God-given ontic law for the school.

6.2.3 Anthropological considerations

6.2.3.1 The anthropological "problem" of the school (according to its critics)

The child is regarded by most school critics, and especially by the left liberal and left radical school critics, as a free, good, and autonomous/sovereign being who is imbued with rationality and specific capabilities. They put a high premium on man's potentiality, perfectibility, autonomy, freedom and dignity.

The ideal of developing the free autonomous human being goes back to classical times. The ideal of paideia and kalokagathia was the aim of the Athenian schools (cf. paragraph 2.4.7.5). During the Hellenistic period, the ideal of paideia became much more important than even before (cf. paragraph 2.4.4). The Roman school took as its model the paideia ideal of the Greek and Hellenistic times (cf. paragraph 2.4.5). In modern times, Rousseau also held the opinion that man was inherently good, clever, patient, and overflowing in his capacity for generosity

and kindness and that the school tended to destroy these traits (cf. paragraph 2.6.4). Dewey allowed the natural needs of the child to be the guiding principle or a rule of conduct in education and schooling (cf. paragraph 3.6.5). Like Rousseau and Dewey, Neill's strong belief was in the goodness of man's desires (cf. paragraph 4.5.4). Modern left radical school critics also deify man's potentiality, perfectibility, autonomy, freedom and dignity (cf. chapter 5).

Based upon these liberal, humanistic anthropological presuppositions, the left liberal critics have up to now been saying that the schools are not fit places for free, autonomous human beings and that they even destroy the minds and hearts of children. Schools are condemned by the left radical critics as being totally manipulative institutions.

All the criticism of the school and theory of education presuppose a certain anthropology. The need for a correct (Scriptural) understanding of man is, therefore, very real in order to be able to evaluate the criticism and ideas of education and the school which have been outlined in the previous chapters.

6.2.3.2 The Scriptural view of man

6.2.3.2.1 Orientation

To discuss Christian anthropology in detail is not the purpose of this paragraph. Abundant sources on this topic have already been produced in Christian reformational circles.¹⁾ In the following paragraphs,

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1. For the purpose of surveying Christian anthropology, one may be referred to the following literature: Calvin (1967:183 - 196); Dooyeweerd (1975:173 - 195); Jaarsma (1953(a):280 - 350); Meehl (1971); Lee (1977); Seerveld (1981:74 - 81); De Jong (1974:71 - 80); Heyns (1981); Taljaard (1976:150 - 187); Van der Walt, Dekker & Van der Walt, I.D. (1983:92 - 187); Dekker (1980); Kim (1980:292 - 333); Strauss (1978(b):285 - 309); Schoeman (1979:129 - 222); Van der Walt & Dekker (1983:76 - 86); Van der Walt (1978).

therefore, a brief discussion on the Scriptural view of man will be presented to provide the basis for the evaluation of the school criticisms which have been treated in the previous chapters.

6.2.3.2.2 Man as a being with a "heart"

The Scriptural understanding of man reveals, first of all, that man is a being with a "heart". The word "heart" as it appears in the Bible has various meanings. Along with its literal meaning (a physical organ of the human body) and its figurative meaning in such an expression as "the heart of the sea", the word "heart" signifies the innermost being of man (Joel 2:13), the source of human life (Jer. 4:18; Proverbs 4:12), the background of human thoughts, wisdom, reason, words, deeds, emotional life (Ex. 28:10; Ps. 90:12; Math. 12:34; 15:19; Proverbs 15:13), the source of sin (Gen. 8:21), and the deepest centre of our entire temporal existence (Ps. 51:12). All these different meanings of the word "heart" illustrate the Biblical doctrine that out of the heart are the issues of life (Spier, 1976:16 - 17).

Both the Hebrew term for heart, lēbab or lēb, and the Greek term for heart, kardia, etymologically mean the deepest being of man, and hence refer to the kernel of personality, of his self, to the root of his existence as man (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:7 - 8).

In this way, the Bible clearly shows that the heart of man is the true selfhood of man, the concentration point, the religious root of our entire human existence. Out of it arise all human deeds, thoughts, feelings and desires. It is the origin, the fountain of all functions or abilities of man in temporal life.

In short, man is a being with a heart, and the heart of man is, as Schoeman (1980(b):89) says, "the religious focal point of the totality structure of the human body in which all fifteen temporary functions of man knit together in a typically human way to form a specific whole, namely man, explorer of creation, builder of cultures, heir of God, collaborator in His creation, yet never God, and always subordinate to

His law". Educational and teaching activity should, therefore, be an activity aimed at forming the heart of man. It is an ongoing process of unlocking the gateway of the heart of man.

6.2.3.2.3 Man as a religious being

The word "religion" is derived from the Latin word re (again) plus ligare, which means "to bind". Religion, thus, means "rebinding" or "binding back" the heart of man to God or a god/gods (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:2). By religion, Dooyeweerd (1969:57) means "the innate impulse of human selfhood to direct itself toward the true or toward a pretended absolute Origin of all temporal diversity of meaning, which it finds focused concentrically in itself". This implies that the word "religion" denotes a relation in which man stands to God or a god/gods.

Man is basically a religious being. Religion is founded in the very nature of man, and was not imposed on him from without. In this respect man differs from all other created things, because they are in essence a-religious, or in other words, they possess a religious structural-moment merely for man's sake (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:78). By virtue of his being religious, man seeks communion with God, though by nature he now seeks it in the wrong way. "Elke mens se religie is dus anastaties (dit wil sê op God gerig) of apostaties (afvallig gerig, weg van God, gerig op iets uit die kosmos), dus: teosentries (God in die sentrum) of kosmosentries (iets uit die skepping in die sentrum)" (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:2).

Religion takes its seat in the heart of man. Therefore, it embraces man in his entirety with all his thoughts (knowing) and fantasy (imagination) and volition (willing). In religion the heart controls the knowing (Rom. 10:13 - 14; Heb. 11:6), the imagining (Ps. 28:7; 30:12), and the willing (Rom. 2:10, 13; Jas. 1:27; I John 1:5 - 7) (Berkhof, 1976:19).

Since religion which takes its seat in the heart of man determines the direction of all activities of man, education and teaching activity should

be directed toward the religious forming of the heart of the pupil (cf. paragraph 6.4).

6.2.3.2.4 Man as an individual being

Since God created everything "according to its kind" (Gen. 1:11 -27), everything in reality has its own individual structure. In other words, God supplied specific ontic laws for all the creatures, thereby installing in creation the diversity which one finds everywhere, and which must always be honoured.

Man has, just like any other "thing" in reality, his own individual existence: he is not material, neither plant nor animal. One person is also not another person; each person has his own identity.

From the theory of modality it is evident that although in certain aspects of his composition man is akin to matter and all living things, he can never be identified with them. Unlike the physical thing, the plant and the animal, the three "lower" structures of man, that is, the physico-chemical, the biotic, and the psychical structure of man (cf. paragraph 6.2.3.2.5) are stamped and directed by the normative act-structure which is typical for man (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:79 - 80; cf. Kalsbeek, 1970:65).

In addition, man has subject functions in all 15 modalities, and according to his corporeality also object functions in all the modalities:

Die mens verskil van die dier in dié opsig dat hy 'n subjeksfunksie in al vyftien die modaliteite besit. Slegs die mens kan glo, liefhê, reg spreek, kuns skep, handel dryf, sosiaal verkeer, praat, kultuur vorm, dink, voel, lewe en bowendien deel hê aan die fisiese, die kinematiese, ruimtelike en aritmetiese funksies. Die mens kan die benedemenslike individuele skepsele (die dier, die plant en die materie) objektiveer deur ...

die objektfunksies van die dinge te ontsluit
(Van der Walt, Dekker & Van der Walt, I.D.
1983:80 - 81; cf. Spier, 1946:228 - 229).

Furthermore, each person also has his own unique, unrepeatable, irreducible personality within the entirety of the human kind. All this is so because man is created in the image of God.

The Christian educator knows the radical distinction between material, plant, animal and man, and thus lets his educational activity be qualified by the act-structure of man. He knows, moreover, that one child can and may not be treated purely like another one, because every one possesses his own unique and unrepeatable personality. He knows, furthermore, that the law-structure of the educand must be deepened and opened up to typical-human functions under the guidance of the act-life (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:80 - 81).

6.2.3.2.5 Man as a modal being

The existence of man on earth is a temporal being (Afr. syn) (cf. paragraph 6.3.4.6), in which all fifteen modalities can be distinguished, but can not be separated from one another. It shows a coherence and interlacement of four structures, united by God in the human body as the expression-field of the human self (Kalsbeek, 1970:92).

An analysis of the typically human totality structure shows four clearly distinguishable structures:

In the first place, the "lowest" structure of the human body is the physico-chemical body structure, which comprises the building materials of the human body and includes the first four modi of human existence, namely those of number, space, movement and energy. This structure forms the basis of man's earthly temporal existence.

The next and "higher" body structure is the biotic body structure, which encompasses the organic life of man and belongs to the biotic aspect of reality. It is based on the physico-chemical body structure and cannot exist in isolation from the latter.

In the third place, the human body shows also a psychial structure, which relates to the sensory-emotive aspect of human life, and which is based on the vegetative-biotic and physico-chemical body structures. It is dependent upon their existence and encompasses the psychial mode of human existence.

In the fourth place, the "highest" and at the same time most complicated structure of the human body is the normative act-structure, which is based on the foregoing three body structures and which encompasses the nine normative modi of man's existence (namely, the logical, historical (cultural), lingual, social, economic, aesthetic, juridical, ethical and pistic). Because of the fact that man has a normative act-structure at his disposal he is more and higher than all other creatures. The act-life of man makes all his lower-structures typically human (Schoeman, 1980(b):89).

Man as a modal being participates in all the above-mentioned structures. In other words, he participates in all fifteen modalities or ways of existence which are of equal importance and are closely interwoven in reality. The religion which controls the heart of man, gives direction to all these fifteen functions of man. And exactly for this reason man is more than the sum-total of his functions.

In view of man as a modal being, the teacher (and educator) may not absolutize any one of modalities in the structure of the pupil. The Christian teacher (educator) should realize that every human act which originates in the depths of the selfhood of man, moves the whole body to action and that in every act the individual personality operates in terms of all fifteen modes of existence. The Christian teacher (and educator) should also realize that, because the normative act-structure deepens the lower structures of man to typically human structures, man is not an animal, and that the methods and techniques which are used in education and teaching differ radically from all methods and techniques which are used in the training of the animal (cf. paragraph 6.4).

6.2.3.2.6 Man as a temporal being

All created things exist in time. God has included the whole of creation in time. All modalities, from the arithmetic to the pistic, are subject to time (Gen. 1:1; Is. 40:6 - 8; Ps. 102:25 - 27). As a creature, man is also subjected to time. Man is a temporal being:

Cosmic time encompasses all of creation and expresses itself in each modality in a unique manner. No single modality is timeless. No aspect of reality transcends time; the super-temporal is not to be found within any law-sphere (Spier, 1976:52).

All cr²atures (man not exluded) are totally temporal. Only God is eternal, exalted above all temporality. Therefore, everything in the world would lose its meaning if it were not related to Christ who will bring creation to its completion. This view of time is of great importance for the Christian educator and teacher.

Since the pupil is a temporal being, and since he can find the true and real meaning of his temporal existence only in his relation to the Eternal God as Creator and Redeemer, constant attention should be paid to the direction of the heart of the pupil in all activities of education and teaching/learning. The human heart is apostate by sinful nature. The core of the Christian education and teaching/learning is, therefore, the binding back of the apostate immature being to his religious root. In this sense educational and teaching activity is grace-work, and an especially responsible task. The educator/teacher is an instrument of the Holy Spirit by whom the educand/learner is re-established in his God-pleasing and eternal relation to God on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:79) (cf. paragraph 6.4).

6.2.3.3 Evaluation of the anthropological "problem" of the school

In the light of the Scriptural view of man, the anthropological presuppositions of modern humanistic critics (left liberal and left radical) are unacceptable. Man, as a created being, is not a totally "free" and autonomous/sovereign being. As a religious being, man can find his true and real meaning of existence only in his relation to his Creator, God.

Furthermore, the natural needs of the child can not be the norm in the process of education and schooling of the child. The human heart, which is the true selfhood of man, is apostate by nature. Therefore, although it is true that in the teaching and learning situation careful attention should be paid to the interests, desires and potentiality of the child it is totally wrong and anti-normative according to Christian norms to make sinful human nature the determining factor or guiding principle in the process of education and schooling.

Modern humanistic critics (left liberal and left radical), however, are correct in their view that all human beings differ from each other, and that each person has his own and unique abilities and possibilities. Man as such, as a unique individual human being, as a religious unity, ought never to be the object of pedagogical moulding. Therefore, one should admit that the critics are at least correct in realizing that men differ from each other and that a school which wants to prepare people for society in a way which is good for only some people will inevitably be doomed to failure.

The critics also call our attention to the fact that the modern school leaves little room for the pupils to be creative and original. Illich, especially, indicates sharply nearly all the shortcomings of the modern school as a social institution (cf. paragraph 5.4.3).

In view of the Scriptural evaluation of the anthropological "problem" of the school, it can be concluded that the modern school might have a future and can function effectively only on the basis of a Scriptural view of children.

6.2.4 Epistemological considerations²⁾

6.2.4.1 The epistemological "problem" of the school (according to its critics)

Modern humanistic critics (for instance the left liberal and the left radical) maintain that the primary and legitimate function of the school is the educative function, that is, to promote the growth of the children in the school. In other words, they see the main function of school not as teaching or instruction but as providing intimate personal relationships (cf. paragraph 4.3). Thus, knowledge and skills which are transmitted in the school, for them, are a means of personal development, toward the natural man, or towards individual growth, respectively, and the knowledge and skills demanded are those which are significant for the child as such, not knowledge and skills appropriate to the needs of the adult he may one day become. The problem or crisis of the modern school for them, in the first instance, lies in the fact that the schools do not perform the educative function fully and properly.

Furthermore, modern humanistic critics are saying that the school is the wrong place for learning knowledge and skills. What is worse for them is that the teaching function of the school is contrived to serve the established norms of the existing social order of society. The public schools are seen by the left radical critics as the official agents of a

2. Epistemology (the theory of knowledge) answers primarily the question: what is knowledge? This paragraph, however, does not deal with purely epistemological problems. However, the epistemological implications with regard to the problems of the modern school, that is, the function of the school, will mainly be treated in this paragraph.

corrupt order, justifying and supporting that order, and preparing young people to accept and serve it. Reimer, for instance, sees that the school sorts its students into a caste-like hierarchy of social classes (cf. paragraph 5.3.2.1). The main thrust of Goodman's thought points up the functions that schools perform as agents of society and servants of the system (cf. paragraph 5.3.2.2). Holt, Freire, and Illich also severely criticize the so-called indoctrinating or manipulating function of the modern school (cf. paragraphs 5.3.2.3; 5.3.2.4 & 5.4.3.4).

6.2.4.2 A Scriptural perspective on the epistemological "problem" of the school, amongst others the function of the school

6.2.4.2.1 The leading function of the school

In a previous paragraph (6.2.2.2), it is argued that the school as a social institution is not an arbitrary establishment or a mere product of historical and cultural coincidence; it is a form of positivization of the God-given ontic law for the school.

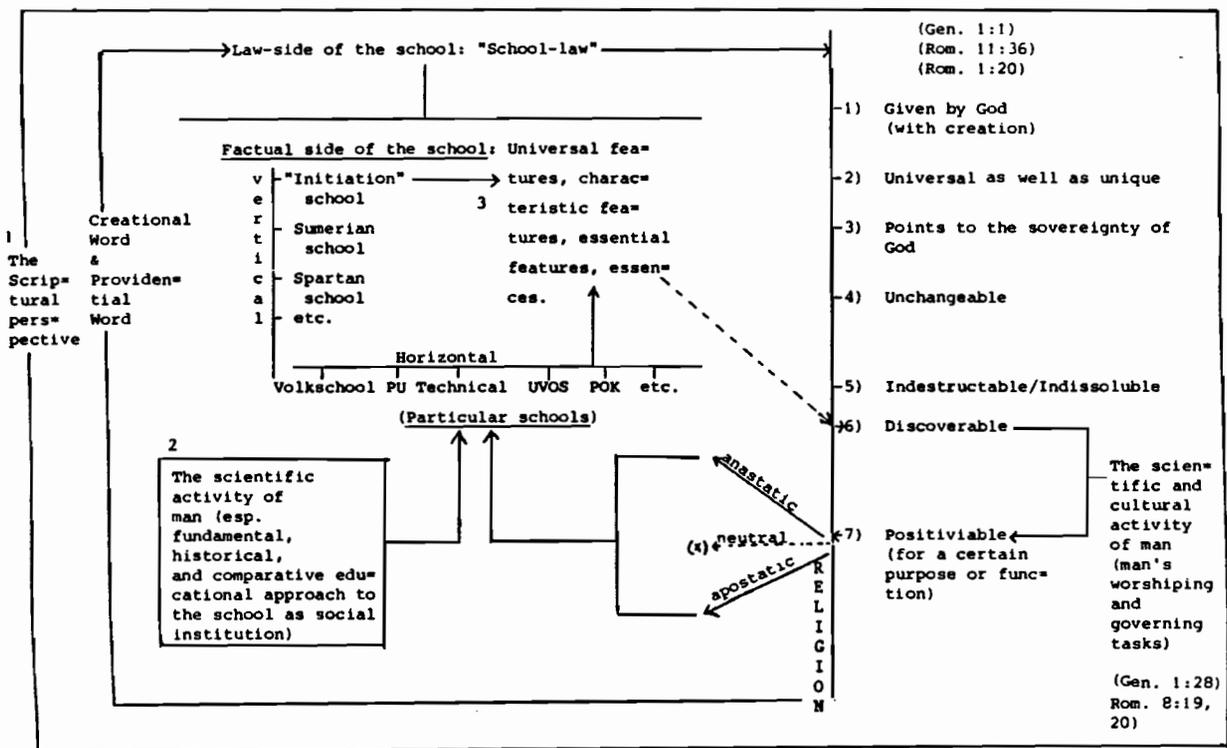
How do we then know this God-given ontic law or structural norm for the school? What is this law or norm for the school? These questions are closely linked with the task or function of the school.

The Bible does not give any direct and decisive explanation of the ontic law or structural norm for the school, although it supplies guidelines and perspectives about it. Clearly the Bible is not a handbook on science, nor a textbook on education. It offers no systematic treatment of such issues as education and the school. Therefore, one must analyse the school as a given reality on the factual side in a Scriptural perspective in order to discover the God-given ontic law for the school by using fundamental, historical, and comparative educational methods.

The truth, viz that God gave the ontic law for the school at creation, by which the essence of the school is determined, is evident from the

fact that one finds schools in one or other form in every cultural group, even in elementary or primitive society (Van der Walt, 1980(b):36). The analysis of the school historically (vertically) as well as in its diversity (horizontally) also shows certain universal or essential characteristics which are common to all forms of the school. The reason why one can discover the universal or essential characteristics of the school is that all forms of particular schools on the factual side are actualizations or positivizations of one and the same ontic law which is unique to the school. The following diagram (6.2) makes the point clear:

Diagram 6.2: Flow-chart to explain the understanding of the function of the school



(Explanation of diagram 6.2)

- * Scripture gives all-embracing perspectives about the ontic law for the school (1).
- * Since the Bible does not give any direct and decisive explanation about the school, one must analyse the school as such (particular schools) historically as well as empirically by using fundamental, historical, and comparative educational methods (2).
- * By means of comparing the various schools, one can extract some universal, characteristic, and essential features which are common to all forms of the school on the factual side. These essences point to the law-side of the school (3).

Now, what is this God-given ontic law or structural norm for the school?

The brief historical review of the school (cf. chapter 2) reveals an essential and universal characteristic feature of the school, namely the feature that the school exists, first of all, for the purpose of transmitting knowledge and skills regarded as necessary to the ensuing generation.³⁾

This exclusive teaching task of the school is also evident from the teaching mandate which is delegated to the parent by God (cf. Deut. 6:4 - 9; Eph. 6:1 - 4). The historical fact that parents, who received the teaching mandate from God, began to positivize the ontic law for the school clearly indicates the teaching task of the school.

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3. Analysis of the school also reveals another common element, namely that the school as a special community for learning consists of three elements: those who desire teaching, those who teach, and those who receive teaching. When one or more of these elements are eliminated, then the school as an institution can no longer exist.

The school is a social structure where teaching/instruction and learning⁴⁾ take place as primary activity (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:96; 1981:6; Barnard, 1982:7; cf. Fowler, 1980(b):34; Mechielsen, 1980:65; De Jong, 1977:5; Ebel, 1982:376). Taljaard (1976:244) states this point clearly as follows:

The school should have a specific task, determined by the ontic law which is valid for it as a reality. This task ought to be unique and irreducible to any other tasks of other communities. The ontic law of the community should guarantee its uniqueness, its irreducibility ... The school busies itself exclusively with teaching activities, i.e. with tuition and education in its specialized sense, the education combined with the teaching of pupils. In this activity the school endeavours to provide the intellectual development of the pupil by means of enriching his life equilibriously with the cultural heritage of the past, thus enabling him to open up the future, to enter the world well-equipped for the vocation within the cultural situation in which it pleases God to place him as somebody to "rule and subdue the earth".

The school is, however, not the only place where the teaching and learning activity takes place. Teaching and learning activity takes place also in homes, in churches, in business enterprises, in sporting clubs - almost anywhere that human beings gather together (Fowler, 1980(b):34). In what sense, then, does the teaching and learning activity of the school differ from that of the family, church, state, and other social relationships?

First of all, the ontic law for the school makes the teaching and learning task of the school unique and peculiar. In other words, the fact that the exclusive task of the school is to be busy with the instruction/

4. By using the term "teaching and learning" special emphasis is put on both aspects of schooling. In addition, the close relationship between the two parts is stressed. There is no dichotomy between the activities of teaching and learning.

teaching of the pupils in the school gives identifying characteristics to school teaching. De Jong (1977:4 - 5) explains the peculiar characteristics of teaching and learning activity of the school very clearly. According to him, the teaching and learning activity of the school is, in the first place, a formed/formal or structured one, while informal learning refers to that which is incidental or lacking formal structure. In the second place, the teaching and learning activity of the school, by the very fact of its being structured, is accelerated or speeded up so that more can be learned within a shorter time. In the third place, the teaching and learning activity of the school is concentrated or condensed activity which all the non-essentials are eliminated for efficient delivery. In short, schools are structured, accelerated, concentrated, and condensed teaching-learning centres. These characteristics, says De Jong (1977:5), make schools distinguishably different from that which is not school and serve to justify their continued existence.

The teaching and learning activity of the school is different from that of other social relationships in the sense that the school is qualified by the logical-analytical function. In other words, the teaching task of the school primarily aims at unlocking or opening up the logical-analytical aspect of the child. school

The teaching (and educational) function of the parental home is ethically qualified since the ethical is the typical leading function of the parental home. The teaching (and educational) function of the church is pistically qualified because the pistic is the typical leading function of the church. Likewise, the teaching (and educational) function of the state is qualified by the juridical function. But the teaching task of the

school is qualified by the logical-analytical function:⁵⁾ "Sy bestemming vind die skool in die (ontslote) logies-analities funksie. Die analitiese funksie is dus die leidende of kwalifiserende funksie van die skool" (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:96; cf. Schoeman, 1980(b):39).

To summarize, the school exists for the sake of teaching and learning. The first and primary task of the school is the establishment of teaching-learning situations within which the culture of the community is transmitted to the pupils on the one hand, and on the other hand, cognitive (especially), affective, and psycho-motor skills are transmitted to the pupils by teachers.

6.2.4.2.2 Educational teaching

The school is, as has been indicated in the preceding paragraph (6.2.4.2.1), an institution which takes care of teaching and learning, namely, transmitting knowledge and skills to the pupils. The school is not in the first instance an educational institution. The teaching task of the school must be distinguished from the educational task of the school.

5. Opinions differ on the leading or qualifying function of the school. Dooyeweerd (1969:III:287), for instance, qualified the school in passing as ethically determined. "It may be that," said Dooyeweerd, "school tuition in its typical historical foundation is qualified by a typical ethical function, but the latter is certainly not that of the family bond in its natural sense". It is, however, difficult to see the connection between the school and an ethical leading function, since the uniqueness of the school can never show to better advantage if the leading function of the school is searched for in the ethical. Kock (1968:55) and Du Toit (1971:17) maintain that education/teaching, and by implication the school also, cannot be one dimensionally qualified. They see teaching and education as being qualified by the act-structure. This view regards the primary task of the school as education.

However, the task of the school is, in the first instance, teaching, and teaching is specifically qualified by the logical-analytical function.

It is, however, very difficult and artificial to separate these two tasks (the teaching task and the educational task) from each other. On anthropological grounds (according to the principle of universality in each sphere, the coherence between the different modal functions of human being) it can be asserted that any instructional and teaching concern of a teacher with a pupil will also be of necessity educational by nature. In other words, it will tend to lead to the balanced development of the normative act-structure of the child. In this sense one can certainly say that teaching is also educational by nature (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:97).

The Christian parent, however, can not content himself with the teaching-learning situation in which education is acquired as it were merely by chance as a bonus or as a by-product of teaching in the school. He, therefore, always insists that the school must apply itself to educational teaching, that is to say, by means of the transmission of knowledge the heart of the child must be bound back to the true God, the God of the Scriptures (Van der Walt, 1983(e):99). He, thus, insists consistently that the instruction-learning situation will be used as a way to intentional, purposeful and purpose-directed education by the teacher.

Only by educational teaching can the child in the school be formed, as Waterink (1954:41) says, into an independent personality serving God according to his Word, able and willing to employ all his God-given talents to the honour of God and for the well-being of his fellow-creatures, in every area of life in which he is placed by God.

6.2.4.3 Evaluation of the epistemological "problem" of the school

First of all, modern humanistic critics are not justified in their insinuations that the primary function of the school is the educative function and that the school is the wrong place for learning knowledge and skills. In view of the Scriptural perspective, the school certainly has

an educational task, but it is a fallacy to state that it is the school's first responsibility to educate children. If the primary and exclusive teaching task of the school is not fully acknowledged, there may arise confusion and haziness about the true unique structure and task of the school.

Furthermore, the school has so far fairly succeeded in carrying out its basic function, namely teaching. The brief historical review of the school (cf. chapter 2) revealed that the basic function of the school, that is, the transmitting of the cultural heritage or knowledge regarded as necessary (including the three R's) were continually carried out by virtually all schools in ancient, classical, and mediaeval times. Also, in modern society, parents commit their children to schools and teachers in the expectation that they will learn what they can't learn at home or in the street. In this sense, it can be said that the unique role of the school in performing its leading or qualifying function is grossly underestimated by modern humanistic critics of the school. The critics of the school should first of all ask the question whether the school is carrying out its main function effectively or not, and the answer seems to be that the school has been doing it effectively up to now.

However, modern humanistic critics are correct in their criticism that the teaching function of the school is contrived to serve the established norms of the existing social order of society. The historical review of the school has indicated that the function of the school was contrived, to a great extent, to perpetuate class distinctions. The ancient schools were concerned with socializing children into the existing social system since only an upper-class élite enjoyed all the advantages of formal schooling (cf. paragraph 2.3). Likewise, the paideia ideal which was first put forward by the Greeks, later on became an ideal for the élite. The ordinary people were deprived of the opportunities for receiving it because only the privileged class in society could enjoy paideia-teaching and education in the grammar schools (cf. paragraph 2.4.3). During mediaeval times, the three-track system of teaching was keyed to the existing class structure of mediaeval society (cf. paragraph 2.5). Up to the end of the 19th century, the formal school system was a two-track system,

although more opportunities for schooling were extended to the poor and common people. The Deweyan progressive schools were closely tied to middle-class values. In present times, one should also keep in mind that children in the school are easily manipulated by schooling, as the left radical critics clearly indicate (cf. paragraph 5.4.3.4), to accept the value of the dominant minority in society uncritically, despite the fact that teaching is claimed to be a-political.

From the Scriptural standpoint, the crisis of the modern school can be ascribed, beyond a doubt, to the fact that the teaching work of the school was not always truly educational teaching, but that it has frequently been used for certain secondary purposes, for instance, for political and ideological purposes.

In view of the Scriptural evaluation of the epistemological "problem" of the school, it can be expected that the school will be able to attack its crisis in future, but only on condition that the teaching task of the school is always faithful to the educator's ultimate aim, that is, to lead and to equip the child whom God has entrusted to us so that he or she will be able to take up cheerfully the calling and task which God has given him or her.

6.2.5 Considerations linked to societal relationships

6.2.5.1 The societal relationships "problem" of the school (according to its critics)

Many school-critics have been concerned about the relationship of the school with other societal structures. Modern school critics, for instance, take note of the school in mediaeval times because of its subjection to the strong control of the ecclesiastical power (cf. paragraph 2.5). The progressive school critics, especially Dewey, criticized the public school on the basis of their picture of the ideal school, that is,

an extension of the ideal home, a miniature community or an embryonic society (cf. paragraph 3.4.2). Modern left radicals criticize a kind of state monopoly over schooling which has developed from the Spartan and Roman schools. The state monopoly over schooling, according to them, makes the school a donkey of the government. In other words, they suspect that the modern public schools are instruments in the hands of the late-capitalistic dispensation (cf. paragraph 5.3.2 & 5.4.3.4).

The left liberals' efforts to reform the school, which were discussed in paragraph 4.3, can be regarded, in a sense, as an effort to reform the school according to the pattern of an ideal home. The left radicals' alternatives to the present school system (cf. paragraph 5.3), like learning networks, can also be regarded as a strategy to avoid any kind of monopoly over education and schooling whether it be state control or ecclesiastical power.

The following paragraph will treat the above-mentioned societal relationships "problem" of the school from a Scriptural perspective. Not all societal structures will, however, be discussed in terms of their relationship to the school.

6.2.5.2 A Scriptural perspective on the societal relationship "problem" of the school

6.2.5.2.1 The school and the family (Afr. gesin)

Education of the children in the family shows a unique, irreducible inherent nature which can never be substituted by any other form of education (also not even by the school). In all other forms of education and teaching the basic parent-child relationship is lacking. Thus, the school can not take over this task from the parents. In this sense the school is not an extension of or a substitute for the family, and the teacher is not a substitute for the parent. Between parental education

and school education there must, however, exist the closest relationship (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:92; Van Wyk & De Klerk, 1975:321 - 322; Van der Walt, B.J., 1982:172).

The relationship between the school and the family (home) is of a dual nature. In the first place, the school and the family must unite on the same line concerning the spirit and direction of education. There must be continuity between family and school education in order to protect the child from confusion and internal conflict. "Indien die gesin en skool botsende waardes aan die kind voorhou, sal dit lei tot verwarring en splyting van die persoonlikheid omdat hy hom met albei identifiseer" (Barnard, 1982:7). Parents directly exercise authority over the spirit and direction of the school education by means of parental committees/school committees. Schoeman (1978(b):117) explains this matter as follows:

Daar moet egter op gelet word dat hoewel die ouer veel van sy 'onderwysende' verantwoordelikhede aan die skool moes oordra, hy desnieteenstaande in die laaste plek die onbetwisbare en onvervrembare reg (asook verantwoordelikheid) besit om toe te sien dat die gees en rigting waarin hierdie onderwysende bemoeienis van die professionele opvoeder met die mondigwordende opvoeding plaasvind, in alle opsigte sal strook met die Christelike gees en rigting waarin hy tuis opgevoed word.

There is also a second facet of the relationship between the school and the family. Because the teachers are professionally trained institutors of the teaching-learning situation, only they have authority in those aspects of the teaching which have to do with their professional competence, for instance, in the area of curriculum planning, the choice of learning content, the methods which they use, the methods of discipline and punishment, and so on. In this, the parents have nothing to say, besides perhaps indirectly via the statutory bodies which were instituted for that purpose.

Die ouer se seggenskap is dus direk oor die gees en rigting van die skool, maar indirek oor die professionele aangeleenthede van die onderwyser in die skool (Van der Walt, 1983 (a):28; cf. Schoeman, 1979:111 - 112).

School is principally erected by the parents, but as soon as it is erected it becomes independent.

6.2.5.2.2 The school and the state/authority/government (Afr. owerheid)

The relationship between the school and the state proceeds from the legal provision and maintenance of the state. In view of its legal function, the state has, in the first place, the right to determine the standard of the school-teaching of its citizens. A low standard of cultural development endangers the state, and therefore the state authority must keep an eye on this standard: the state must determine the standard of teaching and compel its citizens to achieve it or punish them if they do not comply with the standard. The state is therefore concerned with compulsory education and everything which it implies, like regular inspection. State interference in these matters is not a transgression of the sovereignty in each sphere, but is legal provision and maintenance (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:104).

The state also demands of its citizens sound political and national principles so that the state will not be endangered (Fourie, 1973:111; Taljaard, 1976:248). The state may thus demand national education and prohibit elements which are dangerous to the state. Unless ideologies harmful to the state are advocated in the school, the state has no right to interfere with the spirit and direction of the school (Schoeman, 1979: 114).

In addition, the (Christian) state expects the inculcation of Christian virtues in its future citizens and it has the right to forbid corruptive elements in school education. Furthermore, the state is responsible for

the provision of facilities which are necessary for the cultural development of its future citizens (physical requirements, instructional aids, sports-fields, equipment, administrative machinery and so on). The state also has the right to determine by means of inspection whether its demands with reference to cultural forming and well-balanced development of its future citizens are indeed complied with and whether the facilities which it provided are utilized properly.

The school should never be seen as a mere instrument of the state. Although the state ought to demand a certain minimum standard regarding school-teaching, the school should function as a relatively independent institution, which has certain rights within its own sphere of competence, by virtue of its unique and individual structure. It should be allowed to fulfil its task in its own unique way, independently and with the aid of the state (Schoeman, 1978(b):121). The state may not render itself guilty of state-absolutism (totalitarianism), but if the parents neglect their duty with respect to education and teaching of their children, it may be necessary for the state to establish state schools (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:104 - 105).

6.2.5.2.3 The school and the church

The local, instituted church also has a particular relationship with the school. The local church as a community of confessed Christ-believers has a unique interest in the education of its baptized members who are also pupils in the school. The church demands of its confessed members a promise (oath) with reference to the education of the baptized members, namely, the baptismal vow. For this reason, the church can expect of its members to take responsibility for the establishment and the maintenance of a Christian school in which the baptismal oath can be realized.

The church, however, has no direct authority over or voice in the school because of its origin and calling of the church. The church thus can not enforce any discipline or punishment on the school. The church can

only discipline its own members, or it can address an admonitory word to the school and to the educational authorities in an inter-relational manner. The church must always make sure whether the instruction and the education which its baptized members receive in their school are in accordance with the confession of the parents. If not, the church admonishes its own members along ecclesiastical lines, and the school authorities in an inter-relational manner.

The church exerts an enormous influence on the spirit and direction of the school (watched over by the parents) via its members (both parents and teachers) in the Christian community. The church makes no direct demands on the school; it makes demands indirectly via its members. The concept of a church-school infringes upon the principle of sphere sovereignty and must thus be rejected. Education and schooling must be Christianized but not be ecclesiasticalized, because the latter is a form of ecclesiasticism. Only in cases of emergency may a church school be established (Van der Walt & Dekker, 1983:103).

6.2.5.3 Evaluation of the societal relationships "problem" of the school

The different types of communities as concrete realities are irreducible to one another. They exist next to each other in their uniqueness and they are equivalent to each other. Founded in the historical modality the school also has its own structural identity which functions in its unique way in all the cosmic aspects. When the school begins to resemble any other social structure (the parental home, or society, as in Dewey's case), then the unique character of the school is endangered. Dewey's view on the relationship between the school and society obscures the typical internal structure of the school.

The school has a specific and unique task of teaching which can never be reduced to any other task in communal life. Therefore, criticism of ecclesiastical control over the school and against the state monopoly over the school is, to a large extent, justifiable. The ecclesiastical con=

trol or state monopoly (state-absolutism) over schooling is not acceptable, except in emergencies (cf. paragraphs 6.2.5.2.2 & 6.2.5.2.3).

Between the different types of communities as concrete realities, however, there exist an intimate coherence, intertwinement and interlacement which should not be underestimated or ignored.⁶⁾ The unique teaching task of the school can not be effectively achieved in future unless there exists a proper and correct relationship of understanding and cooperation between the state and the school, and between the church and the school.

6.2.6 Ethical considerations⁷⁾

6.2.6.1 The ethical "problem" of the school (according to its critics)

Education, for the left liberal critics, is an ethical enterprise since it gives direction to natural growth in preparation for social life. The ultimate morality of a society depends upon the education of its members and a moral society must have moral education, that is, education which protects and enhances the natural goodness of man. The freedom of the child is, therefore, strongly emphasized by the left liberal critics.

The ideal of acquiring real freedom is of great importance among contem=

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6. Inter-community coherence is necessary and possible because God is a Sovereign God: since only God has self-sufficient authority, a social form like every other created "thing" can never be considered outside its inter-relationship with other things and God. Each significantly points to all others and together towards God, in Whom they all find sense and destination. This universal dependence-relationship in which all relations exist with each other, is why sound interaction and harmonious complement between family, church, state, school, etc. is on the one hand necessary and on the other hand possible (Schoeman, 1978(b):115).
 7. The ethical problem of the school is closely linked with the anthropological problem of the school (cf. paragraph 6.2.3). The ethical problem is fundamentally a problem of a view of man.

porary liberal and radical school critics. They advocate the ideal of individual freedom and reject external authority, compulsion, discipline and punishment in education and schooling since they see man as a free and autonomous being and believe in learner sovereignty. They do not acknowledge the authority of the teacher (and also of the parents) in the teaching and learning setting. They see the school as an obstacle in the way of realizing the ideal of freedom and search for alternatives for schooling (cf. chapter 5).

Historically, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel established a background against which the modern romantic movement of the left liberal can be considered. For Rousseau, in particular, real freedom meant freedom from any form of internalized authority (cf. paragraph 2.6.4). Dewey also exalted the experience of the child to the position of being the authoritative norm in education and schooling. Thus, he shifted the source of authority from the external teacher to the internal experience of the child (cf. paragraph 3.6.10). Neill insisted that teaching a child how to behave was needless. His strong conviction was that a child will learn what is right and wrong in due time (cf. paragraph 4.4.5). Likewise, the countercultural critics rejected everything which they thought confined the free expression of personal freedom (cf. paragraph 3.7.1.3).

The crisis of the school in modern times is caused to a great extent by the misconception of the relationship between freedom and authority (and, thus, also of discipline and punishment). For this reason, a Scriptural view of freedom, authority, discipline and punishment will be discussed in following paragraph.

6.2.6.2 A Scriptural perspective on the ethical "problem" of the school

6.2.6.2.1 Freedom in the school

The idea of freedom can only be correctly understood in the light of the Scripture and from the viewpoint of the Christian faith. The

Scriptures teach us that freedom has to do with both God and man, and that one can talk about freedom only in terms of the relationship between God and man. The Bible reveals the truth that man is free only in so far as he puts himself at God's disposal, that is, to the degree that he subjects himself to the law of God, the law which demands of him to love God and his fellow-man. For this reason, one can never say that freedom is a characteristic or a condition of man; it must always be seen as a relation or a relationship of man with God (Botha, 1973:2). Christian freedom is not arbitrariness or lawlessness; it is freedom only under the law of God (Coetzee, 1973:272).

Therefore, freedom in the Christian sense of the word is never to be equated with freedom from laws, rules, regulations, norms and morals the way the liberalist sees it (Van der Walt, 1979:149). Such a false notion of freedom as that of the liberalist arises from man's perverted self-deification and illusion of autonomy. When the Christian acknowledges freedom from, it is freedom from the bondage and slavery of sin and man's old nature. True freedom can refer only to freedom within the law of God (Schoeman, 1980(b):140).

The Christian does not acquire true freedom by himself. He receives it through God's mercy in Jesus Christ (sola fide and sola gratia). Through faith alone, and through grace alone, he may regain his lost and true freedom. Freedom from sin, then, means the freedom to serviceableness to God and to the fellow-man with one's whole heart (soul, being) which is the epicentre of all the issues of his life (cf. Rom 8:1 - 11; 6:17 - 18; 1 Peter 2:16 - 17). "This freedom - the compliance with norms and the voluntary subjection of self to the Will of God -", says Schoeman (1980 (b):140), "will create in man the capacity to accept true responsibility, as well as true authority, since compliance with the law is the precondition for a state of true freedom".

Man can be free only when he is in his "element" (like water is the "element" of the fish), and the "element" of man is the bounds and the limits which God put upon him in the various life-situations, because it is God's law which regulates the religious relationship between people. God is the author of bounds and the limits for human behaviour in the form of the laws, norms, criteria, rules and regulations which have

been formulated and given form by men (persons in authority) in a great variety of life-situations like the church, state, family and the school (Van der Walt, 1979:149 - 150).

All these positivized norms for man's behaviour must not be seen as compulsion, as a yoke which is put on his neck, or as a burden. God gives the laws to obey and as a direction to follow, but He does not coerce or manipulate man into obedience. He allows man the choice to obey or to disobey. But man must also bear the consequences of his decisions (cf. Gen. 2:16 - 17; Deut. 30:19 - 20; Rev. 22:11 - 12).

Freedom is much like a river that runs between two banks. One bank is licence and anarchy; the other bank is legalism and externalism. Desiring licence is giving in to hedonistic impulses. Desiring the security of legalism is slavery of the opposite type. Mechanical conformation to the laws, norms, mores, and expectations of men causes the abdication of one's responsibilities and the loss of one's freedom (Mark 2:23 - 3:5; 7:1 - 13). Both licence and legalism are equally damaging (Fennema, 1978:99). The teachers in the classroom (school) are to direct, help and guide the pupils to function between these two extremes of licence and legalism in order to remain free in Christ.

6.2.6.2.2 Authority in the school

As has become clear from the preceding discussion, freedom always refers to the exercising of authority. One of the most basic relationships in which man stands is the relationship of authority. Everywhere where men live together, like in the parental home or the school, there is a relationship of authority; where there is no authority, chaos and anarchy begin to set in.

From a Scriptural perspective, it is clear that all authority finds its foundation and its starting point with God Himself. God, the Creator, the Almighty, is the only true, absolute authority. He is the source of all authority and all authority comes primarily from Him (cf. Rom.

13:1 - 2; John 19:11). Human authority is therefore always dependent and relative, being never absolute but rather a delegated (Afr. ontleende) form of authority (Van der Walt, 1979:150; Schoeman, 1980(b):140).

Authority is sometimes delegated directly from God and sometimes inter=medially or indirectly from God. It pleased God after the creation of man to directly give him authority by making him ruler over the creation and by giving him authority over his fellow-man (Gen. 1:28). Another ex=ample of direct authority is God's granting to parents specific authority over the children whom He entrusted to them (as primary educator) (Eph. 6:1 - 4; Col. 3:20). Authority is also often delegated indirectly from God - via another person or institution. In Israel one of the duties of the kingly office was to teach all of God's people the ways of the Lord. But the king could delegate that authority to others (II Chron. 17:7 - 9). The same is true of Jesus. Although he shares the divinity of the Father, during his sojourn on earth he also presented himself as a man who was sent from God (John 5:30). But he could also delegate this God-given authority to others (Luke 9:1 - 2; John 13:20) (Fennema, 1978:94).

The authority of the teacher in the classroom (school) is of the latter type of authority. The teaching (educational) authority of the teacher is derived from the structures of the school - not from those of the pa=rental home. It is a false notion that the educational authority vested in the teacher-educator is derived partly from God and partly from the parents. Parental authority is the authority of love, since the leading function of the family is ethical. The teacher is not vested with that authority of love (Schoeman, 1980(b):141). The authority of the teacher is delegated to the teacher by God Himself via the process of training the teacher in the teacher-training institution. In other words, it is delegated to the teacher by God through his training and through the character of school which results in his being a professional teacher. Van der Walt (1983(a):74 - 75) states the matter clearly as follows:

Die opvoeder beskik oor gesag wat gebore is uit 'n bepaalde bevoegdheid wat God self aan die opvoeder gegee het. So is 'n ouer se be=voegdheid die feit dat die kind uit sy liggaam gebore is, en dat God die kind aan die ouer

gegee het om in verantwoordelikheid op te voed. Daarom het 'n ouer gesag oor sy kind. 'n Onderwyser het gesag oor die kinders in die skool, omdat God hom geroep het tot hierdie roeping en hierdie professie, en omdat die onderwyser 'n bepaalde bevoegdheid ontvang het vanweë sy opleiding.

The fact that man (the person-in-authority) receives his authority directly or indirectly from God brings the ideas of responsibility and calling to the fore. God Himself bestows authority on all persons-in-authority and in a great variety of situations. The authority is then exercised on behalf of Him so that the subordinates can perform their God-given tasks. Man, therefore, is to act in a responsible manner in executing his authority. He is responsible to God Himself for his exercising of authority.

Teachers (the person-in-authority) in the classroom (school) should also realize that authority is delegated to them by God Himself, and therefore they are responsible to God for the exercising of their authority in the school situation. In order to exercise their authority as teachers in a responsible manner they should know their subjects, pupils, how to teach, and how all of that relates to the sovereign God.

6.2.6.2.3 Discipline and punishment in the school

It became evident from the preceding discussion that freedom in the true sense of the word is not antithetical to authority. These are two sides of the same coin and together they presuppose discipline, namely guiding the pupil in the right direction and teaching the pupil to submit himself voluntarily to the Will of God. To live free in Christ and to surrender oneself to divine authority means that he is disciplined to the voluntary subjection to the Will of God. Such a person is really a disciplined person.

The Greek word used for discipline in the New Testament is paideuō/paideia, which can be translated as meaning either discipline or nurture

It is used in the New Testament mainly in two ways. In the first place, it is used to refer to education in the sense of moral training (cf. Acts 7:22; 22:3). It also refers to chastening or correcting (cf. II Tim. 2:24 - 25; I Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:5 - 11). The closest Old Testament Hebrew equivalent to paideuō is yissēr/mūsar (cf. Deut. 8:5 - 6; Prov. 4:13 - 14), which generally refers to discipline in the sense of teaching or even warning a person to obey God's law, often as a corrective response to improper behaviour. It is clear, then, that the Scriptural meaning of discipline is synonymous with nurture. Discipline or nurture contains two primary emphases, that of instruction or education, and that of chastening or correcting. This implies that discipline or nurture begins with instruction, teaching or education,⁸⁾ but it also includes chastening or correction (Fennema, 1978:52 - 53; cf. Jaarsma, 1953(b):405).

Chastening means "correcting", "redirecting". The Afrikaans word tug, which can be translated as meaning "discipline" or more correctly "chastening", is derived from the Afrikaans word trek which means "to draw", and in pedagogical connection tug points to an activity by which the child is drawn nearer (nader getrek in Afrikaans) (Van der Walt, 1979:158). The emphasis is on future actions, not on past misdeeds. It looks forward to a change in behaviour. Therefore, it is reformative.

In the process of chastening or tug, the moderate and wise use of spanking is certainly acceptable (cf. Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13 - 14; 29:15). It is the misuse of physical force that is biblically unacceptable. Physical correction has a legitimate but limited place. Alongside of external "punishment" there exists also internal "punishment" (self-correction). Self-correction is the aim of Christian discipline.

8. The first part of the meaning of discipline, namely instruction, teaching, or education has been discussed throughout this study. In this paragraph, therefore, attention is paid to the second part of the meaning of discipline. One thing which should be pointed out here is that instruction, teaching, and education as such are in themselves forms of discipline.

6.2.6.3 Evaluation of the ethical "problem" of the school

Modern humanistic critics (left liberal and left radical) distort the real and true meaning of freedom. Their idea of freedom conflicts with the Scriptural principle. They try to understand freedom only on a horizontal, man-to-man, human level.

Freedom in the classroom (school) should be viewed and practised by both the teacher and the pupil within the biblical perspective. Teachers should never allow the pupils to do as they please as is advocated by the left liberal. Freedom is not to be equated with licence, which can lead only to anarchy. Teachers also should not demand blind obedience of the pupils in an authoritarian manner or manipulate a response in a behavioristic manner. Such actions tend to mould the children in the image of the teacher instead of allowing them to develop as the image of God.

The negation of all external authority by left radical critics is not justified from the Christian standpoint. It is a result of their indeterministic solution of the law-side of the pedagogical reality into the factual side of it that they want to lead the child to negation of all authority.

The pupils (the subordinates) in the classroom (school) should be taught that voluntary submission to the authority of the teacher is both a reflection and a part of a proper Creator-creature relationship with God. As Fennema (1978:98) says, one who learns to submit voluntarily to earthly authority finds submission to divine authority more comprehensible and meaningful.

Modern humanistic critics are mistaken in regarding discipline/punishment as an antithetical concept to freedom. They are not separate entities which can be exercised or acquired apart from each other. Real and true freedom comes only through submission to the law of God.

In the school situation, therefore, discipline/correcting must be conducted within the framework of love and kindness. The Divine demand of

loving God and service to Him implies that chastening will bring man (the pupil) nearer to God, and the Divine demand of loving one's fellow-man implies that all chastening will be motivated by love. It must be consistent, clear, and fair. The teacher is responsible to God for his exercising of authority as a teacher.

6.2.7 Considerations concerning the prevailing religious ground motif

6.2.7.1 The religious ground motif "problem" of the school (as highlighted inter alia by its critics)

The school (and schooling) is always driven and determined by some or other religious ground motif. Classical schools were, for instance, based on the dualistic religious ground motif of form and matter (cf. paragraph 2.4.3). Mediaeval schools were again governed by the scholastic ground motif of nature and grace (cf. paragraph 2.5). Since the Reformation and the Renaissance education and schooling have been characterized by the modern dualistic ground motif of nature and freedom, which also expresses itself as the science ideal vs. the free personality ideal, two components which are always in a state of polarity and tension.

Modern school critics (humanists) keep wavering back and forward between these two polar opposites. When one pole is over-emphasized the other pole suffers, and vice versa. Absolutization of one automatically calls for its polar opposite. Up to the period of the late rationalism, i.e. toward the end of the 19th century, it always seemed as if the nature/science ideal prevailed in schooling and science, but this was soon taken as an infringement on the personal, individual freedom of the persons involved. Reaction came, as could be expected, early in the 20th century, in the form of irrationalism which is an expression of the freedom/personality ideal.

In this way, the pendulum has always been swinging between the two polar extremes: Dewey and the progressive school movement of the early 1900's emphasized the freedom/personality ideal (cf. paragraph 3.4), and the reaction came from the "scientific school" which put so much emphasis on the nature/science ideal during the Cold War (cf. paragraph 3.7.1.2). The counter-cultural movement and free school movement of the late 1960's can be seen again as a strong reaction to the intellectualism brought about by the domination of the science ideal of the "scientific school" (cf. paragraph 3.7.1.3), and back-to-basics movement of the early 1980's went back to the nature/science ideal (cf. paragraph 3.7.1.4). In the ideas of the modern left liberal and left radical school critics, the personality or freedom ideal of the modern humanistic religious ground motif is again dominant (cf. chapters 4 & 5).

The true crisis of the school is essentially due to the fact that it is in the present century being determined by a religious ground motif which is in an internal state of tension. The following paragraph, therefore, will treat the true, the Scriptural, ground motif which will supply the school with an escape from the inevitable dualistic tension existing between the two extremes of all humanistic religious ground motifs.

6.2.7.2 The Scriptural ground motif of school and schooling

Religious ground motifs play a decisive and determinant role as pre-scientific, life-conceptual a prioris for all activities of man, including his scientific activity (and therefore, also, for his educational and school theory). It determines one's world and life view and directs one's whole life to the true or the supposed origin of existence.

Science is always radically (radix = root) determined by a religious ground motif, but the religious ground motif itself can never be an object for a special science. It is not even the outcome of theological reflection but it is the fundamental biblical given upon which all theology is based (Kalsbeek, 1975:66). The point of departure for science is determined by a religious ground motif; science is therefore never neutral

with respect to religion (Dooyeweerd, 1979:9).

Which religious ground motif should then control the school and schooling from the Christian standpoint? What is the Scriptural religious ground motif?

Over against non-Scriptural apostatic religious ground motifs, for instance form-matter, nature-grace, nature-freedom and the ground motif of contingency-firmness of the contemporary time which prey on dialectical tensions (Duvenage, 1971:68), the Bible reveals to us the true (anastatic) religious ground motif of creation, fall into sin, and redemption through Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God, in the communion of the Holy Spirit (Dooyeweerd, 1975:41 - 42; 1979:28; cf. Kalsbeek, 1975:63). Dooyeweerd (1969,1:61) explains the true Scriptural ground motif as follows:

Since the fall and the promise of the coming Redeemer, there are two central main springs operative in the heart of human existence. The first is the dynamis of the Holy Ghost, which by the moving power of God's Word, incarnated in Jesus Christ, re-directs to its Creator the creation that had apostatized in the fall from its true Origin. This dynamis brings man into the relationship of sonship to the Divine Father. Its religious ground motive is that of the Divine Word-Revelation, which is the key to the understanding of Holy Scripture: the motive of creation, fall, and redemption by Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Ghost.

What is actually meant by the Scriptural religious ground motif of creation, fall and redemption? According to Duvenage (1971:71 - 74), the following principles, amongst others, can be subsumed under the Scriptural religious ground motif: the principle of theo (God)-centredness; the principle of 'aw; the principle of diversity; the principle of unity or coherence; the principle of brokenness, and the principle of re-creation or redemption.

The Scriptural religious motif reveals, first of all, the principle of God-centredness. The Holy Scripture reveals the absolute sovereignty of God "for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Rom. 11:36). In creation there is nothing over against God having a separate existence of its own. God has revealed Himself as the Creator, as the only and absolute Origin of all things (Kalsbeek, 1975:64). Therefore, nothing in the cosmos may be absolutized. Everything owes its whole existence to God (Gen. 1:1; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Ps. 94:9 - 10). The Scriptural motif of creation cuts off at the root every view of reality which grows out of an idolatrous dualistic ground motif which posits two origins of reality and thus splits it into two opposing parts (Dooyeweerd, 1979:31).

Furthermore, the Bible clearly reveals that creation is maintained and governed through the Providence of God and is in accordance with His Counsel. The things which happen here and now, that which is contingent, must be seen in direct connection with the Providence of God which does not annul the responsibility of man, but takes it completely into account. The contingent calling of man in a given time and situation must thus be anchored in the principle of theo(God)-centredness. The destination of man and of the cosmos, too, originated from God.

In the second place, the Scriptural ground motif contains the principle that God rules over His creation, the cosmos, according to the cosmic law order which He instituted in the cosmos not only for physical things, plants, and animals, but also for man and for societal structures. The cosmic law order is determined by God who from the very beginning subjected His creation to His laws. This law order was not invented by science but is only being systematically discovered by it (Spier, 1976: 34-44).

The Scriptural religious ground motif also includes the principle of diversity. Since God created everything "according to its kind" (Gen. 1:11 - 27), everything in the cosmos has its own unique individual structure. In the cosmos there exists a manifold diversity which finds its origin in God. This principle of diversity is also valid for human society. Every different societal structure is (relatively) sovereign and independent in its own sphere (Spier, 1976: 189).

In the fourth place, the Scriptural religious ground motif reveals the principle of unity or coherence. One of the significant teachings of Scripture is that the universe which God has made is one and a unity (cf. Rom 12; Col. 1; Eph. 4; I Cor. 12). The principle of diversity is not in conflict with the principle of unity. The latter points to the coherence of the radical diversity.

In the fifth place, the Scriptural religious ground motif embraces the principle of brokenness. Man's fall into sin has far-reaching consequences for himself and the world (Gen. 3:17 - 18). Sin lies in the very depths of human existence, in the religious centre of being human (cf. Matt. 15:19). Man's heart, initially directed toward the eternal God, is now turned away from God and toward someone or something in creation. Man's relationships with God, men, and the world are radically corrupted. In spite of this fall, however, God's laws remain valid and do not lack perfection. Imperfection lies in the person who is subjected to God's law, which he violates by replacing them with laws which he himself makes (Spier, 1976:126).

In the sixth place, the Scriptural religious ground motif includes the principle of re-creation or redemption. The redemption of Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit redirects man's heart through regeneration and allows him to share in the full renewal of creation and to enter into fellowship with God once more. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ has not only the meaning of worship (Afr.-godsdienstige) but also has a religious meaning; His Kingdom embraces not only the Church, but every sphere where His kingship is acknowledged, also in culture, science and so on (Duvenage, 1971:73).

The true school should operate in its all activities on the basis of this Scriptural religious ground motif. The aim, content, method of educative teaching as well as the spirit and direction of teaching, the view of the child and reality, discipline, and the administration of the school should be determined by the Scriptural religious ground motif outlined above. In fact, everything in the school must be determined, understood and taught within the framework of God's perfect creation, the universal effects of sin and the curse on it, and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

If any one or more of these elements are denied or ignored, then a real crisis looms right at the root or basis of the school and schooling.

6.2.7.3 Evaluation of the religious ground motif "problem" of the school

Non-Scriptural apostatic religious ground motifs are internally dualistic and fragmentary. Their discord pushes one's posture of life alternately to opposite extremes that can never be resolved in a true synthesis. Since the two opposite extremes of the dualism (tend to) exclude each other in every conceivable sense, the humanistic thinker (school critic) can never find a true balance between the two polar opposites.

From a non-Scriptural and humanistic point of view the problem of the ground motif of the school is insoluble; the humanist has no choice but to vacillate irresolutely between the two poles of the antinomy. Whether or not one can reach a synthesis depends upon his starting point, which is again governed by a religious ground motif.

Only the Scriptural ground motif of creation, fall into sin and redemption in Jesus Christ can make it possible for one to reach a real and true synthesis: the Scriptural religious motif is linear and therefore does not tear the thinker about the school and schooling apart but allows him to find real meaning and balance in his theorizing about education and the school.

If the modern school is going to truly meet crises in future it must radically break with all the inwardly contradictory tendencies of humanistic thought and practice, and should in all its aspects and facets be radically determined by the sound Scriptural ground motif of creation, fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ in communion with the Holy Spirit.

6.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a Scriptural perspective on school and schooling was given as an answer to the alleged crisis of the school. The main, basic or fundamental problems of the school were firstly profiled, and then a Scriptural perspective on these problems were supplied. The legitimacy of the various points of criticism on the school were also evaluated with this Scriptural perspective as a frame of reference. Lastly, the future of the modern school was repeatedly assessed very briefly on the basis of the evaluation of the various aspects of the school criticism.

Although the Bible does not offer any systematic treatment of such issues as education and the school, it supplies sufficient guidelines and perspectives about the fundamental aspects of the school. These can be profiled as ontological, anthropological, epistemological by nature, as pertaining to societal relations, and to ethical and religious issues.

In the light of the Scriptural perspective supplied on the various fundamental problems of the school, it was found that various points of criticism on the school (although not all the criticism can be justified) indeed call our attention to shortcomings in/of the existing school system. The status quo of the school should never be accepted as a perfect condition. The school as a social institution should always be reformed according to the God-given ontic law for the school, so that it can become increasingly obedient to God and His Word. All reformational efforts should be radical in the sense that they must penetrate to the root of the wrong or shortcomings of the school. Needless to say, this root pertains to the religious ground motif of the school and schooling. In order to meet its crisis and to be able to function effectively, the apostatic (humanistic) religious ground motif of the modern school should, first of all, be converted to become anastatic, i.e. to put God in the centre of its all activities.