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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ASCENSION BIBLE INSTITUTE IN PREPARING LAY
PEOPLE FOR MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

A Major Applied Project Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry


By
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May 2005



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Director, Doctor of Ministry Program, Dr. David Peter

**The Effectiveness of The Ascension Bible Institute
In Preparing Lay People for Ministry in the Church**

Major Applied Project

**In partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the
Doctor of Ministry Degree**

**Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO**

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Introduction

This Major Applied Project is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry Degree at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. The subject of the project and its research is the Ascension Bible Institute, hereinafter referred to as the ABI, of Ascension Lutheran Church of St. Louis, Missouri. Ascension Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS).

The ABI was created to service a specific educational purpose. That purpose may be described as providing for the

“need of continuing education not merely for the sake of acquiring more information about the faith. (Christians) are summoned to be the church in the world and to do the work of the church among the pressing problems of our day. The aim of adult Christian education is to produce dedicated, capable and active Christian disciples.”¹

ABI is a ministry of Ascension Lutheran Church to benefit itself, other Lutheran congregations in south St. Louis, and also the larger Christian community. Its purpose is the preparation and equipping of lay people for service in their congregation as officers, teachers, and evangelists for the building up of the Church of Christ and the spread of his kingdom.²

What I will evaluate in this project is whether the ABI accomplishes its stated purpose in the lives of those who participate. Do they find themselves equipped and

¹Henry J. Boettcher, *Adult Education in the Parish*, (New York: Vantage Press, 1975), Forward, quoting Richard J. Schultz.

²Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing in Our Story and Vision*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), page 34. “The purpose of Christian religious education is to enable people to live as Christians, that is, to live lives of Christian faith. This would seem to be its purpose since the Christian community first began to educate. - What is the purpose of being Christian? . . . The Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ is proposed as our ultimate purpose.”

motivated to serve in their congregations with greater confidence? Do they feel adequately equipped to function outside of their congregations in the community for the spread of the Church of Jesus Christ? What needs to be strengthened in the ABI? What needs to be changed in the ABI? What can the ABI do to reach more people within the Church? What kind of mechanism can best be used for periodic evaluation of the ABI?

Chapter One will trace the history of the ABI. Chapter Two will examine the Biblical background for ongoing adult religious education. Chapter Three will review relevant literature concerning the Christian education of adults under an introduction, seven headings: 1.) Equipping the saints by the Apostle's life changing teaching, modeled in congregational life; 2.) Christian practices should be relevant in the world; 3.) Growth in faith and truth is fostered; 4.) Pastors are not taught the skill of teaching; 5.) Suggested changes for growth in Christian education; 6.) Motivation in Christian education; and 7.) Summary. Chapter Four on research results will be divided into five parts: 1.) Results of the research conducted through questionnaires and the trends shown; 2.) Interpreting the questionnaire results and trends; 3.) Follow-up personal interviews results and trends; 4.) Summary of the personal interviews results and trends; and, 5.) Conclusions from personal interviews. Chapter Five will contain suggestions for improvement of the ABI in light of the evaluations and also for continuing evaluation of the efforts of the ABI.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Bruce Hartung, my reader, Prof. David Wollenburg, Ascension Lutheran Church for allowing me the time to pursue these studies, Dr. Jane Fryar, Dr. John Oberdeck both of whom advanced my vision for the ABI, and Mr. Joel Young, who conducted the personal interviews. Most of all I want to thank my wife

Christine for her patience and encouragement. All glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter One

History of the Ascension Bible Institute

The history and purpose of the Ascension Bible Institute are tied together. It has been my experience that many Lutheran congregations in city situations face the problems of stagnation in program and ideation, declining numbers of active and able participants in congregational structure, lay leadership, ³ programs and outreach, dwindling monetary resources and therefore less case specific pastoral direction and guidance. Thus, city congregations find it difficult if not impossible to fulfill their call to make disciples. ⁴

Beginning in the early 1990's, pastors of the joint conference of the St. Louis City South and St. Louis City West Circuits of the Missouri District of the LCMS, and I among them as pastor of The Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer for nine years, began discussions centered around the need for cooperation among the circuit congregations to accomplish their mission.⁵ The congregations involved had at one time been large and self-sufficient. They were commonly reported⁶ to have little concern for the mission of each other, since they all had abundant resources of people, money, and pastoral leadership. Initially, the

³Donald B. Rogers, *Urban Church Education*, (Birmingham, AL: Religious education Press,1989), page 2. The most perplexing urban church situations are those that are in the midst of transition caused by factors in urban life. These churches are often suffering financially and with a small base of available leadership. They may be churches that have seen a great change in their neighborhood. They may be churches that have become racial islands trying to achieve integration. They may be churches that find it difficult to get and keep well-qualified, full-time, professional leadership."

⁴Boettcher, page viii. "To train more of the laity, in lay leadership in the local congregation, that is a major task of the Church at this time."

⁵Rogers, page 2. "These churches need to work more closely together, communicate more freely congregation to congregation, and become aggressively creative in resolving the issues of education ministry."

⁶In informal conversations with the Pastors and lay people of those congregations, I was often told of this attitude. It had been held, at one time, as almost a badge of honor.

congregations grew because of demographic forces. They continued to grow because of birth rate within the congregations. Their parochial schools grew as well. But these were congregations located in urban areas heavily populated by similar immigrant groups.^{7 8} They were primarily pedestrian congregations. The mission strategy was, "People know where we are, and the doors are open. Let them come in."⁹

At the end of the Second World War, the demographics of the area changed. The changes were not rapid at first. Sons of the congregations arriving back from the war naturally returned to their home congregations. Soon many took brides and needed housing beyond a room in their parents' house or flat. Some such housing, but not much, was available in the neighborhoods in which they were raised. Those who could find and rent a flat settled down. Those who could not find such accommodations moved to the near ring of suburbs and began their families.¹⁰ Many of these young families remained attached to the old home congregation, even though they had to drive a little distance, or even drive past another Lutheran congregation, to get there.¹¹ Other young families who had remained in the city and began their families soon became dissatisfied with the crowded conditions their

⁷ In south St. Louis, the only English-speaking congregation for two decades was Our Redeemer, organized in 1894 by Martin Sommer of nearby Concordia Seminary. Our Redeemer became part of the English Synod, having been denied entrance into the Missouri Synod because of language. Even Our Redeemer was populated largely by immigrants, but the members wanted to worship in English and have their children instructed in the language of their new home.

⁸ Howard E. Spragg, *Scope of the Churches-in-Transition Problem Nationally*, in *Proceedings Report of the Churches-in-Transition National Consultation*, William R. Voelkel, ed. (Chicago, IL, Printed by the committee. 1977) page 2. "Often, as in the case of . . . churches with their German background, such congregations are ethnically oriented."

⁹ Again, reported by members of the congregations as a common attitude.

¹⁰ Specific information related to me by Edward Pavletich and other members of Our Redeemer as we spoke about the impossibility of former members returning to revitalize the congregation. This confirmed what had been told me by Rev. Roy Moeller, pastor of Zion Lutheran Church of north St. Louis for 34 years, as a phenomenon common to that congregation as well.

¹¹ George D. Younger, *The Church and Urban Renewal*, (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965), page 35. "Since World War II a fantastic increase in the use of the automobile has created the spread city, sprawling its places of residence, work and play across the landscape, providing a horizontal pattern."

parents had taken for granted. They moved to the suburbs because they could afford it¹² and largely retained membership in their old congregations.

In the years immediately following the war,¹³ these city congregations were full of young people with great ideas for ministry and a desire for socialization. They also had a zeal for foreign missions, since many of the young men had become aware of the need for the Gospel in many of the parts of the world they had seen in their experience with the nation's armed forces. Sunday Schools and parochial schools grew. Couples' organizations sprang up along with men's clubs, women's auxiliaries and youth groups. Congregational offices and positions were filled with people with experience and energy. Things looked bright indeed for these city congregations. There seemed to be no need for real cooperation or sharing of resources. In fact, there may have been some competitive feeling between congregations.¹⁴ That competitive feeling may have fostered the later parochialism which prevented earlier intervention in the problems which plagued the congregations in common. Another factor foreshadowing the need for leadership in Christian education which would arise years later was that the LCMS had not developed a system of training and enlisting lay adults for leadership in Christian adult education for any sustained time period. Pastors also did not wish to relinquish the teaching task, and themselves were not trained in adult

¹² Younger, page 37. "The Veterans' Emergency Housing Act of 1946 provided so-called "G. I. Loans" that made home ownership a reality for more Americans than ever before in the nation's history. The greatest share of those homes was built in the suburban areas surrounding the old cities."

¹³ These conclusions were drawn from conversations with those present at the time and engaged in those activities, and from written congregational history at the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer.

¹⁴ Our Redeemer participated in Holy Cross Lutheran School with Holy Cross congregation of St. Louis by providing a teacher for the faculty in return for member tuition rates. In spite of this cooperation, it was reported to me by those present at the time that the prevailing attitude of the congregations was one of competition, or at best resistance to further cooperation.

education until after 1960.¹⁵

Most of these congregations were between 50 and 100 years old in the 1950's when the larger changes began. The young families that lived in the suburbs and drove in to church and other activities began to tire of this as their children grew into school age and needed to attend the parochial school. Parents then transferred to the congregations they had driven past and placed their children into the parish school and became active in those congregations.¹⁶ Even parents whose children attended public schools joined the congregations closer to their homes when their children attained the age of confirmation instruction. It was easier for their children to participate that way. It also fulfilled a dictum which they had probably heard in their youth that one should attend the congregation closest to home in order to be regular in attendance and active in the support and programs of the church.

As the parents of the G.I.'s who returned and moved to the suburbs also became more affluent they, too, followed their children to the suburbs and joined and attended the congregations which their children and grandchildren attended. This left housing stock in the city available for occupation.¹⁷ ¹⁸ Since this was an age of rising affluence, the cultural

¹⁵ Ewald Kane, Jr. *The Development of Adult Christian Education in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1914-1989*, (Akron, OH: The University of Akron, 1994), page 492.

¹⁶ This pattern is evident in the growth statistics of congregations in the near suburbs, also in the cases of older congregations which had once been rural and were now suburban.

¹⁷ Younger, page 36. "The statistics on metropolitan growth in the postwar years are startling. While central cities have increased slightly or even decreased in population, the 212 metropolitan areas have grown until by the 1960 census, they had a combined population of nearly 113 million inhabitants, over 60 percent of the nation's residents. Between the 1950 and 1960 censuses, population in the central cities increased only 10.7 percent (and decreased in 56 metropolitan areas), while it was growing by 48.6 percent in the metropolitan ring surrounding those cities."

¹⁸ Spragg, in *Proceedings Report*, page 2. "The population in central cities over the period from 1970-76 declined 3.4% reversing a pattern of 6.5% growth during the previous decade."

tendency was to value space and comfort. The city housing stock of these communities was not attractive to people with means. So those who moved into city housing in those communities were not like the people who had left. They likely also were not likely to be Lutheran. Thus, the “changing neighborhood” was first changed in economics and culture.

The “open door” mission strategy of the past had not changed. Those from the new community around the church could come in if they wished, but it was not likely. If they did come in, there was the distinct sense they did not truly belong there. They may have been tolerated, but not usually acculturated. There were exceptions. These exceptions gave a false sense of security to the continuing members of the congregation.¹⁹

They generally saw no need to evangelize their own community because they still had plenty of members to fill the offices and pay the bills. Certainly there would be no change in what the congregation did because these things had worked in the past and could be expected to continue to do so.²⁰ But comments about former days when things were bigger and better began. Cooperation between congregations was confined to publicizing each others’ special dinners and patronizing them.

Any societal change precipitates another. As the community around these congregations changed in economics and culture, it became less desirable for the old residents to remain there. More of them began to move away. Many of the former residents passed away, leaving even more housing available.

¹⁹ In personal conversations with some of these “exceptions” who were still in the congregation, I learned that they had come because of the closeness of the church and curiosity, not because of an outreach program of the congregation. They had acculturated. Other interested people had not felt comfortable and did not remain.

²⁰ Spragg, in *Proceedings Report*, page 2. “In the face of (heavy community deterioration), the tendency (of the congregation) is to hang on, grow inward, and hope the external storm will pass.”

As it is initially difficult to dump a full barrel of water, and then after some is gone, it is easier and easier to tip until all the water is poured out, thus it is with this kind of change in a neighborhood. The second generation residents who had moved in were not owners of the flats but renters. Owners did not live in the neighborhood anymore. They were less and less concerned with the condition of the property. So the second generation residents also moved out, and people of different ethnic groups began to move in. The barrel was quickly emptying.

In some of the congregations there was more than a neglect of evangelization of the new ethnically and economically different residents of the community, there was a resistance to it.²¹ Crime increased as a factor in the neighborhood. Over time, commitment to the congregation where their revered parents had been members and where they themselves had grown up, been confirmed and married, no longer held members who lived out of the community and continued to drive in. They were transferring in droves. Astute laymen and pastors began to see signs for the necessity to change the mission strategy to intentionality.²² They also began to understand that they would have to cooperate with each other to accomplish such an intentional mission in communities which had not witnessed such

²¹ Stories were told to this author by congregational members of comments by pastors and officers of congregations that people of other ethnic groups were actively discouraged from membership in these congregations. As late as the late 1980's I heard some of these comments personally.

²² United States Catholic Conference, Committee on Education, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, (Washington, D.C., United States Catholic Conference, 1999), page 5. "Seek to form parishes that are vitally alive in faith. These communities will provide a parish climate and an array of activities and resources designed to help adults more fully understand the live their faith. Seek to form adults who actively cultivate a lively baptismal and eucharistic spirituality with a powerful sense of mission and apostolate. Nourished by word, sacrament and communal life, they will witness and share the Gospel in their homes, neighborhoods, places of work and centers of culture."

before.²³

In the early to mid 1990's, the areas of cooperation explored were mainly in the realm of money saving considerations, such as sharing secretarial help, buildings, etc. Little actual sharing of personnel and facilities happened.²⁴ Common themes of community awareness and evangelism also came to the fore. It quickly became apparent to the pastors in the area that such limited cooperation would not solve the problem. No amount of money saved could reverse the trend of the congregations towards death. Congregations did not have the resources in terms of people-power to mount the types of efforts which would be necessary to effectively evangelize the community and also maintain the congregations institutionally. There was a sense of desperate resignation among many in those congregations.²⁵

A seminal idea began to grow as a result of an effort by the Sunday School superintendent of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church of south St. Louis.²⁶ Our Redeemer sponsored a special Sunday School teachers' training with a well-known Christian educator from the area and invited the Sunday school teachers and staffs from circuit congregations. Many teachers from various congregations attended. In the evaluation at the end of the session the participants expressed the opinion that it was worth-while. It was evident to

²³ Rogers, page 2. "These churches need to work more closely together, communicate more freely congregation to congregation, and become aggressively creative in resolving the issues of education ministry."

²⁴ Pastor Marcus Zill, then serving Emmaus Lutheran Church in a part-time capacity, suggested meetings of the congregations to discuss the issues. A meeting was held at Holy Cross and at Emmaus, but the discussions, although thoughtful, proved unfruitful as there was no movement to carry out the ideas.

²⁵ Rogers, page 16. "The uncritical identification of wholeness with completeness in this programing modality led some urban churches to despair. Those that had very limited resources (in leadership particularly) could not offer even the minimal range of programs and concluded that they were thus not a whole church."

²⁶ Christine Spomer was the superintendent who came up with the idea and enlisted the aid of Luther DeCuir, the Director of Christian Education at Our Redeemer in planning and executing the subsequent gathering.

those present²⁷ that this kind of sharing of training that one congregation could not afford to do for itself, was needed for information, skill building, and inspiration.²⁸ Efforts that would benefit several congregations at once in areas which did not threaten the territory of a congregation, or cause that congregation to doubt its viability, were needed and welcomed. Plans were made for further cooperative efforts, but never came to pass as congregations were unable to keep their commitments.²⁹

Pastors in the circuits knew that stability was needed.³⁰ They also thought that an outside agency which could lend its name and influence to the effort might draw more people and congregations. Dr. Albert Garcia of the Lay Training Institute of Concordia University, Mequon, WI was in St. Louis for a meeting. Pastors of the joint circuit conference were able to persuade him to meet with them at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in south St. Louis in winter of 1993. The discussion centered on promoting the program of the Lay Training Institute. However, it became apparent during the discussions that the requirements for entering the Institute were too high for many members of the congregations represented. The commitment of time and length of course of study also were deterrents to enlisting the numbers of congregational members envisioned to help the

²⁷ This author was among those present at this meeting and witnessed the conversations and evaluation.

²⁸ Robert W. Pazmino, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997), page 22. "Education entails conscious planning, implementing, and evaluating of educational experiences. Intentionality in Christian education involves the effort to share biblical content, to grapple with its implications for life, and to suggest avenues for appropriate response."

²⁹ A second meeting had been planned at Messiah Lutheran Church, but with the departure of their pastor, the plan did not materialize.

³⁰ Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*, (Louisville: Geneva Press, 1999), page 34. "It is clear, both from experience and from the testimony of Scripture, that the kind of faith and life of faith we described . . . do not arise in a moment. The alterations and transformations that occur in faith and in the life of faith occur in time and over time.

congregations make an impact in their communities.³¹ Congregation members were not seeking synodical certification as Lay Ministers. Dr. Garcia informed us that the level and type of instruction we had in mind did not fit into the parameters of the Lay Training Institute, and they were not prepared to create such a program for pilot in our area.³²

The idea seemed for a time to subside. The need did not. The window of opportunity began to close as fewer and fewer people were available in the congregations for jobs and positions in outreach, Sunday School, and the organization of the congregations. The clergy of the congregations also changed. Some congregations became vacant or served by neighboring pastors and seminary students.

It was in May of 1996 I accepted a call to Ascension Lutheran Church in south St. Louis. Ascension is viable congregation in a beautiful area of the city. It has a rich history of education, having had its own parochial school, as well as dedicated Sunday School superintendents.³³ In 1974 Ascension had joined with Timothy Lutheran Church and Concordia Lutheran Church of Maplewood to form the Word of Life Lutheran School Association. Concordia Church has since withdrawn because of lack of students, but St. Lucas Lutheran Church has joined the association and brought its large and active pre-school along.

Another factor in the establishment of the ABI was that I was not able to teach a

³¹ Virgil E. Foster, *Christian Education: Where the Learning Is*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), page 16. "If the message of Christ is relevant now it must be communicated in the situations in which people have their being as God's creatures. God's love is current, not just historic, and must be witnessed to wherever people are."

³² The conversation with Dr. Garcia did bear the fruit of beginning an extension of the Lay Training Institute at Mt. Olive the following spring.

³³ One of those superintendents, Charles Beckerman, who had grown up at Our Redeemer, left a continuing legacy to Ascension which funds the ABI independent of congregation budget.

Sunday morning Bible Study at Ascension due to the Sunday morning service schedule. Although I teach a Tuesday morning adult study, many people who may wish a more in depth study are not available at that time.

In January 1997 at the planning meeting of the Church Council of Ascension, the seminal idea of the ABI was brought up in response to an expressed need for more venues for adult education in the congregation,³⁴ and for me to teach, in particular.

In conversation over lunch in April of 1998 with John Oberdeck D.Ed., our Board of Education leader for adult classes and professor of practical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. I discussed the need for another Bible Study time. I explained to him my concept for a more comprehensive course of study, not just single classes at a time. If only one class is offered in an evening time slot, only a few people would possibly attend. But if more than one class is offered of various genre, more people would be interested in coming. Bible Text study, topic study, elder training classes, family life classes, Sunday School teacher enhancement classes, etc., might even attract members of congregations which do not have the resources or training needed for such courses.³⁵ Dr. Oberdeck liked the idea and agreed that this effort should be from the congregation, but have its own board to insure that it would continue to function at a high level. He believed the congregational Board of Education had enough to handle without the new effort.

A board was assembled and met in May of 1998. It was decided that this new

³⁴ Foster, page 10. Churches owe it to their adults . . . to open the way for adult study and action worthy of the name. They must provide opportunities in education that have some chance of helping adults to prepare for responsible living in an exciting, threatening, revolutionary time.”

³⁵ Rogers, page 2.

endeavor should be called the Ascension Bible Institute. The agenda for the first meeting included conversation on vision, connectivity, goals, resources, and logistics.³⁶ Under vision we discussed four areas: 1.) training; 2.) graded studies; 3.) Wednesday nights as the anchor time; and 4.) certification. Under the heading of connectivity we saw it desirable that we increase our learning and spiritual development to the point of discipleship.³⁷ Our goals were to “Know Christ, Be like Christ, and Share Christ,” or “Learn, Live, Share.”³⁸ We needed to advance beyond our foundation of basic instruction and get to the point in our lives where we were equipped to share the Gospel with others.³⁹ While we talked of our goals, we did not discuss the design of individual classes.

As we discussed resources, we realized that we had in the congregation a nucleus of perhaps 10 qualified instructors at the time. New instructors could be added as advancement in the curriculum occurred. It might even be possible to offer a stipend, from grants for which we could apply, to outside instructors.

In terms of logistics we decided to work around Advent and Lent, and have three sessions per year, one beginning after Labor day and continuing 10-12 weeks or up to Thanksgiving. The second would begin after Epiphany and continue to Lent. The third

³⁶Pazmino, page 22.

³⁷ Dykstra, page 34. (F)aitth and the life of faith are dynamic, vital processes, not static conditions. For all these reasons, it is important to recognize and articulate what it means to grow in faith and in the life of faith and to ask how it happens.”

³⁸ Ibid. “The Bible speaks of both immaturity and maturity in faith, and we are called to grow up into the latter (Eph.4:13-16).”

³⁹ Ibid. page 71. “In my view, an essential task of education in faith is to teach all the basic practices of the Christian faith. The fundamental aim of Christian education in all its forms, varieties, and settings should be that individuals - and indeed whole communities - learn these practices, be drawn into participation in them, learn to do them with increasingly deepened understanding and skill, learn to extend them more broadly and fully in their own lives and into their world, and learn to correct them, strengthen them, and improve them.”

would begin after Easter and continue through May, usually 5 to 8 weeks. It was decided not to have summer sessions.

The varying lengths of sessions would lend themselves to certain types of courses. We decided to take into consideration the needs of parents with children in time scheduling and offering childcare and even homework monitoring. We talked about the possibility of graded testing for advancement.

Also, initially, there were two time slots scheduled for each evening, giving people the opportunity to attend two studies of interest in the different areas designated “Learning our Faith” and “Living our Faith”. The studies were also graded, that is, assigned a level of difficulty. People could choose to take a course on any of three levels: beginning, intermediate, or advanced. It was thought that people would begin at the lowest level and then move to the higher level courses and gain confidence and competency.

Proposed course offerings in the various areas included: What Lutherans Believe; Walk Through the Old Testament; Walk Through the New Testament; The Christian Church (history); Understanding the Scriptures (basic tools for understanding the Bible); The Life of Jesus; Key Doctrines of the Christian Religion: Means of Grace, Justification by Grace; Romans; The Lutheran Church and its Confessions; Worship; Prayer; Stewardship; Congregational Organization; Discipleship; Christian Parenting; Leadership; Elders’ Training; Witnessing; and Caring for One Another.

It never seemed in question that the ABI would be launched. The eight inaugural classes began on January 6, 1999. Attendance at the beginning session was 64. We had no idea of how this effort would be received at Ascension. Many people also attended from

other congregations. The ABI board had in mind that the offerings should be available to the larger community. This made sense, since part of the rationale for beginning the ABI was to help congregations which did not have the resources to train lay people for the tasks of the congregation and outreach. Therefore, board members decided to market beyond the local congregation. Publicity was sent to nearby Lutheran congregations, other Christian congregations, and the local neighborhood newsletter.

The advantage to being located in the St. Louis area is the availability of many competent and interesting teachers in many areas of study. The staff of Ascension was often called upon to teach, as were faculty members of Concordia Seminary and staff members of Concordia Publishing House, radio station KFYO, and local Lutheran service organizations. Local pastors were also recruited to teach courses as a way of widening the appeal of the ABI. They would make their congregations aware of what was being offered and the advantage of making use of the opportunity.

By the time of the second session, in the spring of 1999, the idea of having two courses per evening session was dropped. Participants reported they were just getting warmed up by the end of the first 50 minute period and wanted to continue with that subject rather than break, and then begin another study. It also was difficult for some people to make the transition at that time of night. Many people did not avail themselves of the second offering per evening. We decided to move to offering one class period per evening giving more instruction time per course.

From the winter 1999 session through the fall 2000 session, 29 courses were offered and 26 were actually held over a total of 46 weeks with 248 participants.

In summer of 2002 Dr. John Oberdeck left Concordia Seminary to teach at Concordia University, Wisconsin. Another Ascension member, Dr. Jane Fryar, D.S.L., LL.D., became the director of ABI. In May of 2003, the board began to explore restructuring of the courses. Suggested course areas were: Doctrine - roughly conceived as what we as Lutherans believe and why; Scripture; Witness/Evangelism; Personal "Life Management"; Sacraments; and Prayer. The board adopted this concept.

Courses continued to be offered under this system. Dr. Fryar, however, accepted a call to teach at Concordia University, Seward, NE in summer of 2004. Mr. Charles Conover took over the directorship for a short time, but left to head The Lutheran Elementary School Association of the St. Louis Area. There was one session when no courses were offered, due to lack of leadership. Other problems such as inadequate marketing also beset the ABI in 2004. In winter of 2005, Mrs. Lisa Hoelderle accepted the position of director of ABI. The post-Easter session is under way at this writing. Three courses are being offered, although the attendance is not as large as has been in the past.

Chapter Two

Biblical Background for Ongoing Adult Religious Education

Scripture⁴⁰ has many things to say about the process of education.⁴¹ We will examine some of the words used for the educational process, including both teachers and learners. We will also look at the context and the purposes for education. Finally we will state what this has to do for our study of the Ascension Bible Institute.

We begin with the idea of teaching. The Old Testament speaks of instruction in the law and will of God with a variety of words. Teaching the Law of God is spoken of in Deut. 6:7⁴² as a sharpening one in the knowledge and application of the Law by the process of the believer bringing the words of God to bear on each other like sharpening a knife on steel. The purpose of such teaching according to 2 Chronicles 30:22⁴³ is to make the hearer wise, a mere surface knowledge of the things of God not being good enough for God's purpose.

According to Proverbs 31:1,⁴⁴ teaching is a corrective to misunderstanding which also brings about discipline in the very process as the misunderstanding is removed. In

⁴⁰ Citations from the Bible are from or in reference to *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, (New York: International Bible Society, 1973, 1978, 1984) unless otherwise specified.

⁴¹ Pazmino, page 11. "The Bible is a critical instrument which discerns and judges the educator, the educatee, and the educational process. By exploring biblical and theological foundations first, Christian educators can affirm transcultural universals which may then guide all educational conceptions and efforts. The consideration of biblical and theological foundations can also serve to identify distinctive assumptions tht Christians bring to their thought and practice of education."

⁴² "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

⁴³ "Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites, who showed good understanding of the service of the LORD."

⁴⁴ "The sayings of King Lemuel-- an oracle his mother taught him. . ."

Psalm 105:22⁴⁵ the context tells us that the purpose of instruction in wisdom is not merely so that a person will be wise, but act upon that wisdom. Exodus 18:20⁴⁶ mentions the purpose of teaching is to admonish someone to conduct their life according to the will of God.

Jeremiah 28:16⁴⁷ speaks of teaching as speaking or conversation in which a person declares something which brings about a result in the lives of others. Teaching can also mean to understand and to cause others to understand as in Nehemiah 8:9.⁴⁸ Deuteronomy 4:9⁴⁹ refers to teaching for long term effects, as to make someone know something they will not forget, to apply it generation after generation.⁵⁰ God gets even more direct with His use of “teach” to Moses when He uses it to mean guide or direct in Exodus 4:12.⁵¹ Deuteronomy 4:1⁵² tells us that to teach also means to train through rehearsing or putting into practice that which is imparted as knowledge.

The New Testament uses some of the same concepts, but also has its own nuances

⁴⁵ “. . . to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom.”

⁴⁶ “Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.”

⁴⁷ “Therefore, this is what the LORD says: ‘I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.’”

⁴⁸ “Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, ‘This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep.’ For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.”

⁴⁹ “Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”

⁵⁰ Ibid. page 11. “Moses’ teaching called the believing community to relate their faith in God to all of life. This passage from Deuteronomy provides insights about the goals, the teacher, the student, the content, and the setting of biblical education. Paragraph. The educational mandate. . . requires passing on the commandments of God to the next generation. Its ultimate goal is to foster the love of God expressed in loyalty and obedience.”

⁵¹ “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

⁵² “Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.”

that lend difference to its meanings. In Luke 11:1⁵³ when one of the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray, he was asking to be instructed. The word can be used to describe either a formal or informal context for the teaching.⁵⁴ Also in Luke 1:4⁵⁵ the word translated “teach”⁵⁶ includes the idea of detail or a systematic style of teaching.

In Acts 22:3,⁵⁷ instruction brings with it forming the right habits. As in one of the Old Testament words for “teach,”⁵⁸ it can also mean a corrective to behavior and belief as in Romans 15:14⁵⁹ and 1 Thessalonians 5:12⁶⁰ as the word is translated “admonish.”⁶¹ In 2 Timothy 2:15⁶² Paul uses a word which carries the meaning of correct, accurate and right instruction⁶³. And Paul again in 1 Timothy 4:6⁶⁴ uses a word which means to provide both instruction and training with the end result of gaining skill in a practical area.⁶⁵

⁵³ “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’”

⁵⁴ δίδαξον

⁵⁵ “. . . so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught”

⁵⁶ κατηχήθης

⁵⁷ “Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.”

⁵⁸ Proverbs 31:1 וְיָרַח

⁵⁹ “I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.”

⁶⁰ “Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.”

⁶¹ νουθετοῦντας

⁶² “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

⁶³ ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας.

⁶⁴ “If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.”

⁶⁵ καλῆς διδασκαλίας

Teaching is of little value if learning is not going on at the same time. In Deuteronomy 4, which was cited above (v.1)⁶⁶ under teaching, we also find the same word used in a different tense (v.10)^{67 68} to mean “to learn.” In this case, the learning is an ongoing activity as Israel learns to revere the Lord. Deuteronomy 5:1⁶⁹ and Isaiah 26:9⁷⁰ also reflect this ongoing activity which not only reinforces the lesson taught, but through practice brings about the desired end result. In both cases the people addressed are better fitted for their lives under God.

New Testament references to learning carry many nuances of meaning. In Acts 24:8⁷¹ the idea is to get information in a precise form and focus on what is learned. Acts 17:27⁷² refers to learning something which the learner did not know before, perhaps carrying with it the idea of discovery. 1 John 4:7,⁷³ when it speaks of knowing God, adds the dimension of experiencing that which is learned. Romans 16:17⁷⁴ and Philippians 4:9⁷⁵ have

⁶⁶ שָׁמַע

⁶⁷ וְאָשַׁמְעוּם

⁶⁸ “Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when he said to me, ‘Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.’”

⁶⁹ “Moses summoned all Israel and said: Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them.”

⁷⁰ “When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness.”

⁷¹ “By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him.”

⁷² “God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.”

⁷³ “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”

⁷⁴ “I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.”

⁷⁵ “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

the same idea but include reflecting on it, or learning over a period of time. Philippians 4:12⁷⁶ has the force of learning the secret of a thing either through personal experience or having been brought to it by another.

Receiving information passed on from another person, especially in the area of tradition is implied in 1 Corinthians 15:3.⁷⁷ Learning also takes place when someone makes an inquiry into a matter, as in John 4:52.⁷⁸

The purpose and context of teaching and learning is treated informatively in both Old and New Testaments. As an example, Exodus 35:34⁷⁹ tells us that the ability to teach is given by God and Daniel 1:17⁸⁰ portrays learning as a gift from God as well. The whole enterprise of education in the name of God, teaching and learning His truths from the Word of God, is undertaken with the blessing of God the Holy Spirit.⁸¹

Deuteronomy 8:3⁸² reminds us that the purpose of God's teaching is God's Word itself, that it surpasses in importance anything else which can be learned in this world. Psalm

⁷⁶ "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."

⁷⁷ "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,..."

⁷⁸ "When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, 'The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour.'"

⁷⁹ "And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others."

⁸⁰ "To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds."

⁸¹ Nehemiah 9:20, "You gave your good Spirit to instruct them."; 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"; Luke 12:12, "...for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."; John 14:26, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"; Romans 12:7, "If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach"; Romans 15:4 "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

⁸² "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."

25:4⁸³ tells us that the Lord's teaching is truth. Such teaching is to be guarded closely⁸⁴ because of its importance. It is teaching in discernment⁸⁵ and instruction in holy living.⁸⁶

Jesus' earthly ministry was characterized by three actions: preaching, healing, and teaching.⁸⁷ He engaged his disciples through teaching.⁸⁸ It was by His teaching that he formed them as disciples,⁸⁹ because his teaching had authority⁹⁰ that changed people's lives.

The purpose for which Jesus taught his disciples is that they might come to the knowledge of the truth,⁹¹ be saved⁹² and be teachers themselves.⁹³ Acts 2:42⁹⁴ and 4:2⁹⁵

⁸³ "Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths;"

⁸⁴ Proverbs 7:2, "Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye."

⁸⁵ Ezekiel 44:23, "They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean."

⁸⁶ Isaiah 2:3, "Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.'"

⁸⁷ Matthew 4:23, "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

⁸⁸ Matthew 5:2, "... he began to teach them."

⁸⁹ Matthew 10:25, "It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master."

⁹⁰ Matthew 7:28, "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. Luke 4:31, Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority."

⁹¹ John 8:27,28 "They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *the one I claim to be* and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.'"

⁹² Colossians 1:28 "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."

⁹³ Luke 6:40, "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

⁹⁴ "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

⁹⁵ "They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead."

tells us that teaching was one of the top priorities of the apostles, and all of those sent out with the Word of the Lord.⁹⁶ Teaching is to be the activity of the Church itself as Jesus instructed in Matthew 28:20.⁹⁷ 1 Timothy 4:13⁹⁸ bears this out from the point of view of the Apostle Paul.⁹⁹

This teaching which Jesus enjoins upon his followers is not a haphazard thing.¹⁰⁰ It was understood that one who was to take up the honorable activity of teaching¹⁰¹ had to undertake a course of instruction¹⁰² in order to be able to be a teacher himself.¹⁰³ The teacher must study and be faithful because the teacher is himself strictly judged.¹⁰⁴ A teacher searches for the right words¹⁰⁵ so that he does not misrepresent the message, which is easily misunderstood and offensive¹⁰⁶ because it distinguishes right and wrong and touches the

⁹⁶ 2 Chronicles 17:7, "In the third year of his reign he sent his officials Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel and Micaiah to teach in the towns of Judah."

⁹⁷ "... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

⁹⁸ "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching."

⁹⁹ Robert Pazmino quoted in James Michael Lee, ed. *Forging a Better Religious Education in the Third Millennium*, (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 2000), page 74, "One suggestion I propose for religious educators . . . is to return to the sources of faith and to encourage others to do the same."

¹⁰⁰ 2 Timothy 1:13, "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus."

¹⁰¹ 1 Timothy 5:17, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."

¹⁰² Daniel 1:4, "... young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians." Acts 18:11, "So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God."

¹⁰³ Romans 2:20, "... an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth"; 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

¹⁰⁴ James 3:1, "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

¹⁰⁵ Ecclesiastes 12:10, "The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true."

¹⁰⁶ Acts 4:18, "Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus."

heart of individuals.¹⁰⁷ The teacher who is sent by Jesus cannot shy away from the hard teachings as Jesus also did not,¹⁰⁸ because the source of the disciples' teaching is Jesus' own teaching,¹⁰⁹ as the source of Jesus' teaching is the Father.¹¹⁰ The subject of such teaching is the Gospel and its doctrines,¹¹¹ that is to say, Jesus himself.¹¹²

Learning also has its special contexts. Learning is not done for its own sake. Deuteronomy 5:1¹¹³ carries the idea that learning the commands of God includes the desire to follow them. Learning the meaning of the word of God¹¹⁴ does not stand by itself. The purpose of such learning is to pass on what one learns.¹¹⁵¹¹⁶ Paul characterizes what is learned from faithful servants of Christ as the Gospel, the message concerning Christ's work of redemption.¹¹⁷ What a person learns, they should know, in the sense of it being part and

¹⁰⁷ Acts 5:28, " 'We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,' he said. 'Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood.'"

¹⁰⁸ John 6:59-60, "He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. On hearing it, many of his disciples said, 'This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?'"

¹⁰⁹ John 15:20, "Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also."

¹¹⁰ John 7:16 "Jesus answered, 'My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.'"

¹¹¹ Romans 16:17, "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them." John 6:69, "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

¹¹² John 5:39, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me. . ."

¹¹³ "Moses summoned all Israel and said: 'Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them.'"

¹¹⁴ Matthew 9:13, "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

¹¹⁵ Job 8:8, "Ask the former generations and find out what their fathers learned. . ."

¹¹⁶ J. Stanley Glen, *The Recovery of the Teaching Ministry*, quoted in J. Gordon Chamberlain, *Freedom and Faith: A New Approach to Christian Education*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), page 17. "The teaching ministry . . . insists that the substance of the Bible and of its faith, are essentially intelligible and must be communicated from one generation to another if the church is to be the church and men and women are to hear the word of God."

¹¹⁷ Colossians 1:7, "You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf. . ."

parcel of their thinking, attitudes, and actions.¹¹⁸ That knowledge, which comes from God¹¹⁹ is first of all the fear of God¹²⁰ and is linked with wisdom.¹²¹ This knowledge which God gives concerning himself is understanding.¹²² Adding understanding to knowledge, wisdom and the fear of God wraps the package neatly. Such weighty matters are not easily learned, however, as the scripture tells us to continue in what we have learned,¹²³ to learn by repetition,¹²⁴ and thus to wisely store up that knowledge,¹²⁵ so that we may know with certainty.¹²⁶

For us this knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and fear of the Lord is tied up with Christ himself¹²⁷ as both author and subject. And it is not confined to facts about him, but is

¹¹⁸ Colossians 1:10, "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. . ." Philipians 1:9, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight. . ." Titus 1:1, "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness. . ."

¹¹⁹ Numbers 24:16, ". . . the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who has knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:"

¹²⁰ Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."

¹²¹ 2 Chronicles 1:10-12, "'Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?' God said to Solomon, 'Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you.'

¹²² Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

¹²³ 2 Timothy 3:14, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it. . ."

¹²⁴ Titus 3:8, "This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone."

¹²⁵ Proverbs 10:14, "Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin."

¹²⁶ Luke 1:4, ". . . so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

¹²⁷ Acts 10: 36-37, "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached. . ." 1 Thessalonians 4:2, "For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus."

an intimate knowledge of Christ personally¹²⁸ with the result of eternal life in his name.¹²⁹

The biblical background just examined shows us 4 things:

1. The ability to teach and to learn is given by God (page 22) because the purpose of God's teaching is God's Word itself.
2. Teaching was one of the top priorities of the apostles themselves (page 23). They taught so that people might know the truth, be saved and teach others. It was teaching in discernment and holy living. Along the lines of Old Testament concepts (page 18), it was to correct misunderstanding and sharpen both the teacher and hearer.
3. Teaching and learning is not a haphazard thing (page 24).
4. The purpose of such learning is to pass on what one learns (page 25). It is to be repeated from one generation to the next (page 19), and bring about a result in the lives of others.

At the heart of the ABI is the desire to help people prepare for service to Christ through service in the Church.¹³⁰ The scriptures instruct us to teach and learn, to be wise and continue to gain wisdom, to store it up, to fear the Lord, and live in that fear and knowledge by faith in Christ. This is what the ABI endeavors to impart to people. The results of the activities of teaching, learning, and gaining wisdom and understanding are many. Primarily

¹²⁸ Ephesians 3:17 & 19, "... that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love... and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Colossians 2:2&3, "My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

¹²⁹ Philippians 3:10, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death..."

¹³⁰ Pazmino, page 22. "Education entails conscious planning, implementing, and evaluating of educational experiences. Intentionality in Christian education involves the effort to share biblical content, to grapple with its implications for life, and to suggest avenues for appropriate response."

the results that the ABI aims for are that people grow in Christ,¹³¹ are able to teach,¹³² that they may identify and refute those who teach incorrectly,¹³³ provide a steady base of doctrine for those who hear them,¹³⁴ that they may adorn correct teaching with a holy life which brings glory to Christ¹³⁵ and teach others to live the same way.^{136 137} The final result is, of course, that people come to Christ and have eternal life.

¹³¹ 2 Corinthians 8:7, "But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

¹³² Romans 15:14, "I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another." Deuteronomy 31:13, "Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

¹³³ 2 Corinthians 10:5, "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Romans 16:17, "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them."

¹³⁴ Ephesians 4:14, "Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming."

¹³⁵ Colossians 1:10, "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. . ." 2 Peter 1:3-8, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 4:9, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice."

¹³⁶ Colossians 1:28, "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."

¹³⁷ Pazmino, page 21. "The content of God's revelation is to be taught or impressed upon students, to be talked about at various times, to be tied and bound upon one's body, and to be written in public and readily observed locations. . . . This content is both foundational and radical. It is foundational in providing the basic truth and structure upon which all else must be built. It is radical in providing the roots from which all life is nourished or affected. Thus both stability and growth are assured to the extent that the content of education is based upon God's revelation."

Chapter Three

Review of Literature of Christian Education of Adults

In this chapter I will undertake to review the literature concerning the Christian education of adults as it might impact on an effort such as the ABI. This is not an exhaustive search, but lengthy enough to see repeated themes and emphases.

Introduction: Instruction in the Word of God in a teaching/learning fellowship to spread the Gospel

The New Testament Church was a teaching-learning fellowship.¹³⁸ “They were continually devoting themselves to the instruction given by the apostles, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.”¹³⁹

But this work of teaching and learning was not the end in itself. Rather, the church understood itself to be under the mandate of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20, to spread the Gospel to all nations, and to begin in Jerusalem, where they were, and widen the circle to those surrounding them and the world.¹⁴⁰ Instruction in the Word of God, the means the Holy Spirit uses to build the Church of Christ, is needed.

¹³⁸ Howard P. Colson, and Raymond M. Rigdon, *Understanding Your Church's Curriculum*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), page 17.

¹³⁹ Acts 2:42

¹⁴⁰ Acts 1:8, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

1. Equipping the saints by the Apostle’s life changing teaching, modeled in congregational life.

“A description of the goal of adult education as most clearly defined by Eph.4:12 as ‘equipping God’s people for work in His service’ (NEB); ¹⁴¹ and by I Peter 2:9-10 as ‘to declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.’” ¹⁴²

If we track the growth of the early Church in terms of numbers of converts, dispersion across the known world, production of works of theology and apologetics, we see that it grew rapidly in the context presented in Acts 2:42. ¹⁴³ We certainly cannot posit the growth of the Church solely on the fact that the believers merely studied of the Word of God, the Old Testament. We know from the Acts 2 reference above that without the instruction of the apostles, the members of the Church would have simply been dispersed across the region. There would have not been much content or conviction to their message. Rather, they were equipped for service to those around them. Their word carried much weight because it was well grounded in apostolic teaching.

Looking at the experience of the early Church and the growth of the Church before the middle ages, the missionary activity of the middle ages, as well as the fire in the Church during the Reformation, it was fueled by a fervor of faith granted by the Holy Spirit¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ The New English Bible, Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, 1970.

¹⁴² Kane, pages 361-2.

¹⁴³ See footnote 83.

¹⁴⁴ Matthew 10:19b-20, At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

through the Word, the Gospel of Christ.¹⁴⁵

Taking an honest look at the poor record of the Church within urban areas in the United States in the last half of the last century when it comes to sharing the Gospel of Christ, “[o]bservation, intuition and research produced the general impression that most of the education of adults in the church today is almost useless,”¹⁴⁶ at least in producing results comparable to those in the early Church.

Although that may have been the case recently, it is important and possible to get back to that condition which was present in the early Church in terms of the life-changing message learned from the apostles. As Thomas Groome says,

“The nature and purpose of Christian religious education require that we promote personal cognition as a critically reflective, dialectical and dialogical process that encourages a ‘right relationship’ between knower and known in a community of discourse and that we broaden our concern beyond simply cognition. The incarnational principle that stands at the heart of Christianity demands a pedagogy that is grounded in and shapes people’s ontic selves - their identity and agency in the world.”¹⁴⁷

As the believers related to the apostles and sat at their feet, it did more than give the believers information. It changed them.

Christian education is directed towards more than a class of people. Rather, it is directed towards an individual for the purpose that the individual should learn something about her/himself and the world around her/him in relation to God in Jesus Christ. Through

¹⁴⁵ Romans 10:14,15a, How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? . . . Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

¹⁴⁶ John R. Fry, *A Hard Look at Adult Christian Education*, quoted in Boettcher, page viii.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), page 8.

this process, the individual will not only know her/himself and God but will experience her/his relationship with God through the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that the mere knowing of things is only a partial goal. The goal is that what is learned and known can be placed into a life lived with an integrated faith.

This does not happen in a vacuum. A Christian learns the faith and its consequent life through contact with those who have learned it before them and model it for them. The places in which this takes place most efficiently and effectively are the family and the congregation. The prime reason God established the family and protected it with the fourth commandment is precisely this: that parents, particularly fathers, have the responsibility to teach their children the works of God, as we saw in chapter two.

The congregation, as the body of Christ in a locality, is the second place where this educational process takes place. “The parish is a role model for the adults that form that community. The very life and mission of the parish provide the primary model for adult growth.”¹⁴⁸ The life and mission of the parish are provided by Christ in the Great Commission.

Therefore, Christian education is not only that activity which takes place at specified education hours set aside for formal instruction. It also takes place during times of worship as congregations

“seek to form adults who actively cultivate a lively baptismal and eucharistic spirituality with a powerful sense of mission and apostolate. Nourished by word, sacrament and communal life, they will witness and share the Gospel in their homes,

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Downs, *The Parish as Learning Community: Modeling for Parish and Adult Education*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), page 2.

neighborhoods, places of work and centers of culture.”¹⁴⁹

Consequently, the work of Christian Education must be fully integrated into the worship life of the congregation, that from which the community draws on the strength of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Christ in Word and Sacrament. The paragraph above addresses the desired outcome - that adults have a powerful sense of mission.

Mary Mullino Moore proposes that Christian teaching itself is a sacramental activity. She says that “the heart of Christian teaching is mediating the free grace of God through the concrete stuff of creation for the sanctification of human communities and for the well-being of all God’s creation.”¹⁵⁰ She suggests four aspects of sacramental teaching: 1.) expect the unexpected, God is present and will act; 2.) seek reversals, reversals of tradition as well as the reversals in keeping with the nature of God’s being; 3.) nourish new life, in one another and in the community; 4.) reconstruct community and repair the world, called to be more than we were, mediating the prophetic call we hear from God.¹⁵¹ That may fit some definitions of “sacramental,” but it does not fit the Lutheran definition. That does not mean, however, that God does not show up when we teach and do things through that teaching as He promises. God does use the teaching of His Word to nourish His people and motivate them towards the mission He designed for them. The believer moves out from the safe confines of the congregation into the world.

¹⁴⁹ United States Catholic Conference, page 5.

¹⁵⁰ Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, *Sacramental Teaching: Mediating the Holy*, in Lee, page 41.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

2. Christian practices should be relevant in the world.

“That the believer take his place in the world as equipped to bring the Word of God, the Holy Spirit’s means of changing the faith and lives of people, into the community, is essential for the Church’s witness to Christ and the existence of the Church,” Raymond J. Baake states.¹⁵² He speaks of certain “specializations” in the Church for sake of mission for which the laity must be trained.

“Another specialization involves *laity in the marketplace*. In the Urban parish, it is not enough to have a busy program at church. We need to equip people to move into the subsectors of the city: the court system, the advocacy roles. We need to send people into politics because the laws are unfair and unjust. We need Christians who will articulate the gospel in the business world. We need people to serve in convention businesses, in theaters, in the arts, in all the subcultures of the city. So pastors have to be the equippers of the laity and commission them to move into the marketplace.”¹⁵³

Pastors must support such a move beyond the church walls. They must also make sure that those undertaking such deployment are thoroughly grounded in the Gospel, the Word of God, and prayer so that they will be able to stand up against the opposition they will receive. The world is a place with its lies and its own standards and threats. It is difficult for the believer to function there as an emissary of Christ without continuing exposure to the Word of God rightly divided and applied.

For the believer is not merely a sponge to absorb truth in an esoteric sense, as the Gnostics thought, or in today’s postmodern context, to determine what their personal truth is. He/she is to learn so he/she may be engaged with the world in such a way as to affect it

¹⁵² Raymond J. Bakke in Harvie M. Conn and others. *The Urban Face of Mission: Ministering the Gospel in a Diverse and Changing World*, (Philadelphia: P & R Publishing, 2002), page 37.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

towards the purposes of God, the salvation of people in Christ.

Christian education also has as part of its purpose to teach and foster Christian practices. Craig Dykstra, quoting Alasdair MacIntyre, says that Christian Education itself is a practice. For it is

“a coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which powerful internal goods are realized and through the pursuit of which our capabilities as human beings to do and to be and to conceive of what God is calling us to become are systematically extended.”¹⁵⁴

As a practice which is steeped in the Sacraments of Christ and His Word, Christian education is a means by which God the Holy Spirit works in the believer to accomplish a continuing change in both her/his understanding and pattern of action.

Dykstra describes what happened to a French town during the second world war. Their pastor had been leading the townspeople in private and corporate Bible study. They did it as more than satisfying mere curiosity. They needed to study to know who they were as God’s people and what they were to do in the world in which they found themselves.

Something happened to them because of this reading and study. By doing this in their everyday lives, they heard God’s promises, believed them, and built their lives upon them. The Scripture also told them what kind of a world they were living in. They could then tell the truth from the lies. They also found the courage to do what they could not have done, if their minds had been conformed to the world. A way of life and faith and been brought to them and they lived it. What was that? It was to put their very lives on the line by standing

¹⁵⁴Dykstra, page 71.

with the Jews among them when the Nazis came to deport them.¹⁵⁵

It was a great example of the fact that the Christian faith is built on the historic, incontrovertible fact of Christ's death and Resurrection, that the Holy Spirit uses the message of those facts directly in the hearts of people through the Word taught and learned. The villagers learned the message of Christ through a particular servant of Christ. They learned it together in the context of their lives, so that for them it was not a set of irrelevant, moribund ideas, but the example of God's ancient and continuing love in Christ for humankind. That love of God towards them would sustain them as they lived out the sacrifice of their lives.

“If the message of Christ is relevant now, it must be communicated in the situations in which people have their being as God's creatures. God's love is current, not just historic, and must be witnessed to wherever people are.”¹⁵⁶

3. Growth in faith and truth is fostered.

Not everyone sees the total sacramental and worship life of the congregation as being the primary mover in the area of faith formation and motivation to action. Eugene Roehlkepartain, a noted Christian educator, sees Christian education as the most important vehicle within congregational life for helping people grow in their faith. In his view, Christian education has more potential for promoting faith than any other area of congregational life. Getting people involved is his key to addressing the passive faith was

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Foster, page 16.

discovered by a study conducted by the Search Institute.^{157 158}

J. Gordon Camberlin quotes J. Stanley Glen in *The Recovery of the Teaching Ministry* (Westminster Press, 1960) as saying, education is

“a function which properly belongs to every ministry and to the entire witness, worship, life, and work of the church. It is the . . . intelligible content of the Christian faith, without which worship is not worship, preaching is not preaching, and pastoral work is not pastoral.”¹⁵⁹

Glen says that the content is essential, especially in the context of the current move towards what is felt as being the ground of truth, rather than the truth of Who or what is known objectively. Since Jesus is the object of our faith, many forget that He is also its content. They come to think that it is sufficient to feel oneself a Christian, and that the facts Scripture teach about Jesus are irrelevant.

Glen describes this as part of the result of anti-intellectualism in American culture: the church is

“less concerned about the intelligible content of its faith than with the noumenal and the subjective. . . The teaching ministry is the one ministry which, when taken seriously, assumes the responsibility of communicating the truth at the human level and in human form.”¹⁶⁰

4. Pastors are not taught the skill of teaching.

In the LCMS, my church body, one characteristic we have had over the years, is that

¹⁵⁷ Eugene C. Roehlkerpartain, *The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), page 18.

¹⁵⁸ “Getting people involved” is certainly one of the desired outcomes of Christian Education of adults, but whether it is the key itself to the lack of action we find in the Church, I am not certain. I am inclined to think the main impediments to effective Christian education are the sins, insecurities, and laziness in the life of the individual which must be overcome through the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of Christ, the means by which the Holy Spirit works in people.

¹⁵⁹ Camberlin, page 16.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* page 17.

generations of pastors were not schooled in teaching. In a study undertaken to review the practice of our Synod in adult education from 1914 to 1989, Ewald Kane concluded

“the Synod had not developed a sustained emphasis in adult leadership enlistment and training for any significant time during the 75 year period under study. Many factors in not developing are pastors did not want to give up the teaching task, and seminary training for pastors in adult education not generally offered until after 1960.”¹⁶¹

It was not until the 1944 convention of the LCMS that permission was given to begin a concerted effort at adult Christian education.¹⁶²

One might even argue today that the attempts being made to remedy that at LCMS seminaries are not sufficient, although well intentioned. The press of time and other areas of study of necessity make it impossible to adequately cover the subject.

Some pastors, who have entered the ministry as a second career, have had the advantage of education being a major field of study in undergraduate work at one of the LCMS’s universities. They have studied education in a Christian context, expecting the Holy Spirit’s action in and God’s blessing upon the endeavor. Still, most pastors among us are not are not appropriately trained in a Lutheran context of pedagogy. Sometimes they rely on outside sources for their rationale and techniques. Therefore, a criticism may be that since pastors are not well enough trained in Christian education, they may rely more and more on the tenets of secular education. They try to teach the truths of the faith without the particularity of the incarnational aspects of it.

Wayne R. Rood has this evaluation of the situation:

¹⁶¹ Kane, page 492.

¹⁶² Ibid. page 1.

“Institutional Christianity has grown more and more dependent upon public education for design and technique in Christian education. Now, hardly distinguishable from secular schooling, having committed the same grievous errors, it falls under the same judgements. Worse, Christian education has become a follower of alien principles, destroying itself by destroying its own special nature.”¹⁶³

The solution to this problem is again to remember the One around whom this endeavor revolves, has its beginning and is its object. Rood reminds us,

“Christianity may claim to be the original situation in which the medium is the message. That is the impact of the incarnation: when, to put it simply, God most wanted to make himself known to his creatures, he sent a messenger to them who was himself the message.”¹⁶⁴

5. Suggested changes for growth in Christian education.

Some suggestions regarding the education of adults in the Christian faith so that they may more willingly take their place in the action of the Church are made by Robert S.

Clemmons. He suggests seven needed changes:

“1) new look at persons, not manipulated to preconceived ends; 2) groups are fellowships of love and understanding; 3) participation is needed for change; 4) participants must learn new disciplines, self disciplines; 5) treatment of others as persons, fostering relationships between God and people; 6) reliance on Holy Spirit; 7) laboratory for help and redemption.”^{165 166}

¹⁶³ Wayne R. Rood, *On Nurturing Christians: Perhaps a Manifesto for Education*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), page 9.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Robert S. Clemmons, *Dynamics of Christian Adult Education*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), page 16.

¹⁶⁶ I find these changes to be a little out of order. I would put number 6, reliance on the Holy Spirit, first. I would also like to know what is meant by redemption under number seven since it is spoken of as taking place in a laboratory. Does this mean that aspects of it are experimental, or that the outcomes are uncertain? Otherwise, to have a new look at persons does not necessarily mean that all those who have led or designed Christian adult education have always had an improper view of the people who were the beneficiaries of their work. To remind us to understand them also as people in whom the Holy Spirit works according to His good pleasure to do what He has in mind rather than what we have determined as the outcome in each individual case, is probably a good thing. It works better with the item I have designated as number one. We understand also that the setting for Christian education is more than just a classroom, but that the most significant ideational and life changes happen in the context of other people, groups of fellowship and understanding. People also cannot just be observers, they must participate in the changes and the expanded understanding demanded by the learning experience. In order to make that a continuing reality in the participants' lives, there must be a discipline to maintain the learning experience and retain or rehearse what is learned so that it is always contextualized.

In order to keep that in front of us as much as possible, Victor Constien suggests that we “select goals carefully,” with an

“overarching purpose statement. Listen to people’s interests and concerns and respond to them in love. The process of diagnosis begins with a list of the opportunities, needs, concern, problems, and issues facing the people in congregation and community. The purpose of diagnosis is to set meaningful goals. It is an ongoing process.”¹⁶⁷

His encouragement is to “keep your ministry of the Word a service to people. Avoid merely letting organizational charts or job descriptions determine what you do.”¹⁶⁸

Marion E. Brown and Marjorie G. Prentice expand on this theme with six

“guidelines for action: [1.] *intentionality*, knowing what we want to accomplish; [2.] *mutuality*, shared ministry, priesthood of all believers; [3.] *empowerment*, focus on laity and clergy; [4.] *spiritual enrichment*, thirst for Biblical knowledge, spiritual growth to live in an alien world; [5.] *voluntary simplicity*, simpler lifestyle; [6.] *interiority* innermost being, where we struggle with issues.”¹⁶⁹

While we may not often focus on voluntary simplicity as an aspect of adult education, the advantage of it is in the freedom to be in the Word, having time for contemplation, and engagement in the community in which one lives. This emphasis gives us some broad guidelines on which to focus as we set our sights on the desired outcome.

Craig Dykstra also helps us here.

“A focus on practices provides an educational aim and task that is at once concrete enough for us to accomplish and yet far-reaching enough to connect with faith’s ultimate ends. This focus also encourages us to understand that a good deal of the best teaching consists of a kind of coaching that helps those learning practices of

¹⁶⁷ Victor A. Constien, *Your Congregation’s Educational Ministry*, (St. Louis: Board for Parish Education, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, n.d.), Page 2.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* page 4.

¹⁶⁹ Marion E. Brown and Marjorie G. Prentice, *Christian Education in the Year 2000*, (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1984), page 12.

faith how to be intelligent, purposeful, and active participants in them.”¹⁷⁰

Beyond coaching are the decisions concerning the plan and the content, the curriculum framework. A long-range plan is needed for organizing proposed learning experiences related to the content of the curriculum. “Content” can be defined as the basic realities explored and experienced by learners. The long-range plan is a system of organizing the educational experience.¹⁷¹ The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of order and not confusion.¹⁷² That the task of education is His is evidenced by the fact that it is an organized work. The Holy Spirit who produces faith in the hearer is the one who also produces the life of faith.

“Furthermore, faith and the life of faith are dynamic, vital processes, not static conditions. For all these reasons, it is important to recognize and articulate what it means to grow in faith and in the life of faith and to ask how it happens.”¹⁷³

This is essential in setting the process. The Word by which the Spirit produces faith is the unchanging “*materia medica*” of the process of living faithfully the transforming element in our lives. The Holy Spirit transforms as and whom He wishes. The Holy Spirit is not capricious and the means of grace working in human lives does do some predictable things. God invariably acts according to His promises. So our faith development can happen in expected ways.

“Human life involves continual transformations and developments, and many of these, we now realize, occur according to some pattern and in an orderly and expected sequence. It is reasonable to wonder whether or not the same is true for

¹⁷⁰ Dykstra, page 74.

¹⁷¹ Colson, page 69.

¹⁷² 1 Corinthians 14:33, For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

¹⁷³ Dykstra, page 34.

faith and the life of faith. We know the life of faith involves change, transformation, growth, and maturation. Would it not be possible to chart out a consistent, general pattern by which this occurs?"¹⁷⁴

We can see this general pattern, according to Dykstra,

“either as growth or journey. Growth involves a series of transformations, organic in nature, following a consistent pattern. On a journey, the sources of transformation are both external and internal, and growth itself implies some sense of purpose on the part of the person who takes the journey.”¹⁷⁵

As growth, we see the work of the Holy Spirit particularly in the regularity of what happens when people are exposed to the Gospel of Christ. As journey, we see the work of the Holy Spirit using the paths decided upon by the participant to arrive at the destination He desires. Of course, the Holy Spirit can be resisted in the process.

The growth of the life of faith and faith itself takes place in and belongs to the community, even as at the same time it is intensely personal.¹⁷⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his pivotal work *Life Together*, speaks of the purpose of the Christian Community, the Church, as being the place where we grow as we are encouraged by each other through the mutual sharing of the Word of God. There the pastors supply the needs of the community through the Word, much like “religious shopkeepers,” so that the community might be a confessing community. As such, it bears witness before the world concerning the One who created it, brought it together, and keeps it together as His own.¹⁷⁷

Growth in understanding is always in order, but there is more to it than that.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* page 35.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* page 40.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* page 55.

Understanding must grow into something more, it must take root in the ground of our being and transform that.

“For instance, our aim is not simply that people. . . understand compassion but be compassionate, and so on. We are, then, to attend to all dimensions of human ‘being’ and articulate our most basic philosophical foundation and task as ontological rather than simply epistemological. We need to make an ‘ontological turn’ in the very foundations of Christian religious education.”¹⁷⁸

The United States Catholic Conference talks about Christian education of adults in terms of goals of Christian congregational activity. It cites three major goals:

“1) invite and enable ongoing conversion to Jesus in Holiness of life; 2) promote and support active membership in the Christian Community; 3) call and prepare adults to act as Disciples in Mission to the world.”¹⁷⁹

These goals must be put in place according to a plan, however. First, the Conference enunciates general principles for Adult Faith Formation: 1) plan adult faith formation to serve “the glory of God, the building of the Kingdom, and the good of the Church;” 2) orient adult Christian learning towards adult Christian living; 3) strengthen the role and mission of the family in Church and Society.

Second are the principles for planning adult faith formation: 1) give adult faith formation the best of our pastoral resources and energies; 2) make adult faith formation essential and integral to the pastoral plan of the parish; 3) design adult faith formation opportunities to serve the needs and interests of the entire faith community.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Groome, *Sharing Faith*, page 8.

¹⁷⁹ United States Catholic Conference, page 22.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

6. Motivation in Christian education.

Motivating those involved in the teaching/learning process is important for the success of that process. Different adults are motivated differently: some want to be with interesting people and interesting discussion; some are aware of the gap in their knowledge; some are just eager to learn.¹⁸¹ The greatest motivator, of course, is the love of God in Christ. “We love Him because He first loved us.”¹⁸² The love of God is expressed in obedience to God’s commandments¹⁸³ and in giving oneself wholly (heart, mind, soul, and strength).¹⁸⁴

Teaching is to be incisive in challenging hearers to such a total life response to God characterized by heartfelt devotion. This teaching was the particular responsibility of parents, yet the goal of a total life response has significance for all forms of education.¹⁸⁵

In a significant way, this motivation has to do with the fact that one is handling the Word of God. It is that Word which, by the power of the Holy Spirit, reaches into the heart of teacher and student to bring about His desired result.

“In the ultimate sense, God is the teacher in biblical education. God is the author and discloser of all truth, and both teachers and students alike stand under this truth. God calls teachers and students to understand, grow in, and obey God’s revealed Word. . . [T]hroughout the biblical record, teachers are responsible as stewards and proclaimers of God’s truth. This truth can be communicated in a variety of ways, always involving a relational dimension.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Victor A. Constien, *Adults Who Learn and Like It*, (Concordia Publishing House, 1980), page 15.

¹⁸² | John 4:19

¹⁸³ John 14:15, If you love me, you will obey what I command.

¹⁸⁴ Luke 10:27, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.

¹⁸⁵ Pazmino, page 20.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

This relational dimension is the presence of Christ both personally and in His Body, the Church. The context and content, therefore, of our theology presented is also Christ. However, there are those who would not concede that, particularly in the social sciences. James Michael Lee says, “The social science approach regards religious instruction as basically a mode of the teaching-learning process rather than an outgrowth of theology.”¹⁸⁷ While the social science approach to teaching discounts theology, the theological approach cannot ignore the science of teaching.

“Yet religious instruction is a work of teaching, not of theologizing; in other words, religious instruction is a process whereby learning is facilitated. Such a process is properly the work of social science, not of theology...”¹⁸⁸

Not all agree with that point of view. Although Marcel Caster seems to view religious education according to the outcomes related to the secular view

“Caster’s . . . contribution . . . identifies three ascending levels of individual development through which the person undergoing religious education successively passes. The first stage, that of instruction, has knowledge and understanding as its prime learning outcomes. . . The second developmental stage, that of formation, has values, attitudes, and feelings as its prime learning outcomes. . . The third developmental stage, that of initiation, has interpersonal communion as its prime learning outcome.”¹⁸⁹

God is the teacher in biblical education, “the author and discloser of all truth.”¹⁹⁰ God is also the actor in the necessary action of bringing about the life of faith as a result of that biblical education. “The crucial action, of course, is the action of Christ. It is the nature of

¹⁸⁷ James Michael Lee, *The Shape of Religious Instruction: A Social Science Approach*, (Mishawaka, IN: Religious Education Press, Inc., 1971), page 2

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* page 3.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* page 12.

¹⁹⁰ John 17:17, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

his action to effect the creation of *faith*, the action of faith on the part of the believer.”¹⁹¹

“An analysis of *faith creation* will serve to make this crucial distinction between the faith-creating action of Christ and the faith-creating action of leaders. This distinction serves to illuminate still another facet of the leader’s mental/emotional posture appropriate for administrator/leaders in religious education, that is, the orientation toward the *creation of faith in religious education itself*. (By creation here we are not speaking of bringing faith into existence from nothing. Only Christ can do this. By creation of faith here is meant the facilitation of faith growth which in the ultimate view, is done by the religious educator who deploys the underlying creative power of Christ.)”¹⁹²

While a tremendous amount of the effort of churches goes into the education of the young, the Christian education of adults must be a primary task of the Church. C. Ellis Nelson explains why.

“We must devote more than a tithe of our efforts to adult education. Why? First, adults set the cultural pattern. If you desire to make Christianity alive in America, we will have to plan our strategy in terms of adults. Second, adults are in positions of authority. Third, is the gradual age shift. There will be more of them in the distribution.”¹⁹³

7. Summary and conclusions from the review of the literature

Summary

The body of literature concerning adult Christian education tells us that it is the work of God among his people. It also tells us that it is the work God has assigned to his people. To teach and make disciples is Christ’s commission to the Church in Matthew 28. Christ considers it an important work for the Church to do. He sends his Spirit to the Church to accomplish this work.

¹⁹¹ David Arthur Bickimer, *Leadership in Religious Education: A Comprehensive Model*, (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1989), page 35.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, page 36.

¹⁹³ C. Ellis Nelson, *Growth in Grace and Knowledge: Lectures and Speeches on Practical Theology*, (Austin: Nortex Press, 1992), page 12.

This work of teaching and learning is primarily about Jesus and his saving death and resurrection. It has as a prime purpose the increase of faith in Christ among the learners. It is also teaching and learning how to be God's people in the world. The Word of God instructs us how children of God lives out the fact that they have been saved by Christ from sin and death and baptized in his name.

The literature also tells us that at many times and in many places, the efforts at Christian education of adults has been less than God would desire. This is particularly true in urban areas. Congregations, which are supposed to be the matrix in which adult Christian education flourishes, can stifle or extinguish it. Pastors, who are supposed to have an aptitude for teaching the Word of God, are not adequately prepared with the skill of teaching.

Christian education of adults has to be purposeful. It has to be undertaken in a pedagogical manner, with planning for the entire enterprise. Its curriculum must address the goals. Its goals must be set according to Christ's purposes.

In order for Christian education of adults to bear fruit in the world, it has to be engaged in with a view to what happens in the world. Those who are taught need to be in the world with the Gospel as servants of Christ for humanity's sake.

Conclusions

Effective adult Christian education is sorely needed in the Church today for the preparation of people who are to be propagating the Gospel and "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you,"¹⁹⁴ the call and mission of the Church. This command of

¹⁹⁴ Matthew 28:20

Christ cannot be ignored without peril to the being of the Church. In an inescapable sense, every Christian is called upon to be a teacher, if not in a formal, institutional way, certainly in reality.¹⁹⁵ There are five reasons why the Church should avidly devote itself to the Christian education of adults: 1) Christian education is still valid and still needed; 2) any neglect by a church of its teaching responsibility is serious; 3) the work demands a much greater expenditure of time, thought, and effort than is presently the practice in many places; 4) there are no easy solutions to the problems of Christian education; 5) the work is worthy of our best efforts.¹⁹⁶

Kenneth O. Gangel says, “The more definitive the theology, the more committed the process [of Christian Education].” “Christian education consists in teaching and learning as modes and means of response to revelation.”¹⁹⁷ “Christian religious educators who want to function vibrantly in the social and religious climates of the third millennium must proclaim allegiance to the essentials of life-changing truth rather than the externals of marketing paradigms.”¹⁹⁸ Gangel appeals to the authority of Scripture as the basis of Christian education. “Religious educators, standing on the foundations of biblical authority, serve God by developing people of faith into people of unity, mutuality, and generosity.”¹⁹⁹

As these attitudes develop within us, the Holy Spirit moves us to desire to accomplish the will of God in the world, as we pray in the third petition of the Lord’s prayer.

¹⁹⁵ Colson, page 22.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in Lee, *Forging*, page 120.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* page 116.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* page 119.

In adult religious education, our attitudes are directed to help us to understand God's will, and therefore, His purpose for us.²⁰⁰

For a conservative Church body, such as the LCMS, having a well-constructed systematic theology and a clear biblical understanding is not enough. It must be centered in the Doctrine of Justification with the proper distinction between Law and Gospel operative. Education of adults in biblical doctrines and their practical applications should be one of our major efforts. In the past, this was not the case. In the early 1940's adult education was finally seen as something to assist "people in their Christian life, helping them solve problems and training them for more efficient services in the Church."²⁰¹ Until then, the more conservative approach, that of education imparting knowledge, held sway.

The early Church was a teaching/learning community, based upon the apostles' teaching applied to life situations for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to all nations. There was rapid growth.

The Church today in the United States is not growing rapidly, if at all. Christian education for adults is a means of changing that trend. Christian education is a function which belongs to the entire witness, worship, life, and work of the Church. The goal of Christian education for adults is to integrate what they know and learn into their lives. This must be modeled in the congregation and family. People must be equipped to move into all areas of society. God makes no other provision for the spread of the Gospel than through the Church, the individual members of the Body of Christ, moved by the Holy Spirit through the

²⁰⁰ Paul Emile Bergevin, *Design for Adult Education in the Church*, (Greenwich, ST: Seabury, 1958), page 126.

²⁰¹ Kane, page 493.

Word of God.

While the Church relies on the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God, we also plan adequately for our educational effort. We decide what we want to accomplish, share the ministry, focus on laity and clergy, and desire Biblical knowledge and spiritual growth to live in a hostile society. The Church must devote itself to Christian education of adults because it is still needed and is a valid pursuit, and to neglect this responsibility is serious. The work demands more time, thought, and effort than we are currently expending.

Chapter Four:

Research Results

This project was constructed to study whether the ABI accomplishes its stated purpose to equip and motivate people to serve in their congregations and community with greater confidence. It is also to determine what can be strengthened or changed in the ABI, and what mechanism can be used for periodic evaluation of the ABI.

In order to determine how well the ABI accomplished its stated purpose, four questionnaires were administered to participants in the ABI. The questionnaires were administered before and after two successive sessions of the ABI providing two sets of before and after responses that can be compared with each other.

Questionnaire One (Q.1)²⁰² was administered and collected September 11, 2003 before the Fall 2003 session of the ABI. Questionnaire Two (Q.2) was administered and collected on November 12, 2003 following the Fall 2003 session. Thus, the 2003 before and after responses can be easily compared. Questionnaire Three (Q.3) was administered and collected January 7, 2004 before the Winter 2004 session of the ABI, and Questionnaire Four (Q.4) was administered and collected February 11, 2004 at the end of that session comprising another comparative set of before and after responses.

The purpose of the questionnaires and the study was to track either the positive or negative shift, from before to after each session, in the perception of those who participate in the ABI as to whether they were prepared for service in the Church. Evaluation is directional, not using tests of significance.

²⁰² See Appendix I, page 92.

1. Percentage Scores Relative to Each Question.

Table One

Percentage Score

1. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a pre-school up to 5th grade context?

	Very Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Neither Qualified or Unqualified	Somewhat Unqualified	Very Unqualified
Q.1	22.5%	50%	5.5%	5.5%	16.7%
<u>Q.2</u>	<u>28.6%</u>	<u>42.8%</u>	<u>14.2%</u>	<u>14.2%</u>	<u>0%</u>
Q.3	11.1%	44.4%	16.7%	22.2%	5.6%
Q.4	15.8%	36.8%	26.3%	15.8%	5.6%

2. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a 6th grade up to Senior High context?

	Very Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Neither Qualified or Unqualified	Somewhat Unqualified	Very Unqualified
Q.1	5.5%	38.8%	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%
<u>Q.2</u>	<u>7.1%</u>	<u>42.8%</u>	<u>21.4%</u>	<u>21.4%</u>	<u>7.1%</u>
Q.3	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	27.8%	16.7%
Q.4	5.2%	36.8%	21%	26.3%	10.5%

3. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in an adult context?

	Very Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Neither Qualified or Unqualified	Somewhat Unqualified	Very Unqualified
Q.1	11.1%	27.8%	22.2%	22.2%	16.7%
<u>Q.2</u>	<u>28.6%</u>	<u>42.8%</u>	<u>14.2%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>14.2%</u>

Q.3	11.1%	33.3%	22.2%	16.7%	16.7%
Q.4	5.2%	26.3%	36.8%	21%	10.5%

4. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an official leadership position in my congregation such as chairperson of a board, congregational officer, member of congregation council, elder?

	Very Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Neither Qualified or Unqualified	Somewhat Unqualified	Very Unqualified
Q.1	5.5%	38.8%	38.8%	11.1%	5.5%
<u>Q.2</u>	<u>14.2%</u>	<u>42.8%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>28.6%</u>	<u>14.2%</u>
Q.3	22.2%	44.4%	16.7%	11.1%	5.6%
Q.4	21%	31.6%	15.8%	31.6%	0%

5. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an unofficial leadership position in my congregation such as a lay reader, host at a service, resource for youth, baptismal sponsor, mentor in the confirmation program, prayer partner?

	Very Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Neither Qualified or Unqualified	Somewhat Unqualified	Very Unqualified
Q.1	27.8%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	5.5%
<u>Q.2</u>	<u>42.8%</u>	<u>28.6%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>28.6%</u>	<u>0%</u>
Q.3	50%	27.8%	16.7%	5.6%	0%
Q.4	42.1%	36.8%	10.5%	10.5%	0%

6. How able do I see myself to be to witness to Christ in my daily context of home, work, school, neighborhood?

	Very Able	Somewhat Able	Neither Able or Unable	Somewhat Unable	Very Unable
Q.1	27.8%	66.7%	0%	5.5%	0%
<u>Q.2</u>	<u>35.7%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>7.1%</u>	<u>7.1%</u>	<u>0%</u>
Q.3	44.4%	33.3%	16.7%	5.6%	0%
Q.4	26.3%	52.6%	15.8%	5.2%	0%

Table Two

For the purpose of determining the Mean, Median, and Mode of the answers to each question in each questionnaire, each answer was assigned a numerical value in this order: 1 for Very Qualified/Able; 2 for Somewhat Able; 3 for Neither Able or Unable; 4 for Somewhat Unable; and 5 for Very Unqualified/Able.

1. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a pre-school up to 5th grade context?

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4
Mean	2.44	2.14	2.67	2.58
Median	2	2	2	2
Mode	2	2	2	2

2. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a 6th grade up to Senior High context?

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4
Mean	3.05	2.78	3.05	3
Median	2	2.5	3	3
Mode	2	2	2	2

3. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in an adult context?

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4
Mean	3.05	2.28	2.94	3.05
Median	3	2	3	3
Mode	2	2	2	3

4. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an official leadership position in my congregation such as chairperson of a board, congregational officer, member of congregation council, elder?

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4
Mean	2.7	2.86	2.33	2.58
Median	3	2	2	2
Mode	2 and 3	2	2	2 and 4

5. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an unofficial leadership position in my congregation such as a lay reader, host at a service, resource for youth, baptismal sponsor, mentor in the confirmation program, prayer partner?

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4
Means	2.33	2.14	1.78	1.89
Median	2	2	1.5	2
Mode	2	2	1	1

6. How able do I see myself to be to witness to Christ in my daily context of home, work, school, neighborhood?

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4
Mean	1.83	1.86	1.83	2
Median	2	2	1	2
Mode	2	2	1	2

Table Three

This table charts the difference + or - in the raw scores and percentages of the questionnaires from the beginning of each session and the end of that session.

Session 1		Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
Q. 1	raw	0	-3	+1	+1	-3
Q. 1	percent	+2.1%	-7.2%	+8.7%	+8.7%	-16.7%
Q. 2	raw	0	-1	-1	+1	-3
Q. 2	percent	+4.7%	+4%	-8%	+10.3%	-15.1%
Q. 3	raw	+2	+1	-2	-4	-1
Q. 3	percent	+17.5%	+15%	-8%	-22.2%	-1.5%
Q. 4	raw	+1	-1	-7	+2	+1
Q. 4	percent	+8.7%	+4%	-38.8%	+17.5%	-8.7%
Q. 5	raw	+1	-2	-4	+2	-1
Q. 5	percent	+15%	-4.7%	-22.2%	+17.5%	-5.5%
Q. 6	raw	0	-5	+1	0	0
Q. 6	percent	+7.9%	-16.7%	+7.1%	+1.6%	0

(The number of respondents to Questionnaire One was 18, and to Questionnaire Two was 14.)

Session 2		Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
Q. 1	raw	+1	-1	+2	-1	0
Q. 1	percent	+4.7%	-7.6%	+9.6%	-6.4%	0
Q. 2	raw	-1	+1	+2	0	-1
Q. 2	percent	-5.9%	+3.5%	+9.9%	-1.5%	-6.2%
Q. 3	raw	-1	-2	+3	+1	-1
Q. 3	percent	-5.9%	-7%	+14.6%	+4.3%	-6.2%
Q. 4	raw	0	-2	0	+4	-1
Q. 4	percent	-1.1%	-12.8%	-2.9%	+20.5%	-5.6%
Q. 5	raw	-1	+2	-1	+1	0
Q. 5	percent	-7.9%	+9%	-6.2%	+4.9%	0
Q. 6	raw	-3	+4	0	0	0
Q. 6	percent	-18.1%	+19.3%	-9%	-4%	0

(The number of respondents to Questionnaire Three was 18 and to Questionnaire Four was 19.)

2. Interpretation of the Changes These Results and Trends of the Questionnaire Show

Since the number of respondents to the first and second questionnaire in each session was different, raw scores are not valid for a numerical evaluation of the positive or negative shift of perception of preparedness on the part of participants. However, percentages and their positive and negative shifts do show how the perception of preparedness for tasks in the Church varies from before to after the sessions. The shifts between sessions might also be interesting.

Desired is an increase in the percentage of times answers one and two under each

question were chosen. That would indicate that participants felt that the work they had done during the session had increased their perception that they were qualified to work in the Church. Consequently, a decrease in the number of times answers three, four, and five were chosen is looked for.

The percentages listed under the responses indicates more or fewer respondents chose that answer after the session than before. Percentages under the answers do not indicate from which other question the respondents shifted. They might have come from any of the other four.

Session, Fall of 2003.

1. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a pre-school up to 5th grade context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
+2.1%	-7.2%	+8.7%	+8.7%	-16.7%

This question has the smallest percentage increase on the left, or positive, side of the scale of all six questions and yet has the largest percentage decrease on the right, or negative side of the scale. The respondents in the initial questionnaire who replied with the second response, “Somewhat Qualified,” by the second questionnaire found themselves either more qualified or less qualified than they had imagined by 7.2%. Those who chose the “Very Unqualified” response in the first questionnaire moved to the left by 16.7%. This can be viewed as a positive outcome in this area even though in total percentages those who feel qualified to teach at this level is the largest percentage, reaching a total of 71.4% (see table two) of final respondents.

2. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a 6th grade up to Senior High context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
+4.7%	+4%	-8%	+10.3%	-15.1%

This question had the second smallest increase on the far left of the scale, but had also an increase in percentage under the second response, “Somewhat Qualified.” There was also movement in the middle of the scale, with 8% moving out of that response. Most significantly, again, was the movement of 15% from the right end of the scale out of the “Very Unqualified” response. Respondents seemed to feel themselves a little more qualified to teach in the area of 6th grade through High School following the session.

3. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in an adult context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
+17.5%	+15%	-8%	-22.2%	-1.5%

The percentage shifts in this question are truly astonishing. The entire right end of the scale suffers a loss of 31.7%, while the left (desirable) end finds an increase of 32.5%. This seems to go contrary to experience, since it is easier to find people who are willing to teach Sunday School for pre-school through High School than it is to find people to teach an adult Bible Class. But here 71.4% (see table two), the same percentage of those who feel qualified to teach pre-school through 5th grade state they feel qualified or somewhat qualified to teach adults.

4. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an official leadership position in my congregation such as chairperson of a board, congregational officer, member of congregation council, elder?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
+8.7%	+4%	-38.8%	+17.5%	-8.7%

12.7% more people felt “Very Qualified” and “Somewhat Qualified” to serve their congregation in an official capacity after the session. The total percentage of those after the session who felt qualified for this service was more than half (53%) of the respondents. Interestingly, 38.8% of those in the undecided category decided to move up or down. Judging from the 17.5% increase in “Somewhat Unqualified,” a fair number of them moved there to the right, even assuming that all of those 8.7% who vacated the “Very Unqualified” category moved to the left as we had hoped.

5. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an unofficial leadership position in my congregation such as a lay reader, host at a service, resource for youth, baptismal sponsor, mentor in the confirmation program, prayer partner?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
+15%	-4.7%	-22.2%	+17.5%	-5.5%

The “Very Qualified” under this question increased by 15%, going from 27.8% to 42.8% of respondents. Combined with the other positive response of 28.6%, more than 71% of respondents considered themselves qualified to lead in unofficial capacities within the

congregation. The undecided respondents moved up and down on the scale to empty that category. Also emptied is the far right “Very Unqualified” category. Thus, while many initially felt themselves qualified to serve in this capacity, many more moved in this direction, producing the desired outcome of the ABI.

6. How able do I see myself to be to witness to Christ in my daily context of home, work, school, neighborhood?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Able	Able	Able or Unable	Unable	Unable
+7.9%	-16.7%	+7.1%	+1.6%	0

85.7% of the respondents ended the session with the left end positive responses. While that is an overwhelming amount, the initial percentage was 94.5. No one answered “Very Unable” either before or after the session.

From the beginning to the end of the Fall 2003 Session there was an increase in the percentage of respondents under response one recorded for each question, with an overall average of 9.3%.²⁰³ Under response two there were an equal number on percentage increases and decreases, with an average .93% decrease. For response three there was an increase for two questions and a decrease for 4 questions with an average decrease of 9%. Five questions

²⁰³ All of the averages in this section comparing the percentage increase and decrease of respondents under each response is calculated across all six questions, even if some questions had no change in percent of respondents from the questionnaire before the session to the one after that session.

had an increase in percentage under response four and one question's percentage decreased with an average of 5.6% increase. Response five saw a decrease in percentage for 5 questions and the same percentage for 1 question. The average decrease was 7.9%.

Since the desire is to move respondents up the scale from response five to response one, combining the primarily positive responses one and two under each question might give us a better view of the effectiveness of what we attempted to do. For question one about the teaching of pre-school to fifth grade, there is a decrease of 5.1% . For question two about teaching sixth grade through senior high, there is an increase of 8.7%. In response to question three about teaching in an adult context there is an increase of 32.5%, and a 12.7% increase in response to question four about official leadership positions. The larger percentage of response one under question five is decreased by response two. Combined they are an increase of 4.7%. Question 5 brings a cumulative decrease to a negative 8.8% due to response two.

Session Winter 2004

1. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a pre-school up to 5th grade context?

Very Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Neither Qualified or Unqualified	Somewhat Unqualified	Very Unqualified
+4.7%	-7.6%	+9.6%	-6.4%	0

Here the neutral category “Neither Qualified or Unqualified” experienced an increase which may have come from the categories to its immediate right and left. At the least, the right side

negative responses cumulatively decreased a little. The most desired response on the left increased slightly. So, while slightly fewer people felt themselves qualified, fewer also felt themselves less qualified.

2. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a 6th grade up to Senior High context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
-5.9%	+3.5%	+9.9%	-1.5%	-6.2%

For this question, the right hand responses again decreased in percentage. The far left desired response also decreased, while the neutral response had the greatest increase, and the only other positive shift was to the positive “Somewhat Qualified” response. We see a slightly different pattern than in the question above.

3. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in an adult context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
-5.9%	-7%	+14.6%	+4.3%	-6.2%

Contrary to the percentages for the 2003 Fall session, both positive responses decreased a total of almost 13%. The right column negative response also declined slightly, whereas those who felt neither qualified or unqualified after the session increased in double digits.

4. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an official leadership position in my congregation such as chairperson of a board, congregational officer, member of congregation

council, elder?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
-1.1%	-12.8%	-2.9%	+20.5%	-5.6%

Following this session, there were losses in the three categories to the left of the scale and a significant gain in the second right category. After this session significantly more people felt less qualified to act in official leadership positions in the congregation. Fortunately there was also a decrease among those who felt very unqualified for such positions. Significantly, according to Table Two, more than 50% of the respondents still felt themselves qualified to serve there.

5. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an unofficial leadership position in my congregation such as a lay reader, host at a service, resource for youth, baptismal sponsor, mentor in the confirmation program, prayer partner?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified
-7.9%	+9%	-6.2%	+4.9%	0

Under this question, it would appear that those in the middle category moved to the right and left following the session, with those in the left categories with a slight combined gain. Still, almost 80% of the respondents felt qualified for informal or unofficial leadership within the congregation.

6. How able do I see myself to be to witness to Christ in my daily context of home, work,

school, neighborhood?

Very Able	Somewhat Able	Neither Able or Unable	Somewhat Unable	Very Unable
-18.1%	+19.3	-.9%	-.4%	0

Both right categories as well as the middle column changed insignificantly for the better, while there was a sizeable shift from the far left to the second left column. It would seem that many respondents felt less certain of their preparedness, but almost 80%, according to Table Two, still felt able or somewhat able to witness to Christ in their context.

Graphing the changes makes them readily visible for comparison. In this case, graphs can easily show us the values of the percentages as they stand at the beginning and the end of the sessions in relation to other percentages of the same session. In the graphs on pages 96 and 97, the responses under each question are grouped together for each session, with the responses at the beginning of the session listed as “a” responses, and the responses at the end of the session listed as “b” responses.

From the beginning to the end of the Winter 2004 Session, there was an increase in the percentage of respondents recorded under response one only for question one. Under response one for questions two through six there was a decrease in respondents for an average of 5.7%.

Under response two, half of the questions, numbers two, five, and six showed an increase of respondents. The remaining questions had a decrease. The average increase was a modest .73%. Response three had three questions with increased percentage of

respondents. Questions four, five, and six had decreases for an average of 4%. Response four showed decreases for questions one, two, and six with questions three through five showing increases in respondents for an average increase of 3.57%. Response five had three questions with no change in respondents from before the session to after. Questions two, three, and four had an average decrease of 3%.

Again, we combine responses one and two under each question to give us an idea if we have accomplished what we attempted. For question one about teaching children through fifth grade, the percentage of increase under response one is offset by the larger negative percentage under response two for an average of negative 2.9%. For question two concerning teaching sixth grade through senior high students, the negative percent under response one is adjusted upward by response two to a negative 2.4%. For question three, teaching in an adult context, the percentages under responses one and two are both negative for a negative percent of 12.9%. For question four concerning leadership in an official organized capacity in the congregation the two responses, both negative, combine for a decrease of 13.9%. For questions five and six, both in the more informal context of congregation and personal life, positive responses under two overcome the negative responses under one for positive averages of 1.1% and 1.2% respectively. If we measure effectiveness in terms of the percentage of respondents who moved from right to left on the scale of responses, from the higher numbered responses to the lower numbered responses, then the Fall 2003 session was more effective. In that session there were percentage increases in 9 of the 12 slots in the 2 responses on the left end of the scale (the desired lower numbers), with only 3 decreases. In the middle of the scale, the percentages went down in 4

slots and up in 2. However, for the 2 responses on the right end of the scale (higher numbers) there were 6 percentage increases and 5 decreases. If we take the last 2 responses separately, the farthest right had 4 decreases in percentage, 1 increase, and 1 remained the same. The second to farthest left had one decrease and 5 increases. Perhaps that shows a positive shift from the farthest right to the left, rather than from the middle response to the right. It appears that the Fall 2003 session was effective.

The Winter 2004 session, however, was not as effective as hoped. In the 2 responses on the left of the scale there were only 4 percentage increases compared with 8 decreases, contrary to the desired outcome. The middle response had an equal number of increases and decreases. The far right showed up well with only 3 increases, while there were 6 decreases as desired and 3 responses remained the same.

In order to understand why the percentages for the Winter 2004 session did not in general show the increases on the left end of the scale that were desired, the beginning and ending percentages under the various responses as recorded in Table Two were examined. For questions 1 and 6, the respondents before the Fall 2003 session felt more qualified for those tasks by 22% and 17 % respectively. Responses 1 and 2 under questions 2 and 3 are even or very close. Questions 4 and 5 answered under responses 1 and 2 were higher before the Winter 2004 session. On the far right of the scale, questions 4 and 6 were almost even. The Fall 2003 respondents' percentage was 5 lower for question 1, 11% lower for question 2 and higher for question 3 by 5% and question 5 by 11%. The middle response shows the same type of mix, with Fall 2003 initially lower for questions 1 and 6, and higher for questions 2, 4, and 5, and the same on question 3. The result of this examination is that there

is no clear evidence that the class of respondents for the Winter 2004 session entered that session with a decidedly more negative opinion of their qualifications.

3. Follow-up Personal Interviews Results and Trends

The second major part of the research is the results of personal telephone interviews conducted by Mr. Joel Young²⁰⁴ during the month of October, 2004. Seventeen interviews were conducted. The format of the interview that was used is found in Appendix II, page 94. Mr. Young asked the questions and recorded verbal answers under various headings which were then grouped together by the author. Reproductions of the sheets Mr. Young wrote out are in Appendix V, page 98. Mr. Young randomly selected the interviewees from a list of attendees of previous ABI sessions.

The general results can be shown in the following tabulation. The questions of “How”, answers to question 11, and the “What would you hope to gain?” and “If not, why not?” will be answered in narrative fashion following the further breakdown according to numbers of people responding to their level of involvement and number of sessions attended.

1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3	B.) 4-6	C.) 7 or more
9	7	1

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI?

A.) Little: Attending worship and the Lord’s Supper occasionally.

²⁰⁴ Mr. Young earned a degree of Bachelor of Science in Education and History from St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri in 1995. Mr. Young resides in the city of St. Louis, Missouri.

1

B.) Involved: Regular in Worship and at the Lord's Supper, attending Bible Study, member of service/fellowship group, greeter, worship team, prayer partner, reader, choir.

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C.) Very Involved: Regular in worship, Bible Study, volunteering at Church/community, teaching Sunday School/Bible class, member of program board, advisory board, parish council.

2

3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

<u>More involved</u>	<u>Less involved</u>	<u>No Change</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
3	1	11	2

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>No</u>
16	1	0

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
9	1	6	1

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
16	0	1	0

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
15	1	0	1

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
5	2	9	1

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
3	3	10	1

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI?	If so, how?			
<u>More</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>No change</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>No answer</u>
1	4	11	0	1

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) (See page 77.)

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not?	
<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
16	1

The breakdown in answers to question 1 seems to reflect the general population of attendees of the ABI. Most have attended between one and three times and an almost equal number between four and six times. Few, however have attended more than six times. We would hope that the one respondent who attended 7 times or more would reflect more of the desired outcomes of the ABI.

4. Summary of the Results and Trends of Personal Interviews

The answers to question 2 showed that the large preponderance of respondents were those who were involved with the congregation's ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Only two respondents could be considered very involved in the congregation. One is in that category by their own designation. The other was placed in that category by me in consideration of the comments recorded by Mr. Young provided by the respondent. While those comments do not directly answer question 2, they were recorded as being in response to question 2.

The first category of those who attended from 1-3 sessions that had little involvement in the congregation, shows only one respondent. His assessment was that there was an increase of involvement in the congregation following ABI, and that it was helpful to his spiritual life. He admitted having a better understanding of the Bible and issues facing the Church. In contrast, he does not feel more motivated to involve himself in congregational or community service as a result of ABI. This individual also does not see himself as more qualified for such pursuits as a result of the ABI, but is willing to attend more sessions.

The second category of those who attended 1-3 sessions and thought of themselves as involved with the congregation numbered seven individuals. Four said there was no change in their involvement with the congregation following ABI, while two said more, and one did not know. All seven said ABI was helpful in their personal spiritual life. Five respondents said ABI was helpful in their congregational life, one said it was not helpful, and one did not answer the question. Six said they had a better understanding of the Bible and one did not know if it was due to ABI or other Bible studies. All seven credited ABI with helping them understand issues facing the Church. When it comes to being motivated to be of service to the congregation because of ABI, five said yes and two answered no. In motivation to be in service to the community through ABI, three said no, and two each answered yes and somewhat. As far as feeling more qualified to be of service because of ABI, three said no change, two said more qualified and two said they didn't know. Again, all respondents said they would attend more sessions of ABI.

The third category of those attending 1-3 sessions of ABI was those considered very involved. There was one respondent in this group. He did not feel a change in involvement

following ABI, but did find it helpful in personal spiritual life and congregational life and gave him a better understanding of the Bible. He did not answer questions 7-10, and in response to question 12, said he would not attend more sessions.

Those attending 4-6 sessions had seven respondents, six in the “Involved” category and one in the “Very Involved” category. Of those in the “Involved” category, only one said there was more involvement in the congregation after attending ABI while five said there was not. All six said ABI was helpful in their personal spiritual life, but only four of the six said that was true in their congregational life. Again, all six said they had a better understanding of the Bible following ABI but only five had a better understanding of issues facing the Church. One answered that question with the “somewhat” answer. Five respondents said they were not more motivated to involve themselves in congregational service following ABI, while one responded positively to that question. Five respondents said they were not more motivated towards community service and one said only somewhat. None of the six see themselves as more qualified for service following ABI, but all six replied that they would attend again.

The one respondent in the 4-6 session “Very Involved” category said that he would be less involved following ABI, but that it was helpful to his spiritual life, congregational life, understanding of the Bible and Church issues. He was not more motivated to involve himself to a greater degree in the congregation, but was in the community, while he felt no more qualified for service following ABI. He also said that He would attend again.

The one respondent in the 7 or more session category was classified as “Involved.” This one said there was no change in involvement following ABI, that it was helpful in his

personal spiritual life, but not in congregational life. As a result of ABI he has a better understanding of the Bible and issues that the Church faces. He does not feel more motivated for community service and no more qualified after attending than before, but is willing to attend again.

A comparison of those respondents who attended the ABI 1-3 times in the lower categories of involvement shows little difference in the answers to the questions. The only differences are that the single respondent in the “Little Involved” category bucked the trend in questions 8 and 9, increasing the “No” response, and in question 10 adding to the “Don’t Know” response. That respondent joins the others on question 12. The lone respondent in the “Very Involved” category is unique in that the individual did not directly answer most of the questions but provided the interviewer a narrative of his life and experience in the church and family. As many responses have been gleaned from that narrative as possible. He will not be more or less involved in the congregation because of ABI, but less involved because of health issues which also affected the negative answer to question 12 about attending further sessions of ABI. He felt that ABI was helpful in personal spiritual life, understanding of the Bible and congregational life.

We can also compare those who answered in the 4-6 session group. The single respondent in the “Very Involved” category joined the majority of his fellow respondents on each question except 1, where he would be less involved, and 9 where he felt more motivated to be involved in the community.

The one individual who attended the most sessions of the ABI gave the most number of negative answers, six, as opposed to five positive answers. In respect to the positive

answers, they were to the questions that were almost consistently answered in the positive by the other respondents.

Some of the comments made by respondents may also be instructive for our evaluation of the ABI. We will look at the comments in all categories according to the questions to which they were responses, explanations, or elaborations.

Question 2: One respondent mentioned being invited by a friend, and now finds that he worships with that friend more often. One listed many things which are non-spiritual tangents to congregational life as indicative of level of involvement. One mentioned a recent transfer into the congregation and arriving wishing to only worship, but finding that changing towards more involvement.

Question 3: Increased church attendance and more involvement with the congregation and other Bible studies were noted. Some noted more involvement, but were reluctant to lay that at the feet of the ABI. One said there was a decrease due to burnout in other areas.

Question 4: Respondents were glad they attended ABI, citing growing friendships, faith, fellowship, and mutual prayer. Also noted was an increase in Bible reading, and more focused Bible reading, better Biblical understanding, being forced to study, knowing more about the Church, getting answers and sharing opinions.

Question 5: Respondents shared about increased church attendance, meeting new people, being closer to fellow members, with increased fellowship. Some noted they were more active and more willing to help. There were opportunities to learn from older members, since the groups were inter-generational in some cases. The number of people attending

enhanced the experience.

Question 6: One thing mentioned more than once is that other Bible studies also helped increase biblical understanding. Homework made them more accountable, . They developed a deeper understanding, and became aware they can always learn more.

Question 7: One mentioned that the classes attended did not touch on issues that faced the Church. Others said that the classes touched on a few, but that the teacher's world view helped. Classes helped understand issues in the U.S. Church, as well as groups such as Apple of His Eye (the LCMS's evangelistic outreach to Jewish people). The study of comparative religions also was helpful.

Question 8: Many respondents said they were already at an appropriate level of congregational involvement, or that their "plate was full." Some found the ABI to show more ways to help, created a greater comfort level with people, but that it was hard to motivate people to participate. Other comments were that fellowship and worship contacts were motivating, rather than ABI, and that although their level was not going to increase, they would still serve.

Question 9: The comments were that they were not going into greater community involvement at this time, or that they were busy enough, didn't know where they would fit in, or that they had learned to touch other people. Some liked the corporate setting. One mentioned that not ABI but Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ was motivating for community involvement.

Question 10: Concerning qualification for service many said they were not more qualified, or did not feel qualified. One mentioned that they had more knowledge, but did

not equate that with being better qualified. One said he did not know exactly what he could do in the Church. One mentioned that he had learned new ways to approach subjects in the Church. One said that application of knowledge was not made.

Question 11: There were many suggestions made. The most frequent one was to offer previous courses because participants had to choose between courses and had missed ones they wanted to take. Also frequently mentioned was maintaining the quality of instructors. Fellowship is important. Accountability was stressed. Suggestions for classes were Old Testament and New Testament overviews and outlines, LCMS history, minor prophets, wisdom literature, how to study the Bible, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, why some churches are growing, how to raise children in a Christian setting, parenting a teen from a Christian perspective, family dysfunction and domestic issues, single parenting, apologetics, and confirmation refresher for adults. Evening classes are good, but perhaps not for older adults. One suggested better practical application, then they would feel better qualified to serve in the church. Wednesday evening are good to keep the habit through Advent and Lent. We should try to attract younger people, and offer a class for 7th grade through high school age. One person suggested limiting the class size to make it more personal.

Question 12: The one person who said they would not attend again cited health issues. Otherwise all respondents said they would attend again. They included comments such as, depends on which classes are offered, they would attend as many as they can, fellowship aspect is very important, subjects are important, and they desired to gain a better knowledge to share with others.

5. Conclusions from Personal Interviews

In relation to the questions relative to the purpose of the ABI posed in the introduction to this paper which are proper to this chapter, the data suggest four conclusions.

1. The difference between the generally positive answers to the questions concerning spiritual life, congregational life, Biblical knowledge and issues (3-7), and the negative answers to the questions concerning motivation and qualification to serve (8-10) is striking. It tells us that the purpose of the ABI to equip people with Biblical knowledge and spiritual connection is being carried out rather well. The ABI increased awareness and knowledge among the attendees concerning the Bible and Christian issues. That may be the easier part of the purpose to carry out.

2. It seems as though the more difficult part of the purpose, equipping people for specific service and motivating them to serve both in the church and outside it, is not being accomplished with the effectiveness that we would desire. This conclusion is borne out by the data from the questionnaires received before and after sessions of the ABI (pages 59 ff. and 63ff.)

3. People who tended to participate more often in the ABI were those already involved in their congregations, as responses to personal interviews (question 2, page 70) indicated. We did not seem to be able to attract people who labeled themselves little involved in order to move them to a more active status. We did not attempt to measure whether this type of response is to be expected.

4. Those already involved largely did not consider themselves inclined to be more involved as shown in responses to question 3, page 70. There were courses in the sessions of

the ABI which offered training in being an elder in the congregation, a Sunday School teacher, and courses on parenting. Only the course on elder training had any significant number of attendees. From this one could conclude that those to whom the ABI was marketed did not see training, or at least training in those areas offered, to be significant in their lives, although one respondent to the personal interviews suggested various types of parenting courses.

Chapter Five: Recommendations

Christian education of adults involves intentional planning of the educational experience and bringing those experiences about for the sake of the learner. It also involves an evaluation of the process and the results in the lives of those participating. It is not a haphazard attempt call a class together, cajole someone to teach “something,” and let it sink or float. Christian education faces a tremendous task, since it affects all of life.²⁰⁵ It has an intention to share the fullness of the Word of God, come to grips with the change it demands on the life of the Christian in terms of the Biblical mandate and their life situation, and provide insight into ways the Christian can respond.²⁰⁶ Being a transforming agent for the Church and society is an important and taxing endeavor.²⁰⁷

Conclusion One asserts that the ABI was living up to only part of the intentions with which it was undertaken. That part is knowledge of subject matter, the Biblical material and information concerning issues that face the Church and its individual members. ABI has not lived up to the other major part of its stated purpose, that is, the end result of motivating and moving attendees to become involved, or more involved in Church and community service for the sake of Christ, and to feel more qualified to do so.²⁰⁸

Part of this failure is also part of its success. ABI had been well attended. Those who

²⁰⁵ Herbert W. Byrne, *Improving Church Education*, (Birmingham, Religious Education Press , 1979), p. 5.

²⁰⁶ Pazmino, *Foundational Issues*, p.22.

²⁰⁷ Byrne, p. 5.

²⁰⁸ Earl F. Zeigler, *Christian Education of Adults*, (Philadelphia: Cooperative Association by Westminster press, 1958), p.21.

attend with greater regularity are those who are already involved in their congregations, and who, to a certain extent, feel themselves already qualified to serve in their context of church and community (Conclusion 3).

It is important to acknowledge that the second conclusion on page 78 pointed to the failure of the ABI to be a significant motivating factor among those who could be more involved either in their congregation or community. Also, it is important to acknowledge that the training effect of the ABI was practically non-existent as we saw in conclusion 4. There were training courses offered in various areas of service, but did not draw significant response (page 79.)

The first remedy is continually hold the goals of the ABI before the program board, instructors, and the attendees. The unfortunate thing is that “goals are seldom understood in concrete terms by learners and seldom used by planners.”²⁰⁹ Each planning session must begin with the goals clearly in mind. Then it will be easier to arrive at them as a result of the courses taught.

How do we insure that we accomplish those goals and address the conclusions from page 78 and 79 of this study?

It is imperative that the pastor adopt the goals of Christian adult education in relation to the ABI and give much time and energy to the effort.²¹⁰ The prevailing attitude has to be that the work Christ has given the Church to do is done better when supported and directed by Christian education which involves the entire congregation.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Bergevin, p. 45.

²¹⁰ Byrne, p.3.

²¹¹ Ibid.

According to Richard Bergevin in an essay entitled “Religious Education for Adults,” the planning board also has to take into consideration seven problems:

“1. Not using available resources properly, or at all. 2. Poorly trained or untrained teachers or leaders. 3. Secularizing the programs. 4. Ignoring problems of adulthood. 5. Assuming knowledge is virtue and intellectualizing rather than acting on the knowledge we acquire. 6. Basing programs exclusively on needs prescribed by others. 7. Use of inadequate educational methods.”²¹²

Each of these problems must be addressed adequately in the planning sessions if the goals of the ABI are to be obtained. Numbers 4 and 7 will be the most difficult to address, while number 6 reminds the planning board to remember the initial goals of ABI, and not to allow those goals to be hijacked, or turned aside by the popular opinion of those attending. However, those who attend the sessions of the ABI are in a unique position to criticize and make suggestions.

Bergevin’s seventh problem above suggests a rigorous curriculum review. The goals of the ABI should be uppermost in the mind of the instructor while constructing the course. It may not have to be explicit in the material. But it has to pervade the teaching. The content and method of a course should be reviewed by the teacher and the board following the course. This evaluation should be done in the light of the evaluations of the members of the class.

A significant item in the responses of attendees to the personal interviews was the answer to question 11 in which they made suggestions about what to do with the ABI in the future. What ABI was doing was valued by those who attended. They wanted some of the same courses again, wanted the same good quality teachers, wanted good quality and interesting courses. They named some areas of study, most of which we are engaged in, and the ones we

²¹² Lawrence C. Little, ed., *The Future Course of Christian Adult Education*, (Pittsburgh: for the Workshop of Christian Education of Adults by the University of Pittsburgh Press, 1958), p. 130.

are not engaged in could be added to the ABI if we would modify their outcome structure to match the goals of the ABI. The question must be asked if popular courses fulfill the goals and purpose of the ABI.

Since Biblical ignorance among Protestants is proverbial,²¹³ the suggestion by attendees that we should maintain the highest quality of teachers and courses is one we should follow. That would help towards addressing conclusion 1 from the last chapter, page 78.

Dr. Richard J. Schultz says that often the quality of Christian education leaves a lot to be desired.²¹⁴ That quality has to do with more than just information about the Bible or about the Church. It has to do with being able to do the work of the Church within the context of the opposition to the goals of the Church today.²¹⁵ “The aim of Christian education of adults is to produce dedicated, capable and active Christian disciples.”²¹⁶ (conclusion 2, on page 78) Adequate recruitment and advertising with the goals of the ABI up front might also widen the scope of those who attend (conclusion 3, on page 78), thus helping to achieve the goals of the ABI.

Another emphasis that will help accomplish the goals of the ABI to increase motivation and qualification for service in Church and community will be to ask instructors to pay special attention to information and activities in the course which promote the practical application of the material. One respondent to the interviews mentioned that application was not present in the course he attended. I believe that can be said of more courses. Instructors can construct types

²¹³ Camberlin, p.18.

²¹⁴ Boettcher, p.vi.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

of activities in the course which emphasize what to do with the information provided either in the context of the Church or the community thus addressing conclusion 2. This should be taken into consideration in the curriculum review following the course.

The planning board should also give consideration to the fellowship aspects of the ABI. Settings should provide adequate room for participants, and promote communication between them. Instructors can include communication activities, or small group discussion time to allow people to work together, get to know one another, and test their skills,²¹⁷ addressing conclusions 2 and 3. Giving assignments which promote the development of Christian habits and attitudes will also reap benefits beyond the time limits of the session.²¹⁸

The fact that the occasion of this project was the first attempt at evaluating the ABI speaks to what is its inadequate attainment of its goals. Thorough evaluation has to be an ongoing part of the ABI. Herbert W. Byrne says,

“Evaluation . . . concerns the measurement of success or failure. It lays the groundwork for making changes necessary to the achievement of improvement. It concerns the identification of needs, problems, clear objectives, efficient processes, adequate resources, and sufficient outcomes. In some respects it is rather subjective in nature. This whole matter is securely based on scriptural foundations (1 Thess. 5:21, “Test everything. Hold on to the good.”; 1 Cor. 11:28, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat . . .”; 2 Cor.13:5, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in faith. Test yourselves.”; Gal. 6:1-5, “Watch yourselves. . . test your own actions.”; 1 Tim. 3:10, “First they must be tested, and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve.”; Matt.7:20, “By their fruits, you will know them.”; James 2:14-17, “Faith without works is dead.”) . . . The process of evaluation consists in steps taken: 1. To determine the need; 2. To measure progress and achievement; 3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the educative process, materials, and equipment; 4. To help lay out a plan for

²¹⁷ Dykstra, p. 40. “The growth of the life of faith and faith itself takes place in and belongs to the community, even as at the same time it is intensely personal.”

²¹⁸ Pazmino, *Foundational Issues*, p.20. “Teaching is to be incisive in challenging hearers to such a total life response to God characterized by heartfelt devotion.”

improvement.”²¹⁹

Feedback from instructors and participants is a necessity. Each session should have a participant evaluation process similar to those conducted at continuing education opportunities. One session per year should have an evaluation similar to the instrument in Appendix I, page 92. Instructors should also be required to evaluate their performance, the aptness of the course in relation to the goals of the ABI. Suggestions for improving the course and the ABI in general should be solicited with particular respect to fulfilling the goals. They should always evaluate the curriculum with a view to the goals of the ABI.

By following rigorous evaluation following each session as plans are being made for the next one, the planning board will help the ABI to accomplish its goals and be effective in the Church. The task which confronts the ABI planning board is large. But it is part of the whole task which the Lord of the Church has laid upon his people and has promised to bless. The measure of success of the Church's efforts is not judged according to the world's standards. It is rather a matter of faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ, the instruction of the Holy Spirit in scripture, and the call of Christ to be his people in the world.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Herbert W. Byrne, *Improving Church Education*, (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1979) page 65.

²²⁰ Pazmino, *Foundational Issues*, p. 20. "In the ultimate sense, God is the teacher in biblical education. God is the author and discloser of all truth, and both teachers and students alike stand under this truth. God calls teachers and students to understand, grow in, and obey God's revealed Word."

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Appendix I

ABI

The Ascension Bible Institute

St. Louis, MO

Supported by the Charles and Lillian Beckermann Trust

through the Lutheran Community Foundation

Please fill out and return this questionnaire as a participant in the Ascension Bible Institute. Individual confidentiality is maintained since no personal identification is required. Please circle the choice that comes closest to your answer.

1. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a pre-school up to 5th grade context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified

2. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in a 6th grade up to Senior High context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified

3. How qualified do I see myself to be to teach in an adult context?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified

4. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an official leadership position in my congregation such as chairperson of a board, congregational officer, member of congregation council, elder?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified

5. How qualified do I see myself to be to serve in an unofficial leadership position in my congregation such as a lay reader, host at a service, resource for youth, baptismal sponsor, mentor in the confirmation program, prayer partner?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Qualified	Qualified	Qualified or Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified

6. How able do I see myself to be to witness to Christ in my daily context of home, work, school, neighborhood?

Very	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
Able	Able	Able or Unable	Unable	Unable

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix II

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?
A.) 1-3 B.) 4-6 C.) 7 or more

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

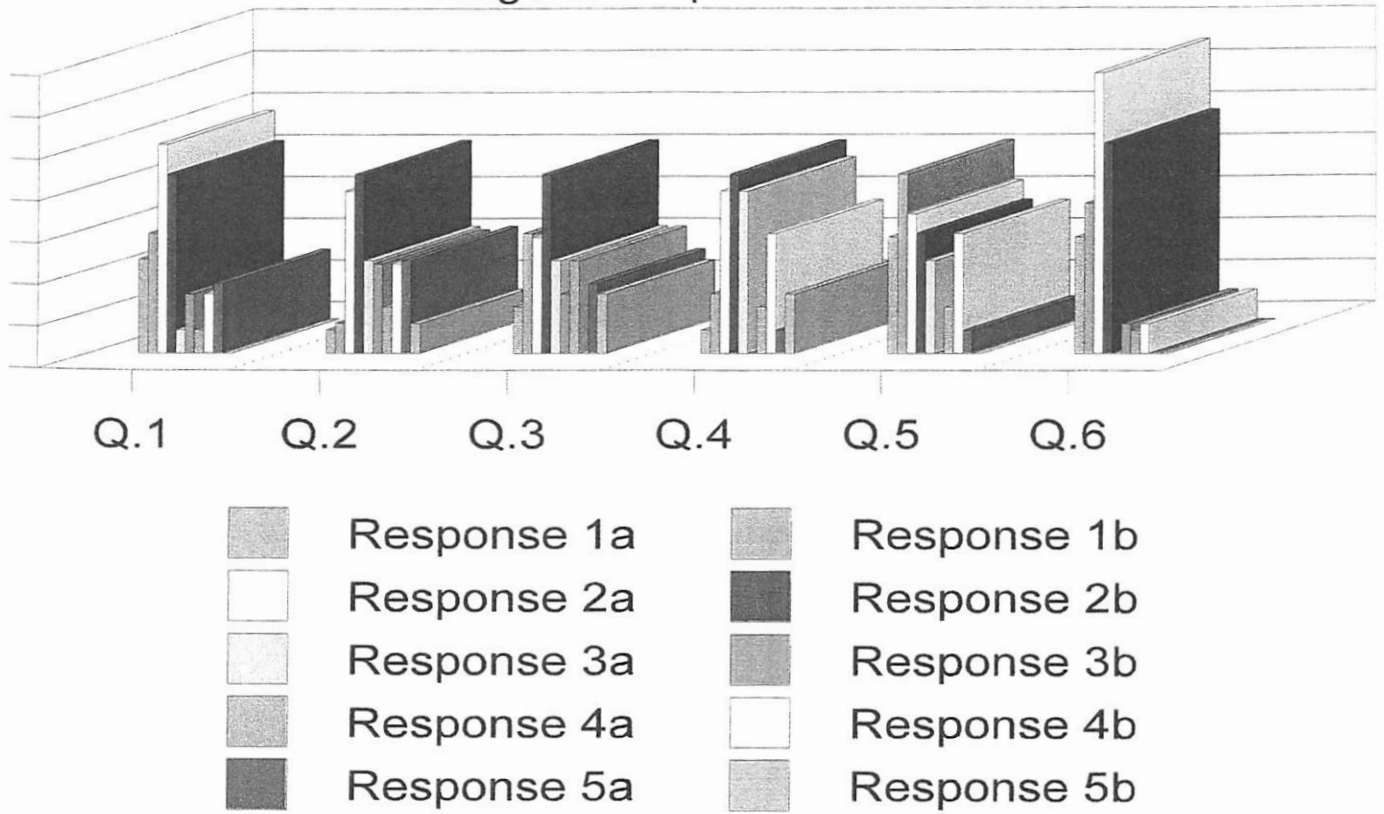
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally | B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader,
choir. | C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship,
Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community,
teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of
program
board, advisory board,
parish council. |
|--|---|---|

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?
- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?
- 6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?
- 7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?
- 8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?
- 9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?
- 10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?
- 11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)
- 12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

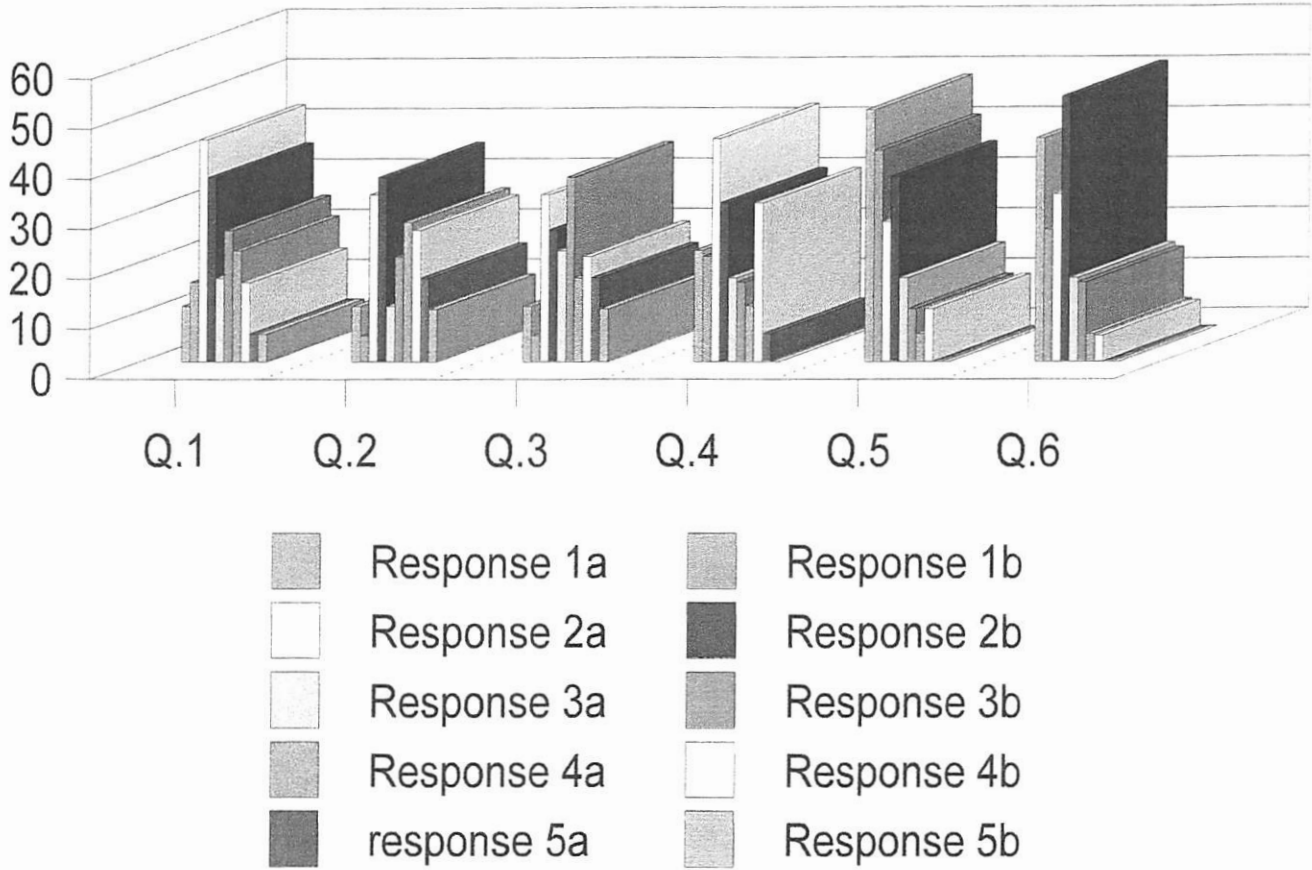
Appendix III

Percentage of Respondents Fall 2003 Session



Appendix IV

Percentage of Respondents Winter 2004 Session



Appendix V
Response Sheets to Personal Interviews
(following)

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3

B.) 4-6

C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally

B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader,
choir.

C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship, Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community, teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of program
board, advisory board,
parish council.

A friend invited me to attend
the class and I started
worshipping with them more often

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

My church attendance increased

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

A friendship that previously existed grew
because of our mutual interest and attendance

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

If increased my attendance
I guess you could say

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes I did not know as much about the church

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

I don't know if I'm ready for that

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

Not at this time

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

I think I could be after some time

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

Keep offering good classes

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

3

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

- A.) 1-3 B.) 4-6 C.) 7 or more

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally</p> | <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader, board,
choir.</p> | <p>C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship,
Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community,
teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of
program
advisory board,
parish council.</p> |
|---|---|---|

3.) Was there any change in one direction or another following your ABI sessions?

I became more involved

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

Yes it helped my faith grow a lot

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

I became more active it increased willingness to help

6.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

Yes

7.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

Yes Pastor touched on a few of those.

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after

Yes, it showed us a few more ways we could help.

attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI? *ABI was not motivational but OAFCL was.*

10.) Do you see yourself less or more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how? *More qualified*

New ways to approach people on subjects in the church
11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) *Evening is good* *Have one class for youth 7th and up.*
There are a lot of good classes.

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not? *Yes I will attend more dependent on what classes are offered*

I hope to gain a better faith base in order to share my faith with others.

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

- A.) 1-3
- B.) 4-6
- C.) 7 or more

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally</p> | <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader, board,
choir.</p> | <p>C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship,
Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community,
teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of
program
advisory board,
parish council.</p> |
|---|---|---|

3.) Was there any change in one direction or another following your ABI sessions?

No change

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

ABI was interesting. I was glad I went

Age does not retain the info

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

No I was not raised Lutheran and now I can attend

6.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

Other Bible studies have helped me in this area

7.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

Yes Ken Wagner's world view helped me

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after

Not really, I already am at an appropriate level of involvement.

attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI? I have thought about increasing my involvement after my husband passed on Oasis

10.) Do you see yourself less or more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how? NO, I would serve with the same result Retention of knowledge is an issue

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) I enjoy Pastor's classes very much I also enjoyed Ken Wagner A class with a basic overview of

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not? Church history timelines

I would Even the confirmation instruction would be a great refresher for older adults

OT, NT, LCMS History

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?
 A) 1-3 B.) 4-6 C.) 7 or more

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally</p> | <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> B) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader, board,
choir.</p> | <p>C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship,
Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community,
teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of
program
advisory board,
parish council.</p> |
|---|--|---|

3.) Was there any change in one direction or another following your ABI sessions?
No change

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?
Yes, enjoyed the information and fellowship

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

6.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?
Of course, Pastor's class on the Lutheran churches

7.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?
Yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after
Yes I actually do but currently I have more on my plate than I want

attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI? *see # 8*

10.) Do you see yourself less or more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how? *No skill level did not increase.*

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) *Finding out what might draw people in. Evening classes are not as good for the older folks.*

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not? *As many as I can, but I may be moving soon.*

*Lack of education in issues facing parents
Public school curriculum i.e. evolution*

*ABI could or ought to help younger
adults with their foundation of knowledge.*

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3

B.) 4-6

C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally

B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
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service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader,
choir.

C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship, Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community, teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of program
board, advisory board,
parish council.

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

*I started attending other bible study sessions
as well as ABI*

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

*It made me read my bible more often
and focused the reading*

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

*I met a few new people
in the classes.*

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI? I feel more comfortable with some of the people that I met.

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

no

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

no I don't know that I have any new skills to offer

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

Continue offering a wide variety of subjects. They're fascinating

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3 B.) 4-6 C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

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B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader,
choir.

C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship, Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community, teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of program
board, advisory board,
parish council.

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

No change

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

yes I feel closer to God

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

*yes I feel closer to other
church members*

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

yes

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

yes

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

I don't know exactly what I can
do for the church

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

Just keep offering
good courses

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3 B.) 4-6 C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little: Attending worship and the Lord's Supper occasionally	<input checked="" type="radio"/> B.) Involved Regular in Worship and at the Lord's Supper, attending Bible Study, member of service/fellowship group, greeter, worship team, prayer partner, reader, choir.	C.) Very Involved Regular in worship, Bible Study, volunteering at Church/community, teaching Sunday School/Bible class, member of program board, advisory board, parish council.
--	--	--

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

no change

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

*Yes we got to know each other in
the class and we prayed for each*

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

other.

yes

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

not more motivated, but I will
continue to serve

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

no

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

No

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

There are some classes that I
would have liked to take
Need to repeat some courses.

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

112
49

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3 B.) 4-6 C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little: Attending worship and the Lord's Supper occasionally	<input checked="" type="radio"/> B.) Involved Regular in Worship and at the Lord's Supper, attending Bible Study, member of service/fellowship group, greeter, worship team, prayer partner, reader, choir.	C.) Very Involved Regular in worship, Bible Study, volunteering at Church/community, teaching Sunday School/Bible class, member of program board, advisory board, parish council.
--	--	--

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

*I have become more involved in church
over the last few years, but I don't know if it*

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How? *is because*
yes I know more about *of ABI*
the church

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

I know more people in the pews now

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

Probably

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

I don't know exactly where I fit in

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

*I feel more knowledgeable about scripture
but not more qualified*

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

*More practical application
would make me feel more
qualified to do things in
the church*

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3

B.) 4-6

C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally

B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
service/fellowship group,
greeter, worship team,
prayer partner, reader,
choir.

C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship, Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community, teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of program
board, advisory board,
parish council.

School events with
children

Art work for bazaars (went through quite a bit of trouble to decorate)
Gaslight square decor
Alpine decor
Evening Guild
Guy 90's Xmas

Volunteer for
School registering
students

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

Family always tried to attend church
My children don't always share that value (saddens me)

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

I graduated Holy Cross, then on to public school
I didn't like public school My children went to public school
They left the church and came back to wed.

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

There was an aspect of fellowship

Real Estate career interrupted volunteer work (Instead of church involvement)
Husband's health put new priorities into life we spent time together

A number of family anecdotes are revealing that
teen years over 3 generations are crucial turning points

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

Absolutely, the homework held me accountable
constant training Holy Cross, memory work Valedictorian

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and
the Christian Church after attending ABI? WWII

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after
attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending
ABI?

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after
attending ABI? If so, how?

Teenagers ought to be addressed, that is such
a difficult time

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest,
teachers, setting, times, etc.)

Grandchildren went to ^{Lutheran} South but some events at
South were no different from the public school
Another Pastor did not have the social skills
that my family needed.

This respondent has a lifetime of experience
that dwarfs the effect of ABI over the
12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? course of their faith life

Elderly knee operations prevented
any further attendance
Loved the classes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?
 A.) 1-3 **B.) 4-6** C.) 7 or more

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little: Attending worship and the Lord's Supper occasionally	B.) Involved Regular in Worship and at the Lord's Supper, attending Bible Study, member of service/fellowship group, greeter, worship team, prayer partner, reader, board, choir.	C.) Very Involved Regular in worship, Bible Study, volunteering at Church/community, teaching Sunday School/Bible class, member of program advisory board, parish council.
--	---	--

3.) Was there any change in one direction or another following your ABI sessions? *no change*

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How? *I became more knowledgeable ... more educated.*

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How? *No change or difference save an increase in knowledge*

6.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI? *yes*

7.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI? *yes*

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after *No there has not been an increase in motivation to do more in the congregation, nor a decrease*

attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI? *No, I will stay at the current level of service*

10.) Do you see yourself less or more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how? *I am more knowledgeable, but the application of that knowledge has not made*

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) *None at this time. any change.*

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not?

Yes, and I hope to gain more understanding of the Bible.

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3

B.) 4-6

C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little:

Attending worship and the Lord's Supper occasionally

B.) Involved

Regular in Worship and at the Lord's Supper, attending Bible Study, member of service/fellowship group, greeter, worship team, prayer partner, reader, choir.

C.) Very Involved

Regular in worship, Bible Study, volunteering at Church/community, teaching Sunday School/Bible class, member of program board, advisory board, parish council.

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

no change

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life?

How?

It forced me to read the bible more often.

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life?

How?

no difference

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

no I am comfortable with the level of service that I am involved in

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

no

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

Not really

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

There are some courses that I would like to attend but they have not been offered again.

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?
 A.) 1-3 B.) 4-6 C.) 7 or more

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>A.) Little:
 Attending worship and the
 Lord's Supper occasionally</p> | <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> B.) Involved
 Regular in Worship and at
 the Lord's Supper, attending
 Bible Study, member of
 service/fellowship group,
 greeter, worship team,
 prayer partner, reader, board,
 choir.</p> | <p>C.) Very Involved
 Regular in worship,
 Bible
 Study, volunteering at
 Church/community,
 teaching
 Sunday School/Bible
 class, member of
 program
 advisory board,
 parish council.</p> |
|---|--|---|

Transferred but only wanted to worship at first.

3.) Was there any change in one direction or another following your ABI sessions?
Your involvement increased, but not certain if it can be attributed to ABI attendance

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?
It forced me to do my Bible studies

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?
I enjoyed the Adult study after teaching children

Mixed groups were good life circumstances

6.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?
Yes I found out many things and developed a deeper understanding

7.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

The courses that I took did not necessarily address issues

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after

ABI was not necessarily the motivating factor in my increased involvement. The Fellowship may have been a big part. Contacts with Saturday worshippers

Fellowship increase opportunity to learn from older congregants.

attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI? *Not necessarily*

10.) Do you see yourself less or more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how? *I don't give myself a lot of credit in this area. I don't have all the answers, but my knowledge*

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) *increased.*

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not?

#11) Limit the choices of course offerings
(small classes 1 or 2 people)
Wednesday classes are good Habit of Lent/Advent
Repeat some of the past courses
Good choice of instructors all positive experiences
Teachers have been natural instructors and
brought their backgrounds to the class.

#12) Yes dependent on the courses.
I hope to gain more knowledge and
more fellowship.
Apologetics really helped me to talk
about my faith.

Questions for Interviews

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- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3

B.) 4-6

C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little:

Attending worship and the Lord's Supper occasionally

B.) Involved

Regular in Worship and at the Lord's Supper, attending Bible Study, member of service/fellowship group, greeter, worship team, prayer partner, reader, choir.

C.) Very Involved

Regular in worship, Bible Study, volunteering at Church/community, teaching Sunday School/Bible class, member of program board, advisory board, parish council.

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

Other than attending the ABI classes there hasn't been a change

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life?

How?

Yes I understand the bible more

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life?

How?

No change

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

not really

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

not really

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

not really

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

Time is good

Young people could benefit
from attending some of these
classes

I wish I would have had the
opportunity to learn like this when I

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? was a younger person

yes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3

B.) 4-6

C.) 7 or more

- 2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little:

Attending worship and the Lord's Supper occasionally

B.) Involved

Regular in Worship and at the Lord's Supper, attending Bible Study, member of service/fellowship group, greeter, worship team, prayer partner, reader, choir.

C.) Very Involved

Regular in worship, Bible Study, volunteering at Church/community, teaching Sunday School/Bible class, member of program board, advisory board, parish council.

- 3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

Not really a change

- 4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

yes It enhanced the bible reading that I did

- 5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

yes it enriched the friendships with fellow attendees

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

*Not necessarily because of ABI
but yes*

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

I attended a number of study groups over the years and the combination of all of them motivated me

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

NO

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

*Continue offering other instructors
this gives different perspectives*

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?

A.) 1-3

B.) 4-6

C.) 7 or more

2.) How would you describe your involvement in congregational life before you attended ABI? (Allow the respondent to use their own words and choose the response below which most closely matches their response. You may make notes for clarification.)

A.) Little:
Attending worship and the
Lord's Supper occasionally

B.) Involved
Regular in Worship and at
the Lord's Supper, attending
Bible Study, member of
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prayer partner, reader,
choir.

C.) Very Involved
Regular in worship, Bible
Study, volunteering at
Church/community, teaching
Sunday School/Bible
class, member of program
board, advisory board,
parish council.

3.) Compare that level with after attending ABI.

NO change

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?

*Became more educated not necessarily more of a
Bible reader. I gained more knowledge.*

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?

No

6.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?

yes

7.) Do you feel you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?

yes

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?

no

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI?

no

10.) Do you feel more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how?

no I know a little more about the subjects we studied, but I don't think I'm better qualified.

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.)

I like the classes, but I want to see some of them offered again, because when I had to choose one I missed another.

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI?

yes

Questions for Interviews

Preliminary Considerations:

- 1.) Make arrangements with respondents for either a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.
- 2.) Ask these preliminary questions at the time of the interview: Are you willing to answer questions to the best of your ability and knowledge, with no bias towards positive or negative answers? Do you mind if the interview is recorded? Inform the respondents that you may be taking notes during the interview for clarification.
- 3.) Begin when you ascertain the respondent is comfortable.

Questions:

- 1.) How many sessions of the ABI have you attended?
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- | | | |
|--|---|--|
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 Attending worship and the
 Lord's Supper occasionally

 <i>Decrease</i></p> | <p>B.) Involved
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 Regular in worship,
 Bible
 Study, volunteering at
 Church/community,
 teaching
 Sunday School/Bible
 class, member of
 program
 advisory board,
 parish council.</p> |
|--|---|--|

3.) Was there any change in one direction or another following your ABI sessions?
There was a decrease due to burn-out, involved in choir and Bible

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How?
It just helped me to answer questions that I had

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How?
When ABI started other congregants were attending and this enhanced the experience and compare opinions with other

6.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI?
Yes I can always learn more and have always had a strong faith.

7.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI?
Yes, it helped me understand issues in the U.S.

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after attending ABI?
Not necessarily, it is frustrating to motivate others to come. The same few attendees Americans take their freedom for granted.

attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI? I like learning more so that I can maybe touch somebody
Corporate learning is better for me.

10.) Do you see yourself less or more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how? No leading is not where I will serve... Yes certain segments of the ABI have revealed

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) The length of the class is good to me things I did not know. Evenings are good for me Subject matter is good A session on how to

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not? study the Bible would be good

Yes, I will Fellowship with Christians and non-Christians. I plan to gain more knowledge and ability to talk with others about faith.

Self-study is difficult for me. A knowledgeable leader is very beneficial. A study on the OT books past the Pentateuch, minor prophets, wisdom books, etc.

Topics: How to deal with other religions
Mormonism Jehovah's Witness
Why are other churches growing?
How to raise your children in a Christian setting
Parenting skills or teen parenting from a Christian perspective.
Role play to handle dysfunction, domestic issues, single parent issues.

Other leaders in the Christian arena who might draw more people in

Questions for Interviews

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--	---	--

3.) Was there any change in one direction or another following your ABI sessions? *No change*

4.) Was ABI helpful in your personal spiritual life? How? *Yes it was informative*

5.) Was ABI helpful in your congregational life? How? *No change*

6.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the Bible after attending ABI? *Yes*

7.) Do you believe you have a better understanding of the issues facing congregations and the Christian Church after attending ABI? *both offered a very job of view*

8.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in congregational service after *Apple of his eye comparative Religions of the world.*

No, not really

attending ABI?

9.) Do you feel more motivated to involve yourself in community service after attending ABI? *No not necessarily*

10.) Do you see yourself less or more qualified for service in the congregation or community after attending ABI? If so, how? *No I am not imore qualified*

11.) What suggestions would you make to improve ABI? (Classes, areas of interest, teachers, setting, times, etc.) *Pastor ought to ~~to~~ continue teaching Jane was very enjoyable Joel did a good job communicating*

12.) Will you attend more sessions of the ABI? If so, what would you hope to gain? If not, why not?

As soon as we know the subjects offered we will certainly attend.