



Fr. Bryde Develops Program on Classroom Indian Psychology

How can "Modern Indian Psychology" be taught in the classroom?

The Rev. John Bryde, of the Society of Jesus, has worked out a program plan that so far is successful.

Following is a brief summary of one class. This lesson concerns the old Indian concept of "bravery" and how it can be applied to modern living.

In the old Indian culture, "Bravery" was doing the hard thing (risking one's life) once in a while and then enjoying survival. The left-over attitude from this concept is: "A man works once in a while."

In the white culture the goal is achievement and money with success coming from "working all the time, around the clock or from 8 to 5."

The effect on the young Indian from the conflict in these two cultural ideas can be:

- Depression—constant sadness because others think badly of you.

- Introjection to negative image of self—(others have a picture of you as "no good" and you take on this same picture of you as "no good" — and this leads to:

- guilt — knowing you're not doing a man's real job: supporting his family.

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-rejection-feeling others reject you, soon you start rejecting yourself.

-no role identification-(for young people) some fathers are "ineffectual models." This leads to a feeling of being lost; defense orientation (too busy defending yourself to yourself to enjoy life) frustration and giving in to your feelings of the moment.

How to handle the stress of this conflict? You must recognize or realize that:

1. SURVIVAL is no longer the issue. Therefore, no more working (risking your life) once in awhile in order to survive.

2. There is an easier way now, 8 to 5. (Say, Thank God, it is over and I don't have to risk my life to survive).

3. Since we have (in the history of our people) always overcome obstacles, we will overcome the obstacle of 8 to 5.

4. We will work all the harder at whatever level we want our family to live.

We use the old value (doing hard things) to overcome the obstacle of 8 to 5.

We don't stop being Indians nor give up the old value of bravery. But we use this value in a new setting (8 to 5). Bravery applied to the new setting (8 to 5) is calling "staying on the job" - not quitting because that's running from a hard thing, or "steadiness or reliability (because staying on the job is doing something hard) - and this is bravery.

-Withdrawal - (because others say he is "lazy") and fantasy identification with the past (saying "I'm better than you because my ancestors - with whom I Make Myself One - were supreme men). This leads to doing nothing and not supporting your family.
