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An Examination of Educational Principles as Applied to an On—Going Congregational Program of Childhood and Adult Education

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CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

AN EXAMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES AS APPLIED TO AN ON-GOING CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAM OF CHILDHOOD AND ADULT EDUCATION

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF D. MIN. STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

JAMES F. KEUCH

UNION GROVE, WISCONSIN
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Introduction

The role of education within the parish context has long been recognized as a necessary and integral component of parish ministry. The scores of confirmation and Sunday School materials available on the market today illustrate the variety of techniques and approaches used to educate children. But education does not, or should not, end with the onset of puberty. Education, and Christian education in particular, needs to be an ongoing facet for the adult as well. To that end, this project will seek to present some of the philosophical foundations and practical methods of adult education within the parish.

CHAPTER I

Theoretical Aspects of Adult Education

Adulthood Examined

At first glance, the task of defining the term "adult" may seem quite simple and rather obvious. A chronological yardstick indicates that an adult is anyone who has reached a certain commonly accepted age of accountability; say, 21. But upon closer scrutiny, the task becomes a bit more complex.

Even a casual observation of the complexity and diversity surrounding adult educational activities implicates a connection between the term "adulthood" and the particular sociocultural context. The usual ingredients found in the definition of who is an adult such as age, psychological maturity, and social roles are assigned differing priorities, depending upon the context. In the context of American culture, for example, even the very concept of adulthood is a relatively recent one.[1] In his

discussion of how the concept of adulthood developed, Jordan writes that it came about by "a process of exclusion, as a final product resulting from prior definitions of other stages in the human life cycle."[2] This idea of definition by exclusion forms a portion of Patterson's idea of an adult as he states that "adults are adults, in the last analysis because they are older than children."[3] This difference in age is often assumed to be invariably connected with mature behavior. But while this assumption is fairly widespread, Patterson goes on to state that such is not always the case.

> Those people (in most societies, the large majority) to whom we ascribe the status of adults may and do evince the widest possible variety of intellectual gifts, physical powers, character traits, beliefs, tastes, and habits. But we correctly deem them to be adults because, in virtue of their age, we are justified in requiring them to evince the basic qualities of maturity. Adults are not necessarily mature. But they are supposed to be mature, and it is on this necessary supposition that their adulthood justifiably rests.[4]

Others, such as humanistic psychologists, tend to define adulthood more as a process, rather than a condition. Defined in this fashion, adults are portrayed as individuals who are continually involved in the process of self-fulfillment and self-actualization. Malcolm Knowles utilizes by way of illustration Maslow's hierarchy of human needs as a demonstration of this maturation process.[5]

How one defines the concept of adulthood will

ultimately determine the approach to educating adults. Knowles, for example, states the case that the educational process must be different for adults than for children.

> It is no longer functional to define education as a process of transmitting what is known; it must now be defined as a lifelong process of discovering what is not known. What children should learn is not what the adult world thinks they ought to know, but how to inquire. This is why traditional pedagogy is irrelevant to the modern requirements for the education of both children and adults. Skillful adult educators have known for a long time that they cannot teach adults as children have traditionally been taught...For adult-education theorists in both Europe...and in North America are rapidly developing a distinctive theory of adult learning. And from this theory is evolving a new technology for the education of adults. To distinguish it from pedagogy, this new technology is being given a new name: "andragogy."[6]

Others, such as Cyril Houle[7] believe that the process of education is the same, regardless of the age or maturation level of the clientele. If one views the concept of adulthood as a process of becoming rather than a state of being, adult education may then be seen as a vehicle for that process. Behaviorists would thus be more concerned with securing the proper reinforcement in the educational environment in order to obtain the desired results rather than the age or maturation level of the learners. Clearly the philosophical presuppositions regarding the concepts of adult education and adulthood profoundly affect both the practice of and theory behind adult education.

For the purposes of this project about adult education

within the parish context, an examination of two main theoretical schools of thought would be most helpful. Humanism and behaviorism have profoundly altered the educational landscape of our country. They have done so by altering the way educators view the role of the teacher in the learning process, and by changing commonly accepted thought regarding the mechanics of learning itself. The understanding of the process of education within the parish begins now with these philosophical constructs.

Theoretical Constructs of Adult Education

Humanism and the Self-Directed Learner

The differences between children and adults can have a profound and dramatic effect on educational theory and practice. For example, there are a number of assumptions that can readily be made about children in the fifth grade. It would be reasonable to assume that they would be approximately 10 years of age with particular, measurable social and physical development.

A group of adults, on the other hand, is apt to be much more diverse. Such a group may range in age from 18 to 80 and beyond. Each member of the group may have significantly different psychosocial and physical skills, and their life experiences are also likely to vary greatly. For as adults age, they tend to become increasingly diverse both in levels of skills and experience.

In order to provide a setting conducive to adult education, it would seem preferable to have an understanding of the concept of adulthood as it is tied to the learning process. Humanistic philosophy suggests that one way of doing this would be to contrast adult learning with childhood learning in order to explore some of the unique characteristics of adult learners.

Malcolm Knowles distinguishes and contrasts andragogy, adult education, with pedagogy, the education of children, through the use of four assumptions regarding adults:

1. As a person matures, his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directing human being;
2. He accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning;
3. His readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles;
4. His time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness.[8]

The first two of these assumptions have their origins in humanistic philosophy and psychology. The third and fourth assumptions give us an opportunity to look at adult education from a psychosocial developmental perspective. A knowledge of humanistic philosophy with a developmental orientation can thus be useful in understanding the complex relationship between the concept of adulthood and the idea of what it means to learn.

As Knowles' first two assumptions suggest, adults tend to be self-directing in their educational growth and development and they also have experiences which differentiate them from the more youthful learner. In order to provide a proper setting for adult education, it thus becomes necessary to obtain a knowledge of the goals and needs of the adults involved.

Chronological age does not, at least in our society, provide a credible rule for distinguishing between adults and children. A more useful concept from the adult educator's point of view is the idea of independence. Adults are often defined as those individuals who have assumed the responsibility for the conduct of their lives. Children tend to be dependent, with the degree of dependency gradually decreasing through the period of adolescence. An adult is thus distinguished from a child or an adolescent by the social roles and responsibilities that define an adult; roles such as marriage, career, parent, decision maker and the like.

The primary focus of childhood education is to help the child develop in such a way that he/she will one day be able to assume adult responsibilities. Adult education, conversely, rests on the assumption that its participants are already functioning this way. Thus, the primary focus and aim of adult education is to assist adults in realizing their potential as fully functioning and participating

members of society.

This idea of life enhancement as an educational emphasis warrants the treatment of adult learners as individuals rather than as a class or set. Humanistic philosophy and psychology tends to focus upon individual growth and development. Dissatisfied with a simple behavioristic-mechanistic approach to behavior and learning, humanistic psychology seeks an understanding of the affective and the intellectual components of individuals. Knowles draws heavily upon these humanistic foundations and has given them expression in adult education through his concept of andragogy. Humanism, in turn, draws heavily upon phenomenological and existential thought in that it gives emphasis to the idea that perceptions grow out of individual experience and in the stress it provides upon individual responsibility for reaching the desired goal.

The foundations of an andragogical approach to adult learners can be clearly illustrated in the following four tenets of the Association for Humanistic Psychology:

> A centering of attention on the experiencing person and thus a focus on experience as the primary phenomenon in the study of man.
>
> An emphasis on such distinctively human qualities as choice, creativity, valuation, and self-realization, as opposed to thinking about human beings in mechanistic and reductionistic terms.
>
> An allegiance to meaningfulness in the selection of problems for study and of research procedures, and an opposition to a primary emphasis on objectivity at the expense of significance.

> An ultimate concern with and valuing of the dignity and worth of man and interest in the development of the potential inherent in every person. Central in this view is the person as he discovers his own being and relates to other persons and social groups.[9]

While there exists something of a general consensus regarding these four tenets, there is also within humanistic thought and philosophy a diversity of idea and thought. Abraham Maslow has been a major contributor to the humanist psychology movement in this country. In his book entitled, Motivation and Personality, published in 1954, Maslow proposed a theory regarding human motivation based on a hierarchy of needs. According to this theory, physiological needs, such as those of hunger and thirst, form the lowest level of the hierarchy and must be satisfied before any of the other needs can be addressed. The final or highest need in this scheme was the need for self-actualization. While these needs are arranged and addressed according to the specific hierarchy, it is also true that "people who are normal are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time."[10]

Of particular interest to the theory of adult education is the fact that Maslow believed that this self-actualization was possible only in adulthood:

> Self-actualization does not occur in young people. In our culture, at least, youngsters have not yet achieved identity, or autonomy, nor have they had time enough to

> experience an enduring, loyal, post-romantic love relationship....Nor have they worked out their own system of values; nor have they had experience enough (responsibility for others, tragedy, failure, achievement, success) to shed perfectionistic illusions and become realistic; nor have they generally made their peace with death; nor have they learned to be patient; nor have they learned enough about evil n themselves and others to be compassionate; nor have they had time to become post-ambivalent about parents and elders, power and authority.[11]

In speaking of the accumulated experience of the adult, Maslow not only defines the individual adult but also describes the adult in terms of a resource for learning activities. That is to say, the self concept of an adult has evolved from this rich bank of experiences and can be used in educational endeavors to further assist adults to achieve even greater self-direction or self-actualization. According to the theory propounded by Maslow, such self-actualizing adults tend to exhibit more of the following characteristics:

1. They are realistically oriented.
2. They accept themselves, other people, and the natural world for what they are.
3. They are spontaneous in thinking, emotions, and behavior.
4. They are problem-centered rather than self-centered in the sense of being able to devote their attention to a task, duty, or mission that seems peculiarly cut out for them.
5. They have a need for privacy and even seek it out on occasion, needing it for periods of intense concentration on subjects of interest to them.
6. They are autonomous, independent, and able to remain true to themselves in the face of rejection or unpopularity.
7. They have a continuous freshness of appreciation and capacity to stand in awe again and again of the

basic goods of life, a sunset, a flower, a baby, a melody, a person.
8. They have frequent "mystic" or "oceanic" experiences although not necessarily religious in character.
9. They feel a sense of identification with mankind as a whole in the sense of being concerned not only with the lot of their own immediate families, but with the welfare of the world as a whole.
10. Their intimate relationships with a few especially loved people are profound and deeply emotional rather than superficial.[12]

Maslow believed that educators should think in terms of bringing to adults intrinsic learning; that is, "learning to be a human being in general, and, second, learning to be this particular human being."[13] Maslow was thus instrumental in propounding the view of the self-actualizing learner.

Similar to this self-actualizing learner is the concept of the "fully functioning person" postulated by Carl Rogers. In Rogers's theory of the individual, the principle tenets are "(1) the organism, which is the total person; (2) the phenomenal field, which is the totality of experiences; and (3) the self, which is a differentiated portion of the...field."[14] Rogers taught that some of the characteristics of the self are a striving for consistency and change as a result of maturation and learning.

Beyond the reality of the self, Rogers taught that there was an ideal self; that is, the individual the person would like to be. It was the discrepancy between the real and the ideal self that provided the impetus and stimulus

for learning. If this tension was not resolved in new learning, however, there was also the possibility for the creation of unhealthy tension-relieving behaviors. Rogers thus saw a similarity between therapy and educative processes. Posing the question "If education were as complete as we could wish it to be in promoting personal growth and development, what sort of person would emerge?" Rogers replied:

> [The person who] is able to experience all of his feelings, and is afraid of none of his feelings; he is his own sifter of evidence, but is open to evidence from all sources; he is completely engaged in the process of being and becoming himself, and thus discovers that he is soundly and realistically social; he lives completely in this moment, but learns that this is the soundest living for all time. He is a fully functioning organism, and because of the awareness of himself which flows freely in and through his experiences, he is a fully functioning person.[15]

Rogers described the process of learning as a continuum of meaning that ranged from nonsense and meaningless memorizing on the one end to significant, meaningful, experiential learning on the other. The qualities of experiential learning necessary for the development of fully functioning individuals were described by Rogers as including a sense of personal involvement. This involvement implies that both the affective as well as the cognitive dimensions of a person be involved in the learning event. Experiential learning is also self-initiated; that is, it derives from a sense of discovery that is driven by a

motivation from within the person. This sense of discovery then takes on a pervasive character. It impacts behavior, attitudes and the personality of the learner. Because this learning is such a personal and pervasive experience, evaluation is also best accomplished by the learner, since he or she is best suited and qualified to determine if this experience is meeting the defined needs.

Finally, when the learning experience has occurred and has been evaluated by the learner, it becomes incorporated into the total person. It then becomes a part of the personal essence that typifies both the identity and the qualitative dimension of the total person. The learning experience provides an essence that is incorporated into who that person is and is becoming.[16]

The emphasis that Rogers placed upon self-initiated learning and student participation in planning and evaluating the learning experience has served as a model for adult educators. For if the concept of adulthood includes some measure of independence and self-responsibility, then it follows that adult students should likewise have a role in the structuring of their own learning experience.

One of the mechanisms developed by Rogers for facilitating this self-growth was called the encounter group. Similar to client-centered therapy in which the individual grows by recognizing the real self and removing the artificial restraints that hinder the actualizing of the

ideal, the encounter group "seeks to enable the participants to become experiencing persons capable of choice, creativity, valuation, and self-actualization."[17]

While the use of groups is certainly not new to adult education, Rogers, in the use of the encounter group, introduced the idea of utilizing group processes to facilitate the emotional and psychological maturity of the participants. Such groups, however, were not without their drawbacks. For example, behavior changes brought about by such a group are not necessarily long lasting. In addition, a person may "become deeply involved in revealing himself and then be left with problems which are not worked through"; tensions within a marriage may be brought to the surface, and complications may develop because of liaisons between various group members.[18]

These possible difficulties notwithstanding, Rogers believed that the group process is a very real force for adult education in the area of rehumanizing human relationships and assisting individuals to "live life fully in the here and now."[19]

A number of other theorists have also provided insights into the arena of self-directed adult education. One of which was psychologist Gordon Allport. He spent a lifetime researching human nature as found in what he termed, "mature adults." His attempt was to determine the motivation behind human actions and the characteristics which comprised

maturity. While he himself did not actually talk about the role of education in developing the mature adult, there are some implications that might well be drawn from the way he characterized such a person. Allport noted seven characterizations of the mature personality:

1. extension of the sense of self--psychologically healthy persons are those who are able to become actively involved with activities, people, or ideas;
2. warm relating of self to others--the capacity for intimacy and the capacity for compassion;
3. emotional security--self-acceptance, control of emotions, and a tolerance for frustration are qualities of emotional security;
4. realistic perception--the ability to view the world objectively;
5. skills and assignments--the development of one's skills and the full commitment of one's self to work;
6. self-objectification--knowledge and understanding of oneself;
7. a unifying philosophy of life--healthy persons are characterized by directedness, that is, guided towards the future, towards long-range goals and plans.[20]

Allport's model of the mature adult fits well with the model of the self-actualizing learner. Educational settings from the humanist viewpoint tend to associate active involvement with others, the development of work skills, and increased self-understanding as means towards the actualization of the goals of the adult learner.

> Ego-involvement lies at the heart of the adult educator's art...the main thrust of modern adult educational technology is in the direction of inventing techniques for involving adults in ever-deeper processes of self-diagnosis of their own needs for continued learning, in formulating their own objectives for learning, in sharing responsibility for designing and

> carrying out their learning activities, and in evaluating their progress toward their objective,

states Malcolm Knowles.[21] Contrasting this view of adult learning with that of children, it appears that the self-concepts of adults are more independent and self-directed.

Humanistic philosophy would also postulate that adult learning is affected by developmental tasks that are related to societal roles and by an orientation to the task of learning that seeks an immediate application of the newly acquired knowledge. By understanding how an adult fits into this developmental framework, the adult educator is provided with some additional insights into the differences between andragogy and pedagogy.

Children as well as adults learn within a social context; however, the emphasis of pedagogy is often socialization or learning how to live with others in a way that is socially acceptable. For the child, the "teachable moment" depends largely upon the child's physiological development. What is learned is then either stored for future use or used as a foundation for additional learning.

For adults, education often consists of helping them manage the societal roles in which they, as adults, are already engaged. Thus, the "teachable moment" depends not upon the degree of physiological maturation, but upon the immediate problems or goals that are being addressed. By

viewing the adult learner in his developmental context, the task of adult education is seen as a complex phenomenon that involves the interaction with biological, psychological, and social environmental factors. Developmental psychology focuses on this process of development and provides adult educators with a view of the patterns of adult change so that more meaningful learning experiences can be provided, thereby bringing about further growth and development within the individual.

In addition to being a function of interaction with the social system, adult development is also seen as a function of historical time. This has been termed the "generation effect," and it can be viewed from the perspective of the individual as moving from one life stage (generation) to the next. It can also be seen within the context of the family within a particular social group:

> As people move from early to middle adulthood, their parents are simultaneously moving from middle adulthood to middle age, and their children are moving from childhood to adolescence. What is more, as their age cohort moves from youth to established adulthood, their parents may still be in the social position of established adulthood, also, but perhaps with another set of values, while a new age cohort is already replacing them in their earlier social niche. While all this is going on, the society as a whole is changing. Any attempt to understand development, particularly in adulthood, must recognize the complex effects of the intertwining of these different kinds of generations.[22]

Adulthood is characterized both by periods of relative

stability and periods of change. Those events or tasks that stimulate change offer the greatest potential for continued adult growth and development since they are likely to provide the greatest incentive for such growth.

The developmental perspective includes, therefore, historical factors, social and cultural norms and individual differences. One of the goals of developmental psychology is to determine the commonalities present for all human beings as they progress through the life cycle, while at the same time keeping an eye on the uniqueness of the individual response to life's events. This developmental perspective regards the adult as a learning organism which utilizes the intellectual or cognitive dimension as a means of adapting to the tasks and events of the life cycle.

Behaviorist Theory of Adult Education

Behaviorism as a system of thought has its origins in a variety of philosophical traditions. One of these traditions is known as materialism. This is a philosophical system which postulates that reality is best explained through the use of the laws of matter and motion without any further appeal to mind or spirit. Humans, though perhaps more complex in a number of different ways, are still just a part of nature. The British philosopher Hobbes demonstrated this belief through his contention that the psychological make-up of persons could be explained in

mechanistic terms.

Another philosophic tradition closely allied to modern behaviorism is known as scientific realism and empiricism. This is the belief that one could arrive at the truth through the information gleaned by the senses. Francis Bacon, followed by John Locke believed that human knowledge was the product of empirical processes, quite apart from any innate idea or inspiration. Bertrand Russell also made contributions to this avenue of thinking through his preference for the observable, empirical data of science as opposed to the relatively subjective and often difficult to verify data of the humanities.

Closely allied with scientific realism and empiricism is the concept known as positivism. Comte proposed what came to be known as philosophical positivism: the idea that one arrived at knowledge through scientific observation and the measurement of facts. Logical positivism, a movement that gained prevalence in Germany and England, took this a step further by advocating the development of a language that did not go beyond the observable, empirical reality gained through personal, sensual experience.

The 17th century philosopher, Rene Descartes, embarked upon a distinctive psychological orientation on the study of human behavior when he suggested that all instances of human behavior could be classed as either voluntary or involuntary. Descarte's involuntary behavior ultimately led

to the development of what was known as the "reflex" concept in the 18th and 19th centuries. This concept in turn was the impetus behind the work of Ivan Pavlov and his famous experiments with salivating dogs. Through his work came the concept of classical conditioning which emphasized the idea that behavior could be controlled through the control of the stimulus.

In 1914, John B. Watson published an important work entitled, Behavior--An Introduction to Comparative Psychology. Watson here described psychology as a science of behavior, not a study of the mind or mental activity. The way to understand humans, he maintained, was through the observation of their behavior. Implicating a connection between human emotions and behavior, Watson defined emotions as:

> a hereditary pattern of response in which implicit visceral and glandular responses were predominant...the genesis of behavior, from the squirming and squallings of the new-born child to the complex skills and language responses of the adult, he ascribed to Pavlov's principle of conditioning.[23]

Through a number of books, articles and lectures, Watson championed the cause of behaviorism to the American public and the field of psychology. And while Watson was a very influential figure in the behaviorist landscape, he was by no means alone.

Burrhus Frederick Skinner was another important and influential figure. A strong exponent of a radical

determinist brand of behaviorism, Skinner believed that humans are controlled by their environment, an environment which can be studied and manipulated to accomplish behaviorist goals. Perhaps his greatest contribution to behaviorist thought was the distinction he made between classical and operant conditioning.

Classical conditioning elevates the importance of the stimuli on behavior; reward, reinforcement and feedback are of much lesser importance. Operant conditioning theory, on the other hand, stresses the notion that the response is just as important as the stimulus in reinforcing desired behavior.

It is this principle of reinforcement that is crucial to an understanding of operant conditioning. Behavior that is reinforced is much more likely to recur under similar conditions. Behavior that is not reinforced by an appropriate response is likely to become less frequent or even disappear. According to Skinner, human personality is a "repertoire of behavior imported by an organized set of contingencies," or in other words, a history of reinforcements.[24]

Reinforcements can be positive or negative. Robert Nye describes certain aspects of positive and negative reinforcement as follows:

> Positive reinforcement involves the addition of something (a positive reinforcer) to a situation when a response is made. For example, a response may be positively reinforced if the obtaining of food, water,

> sexual contact, money, or praise is a consequence. Negative reinforcement involves the removal of something (called either a negative reinforcer or an aversive stimulus) from a situation when a response is made. For example, a response may be negatively reinforced if the removal of extreme cold or heat, a loud noise, a threat, a tedious task, or a headache is a consequence. In short, much of our behavior is conditioned because it gains us something (in the case of positive reinforcement) or because it allows us to escape or avoid something (in the case of negative reinforcement).[25]

According to behaviorist theory, reinforcement is a tool that can be used to either explain our own behavior, or to modify another's. Determining the most effective scheduling of reinforcements for the purpose of eliciting desired behavior has been an area of particular concern for behavioral psychologists. Skinner, in fact, noted that the purposes of psychology are simply to understand, predict and control human behavior. In order to do this, Skinner reasons that we must first forfeit the notion of personal freedom. Describing the efforts for obtaining this freedom from a behaviorist perspective, Skinner writes:

> Man's struggle for freedom is not due to a will to be free, but to certain behavioral processes characteristic of the human organism, the chief effect of which is the avoidance of or escape from the so-called "aversive" features of the environment.[26]

The task facing society, then, is "not to free man from control but to analyze and change the kinds of control to which they are exposed."[27]

Behavioristic theory has profoundly affected the

educational patterns of society. Skinner alludes to this by speaking of survival as a fundamental value for individuals and societies:

> What is good for the species is what makes for its survival. What is good for the individual is what promotes his well being. What is good for a culture is what permits it to solve its problems. There are...other kinds of values, but they eventually take second place to survival.[28]

Educational systems are affected by behaviorism in that they are encouraged to ensure the survival of society by carefully arranging and managing reinforcements. Learning how to learn would be just one of the skills that needs to be reinforced. And to do that, behaviorist thought tends to de-emphasize competition and individual success while at the same time reinforcing cooperation and interdependence.

The roles of teacher and learner are also well defined in behaviorist thinking. Education's ultimate goal is to initiate and reinforce that behavior which will ensure the survival of the society and the individual members of that society. Along these same lines, the role of the teacher is to design an environment for learning that elicits desired behaviors and extinguishes that behavior which is deemed undesirable. The teacher thus becomes an environmental engineer who plans in detail those conditions necessary to bring about the desired behavior. Some principles for accomplishing this follow:

1. Consequence Identification--the consequences for an educational program (reinforcers and punishers), must be identified by their effects on the pupil's behavior--not on the teacher's.
2. Automaticity--consequences affect student behavior automatically, whether or not the relationship between behavior and consequences can be verbalized.
3. Relevant Criteria--consequences of an educational accomplishment should be closely related to the criteria of accomplishment.
4. Consistency--the consequences of student's behavior should be attended to in a consistent manner.
5. Immediacy--consequences should be presented immediately following the behavior responsible for them.
6. Frequency--reinforcements should occur often enough to strengthen desired behavior.
7. Small Steps--educational material should consist of units and subunits small enough to allow for a reasonable reinforcement schedule.
8. Unplanned Punishment Effects--the threat or actual withdrawal of possible reinforcements or punishment weakens the effect of using positive reinforcement alone.
9. Effective Contingency Contracting--a learning contract between student and teacher should be clear, fair, and honest.[29]

Students are given an active role in their education in behaviorist thought. Learning is measured and verified through the student's behavioral changes. Advocates of behaviorist theory tout this feature as a way of precisely measuring student progress and learning without the use of subjective, often capricious estimates and standards. This measurement of behavioral change gives rise to the notion of accountability. This notion may be defined as follows:

> The concept of educational accountability involves the teacher's producing evidence regarding the quality of his or her teaching, usually in terms of what happens to pupils, then standing ready to be judged on the

> basis of the evidence. Any accountable teacher, therefore, takes responsibility for the results his or her instruction produces in learners.[30]

A systems approach to administration and planning in education is yet another facet of this accountability theory. A systems approach is simply the idea of looking at the educational system together with its constituent parts with an eye to determining how they fit together and how they work together. Three basic parts of the systems model are the input, that which comes into the system to be processed in order to secure the desired results; the throughput, or the heart of the system where the inputs are processed; and the output, or the end result of the system's endeavors.

In the field of adult education, the systems approach has been used for the planning of university extension programs, cooperative extension, and business and industry continuing education. A typical application of systems analysis to adult education programs would likely involve the following basic steps:

> NEED--the definition of the real underlying need and problem the program is trying to satisfy.
>
> OBJECTIVES--the statement and definition of the educational objectives in terms of measurable learning goals.
>
> CONSTRAINTS--the definition of the real-world limitations or restraints which must be satisfied by the system before reaching the desired outcome.

ALTERNATIVES--the generation or adoption of possible approaches to attaining the desirable outcomes.

SELECTION--the analysis and evaluation of all alternatives in light of the desired outcomes and the possible constraints with which the system must cope.

IMPLEMENTATION--the first adoption of the selected alternative to meet the desired outcome.

EVALUATION--the assessment of the conformance or discrepancy between the initially specified objectives and the actual system performance.

FEEDBACK AND MODIFICATION--the process of modifying the designed system based on deficiencies in meeting the stated objectives.[31]

Perhaps one of the greatest impacts on adult education by behaviorist thought has been in the area of curriculum design and program development. In a book entitled, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, Ralph Tyler presents a basic model for designing an educational activity. He bases his model upon the assumption that "education is a process of changing the behavior patterns of people."[32] The first step in the design of a program is to define its purposes. These purposes may come from a variety of different sources, including the learners themselves. Information from these sources is then filtered through the philosophical mindset of the designer and institution and also through psychological findings related to learning. The end result of this process is the formulation of specific objectives to be used in the selection of learning activities.

The actual writing of these objectives constitutes the second step in curriculum planning and design. Regarding these objectives, Tyler states that "since the real purpose of education is not to have the instructor perform certain activities but to bring about significant changes in the students' patterns of behavior," an objective should be " a statement of changes to take place in students." Each objective should also have "both the kind of behavior to be developed in the student and the content or area of life in which this behavior is to operate."[33]

Having formulated and stated the objectives, learning experiences are then chosen which will facilitate their realization. Tyler defines this learning experience in behaviorist tones as "the interaction between the learner and the external conditions in the environment to which he can react."[34] The teacher's role is also very important here. In addition to the selecting of learning experiences, the teacher must also organize them in a fashion that enables the learning experiences to reinforce each other.

Tyler lists three major points for organizing a group of learning experiences. These experiences should be <u>continuous</u>, that is, they should provide recurring opportunities for experiencing particular elements. They should be <u>sequential</u>, each successive experience builds up the preceding so as to increase the learner's depth and

breadth of understanding. And finally, they should be integrated, arranged in such a fashion that the segments of learning experiences can be united into the learner's behavior.[35]

The final step in Tyler's model is that of evaluation. This evaluation is based upon the educational objectives. Specifically, it is "the process of determining the degree to which these changes in behavior are actually taking place."[36] There are a number of ways in which this evaluation may be accomplished: tests, questionnaires, observations and samplings of a student's work to name a few. As the final step in the process, evaluation is used for both individual and program assessments that leads to further curriculum planning, replanning and redevelopment.

The significance of Tyler's thought is to be found in its widespread application and impact on the field of adult education. Houle notes that although the system has been altered and criticized, the "fundamental way of thought which Tyler suggested still remains intact, underlying the discussion and practice of most education today."[37] Houle also credits Tyler with having the primary influence on his system of planning and implementing adult education programs. The similarities between Houle's "fundamental system" and Tyler's curriculum design are clear.

Although Malcolm Knowles is clearly identified with

humanistic psychological principles in his andragogical approach to adult education, yet even here his program planning reflects Tyler's influence. In Knowles' scheme, the needs become objectives once they have been filtered through institutional purposes and philosophies, and the degree of feasibility, which includes the "psychology of learning" and the interests of the clientele.[38]

Adult educators tend to promote educational activities that foster self-directed learning. Knowles Self Directed Learning[39] advocates a process in which the student determines the behavior to be performed and the criteria and mechanisms for evaluation. In practice, however, adult education will likely tend to be more individualized through joint student-teacher planning or teacher determined tasks. The behavioral concepts of operant conditioning: reward, reinforcement and feedback, are to be found throughout the instruction and arrangement of adult education activities.

While it may be tempting to provide a summary or unifying synthesis of adult education, the process is complicated by the fact that adult education tends to be a much more complex and varied endeavor than the education of children. This is due partly to the fact that adults tend to have a wider range of motivating factors involving them in the educational process. Children very often are involved in the educational process, not by their own will

or volition, but by the statute and mandate of others. Adults, on the other hand, may also feel in some ways compelled to continue their education. But more often than not this sense of compulsion is from within for the express purpose of achieving some goal that is thought to be desirable.

A synthesis then, if one can profitably be made, would include the behaviorist point of view. Adults often are driven and motivated by environmental pressures and rewards that have profound influence on the perception of self-identity and on subsequent behavioral patterns.

But there is also the humanist dimension which stresses the inner definition of the mature human psyche. Adults are qualitatively different from children, both from the standpoint of psychological maturity and development, and also from the obvious fact that adults have more accumulated experiences than children. There is also an element of truth in that adults, on average, may well desire to achieve their full potential and fulfillment as individuals, while such goals and aspirations may be somewhat esoteric for a child.

Where all of this encounters a measure of difficulty, however, is when the theological realm is added to the mix. For the idealism that is found in both the humanist and behaviorist camps becomes tempered when confronted by the harsher realities exposed through a divinely revealed

theology. Such a theological perspective casts a somewhat different light on who we are and how we are motivated and towards what we are motivated. Such a perspective will now be the focus and thought of chapter two.

CHAPTER II

Theological Foundations of Adult Education

"The Gospel is a truth that cannot be taught; it must be lived."[40] This statement is indicative of the lack of purpose evident in many evangelical Christian circles today. All too often, the stated purpose of Christian education is to teach the Bible; or to live the Gospel. But the ambiguity inherent in such a statement strips it of any value in defining the purpose of Christian education.

Teaching the Bible, for example, means different things to different people. To a Jehovah's Witness, teaching the Bible will involve an entirely different set of teachings from those of a Mormon, or a Baptist, or a Lutheran. Living out the Gospel may well carry with it an entirely different set of baggage for one schooled in Catholicism than for an adherent of a Protestant confession. It would seem evident, therefore, that Christian Adult Education presupposes a foundation of specific theological principles. These theological principles lend not only substance to the

curriculum, they provide the purpose for teaching in the first place.

This may seem obvious and self evident; yet, experience shows that Christian Adult Education programs commonly suffer from a lack of purpose brought about by poorly defined or misunderstood theological principles. Often this results in a lack of interest in the program as demonstrated by a low rate of participation. Even talented and enthusiastic communicators cannot adequately compensate for the lack of a well thought out and clearly stated theological foundation.

Some of the greatest resources in the field of adult Christian education are those who bring these theological principles to others. They are the ones who are directly involved in carrying out the commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to go and make disciples. Making disciples involves more than simply being the provider of information. It involves equipping others by providing them with a Biblically sound theological foundation.

In doing so, there are at least three points critical to this discussion. First, Christian Education in general, and adult Christian Education in particular, is a people-intensive endeavor. Adult Christian education is acutely focused on the person. It has the aim of enabling the person to gain a comprehensive view of God's world. Through this understanding of creation as the work of God

Himself, the purpose is then to shape the values of the learner towards a theocentric end. Looking at this point from a distinctively Lutheran perspective, it could also be said that the purpose is to shape the values of the learner towards a Christocentric end.

Jesus Christ Himself is the sole end and purpose of Lutheran Christian education. In the teaching of Christ, there follows salvation; for salvation is to be found in Christ alone. Thus, the specific theology inherent in Lutheran Adult Christian Education is to be seen in its Christological underpinnings. And this, in turn, has a material impact upon the stated purpose of adult Christian education. Adult education thus has a Christocentric purpose. It is Christocentric not simply as a pious example for proper living, but as the source and foundation of our eternal salvation. It is this understanding that is intensively applied to the individual learner.

Secondly, Christian education tends to focus on the meaning of life. Through an understanding of the relation of sin and redemption, the learner will be enabled to see a God-given purpose and foundation for his/her life; a purpose and foundation that cannot be duplicated in secular endeavors. Modern society, with decadent values based upon sex, power, and money, simply has no deeply satisfying purpose to offer those who are searching for meaning and purpose.

In the third place, if Christian education is to

accomplish these goals, it will happen only through the power of God's Word as given in the Scriptures. The Christian educator, particularly the educator of adults, needs to recognize that the objectives of any educational program are brought to fruition via the unique power which God Himself has invested in the divinely ordained means, His Word and the Sacraments. It is this last point that is distinctly Lutheran. The Lutheran educator has the responsibility of presenting and explaining the lesson, while the Word of God is the power and the driving force behind the task of instructing and making disciples.

This is especially important in adult Christian instruction, since one of the major findings in the research of adult developmental psychology is that growth and development continue throughout the adult years up to the very end of life.[41] Thus, it is extremely important that religious education be planned for young adults who are involved with the struggle for self-identity, intimacy, establishing a marriage covenant and child rearing. Adults in the middle years of life have needs that touch on religious faith as they begin the search for a new meaning system or life-structure. During these middle years, profound changes within the personal sphere often produce corresponding changes within the spiritual realm. The onset of marriage, and the beginnings of family and career often

work to produce a felt need for spiritual life and growth. In the inevitable progression of life towards temporal death, it becomes apparent to most that some preparation and forethought must be given to what ultimately awaits us all: declining physical prowess, infirmity, bereavement and death.

Consistent with the accomplishment of these ends is the examination of the Biblical/theological foundations for adult Christian education. This examination will focus on three main points. The first will be a look at God's transforming grace and the role that grace plays in religious education and instruction. The second will take a look at the concept of the priesthood of all believers. This is done to provide some idea of the sociological fabric that envelops all Christians. And finally, a look at the Biblical concept of servanthood will provide an insight into the resulting effects of adult Christian education.

Biblical Foundations: God's Transforming Grace

The fundamental concept of grace in Christian education comes from the active sense of this concept. Grace is not simply a description of God's unmerited favor toward fallen mankind, it is the driving force and power behind all Christian learning. It is God's active grace that changes the hearer/learner.

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, he writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saying

that God "made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions; it is by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:5) This grace of God has brought about an astounding change in Christians; once dead in sins, now they are alive in Christ. As Christian learners, we are not only given new life in Christ through the grace bestowed upon us through the means of His Word, we are empowered to grow in knowledge and wisdom and Godly living because of this grace.

Our salvation begins with this new life and it ends with our glorification in heaven. But in between, this grace is working in us to also bring about a sanctified life. The process employed is called Christian Education; a process by which the means of God's grace is made available to His people. This availability of God's grace has several implications for the task of Christian Education.

First, while the task of Christian education resembles the educative process elsewhere, Christian education distinctively emphasizes the power of God's grace. This means that the real emphasis in Christian education is not on the teaching technique or the subjective qualities and capabilities of the learner; rather the emphasis is on the inherent power given in the grace of God. It is this powerful grace that ultimately produces the desired results. In no other field of education theory or practice can such a claim be made. For while educational theorists have developed many ideas regarding the best and most effective

teaching methods, the driving force behind Christian education is the fact that it is God's grace, and not our efforts, that ultimately brings about the desired behavioral and cognitive changes.

Secondly, this concept of grace within Christian education implies a sacramental character to the learning process. As the Word of God is present in the visible elements of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, so this same Word is present in the teaching and learning process. Teaching in the sphere of Christian education becomes a channel whereby this Word of God is given voice and a presence in the lives of the learners. This does not diminish or denigrate the role of teaching; instead, it is placed in the context of a transformational process wherein God is exalted and His power is made available to the learners.

In the third place, educational theory and practice in Christian education embraces the discipline of prayer, Scripture reading and meditation. These practices are not simply part of the curriculum, they are a part of the teaching and learning strategy. Using the means of God's grace, Christian education seeks to foster or create an atmosphere that encourages and assists people to freely communicate with each other and with God. Thus the Scriptures are far more than a textbook; they are the means through which the education is conducted. Prayer is more

than simply a technique or style associated with religion; it is a response to the grace that God Himself gives through this process.

Prayer, however, is not the only response to adult Christian education. The concept of discipleship, that is, making disciples of Jesus Christ, is the key purpose of Christian education. By its very definition, discipleship implies a strong connection to an ideal or a person. As disciples of Jesus Christ, Christians live out this ideal by the words and actions that comprise their lives. Theologically speaking, this is known as sanctification, or that aspect of holiness that is demonstrated through a style or mode of living.

The logical and intended result of Christian education is to enable and foster the process of sanctification in the lives of the learners. It does this, not by instructing the learner in a sort of "how-to" method of holy living, but through the empowering nature of grace itself. God's grace given through the means of His grace (Word and Sacrament) instills, strengthens and nurtures faith. From this faith naturally proceeds the sanctified life.

Jesus speaks of this in the Gospel of John. In chapter fifteen, beginning at verse five, Jesus states: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit." This fruit is the sanctified life, and the attachment to the vine is the essential

purpose of Christian education.

Christian education, then, employs the power of God's grace in and through sacramental means that encourage a definite response on the part of the learner. This aspect, unique to Christian education, is central to any further discussion on this issue. It is that Divine quality that gives Christian education its transformational character. Indeed, without it there may well be education, but it could not be called Christian education in the strictest sense of the word. With the apostle, we too proclaim: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." [1 Cor. 15:10].

Biblical Foundations: The Priesthood of All Believers

The Bible, in addition to being the Word of God, is a book that is literally filled with mental pictures and powerful images. Images such as heavenly streets of gold, pearly gates, Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and the Church as the Body of Christ are far more moving than any so-called literal depiction. These mental pictures provide a powerful tool for the Christian educator, assisting the learner to more readily grasp the concepts presented.

The metaphors of Scripture which seem to capture the essence of the teaching task are those of priest and

servant. The image of a priest often calls to mind God's accessibility to man. Through the priest, especially in the Old Testament context, intercessions, worship, service and stewardship were all brought together. The image of a servant calls to mind love for God demonstrated in unselfish service to others. The very ideals of Christianity are exemplified in the concept of service and servanthood.

Just as all Christians are called to be servants, so now all Christians are also called to be priests. 1 Peter 2:9 calls Christians a "chosen race, a royal priesthood." This doctrine of the priesthood of all believers provides both a divine mandate plus the enabling power necessary for Christian education. The mandate for Christian education is provided through the implication that each individual Christian is responsible to God for his or her spiritual growth. And even though God has provided His Church with pastors and teachers whose task is to teach and build up the Church, yet the responsibility for spiritual growth and learning rests upon each and every Christian. The parish pastor is called to assist the layman in fulfilling this responsibility of learning and spiritual growth. As such, he is called to serve as a catalyst by bringing this Word of God and His grace to the people.

The enabling power inherent within the concept of the universal priesthood is especially apparent when seen through the lens of the Office of the Keys. In this

doctrine, we confess and believe that Christ has given to His Church on earth, that is, to all believers, the power and authority to preach and teach the Word of God.[42] Thus the task of teaching is given not only to called and ordained preachers, but also to the laity. Lay teaching is, in fact, an essential ingredient in both the conceptual and practical framework of Christian education. Properly understood, the Biblical principle of the priesthood of all believers provides a reaffirmation of the personal spiritual responsibility of all believers and of both their right and their duty to minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

All believers now have access to God through the finished redemptive work of Christ. No longer is there needed a sacrificing priesthood to mediate on our behalf. Yet, this must not be used as an excuse for spiritual lethargy or a license for false doctrine. Rather, if Christians are to be able to fulfill their calling as priests before God, they must receive training or Christian education.

Luther, writing in the preface to his Small Catechism, spoke of the need for Christian education owing to the abysmal ignorance of Christian doctrine, even among the clergy. Relating the need for the instruction given in the catechism, Luther wrote:

> The deplorable conditions which I recently encountered when I was a visitor constrained me to prepare this

> brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching. Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching. Although the people are supposed to be Christian,...they live as if they were pigs and irrational beasts, and now that the Gospel has been restored they have mastered the fine art of abusing liberty.[43]

God's grace, as earlier stated, is the operative force behind Christian education. And yet, this grace is not given without means. Christian education as carried on through the priesthood of all believers, provides instruction in spiritual matters. But this instruction cannot be the exclusive domain of the ordained clergy. Without the emphasis of Christians (not necessarily ordained clergy) teaching other Christians given through the concept of the priesthood of all believers, modern Christian education could not have developed. While the pastor, by virtue of his call, has the primary duty to teach, all Christians must likewise recognize that their own priesthood entails various responsibilities for them as well.

Much of what passes for Christian education today consists of a more or less "consumer" mentality; that is, people come to the church "simply to consume spiritual benefits in exchange for their money and loyalty."[44] But such thinking does not lend itself to an effective educational ministry. By way of contrast, effective Christian eduction consists of training people in the

knowledge of the Lord and His Word, and in equipping them for service. Through the equipping for spiritual service, the Church enables people to live as Christians, as priests who minister throughout the world by what they say and do. This introduces the third Biblical concept to be discussed here, the Biblical concept of servanthood.

Biblical Foundations: Serving God and Others

Effective Christian education seeks to cultivate an outlook or orientation that is centered on others. There are at least two reasons for doing this. First, the Church as the Body of Christ is called and commissioned by Christ to bear witness to the Good News of salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ. This witness cannot be by word alone; it must always be accompanied by deeds consistent with the teaching.

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 1 that we are to follow Paul's example as Paul followed the example of Christ. In Matthew chapter 25, Jesus Himself describes the scene of judgement at the end of the world. The judgement passed upon the righteous and the unrighteousness is put in terms of what was done or not done. This is not an appeal to salvation through works; rather it is an indication of faith as evidenced by servanthood.

This emphasis on an active Christian life, abundant in

good works is not simply a reflex action to certain spiritual stimuli. Behavioral modification theory is a foreign concept to Christian educational principles. Instead, the service that characterizes the life of the Christian is brought about through God's grace given through the means of education in the Word of God. God's Word as taught within the Church, the priesthood of believers, is the enabling power that not only motivates but provides the change of heart and mind that makes God pleasing service possible. God's grace given through means is the starting point; the concept of the priesthood of all believers is the identifying mark, and servanthood is the resulting feature of Christian education.

Associated with these presuppositions of Christian education is the theological arena. Theological doctrines and beliefs have an obvious and expected place in Christian education; not just because it forms the basic content of what is taught, but also because these doctrines deal directly with the presuppositions of Grace, the priesthood of all believers, and servanthood underlying Christian education programs. Theology thus serves as a control in shaping theoretical constructs of Christian education. Because of its importance in any discussion of Christian education, four issues of theological importance are examined. Each has a prominent impact on Christian education. These include knowledge of God, the purpose and

place of the Bible, the role of the Holy Spirit, and human nature.

Theological Constructs: Knowledge of God

It may seem to be a rather obvious observation that Christian education ought to play a role in assisting people in knowing more about God. While the term "Christian" as appended to the word education should serve to define more or less the sort of knowledge in question, yet there is a wide range of disagreement regarding what this endeavor means. The knowledge of God that is of interest here is not merely a collection of empirical data, but rather that knowledge that is expressed in an interpersonal relationship. The knowledge of another person obtained in a close, personal friendship, for example, would be a good illustration of the sort of knowledge of God that is relevant here.

Relating theology to Christian education quickly provides a demonstration of how insufficient factual knowledge of God is. James chapter 2, verse 19, relates that mere intellectual assent that God exists is insufficient, for even the demons have that and they shudder! Old Testament prophets relate similar issues with the people of Israel. Isaiah chapter 1, verse 3, for example, states that while an ox knows its master and a donkey its stall, the people lack knowledge and discernment

concerning God. It was not the case that Israel had forgotten who God was or had lost all information about Him, for Isaiah in this same chapter goes on to mention how the people offered prayers and sacrifices to God. The problem was that while they knew of God's existence, they still did not know God. In the arena of Christian education, the possibility exists for educators to have a scholarly knowledge of God, but still not know God in their lives and words.

The other end of the spectrum is equally perilous. It sometimes happens that in an effort to avoid the cold, dry, lifeless intellectualism that sometimes invades theological thinking, some have entered into what might be described as total subjectivism. One may genuinely feel that a course of action or underlying principle is right, but that is seldom a reliable indicator of theological propriety. The Hebrews often felt that Baal, Ashtaroth, or other pagan deities were responsible for favorable weather conditions or material prosperity, but such feelings when acted upon proved to be prescriptions for disaster.[45]

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul notes the instability of reliance on the subjective by suggesting to the Ephesians that there be something more to their theological thinking so that they wouldn't be constantly tossed about by every wind of opposing doctrine. (Ephesians 4:14) Clearly, knowledge of God must have something more

than a feeling to determine its accurateness and propriety.

The concept of what it means to know God can perhaps be illustrated in Genesis chapter 4, verse 1. There we read that Adam "knew" his wife Eve. He knew her in the sense that he had a personal, intimate, sexual relationship with her that resulted in the birth of their child Cain. Conversely, in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21, we are told that Christ Himself "knew" no sin. Obviously, this cannot mean that Christ had no intellectual knowledge of sin, for it was because of sin that He was incarnate. Rather, Christ had no personal, experiential contact with sin.

From a Biblical perspective, knowledge of God is factual and subjective, but it is also experiential. We come to know God not just in a cognitive way; although that is certainly part of knowing. We come to know God not just in a subjective, highly personal manner; although that too is a part of knowing. Knowing God also means to have an experiential knowledge of God. Such knowledge of God is demonstrated in living as if God existed and as if His existence mattered. Educational theory and practice from a Christian perspective therefore seeks to incorporate cognitive, subjective and experiential elements in its programs in order to provide the learner with a true knowledge of God. An example of how this might be accomplished is provided in a discussion of the Bible and its purpose.

Theological Constructs: The Bible and its Purpose

The Bible is a common and logical starting point for most Christian educational endeavors. As a means of God's grace, the Bible is the self-revelation of God to His people. It cannot therefore be accorded the same status as any other book, nor can it be judged according to common literary and cultural standards. This poses some interesting challenges for the Christian educator. For although the Bible, as the very Word of God, is a means of extending and providing God's grace to people, how the Scriptures are presented and taught has profound implications for how this Word is received by the students. It is important to present the Scriptures in such a way that God's grace is clearly evident and its meaning related to the lives of the learners.

The Lutheran church has long recognized the Bible as the only norm of doctrine and faith. The Solid Declaration of the formula of Concord states that "the Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine, and that no human being's writings dare be put on a par with it."[46] As such, no other text, no other theory or history or system of instruction can take precedence or usurp the authority of Scripture. Because of the supreme authority of Scriptures, we recognize that the chief purpose of the Bible in Christian education is to make us wise unto salvation;

that is, to create within us saving faith. This too, is the ultimate goal of all Christian education.

If this goal is neglected or forgotten, then the use of Scriptures in an educational setting can be greatly distorted and abused. If, for example, the Bible is viewed primarily as a moral textbook, the real need of the students (the forgiveness of sins) will remain largely unmet. Or if the Scriptures are used for the simple acquisition of historical or literary knowledge, this too may be accomplished. But the knowledge gained serves only a vain pursuit while the goal of salvation, the creation of saving faith within the heart of the learner, goes largely unmet.

The need for solid, Biblical instruction in our day is great. There is a proliferation of conflicting beliefs being taught within Christendom, nearly all of which claim to be Bible-based. The denominational divisions have as their source and origins false and misleading doctrines. While it's true that the Church is one, doctrinal unity can be established and maintained only through the proper use of Scripture. The Bible and its doctrines must establish Christian unity and practice. Effective Biblical teaching clearly presents the Word to the learners in such a way that they come face to face with God in a highly personal, informative manner that refreshes, renews, cleanses and illuminates. Faith is created, strengthened and sustained and inspiration and ability are given to lead a God-pleasing

life.

Obviously, this is all dependent upon sound linguistic and exegetical practice; a practice that will be given greater depth of discussion in chapter 3. For now, however, it will prove instructive to examine the role of the Holy Spirit in this learning process.

Theological Constructs: The Role of the Holy Spirit

Christian education differs from the secular notion of education in that it posits as a primary factor in the learning process something quite apart from environment, curriculum, human nature or experience. This primary factor in the learning process is the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the learning process does not eliminate the need for teachers, theories, books or other learning tools. But it does illuminate the difference between Christian and secular learning endeavors, a difference that is demonstrated through a look at the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian learning.

To say that teachers or instructional materials are minimized because of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit is to misunderstand the Spirit's role in Christian education. The fact that God has given us His Word certainly points to the fact that He still uses physical means to teach and communicate the message. Nor is it exclusively the Spirit's role to apply the lesson being

taught. In bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders, Paul reminded them how for the last three years he had constantly warned them and made application with them of God's truth. (Acts 20:31) Although the Holy Spirit is closely involved with teaching and applying the truth of God's Word, there is no evidence that either Paul or any of the other disciples in any way diminished their efforts because they were relying upon the Holy Spirit to do the work.

Instead of eliminating the need for teachers, techniques of teaching, and curriculum, the Holy Spirit acts as enabler and facilitator of the education process. As for teachers, the Holy Spirit acts to facilitate the work of the teacher by giving people the gift of teaching. Romans chapter 12, verse 7 specifically mentions the God-given gift of teaching. Included in the gift of teaching are spiritual insight--"logos sophias...logos gnosis"--(1 Corinthians 12:8, 10), motivation to minister effectively to others--"pneuma...dunamis kai agape kai sophronismou"--(2 Timothy 1:6-7), and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively--"didaktikon"--(2 Timothy 2:24).

The Holy Spirit also provides illumination for the teachers; that is, He gives them spiritual insight. Since the Fall into sin, all of mankind has suffered from spiritual blindness. Speaking of unbelievers, the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth that the "god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they

cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:4) All unbelievers are blinded to the light of God's truth. It is the Holy Spirit who, working through the means of God's grace (His Word and the sacraments), provides Christians with clear spiritual vision so that they can see and understand the revelation of God given in and through His Word.

While non-Christians may well provide contributions in the field of Biblical scholarship, only the spiritually renewed can perceive the truth of the Word and receive the blessings of faith given through such instruction. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian education that enables the teacher to teach and to present the message of the Gospel to the students.

In a way similar to that of the teacher, the Holy Spirit is also active in the learner. In both the teacher and the learner, the Holy Spirit brings about spiritual illumination and renewal. Through the renewal effected by the Holy Spirit, the learners are motivated to study and learn spiritual things. Motivation is an important aspect of all learning. In secular pursuits, motivation may well be engendered by a desire to improve one's earning potential or as a means to accomplish new and different pursuits or career goals. While the sinful nature robs people of their motivation to participate in Christian education, it is the Holy Spirit who creates and provides the eagerness and the

hunger for spiritual truths.

Jesus once remarked to Nicodemus that the Spirit blows where He will. (John 3:8) This does not imply a capriciousness on the part of the Spirit, but it does say that He cannot be programmed by us according to our ways of thinking. Because of our sinful nature, we cannot comprehend God's ways or His wisdom. To assist in an understanding of the human role in Christian education, it is important to take a look at our human nature.

Theological Constructs: Human Nature in Christian Education

While the non-christian theories of human nature are many and varied, it can be said as a general statement that they tend to regard man as being intrinsically or basically good by his nature. They also tend to regard man as a morally free agent, able to choose between what is good and what is evil.

Scriptural notions of human nature are far different. For although man was created holy and with a will that was consonant with God's, all this was lost in the fall into sin. In this one, cataclysmic event, humankind lost the image of God into which he was created. No longer was man's will in harmony with God's and no longer was man able to choose between good and evil. Since the fall into sin, humankind is now prone only to what is evil. No one is excluded from the curse and evil effects of sin. David,

writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 51, states in verse 5 that he was sinful not simply from the time of his birth, but also from the moment of his conception. Because of this sinful condition, nothing that a person does apart from faith, no matter how socially commendable it may be, can please God. Hebrews chapter 11, verse 6, makes this plain when it states that without faith it is "impossible to please God."

The Biblical view of human nature plainly removes the possibility of self-conversion or a human, unilateral choice for God. Human nature, being sinful and corrupt, will simply not permit such an event. The implications for Christian education are profound. In the first place, this means that simply allowing a child or an adult to decide on his or her own to become a Christian is not feasible. Luther, in his explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, put it this way:

> I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.[47]

Christian education thus begins at the time of conversion. This conversion is an instantaneous, Spirit-performed act accomplished through the means of God's grace. At that very moment, whether it be at the time of one's baptism, or whether it be when one first hears the Gospel, at that

moment of conversion the process of Christian education is allowed to begin along with the work of sanctification, or the leading of a sanctified or holy life. The image of God is restored in the converted Christian, albeit imperfectly.

Thus a key element in the thought of Christian education is that this educational process is not designed to bring about conversion, since that is the exclusive work of the Holy Spirit. Christian education is designed to assist a person in his or her spiritual growth. It is designed to prevent a return to our former, unregenerate ways. It is designed to keep us in the faith which the Spirit Himself has wrought and, indeed, enable us to grow in this faith.

Even in the regenerate Christian, the sinful human nature is still a force to be reckoned with. The fact that the image of God is restored only imperfectly means that not all our educational endeavors will succeed, despite our best and most conscientious efforts.

Our theological framework is a crucial aspect of any program of Christian education. Without a proper theological understanding and foundation, no program of Christian education, no matter how zealously and conscientiously carried out can succeed.

The theological framework is a multi-faceted concept. It includes an understanding of the fundamental relationship we as Christians have with God. And in addition to the

obvious necessity of having a comprehensive knowledge of the content of Scripture, it is also important to have an understanding of the purpose of the Bible in Christian education. Added to all of this is an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and the implications of human nature in the learning process.

The importance of such an understanding of the theological framework of Christian education goes beyond the scope of the classroom. The quality of our existence depends upon our perspective and our response to the challenges which our Lord sets before us. Happiness, peace, joy, contentment--these are not so much the products of our circumstances as they are the products of our responses to these circumstances. Our responses are shaped and formed by a number of competing forces. The powerful impact of cultural norms and ideas, along with the pervading humanistic influence which denies the existence of the sinful human nature, create formidable barriers to successful Christian education. As Christians, it is imperative that we learn both to describe and also evaluate the experiences of life from a Biblical perspective. Christian educators must teach a Biblical perspective while employing a proper theological foundation. The Apostle Paul, writing under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, summed it up in this fashion: "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." (2 Timothy:16-17)

Clearly, Christian education is more than the simple relating of facts., It begins with grace, the grace of God given to us in and through the means of grace, God's Word and the Sacraments. God's grace actually changes the learner. The learner is changed or transformed from an unbelieving person to one who believes in Christ as Lord and Savior and lives out this belief through a life of service to the Lord and His Church. In every aspect of Christian education, God is the active One. God is the One who changes the individual through the educative process.

God's primary activity in the education process does not, however, lessen the importance of theological principles in Christian education. On the contrary, foundational theology is reaffirmed as the essence and keynote of adult Christian education. Not to be confused with philosophy, that is, man's attempt to expound wisdom, theology is that revealed wisdom given by God in the Bible. Through this revealed wisdom, God reveals Himself to all of humanity. In this self-revelation, God describes His role in our lives through the activity of the Holy Spirit and the purpose of the revealed Word, the Holy Scriptures.

Without this theological basis, Christian education quickly degenerates into a quasi-religious, philosophical

think tank. And while such intellectual activity may indeed arouse the attention and fascination of the curious, it has little to do with the purpose of Christian education which is to create, nurture, and sustain a saving faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

CHAPTER III

PROGRAMMING, PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF ADULT EDUCATION WITHIN THE PARISH CONTEXT

Effective administration of an adult education program within the parish context is directly related to sound educational philosophy and theology. Building upon the first two chapters, our attention turns now to the selection, planning and evaluation of the mission of adult education within the parish. The nature of this process is demonstrated in the fact that a church does not have an educational program, it is an educational program. The very nature of church as Church constrains it to be an educational entity. Religious education, both of children and adults, is and always has been a basic and essential function of the church. As an essential function of the Church, it serves not only to educate but also to nurture, protect and sustain saving faith in Christ as Savior.

Competent administration of this educational mission enables the church to clearly identify its educational

objectives and philosophy. Effective administration begins with a clarification of objectives and a determination of priorities. These will depend to some extent on the particular needs of the individual congregation and the community context. In the first section of this chapter, the focus will be on the concept of program definition, planning, and development. The second section will propose an evaluative framework designed to gauge program effectiveness. The overall focus is to meet the challenges of a secular world, whose goal is the discrediting of Christian principles, through the development of an effective and relevant program of Christian adult education.

Effective Program Planning and Development

The term "program" can be somewhat misleading because it is so often misunderstood. It is frequently used to convey rather divergent thoughts, ideas and practices. Sometimes the term "program" is equated with "curriculum" in the sense of structured learning opportunities designed to achieve specific objectives. For the purposes of this project, however, the term "program" is defined as the product resulting from all programming activities in which the educator and learner are involved. For example, this would include the activities of planning, instruction, evaluation and reporting of results.

Program development may be defined as a deliberate

series of actions and decisions whose purpose is to:

> Establish priorities on the problems and situations for which desirable changes should be identified in the plan of action.
>
> Identify desired outcomes to be attained through the program with people and communities.
>
> Identify resources and support for effective promotion and implementation of the program.
>
> Design an instructional plan that provides for extensive involvement of the learners in appropriate learning experiences.
>
> Implement the plan of action that is designed to provide appropriate learning opportunities such as conferences, meetings, Bible Studies, workshops, individual consultations, etc..
>
> Develop appropriate accountability approaches so as to make effective judgments about the value of the program.
>
> Communicate the value of the program to the participants, the congregation, and other interested individuals and groups.[48]

Program development is essentially an attempt to plan an educational endeavor that will significantly contribute to the attainment of a specified goal within a particular community, such as a church or congregation. Part of this process is the identification and delineation of the changes that are desired and the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve them.

While there is virtually a limitless variety and number of approaches to program development, for the purposes of this project we will consider five that may with varying degrees of profit be employed for adult education within the

parish. As each approach to program development is examined, references will be made to the educational theory that undergirds the program development process. The first of these five approaches will center on the educator's exclusive role in program selection and development.

Satisfying the Educator's Needs: The Preemptive Approach

The preemptive approach is described in the example of a church in which the pastor or director of Christian education becomes very enthused or interested in a particular topic, such as liturgics. Perhaps this educator had attended a seminar in which the speaker effectively and forcefully portrayed the subject. Having had this experience, the educator then attempts to replicate the experience within the parish context. The selection of the topic is a unilateral decision by the educator; he or she is exclusively involved in the program selection and planning.

Initially, there may be some attempt to coerce or require attendance. However, as is usually the case within the parish context, such coercive power is almost totally absent and not even very desirable where present. Emphasis is then placed on selling the idea or topic. Adults may be reminded that Sunday worship could be enriched greatly through an enhanced understanding of the liturgical format. An attempt may also be made to encourage attendance using a

deontological appeal; reminding the parishoners that it is their sacred duty to grow in knowledge and support the various activities of the church. Generally speaking, that approach which stimulates interest has better long term results and attendance than that which seeks to coerce or otherwise forcefully motivate the learner.

In this approach, the educator is assumed to be well-intentioned. There is no conscious attempt to neglect other legitimate topics or concerns; rather, the educator simply believes that this topic or subject deserves a program emphasis in order to effectively transmit important knowledge to the minds of the learners. The motivating factor behind topic selection is the fascination or interest on the part of the educator. Usually this is the key element that drives program development, and not a conscious desire to exclude others from participating. The program itself emerges directly from the need of the educator to educate on a particular topic, often without any consideration of the needs and interests of the learners.

The goal of such a program may often be stated in broad terms, such as "the need to bring people closer to God through a more informed worship experience." And while this certainly may be a credible goal, the reality of the situation is such that the underlying, unexpressed goal is for the educator to relate his knowledge and experience to a particular audience. The educator in this approach utilizes

a dominant or controlling management style. He or she makes all the decisions regarding topic selection and program development. Participation is usually encouraged through a persuasive selling approach which carries the implied expectation that the adult learners in the parish are supposed to be loyal, willing buyers of an educational service.

Reflecting upon this approach from the perspective of educational theory, it seems somewhat obvious that it is inconsistent with the humanist thought as represented by Malcolm Knowles. Knowles, it may be recalled, considered adults to be more self-directed than children, with more and qualitatively different experiences than children. And as adults are thought to be more problem-oriented in their desire for continuing education, the dominant, managerial style of this approach may be somewhat stifling to some. Since it is the educator who has total control over every aspect of this endeavor, the adult has no opportunity to exercise what are perceived to be his/her abilities and strengths; namely, a well developed self-concept, an enhanced readiness to learn and a richer, more varied experiential base.

Behaviorist theory attempts to explain human behavior on the basis of environmental and motivational factors. The promise of a reward or the threat of punishing behavior often provides the motivation for most behavior, including

learning activities. As noted by the humanist theory, the educator's dominant and exclusive role may not coincide with the learner's perceptions of reward or goal. Motivation may be used as a selling point in promoting the approach, but it is always a tool or means to an end, never the end itself. Unless the adult can somehow be convinced that this program approach is sufficiently rewarding or necessitated by environmental conditions, it would seem unlikely to succeed according to Behaviorist theory.

The preemptive approach for program development is at fault precisely because it does not require the educator to investigate adult perceptions of reward or motivation. On the contrary, the only reward that is considered is that which is rewarding to the educator. And since the adult consciousness has apparently undergone a democratization over the last few centuries, the rejection of adults as independent decision making entities would seem to be more appropriate to a feudal society. Particularly during this time of church-shopping by young adults, church based adult education is voluntary and thus largely incongruent with the preemptive approach.

Deducing Adult Needs: The Ascriptive Approach

In the ascriptive approach, the educator is attentive to the apparent needs of the adults in the parish, and these needs which are deduced by the educator play an important

part in program development. Utilizing a general knowledge of the adult population within the parish, the educator ascribes or deduces certain needs to this population and then attempts to prioritize them according to their relative importance. All of this is accomplished on the basis of a "global apprehension or subjective impression of the adult population."[49] Very often no attempt is made to validate this impression through the systematic gathering of empirical data or through random samplings or surveys. While adults may be asked to assist with the administrative details of program implementation, their help is generally not solicited in the planning stage.

While this approach has the advantage of taking into account the needs of the learner, the method of ascertaining these needs is perhaps haphazard at best. Often, while these needs may be genuine, they are neither primary nor urgent. In addition, they may not necessarily be applicable to a majority segment of an heterogeneous population. In that event, the educator is once again compelled to sell the program as something that is worthwhile and capable of meeting the felt needs of the adult population; something which may prove to be exceedingly challenging in itself.

Although the management style of this approach may at times take on a dominant flair like that of the preemptive, most often the approach is more persuasive. There is a strong incentive for the educator to sell the approach in

order to convince others that his needs assessment is indeed credible.

The expressed goals of the ascriptive program are usually phrased somewhat ambiguously: "bringing adults closer to God," or "assisting adults in strengthening their faith." While these may indeed be goals that are honestly approached, the primary goal is predictably the satisfaction of those needs ascribed to the learner by the educator.

While there are obviously a number of areas where this approach overlaps with the preemptive approach, the fundamental difference between the two is that in the ascriptive approach the immediate goal is built upon the satisfaction of the needs of the learner, even though those needs were ascertained by the educator. But it is precisely because these needs are ascertained by the educator that the program often runs into difficulty. For no matter how diligently and honestly the educator goes about determining these needs, his determination for the most part remains untested and may thus fail to address adequately adult needs and interests.

The ascriptive approach encounters some difficulty from the vantage of humanist theory for many of the same reasons as the preemptive; it fails to consider the adult population as an independent resource and therefore does not use it as a data base. The value given an educator's assessment of needs is often overrated and is indicative of a fundamental

failure to recognize the complexity of program development.

The next approach is an attempt to correct this deficiency.

Adults as Parish Members: The Diagnostic/Prescriptive Approach

The Diagnostic/Prescriptive approach introduces a more involved procedure for determining the needs of perspective learners. It begins by observing these perspective learners from an organizational context; in other words, their identity as parish members is given focus. This focus then becomes the emphasis in diagnosing needs--the needs are seen in terms of problems present in the parish community and the education process then becomes one of addressing these problem areas.

This process is concisely described as follows:

> Diagnostic procedural models...are used to discover educational needs of a social system--usually an organization, a sub-unit of an organization, or sometimes a community. They are termed 'discrepancy models' because they either assume the existence of, or attempt to identify, the gap or discrepancy between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' in the system.[50]

In this approach, the educator recognizes adults as a resource and attempts to utilize them as data sources. This is often accomplished through random selection of adults from within the parish population or through the use of a parish survey, or through the use of a panel of adults

deemed to be representative of most adults in that parish. In this fashion, attempts are made to improve the accuracy of the needs assessment process of program development.

Even when this data is thus collected, it is not immediately translated into program goals. This data is treated, not as identifying true organizational needs, but rather as felt needs--needs that are genuinely felt by the respondents, but are really symptoms of larger, organizational needs. The data is organized so as to produce a pattern or syndrome. From these patterns or syndromes that emerge from an organization of the data, the educator may then uncover the organizational needs to be addressed by the educational program. The task of the educator is not simply the collection of data, but also its coordination and interpretation. It is this interpretation that is utilized in program formulation. The underlying assumption is that responsiveness of an educational program may be at its best, not necessarily as it responds to the felt needs, but as it responds to what is assumed to be real needs in the parish.

This approach is sometimes referred to as a medical model because it draws an analogy between problems in a social system to symptoms of a disease in the body. In this analogy, the educator takes on the role of a physician who can observe and interpret the symptoms and use this to come up with an accurate diagnosis of the disease.

This approach employs a consultative management style since the adult population is given a role in program development via personal consultation. The educator nevertheless still plays a key role through the manipulation of data and diagnostic procedures. Because this approach uses a direct consultation, it is usually assumed that a sales effort to secure adult participation is largely unnecessary. Promotion consists simply in making the adult population aware of the program's existence. Since the program is thought to be responding to real organizational needs, the assumption is that adults will naturally be inclined to participate.

A caveat worth noting here, however, is that error could creep into this approach if the educator is not fully aware of his own motivations. If, for example, the educator begins the parish research with a hidden agenda--unknown, perhaps, even to himself--then the entire procedure outlined in this approach could serve as an elaborate cover to justify what he had wanted to teach all along. Unless the educator is engaged in honest reflection and self-evaluation of the motives behind the teaching of the course and the selection of the topic, it may well happen that the procedures of the diagnostic/prescriptive are coupled with a mindset more appropriate to the preemptive or ascriptive approaches.

But even if this difficulty is successfully averted,

there remains at least one other area where this approach may encounter problems. As the name implies, the diagnostic/prescriptive approach relies heavily on a skillful analysis of the collected data in order to produce an accurate diagnosis. Using the medical analogy once again, it may well happen that in the case of particularly rare or unusual ailments, a number of incorrect diagnoses may be made before the correct one is finally hit upon. While this may not be a serious problem in each and every case, if the disease is serious enough, there may not be time to employ the proper remedy after a series of false starts.

Similarly, the danger of a misinterpretation of the available data exists on the part of the educator. And if the fundamental problem is incorrectly addressed on initial attempts, there may not be sufficient second chances to successfully turn things around.

Having identified some of the major sources of possible difficulty, it must also be said that this approach does meet with a number of the assumptions underlying humanist educational theory. For example, according to this theoretical basis, adults are members of organizations and wider community structures, and this membership should be considered during the process of program development. As it seeks to distinguish the felt needs of the individual from the genuine needs of the parish community, the

diagnostic/prescriptive model attempts to do precisely that very thing. It does so, not by denying that adults are indeed individuals, but rather by focusing on the role they play as members of the parish community.

The diagnostic/prescriptive approach has the further advantage of enabling the adults within the parish to take responsibility for the educational process of program development, while at the same time recognizing the common fact that individual adults may not always have a sufficient perspective of the wider organizational needs and problems. The educator may then have the opportunity to serve the valuable function of diagnostician in order to provide the needed educational remedies. This too is congruent with the basic thought of humanist theory.

On the behaviorist side, the diagnostic/prescriptive approach views reward primarily in terms of the absence of punishment. By collecting data within the parish community regarding the problems present there, the educator is in reality collecting data regarding those situations that make membership in this community less rewarding and more punishing. The idea, of course, is that these problems can in some sense be mediated through educational solutions, thereby lessening the punishing aspects of membership in the parish community. All of this is consistent with basic behaviorist theory.

However, as with most motivational theories, the

behaviorist theory tends to place greater emphasis upon the individual as an individual. The diagnostic/prescriptive approach to program development, as stated earlier, tends to focus upon the adults primarily as members of the parish community. As this approach is used, adults in the parish must view themselves primarily as members of the community and less as individuals in order to move towards participation in the program. Behavioristic theory would tend to counter this notion with the idea that an individual generally seeks out those options that prove to be either the most rewarding or least punishing for the individual.

Behaviorism would state that in order for the diagnostic/prescriptive approach to be employed successfully, the educator must convince the adults in the parish that participation in an educational endeavor that seeks to address community problems will also, through the solution of these problems, bring about individual benefits. This may serve as a hindrance or difficulty in obtaining high rates of adult participation. However, there are times when the objective of remedial action towards community problems must take precedence over the satisfaction of individual concerns.

Because the educational program takes place in a parish setting, this may work to override somewhat the difficulty of obtaining high rates of participation as anticipated by behavioristic theory. By its very nature, theological

concerns tend to place emphasis on community concerns rather than on individual needs. In the apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, he writes in chapter 10, verses 23 and following:

> "We are free to do anything," you say. Yes, but not everything is good for us. We are free to do anything, but not everything builds up the community. You should each look after the interests of others, not your own...for my part I always try to be considerate to everyone, not seeking my own good but the good of the many, so that they may be saved.[51]

As members of the parish community, following the example of the apostle as well as that of our Lord, there is a tendency to override individual concerns in favor of the common good. And although this tendency is certainly not present in the perfect or complete sense, yet it is present generally speaking to a significant degree. It is part of the fabric or rationale behind Christian thought that is, perhaps, unique to the Christian arena of educational endeavor.

There is an approach to program development that relies heavily upon the satisfaction of individual wants. The presumption here is that even within the Christian community, there will nevertheless be a significant demand for those programs that seek to satisfy what the individual as an individual demands. This approach introduces the fourth model of program development.

Responding To Market Demand: The Analytic/Subscriptive Approach

In the Analytic/Subscriptive approach, the primary function of the educator is market analysis. The educator goes about gathering data which elucidates individual needs and desires. On the basis of such data, the educator then attempts to determine the extent to which a given topic appeals to adults within the parish. If enough adults demonstrate an interest in a given topic, the educator would then recruit a group leader from among those with a demonstrated interest. The educator would then assist the group leader recruit other resource persons who are knowledgeable in the topic. In addition, resource materials are also sought out and used in the planning process. In this fashion, adults in each interest group become involved, not only in topic selection, but also with implementing and evaluating program and learning activities.

By seeking the satisfaction of individual needs, this approach differs sharply from the diagnostic/prescriptive model which would seek to ameliorate problems affecting the community at large. In the analytic/subscriptive model, the educator consults adults by means of the research process in a way that is similar to the diagnostic/prescriptive model. The resulting data is not, however, interpreted but is taken at face value. The analytic/subscriptive model takes felt

needs, interests, and wants and equates them to the real needs of the learner as he/she comes to understand them. Adults are seen as being intelligent and self-directing; able to discern for themselves what is important and what is not.

Therefore, in the analytic/subscriptive model, the task of the educator centers not on interpretive diagnosis, but on competent and thorough market analysis and subsequent program administration. At first glance, this approach may seem to introduce a sort of secular commercialism into the religious world of altruistic community service. But this need not be the case. Taking the assumption that within the religious community, the needs and wants of true believers will be consonant with Christian ideas of community values, market analysis may be employed simply as a tool to determine the inclinations and disinclinations of a particular segment of the adult population. This in turn may be used to suggest a potential for a particular learning activity. If, for example, there is only a marginal potential for a topic or activity, the educator might well focus his time and energy elsewhere.

Market analysis need not connote a disingenuous sales regime. It is simply a means of gaining an understanding of the potential clients in order to service them better. And since participation in educational pursuits within the parish setting are usually voluntary in nature, this

approach also promotes good stewardship of the educator's time and talents.

From the standpoint of a Lutheran educator or pastor, there is one note of caution, however. In the society as it is today, it is becoming increasingly unwise to assume that the wants and desires of even the most ardent and faithful parishoners will be consistent with doctrinal emphases and values. The educator must therefore exercise some caution in the selection and presentation of educational programs.

For example, the majority of the adult population may exhibit a strong interest in demonic or occult activities. This interest may result from motives that are more sensationalistic and titillating than edifying. The task of the educator then becomes one of properly presenting the material in such a way as to demonstrate the inherent dangers in such a topic, while at the same time satisfying the desire to know more about the given topic. The skill required of the educator then becomes one of careful and patient instruction without giving in to the whims of secularism and false doctrine. Paul, in his instruction to Timothy, put it this way:

> Proclaim the message, press it home in season and out of season, use argument, reproof, and appeal, with all the patience that teaching requires. For the time will come when people will not stand sound teaching, but each will follow his own whim and gather a crowd of teachers to tick his fancy. They will stop their ears to the truth and turn to fables. But you must keep your head whatever happens; put up with hardship, work

> to spread the gospel, discharge all the duties of your calling.[52]

For the Lutheran educator, market analysis certainly has a credible use and purpose. But the emphasis for the educator must focus on the presentation of proper teaching and not simply what the majority wishes to hear.

The analytic/subscriptive approach holds out the promise of integrating secular educational theory into a program of religious instruction. The motivation issue, for example, is one of the prominent features found in the analytic/subscriptive approach. Behavioristic theory places significant emphasis upon the issue of adult motivation. This can be used with profit within the area of adult education in the parish context as well. Even empirical evidence suggests that motivation is a strong factor in influencing behavior. People generally do what they want to do. To harness this powerful factor is to lend a potent ally to the camp of Christian education.

Humanist theory, despite its emphasis on personal autonomy and self-direction, does have the redeeming value of focusing on the person. This too is a useful part of the analytic/subscriptive approach, since the work of parish education is people-centered. The individual is important; every single soul matters. It is out of love for the individual that impels Christian educators to teach--love for the individual and a deeper love for the Lord. To

harness the benefits of this approach is merely one tool in the arsenal of Christian education that carries within it the possibility for good and also for misuse.

The final approach to be examined could be termed the Cafeteria Approach since it sets before the community courses of instruction in much the same way one might display food items in a cafeteria line. For the purposes of the discussion of program development, this approach will be termed:

Talent Inventory: The Cafeteria Approach

At first, this approach may seem very similar to the analytic/subscriptive approach. They both include a variety of topical areas; both emphasize a sharing of skills and an involvement of the adult participants. The cafeteria approach is distinguished by the unique way the educator goes about setting up program development.

The process of program development in the cafeteria approach begins not with the searching for individual needs or desires, but by the taking of a human resources inventory within the parish community. In effect, it amounts to something like a talent search in which the educator goes out looking for those who are willing to share their talents, skills, and knowledge with others in the parish. In so doing, several needs could be met in one operation. The contributive needs, the need to share one's expertise

and gifts with others could be met and utilized, as well as the educative needs and interests of others in the parish context.

This talent roster may include anyone who wishes to teach, along with of course, those normally responsible for parish education. Once the inventory has been completed, the educator publishes a list or prospectus in which the various topics and teachers are listed, along with time and place of initial meetings. Those interested in any of the offerings are asked to complete a registration form which is then returned to the educator, allowing administrative decisions to be made that relate to the entire program of instruction. In this setting, the educator may also function as a resource person for the volunteer teachers by helping them obtain material, plan and organize the course offerings.

If it should happen that no one registers for a particular course, or if too few register, the educator notifies the teacher. Part of the reality obtained through the use of the cafeteria approach is that some courses will not be elected, while others will be conducted very much as originally planned. Which will be elected and which will be dropped is a variable that simply cannot be determined with certainty prior to registration.

The management style of this approach might best be described as adaptive; the educator adapts to both the

decisions of the volunteers and the learners. For the Lutheran context, the style of management must also include an element of supervision, particularly in the realm of theology and doctrine. Because there is such a vast array of theological opinion and ideas being broadcast over the media, it is relatively easy for a diversity of doctrinal views to enter into the teachings of the volunteers. In order to guard against the harmful intrusion of false doctrine, the educator must follow closely what is being taught and the curriculum that is employed.

The Five Approaches: An Overview

What begins to develop from the discussion of these five approaches is that the concerns of the adults in the parish need to be given primary focus in the approach used toward educational program development. This is, of course, very similar to what the exponents of humanistic and behavioristic educational theories have been promoting. Perhaps the similarity between catering to the desires of the adult population and the ideals of secular theory might prove to be disconcerting to some religious educators. However, it should be noted once again that the implementation of secular theoretical concepts does not necessarily imply a retreat from doctrinal or confessional principles. It is simply taking what is useful from the

realm of educational science and putting it to work within the parish context.

In general, the programs developed from the diagnostic/prescriptive, analytic/subscriptive and cafeteria style approaches entail much time and effort in addition to a competency in social research techniques. The implication from this would seem to be that religious education cannot be overlooked as part of the overall parish work. It's not enough to merely hand a catechism to a more or less willing volunteer with the announcement that catechism/Bible studies will begin on such and such a date. What is required, perhaps now more than ever, is a greater degree of competency on the part of religious educators.

Theological understanding is, of course, a prerequisite for teaching theological courses. But doctrinal comprehension and Biblical competency do not in and of themselves prepare one for competency in teaching. The academic preparation of religious educators must include the instruction of not only educational theory, but also of the social sciences in order to make proper preparations for the challenges of meeting people where they are and offering them the answers that only Christian education can bring.

Having suggested some methods of program planning and development, it remains yet to present a concept of program evaluation.

Adult Education in the Parish: A Concept of Evaluation

Not only is the concept of evaluation an important component of program development and implementation, proper application of this evaluation is similarly important. The concept of evaluation is important because it provides the necessary feedback for determining how effective the course was in meeting its objectives, and also because it provides a data base for the development of new course offerings.

But the difficulty arises in attempting to measure what has been grasped by the learner. These measurements are difficult because often there are few, if any, objective, standardized units of measurement that accurately portray the degree to which learning has taken place. This makes the systematic evaluation of educational programming both difficult and costly. But although the decisions regarding evaluative concepts are difficult, they are nevertheless extremely important.

Program evaluation is important because one of its major functions is with decision making. If an evaluation determines that little progress has been made towards the attaining of stated goals, the decision to either alter or discontinue the program may be in order. The general outline of any educational evaluative process may be outlined in three essential parts: (1) establishing

standards or criteria; (2) gathering evidence about the criteria; (3) making judgments about what this comparison revealed.

Criteria

In order to provide a clear evaluation, the evaluator must first have a clear idea of what should be. Any evaluation depends upon the existence of standards or norms that serve as a rule or norm of behavior which are considered to be good or even ideal. By providing an image of what a valuable program is like, value may be assigned to various phenomenon related to the program.

These criteria also identify what needs to be discovered about the actual program. The criteria can then be used to determine what kinds of evidence must be gathered and examined in order to make a credible judgment of program effectiveness and value. Then the evidence of the actual program is compared with the criteria used to develop the program in the first place. This is the essential framework of evaluative procedures.

Evidence

The second important part of the evaluative process is that of gathering evidence about the criteria. Evidence is an indication or outward sign usually composed of acts, words, numbers or things that provide a sign or indication about

the criteria. Anything that provides some sort of proof regarding the extent of the desired quality present in the program is categorized under the heading of evidence. Sometimes evidence may be a kind of accumulated pattern which provides a picture for judging the extent to which the criteria have been met.

The sort of evidence collected and sought after is determined by the criteria. We use the criteria to relate the kind of evidence that is needed to perform a reasonably objective evaluation.

Yet, even the evidence itself may at times be somewhat more subjective than objective. For example, evidence may be what people say, as in the perception of someone who is considered to be expert in the topic in question. In the parish context, this could be the pastor, or the teacher (educator). It might be a well informed layman, or it might even be a panel of laymen who, having participated in the course of instruction, now lend their subjective critique as evidence of whether or not the criteria of the course have been met.

Evidence of change is also frequently used. If specified changes are outlined as criteria in the development of an educational program, then evidence of the required changes may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the course itself. Some obvious examples may be a change

in lifestyle, patterns of behavior, or in the ability to classify or correlate data or other information.

In terms of education of adults within the parish, the most frequently obtained evidence is that of the resulting satisfaction of needs met as determined by the individual learners own self-evaluation. Given the difficulty of objective measurement standards regarding increases in knowledge or changes in attitude, it is difficult at best to apply an outside standard upon the participants of an adult parish education course. Moreover, given the usually voluntary aspect of adult parish education and the usual motivation of need fulfillment, evidence is often something that is gathered and evaluated by the individual participant.

Judgment

Judgment is that part of the evaluation process in which alternative conclusions are considered and weighed against what has occurred in the course of instruction. On this basis, a decision may be made as to the relative worth or value of the course offered.

What is fairly obvious here is that judgments are made by people and are dependent upon people. These judgments are often influenced by past experience or belief systems held by the people. Such judgments may be reliable or

highly biased, depending upon how well the individuals are able to determine and apply their own standards.

Evaluation cannot occur unless there is some sort of judgment, no matter how detailed the criteria or objective the evidence. Although it may be thought that mere descriptions of what has happened may serve as judgment, nevertheless descriptions become evaluation only if there is a judgment or definite conclusion as to the value of the program.

When determining or implementing a judgment regarding a program's faithfulness to its original criteria, there are at least five (5) kinds of decisions that may well enter into the process. The first kind of decision concerns initial decisions about the evaluation. Some of the questions are: what is the purpose of the evaluation? How will it be used? What are the resources? When will it be done? What are the characteristics of the program that will be evaluated? Such questions will be of aid in providing a focus for the evaluative procedure. This focus will provide a sense of direction in conducting the evaluation and an aid in using the evaluation in decision making.

The second kind of decision to be made concerns decisions about the criteria. This is a focus on what the program should be; how it should be will be critical to determining how it actually was.

The third kind of decision has to do with the evidence. Specific questions concerning this evidence include: what kind of evidence is to be collected, how will this evidence be applied in the evaluative procedure, and how this evidence may best be secured and analyzed.

The fourth area concerns judgmental decisions. The primary task here is to compare the evidence against the criteria and come up with a summary statement regarding the value of the program.

The fifth area concerns feedback concerns. Once the judgment has been made, the next task concerns putting this judgment or evaluation into usable form. In the parish context, this sort of feedback might be obtained through the use of exit questionnaires designed to gather perceptual input from the learners. It might also be obtained through less formal methods, such as informal conversation between the participants and the educator.

The concepts discussed in this chapter deal primarily with the formal aspects and theories of program evaluation. More often than not, such formal applications are difficult to implement in a parish setting due to the basic informality of most parish education settings. Evaluation does have a valuable place in adult education within the parish, however. How this fits in and how practical applications of education theory can be worked in to a typical parish setting will be the topic of chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

PERSPECTIVES ON ADULT EDUCATION FROM WITHIN A RURAL PARISH

Christian education begins with a theory of education. This theory then builds upon theological foundations and is guided by program planning. Finally, it is put into action, a process which is referred to as the implementation of an adult Christian education program. While this may flow rather well conceptually, the actual implementation of an adult education program within the parish is often beset with problems unique to the parish setting.

Humanistic theory, for example, postulates that the readiness of an adult to learn becomes increasingly oriented to the developmental tasks of his/her societal roles. That is, in most so-called secular situations, learning carries with it an implied social function. This function might be something as individualistic as an increased self-awareness or appreciation; or it may have a more societal, interactive

purpose such as an increased ability to persuade or motivate others. It may have a purely materialistic goal, such as the ability to earn more through increased competence in the workplace. The common thread running through all of these goals is the motivation given through some promise fulfilled in the temporal sphere of this life.

While adult education in the parish may also carry similar goals, these tend to be secondary in importance. The primary and chief objective of adult education in the parish, however, is decidedly transcendent of temporal or earthly achievement. It's true; there are a number of opportunities in many churches today to enroll in courses such as aerobics or even auto repair within the confines of the church building. But such courses, at least for the purpose of this project, fall outside the realm of adult education in the parish. Such opportunities may more accurately be classified as adult education coincidentally occurring on parish property.

Adult education within the parish is concerned with a fundamental spiritual theme. It has as its mandate the great commission of Matthew 28 wherein Jesus told His disciples to make other disciples from among all the nations. Adult education within the parish thus has a goal and motivation that extends beyond the normal course of events in what is often called "every day life" to the expectations of what is to follow after one's death. This

"other-world" orientation may well seem a bit esoteric to a world steeped in materialism and narcissistic culturalism. To be concerned with spiritual values appears to be increasingly at odds with a society that is bent on its own gratification while at the same time seeking to avoid the negative consequences that follow.

Behavioristic theory is also of little benefit in demonstrating the value of adult religious education. Positive thinking, life enhancement through moral and upright living, a positive self-image; these and others are sometimes touted as the benefits of religious education and living. But from a distinctly Lutheran perspective, such motivations for learning can be downright troubling. First, they seem to imply that a creeping pietism can easily envelop a theological framework, effectively destroying grace through a synergistic action of the will. Secondly, the entire idea of a theology of the cross implicitly negates the classical concept of conditioning, since the response to Christian learning is often painful and difficult. The rewards and the goals accruing from adult Christian education in the parish tend to be fixed on the promise of a gratification that has very little to do with the usual aspects of everyday life.

Instead, recognition must be given to the fact that the motivation for adult learning in the parish has a distinctly theological rationale. Motivated by a God-given faith, the

adult learner has a desire to know more about God and His gift of salvation that is often largely independent of a desire for self-fulfillment or as a means to a temporal end.

Quite obviously, there may be those courses offered within the parish setting that are geared to an obvious need or objective. These include courses on improved parenting, evangelism techniques or coping with stress. Although such courses have their place, the primary focus of adult education as addressed in this project has to do with spiritual growth and with the Scriptures as a means of God's grace given to fallen mankind. Viewed from this perspective, adult education within the parish setting is not so much a means of self-fulfillment or a response to environmental stimuli as it is a means of promoting and nurturing spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is here defined as an increase in faith manifested by a life of adherence to Christian principles and values.

In such a scheme, adult education is of preeminent importance since without this means the spiritual life of the adult parish population is stultified. Eventual stagnation, along with a spiritual atrophy, are the inevitable results. The manifestations of such spiritual atrophy are declining worship attendance and a general indifference to matters spiritual. Admittedly, this is a highly subjective appraisal; but then, the measurement of spiritual qualities such as faith and a sanctified life

themselves defy objective description or measurement. It is also true that there may well be other reasons for declining worship attendance, such as doctrinal difference and personality conflict. However, a consistent, regular program of adult education of the Scriptures can be an extremely effective vehicle for promoting spiritual growth and well-being within the congregation.

As an example of this spiritual growth and well-being fostered through adult education programs, the following examples are offered from a rural congregation in South Dakota.

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Clayton, South Dakota

St. Peter Lutheran Church in Clayton, South Dakota is a decidedly rural congregation. Its location is approximately thirteen miles from the nearest town, and its members are engaged exclusively in agricultural pursuits. As in many congregations, Bible studies had been tried over the period of many years, usually without much success. The normal pattern of events was for a Bible study to be announced with great flourish and fanfare. Its beginning would be marked with a high degree of initial participation, but soon, almost inevitably, participation would decline to the point where the study would simply disband.

Membership growth within this congregation is difficult since the area is one of declining population. As the population of this area declines, the size of the average farm increases. Fewer and fewer people are taking their living from the land. This has resulted in a slow, but inexorable decline in the size of the congregation along with an increase in the average age of the membership. In September, 1991, we began a series of adult education courses. The goal was to increase faith and promote spiritual growth through a program of Biblical study and discussion.

Program Selection and Implementation

Working on the premise that the Scriptures are a means by which and through which God creates, sustains and nurtures faith, we began with a look at the Old Testament. The initial selection of the Old Testament was made with the intent of providing an intellectual basis and understanding of God's promise to send a Savior for fallen mankind.

6:30 am Thursday Morning Session

Selection of a meeting time for this class was seen as critical to its ultimate success. An understanding of the agricultural community was essential, since work schedules

tend to be somewhat more erratic than urban or suburban counterparts. Based upon the usual early morning schedules of many parishoners, a 6:30 am Thursday morning meeting time was selected. The length of each session was one hour, with closing at 7:30 am promptly adhered to. The early morning hour allowed for participation without interruption of workday activities. With the exception of certain dairy operations, most of the agricultural activities did not begin in earnest prior to 7:30 am. Thursday morning was selected because it was approximately halfway through the work week.

The conduct of the meeting was simple. Beginning with a particular Book of the Old Testament, (in this case the Book of Samuel), the instructor/pastor reads a short passage of the text, one or two verses for example. This activity, although apparently simple, proved to be a critical departure from past experience. In the past, learners were asked to take turns reading from the text. But many of the learners present had relatively little formal education. As such, they felt uncomfortable reading aloud in a public setting. Rather than read aloud or express verbally their discomfort at doing so, they simply stopped attending similar classes in the past. By having the instructor/pastor read the verses aloud, a recurrence of that difficulty was avoided.

For the study to be functionally complete, however, more was required than a simple reading of the text. In

addition to reading, some commentary was provided by the instructor. The commentary was designed first of all to offer an explanation of the historical setting of the account. Dates, places and other relevant details were provided in order to make the account more understandable and interesting. The second purpose of the commentary was to demonstrate the relevancy of the account to the current affairs and conditions of today. Comparisons were made with the news accounts of world and local events and the lesson or Biblical account under discussion. The discussions which ensued helped to focus the attention of the learner on the power of God's Word. It was meant to open new vistas of appreciation for the Word of God so that the learner might be assisted to see the Hand of God in history and thereby gain a greater trust for the workings of God in his or her own life.

Interspersed throughout the commentary were a number of questions designed to provoke thought and discussion by the learner. The idea or the goal was to assist the learner to participate in the lesson through interaction with the text and with the other learners. As the lessons progressed, the goal was also to assist the learner to gain a greater measure of confidence, both with the Scriptures and with conversational interaction within the group. Mere knowledge was not the only goal; but the application of that knowledge was equally intended.

Attendance at this class began at approximately 15; it has grown steadily over the last two and one half years to an average attendance of 20 today. Having begun with the first book of Samuel, the class is now nearly through the book of Proverbs. The pace is relatively slow, and to some extent, determined by the group itself. While there is no formal evaluative procedure, informal discussions and attendance are used to measure the success of this endeavor.

9:00 am Tuesday Morning Session

The Thursday morning group consisted of about 75% male attendees, with the 25% female participants composed of older, retired women. It seemed that while the Thursday morning schedule allowed for the younger men to attend, younger women with school aged children could not be there since they had to get their children off to school. The Tuesday morning class at 9:00 am was designed to meet this need. By 9:00 am, the children have departed for school, and the opportunity is present for this sector of the congregation to attend.

The conduct of the class is similar in many respects to that of the 6:30 am Thursday morning class. The goals are similar, and although different portions of Scripture are studied, the content is still that of a particular portion of the Bible. Much, in fact, is the same as the Thursday

morning class since the goals and the objectives of this class are virtually the same. The difference lies in the ability to reach out to those people whose schedules make it difficult or impossible for them to attend the other class.

Attendance at this class tends to be somewhat more erratic. Conflicts regarding sick children, doctor appointments and the like tend to compete with this time slot. However, over the last two and one half years, the attendance has remained at an average of 10. The composition of the group is predominantly female, with an average age of 36. The length of the class is also one hour, from 9;00 am until 10:00 am every Tuesday morning.

8:00 pm Wednesday Evening Session

There are those individuals who, for whatever reason, simply do not prefer or cannot meet the morning schedule of class. For such individuals, there is the 8:00 pm Wednesday evening class. This class meets every other Wednesday at the church. This time slot is designed to meet the circumstances of those people who find the other class times either undesirable or impracticable.

While the section of Scripture under study is different from class to class so as to avoid repetition, the general conduct of the class is the same. A portion of Scripture is selected and expounded by the instructor/pastor, and discussion is encouraged.

Class size has averaged approximately 10 people. While there has been some overlap in attendance, (some people attend more than one or all of the offered courses of study), nevertheless there has been a substantial benefit in terms of the number of those participating in some aspect of the adult education program. The number of course offerings and the variety of class times has served to involve more people. The result of involving more people is that the means of God's grace is given greater access.

These three midweek courses are designed to provide an opportunity for greater knowledge of and involvement in the Scriptures. By offering various times and topics, this objective is more likely to be achieved. But while Scriptural knowledge is the primary objective, education in Christian doctrine and specifically Lutheran doctrine, is also a primary objective. To reach this goal, the Sunday evening Study was initiated.

7:30 pm Sunday Evening Session

Nearly all denominations and religions that call themselves "christian" bear at least a nominal allegiance to the Bible. Clearly, this does not imply that all so-called Christian denominations teach or believe the same thing. To delineate more fully and instruct more systematically what we as Lutherans believe, the Sunday evening session was begun.

The purpose of this session was to apply a Bible based curriculum to various religious topics. For example, the topic of baptism is often a point of contention between various Christian denominations. Our text for a number of sessions was Luther's Large Catechism on the topic of baptism. The curriculum was completed with the addition of a number of topical studies. In addition to Bible studies, doctrine was also offered in the form of topical discussion groups. The idea is to offer not just a Biblical basis for Lutheran doctrine and teaching, but also to educate and instruct in the teaching itself.

This class often attracted as many as 30 attendees. Its relative success may be attributed to the rather controversial nature of the topic and also to the desire to relate the Biblical instruction to a doctrinal emphasis. Over the last two and one half years, the attendance at this and the other courses offered has remained stable or has increased, despite the fact that there has been little or no numerical growth within the congregation. Some of the theoretical/theological concepts driving this program of adult education are as follows.

The Power of the Word -- Let Scripture Speak

This concept is fundamental to any program of adult parish education. Many Bible studies are available through

a wide array of publishing houses that purport to present Scripture in a highly organized and understandable fashion. And yet, their very organization can sometimes function as a liability.

For example, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has published a Bible study entitled God's Caring People. It is a highly organized and well thought out lesson prepared with a stewardship emphasis in mind. This emphasis is unabashedly portrayed in the questions following each portion of Scripture. In the lesson called "The Disciple's Place," 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 is one of the passages under study, and the questions which follow are: "What is a Spirit-given gift?" The participant is asked to consider the Trinity, and then make an analogy concerning "gifts, service and workings."

While there is nothing wrong per se with such an approach, the fact that the adult is being programmed with a particular mind-set (stewardship) before reading the passage might well color his/her thoughts before any part of the passage is examined. Indeed, one could argue that that is the stated objective.

The approach advocated in this project differs in that it suggests that as the portion of Scripture is read, the participants be allowed and encouraged to offer their impression first. This impression is then either affirmed

or revised by making reference to other relevant sections of Scripture. For example, in the 1 Corinthians 4 section, stewardship is an obvious application and focus. But one might just as easily focus on the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. Such a focus might appear to lend itself well to the assumption made by some denominations that the Holy Spirit ordinarily functions without means in the life of the Christian. Yet, a reference to Romans 10:17 tells us plainly that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." God's Word is the means, the very means of God's grace through which faith is engendered and gifts of the Spirit given.

This approach tends to be a bit more eclectic than some instructors prefer, since it makes it difficult to know exactly what to expect from the learner as the lesson is presented. It also requires a fairly comprehensive knowledge of Scripture to be able to relate other passages to those which form the lesson.

Allowing the learner to offer his/her first impression of the portion of Scripture under study also has some very decided advantages. First, it tends to encourage more freedom of thought on the part of the learner. Rather than trying to force the thought of the learner to a particular objective, this style of presentation allows for a variety of view points to be addressed. This is not to say that all views are equal in their validity, nor is it a denial of

objective truth. Instead, it is an admission that differing views exist and because they exist, there needs to be an avenue to examine them in the light of the Word of God.

Secondly, as the portion of Scripture under study is related to other sections, the learner is enabled to see the Bible as a unified whole, and not as a somewhat disjointed collection of religious sayings or topics. The instructor/pastor has the opportunity to demonstrate both the presence and the effectual power of Law and Gospel in the Word. God's justice is shown in His love. While the Bible does say many things in different ways, it is nevertheless consistent and without contradiction. The discussion format combined with a "free-ranging" approach to Scripture actually creates the opportunity for the Word of God to have free course in the study, to the benefit of those present.

The Power of the Word -- Increased Availability

Even the most beneficial, the most needed or the most enjoyable of things does very little good if it is not available. If the Word of God is presented on a limited timetable, or if the opportunities for corporate study are few, then the most beneficial aspect of Christian life, education in God's Word, will be similarly reduced. The only way to prevent such an occurrence is to present a wide array of times and opportunities for such studies to occur.

At St. Peter's, our aim was to provide such opportunities for growth in the knowledge of God's Word and faith by providing courses on different days and times. Such attempts sometimes yield rather surprising results. For example, the 6:30 am time slot ultimately proved to be the most fruitful and best attended, despite some skepticism by members and congregational leaders at the time of its proposal.

Equally important is the opportunity for corporate study throughout the week. Educational programs are sometimes minimized as "Sunday morning events." One of the aims and goals of adult Christian education within the parish is to demonstrate that it is in reality an every day event. As believers in a parish setting, it is reasonable to expect that Christian education be given a priority status. But, given also the number of competing interests and events in our world today, it is vital that Christian education be as omnipresent as possible. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22)

The Power of the Word -- Its Eschatological Significance

Education is often motivated by the hope of some present or future gain. Trade schools, for instance, offer

the chance for increased income and status through the learning of a trade. Many adult education programs have the incentive of offering a skill or coping strategy to help with the challenges of life.

The scope of adult education within the parish, however, has a decidedly eschatological tone. The aim of adult education in the parish is not primarily the remedy of things in the here and now, but as a preparation for what is to come. Salvation is the ultimate goal of adult Christian education in the parish. It is salvation that comes not by individual merit, but through the merits of Jesus Christ made subjective through faith.

This other-worldly objective may at times seem like something of a liability since there are so many other responsibilities and concerns that loom large in the life of an adult. There are the responsibilities of parenting, of earning an income adequate to meet the ever more expensive needs of family life. Marital responsibilities also play a large role in the lives of many adults. With all of these vying for time and attention, it may seem relatively easy to postpone avenues for Christian growth.

And yet, this is precisely one of the main challenges of adult Christian education. It must be presented as relevant now, even though it speaks of the hereafter. In fact, it is the most relevant topic for adults, even though it deals with the "now" by speaking of the "not yet." Its

relevancy lies in the words of Jesus when He said, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36)

Educational theory holds that adults seek self-fulfillment and the realization of their full potential. Our full potential lies in the realization that we are not of this world, but as Christians we are firmly rooted and grounded in the next. Adult Christian education is designed to further that end through the means of God's grace, His powerful Word. By making available this Word through numerous opportunities and by stressing the eschatological outlook, the Church can move its people forward from this world on into the next.

The Power of the Word -- A Summary

Theories of human behavior and learning provide a fine background for the educator. But the experience of this writer has shown one additional item to be of great importance: a personal knowledge of and relationship with the learners. This is particularly important in the parish setting, since the application of what is being studied is such an important component of the learning process. A personal relationship with the learners enables the educator

to assist them to more accurately and appropriately apply the important truths of Scripture to their lives.

One other advantage of the educator knowing the learners personally is that it tends to facilitate trust. Particularly important in spiritual matters, a learner's trust has the effect of increasing the educator's credibility. Without that trust, progress in learning may be somewhat impeded because of an air of pervasive skepticism, especially if the educator should be attempting a point that is novel or difficult to comprehend.

One word of caution. This trust can easily be abused or taken for granted. Should that happen, the educator may well find himself in a position that renders subsequent learning extremely difficult or even impossible. Once obtained, the learner's trust should be well cultivated through patient instruction and careful attention.

The experience of this study has been with relatively small, rural congregations. However, much the same can also be applied to larger, urban settings. To make the application to the larger congregation, however at least two items should be given consideration. The first has to do with the scheduled time of the courses offered. Urban settings tend to follow different schedules than those of their rural counterparts. A determination of the most attractive time slot needs to be made, thereby allowing for the maximum number of attendees. As in the rural setting,

the optimum scheduling permits a variety of times to be offered.

Secondly, because of the increased number of members, it may be necessary to recruit and train other educators. Depending on the size of the congregation and the degree of participation, the adult education program could be designed on two separate levels. The first level would train a number of educators. Specifically selected and trained, these educators could utilize the same approach as that used in a smaller congregation within a small group setting. Class sizes might be limited so that learner participation could be maximized.

An important ingredient of adult education in the parish setting is the freedom of the learner to express his/her thoughts and concerns in an environment of loving trust and concern. Perhaps the summary of the matter is found in John's first epistle, chapter four, verse eleven:

"Dear Friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Soli Deo Gloria

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