

touch with the greater vision to which I hold myself ultimately responsible, as I go about my daily educational ministry: Who or what calls, inspires, me to serve? What ethical principles (must) inform my decisions, interactions, initiatives? And how can I make myself accountable to my espoused values and commitments? — *Colleen M. McDonald*, Minister of Religious Education, The Unitarian Church, Rockford, Illinois.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. By Gabriel Moran. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1989. Paper, 254 pp.

Gabriel Moran is the preeminent theorist of religious education in the United States. He is in a class by himself. If the most palpable indication of excellence is originality, then Moran's new work is indeed most excellent. In *Religious Education as a Second Language*, the author invites us to join an international and ecumenical conversation. His call is to explore how our daily efforts link up with a worldwide effort in religious education. There is a prerequisite, however, for this engagement: the willingness to question widespread assumptions about religion and education.

I'm not convinced that colleagues inside the profession (or outside) are interested in Moran's form of questioning. Many will refuse to accept his invitation. They would rather remain cemented in inner denominational conceptions or seek academic legitimacy under the emerging canopy of practical theology. This will be unfortunate because the direction pointed by Moran offers a fresh perspective from which to view the present and future. Simultaneously, he challenges us to reconsider the basic parameters of religious education and the foundations of the enterprise.

Religious Education as a Second Language is divided into three main sections. Part 1 sets out and illustrates the method employed throughout the text (chapters 1 & 2). Methodologically, Moran's procedure is to uncover the richest meaning in language rather than to prematurely define (and limit) the terms of discourse. The focus of his disclosure are the words that have long engaged him, namely, religion and education. The approach incorporates repressed voices from the past and excluded voices in the present. The result is the emergence of richer meaning of religious education and a reconceptualization of the field.

Moran compares the development of religious education to an individual's learning a second language. The analogy is rich and imaginative. Religious education has the characteristics of a language people learn *after* they have learned a native language. Each religious tradition has its own distinct (first) language. However, our current situation calls for the emergence of a mediating, inter-communal (second) language. This language of religious education will be secular in form but deeply rooted in religious ideals — not sectarian conflict.

Moran goes about the task of illustrating this method by exploring the meaning of education and revealing the religious at the center of the process (chapter 2). Chapter 3 is a second illustration as the meaning of teaching is unveiled in a most illuminative manner. Moran wants to open the discussion of religious education to its many possible settings and languages. His entry point in seeking a comprehensive interpretative framework is through exploration of the verb "to teach." By postulating teaching as a central characteristic of humans and situating the activity

in a wider context than schooling, he illustrates various forms of speech (therapeutic, homiletic, academic) in teaching. The chapter is brilliant and sets the framework for his thesis: Religious education is A) Teaching people *to be* religious in a particular way; and, B) Academic instruction in religion.

In Part II, Moran deals with particular elements in the framework of the full meaning of religious education. The form of religious education as academic instruction in religion is explored by contrasting the situations in the United Kingdom and the United States (chapters 4 & 5). In the U.K., religious education usually means a subject in the curriculum of the state school; in the U.S., religious education never means that. The U.K. academic focus is its strength, while its narrow confinement to school is its weakness. In the U.S., the situation is the reverse. Religious education is dis-identified with public schools. The result is an academic scandal: religion is absent from the curriculum in public schools. In the U.S., religious education finds its' home in religious settings (church/synagogue/mosque), other educational forms (family/worship/work) and non-academic discourse (nurture/formation) (chapter 6). The aim of religious education in the U.S. is to teach people *to be* religious in a particular way (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish). Moran is sympathetic to and affirmative of both sides but finds himself somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean seeking dialogue, a common homeport and a unified theory.

Part III pushes out some implications of what the author thinks religious education should mean. He treats the related issues of morality and professionalism (chapters 7 & 8), and concludes with a comprehensive summary and proposal for an interdisciplinary religious education as inclusive of the international, inter-religious, inter-generational and inter-institutional (chapter 9). The finale directs us toward a wider conversation where we get a sense that an exciting new conversation has only begun.

Religious Education Press is to be commended for publishing this book and making it available to the profession. The book is a marketpoint in setting direction for the field, provocative in uncovering current issues and challenging in imaginatively redrawing a map of the field. Some may find Moran's preoccupation with language abstract and impractical. I find it innovative and ground-breaking. Critics who dismiss his attention to language fail to understand the significance of the most important philosophical contribution of the twentieth century. I also wonder: Can any church religious educator proceed with work as usual after reading his chapter, "Does Religion Belong in a Parish?". I fail to see how. Moran is again at his creative best. How unfortunate it is that the current field and profession of religious education has yet to prove itself worthy of his pioneering vision and profound wisdom. — *Kieran* Scott, Professor of Theology and Religious Education, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, New York.

THE GLOBAL ECOLOGY HANDBOOK: WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS. By The Global Tomorrow Coalition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990. Paper, 414 pp.

Chosen as the official resource supplement to the PBS series *Race to Save the Planet*, *The Global Ecology Handbook* provides a comprehensive, practical guide to sustain and protect the earth's future. The timely, well-documented contents



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