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Life Planning Guide for Women (Book Review)

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Vander Goot, Mary, *A Life Planning Guide for Women*. Paideia Press, Ontario, Canada, 1982. Reviewed by Gloria Stronks, Associate Professor of Education.

During the past twenty years a great deal has been said and written about the women's liberation movement. When Christian men and women write about this topic, however, it is often from the viewpoint of either the traditionalist or of those who reflect current moods in society. Traditionalists promote the idea that for a woman to be considering options other than that of homemaker, wife, and mother is a dangerous movement away from the biblical norm. The current feminist view is that women are to be all that it is possible for them to be, in spite of the possible destruction of relationships or institutions along the way.

A Life Planning Guide for Women was written for and about women between the ages of twenty and fifty who seem to be stuck in a confusing "liberation gap." Vander Goot describes the dilemma faced by such women. How are they to live responsibly and thoughtfully in deliberately moving ahead to become all that God has made it possible for them to be? At a time when societal pressures have encouraged women to sound liberated, how do they face the challenges of learning to live well?

Assuming that learning to live well requires change, the author provides guidelines for facing the problems one is likely to encounter along the way. She suggests the need for support in the process of change. The woman who has invested most of her energy in parenting and family concerns may assume that the family, in turn, will offer her the encouragement needed in this new venture. However, the very close involvement of the family members usually means that, rather than being a source of encouragement, they will likely need reassurance themselves at this time. The support for the woman will have to come from a friend or mentor, and when a live mentor cannot be found, a surrogate mentor, in the form of a book, will provide needed encouragement.

Christian Perspectives on Sociology, Stephen A. Grunlan and Milton Reimer, eds., Grand Rapids, Mich.; Zondervan Publishing House, 1982. 457 pp. Reviewed by Fred J. De Jong, Instructor in Sociology and Social Work.

Since Auguste Comte's pioneering work in the early 1800's and the subsequent inception of sociology as a scientific discipline, Christians concerned with the study of society have faced an unattractive dilemma. One could adopt mainline sociological thought based on positivism and cultural relativism. Obviously the result frequently would be to disregard Biblical truths for the nature of man, his purpose and how he should live. The alternative approach is to permit non-Christians and their methods to dominate the field while Christians analyze and comment from the sidelines. Nearly as un-

Vander Goot provides an excellent description of the stages through which women move in their various relationships: wife with husband, parent with child, daughter with parents, friendships, and vocation. The stages which she presents differ from those described by other developmental theorists in that Vander Goot recognizes the likelihood of being in different stages at the same time, depending on the circumstance and the relationship. Within each relationship the woman moves from "predisposition" (getting ready for the relationship by leaving herself open to influence and allowing herself to change) to "immersion" (being totally involved in the new situation) to "emergence" (accepting the relationship as it is, with all of its satisfactions and disappointments). The first two stages have been recognized and discussed in other books but the author makes a particularly valuable contribution in her description of emergence. Vander Goot modestly acknowledges her lack of clarity in this chapter by saying, "There are few good models for emergence and little available advice." But she has provided a step forward in helping the reader to understand that rather than outgrowing relationships or discarding them as we change, emergence conserves our attachments and investments in others. The final chapter, "Charting Your Course," provides guidelines for taking charge of one's life.

This book is a valuable aid in clarifying relationships, an essential step before decisions concerning change can be made. It was not the author's intention to address specific problems faced by single women or by married women who are working through careers. *A Life Planning Guide for Women* will be a helpful book for one particular group of women: those who are married, middle-class, between the ages of twenty and fifty, and not actively involved in careers.

satisfactory as the first choice, sociology as a discipline could be allowed development in its own independent and godless direction, while Christian students, scholars, and researchers glean from the wreckage whatever conclusions or principles which are perceived as congruent with Christianity.

Although the second choice of "gleaning" is superior to the first option of positivism, neither course of action represents an effort to integrate Biblical truths into the field of sociology so that these truths become the driving force for research and discovery. In fact, a flaw of both