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fully reminds readers to be vigilant in finding connections in their humanity, to dig deep in order to find commonalities and to do the research and reflection necessary to find what truly connects us with one another as humans and as a pilgrim Church.

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BUILDING COMMUNITY IN SCHOOLS

THOMAS J. SERGIOVANNI
JOSSEY-BASS, 1994
$25.00, 256 pages

Reviewed by Sean Lynch

By combining research, case studies, and original ideas, Thomas Sergiovanni attempts to address the major obstacle to providing quality education in schools today: a loss of a sense of community. Building on previous books about effective school leadership, Sergiovanni offers the reader ideas about the root causes of this loss of school community and ways in which individuals concerned with this issue might reverse this trend. Written for parents, teachers, superintendents, scholars in educational administration, organizational theorists, and others interested in building community, the author expounds on why reversing the loss of community is not only in our best interest for children, but why such community development is essential for us, as human beings.

The opening chapters of the book lay out the origins of community loss today, how the loss is manifested in our schools, and why its re-establishment is so critical. Sergiovanni sees the breakdown in school community in its relation to the dissolution of community in society at large. In our past, the socialization of young people was shared by the family, the neighborhood, and the school. Today, societal changes have contributed to the partial failure of each of these institutions to provide social support for children, leading them to look internally or to dysfunctional substitutes to address this

need for community. While the author is careful to state that the schools can never be a replacement for family and neighborhood, "community building in schools can provide an important safety net as an interim strategy" for "as schools become communities, they facilitate the strengthening of family and neighborhood" (p. 13).

Sergiovanni claims that schools have come to be seen as organizations rather than communities. Dividing content areas into departments, separating students into grade levels, and designing explicit instructional delivery vehicles are all ways to convince the public that the school knows what it is doing; creating rules and regulations and monitoring programs convey the message of control. However, Sergiovanni claims that such directives over time separate organizations from the people they are created for and end up serving their own organizational goals. The resultant self-interest trickles down to each level of the organization, leaving principals, teachers, and students working solely for their own calculated reasons, seeking reward and avoiding punishment. Communities, however, are different in that they join people to a purpose, connect people via commitment not contract, and rely on norms and values over external control measures.

The reason community is so critical, according to Sergiovanni, is because of its status as a basic human need. Drawing upon the work of Leakey, Oldenquist, and Durkheim, the author furthers the claim of humans as social beings who, when faced with the absence of social constructs, experience negative consequences. Needs are divided into rational connections, emphasizing the pursuit of self-interest, and cultural connections, focusing on loyalties, purposes, and sentiments. While both connections are part of our human reality, schools have begun to promote a dominance of rational connections over cultural ones.

The remainder of the book reveals Sergiovanni's ideas on how community can be incorporated into today's schools. While schools can become communities in many different forms, the need for them first becoming purposeful communities is paramount. These purposeful communities are "places where members have developed a community of mind that bonds them together in special ways and binds them to a shared ideology" (p. 72). Curriculum is another way to help create community in a school by transforming the ideology into decisions about what should be taught and how the curriculum should be organized. Yet both the discipline of adhering to such shared beliefs and the discretion of allowing teachers and students some freedom to create their own teaching objectives and learning outcomes are essential. On a classroom level, democracy can be used to include all classroom members in designing discipline strategies, instilling a spirit of generosity, engaging students in service projects, and enabling students to resolve conflicts peacefully. Such a democratic community promotes active

citizenship and student involvement, leading to intrinsic classroom motivation. Professionalism can assist this transformation by committing educators to improving their practice, assisting their colleagues, and viewing students as persons who require care. Professionalism transforms a school into "a place where everyone is involved in learning and everyone is involved in teaching" (p. 143). This characteristic reveals Sergiovanni's two remaining utopian ideals for today's schools: becoming communities of learners and communities of leaders. Only where openness to new ideas, suspension of judgments, and commitment to inquiry exist can true reflection and dialogue occur between all members. Sergiovanni claims that when such learning is made manifest, there is no need for a single, authoritative leader. The creation of a community of the mind, centered around the all-encompassing ideology, "becomes the primary source of authority for what people do" (p. 170). Principals, teachers, and students alike are followers of this ideal, and their commitment to making this a reality makes them all leaders.

Sergiovanni makes a convincing argument for the need to create community in today's schools and offers some helpful guidelines which schools can use to implement change on different levels to reach this goal. Particularly enriching are the means by which the mission of a school can be inculcated into each realm of a school's social and intellectual structure and into the relationships exhibited by its members. Likewise, the concluding chapter on leadership is beneficial for its summation of central themes and its innovative application of these ideals to the nebulous and evolving concept of school leadership.

The only detractions from this book were its lack of specific means by which to achieve the community constructs extolled by the author, some minor inconsistencies in the intellectual arguments, and a seeming disconnect between some of the author's ideas and the target audience.

Sergiovanni provides the intellectual framework and benchmarks to achieve a successful school community but does not clearly represent the means by which these community standards can be achieved. The author demonstrates how a school with an established community atmosphere would appear and suggests certain essential elements inherent in the existence of such an atmosphere, yet for the process involved in creating such a community, Sergiovanni relies exclusively on case studies. While many of the case studies are helpful and informative, not all of them clarify the methods used to achieve the specific community characteristics for which they are being recognized. Further, the case studies which describe the process of community building are often situation-specific and may not be applicable to all schools. Such an open-ended set-up allows for a fair amount of organizational freedom in constructing community, but might not meet the needs of administrators from schools who are suffering from a dearth of concrete

ways in which to begin the community development process. Therefore, the content of this book offers a clear look at the final destination of a school embracing a model of community but at times remains vague on the journey a school must take to reach this goal.

This reviewer also takes issue with some of the terminology and arguments used to further the points being made about community. The use of some terms and examples causes one to question whether they were chosen simply as a convenient means to drive the author's preconceived arguments or if they are supposed to truly reflect established community practices. The most glaring example of this occurs in the section on democracy. The notion of infusing democracy into the classroom has merit, but the wholesale reliance on this notion opens the entire concept to question. The author contends that a classroom in which students design the discipline policies is preferable to one in which those same policies are created by the teacher. Sergiovanni posits that in the former, fewer discipline problems occur, while in the latter, "no lessons are learned" (p. 133). The author offers a contrived example of a student who fails to complete an assignment, but is allowed to reflect on how he let his classmates down and turn in the assignment later. Leaving aside pedagogical theory and practice, one has to wonder the true lesson that is being learned by the student in this situation. Is it more valuable to learn that through a student-created discipline policy approach, second chances are to be expected, or that, as is the case in the traditional system, that actions have consequences? Combine this with the earlier assertion of the author that a community breakdown exists in the home. If the home is not providing structure or discipline, is it not contradictory to claim that the school should provide this support for the child yet deny the school the means to discipline? While the author admits that certain behavioral acts should be explicitly up to the determination of adults, the list Sergiovanni mentions includes such extremes as weapons, fire alarms, and alcohol. Clearly there is a middle road that should allow teachers to infuse their own measure of rule-making and discipline, as opposed to wholesale reliance on democracy to enhance community.

Apart from this example, the entire notion of democracy and its use in the book calls into question what the author is trying to get across. Throughout the book, Sergiovanni meticulously chooses words and phrases to emphasize precise meanings. Yet the author incorrectly applies the term democracy to the classroom environment when discussing discipline strategies to promote active citizenship. Sergiovanni contends that students should be enlisted to help determine the rules and norms of classroom behavior in order "for the classroom to become a democratic community" (p. 120) to prepare students for active citizenship. The author then cites the U.S. Constitution as an example of "unflinching testimonies to democratic values

that define the obligations of citizenship" (p. 123). Yet, the obligations of citizenship spoken of by our ancestors was not one of democracy, but of a republic. Our system of government requires citizens to voluntarily hand over their individual rights or control to the care and guidance of others who rule for them. It is this ideal, if the author wishes to draw the connection between present and future citizenship, that should justify allowing the teacher to prescribe the rules of classroom behavior and discipline. Therefore, are the examples of a democratic classroom advocated by Sergiovanni designed to bolster this incorrect view of citizenship, or is the paramount ideal of democracy, regardless of the accuracy of its portrayal, used to construct these notions of classroom practices?

The greater point rests in the potential reason why such terminology was chosen and the audience for which the book was written. Throughout the book, there are a lot of unnamed, but clearly identifiable religious notions. The author suggests that community cannot be achieved unless we commit ourselves to "love thy neighbor as thyself" (p. 29). Private schools are championed over public schools in promoting cultural connections because of their "well-established religious and other traditions" (p. 59). In discussing professional communities, the author laments that "even though we fall short, our quest for the professional ideal is a worthy end in itself" (p. 152), reflecting the wisdom of Christian spiritual masters, such as Thomas Merton. Yet when referring to discipline, Sergiovanni claims that the purpose is to teach students citizenship. It seems rather odd that in a book about community which contains hidden references to religion, that the purpose of discipline would not elicit calls to justice, to divine love, or to help build the kingdom of God on earth. This reviewer has to wonder if Sergiovanni has tempered beliefs about community for a secular audience. It would be interesting to see if, in dealing with Catholic schools, Sergiovanni might move beyond the notions of democracy and citizenship to a more satisfying theological foundation for community.

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