

TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE OF ADULT EDUCATION

©Dr. David Naugle

"All branches of knowledge are connected together, because the subject matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, being the acts and the work of the Creator."

—John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*

THE ADULT STUDENT REVOLUTION

In his landmark book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962, revised 1971), MIT philosopher and historian of science Thomas Kuhn argued that revolutions in scientific procedures and conceptions occur when newly emerging findings anomalous to and inexplicable by the reigning scientific model are discovered. Thus there begins, according to Kuhn, "the extraordinary investigations that lead the [scientific] profession at last to a new set of commitments, a new basis for the practice of science" (6). This turnabout in the scientific enterprise has been designated by the celebrated expression "paradigm shift" with which the names of Copernicus, Newton, Lavoisier, and Einstein have been rightly associated. The result of a "scientific revolution" or "paradigm shift" is that scientists ask new questions, select fresh subjects for exploration, deploy innovative methods of experimentation and, in short, possess a new vision of the world. To use Kuhnian language, "the scientist with a new paradigm sees differently from the way he did before" (115).

In analogous fashion, a revolution of another kind has been slowly unfolding during the past three decades transforming the landscape of higher education, not only here in the United States but also throughout the world. The transformation of which I speak is the Adult Student Revolution. This "sea change," sparked by social, cultural, economic and technological factors, is rightly called a "revolution" since it is causing astute educators, like scientists undergoing a paradigm shift, to assume pioneering attitudes and adopt unprecedented methods which the influx of adult students onto college campuses demands. Aware of the implications of this development within higher education, Jerold Apps (1981: 11; cf. Vermilye 1974: 1-3; Harrington 1979: 1-9) graphically compares and contrasts it with the student revolts of the turbulent 1960s.

A quiet revolution is taking place on college and university campuses across this country. It is a revolution that began several years ago, in the sixties and seventies, and has been building in intensity ever since. It is not a violent revolution. There is no stench of tear gas in the air, no trashed buildings, no jailed demonstrators, no television cameras recording each activity as it unfolds. Yet this quiet revolution could have an even more profound impact on higher education and on society than did the violent demonstrations of the sixties. What I'm referring to is the return of thousands of adults to college campuses, adults who may have attended college for one or more years and then dropped out, adults who may have received a baccalaureate degree but find need for additional education, and adults who may never have attended college. [Consequently], colleges and universities cannot continue with business-as-

usual, given the increasing numbers of these older students returning to work on undergraduate and graduate degrees.

A survey of some basic adult education statistics at the national and local levels as well as at Dallas Baptist University confirms the reality of this revolution. At the national level, the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB 1991) reports the following information:

-Nearly 50% of all college students are already 25 years old or older, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics.

-Business and industry spend between \$30 and \$40 billion annually on education and training of adults, generating an equivalent of 2.55 million FTE's (Full Time Equivalents), the size of 65 Universities of Michigan.

-Adult learning is the largest and most rapidly growing education sector in the nation, according to Nell Eurich in *The Learning Industry*.¹

At the local level, an informal telephone survey of leading universities in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex indicates, in most cases, that adult students—those twenty-five years of age and older—constitute a significant presence in area institutions.

-At the University of Texas at Arlington, 10,394 students (undergraduate and graduate combined) or approximately 41.9% of the total 24,783 students are twenty-five years of age and older (Fall 1990 semester).

-At the University of North Texas, 9,698 students (undergraduate and graduate combined) or approximately 35.9% of the total 27,020 students are twenty-five years of age and older (Fall 1991 semester).

-At Texas Christian University, 1,526 students (undergraduate and graduate combined) or approximately 23.3% of the total 6,538 students are twenty-five years of age and older (Fall 1991 semester).

-At Southern Methodist University, 3,083 students (undergraduate and graduate combined) or approximately 35.2% of the total 8,746 students are twenty-five years of age and older (Fall 1991 semester).

¹ The CEEB bemoans the fact that despite these impressive figures, inadequate attention is being given to educational programs for adults and their need for lifelong learning. They write: "We still think of education as something that is pursued by the young and completed upon entering adulthood. Our colleges and universities are primarily organized for 18 to 22 year old students attending full time and in residence, despite the fact that they represent only 20% of the total college population" (CEEB:1989-90).

-At the University of Texas at Dallas, 6,670 students (undergraduate and graduate combined) or approximately 76.8% of the total 8,685 students are twenty-five years of age and older (Fall 1990 semester).

At Dallas Baptist University, which has been a pioneering institution in the field of adult education, adult learners have increasingly over the years made their presence known and felt. Since the groundbreaking inauguration of the BCA/Applied Studies Program by Dr. Gary Starnes in 1974, DBU has enrolled approximately 6,048 adult students. Of those students, 1,978 or almost one-third (32.7%) have completed their undergraduate degrees. According to the active student list compiled this September 1991, the total number of students at DBU who are twenty-five years of age and older is 1,910 or 72.4% of the total enrollment. Following a record registration this Fall of 500 new students, the total number of adult learners enrolled in the Applied Studies Program at DBU now stands at 1,355 or approximately 51.4% of the overall student population and 60.5% of the entire undergraduate population.²

Given, then, the significant presence of adults at this institution, one thing is clear: Dallas Baptist University reflects both local and national educational trends and is certainly participating in and contributing to the Adult Student Revolution. And since "adult learners are at the center of today's most interesting innovations in higher education" (Harrington 1979: 2),³ our institution has the opportunity to set the pace and possibly even become a national leader in the field of adult education.

Now the mere presence of thousands of adult students on college and university campuses throughout the U.S. and, indeed, here on our own campus, is sufficient reason for articulating a "Christian Perspective of Adult Education" which is the burden of this essay. Before proceeding immediately to this objective, however, I would like to investigate at least four additional factors which will impart even more significance and urgency to this task.

FACTORS HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF ADULT EDUCATION

The first factor is historical, namely that adult education has deep roots in the educational tradition of Western Civilization and thus we have the opportunity to perpetuate that tradition in the present in a deeply Christian manner. The second is pedagogical, or more accurately, andragogical,⁴ namely the fact that adult learners are

² The above statistical information was compiled by Carol Roxburgh, Program Administrator, College of Adult and Continuing Education, DBU.

³ According to Harrington, these innovations include "credit for learning through life experience, credit by examination, drop-out and drop-in arrangements, special degrees for adults, weekend classes, all sorts of non-traditional experiments" (2).

⁴ Pedagogy is a term derived from the Greek words *paid* (meaning 'child') and *agogus* (meaning 'leading'). 'Pedagogy' therefore refers to the art and science of

pre-eminently teachable, possessing fertile minds and hearts making them especially open to intellectual and spiritual influence. The third consideration has to do with the vital relationship of adult education to the social and economic system nationally and globally. And a final factor is philosophical. Many have articulated highly influential philosophies and purposes for adult education from a variety of perspectives which dominate the field; the Christian voice should be heard in this conversation as well. Let me develop each of these reasons before I attempt to present a "Christian Perspective of Adult Education."

The Historical Factor

Even though the systematic education of adults is a relatively recent educational phenomenon,⁵ its history and pedigree are very impressive. Indeed, its roots reach deep into the soil of Western Civilization as one set of observers has noticed (Jensen, Liveright, Hallenbeck 1964).

Recognition of the essentiality for educating adults to insure the security, productivity, and adaptability of a society facing changing conditions is as old as recorded history. In ancient times organized education was for adults, not youth. Most of the great teachers in history such as Confucius, the Hebrew prophets, Aristotle, Plato, and Jesus devoted their energies not to the development of the immature, but rather to the mature mind. The great social movements that produced Western Civilization, the Judeo-Christian religions, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the democratic revolutions, the Industrial revolution; all were founded on the ability of the adult mind to learn and change.

Many of the great teachers, movements, books and educational programs of the West were developed with the adult in mind. Mortimer Adler, a founder and associate editor of the Great Books of the Western World program, reinforces this notion by suggesting in a provocative essay entitled "Why Only Adults Can Be Educated," that

teaching children. "Andragogy" (from the Greek stem '*aner/andr*' meaning man or adult in contrast to a boy or child) is a term recently coined by adult educators to describe the art and science of teaching adults. Malcolm Knowles who has pioneered andragogical theories and methods suggests that pedagogy and andragogy are complementary educational models: "Andragogy is simply another model of assumptions about learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions, thereby providing two alternative models for testing out the assumptions as to their 'fit' with particular situations" (Knowles 1989: 145-48).

⁵ "Adult education was first recognized as a vital component of our educational system during the 1920s. During this decade, the term *adult education* first came into general usage (Hart, 1927), and the adult education movement was launched" (Beder 1989: 38). Also "in 1926, the Carnegie Corporation facilitated the organization of the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE)" (Stubblefield and Kane 1989: 32), also giving rise to the movement which has become a revolution.

originally, "the great books were intended for the adult mind. They were not written as textbooks for children. The great books are for adults in the sense that theirs is the level at which adults operate and think" (Adler 1982: 101). Indeed, the Great Books program itself was designed earlier in this century specifically to fill the knowledge gap in and stimulate the intellectual growth of adults.

The Western educational tradition has, therefore, focused significantly on adults, and the present Adult Student Revolution provides Dallas Baptist University with the opportunity to preserve, cultivate and extend this weighty heritage and to do so from a deeply Christian perspective. As Plato once said, "those having torches will pass them on to others" (quoted in Draves 1984: 15).

*** Two examples might serve to demonstrate the connection between the Western educational tradition and adults: one from Plato and another from founding father Benjamin Franklin. Some adult educators have seen Plato's famous "cave analogy" contained in Book Seven of his *Republic* to be an exemplar of adult education. In this text, Plato desires "to show in a parable what education means in human life" and since those entrapped in the cave have, in his words, been there "from their childhood," the implication is that the ordeal of breaking free from the bondage of false appearances into the light of truth is one that can only be experienced by the mature, adult mind.

In our own country, adult educators have designated founding father Benjamin Franklin as the patriarch of adult education in the United States. "If adult educators want to select a hero from among the fathers of the nation," writes Hartley Grattan, "their choice must inevitably fall upon Franklin" (Grattan 1959). Leafing through Franklin's *Autobiography*, we recall the accent he placed on self-cultivation through personal reading, but more importantly for present purposes was his development of group ventures such as the establishment of public libraries and especially the founding of his "mutual improvement society" called the JUNTO. In his *Autobiography* (Penguin 1987: 65), he describes the nature and purpose of this group:

I had form'd most of my ingenious acquaintance into a club of mutual improvement, which we called the JUNTO; we met on Friday evenings. The rules that I drew up required that every member, in turn, should produce one or more queries on any point of Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy, to be discuss'd by the company; and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing, on any subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the direction of a president, and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute, or desire of victory.

The Pedagogical/Andragogical Factor

Perhaps the most important reason why adults have been a principal object of educational ventures in previous centuries is that they have, by virtue of their age, experience and wisdom, a unique capacity for learning and a special appreciation for the entire educational process. In a popularly written article entitled "Non-traditional Students: Why Do I Love Thee, Let Me Count The Reasons" (1989-1990), Dr. William Deeds, associate professor of psychology at Moravian College, says that he especially

*** A note on the format of this paper. The material in ten point Helvetica found between the border lines is supplementary to the main body of this work and will not be read during the presentation. Readers are encouraged to consider it carefully nevertheless.

enjoys adult students not only because he has more in common with them (e.g., sharing the same generational events; economic and domestic responsibilities, etc.), but simply because they make good students. He notes several of their positive qualities as learners: (1) their motivation and determination to get an education; (2) their dedication and faithfulness to their studies; (3) their rich contributions to class discussion and their challenging questions; (4) the positive role-model they provide for the traditional student; and (5) their overall appreciation for the learning process and its importance. He concludes his plaudit with these words:

They are exciting students to have in the classroom although they make me work harder! They add a dimension to my courses which enriches the courses for me and for the traditional students as well. Although as I gain seniority as a college professor, and would not have to teach courses in the evening, I plan to continue to do so. The benefits which exposure to non-traditional students bring to me as an instructor far outweigh the inconveniences of the lateness of the hour.

Now lest we be in danger here of over-romanticizing the positive attributes of the adult student, we must realistically reference their liabilities as well. Recognizing the wealth of experience that adults bring to the classroom and their motivation for study, Apps (1981: 51), nevertheless, points out that adult students often have problems adjusting to university life, struggle to learn academic procedures, possess rusty study skills, and sometimes have difficulty concentrating. Other problems, he says, include unrealistic goals, poor self-esteem (i.e., lacking in academic confidence), social-familial problems, and an excessive practical orientation. On occasion, they can also be cantankerous and unreasonably demanding.

However, because most adults are teachable, motivated, and dedicated, and because they are at a season in their lives that fosters serious reflection,⁶ the opportunity for deep and lasting intellectual and spiritual influence is extraordinary. Therefore, to formulate a "Christian Perspective of Adult Education" and to see it applied seems even more strategic and warranted.

In the essay mentioned above, Mortimer Adler, goes beyond a mere appreciation for the adult student to argue the controversial thesis that only adults can be truly "educated." He asks us to ponder the following scenario.

⁶ When we buttress these andragogical characteristics with the observations of cultural analysts who say that in this country, the babyboomer generation (those in the 30s and 40s who make up the majority of our Applied Studies students), in the midst of mid-life re-assessment, is "returning to God," seeking the "simple life," and returning to traditional values, then it seems that the adult mind and heart is particularly amenable to input and influence. See "And the Children Shall Lead Them: Young Americans Return to God," *Newsweek*, December 17, 1990; "The Simple Life: Rejecting the Rat Race, Americans Get Back to Basics." *Time*, April 8, 1991; and note also the recent movies *Cityslickers* and *Regarding Henry* which illustrate the boomers' quest for and return to "traditional values."

Consider the brightest boy or girl at the best imaginable college—much better than any which now exists—with the most competent faculty and with a perfect course of study. Imagine this brightest student in the best of all possible colleges, spending four years industriously, faithfully, and efficiently applying his or her mind to study. I say to you that, at the end of four years, this student, awarded a degree with the highest honors, is not an educated man or woman. And cannot be, for the simple reason that the obstacle to becoming educated in school is an inherent and insurmountable one, namely youth (91).

Adler elaborates on his thesis by saying that "precisely because they [youth] are immature, properly irresponsible, not serious, and lack a great deal of experience, children in school are not educatable" (92). Youth, he avers, are much more *trainable* than adults especially in matters of simple habit formation. But the adult is much more *educatable* because education is the cultivation of the mind.

Education consists in the growth of understanding, insight, and ultimately some wisdom. These growths require mature soil. Only in mature soil, soil rich with experience—the soul in the mature person—can ideas really take root. . . . When I say adults are more educatable than children, I am really saying that adults can think better than children. . . . Basic learning—the acquisition of ideas, insight, understanding—depends on being able to think. If adults can think better than children, they can also learn better—learn better in the sense of cultivating their minds (92).

Those who have done formal studies on the characteristics of adult learners (Kidd 1959, 1973; Draves 1984; Apps 1981: 39-52) and those who teach them confirm the validity of Adler's notion .

Recently I sent out a survey at this institution in which I asked you as faculty members to comment on your experiences in teaching adults. The results of this internal inquiry were virtually identical with what has been said above and with what is stated in the mainstream literature in the field. To be specific, that adult students frequently excel but also are underprepared and encounter a unique set of difficulties. Marsha Pool's and David Ayer's respective comments are representative of the whole.

Marsha Pool: "The Applied Studies students are a delight to teach. Most of them are eager to learn and study diligently. However, in some cases students are admitted into the program who do not have the pre-college skills needed to study at the university level. Even though these students are eager to learn, they are handicapped because of poor preparation. We need to screen applicants and require pre-college preparation."

David Ayers: "Most [adult students] are highly motivated, and engaging to have in my classes. The experiences they bring with them to class help them to be more forthcoming with good comments and questions on the lectures.

Many are underprepared (weak in essential skills) and overworked (too many credits for the amount of hours they have to work at their jobs). Too often, they expect the professor to "lighten their load" because of their difficulties. Still most are highly motivated and a pleasure to work with—but a significant number do require a lot of extra help because of these difficulties . . . " [emphasis his].

The Socio-Cultural and Economic Factor

In the recent past, the education of the adult was a matter of secondary importance, nice but not necessary. Things have changed, however, and adult education is now seen as a vital vector not only in American society but internationally as well. Noting trends such as the rapidity of change, the dominance of technology, the intensity of specialization, the complexity of human relationships, and the vastness of opportunity, all of which demand the continuing education of adults, Hallenbeck argues in his article, "The Function and Place of Adult Education in American Society" (1960:

38), that the "changing world has brought American culture to that state where it depends upon adult education to make its civilization operate successfully."

The indispensability of adult education to social, cultural and economic betterment at the national and international levels can be seen in a document produced by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) in November 1976 entitled the *UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education*. Commenting on this manifesto, Spikes (1982: 267) has forcefully expressed the profound relationship of adult education to socio-economic and cultural well-being.

The practice of adult education is clearly integrated into the context of lifelong learning; emphasis is placed upon viewing the adult as being a part of a larger cultural, societal, and economic matrix. Hence, [the] wholism of the lifelong education process relative to other aspects of society is the key to the thrust of the philosophical foundation of this [UNESCO] resolution. The content, process, objectives, strategies, and relationships of the practice of adult education are viewed as being integral aspects of a total eco-system in which each element is codependent upon other elements of the system and thus are designed to mutually benefit each other during the process of growth and development of the individual and the society. *Adult education is thereby seen as being a key structural component of society through which social, cultural, and economic development in the largest sense will be enhanced and facilitated. No longer does the educating of adults assume a peripheral position of adjunct importance. Rather it becomes the central force through which progress of the individual man and woman, and the collective cultures and societies of the world can be advanced* (emphasis added).

If it is true that adult education plays such an important role in the social, cultural and economic system, again DBU as a Christian institution and leader in adult education is poised to influence not only our local community, but the nation and perhaps even the world through its graduates who have been exposed to and influenced by an educational philosophy rooted in the Christian world view.

Once upon a time, the knowledge and skills needed to function in and contribute to society and the economic system could be obtained by "completing" an education in the days of youth. One of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century, mathematician and metaphysician, Alfred North Whitehead, helps us to understand why this is no longer the case.

In a commencement address at Harvard University in 1930, Whitehead pointed out that in the past, it was appropriate to define education as the act of transmitting knowledge since the life-span of culture was greater than the life-span of individuals. Under these circumstances, what people learned in their youth would last them for a lifetime. But as Whitehead observed: "We are living in the first period in human history for which this assumption is false. . . . Today this time-span [of cultures] is considerably shorter than that of human life, and accordingly our training must prepare individuals to face a novelty of conditions" (Whitehead 1931: viii-xix). The diagram below is an attempt to capture visually Whitehead's concept (from Knowles 1989: 146).

From this chart it can be seen that up until the first part of the present century, culture in the West remained relatively static, extending over several generations. More recently however, culture (i.e., new knowledges, technical innovations, vocational displacement, population mobility, shifts in political and economic systems, etc.) is changing so rapidly that several major shifts are possible in one lifetime and the pace is accelerating. "Under this new condition, knowledge gained at any point of time is largely obsolete within a matter of years; and skills that made people productive in their twenties become out-of-date in their thirties" (Knowles 1989: 146). Because of the rapidity of cultural change and the consequent obsolescence of human knowledge, the education of adults is necessary to keep pace with the times.

Several conclusions follow from this. First, it is now impossible to ever really "complete" a college education (cf. Mead 1989). Second, education, especially in technical areas, can no longer be defined as a process of transmitting what is known; education must be seen as a continuous process of lifelong learning, obtaining newly emerging information and the skills necessary for self-directed inquiry and personal development. Third, and most importantly for present purposes, adult education becomes absolutely mandatory not only for personal growth and development in a rapidly changing world, but is also an indispensable contributor to the social, cultural, and economic development of societies, nations and the world. Fourth, professors themselves must continually upgrade their own knowledge and expertise, lest they fall victim to obsolescence and fail to prepare their own students adequately. Thus it seems that there is an unbreakable linkage now between rapid cultural change, the need for lifelong, adult education, and the enhancement and progress of individuals and society as a whole.

The Philosophical Factor

Given, then, the role that adult education now plays in contemporary culture, it is not surprising that many educators have carefully formulated philosophies of adult education which establish its nature and purposes. Such philosophies are sets of presuppositions and principles that establish "the foundations or basic structures by which phenomena, events and realities are understood (Elias and Merriam 1980: 3). And as Bloom (1987: 26) points out, "every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain and that informs its curriculum. *It wants to produce a certain kind of person*" (emphasis added). To create human beings in the likeness of their theories, practitioners of adult education have devised philosophies from liberal, progressive, behavioristic, humanistic, radical (marxist), and analytical perspectives. Of these, I would like to delineate three which have been especially prominent.

The Liberal-Progressive Perspective: The liberal-progressive tradition has been central in adult education since its beginning in the 1920s. Those of the liberal mindset focus on the cultivation of the human intellect through the mastery of subject knowledge and the progressives emphasize the educational value of human experience and both assert that the *telos* of adult education is decidedly social: "its purpose is to abet the

democratic order, which, although it is good, can be improved" (Beder 1989: 44; cf. Hart 1927; Lindeman 1926; Sheats, Jayne, and Spence 1953; Knowles 1980).

Human Potential-Personal Growth Perspective: Proponents of this perspective, often drawing on the presuppositions of the humanist school of psychology, tend to focus on the individual person rather than on the collective society as in the previous philosophical construct. According to one practitioner in this camp (Bergevin 1967: 7), the goal of adult education is the development of personal maturity. The term "maturity" is used here to mean the growth and development of the individual towards wholeness in order to achieve constructive spiritual, vocational, physical, political and cultural goals. A maturing person is continually advancing towards understanding and constructive action in the movement from mere survival (the state of lower animals) to the discovery of himself both as a person and responsible member of society.

Radical(Marxist) Perspective: This tradition, like the liberal-progressive approach, focuses mainly on the relationship of education to society. In summary, advocates in this camp consider societies dominated by capitalism to be intrinsically unequal because the system perpetuates the dominance of the privileged bourgeoisie over the oppressed proletariat. Society must be changed, and one way to do it is by means of adult education which elevates the learners' consciousness and empowers them to act and even revolt on their own behalf.

To these sets of ideas seeking to influence the direction of adult education and "produce a certain kind of person," the Christian vision must be added. To attempt this not only means to present a positive, Christian, philosophical contribution to adult educational theory, but it also means, in light of the foregoing discussion, (1) to impact in a Christian manner the course of social, cultural and economic events at a national and global level; (2) to influence the lives of ripened adult students personally, intellectually and spiritually; and (3) to perpetuate the Western educational heritage of adult education and to do so on the foundation of the Christian world view (which until recently lay at the root of almost all major educational enterprises in the Western world; cf. Marsden 1991). The opportunity and responsibility is mindboggling. Hence we now turn our attention to our topic "Towards a Christian Perspective of Adult Education."

The Liberal-Progressive Perspective: While liberal and progressives tend to agree on a common societal goal, nonetheless, they disagree as to how to achieve it. Liberals focus on the cultivation of the intellect which includes a knowledge of facts, a heady grasp of a subject matter or discipline, and the adroitness to assess and analyze critically. All of these qualities are necessary if the adult student is to attain to the ultimate goal which is wisdom. In this schema, the teacher is conceived as the expert in a given discipline and is commissioned to transmit knowledge and content to the uninitiated.

The progressives, on the other hand, believe that the liberal agenda is elitist and that learning should rather be rooted in experience—"from the situations of adults themselves rather than from abstractions or discipline based subject matter. This belief mandated a highly learner-centered form of education involving the teacher as a guide and facilitator rather than as the guardian of knowledge" (Beder 1989: 45).

Human Potential-Personal Growth Perspective: In the 1950s and 1960s, the field of adult education was greatly influenced by the humanist school of psychology, especially that of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Their notions found expression in one of the most widely read books on adult education in the last twenty years, M. Knowles' *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (1980). This humanistic approach

emphasizes man's ability to choose in distinction from the lower animals. Extended educationally, choice implies that learners are responsible for their own intellectual development and personal growth, or as Maslow would put it, "self-actualization."

In this context, then, "the objective of adult education is to assist learners in making choices that maximize their human potential. Since learners are responsible for their own actions, they should control learning, content, process, and evaluation. . . . humanist education is highly learner centered, and the educator is more properly a facilitator of learning than a conveyor of knowledge" (Beder 1989: 47).

Also within this framework, Mezirow (1981) has championed a concept called *perspective transformation* as the goal of adult education. On the basis of the work of German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, Mezirow suggests that through education, adults can and often must experience entire shifts in perspective or consciousness or paradigm that results in an entirely new and more productive way of perceiving themselves, others and the world around them.

Radical(Marxist) Perspective: Those associated with this outlook "consider capitalist democracy to be inherently flawed by structural inequalities that can be redressed only by substantial reordering of the social system." In a more Marxist idiom, "the class structure is a product of the capitalist means of production, and society is necessarily unequal as the dominant bourgeoisie (ruling class) uses its control over the means of production to exploit the proletariat (working class). Resulting social inequity results in endemic class conflict" (Beder 1989: 45).

One thinker who has extended Marxists ideas into education is A. Gramsci (1971) who says that the dominant class controls the ideological and social structures of society most notably by means of education. By extension, adult education is to support and assist in the production of intellectuals who are favorable toward and seek to emancipate the working class.

Other thinkers in the radical school have focused on the way in which the ruling class perpetuates or "reproduces" the social structures to its own advantage through education (cf. Apple 1982; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). In this "reproductionist" framework, the role of adult education is said to lie in the concept of "empowerment" which is central to the thought of the Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire. Writing in the context of the oppression of Latin American society, Freire believes that "the oppressed lack critical consciousness of the forces that control their lives, and lacking that consciousness, they are powerless to redress the oppression that dominates their lives. The role of adult education is, through dialogue with learners, to facilitate acquisition of critical consciousness. Once learners become conscious of the forces that control their lives, they become empowered, and empowerment leads to action" (Beder 1989: 46).

TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE OF ADULT EDUCATION

On September 24, 1991, the faculty (adjuncts included) and staff of the Applied Studies Program (ASP) here at DBU met for a three and a half hour training seminar to conduct what I, as the leader of the session, called "An **Experiment** in the Integration of Christian Faith and Academic Learning in the Applied Studies Program." Our overall goal was to think through the "applications and implications" of the content of the Christian world view on our work with adult students. More specifically, against the background of our culture, we considered how the "pillar points" of the Christian world view—God, Truth, Creation, Man, Fall and Redemption—establish the overall aims of adult education and attempted to think through how these areas impact the content and teaching of our main course, CACE 3300: Experiential Learning-Theory and Application. We also considered how these matters affected each of us day to day in the office as a family of co-workers united in a common cause.

Below is a revised version of the material covered in our seminar which constitutes a first attempt "Towards a Christian Perspective of Adult Education." I would like to share it with you at this time.

GOD

Contemporary Culture: Excluding theism, our culture is characterized by at least four primary belief systems regarding the existence and nature of God. Agnosticism asserts that God is either unknown or unknowable; contemporary deists negate His historical involvement and atheists, naturalists, and humanists deny His very existence; finally, new age pantheists mystically identify the universe and the divine.

The Christian world view: In contrast to our culture, the Christian world view confidently affirms the good news of the existence of God who is to be praised for His "excellent greatness and His mighty deeds" (Psa. 150: 2). Regarding His excellent greatness (or attributes), we understand God to be eternal, immutable, infinite, transcendent, immanent, personal, holy, just, true, gracious, loving and merciful. In terms of God's mighty deeds (or actions), all of His works may be subsumed under the comprehensive titles of Creator and Redeemer.

Applications and Implications: Though Christianity begins at a personal level through faith in Christ, Christianity as a system or world view begins with "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth" (Apostles' Creed). The remaining essentials of Christian theism as well as the presuppositions for adult educational theory are derived from this foundation.

T. S. Eliot has reminded us that "we must derive our theory of education from our philosophy of life" (1936: 169) and if our philosophy of life is Christian theism, then it demands a Christian theistic educational system. This means very simply and yet very radically, that in order to be true to the Christian theistic nature of things, every facet of adult education—the motivation for the entire enterprise, its purposes and programs, administrative procedures, methods of advertising and marketing, the content and teaching of curriculum, the personal relationships with students and co-workers, etc.—all must be rooted in Christian assumptions and principles. In other words, Christian educators of adults have no other choice but to take their theism seriously and to think through very carefully all the consequences of their beliefs on every aspect of their work and to build an educational system that is affected and infected by theism in every nook and cranny. Not to do so would compromise their faith and philosophy, resulting in the construction of an educational superstructure that tilts in the direction of its faulty foundation.

A major implication of the existence of the Christian theistic God has to do with the existence and nature of truth which is so germane to education itself, constituting in many ways its very "reason to be" (*raison d'etre*).

Knowledge and truth

Contemporary Culture: In light of its agnosticism, atheism and pantheism, contemporary culture rejects the notion of objective reality, arguing that "truth," so-called, is relative.⁷ Or as it was put to me recently, "truth is simply out of style." Holmes (1977: 4-8) describes this epistemological situation under three headings. First he says there is a loss of *focus* on truth: people are simply not concerned about it. Second, there is a loss of the *universality* of truth: "truth" is subjective and situational. Third, there is a loss of the *unity* of truth: knowledge is fragmented and devoid of any meaningful coherence.

This loss of truth engenders serious consequences for today's university and its students. The first is a loss of purpose for education. If there is no truth, then there can be no search for it. And if there is no search for truth, then what is education for? The second is a great disturbance in the curriculum of the university. Classically, university curriculum was designed to lead the students who studied it into the discovery of truth. The loss of belief in truth has left educators with another problem: what to teach? A third result is the demoralization of students. The negation of truth deprives learners of the nobility of mind and character, producing what C. S. Lewis, in his educational classic *The Abolition of Man*, deftly called, "men without chests" (1947: 34). The fourth is the consequent spiritual, intellectual and identity crisis of the modern university which the loss of purpose, curriculum and students has engendered. What is a university for if it lacks or is unsure about these essentials? As Lewis also observed, "the practical result of education in the spirit of . . . [relativism] must be the destruction of the [university and the] society which accepts it" (Ibid.: 39).

The Christian world view: It makes all the educational difference in the world whether one stands within or without the *Tao*--Lewis' generic symbol for objective reality and truth (Ibid.: 31). Based on the Christian belief in the existence of an infinite, personal and true God, Christians posit an objective, ontological reality and consequently the existence of theological, intellectual, and moral truth. Christians believe that this truth is embedded in the *cosmos* and is discovered by means of an exploration of creation and human experience which reveals God's nature and eternal

⁷ Allan Bloom's often quoted statement by which he introduces *The Closing of the American Mind* runs as follows: "There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative" (1987: 25). Similarly, in the 1989-1990 University of Dallas Bulletin, in an address entitled "Liberal Education and the Rebirth of the University," UD President Robert Sasseen says that today's university "climate of opinion" . . . holds that values are subjective, truth is relative, man is a historical, being is nothingness, goodness is in the eye of the beholder, and that therefore, freedom is self-creation and justice is the interest of the stronger. Such a climate of opinion must inevitably destroy the university's most fundamental purpose. . . . It is a climate of opinion apt for producing tyrants, not citizens—or else persons, who, doing their own pleasant thing, are good for nothing, not even themselves" (1989-90: 6).

laws (natural revelation and law).⁸ Christians also maintain that God has disclosed truth and knowledge about Himself and all His works in the Holy Scriptures (special revelation) discovered by a thorough study of biblical content. Thus, all truth, whether natural or special, is God's truth and we can assert with Puritan divine Richard Sibbes that, "truth comes from God, wheresoever we find it, and it is ours" (quoted in Ryken 1986: 167). Thus, the Christian theistic notion of truth rescues us from the vortex of the sea of relativity, gives shape to human thought and life, and lays the foundation for the rebirth of the University in the modern or post-modern world.

Applications and Implications: What implications does this notion of truth have on the education of adults who are immersed in the relativism of their culture? I would like to develop at least three.

The first has to do with ourselves as Christian educators. We should model before adult students, in both attitude and action, a passionate quest for truth following it courageously wherever it may lead. We must be about understanding the elements of the Christian world view, seeking to discover from biblical, theological, and natural sources as much truth as possible about God, the universe, the world and ourselves, integrating these elements into our academic disciplines, and thereby exemplifying what it means to be an educated person and the qualities that constitute human excellence (see Phil. 4: 8).

Second,⁹ we must instill in our adult students, by precept and example, the belief in the existence of truth and arouse in them a passionate and courageous quest for it as well. Adult students should be taught that the DBU curriculum, rooted in the Western heritage of liberal arts education and the Christian intellectual tradition, is based on the supposition that truth exists and is the proper object of search (among other things) in an educational career. As adult educators, we should inspire students to use the truth and wisdom so discovered as building-blocks in the construction of a thoughtful, unified, comprehensive world and life view which should be perhaps the most important outcome of their educational undertaking.¹⁰

⁸ I can't resist here Shakespeare's beautiful statement in *King Lear*, v,3, as it relates to the human investigation of the universe: "And take upon 's the mystery of things, as if we were God's spies"!

⁹ Much of the material in this second section was inspired by and taken from the presidential address in the 1989-90 bulletin of the University of Dallas, pp. 5-8.

¹⁰ This seems to be what John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, pp. 593-94, had in mind as the goal of education: "That . . . true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence." Or again: "But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to lessen the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected and majestically calm, because it

Even though many Applied Studies adult students are chiefly concerned to expedite the completion of their degrees by earning experiential learning credits, and even though many of them are primarily concerned to get the technical training needed to advance in their careers (a goal which the Christian world view also promotes as will be seen later), adult students should also be instructed to realize that a liberal education in the truth is the foremost goal of the ASP at DBU since a liberal education has to do with the comprehensive formation of whole persons—intellectually, morally, spiritually and socially. Adult students should be taught that the worlds of science, technology, business and engineering, etc. need genuinely educated, fully human people who can carry out their professional careers with wisdom, understanding, character, depth, sensitivity, perspective and justice—qualities which are the intended products of liberal education in the truth. Adult students must be helped to see that liberal arts education is not a speciality of only one part of the university, but rather informs and interpenetrates the institution's whole program and purpose (see also Ramm 1963: 117-18; Malik 1980: 293; Holmes 1975: 106). To teach these things to our adult students, to impart to them this noble vision, and to see it realized to some extent in their lives is to directly influence the homes, churches, governments, businesses, and industries where our students live, work and assume active and important roles.

Third, the foregoing considerations supply the foundation for the study of world views and the philosophy of education in our initial course, CACE 3300. The study of world views gives adult students, as they begin their studies, an opportunity to seek truth amidst "the mosaic of meaning systems that make up modern thinking" (Sire 1988). The study of the philosophy of education enables adult learners to consider thoughtfully (and perhaps refine) the purposes they have set for their educational careers.

The celebrated formula "all truth is God's truth," which has been at the basis of Christian liberal arts education historically, is a notion that was articulated early on by St. Augustine, reaffirmed in the Protestant Reformation and used as the cornerstone in the Puritan conception of education. St. Augustine conveyed the concept via the astute "Egyptian Gold" illustration in his book *On Christian Doctrine* II.40.

Moreover, if those who are called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, have said aught that is true and in harmony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for

discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another." And finally: "That perfection of the intellect, which is the result of education, and its *beau ideal*, to be imputed in individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres."

our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it. For, as the Egyptians had not only the idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel hated and fled from, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver, and garments, which the same people when going out of Egypt appropriated to themselves, designing them for a better use, not doing this on their own authority, but by the command of God, the Egyptians themselves, in their ignorance, providing them with things which they themselves were not making good use of; in the same way all branches of heathen learning have not only false and superstitious fancies and heavy burdens of unnecessary toil, . . .; but they contain also liberal instruction which is better adapted to the use of the truth, and some most excellent precepts of morality; and some truths in regard even to the worship of the One God are found among them. Now these are, so to speak, their gold and silver, which they did not create themselves, but dug out of the mines of God's providence which are everywhere scattered abroad, and are perversely and unlawfully prostituting to the worship of devils. These, therefore, the Christian . . . ought to take away from them, and devote to their proper use in preaching the gospel. Their garments, also—that is, human institutions such as are adapted to that intercourse with men which is indispensable in this life—we must take and turn to a Christian use.

John Calvin carried on this heritage in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (2.2.15) and in his commentary on Genesis 4: 20.

In reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful . . . not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears.

The sons of Cain, though deprived of the Spirit of regeneration, were yet endued with gifts of no despicable kind; just as the experience of all ages teaches us how widely the rays of divine light have shone on unbelieving nations, for the benefit of the present life; and we see . . . that the excellent gifts of the Spirit are diffused through the whole human race.

Building on this Christian intellectual tradition, the Puritans championed an educational program built upon the premise that "all truth is God's truth" fearlessly seeking it from every source and recognizing truth's unity in God as the following quotations amply reveal (from Ryken 1986: 167-69).

It cannot be denied that all truth, whosoever it be that speaks it, comes from the God of truth (Charles Chauncy).

There is a knowledge of God natural in and by his works: and a knowledge supernatural by revelation out of the word; and though this be the principal, yet the other is not to be undervalued (Edward Reynolds).

Remember that not only heavenly and spiritual and supernatural knowledge descends from God, but also all natural and human learning and abilities; and therefore pray much, not only for the one but also for the other from the Father of Lights and mercies (Thomas Shepard).

Our physics, which is a great part of human learning, is but the knowledge of God's admirable works; and hath any man the face to call himself God's creature, and yet to reproach it as vain human learning? (Richard Baxter)

The world and the creatures therein are like a book wherein God's wisdom is written, and there must we seek it out (Alexander Richardson).

Some among the heathen have been notable moralists, such as Cato, Seneca, Aristides, etc. Find a friend in Plato, a friend in Socrates and . . . in Aristotle (Increase Mather).

All the arts are nothing else but the beams and rays of the Wisdom of the first Being in the creatures, shining and reflecting thence upon the glass of man's understanding; and as from Him

they come, so to Him they tend. Hence there is an affinity and kindred of arts. One makes use of another, one serves to another, till they all reach and return to Him (Samuel Mather).

Creation and the Cultural Mandate

Contemporary Culture: Humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created and assert, along with Carl Sagan, that the "cosmos is all there is, ever was, and ever will be" (Sagan 1980: 4). Pantheists see the universe identified with or unfolding out of deity such that all things are divine and the divine is all things. The implication of all this is a basic confusion about "where we are." As Marcus Aurelius opined in his *Meditations*, "He who does not know what the world is, does not know where he is. And he who does not know for what purpose the world exists, does not know who he is, nor what the world is."

The Christian world view: Christians assert that the universe is not eternal or self-existing but the product of God's creative word. He did not create it out of Himself, *ex Deo*, as the pantheist says, but rather out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, as the Psalmist says: "God spoke and it was done (Psa. 33: 9). The world reflects God's glory, power and divinity (Psa. 19: 1ff.; Rom. 1: 20) and, as the product of His hand, is designated "very good" (Gen. 1: 31; 1 Tim. 4: 4-5). It was created to be inhabited by man (Isa. 45: 18) who was assigned the original task of exploring, understanding and governing it as God's responsible steward (Gen. 1: 26, 28; Psa. 8: 3-8).

Applications and Implications: I would like to suggest two consequences of this aspect of the Christian world view on our work with adult students. If as Marcus Aurelius' aphorism implied, human beings, adult students included, are baffled about their cosmic address, that is, where they are, then teachers permeated with the Christian perspective can help adult students make the wonderful discovery (or rediscovery) that the world is God's creation, a creation which is wondrous, orderly and good.

The second deduction rooted in the notion of creation, or more specifically, in what theologians call the "creation decree" or "cultural mandate," is the hearty affirmation of the adult learners' study and pursuit of all cultural enterprises including the arts, the sciences (natural and human), and the development of technological and business proficiencies. God commissioned human beings to "rule and subdue" the earth, to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, over the cattle and over all the earth. This task is the commission to establish culture and civilization and it applies to all people and embraces every age. This calling implies the need for education and training and justifies adult students' endeavors to master their crafts whatever they may be. The vocational and technical callings of adults and the training they will need to fulfill these callings contributing toward the further development of human civilization finds grounding here. The Christian vision, therefore, not only supports the quest for truth, but also legitimates the study of the arts, sciences and all technology. Whether they realize it or not, adult learners who seek vocational and technical training, even those solely motivated by the desire for career and financial

advancement, are fulfilling their divinely appointed task. On this biblical foundation, coupled with the doctrine of common grace, adult educators can freely encourage their students to this end.

In setting forth these ideas, I am drawing directly on the work the accomplished Dutch theologian, educator (founder of the Free University of Amsterdam) and statesman (Prime Minister of Holland) Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). Kuyper's rationale for the Christian contribution to civilization is rooted in the notions of common grace and the doctrine of creation. Kuyper defines common grace as God's mercy towards all men "which so retards sin and so strengthens man's powers that he is able to carry out to some degree of success the original creation purposes of God" (quoted in Ramm 1963: 81). For Kuyper, the consequences of this doctrine were culturally and educationally vast. Common grace so modulates the curse and God's wrath that man has the space, time and freedom to develop the resources he was endowed with at creation. Common Grace provides a basis for the co-operation of believer and unbeliever in the common, human pursuits of life. It is the source of the good, the true and the beautiful in unbelievers and in cultural and social life. It is the ground and preservation of the family, the state, science, and education. It is the basis for the Christian concern for art, culture, education, civilization and to commit themselves to the common cultural tasks of their society; it does not permit the Christian, on principle, to isolate himself from the world. Common grace supplies the reason for the appreciation of the accomplishments of non-Christians and to recognize and appropriate truth in a Socrates, Plato, Aristotle or wherever it may be found. On this footing Kuyper wrote that a Christian

who seeks God, does not for a moment think of limiting himself to theology and contemplation, leaving the other sciences, as of a lower character, in the hands of unbelievers; but on the contrary, looking upon it as his task to know God in *all* his works, he is conscious of having been called to fathom with all the energy of his intellect, things *terrestrial* as well as things *celestial*; to open to view both the order of creation, and the "common grace" of the God he adores, in nature and its wondrous character, in the production of human industry, in the life of mankind, in sociology and in the history of the human race (quoted in Ramm 1963: 81-82).

Kuyper also took his stand on the theological import of the neglected doctrine of creation (Gen. 1-2) where the original purposes of God for man are set forth. Man was created to be lord of creation, to found a society, to create a culture, and to understand and explore the world, all of which implies the educational mandate, specifically the Christian educational mandate since such notions are derived from the Christian view of man and world. In this vein, the following quotation from Ludwig Kohler, *Der Hebraische Mensch*, p. 112 (quoted in H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, p. 164) relates the cultural and educational mandates (especially in the italicized sentence) and this connection, understood in the context of common grace, lays the basis for the vocational and technical training of adults in their educational careers.

The task given to man to rule over creation as it was in former times and as it is down to the present day: This is the commission to establish civilization. It applies to all men, and it embraces every age. There is no human activity which is not covered by it. The man who found himself with his family on a plain exposed to ice-cold wind and first laid a few stones one upon

another and invented the wall, the basis of all architecture, was fulfilling this command. The woman who first pierced a hole in a hard thorn or fishbone and threaded a piece of animal sinew through it in order to be able to join together a few shreds of skin, and so invented the needle, sewing, the beginning of all the art of clothing, was also fulfilling this command. *Down to the present day, all the instructing of children, every kind of school, every script, every book, all our technology, research, science and teaching, with their methods and instruments and institutions, are nothing other than the fulfillment of this command.* The whole of history, all human endeavor, comes under this sign, this biblical phrase.

Humankind

Contemporary Culture: A plethora of interpretations or models of man abound in today's culture (cf. Stevenson 1974), including (but not limited to) the economic (Marx), psycho-analytic (Freud), atheistic (Nietzsche), existential (Sartre), behavioristic (Skinner), evolutionary (Darwin; Gould), and the pantheistic (Suzuki; McClain). There is much bewilderment about human identity, nature and purpose and people are held captive by the various opinions which dominate our time. Kenneth J. Gergen notes this perplexity in his book *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* in which he states that "social saturation furnishes us with a multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self. For every thing we 'know to be true' about ourselves, other voices within respond with doubt and derision."

The Christian world view: Christian revelation clearly defines man as the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*). We are the "almost divine" having been made a little lower than God (or the angels) who has crowned us with glory and honor and put all things under our feet (Psa. 8). Christian anthropology establishes human uniqueness, value and significance. It stresses the importance of relationships with God, self, others, and the created order. It includes an understanding of the place and importance of human creativity and imagination. It also presupposes that, according to the pattern we find in Jesus Christ, one can mature intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, physically and become a complete person under God for His glory. As St. Irenaeus once said, "The glory of God is a man fully alive!"

Applications and Implications: Several implications follow from this view of man for our work with adults.

First of all, creation in the image and likeness of God suggests the idea that man is essentially a religious being. According to the Proverb, from the heart, the inner most being, flow the springs of life. Christian thinkers have classically affirmed this (e.g., Augustine and Pascal) and so have many secularists such as Walter Kaufmann who observed that "Man is the God-intoxicated ape." Though some, even Christians, may seek to compartmentalize religion (resulting in fragmentation), it simply cannot be done. Nothing human is alien to the religious.

But if man is at heart a religious and spiritual being, then all human activities—educational, intellectual, artistic, political, economic, social etc.—are essentially religious in nature, being animated and informed by some kind of faith. Therefore, adults students as well as those who educate them, need to understand that education

is a deeply religious enterprise. There can be no dichotomy of secular and sacred, culture and faith, education and religion. The calling to be both student and teacher is therefore a religious calling and the whole educational process, therefore, can touch a student at profound levels and contribute significantly to the formation of his or her mind, character and spiritual sentiments. And this leads to the next point.

Second, given the religious nature of human beings, and since systems of education, also essentially religious, seek to produce a certain kind of person, then a Christian theory of adult education should state what kind of person it intends to create. The key here is found in man as the *imago Dei*. Adult education should be pursued with a view to helping adult learners become all they are meant to be as persons created in the image and likeness of God. Though sin and evil have "effaced" that image, man has a "God-restorable potential" (Holmes 1975: 23) and education that is Christian can contribute significantly to this restoration, or better yet, redemptive, project. The model of human restoration is Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God, (Col. 1: 15), the new Adam (1 Cor. 15; Rom. 5), and therefore, the Christian educator should assist students to become a "mature man" and to attain "to the measure of the stature that belongs to the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 13). This task would be accomplished, if an adult student, when asked what he or she gained at DBU, could say: "I learned what it is to see, think, and act like the human person God made me to be" (Holmes 1975: 45).

Third, the fact that all persons are God's image and likeness has profound ramifications on the way we treat co-workers and students on a daily basis. Recognizing co-workers and students as images of God with unique personalities, gifts and callings, we must seek to serve and treat each person in the office and classroom with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Fall and Redemption

Contemporary Culture: It is fashionable in our day to suggest that the responsibility for the tragic human condition lay in the flaws incurred in human evolutionary and genetic development or in the deleterious influences of our economic, social, cultural, political, ecological and technological environments. Some see in science, technology and education the pathway to human amelioration and the eventual betterment of the world (humanists). Others have recognized the shortcomings of such an agenda and have turned to various forms of spirituality as the means of finding healing and hope in the midst of a hurting and despairing world (new age). Some have given up on the human condition as "hopelessly corrupt" and see no way out (post-moderns such as M. Foucault).

The Christian world view: The Scriptures teach that the tragic human condition is the result of moral and spiritual rebellion against the word and will of God resulting in the alienation or separation of human beings from their Creator, themselves, others, and the world. We now abide abnormally in a kingdom of death and darkness. Hope for man is found in the salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ through His life, death, and resurrection. He offers the gifts of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those who place their faith in Him. Upon doing so, the believer is reconciled to God,

understands his true identity and purpose, is restored to meaningful relationships with others and makes the wonderful discovery of the world as God's creation to be fully enjoyed and explored.

Applications and Implications: In a very real sense, this entire essay "Towards a Christian Perspective of Adult Education" has presupposed and been developed in the context of the Christian view of salvation. Otherwise, none of what has been said could have been said. Nevertheless, there are at least two additional conclusions to be drawn from this facet of the Christian vision.

First, since many adult students in the ASP are not Christians, each one of them should have the opportunity to hear, understand and respond to the gospel of Christ so as to be saved. Rejecting secular soteriological systems as ultimately doomed to fail, a presentation of the Christian gospel in the context of the study of world views should give adults the opportunity to decide for or against Christ's offer of salvation. The ASP, therefore, provides incredible opportunities for the work of evangelism contributing to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Second, the fall of man into sin has resulted in the production of numerous philosophies, world views and religions by which people seek to explain their lives and interpret the world of which they are a part. If adults are to understand themselves and the meaning systems that have shaped them; if they are to be able to communicate with others who inhabit an entirely different conceptual and linguistic universe; if they are to understand the sets of presuppositions that govern academic studies; if they are to understand the many belief systems that animate the modern world, then a study of world views is indispensable. For "to think intelligently today is to think world viewishly, that is, to come to terms with the mosaic of meaning systems that make up modern thinking" (Os Guinness).

Summary

This presentation, "Toward a Christian Perspective of Adult Education," is a first try, a preliminary sketch, an academic experiment. No doubt, it could be improved in many ways and expanded in many directions. Nevertheless, it has yielded the following summary.

1. The existence of God, His excellent greatness and His mighty deeds, is the foundation of a Christian theory of adult education. Every facet of adult education must be developed on the basis of Christian theistic presuppositions and principles.
2. Upon the basis of God's existence, Christian adult education posits an independent, objective reality and the existence of theological, moral, and intellectual truth which becomes the object of search in the academic setting.
 - a. This quest for truth should be modelled by DBU professors.

b. Truth should become the proper object of search leading to the formation of a comprehensive world view in an adult student's liberal arts education which has as its goal the formation of persons and is therefore foundational to the entire academic program and purpose of the University.

c. The study of world views and philosophy of education in CACE 3300 gives adult students the opportunity to seek truth, form a world view, and refine their purposes for education.

3. Because the world is God's creation, and because He has directed man to establish culture and civilization, the Christian adult educator promotes the quest to obtain technical skills and vocational training by which adult learners may not only enhance their own lives and careers but also contribute effectively to the ongoing development of culture and civilization in business, the arts, sciences, and all forms of human technology.

4. The notion of man created as the *imago Dei* has three implications on adult education.

a. Adult educators should recognize the essentially religious or spiritual nature of persons and, therefore, of the academic undertaking and the contribution such an endeavor makes to the formation of persons.

b. Given this insight, the purpose of the education of adults in a Christian context is to contribute toward their maturation as persons created in the image of God according to the pattern set forth in Jesus Christ.

c. Because all human beings bear the image and likeness of God, administrators and faculty members should treat one another and students with the respect and dignity they deserve.

5. The presence of sin and evil which disrupted God's original purposes for man and creation, and the provision of salvation in Jesus Christ which has restored the same, creates the existential context for the practice of adult education.

a. Because of the ideologies produced in a fallen world, each adult student should be given the opportunity to study the mosaic of meaning systems that make up modern thinking in order to understand themselves, others, academics, and the world in which they live.

b. Because of salvation in Jesus Christ, each adult student should have the opportunity to hear and respond to the content of the Christian gospel.

CONCLUSION

In an essay entitled "The Marks of a Christian College," famed philosopher and theologian D. Elton Trueblood cited Christian convictions, an interest in wholeness, a

passion for truth, and the role of fellowship as the chief characteristics of the institution devoted to Christ. He then listed the practical steps by which such a model institution might be achieved including the pursuit of excellence, the quality of teachers, the importance of spirituality, and then, "ADULT EDUCATION!" Writing in 1957, he said,

I predict that the day will come when good colleges will have as many students thirty years old and older as those who are eighteen to twenty-two. I don't see why not. Plato thought that a man really ought to be over thirty before he studied philosophy seriously, and maybe he was right (169).

When I first read this, quite frankly I was surprised. Why would someone of Trueblood's stature think that adult education was necessary to create an exemplary Christian college? Because of my own personal experience in the ASP and after having done the research for this paper, I think now I see why. Trueblood recognized the capacity of adults as learners and the importance of their contribution and influence not only in the classroom, but also in the church, society and the world as a whole. If anything, I have learned this too. For adults are truly the major players in the sum-total human affairs and an educational investment in them is a direct contribution to their lives and a powerful influence, through them, upon the world in which we live. Consequently, I draw this important conclusion.

That the greatest opportunity for *immediate* personal, familial, ecclesiastical, social, cultural, political, and economic influence (etc.) that this University possesses is by means of the education of the adult student from a deeply Christian perspective in the Applied Studies Program.

We are in the midst of the Adult Student Revolution; the tradition of adult education in Western Civilization urges us on. We sit on a veritable gold mine; our campus is like acres of diamonds. But we must know the way we are going; our destination must be sure. This paper has been submitted as a small contribution to help clarify the way. And in conclusion, I submit to you the "Parable of the Educator" to encourage us to "grasp our historic opportunities and prove ourselves equal to them" (Malik 1980: 289).

There once was a traveler whom they called Educator. And before him lay a journey. For Mr. Educator believed in his heart that in a certain direction was to be found the achievement of his heart's desire. So he prepared himself for the journey, knowing it would be an arduous one. And he mapped his course with care, for the road was devious. But he knew the destination he was seeking. And his friends gathered to bid him farewell. They respected Mr. Educator although they never understood too well all the mysteries he carried in his mind and pondered in his heart. They waved their good-byes. And they turned to one another as he left saying: "He will get to his heart's desire. He knows the course to take. The goals he is seeking are clear to him. And his direction toward them is sure" (Brown 1957: 159).

Sources

- Adler, Mortimer J. "Why Only Adults Can Be Educated," in *Invitation to Lifelong Learning*. Ronald Gross, editor. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1982.
- Apple, M. "Reproduction and Contradiction in Education: An Introduction." In M. Apple, editor, *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education: Essays in Class Ideology and the State*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.
- Apps, Jerold W. *The Adult Learner on Campus: A Guide for Instructors and Administrators*. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1981.
- Beder, Hal. "Purposes and Philosophies of Adult Education" in *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* edited by Sharan B. Merriam and Phyllis M. Cunningham. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989.
- Bergevin, P. A. *A Philosophy for Adult Education*. New York: Seabury Press, 1967.
- Bourdieu, P., and Passeron, J. *Reproduction*. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage, 1977.
- Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. *Schooling in Capitalist America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- Brown, Kenneth I. "The Goals of Christian Education," in *Toward a Christian Philosophy of Higher Education* edited by J. P. von Gruening. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957.
- College Entrance Examination Board's Office of Adult Learning Services Conference Flier: "Lifelong Education in America: Becoming a Nation of Students." 1991.
- Deeds, William. "Non-Traditional Students: Why Do I Love Thee, Let Me Count The Reasons." *Midnight Oil*. Alpha Sigma Lambda National Newsletter, 1989-90.
- Elias, J., and Merriam, S. *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education*. Melbourne, Florida: Kreiger, 1980.
- Eliot, Thomas Stearns. "Modern Education and the Classics," in *Essays Ancient and Modern*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932, 1936.
- Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Penguin Classics. Edited and with an Introduction by Kenneth Silverman. New York: Penguin Books, 1987.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.
- Gergen, Kenneth. *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gramsci, A. *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers, 1971.
- Grattan, Hartley C., editor. "A Founding Father as Adult Educator," in *American Ideas About Adult Education, 1710-1951*. Teachers College Press, 1959.
- Gross, Ronald, editor. *Invitation to Lifelong Learning*. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1982.
- Hallenbeck, Wilbur C. "The Function and Place of Adult Education in American Society," in *Handbook of Adult Education in the United States*. Edited by Malcolm Knowles. Chicago: Adult Education Association of the U.S.A, 1960.

- Harrington, Fred Harvey. *The Future of Adult Education*. Foreward by John W. Gardner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979.
- Hart, J. K. *Adult Education*. New York: Crowell, 1927.
- Holmes, Arthur F. *All Truth is God's Truth*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977.
- _____. *The Idea of a Christian College*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975.
- Jensen, Gale, Liveright, A. A., Hallenbeck, Wilbur. *Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study*. Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.: 1964.
- Kidd, J. R. *How Adults Learn*. Revised, Updated and Completely Rewritten. New York: Cambridge, The Adult Education Company, 1959; 1973.
- Knowles, Malcolm. *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1973.
- _____. *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*. Revised edition. New York: Cambridge Books, 1980.
- _____. "Andragogy: The New Science of Education," in *Invitation to Lifelong Learning*. Ronald Gross, editor. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1982.
- Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Revised edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Abolition of Man*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1947.
- Lindeman, E. *The Meaning of Adult Education*. New York: Republic, 1926.
- Malik, Charles H. "The Two Tasks." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23 (December 1980): 289ff.
- Marsden, George. "The Soul of the American University." in *Faculty Dialogue* 15 (Fall 1991): 83-118. Originally published in *First Things*, January 1991.
- Maslow, A. H. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper and Row, 1954.
- Mead, Margaret. "No One Can 'Complete and Education,'" in Ronald Gross, editor, *Invitation to Lifelong Learning*. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1982.
- Mezirow, J. D. "A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education." *Adult Education* 32 (1981): 3-24.
- Newman, John Henry. *The Idea of a University, in English Prose of the Victorian Era*. Edited by Charles Fredrick Harrold and William d. Templeman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.
- Ramm, Bernard. *The Christian College in the Twentieth Century*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963.
- Ryken, Leland. *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were*. Foreward by J. I. Packer. Zondervan, 1986.
- Sagan, Carl. *Cosmos*. New York: Random House, 1980.
- Sheats, P. H., Hayne, C. D., and Spence, R. B. *Adult Education: The Community Approach*. New York: Dryden Press, 1953.

- Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic World View Catalog*. Second edition. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1988.
- Spikes, Frank. "The Worldwide Struggle for Adult Education," in *Invitation to Lifelong Learning*. Ronald Gross, editor. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1982.
- Stevenson, Leslie. *Seven Theories of Human Nature: Christianity, Freud, Lorenz, Marx, Sartre, Skinner, Plato*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Stubblefield, Harold W. and Keane, Patrick. "The History of Adult and Continuing Education" in *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* edited by Sharan B. Merriam and Phylis M. Cunningham. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989, pp. 26-36.
- Trueblood, D. Elton. "The Marks of a Christian College," in *Toward a Christian Philosophy of Higher Education* edited by J. P. von Gruening. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957.
- Vermilye, Dyckman W., editor and Ferris, William, associate editor. *Lifelong Learners-A New Clientele for Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. "Introduction," to Wallace B. Donam, *Business Adrift*. New York: McGraw Hill Co., 1931.