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Arnold D. Weigel

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Five Dynamic Dimensions for Effective Teaching

Kevin Treston

Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1997

126 pp. \$9.95 paperback

Kevin Treston, Australian author, experienced teacher of 40 years and consultant to educators internationally, in this book provides an opportunity for teachers—whether in schools or in congregations—to reflect seriously on teaching as vocation.

Treston is emphatic in identifying teaching as a dynamic vocation. “Teaching is much more than instruction. It is a service to enlarge the community’s heritage of wisdom and to empower people to realize the gifts they possess. Good teaching nudges students to open up new horizons of possibilities” (119).

In reading *Five Dynamic Dimensions for Effective Teaching*, I experienced “new horizons of possibilities” being opened up to me. The author explores the vocation and the art of teaching through five particular lenses (each of which has a chapter devoted to it): *integrity* (“the way of inner truthfulness”), *wisdom* (“to discern and communicate authentic ways of living”), *generativity* (“empowers a teacher to choose life for self and propose life choices for students”), *learning* (“the effective facilitation of learning”), and *justice* (“the pursuit of action to promote a more harmonious world”). Each of these perspectives is, of course, itself a central dimension of teaching, which, when taken together, form an enriching framework and process for the totality of teaching. Treston appropriately notes: “Teaching is more than a communication of knowledge. It is also a revelation of self, the sharing of a trustful presence which pervades every facet of the dynamics of teaching... Good teaching seeks to instill in students a love of learning” (5). I heartily agree!

The book is easy to read. The text is a creative integration of educational theories, scriptural foundations and illustrations, anecdotes and insights from literature and many personal life stories—all there to give readers ample opportunity to reflect on the art of teaching as their vocation. Each chapter includes value-based reflection questions which I experienced as particularly engaging and helpful. While very valuable for self-reflection, these questions also make for a healthy and dynamic group process. An extensive bibliography is also included.

I was not drawn to this book either by its title or its table of contents. In fact, I was invited to review this book. I’m pleased I was given this opportunity; it is a valuable resource to educators in many disciplines. I recommend it to anyone involved in teaching.

Arnold D. Weigel
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary
Waterloo, Ontario