

THE GENESIS AND GESTATION OF A JUSTICE JOURNEY:
CATHERINE PINKERTON, CHAMPION OF AND EDUCATOR FOR THE COMMON
GOOD

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This historical study examines events, institutions, experiences, and relationships in Pinkerton's life for educational significance in developing her extraordinary commitment to the common good. Data are viewed through the Deweyan lens of education as continuous, participative, and experiential. Additionally, the study illuminates from Pinkerton's speeches examples of her education of others regarding the need for the common good.

Components of the common good found in the philosophical literature and ego transcendence stemming from a wisdom deep within oneself found in the literature of transpersonal psychology form the conceptual framework upon which this study builds. The chapters are thematic in scope with the content of each chapter presented chronologically to illuminate a continuous education.

The study revealed an integral interaction of education, spirituality, and history in the development and educative embodiment of Pinkerton's transpersonal commitment to the common good. Pinkerton lived a uniquely structured life as a member of the Congregation of Saint Joseph religious community. Emphasis on theological reflection, critical reflection, dialogue, and action for change fostered a perspective transformation regarding the role of women religious in the Roman Catholic Church and led to an analysis of systems that bring oppression of other groups and of planet earth. This awareness eventually led Pinkerton to educate and lobby the U.S. Congress for inclusion of all in the common good.

The study concludes with a metaphor of Pinkerton's life as a whole cloth or seamless garment being constructed from threads of the past, present, and envisioned future. A dialogical shuttle weaves the threads into vibrant, ever-changing, richly hued designs. The design increases in complexity and richness guided by radical, responsible freedom. Such freedom arises from a relationship with a divine wisdom deep within Pinkerton—a relationship through which developed an understanding of the interconnectedness of all things in the common good. Pinkerton's championship of the common good evolved historically through continuous, participative, experiential engagement with learning.

This dissertation is dedicated to the next generations:
my daughter, Julia Elizabeth; my son, Charles Francis,
my daughter-in-law, Sheila Anderson Magness,
and my precious granddaughters,
Alexandra Anne and Noelle Marie

with the desire that for all of their lives
they will derive pleasure from learning.

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PREFACE

Three long-term and recent interests converged in the researcher's life to prompt the writing of this dissertation: the potential of adult education for developing human potential, social action founded in spirituality, and an acquaintance with a deeply spiritual educator for the common good. One of the inspirations for the study was a 1993 book, *Adult Education and Theological Interpretations* by Jarvis and Walters. Hart and Holton's Chapter 15, "Beyond God the Father and the Mother: Adult Education and Spirituality," gave a particularly appreciated, added dimension of spirituality to the usual discourse limited to the "intellectual/conceptual processes in transformative learning."

Catherine Pinkerton, Roman Catholic Sister of Saint Joseph, also motivated this study. Pinkerton, called by the First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton, to participate in meetings, invited to gatherings at the White House, and known by many members of Congress, doesn't own any designer label dresses or fashion accoutrements, a house, or even her own car. Unencumbered by the usual trappings of the successful, Pinkerton lives quite simply and exhibits a different kind of success – the success of one who has remained faithful to a vision. Pinkerton's vision is a society whose members share a concern for the common good. For this common good, Pinkerton offers no dogmatic formula. Rather, the boundaries or shape of that vision expand and change as society changes.

The researcher's interest in adult education ties together this appreciation for the inclusion of spirituality in the discourse of transformative learning, and acquaintance with a woman whose spirituality envelops the common good. Pinkerton's spirituality facilitates development beyond self-actualization to ego-transcendence. Adult education, also, has the potential to facilitate this development. Thus a study evolved of what was educationally significant to Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, in shaping her commitment to the common good and the ways in which this commitment was made manifest in Pinkerton's life.