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## Imponderables In Education

Donald McNichols

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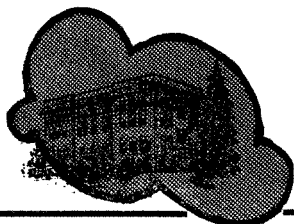
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*" . . . I would not have any to think that I deny, or am against schools for the teaching of children the natural tongues and arts, whereby they may do natural things; for all natural tongues and languages . . . make no more than natural men; and the natural man knows not the things of God. And therefore, all must come to the spiritual school of Christ . . . "*

*Gospel Truths Demonstrated,  
Works, V, 375, George Fox*

## Imponderables In Education

BY DONALD McNICHOLS, DEAN

### *What Are They?*

Imponderables are defined as those elements which cannot be weighed or measured. Among these sustaining values of society and culture are: love, Spiritual vitality, imagination, the pursuit of non-utilitarian values, tolerance, the spirit of sharing. The term imponderables has also been chosen to describe the forces which make character strong. Honesty, initiative, reliability, creativity, fear of God, and courage have blended together to make the American. These virtues carved out an America from the rough frontiers of a disputed country and led it into world leadership in three generations.

### *Their Desirability*

Such elements are observable as they influence action whether they are found in a nation or in an individual. The pattern that has been woven into the fabric of our national history is traceable to the imponderables which directed the events into their particular course. For this reason any na-

tion, and certainly our own, measures its strength whether military or economic, in terms of the physical resources plus the outlook and attitude of its citizens. Morale sometimes proves to be a greater factor in deciding victory than material. It is hardly necessary to cite specific evidence in order to qualify this point of view; everyone has observed evidence of its validity from personal observation both of private and public life. Certainly all who have read history and understand the creating and disintegrating factors that have determined the destiny of previous cultures cannot doubt the importance of these propensities.

If these are this important to national existence and continuity, care ought to be taken to develop these vital forces within the personalities of the oncoming citizens, particularly those who are training for positions of leadership.

#### *How Can They Be Communicated?*

In what institution is this responsibility to be vested? Certainly the church brings moral consciousness into national life by influencing individuals and groups, yet this effort must be augmented by other agencies who can reinforce the precepts of the church and whose influence reaches to a wider area. If the imponderables are as significant to national strength as we believe them to be, they must be included within the process of education and training. To neglect them is to invite disaster.

The area where training is needed has its locus within the deeply-rooted springs of human behavior. Because these desired qualities lie within the area of personality, *i.e.* attitude, moral responsiveness and outlook, they are difficult to inculcate. How can one touch this area of an individual's life? The preponderance of evidence points to the fact that fields of study are in themselves unable to adequately influence the purposiveness of an individual; therefore certain concomitants are needed to the learning process in higher education. The subject fields challenge *mental* development; therefore, they need to be supplemented by additional influences in order to effectively communicate moral perspective.

This observation is as old as American education, for it is simply a restatement of the principle upon which the American college was founded. It is the belief that the college

should be a community, a community of teaching and learning, a community of sharing in which the student can receive the advantage of close association with the men and women of the faculty. Through conversation, and mutual exchange of ideas, the student can come to better understanding the point of view held by the professors.

Students are invariably influenced by the attitude and ideals of their teachers, for undergraduates consciously or unconsciously imitate them. If the teachers can be chosen who possess adequate training, their own intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for truth will challenge the minds of the students who sit in their classroom and who come to make their personal acquaintance.

The close association between student and teacher affords an unequalled opportunity for guidance. Much of this guidance is by indirection and is often thus more effective than many formal conferences in which the student is apt to brace himself against faculty suggestion.

The obligation of the college is to transfer the qualities described as the imponderables from isolated ideals into students' lives. But to accomplish this mission the college must be able to influence every area of the student's life, rather than limit its influence to mental growth. Unfortunately, there is no single formula by which to effect this goal, yet the small colleges of America who share this concern for youth and who provide a total community of influence supply a continuous atmosphere in which such development is possible.

### *In Conclusion*

Many aspects of education are measurable, for tests have proved to be reliable gauges of student ability. Tests also indicate the efficiency of the learning situation. However, many significant determinants of success reside within personality areas where measurement is hardly possible. Such intangibles must receive continuous attention by institutions who seek to train youth.

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## CALENDAR

- November 7—Homecoming, All Day. 1:30 p. m.—  
Football game, Linfield JV's vs. George  
Fox; Evening, banquet; 8:00 p. m.,  
One-act Play Contest.  
25—4:00 p. m., Thanksgiving Vacation Be-  
gins.
- December 1—8:00 a. m., Classes Resume.  
4—End of Second Six Weeks.  
4—Faculty Christmas Party.  
11-12—George Fox College Auxiliary Sale.  
18—4:00 p. m., Christmas Vacation Begins.
- January 4—8:00 a. m., Classes Resume.
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