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CURRENT EMPHASES
IN
ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

CURRENT EMPHASES IN ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

With the advent of the atomic bomb and subsequent atomic research it has been necessary to reconsider and re-evaluate educational aims and methods. This age of atomic power challenges modern educators in an unprecedented way with the urgency of their task. No longer is the emphasis in education concentrated solely upon youth. Adult needs of security, cultural and social literacy and an opportunity for freedom and constructive creativity demand primacy in post-war planning. Adults must be released from "provincial-mindedness,"¹ narrow customs, "spectatoritis," and prejudices.

"We face possible social disintegration from our material gains, if not counterballasted by spiritual gains of comparable degree and character."²

As Cartwright states:

"Historians of the future will look back upon the middle years of the twentieth century as a period fraught with dangers, wherein the mechanical inventiveness of man dangerously had outstripped his capacity to solve human relationships - as between individuals; as between groups, classes, and races; as between states striving for pre-eminence in a world polity. Such historians will note that no 'man-on-horseback' appeared to lead the multitudes of the earth into a better mode of living . . . that peace and balance among men came only through a long and often tedious process of education for understanding. It is the peculiar responsibility of adult education to accelerate that ordinarily slow process."³

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1. F.L. Fagley: A Little Handbook on Adult Education, p. 5.
2. Alain Locke: "Education for Adulthood," Adult Education Journal, July, 1947, p. 10.
3. M.A. Cartwright: "Why Adult Education is Important to You and to Your Community," Adult Education Journal, January, 1947, p. 5.

In view of the significance of the present situation and its implications for the church, in this study an attempt will be made to discover the current emphases in the field of adult Christian education. This field is broad, touching practically every area of man's thinking and experience, and, therefore, it will be impossible to make an exhaustive study of each phase. The purpose of this study is to present the developing currents of adult education in the church against a background of the current trends in modern secular educational theory relating to adults, and a brief summary of recent emphases in adult Christian education in five representative Protestant denominations.

B. Definition of Adult Education

To obtain a clear conception of the subject it is of vital importance to understand the meaning of the terms used.

James Truslow Adams has divided the two words to give the following definition:

"An adult is a person who has passed beyond the age at which he would ordinarily have had education at school or college."¹

"Education is anything which can be taught to an individual to help him to develop his various abilities to the full."²

A more detailed definition is given by the Indiana State Adult Education Association compiled by Harold F. Brigham:

"Adult education, in the broad acceptance of the term, comprehends all educational activities engaged in by persons who have terminated their basic formal schooling and assumed the responsibilities of adulthood. Adult education is therefore not limited to any age level, nor to any restricted form of educational activity. Its essence is the impact of educational processes on adult life. Its significance lies in the assumption that educational processes which are initiated

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1. James Truslow Adams: Frontiers of American Culture, p. 2.
2. Ibid., p. 7.

and cultivated in the brief years of schooling can be, and in a democracy must be, maintained and developed throughout adult life. Its ultimate end is that individual growth may become synonymous with community, national, and world progress."¹

The International Council of Religious Education defines adult Christian education as:

"The Christian education of adults proceeds upon the assumption that religious change and growth should be a lifelong process . . . Any directed procedure or experience through which adults grow religiously is adult education."²

From these statements the conclusion can be reached that a large proportion of the population comes under the classification of adults. The war veteran who may be continuing his formal schooling, the young person between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five, who would normally be considered an adolescent, who has left school to go to work, and the traditionally considered adult would be included in this category.

C. Method of Procedure

For general background in this study of adult Christian education a brief survey of the psychological, economic, political and social trends of secular education of adults will be presented, along with a statement of the implication of these trends for Christian education.

The developing currents of adult education in the church will be included, presenting first an investigation of the present influence of the Protestant Church, and then indicating the changing nature of the church's task and new emphases in the field of adult work.

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1. H.F. Brigham: "Indiana Sets Goals," Adult Education Journal, July, 1947, p. 154.
2. International Council of Religious Education: Leaders' Guides for Second Series Courses of the New Standard Leadership Curriculum, p. 1.

The concluding chapter will be a presentation of organizational contributions to adult Christian education containing both the interdenominational and denominational work. The definition, purpose, and present activities of the United Christian Adult Movement will be stated, and the current emphases in adult work in five major Protestant denominations will be indicated. The denominations selected include the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, the Methodist Church, the Northern Baptist Convention, the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

In conclusion, findings of this study will be briefly summarized.

D. Sources of Data

Sources will include current literature in the field of adult education including recent periodicals, literature in the field of adult Christian education, materials published by the International Council of Religious Education and by leading Protestant denominational departments of adult work.

CHAPTER I

CURRENT TRENDS IN MODERN EDUCATIONAL THEORY
RELATING TO ADULTS

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RELATING TO ADULTS

A. Introduction

The war years have been marked by a revival of interest in adult education, and today it is a vital force in American and even international life. Before 1924 the term "adult education" was practically unknown. During the last quarter of a century tremendous strides have been taken in this field so that today there are national associations of adult education in most civilized countries, and in this country there are state associations, and in some regions community associations of adult education, as well as at least five national agencies for the promotion of various aspects of adult education. The New York Adult Education Council in a recent report indicates the attitude of leaders in the field of education in this country: "In any rapidly changing civilization there must be continuous study by adult citizens . . . In a democracy there is no other way."¹

In connection with the war effort there was a spurt in the development and use of materials in the educating of adults. The armed forces made use of audio-visual equipment on a large scale as a teaching technique. The radio, moving pictures, lectures, discussions and printed materials are some of the chief means used today as a result of the experiences of war-time adult educators.

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1. Post-War Adult Education in New York City: The Report of a Committee appointed by the New York Adult Education Council, March 10, 1944, p. 1.

While advance was made during the war, critical problems have arisen in the field, either as direct or indirect consequences of World War II. In this chapter some of these problems will be presented, followed by the current objectives of adult education, the psychological, economic, political and social trends influencing adults, concluding with the implications of these trends for adult Christian education today.

B. Problems of Present-day Adult Education

Man is pressed on every hand with propaganda of every type, and understands little of the principles behind its design. One of the urgent problems facing adult educators is a method of creating understanding and discernment in gullible American citizens. Mark Starr urges that the "Task of public enlightenment . . . be attempted in every form by which knowledge is transmitted."¹ This enlightenment involves more than the acquisition of facts. He states further: "We acquire more and more facts but lack the loom of social intelligence to weave them into a consistent pattern."² There is need for devising more effective tools.

Inefficiency is another problem closely related to that of public enlightenment. When the tons of printed matter distributed to the American public annually, the hours of radio time, and the quantities of educational film strip are considered, the realization of the tremendous price of inefficiency in these channels can be glimpsed. The resulting lack of public understanding is both pathetic and dangerous. The heart of the problem is the means

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1. Mark Starr: "The Coming Revolution in Adult Education," Saturday Review of Literature, February 8, 1947, p. 7.
2. Ibid.

of interpretation in order to use constructively every available source of information. Adults must be awakened to discernment regarding frauds, quacks and misinformation being imposed upon them.

The current confusions of American adults can be attributed to the increasing complexity of the world, the demand for too many decisions, the making of these decisions without pertinent facts or adequate knowledge, unreliable sources of information and impotence in selecting between conflicting values. Eduard C. Lindeman states that fear, cynicism, withdrawal, blame-fixing and hatred are the expected outcomes of these confusions.¹

World War II brought to focus in American thinking an emphasis upon specialized training which has continued to the present. War veterans and other adults are taking advantage of short-term training programs offered in the field of adult education. Among education-seeking adults what has been termed "liberal education" has been almost totally side-stepped in favor of specialized short-term courses. Because of the expert ability of war educators in presenting technical knowledge in "short periods" and "compact packages"² it is probable that the nature of higher education in this country will be permanently changed. Acceleration has become the slogan of adult education. "Other terms which resounded through the college halls were revision, consolidation, reorganization, reorientation, and special training."³

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1. Eduard C. Lindeman: "Adult Education and the Democratic Discipline," Adult Education Journal, July, 1947, p. 10.
2. Dora Clement Talkington: "New Interest in Adult Education," Baptist Leader, January, 1948, p. 56.
3. Ibid.

With the cessation of war, educators expected a return to traditional educational procedures, but instead they are faced with students who continue to have short-term objectives, and who are holding to specialization, seeking material advancement and social improvement.

The Joint Committee for the Study of Adult Education Policies, Principles, and Practices, representing five agencies of adult education in this country, has compiled a list of the problems being faced in the field at present. Primary among these is the immediate need for the recruitment and training of leadership for adult education. They recognize, too, the need for the development of community responsibility for a program of adult education. Adults need to be stimulated to help themselves and their society. More and better programs must be prepared for specialized adult groups, - illiterates, the retired, the handicapped and foreign-born. "There is need for the creation of understanding of the vital relationship between general adult education and the vocational¹ education of adults." Adequate legislation and compensation is necessary for the program. There should also be "provision for the interchange of information on patterns and plans of organization of local and other adult education programs."²

A separate field in adult education is that of family life. The present strains imposed upon the family as a unit present a grave problem. The changing temporal scene with the displacement of large numbers of families, the critical housing problem in cities and industrial areas, and the disintegrative influence

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1. "Adventures in Religion and Education," Religious Education, July-August, 1947, p. 251.
2. Ibid.

of commercialized entertainment contribute to the breakdown of this important social group. Insecurity, juvenile delinquency, low standards of morality among youth, as well as a high divorce rate among adults, are a few of the consequences of the problems of the family. The problems created by these conditions show the need for provision of social opportunity perhaps even more than vocational opportunity.

An English educator, Sir Fred Clarke, specifies "cultural lag" as a problem of this day. It is natural for society to seek "a substitute adjustment on a superficial level"¹ when there is too great a lag. He recognizes the need for studies which give stability to life's foundations. His recommendations are in striking contrast to the present American trend of short-term courses, specialization and acceleration. He states:

"It may appear a bit startling, but I look forward to the day when we shall get at any rate, one department of adult education which is trying to do something to deepen the springs of the personal life, when you will even have classes deeply interested in the study of theology."²

Numerous and varied as these problems appear, they give an indication of the areas in which stress is being given in the development of modern educational theory in the post-war system of adult education.

C. Recent Objectives of Adult Education

Objectives in adult education may be stated in terms of the individual and in terms of the program of adult education. The National Education Association has published a list of ten objectives prepared by the Indiana State Education Association in terms of the

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1. Sir Fred Clarke: The New Importance of Adult Education, p. 7.
2. Ibid., p. 13.

individual. It is the aim of this group that every adult may discover his potentialities and a plan to achieve them in keeping with his capacities, needs and interests; that he may develop his mind through clear, original thinking, and through use of creativity; that he may use language with maximum skill, with insight into the interpretation of basic centers of knowledge; that he may maintain physical fitness; be equipped vocationally; develop Christian ideals; use leisure time constructively; develop personality through service; be prepared through training for family life; and be qualified for intelligent citizenship.¹

In terms of the program of adult education the objectives for the individual can be realized. All of the objectives of adult education will not be considered here, but those which have been developed in an attempt to meet adequately the present situation.

"Materials developed for adult education use, if they are to be of real service, must be devised with a view to the specific audience by whom they are to be used. They must be fashioned for acceptability not at one or two, but at many levels of difficulty, these levels to be fixed roughly in accordance with educational experience."²

This objective is stated in terms of specialization which is recognized as an important trend.

Other objectives include a careful analysis of existing materials in all forms; an attempt to create new materials in the areas analyzed utilizing principles considered basic; an increased understanding of the needs and interests of people, and an opportunity for students to share in planning and compiling programs; to develop an adequate supply of trained leaders through presenting

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1. H.F. Brigham: "Indiana Sets Goals," Adult Education Journal, July, 1947, p. 154.
2. Annual Report of the Director for 1945-46, American Association for Adult Education, p. 9.

the urgency of the need and making attractive the status of the work; guidance as an integral part of service to adults; closer relationship between existing adult agencies in the community; constant evaluation of experience, and modification of programs and methods in¹ light of available evidence.

The materials for adult education must be geared to experience, interest and need, and must supply their own background.

Summing up the objectives, both individual and organizational, the fundamental aim is to help men "enter into their² inheritance."

D. Psychological Trends in Adult Education

Dr. Irving Lorge notes that there have been few new discoveries in the field of the psychology of adult intelligence. He says: "Most of what we have learned during the past twenty-five³ years has to do with the psychiatric deviant among adults."

The view of Thorndike, expressed in 1928, is still held, that,

"Adults from twenty-five to forty-five should expect to learn at nearly the same rate, and in nearly the same manner as they would have learned the same thing at fifteen or twenty . . . Age in itself is a minor factor in either success or failure. Capacity, interest, energy, and time are the essentials."⁴

Thorndike adds:

"The time for learning anything is when you need it. For there are great advantages which accrue when learning satisfies some real need, benefits some cherished purpose, and is made use of at once, and so is kept active and healthy for use."⁵

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1. Post-War Adult Education in New York City, Report of a Committee appointed by the New York Adult Education Council, March, 1944, p. 7.
2. Fagley: op. cit., p. 29.
3. Locke: op. cit., p. 194.
4. Fagley: op. cit., p. 15.
5. Ibid.

One of the factors indicated by the Strong Interest tests is that with increased age comes increased resistance to change. There is also an indication that the educational activities of an individual before the age of twenty-five greatly influence the development of later adult interests.

Average adult reading ability regresses, but this does not mean a regression in mental capacity. As in other areas of life the effect of disuse is apparent. Lorge also states that the "diminishing powers of sensory perception that go hand in hand with the aging process also affect people's interest and learning habits."¹

There has been increased interest in many adult educational activities in the past half century, but educational interests are more common among those who are already educated.

There have been studies of adult interests in recent years by librarians, publishers, directors of correspondence courses and persons interested in radio broadcasts, but psychologists have made few new contributions.

E. Economic, Political and Social Trends Influencing Adults

"The experiences of life, situations requiring self-reliance, new inventions and discoveries, all have taught adults to adjust themselves to changing conditions and thus have brought them some degree of education."²

The world today is a world of change. In an atomic era there is added incentive to build up a democratic self-governing citizenry. It is an imperative for survival. However, the means used cannot be the same as those used in establishing a disciplined army. An independent citizenry is needed in a democracy. Individuals do not live in a static vacuum, and there is "complete absence

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1. Locke: op. cit., p. 134.
2. Talkington: op. cit., p. 55.

of any inflexible status."¹ There is need for constant readjustment, economically, politically and socially.

In a period of inflation in many parts of the world economic education is necessary in order to avoid a corresponding period of depression. Society needs men and women aware of the economic situation who have the knowledge, capacity, and creative genius to reconstruct our civilization so that higher levels may be attained.

"The greatest handicap, at the moment, is not primarily our economic structure. Though far from perfect, it allows much more latitude for creative living than has yet been capitalized."²

There is economic need, and there is political need, but the greatest need is social. Through every means of publicity the political situation is kept before the eyes of the American public, however, this is usually done by prejudiced partisans, so that it is difficult to picture the true status.

One of the significant trends among adults has been an upswing in interest in international affairs, the need for relief in war-devastated countries, and the challenge to approach political problems seriously and intelligently.

Mark Starr points out that there are three needed emphases in adult education today, including a revision of ideas concerning the place of government action in public life and a better knowledge of the machinery and procedures of local, state and federal agencies; the necessity for international understanding; and education in industrial relationships.³ He firmly believes that there should be more emphasis on civic and political education, and that adult education should provoke discussion of the relation of the individual

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1. Adams: op. cit., p. 327.
2. D. Hewitt and K.F. Mather: Adult Education a Dynamic for Democracy, p. 15.
3. Starr: op. cit., p. 7.

to the state. He recognizes the problems of treating minority opinion in discussing controversial topics, and the general lack of recognition of adult education.¹

The present social trends emphasize the need for social literacy on the part of all members in a democracy. A large part of public entertainment could be constructively and attractively altered as a means of adult education. One of the newest developments in adult education has been the establishing of "autonomous groups"² where individuals with similar interests and abilities unite for the release and development of creativity. There is hope that in a democratic society these groups should function with success.

In the program of adult education there should be a constant awareness of economic, political and social conditions, and every possible endeavor should be made to increase the spread of authentic information and instruction in these areas of human life.

F. Implications for Christian Education

An indictment of the church for its neglect and apparent unconcern of the opportunity before it in the field of adult education is included in the report of Alain Locke in the Adult Education Journal, July, 1947. The church is accused of being too involved in matters of organizational policy, and of being exclusive rather than inclusive, thus being ineffective as an adult educational force in the community. Locke recognizes the areas in which the church can make an important contribution, such as

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1. Starr: op. cit., p. 7.
2. Locke: op. cit., p. 136.

in the problem of racial tolerance, labor problems, the problem of juvenile delinquency, and the need for recreation.¹

" . . . Churches must help in the creation of an awareness of the social problems in the community and encourage its socially-minded leaders to participate in the various social service programs of the community."²

There must be an interdenominational recognition of the necessity of cooperative planning, and the pooling of interests of community organizations. The church's greatest responsibility in terms of the total community life lies in building the spiritual lives of individuals into the character of the community life.³

Having depicted the implications of secular adult education for Christian education as stated by an outstanding secular adult educator, it is necessary to look also at the situation from within the church organization. Looking at the world picture in an atomic age with a knowledge of the current trends in secular education it is imperative that the church make a thorough study of the problems of adults, evaluate its present objectives, methods and program, and reconstruct its adult educational philosophy and program in the light of present needs.

The church is challenged in a vital way to give spiritual security and undergirding to adults. In view of the problems and dangers of the present civilization the church dare not miss its opportunity. New streamlined methods may need to be incorporated into the church program, but the church must realize that its first and foremost contribution is a spiritual one and, therefore, new methods must be centered on the one objective of the extension of the kingdom of God.

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1. Locke: op. cit., p. 136.
2. Ibid., p. 137.
3. Ibid.

The Christian motive must underlie all of the efforts of the church in the field of adult Christian education. This must be presented in a way that will cause adults to recognize sufficiently their needs and responsibilities, so that they will not ignore as trivial and inconsequential the church program in their lives.

The demand for leadership is the same as in the secular field. Trained teachers with dynamic leadership are needed. The church in its program of leadership education must endeavor to meet this need.

Adults "will study if given conditions which suit them, if given studies for which they feel a need and in which they have an interest, if given short-time motivations and near-by specific objectives strong enough and worthy enough, if given teachers with class-room skill and a knowledge of the subject being taught, if given a tempo of teaching fitted to adult capacity, if given short class periods and condensed study materials. Churches that provide a program that meets these stipulations eventually will be able to display proudly a large group of adults well trained for the service of God."¹

G. Summary

This chapter has revealed that there are marked changes in the world today, that in secular life there is an increased recognition of the contributions of the adult education program. The problems are many and varied, but adult educators are revising out-moded methods. The objectives of adult education have been revised in order to effectively provide for the current demands. There have been few new discoveries in the field of the psychology of adult intelligence. Adults learn as readily as youth when the need, interest and stimulus are sufficient. The economic, political and social trends provoke the need for a new awareness on the part of adult educators, and an incorporation into the

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1. Talkington: op. cit., p. 56.

adult education program means for education in these areas. The implications for the adult Christian education program are significant. The church must recognize its opportunity and challenge, and rethink and revise its present philosophy and program in order to meet the urgent demand.

"Adult education will save men from shallow lives, wasted on frivolities or sunk in despondency, and will give them some knowledge of the great thoughts of the ages."¹

This is the challenge of adult Christian education with the added contribution of the spiritual dynamic for effective living.

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1. Fagley: op. cit., p. 29.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPING CURRENTS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH TODAY

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPING CURRENTS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH TODAY

A. Introduction

The shifting emphases in modern educational theory related to adults have their counterpart in the program of adult Christian education. The influence of new techniques developed during World War II has extended not only into the field of secular education, but also into the sphere of the church. With the recognition that adults have made our world what it is, the church realizes that the ability and power to make the world what it should be lies in the hands of adults, and that to accomplish this task the Christian church is responsible for providing the¹ training and guidance necessary.

In the summer of 1946, a National Adult Work Planning Conference was held with the purpose of considering the problems which confront the church as a result of the war, and the present situation in which the church is proving inadequate in meeting the demands that should normally devolve upon it. The United Christian Adult Movement sponsored the conference with delegates from nineteen denominations and eleven interdenominational agencies. The findings of this group have been published by the International Council of Religious Education in the report, Looking Ahead in Adult Work.

In this chapter some of the discoveries and recommendations of the National Adult Work Planning Conference will be briefly indicated. The changing aspects and present trends of the church's

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1. Cf. M. Leo Rippy: The Work of the Adult Division of the Local Church, p. 5.

task will be viewed in the light of the present influence of the Protestant church, and in the fields of missions, evangelism, Bible study and other study courses, social education and action, and stewardship. The significance of the emphasis on parent education and the Christian family will be considered. The most urgent recent emphases in the field of adult Christian education as recognized by the 1946 National Adult Work Planning Conference or leading denominations include work with young adults, retired persons, and men's work.² A study of the present predicament of these groups and proposed means for correcting the situation through a well-developed program of adult Christian education will conclude the chapter.

B. Changing Nature of the Church's Task

1. The present influence of the Protestant church.

In society today the church's influence is not as potent as it has been in the past.³ Barclay states:

"In spite of increased membership, it has ceased to have a controlling influence upon the lives of the majority of the population, both members and non-members . . . it does not seem to have anything to say that is really relevant to the major interests and concerns. No longer does it command the time and effort of its members . . . that it once did."⁴

There has been a slow and yet clear awakening to the total lack of effectiveness of the church upon the world at large. It has failed to present a united Christian front. Barclay indicts further:

"The church is racked with conflicting impulses. It feels under obligation to do something toward the making of a new world, but concrete suggestions are likely to be opposed as 'unsafe' or

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1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, pp. 71, 77, and 78.
2. Cf. Letter dated November 6, 1947, written by Richard E. Plummer, Director, Department of Adult Work, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
3. Cf. Wade C. Barclay: The Church and a Christian Society, p. 50.
4. Ibid.

'radical.' Many church members appear to be wholly unaware of the tremendous changes taking place in the world and of their significance. They continue to speak in traditional terms, using religious methods that were suited to ways of living and types of religious experience now long outgrown, and perpetuating organizational forms and procedures that no longer have vital significance."¹

The church is threatened today by the forces of Communism and secularism which would remove or make ineffective the contributions of the church in a democracy. The forces opposing the church have rightly questioned the reality of the faith which the church professes because "The brand of Christianity exemplified in the lives of most church members is neither socially redemptive nor re-creative."²

"With some notable exceptions, organized Christianity contents itself 'with pouring oil into wounds that desperately call for surgery.' So far as vigorous attempts to replace the prevailing social order with a new and righteous order is concerned, the Church as a whole is not even conscious of the task as a religious obligation."³

For a large proportion of church members the creed which they profess is not based upon personal conviction but is the result of family inheritance or tradition."⁴

"Despite the fact that the open Bible is the corner stone of Protestantism, few of the members of the churches possess any thorough or deep knowledge of the Bible. By many it is held in a kind of sentimental regard, but there are few who read it regularly and fewer still who study it systematically."⁵

With this increased ignorance concerning basic religious truths, one can understand the predominating secularization of this day which the church is endeavoring to combat. This secularization has taken place in the American educational system, in economic and

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1. Barclay: op. cit., p. 53.
2. Ibid., p. 58.
3. Ibid.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 59.
5. Ibid., p. 60.

political life, and even has succeeded in influencing the life of the Christian church. Instead of Christianity bearing a strong influence upon these other areas, the prevalent cultural standard has caused the church to think in terms of materialistic values, thus robbing it of a vital and dynamic spiritual impact upon current life and thought.¹

In a recent issue of Time, the weekly newsmagazine, further indication of the condition of Protestant Christianity today has been noted.

"Modern man knows a great deal about the nature of the atom. But he knows almost nothing about the nature of God, almost never thinks about it, and is complacently unaware that there may be any reason to. Theology, the intellectual system whereby man sorts out his thoughts about faith and grace, enjoys much less popular appeal than astrology . . . This is scarcely strange, since among millions of Christians religion itself is little more than a mental worthy habit, socially manifested in church attendance often more sporadic and much less disturbing than regular visits to the dentist. To the mass of untheological Christians, God has become, at best, a rather unfairly furtive presence, a cozy thought. At worst, He is conversationally embarrassing."²

This picture of Protestantism in the present scene is both sobering and challenging. It is a paradox with all of the elements of futility. Man has unprecedented scientific knowledge and its resultant power at his disposal, but it is unharnessed power, and from every indication is increasingly devoted to destructive purposes. World War II stands as a grim reminder to the world of man's destructive potentiality.³

"The more abundance increases, the more resentment becomes the characteristic new look on 20th Century faces. The more production multiplies, the more scarcities become endemic. The faster science gains on disease . . . the more the human race dies at the hands of living men. Men have never been so

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1. Cf. Barclay: op. cit., p. 61.
2. "Faith for a Lenten Age," Time, March 8, 1948, p. 70.
3. Cf. Ibid.

educated, but wisdom, even as an idea, has conspicuously vanished from the world."¹

In the light of the church's critical position in this atomic age, its evident ineffectiveness in coping with the present world situation, its limited influence upon society, and the increasing prevalence of secularism, leaders of adult Christian education are endeavoring to view objectively the changing nature of the church's task.

2. Changing nature of the church's task in the field of Missions.²

In viewing the developing currents in adult Christian education, the ineffectiveness of previous methods caused the members of the National Adult Work Planning Conference held at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, July 28 - August 4, 1946, to face the situation of the world today. Recognizing man's universal need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and convinced of the power of the Gospel for the needs of the world and the individual members of society, they undertook a consideration of the tremendous responsibilities facing post-war Christianity.

The world is no longer looked upon in terms of isolated countries, but as one world. As a result of World War II many countries have become devastated, many peoples uprooted, and a world-wide fear of atomic power and feeling of insecurity have laid hold upon the hearts of mankind. In a new way the door for the Christian church has opened, and people are looking for assurance and stability in the face of their desperate need. New technological developments have provided the church with implements and methods insuring the future of missions of greater effectiveness

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1. "Faith for a Lenten Age," op. cit., p. 70.
2. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, pp. 5-14.

in medicine, in the use of audio-visual aids, in agriculture, literacy, transportation and communication. With the knowledge that "Human solvents of the world's ills have failed pathetically,"¹ the church is in a position to take the initiative in pointing to the solution which it recognizes can come through the power of God alone. The urgent need is a call to the church to new consecration, that God's power may be released afresh before this civilization destroys itself.

Missionary education is recognized as being broader than education in the program and activities of a single denomination, but as including the total work of the total church. Through the Missionary Education Movement progress has been made, but new areas are opening here also. In thinking of the world as "one world" the Church is now being faced with the importance of an ecumenical Church. Missionary education materials are being prepared for the entire church, not just the church in America. The programs developed for evangelism and church extension in the home church are being shared with mission churches. Thus far this has been done only in a very limited way.

Another new emphasis in the field of missions is that of using native workers in positions of authority in mission stations, with missionaries from other lands working with them but in no way dominating the picture. This transfer of control to the nationals does not imply a transfer of control to state agencies. The church realizes the independent nature of its spiritual task, and while it desires to cooperate with government agencies seeking man's welfare in this day, it is endeavoring to make a distinctive Christian contribution.

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The provision of relief for purposes of restoration and reconstruction in needy areas by the Christian church is a silent, effective evangelistic invitation demonstrating the power of Christian love. This is beneficial to the giver as well as the recipient of the gifts, as it is a means of revitalizing and increasing the missionary vision at home.

"Religious liberty throughout the world, an essential in human society, is a goal to be attained and whole-heartedly maintained. According to Jesus a child of God is of supreme value. His freedom to develop into likeness of his Father must not be hampered. Freedom to worship, to teach, and to serve God in accordance with one's conscience and desire, freedom to change one's religion, to organize into religious groups, and to propagate religion must be guaranteed for all men. In all our Protestant education, strong and continued emphasis must be laid upon the nature, the specific meaning and the basic importance of religious freedom."¹

Anti-Semitism is another current problem facing the Christian church. The World Council of Churches has urged that Christians in the United States endeavor to combat this evil in every way possible.

"Of the total of 16,000,000 Jews in the world's population when Hitler came to power, 5,700,000 have been ruthlessly exterminated. Of the remaining 10,000,000 or more, over 5,000,000 are in the United States. That is, one out of every two Jews left in the world lives in this country."²

Suggestions for maintaining a Christian attitude toward the Jew include denouncing anti-Semitic practices as un-Christian, giving assistance to suffering Jews who have been persecuted, aiding in the replacement of displaced Jews, seeking to promote goodwill and neighborliness among all men, both Christians and Jews.

Through every channel available the church is attempting to make adults realize that "Christian education . . . cannot be

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 7.
2. Ibid., p. 8.

Christian without missions."¹ An enlarged understanding of the organized enterprise of missions is being given through current educational projects in adult Christian education.

In considering the missionary enterprise with its new emphasis upon unity with no distinction between "home" and "foreign" missions, special attention is also being given to conditions in the United States. Since the war, the rights of minority groups have come to the attention of the church in a new way. Previous to World War II some of the minority groups such as the American Indians, Negroes, and other racial groups were provided for by the Christian church largely by means of segregation. Institutions were established to meet the religious and educational needs of these groups, and medical care and social welfare aid were provided. The church's responsibility was discharged quite comfortably. However, the war changed the picture for these minority groups. They shared in the task of winning the peace and protecting freedom and democracy for all Americans. Thousands of them became uprooted during the war.

With the end of the war the acute problem of becoming re-established in remunerative employment has confronted them. These people are no longer satisfied with returning to a life of segregation and discrimination. The church is developing a different pattern in order to meet the needs of these uprooted Americans. This is being accomplished both through individual and group effort. With adults it involves a re-education and a changing of established attitudes toward the uprooted and migrant groups. It is possible for young people and children to be educated easily in Christian attitudes and

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 8.

relationships if these patterns have become integrated into the lives of the adults with whom they associate. The church is now emphasizing the importance of genuine conviction and courage as a means of supplying a Christian solution to this critical problem facing the community and nation.

"Public conscience and opinion must be led to understand that race discriminations are ultimately unjust through the school, the press, the radio, public speech, moving pictures, and practical projects in interracial friendships."¹

The church provides opportunities for participation in fellowship within its organized activities. The promotion of short-term study courses among adults is one method used to clarify the problems involved in minority groups. The ultimate aim of these courses is participation in projects to correct the abuses to which these groups are subject. The Missionary Education Movement and most denominational headquarters supply suitable literature for courses of this nature.

Looking at the American Indian in his present environment in contrast to his former life indicated a need for a change in the church's strategy in its missionary program. America has tended to glamorize the American Indian with his head-dress and tribal regalia, and has failed to see in him an ordinary individual with capacity for training and potentiality for leadership in American life today. "During the war approximately 20,000 Indian men and women served in our country's armed forces, while approximately 40,000 went into the war industries."² The current trend among the American Indians is away from the reservations into cities and towns. The Protestant church is seeking to secure Christian principles in legislation concerning the Indian, and to develop native leadership to serve not

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 12.

only in Indian churches, but also in white parishes, and to include the Indian in the life of the local church and community.

The rural church has presented another area for emphasis and revitalization. Most of the candidates for the ministry and missionary service come from homes in rural areas, or are the children of parents raised in country churches. In spite of the former lack of emphasis upon the work of the rural church, it has consistently provided a larger proportion of leaders than the city church. In a rural section there is better opportunity for centering community life around the church and, therefore, the church is in a position to exert a much stronger influence upon social, political and economic forces than the average city church. The problem facing the church is the inadequacy and insufficiency of its leadership. Hundreds of churches in small communities are without pastors or trained religious leaders. There has been increased cooperation among many denominations in order to avoid duplication of effort, and in order to supply a larger number of communities with the resources which the church offers. Also, the church is presenting the challenge of rural work to young people in theological seminaries training for Christian service.

The recommendations for the rural church made by the National Adult Work Planning Conference include the use of all available means, such as preaching, surveys, distribution of literature, the formation of study groups for community enterprises, encouraging and participating in Community Councils to secure cooperation between the church and all other community agencies, working for church unity, and introducing tested programs and organizational methods.

During World War II large numbers of people migrated to

cities for work in the war industries. An immediate problem was that of housing for such large groups, and the inevitable result has been congested living. Cities have pushed out, and on the fringes large communities of war workers have settled in temporary and inadequate community housing projects. Many of these people have remained in the cities and are not considering returning to rural life. The church has found it necessary to alter its procedures to provide for them. In some instances it has been necessary to build new churches, but in other cases relocating or uniting previously established churches has been of assistance in solving some of the problems. Whatever the method used, the church realizes that it dare not fail these citizens.

Many of the workers who have migrated to the cities have been Negroes, and race prejudice has caused new tensions. The church is endeavoring to take a strong positive position in the promotion of racial tolerance and understanding.

Another tension about which the church is concerned is that created by the existing labor-management conflict in industrial centers. Also, "The reconversion of war industries to a peace-time basis is creating problems of re-employment, unemployment, relief, racial tensions, and social insecurity." ¹ The church today sees its task in ministering to its constituency in every sphere of human need and is, therefore, studying these points of stress in order that its members may participate as intelligent Christians in finding constructive answers to the problems where their lives are affected.

In meeting the critical needs in every area of the church's

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 14.

missionary enterprise education, re-education, opportunities for participation in projects, and constructive planning are considered vital.

"Christian missions are the sharing of the Christian message and life in every area of human experience wherever man is found. It includes the basic Christian attitudes of persons toward one another; the cooperation of all Christians in the task of world betterment; meeting human needs everywhere; and dealing with the problems and needs of the local and world community so that it becomes possible for Christians more adequately to represent Christ in their lives."

"This interpretation of the mission of the church includes not only the activities of the church itself, but sympathetic cooperation with all groups in which the principles of Christianity are inherent. In so far as this sharing is undergirded with spiritual power, to that extent will the world Christian community be built. To this great task the church is divinely appointed."¹

3. Changing nature of the church's task in the field of Evangelism²

Missions and evangelism are closely related fields, for evangelism is the motivating force behind the missionary enterprise.

"The urgency of Evangelism is becoming daily more apparent as we see our world swirling out of one turbulent crisis into another. This has been nowhere more pointedly expressed than in the statement of a group of Christians who recently declared, 'This is the most dangerous period in all history. It can be made safe only in one way - by making enough people really Christian soon enough.'"³

More than half of the population of the United States is outside any organized religious group. The majority of this group are adults, a large number of them young adults. Of those who are affiliated with the Protestant church less than fifty per cent attend regularly and support the program of the church. The indictment that America is fast becoming pagan would seem true in the light of these facts. The work of evangelism has been left in the hands of the

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1. Adults in Action, Bulletin Number 402, International Council of Religious Education, p. 16.
2. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, pp. 14-18.
3. Ibid., p. 14.

clergy when it should have been the responsibility of every individual Christian. Evangelism defined is:

"The presentation of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ, so that men are brought, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to put their trust in God; accept Jesus Christ as their Savior from the guilt and power of sin; follow Him as their Lord in the fellowship of the church and in the vocations of the common life."¹

Throughout the Protestant Church there is a renewed emphasis upon evangelism, and many denominations have adopted an aggressive program for reaching those outside the church. At the last convention of the International Council of Religious Education there was a strong emphasis upon developing an effective program of evangelism. The National Adult Work Planning Conference has enumerated seven problems facing the church which must be solved in order to have an adequate program of evangelism. The indifference of church members to the vital aspects of Christian faith and to the condition of men without faith in Jesus Christ is a primary concern. The character of the spiritual life of the church members must be raised in every area of life, in personal devotional life, in family relationships, in the use of leisure time, and in vocational pursuits. An effort to enlist laymen to participate in the program of evangelism is mandatory. Methods for the reclamation of inactive members are being devised with gratifying results. Clergymen and laymen are facing the task of evangelism together, and from evidence at this time it would seem that prospects for the future are bright.

One source of loss to the Protestant church is the transference of members to new communities. Training of membership in the larger aspects of the church of Christ will enlist their loyalty

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 14.

to more than the local church, and in moving, a church home is more likely to be sought. Assistance is being given in this in many places by interchurch cooperation. Time magazine records that the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. has added 12,000 new members in the last five months through their new program of evangelism, the New Life Movement,¹ by which they are seeking to reclaim those who have been affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. who have changed residence and have not united with a local congregation, as well as reaching those who are unchurched.

Adults recognize their obligation to take the initiative in evangelizing the children and youth of the church. The combined efforts of the church and home are necessary to win and nurture the church's youth. Every kind of legitimate effort to reach the unchurched population is being developed. The power of Christ shown in the quality of life of church members is the greatest means of attracting non-Christians. Publicity, printed and by means of radio, is being used, special meetings with an evangelistic emphasis have been held, home visitation, special promotional projects in the church school, and other methods approved by the church are serving to give opportunity for fellowship, spiritual growth and service to others that the new members may become established in Christian faith and practice.

Methods of evangelism that are considered acceptable today are numerous and varied. Personal evangelism by trained lay-workers is an effective means of recruiting new converts. This type of evangelism is referred to as visitation evangelism, and is becoming increasingly popular as a means of reaching people with the message of

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1. "The Vineyard," Time, March 1, 1948, p. 40.

the Gospel. Visitation evangelism includes home visitation, institutional evangelism and occupational evangelism. Churches send individuals or groups to hospitals, jails, and other institutions for the purpose of evangelism, and in some areas industrial and professional groups are being reached through their vocations. Small groups within a given profession are presented with the claims of the Gospel by Christian laymen engaged in the same vocation.

Mass evangelism is considered a productive way of influencing men. In the thinking of many church members mass evangelism is held in disrepute because of the extremely emotional character of many evangelistic meetings of the past. However, in spite of the weaknesses and dangers which have been associated with this form of evangelism, the church recognizes that there are values in it, and seeks to use to worthy ends this method of reaching the unchurched. Some of the forms of mass evangelism today include the regular Sunday services of worship, World Day of Prayer, World Communion Sunday, Preaching or Teaching Missions, and special evangelistic services held by the local church or by the community's churches combining in a united effort.

Educational evangelism is the uniting of evangelism and Christian education in an effort to win new converts to Christianity. At the present time the channels through which the unchurched are approached include the Sunday School, the Vacation Church School, Week-Day Religious Education, Summer camps and conferences, leadership training programs, the Christian Mission to Teachers, and the University Christian Mission.¹

Group evangelism is being carried on through organized men's

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1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 17.

and women's groups in the church. A recent emphasis has been on the formation of small "cell groups"² within the larger church organization. These "cells" meet at specified times for prayer and discussion of experiences and methods in reaching new recruits.

Printed evangelism, which has long been used, continues to be effective in presenting the message of the Gospel in tracts, pamphlets, books, Gospels, periodicals, and letters. "A valuable method of mail evangelism . . . is to write an appropriate letter or card on the recurring anniversary of the member's union with the church."²

New outlets for evangelism are being discovered through the use of audio-visual aids and other means. Radio, religious films, film-strips, slides, and other visual materials are being used effectively. Special use of music and the drama for evangelistic purposes are also a means of appeal. "Welfare programs and missions to armed forces might be noted. Concerted efforts to build returning service men into the life of the local church is evangelism."³

Opportunities for evangelism are widespread, and through every organization and activity of the local church and through individual contacts with people, the high purpose of evangelism is being given priority in the church that is awake to its task.

4. Changing nature of the church's task in the field of Bible Study and other Study courses.

The new emphasis in the field of Bible study has shifted from the traditional Sunday morning Bible class to short-term study

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1. Cf. Post., pp. 53-54.
2. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 17.
3. Ibid., p. 18.

projects. The basic unit of the church in the past was the "class" but now it is the "group," and activities center in the group. The increased demands of secular life necessitate a stronger incentive than the habit of attending a Sunday morning Bible class for the educational program of the church. "Concentration is more essential than speed, but the church has to do more in fewer contacts with its people than ever before."¹

There are distinct advantages in the short-term study course. The problem of adequate leadership is simplified, as different leaders can be secured for each course. The burden is taken from one teacher and shared with many for short periods of time. Thus, experts in various fields contribute leadership, and the church constituency becomes more literate and alert in regard to the various aspects of the church program. In addition to variety in leadership, short-term courses allow for variety in type of course, time of meeting, length, methods and approach. Actually a short-term course more nearly resembles the level of adult-learning. "The effectiveness of an educational venture with adults is measured much more by its depth than by its extent."² The short-term course better serves the total church than the Sunday morning Bible class reaching only the "faithful few." This trend is comparable to the emphasis upon specialization and acceleration in secular adult education.³

In the field of Bible study there is a "back to the Bible" emphasis.⁴ The present generation of adults is largely illiterate

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1. J. Gordon Chamberlin: "Re-emphasis on Study," Westminster Adult Bible Class, January, 1947, p. 51.
2. Ibid.
3. Cf. Ante., p. 9.
4. Reported by Dr. Emily J. Werner as emphasis in the 1948 International Council of Religious Education Convention.

when it comes to a knowledge of the Bible. Sunday School quarterlies and short-term Bible study courses are being prepared in such a way as to correct this ignorance. This problem has prevailed for some time, but the only answer given in the past was "more Bible."¹ There was little consideration of applying the teachings of the Bible to life. Today there is the recognition that "What is needed is not so much more Bible as a different approach to the teaching of the Bible."² The trend now is to vitalize the teaching of the Bible that it may become a living book enabling individuals to grasp the significance of its truths and to meet the issues of present-day living with conviction and power.

5. Changing nature of the church's task in the field of Social Education and Action

The Christian adult is constantly feeling the pressure of conflicting social, political and economic groups. While the church has not ignored these areas of life in the past, it has dealt with them in a very general way. The 1946 Adult Work Conference recognized the necessity of specific treatment in these fields, and appointed the following six commissions to study them and propose action: "(1) World Order. (2) Relief and Rehabilitation. (3) Civic and Political Action. (4) Minority Rights and Group Tensions. (5) Church and Social Welfare. (6) Christian Economic Order."³

The "Principles for the Guidance of Christian Social Action"⁴ used in the 1946 Conference were set up by the United

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1. Christian Faith and Life, A Program for Church and Home, p. 9.
2. Ibid.
3. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 26.
4. Ibid.

Christian Adult Movement Conference in 1937 as follows:

- (1) Individual personality is of supreme value.
- (2) True Christian Evangelism includes Christian Social Action.
- (3) The salvation of the individual is the central purpose of Christianity, and Christian Social Action and Christian Education mutually complete this experience.
- (4) Society can be Christian only as the individuals of that society are Christian.
- (5) Christian forbearance and understanding are necessary where opinions differ concerning Christian Social Action, and further investigation should be carried on in a spirit of Christian partnership.
- (6) The facts at hand must be carefully analyzed and evaluated before Social Action is begun.
- (7) Cooperation with other agencies concerned with Social Action is important, after consideration of their goals in the light of the purpose of Christianity.
- (8) Christian Social Action is involved in changing the environment of the redeemed individual.¹

The World Order Commission stressed the fact that "Relief and rehabilitation are an immediate imperative, but are not considered an end in themselves."² The program which is advocated for World Order includes a study of world organizations including the church ecumenical movement; the use and control of atomic energy; the establishment of right attitudes in present relations both locally and internationally; and a study of Christian citizenship in regard to local, national, and foreign policy.³

Specific suggestions for individual Christians include:

- (1) Active participation in working for peace and justice, and in enlisting others toward the same end.
- (2) Positive emphasis on good-will with refusal to repeat rumors of hatred, fear or another war.
- (3) Companionship with individuals of other nationalities, races and creeds.
- (4) Groups meeting together in conferences or camps should not forget the moral and spiritual foundations of peace and world order.⁴

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 26.
2. Ibid.
3. Cf. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 30.

"Since world order is dependent upon right attitudes, the program of every church should give prominence to methods of eradicating fear, suspicion and prejudice."¹

The "Relief and Rehabilitation of the War-Stricken Peoples and Areas Commission" urged participation in relieving the condition of stricken peoples. Warning was given that the giving of relief and aid must be intelligent and informed, as many appeals have been forthcoming which were illegitimate or administered by irresponsible agencies. Denominational agencies and Church World Service, the interdenominational organization, make distribution overseas through Protestant channels on the basis of need. Relief is being administered through federal agencies also, but "There is a 'plus' to church relief beyond the humanitarian or 'enlightened self-interest' secular approach."² A vital part of living the Christian life involves becoming the "medium for God's love through service"³ to those in need. The church's program of relief aims to become church-wide, permanent, a "world program of fellowship"⁴ and directly challenging to the entire constituency.

The Commission on "Civic and Political Action as a Responsibility of Christians" urged that the Protestant Church formulate a clear philosophy regarding civic and political issues. "Official bodies of the denominations should give approval to legislation affecting the moral and physical welfare of the individual."⁵ They also recommended encouraging small groups and individuals to become active in political and civic affairs. When social issues are under

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1. "Adult Work Planning Conference Makes Far-Reaching Recommendations," International Journal of Religious Education, October, 1946, p. 30.
2. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 30.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 31.
5. "Adult Work Planning Conference Makes Far-Reaching Recommendations," op. cit., p. 30.

consideration information on both sides should be presented completely.

"As Christians we cannot ignore our responsibility in the field of political action. We cannot leave to non-Christians and pagans the task of setting standards and determining programs. Motivated by a dynamic faith in Jesus Christ and His way of life the Christian must take the lead and determine the direction of political activity."¹

The Commission on "Minority Rights and Group Tensions" advocated impartiality in church membership and renunciation of the former policy of segregation. Membership in Protestant churches should be open to all people with no consideration of race or nationality. A recommendation was made that new church members be given a course in "interracial fellowship as part of their membership training."² In the selection of staff members, some churches are endeavoring to include different racial and cultural groups without discrimination in position, salary or standards of qualification.³

The "Church and Social Welfare Commission" recognized the inadequacy of former philosophy regarding welfare.

"Every area of the Church's life needs today to be examined anew in terms of its effectiveness in meeting the needs of men. Only a far-reaching revitalization and transformation of the church's philosophy and program of service can enable it to rise to meet the God-given opportunities and responsibilities of mankind's present crucial hour."⁴

The church now is giving emphasis to Christian motivation of its members for social welfare work, and making available to them adequate information concerning the nature and extent of the problems in the field. Information regarding existing agencies, community or

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1. The Christian Churchman in Politics, p. 12.
2. "Adult Work Planning Conference Makes Far-Reaching Recommendations," op. cit., p. 30.
3. Ibid.
4. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 46.

religious, is essential. Also church members are being made aware of the opportunities for vocations in the field of Christian Social Welfare. One of the best areas for inter-church cooperation is in this field of welfare services. A unified church can make a tremendous impact upon the community through a complete and organized social welfare program, pioneering in offering services not given by other agencies. The church should initiate and support legis-¹lation in the field of social welfare.

The "Commission on a Christian Economic Order as a Goal of Adult Work" studied present economic conditions, recommended a statement defining Christian objectives in the field of economics, suggested critical problems and possible solutions, and advocated trained ministers and lay leaders in order to guarantee a Christian² approach to the problem.

6. Changing nature of the church's task in the field of Christian Stewardship.

"Christian stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities and material possessions, based on the conviction that these are a trust from God to be used in His service for the benefit of all mankind."³

The emphasis on stewardship is not new in the Christian church. However, because many Christians have failed as Christian stewards, the church is placing a stronger emphasis on stewardship realizing that only as Christians fulfill their obligation can the world distress be alleviated. With a new concept of the world and the world mission of the church every effort is being made to make

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1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, pp. 41-46.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
3. Ibid., p. 48.

Christian stewardship "the undergirding principle of the entire Christian program."¹ Stewardship education is being stressed in every part of the church program. Numerous attractive publications have been made available for distribution through the United Stewardship Council, the International Council of Religious Education² and denominational offices.

C. New Emphases in the Field of Parent Education

1. Crucial Problems Relating to the Christian Family

The family has long been considered the basic social institution of American life. "In Christian terms the family is rightly considered a sacred institution."³ The pressures of modern living, however, have weakened the stability and the influence of family life. Some of the problems facing parents today are almost overwhelming. Society is geared to such a high pace of living that a breakdown in family life seems inevitable.

Some of the inventions of the twentieth century have contributed to this period of crisis through which the family is passing. The movies, the radio and the automobile have tended to divide rather than unite the family unit. The emphasis upon the individual has taken the place of the family. Recreation is centered outside the home. Where both parents are employed further problems are created. Irregular schedules of living, necessary re-adjustments in home routine, and lack of adequate provision for children add to the difficulty of the situation.

The results of these conditions are appalling. Separation and divorce are prevalent. Sidney Goldstein states:

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 48.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 49.
3. Wesner Fallaw: The Modern Parent and the Teaching Church, p. 15.

"We do know with approximate accuracy, however, the number of divorces that occur in the United States, and we are able to establish the incredible increase in the divorce rate. In 1867, the first year for which we have accurate statistics, about 10,000 divorces were granted in this country; 42,000 in 1896; 72,000 in 1906; 112,000 in 1916; a little more than 201,000 in 1929, at the very crest of prosperity. During the first years of the economic collapse the number of divorces decreased somewhat, but in the later years the trend again turned upward and in 1937 rose to over 250,000. It is estimated that in 1943 more than 300,000 divorces were granted in the courts of the United States."

"A more perceptible rise follows war periods. At the present time some predict that 70% of war marriages will end in divorce."²

These statistics indicate that the whole frame-work of society is in danger with the breakdown of the family.

"Instead of the centripetal force that draws all members of the family to the center, the family now is suffering from centrifugal forces that drive each member of the family away from the center."³

Some of the underlying causes for the disintegration of the family include the loss of parental authority, the increasing rebellion of children and young people, the indifference to religion, the growth of secularism and the shift from a patriarchal to democratic type of family life. Actually, the conflicts within the family are influenced by changed social and cultural concepts. In a social order that is in a state of confusion, it can only be expected that traditional social and moral standards will be relaxed. Former laws and standards have been abandoned. In an environment of insecurity it is little wonder that the security of the family has also been lost.⁴

Another important factor in the disorganized state of family

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1. Sidney Goldstein: Marriage and Family Counseling, pp. 5-6.
2. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 18.
3. Goldstein: op. cit., p. 8.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 8-10.

life is World War II. "War and war programs always speed up some social processes and always speed down others."¹ Scientific inventions and mechanical industries make progress, along with an increase in employment, wages, and the number of marriages. However, there is also an increase in delinquency, moral laxity and insecurity. Delinquency is usually considered in terms of juvenile delinquency, but rather it is parent delinquency, for it is an evidence of failure in the training and guidance of the child. Inadequate living conditions often accompany living in war-time industrial areas. The ordinary problems faced in usual home situations are more than doubled under strained living conditions.

The church, aware of the growing decadence of family life, is becoming acutely conscious of its responsibility to parents and the home. The strategic importance of making Christian faith vital in the family unit rather than centering upon the individual has begun to dawn. "The church is engaging in an all-out drive to bring help to the home in every possible way."²

2. Current methods proposed to strengthen family life.

The church is concentrating upon two areas of family life where special needs are recognized. These include premarital and marriage education and counseling and parent education, with the aim of helping parents to learn to teach religion effectively to children in the home.

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has published materials helpful to pastors and lay workers for use in premarital counseling. Many denominations publish supplementary materials which are useful also. Undoubtedly, much of the failure

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1. Goldstein: op. cit., p. 11.

2. Letter from Richard E. Plummer: op. cit.

in marriage could be avoided with adequate counseling by qualified persons. "In each church there should be built up a favorable atmosphere, and an assumption that when a marriage is sick it needs¹ to be healed rather than taken to the divorce court." Many pastors have been discovering that one of the keys to successful marriage lies in sufficient preparation for marriage, and that through counseling many dangers can be spared the couple. It is of paramount importance that the counselor be trained to use skilled techniques in order that the counseling experience may be successful.

Marriage counseling should also include family counseling. Counseling materials for parents to use with their children are in the process of preparation. If the church provides sound Christian counseling for its constituency through the pastor and experienced lay workers in regard to the problems of marriage and family life, it is making a contribution to the individual family concerned, to the whole structure of American society and in many instances to the kingdom of God.²

Family life is required to accommodate itself to all of the demands of social, economic and political institutions, taking a secondary position in all of the relationships of human life, school, church, business or lodge. To correct this situation a thorough job of re-educating adults is necessary. Current literature, motion pictures and the radio are being used in an endeavor to preserve American family life and to give the family priority in the social structure. The church, recognizing the serious nature of the problem and its responsibility for the spiritual heritage of future genera-

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 23.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

tions, is re-organizing its Christian education program on the basis¹ of church-family relationship.

"If there is genuine concern that falsity and secularism shall give place to truth inhering in Jesus Christ, then fathers and mothers will have to give their time and themselves to the task of guiding their children in religious knowledge and religious living."²

Wesner Fallaw indicates the following points as vital for a "fresh perspective with which to examine the implications for church-family education."³

- (1) A Christian education program includes knowledge of the Bible as well as other means of developing Christian character.
- (2) A knowledge of the Bible doesn't guarantee faith in God and Christ, nor right attitudes and conduct.
- (3) A vital faith exemplified in Christian attitudes and conduct on the part of parents in the home is of tremendous value in the Christian nurture of the child.
- (4) A close relationship to the church aids parents in becoming purposeful and influential teachers of Christianity in the home.
- (5) The church has been given the task of the entire religious training of individuals in the past, but now the error of this procedure is recognized and the home is considered the most important agency of teaching religion effectively.
- (6) The church school and the week-day religious education class can supplement the task of Christian nurture going on in the home situation where the entire family shares and practices Christian truths and actions.
- (7) The church has the task of providing incentive and leadership for parents' classes to undergird them in the task of Christian nurture in the home.
- (8) The home has a right to expect consecrated and constructive teaching from faithful teachers in the church fellowship.
- (9) The church should expect consistent direct and concomitant Christian teaching and example on the part of parents who recognize their responsibility.
- (10) The church should provide a program of Christian education which effectively guides the Christian nurture of the entire family.⁴

The parent stands between his child and God and is either a 'separating

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1. Cf. Christian Faith and Life, A Program for Church and Home, p.6.
2. Fallaw: op. cit., p. 205.
3. Ibid., p. 206.
4. Ibid., pp. 206-207.

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wall or a connecting link."

Numerous books and pamphlets have been published by the International Council of Religious Education, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and denominational headquarters indicating ways in which Christian family life may be effectively promoted through the home and the church.

National Family Week, which is observed annually, this year has taken the theme, "Christ the Center of Home Life." The leaflet currently circulating among Protestant groups was prepared by the Inter-council Committee on Christian Life. The importance of the Christian home is stressed in this pamphlet, suggestions for family activities and church activities are listed, along with suggested possibilities for community cooperation and a selected bibliography on the Christian family. One statement defines the Christian Home as follows:

"The Christian Home is one place in which the antagonisms, emotional loneliness and confusion of postwar living can be offset through experiences of security, love, joy and cooperativeness."²

Suggestions for the family include recreation as a family unit. "Families that play together stay together."³ Sharing as a family with needy families overseas and in the local community in gift and fellowship, cultivating family participation in the life and worship of the church, worshipping together as a family, studying the major teachings of the Bible in relation to home life and making the home Christ-centered in every relationship, are additional ways of strengthening the family's spiritual life.⁴

Churches are advised to give emphasis to the home and the

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1. Robbie Trent: Your Child and God, p. 145.
2. "National Family Week, May 2-9, 1948," p. 1.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 3.

family in various parts of its program during National Family Week, and to include specific features such as a Church Family Night, a family night at home for all of the church members, a parents' class, a reunion of all couples married by the pastor, a home-visitation plan, a Youth Fellowship Tea honoring parents, a display table or bookshelf with materials on the Christian family, courses on preparation for marriage and homemaking, support of community programs planned for Family Week and encouragement of family worship and grace at meals in the home.¹

The Family Theatre, a weekly radio broadcast of the Mutual Broadcasting System, has popularized the familiar slogan, "The family that prays together stays together." The sponsors of this broadcast recognize the need for homes with strong spiritual foundations in a day when paganism and secularism is subtly infiltrating the lives of men and women.

A recent experiment in some churches has been the conducting of family conferences and family camps. Ordinarily conference and camp programs are limited to specified age groups, but these conference programs were planned with the aim of providing for the entire family. Worship, Bible study, discussion groups, recreation and hobbies and craft activities were planned to include all in attendance. The discussion groups were designed for parents, and the children were engaged in other activities at that time.² In writing of such a venture held by the Northern Baptist Convention at Green Lake, Wisconsin, in 1946, Rodney Britten states that:

"The campers had learned that a camp is a Christian family camp when it results in a new awareness of the unique opportunities

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1. "National Family Week, May 2-9, 1948," p. 3.
2. Cf. Rodney M. Britten: "Family Camp - A Rich Experience," International Journal of Religious Education, February, 1947, p. 8.

inherent in the family for a togetherness in worship, play and work; and when a family discovers that a Christian home is more than just the sum of its members - that the Christian family has a 'plus' element beyond that which is known by most families."¹

In order that the spiritual resources of the Christian church undergird the homes of the church constituency drastic changes have been introduced into denominational educational programs designed to enable the church and the home to share in the responsibility of Christian nurture.

D. Recent Emphases in Adult Work

1. Young adults in the church program

Young adults in the church are those persons in the adult bracket who have not passed thirty-five or forty years. The upper limit varies in individual church situations, sometimes being as early as thirty years of age. In a large majority of congregations young adults have been considered the "lost generation."² The church has failed to provide for them in its program, assuming that when they leave the young people's department they will naturally find a place in the adult work of the church. This has not proved to be the case, and the church is aware of the need to bridge this gap in its program. There is the realization that "there are special needs and interests represented here which cannot be satisfactorily met in a general cross-section of unbroken adult programming."³

"During the last five years, young adults have had their lives uprooted, pushed about and transplanted more frequently than any other group of people in the population. They have been dispersed to all sections of the globe. They have encountered more cultures, met up with more peoples than any previous generation in American history. They have been drained off the farms and small communities, and poured into huge housing projects where their lives were confined and monotonized by

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1. Cf. Rodney M. Britten: op. cit., p. 8.
2. Frank Clutz: About Young Adult Lutherans, p. 4.
3. Letter from Richard E. Plummer: op. cit.

the routines of mass production."¹

The results of experiences such as these cause despair and disillusionment on the part of some, but many young adults have made the necessary adjustments and are desirous of further education and assistance in rebuilding a stable democratic society. This is a challenge to the church. A young adult layman has indicated the church's task in this field as follows:

"The church is responsible for reaching, teaching and guiding young adults in the Christian way of life. As young people leave the security of their supervised childhood and youth, they are bewildered by the conflict between the idealistic teachings which they have received and the realities of adult life. They need to understand that the church is ready to help them as they face and deal with such problems . . . that the . . . church is interested in each of them as individuals. They should be aware of the fact that the church will help provide such facilities and guidance as they may need in order that they may find themselves and assume their places of responsibility and service in home, church and community life. Through a young adult group, the church must provide opportunities which will enable them to achieve a satisfying fellowship with each other and with God."²

The attitude of young adults toward the church is expressed by Jessie A. Charters in these words:

"We know that these restless, idealistic, purposeful young people have deep spiritual wants. We know too that if they can find what they want in the church, they will eagerly seek it there. A fundamental study of the problems of this group, and experiments in programs to help them solve these problems are urgently needed."³

The Commission on "Young Adults in the Life of the Church" in the National Adult Work Planning Conference enumerated some of the most universal wants of young adults as follows:

- (1) To understand themselves.
- (2) To discover purpose in life, especially in relation to life work.

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1. Robert S. Clemmons: "Emerging Interests and Needs of Young Adults," Religious Education, September-October, 1947, p. 296.
2. Young Adults in the Church, Bulletin Number 415, International Council of Religious Education, p. 10.
3. Jessie A Charters: Young Adults and the Church, p. 32.

- (3) To experience fellowship with God and fellowman.
- (4) To adjust adequately to family life and marriage.
- (5) To participate in wholesome and satisfying recreational activities.
- (6) To work towards the development of an economic order that is Christian in principle and practice.
- (7) To participate in civic and political life as Christian citizens.
- (8) To discover means for individual and group participation in achieving a Christian world order.

In local churches freedom in planning and executing the program for young adults is essential. The church provides the atmosphere and place for young adult activities, but they are capable of developing their own form of organization and program. Guidance should be available at their request but never forced upon them.

The method of procedure in setting up a young adult program varies in different churches, but the first step is some type of survey of the church and community to determine the number of young adults, their specific needs and interests, a careful evaluation and interpretation of them by a representative group and a determining of program to fit the local situation.

Some suggestions for types of programs include a weekly, bi-monthly or monthly meeting in a young adult fellowship group with the purpose of sharing in fellowship, worship, study and service.² Other types of groups include Sunday morning or week night Bible classes "where the Bible is not only studied but a definite effort is made to apply what is learned to everyday living."³ Becoming increasingly popular are the short-term study groups based upon vital interest in some special Bible study or other phase of Christian or community life. These study groups are planned to result in action in the form of a group project in order to be meaningful in

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- 1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, pp. 72-73.
- 2. Cf. Let's Chat About Young Adults, p. 3.
- 3. Ibid.

the life of the group.

"Religious education must lead young adults from their felt needs, through an evaluation process, to new commitments that lead to service and action in society."¹

Chamberlin emphasizes the need for sacrificial service in his chapter on "Creative Churchmanship." He states that:

"The importance of a philosophy which makes service basic, building upon it education, worship and fellowship, becomes clear when an attempt is made to help others take their places as workers in the church. The need of the church is not to discover some new and clever methods of drawing young adults into the active program of the church in order to keep them. If the church would make its primary appeal to young adults . . . upon the basis of the true nature and mission of the historic Christian church, . . . there could be no stronger appeal."²

Many churches are finding renewed interest among young adults through the formation of cells which consciously unite a small group of people, usually from three to twelve in number, for a specific purpose. It is possible to experience an intimacy of fellowship in a group of this size which is not possible in large groups. The essential requisite in the forming of a cell group is the consciousness of uniting in a common task, whether it be study,³ prayer or service projects.

There are dangers which must be recognized in the formation of cells. There is the possibility of elevating the form of the group fellowship to a place of higher importance than the actual purpose of meeting together. Cell groups are organized on the principle that they are not an end in themselves, but rather a part of the larger organization, and beyond that, of the church itself. The part in the total church, the ecumenical church, is to be kept

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1. Clemmons: op. cit., p. 300.
2. J. Gordon Chamberlin: The Church and Its Young Adults, pp. 77-78.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 99-103.

in view. Another danger is that of being so satisfied with the intimate fellowship in the cell group that exclusiveness and pride cut off the small group from the life of the church which gave the cell its original life.¹ One means of preventing this danger is the current practice of enlarging cells and then subdividing, so that new cells are formed which continue to contribute to the life of the church. The cell is a means used and never an end in itself. "Membership in the cell is only one way of making membership in the church more meaningful."²

Chamberlin stresses the need for creativity within the cell groups and within the larger scope of the church's task. He notes that creativity arises out of a realization of the imperfection of the church and the possibility for improvement, of an awareness that there must be spiritual vitality to warrant the use of organizational or ritual forms, and a clearer understanding of the unfinished tasks ahead and the problems involved in undertaking them.³ "The jobs to be done are as varied as the interests and personalities of men and women."⁴ The contribution of every Christian's talent is necessary to do the church's work successfully in this day of crisis.⁵

The married young adults have common interests and special provision is easily made for some sort of fellowship group for them. Study groups for parents, social activities and the opportunity for service vitally challenge these young couples, and while they may participate in the young adult program as a whole, they appreciate the meeting of the need for enrichment of life which comes from sharing with those who face similar problems and responsibilities.⁵

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1. Cf. Chamberlin: op. cit., pp. 104-105.
2. Ibid., p. 106.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 118-121.
4. Ibid., p. 121.
5. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 74.

Resource materials for practically every phase of the young adult program are available for study and use by leaders of local young adult groups to help them in planning a worthwhile and balanced program providing for worship, recreation, study, social service, fellowship, guidance in home and family life, knowledge of community affairs, economic and vocational interests, church activity¹ and missions or Christian outreach.

While there is allowance for freedom in the organization and program of the young adult group of the church it is closely related to the entire adult program in the local church so that there will be effective coordination in carrying out the work of the total church. Additional strength is gained from branching out into a wider fellowship through denominational and interdenominational associations. Sharing of ideas, uniting in service projects which one group could not undertake alone and broader fellowship² are a few of the fruits of such association.

2. The Church's opportunity with retired persons

The problem of retirement and old age is becoming increasingly acute since medical science has discovered means of prolonging life. Now a larger percentage than ever of the total population is in the "past sixty-five" bracket. In the past, older persons were cared for by the members of their families, but now that life in the United States is chiefly urban it is more difficult to provide for the older members of families. When the family was largely agricultural the family unit was usually localized in one place, but now families are³ more and more scattered.

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1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, pp. 74-75.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
3. Cf. George Lawton and Maxwell S. Stewart: "When You Grow Older," Public Affairs Pamphlet, Number 131, pp. 3-4.

Today authorities state that a fifty to eighty year life span is not normal, and that with the removal of abnormal causes of death, life could easily be extended past one hundred years.¹

"The average age of death in 1800 was 35; in 1890 it was 43; in 1935, 59 for males and 63 for females . . . in 1900 there were 3,000,000 persons above sixty-five years of age in this country, the number has rapidly increased until in 1940 the number was 9,000,000 with reliable estimates pointing to 11, 205,000 in 1950 and 22,051,000 in 1980."²

The problem which faces the church is not that of adding years to life "but life to years."³ A young child ended a letter to his father while away from home, "I send you my love. I hope you live all your life."⁴ Community welfare groups, state and federal agencies, university medical departments and churches are seeking to help retired persons engage in activities which will enable them to live their entire lives. The church has just begun to study the needs of this group and to provide for them in its program in much the same way that it provides for younger age groups.⁵

Problems facing older people involve physical, psychological and economic factors. Physically, the problem of insufficient exercise, wrong type of diet, poor living conditions, lack of proper medication and actual loss of physical ability such as hearing, sight or locomotion, faces the individual past sixty-five.⁶ Psychologically, loneliness, a feeling of being unneeded or unwanted, lack of security in social groups, fear of aging, sense of uselessness, lack of preparation for retirement and loss of social contacts add to the insecurity of the older person.⁷ Economically, lack of financial

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1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 78.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. 11% Plus, Recreation for Older People, p. 1.
5. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 79.
6. Cf. Lawton and Stewart: op. cit., pp. 23-26.
7. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 80.

independence through removal of income, inability to make contributions to worthy causes, undesirable living conditions and insufficient social security further challenge the church to rehabilitate where necessary and prepare its present membership for worthwhile pursuits during the retirement years.¹

The National Adult Work Planning Conference Commission on "Leisure Years - An Opportunity for Christian Service" has suggested some of the major interests and needs of older people. They need security and are interested in finding it in the family group where the loyalty of the family gives them moral support. Often there is a deeper interest in the Bible and the work and worship of the church, thinking in terms of eternal values and experiencing the richness of vital Christian life. There is a gregarious instinct in older people. They enjoy participating in group activities and like to share in responsibility in these groups. These leisure years provide opportunity for craft-work and development of hobbies calling forth new skills and using former abilities. The radio and newspaper are constant companions. They are interested in talking with anyone who will listen, and enjoy sharing their opinions on almost any phase of life. Reminiscing is a favorite pastime of many. For some travel and broadening experiences through acquaintance with new people is a possibility. Participation in recreational activities, sharing in community projects or finding part-time employment which occupies time and brings financial remuneration also appeal.²

There are many welfare agencies and clubs which cater particularly to older persons. A recent development has been the organization of Old Age Counselling Centers in New York City, Los

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1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 80.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 81-82.

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Angeles and San Francisco. Life Insurance companies have published pamphlets on possible activities for older persons, as has the National Recreation Association and the Public Affairs Committee.

The church has discovered that it can help prepare persons for retirement and constructive use of leisure years, and can help build up appreciative attitudes toward older persons on the part of its younger members.² Retired persons are able to contribute much to the life of the church through assisting in various phases of the program, in counseling, teaching, visiting, assisting in routine office work, checking records, serving as librarian, leader for discussion or worship group, helping sort and pack packages for overseas relief, making useful articles for mission schools and serving on church committees.³ Some churches offer service to retired persons and shut-ins by acquainting them with the resources available to them, providing fellowship and recreation, visiting them, giving them a sense of usefulness and responsibility, providing interesting and inspirational literature, conducting study groups and by working toward better legislation for financial independence for them.⁴

3. Men's work in the life of the church

For many years the Women's organizations of the church have been active and flourishing, but little of a successful nature has been done in men's work. A whole new philosophy is developing in this connection today. Men's Clubs or classes are no longer considered in terms of isolated programs, but instead the emphasis is upon enlisting the layman in the total work of the church. Within

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1. Cf. Lawton and Stewart: op. cit., pp. 27-28.
2. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 84.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 84.

several denominations a rediscovery of the important place of laymen in the church life is taking place. The church recognizes that it needs to mobilize its manpower for all of the multiple phases of its work.¹

Each local church should have a committee serving as a focal center for all of the men's organizations in the church. The work of correlating all of the men's activities, reviewing and evaluating the present program, and recommending advisable procedures is the major part of its task.²

Specific tasks which men's work includes are the provision of fellowship, study, service, and worship through the church program. Recent activities for men include the forming of men's book clubs, business men's luncheon clubs, providing for veterans of World War II in the life of the church, promoting the Sunday School, use of audio-visual aids, world missions, church property improvement, church union and cooperation, training church officers and lay workers and emphasizing Christian family life.³

Unless the church utilizes its manpower it will lack in effectiveness and vision. The clergy and trained leaders serving in Christian vocations are important, but to reach the unchurched masses the need of enlisting every layman in living Christian witness and service is most urgent.

E. Summary

This chapter has indicated that the present status of the church is that of "a 'sitting' constituency beset with a spectator complex; an intelligent but 'uninformed' constituency; a 'seclusive'

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1. Cf. Letter from Richard E. Plummer: op. cit.
2. Ibid.
3. Jobs for Men

constituency, and an 'unreached' constituency.¹ In every area covered in this chapter a look at the present condition is discouraging, but the revived interest and perspective provide a strong element of hope.

In summarizing the changing nature of the church's task it has been noted that instead of isolated countries the concept of "one world" pervades and influences every part of the church's program today. The trend toward ecumenicity is also noteworthy in this connection. World War II introduced the destructive use of atomic energy resulting in fear and insecurity in the lives of men. This presents a direct challenge to the Christian church. A united Christian front is imperative in the fields of missions, evangelism and social education and action. Bible study is being built into the Christian education program in a new way with stress on its application to living. The demand for Christian stewardship has never been greater.

There is emphasis upon strengthening the bulwark of the home through Christian family life. The major trends in this connection are in the fields of pre-marital and marriage counseling and parent education. Unless the home is preserved the basic social institution of American life will be destroyed. The church, realizing its duty and opportunity, is endeavoring to provide Christian leadership in this field.

Three groups in the adult program receiving special attention today include young adults, retired persons and laymen. In order to conserve and utilize its full manpower all of these groups must be provided for adequately in the church program. Suggestions

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1. Administering the Church Program, Course 2, p. 29.

for each group are given in order to meet their needs and to use their abilities in the service of the kingdom of God.

"The importance of building a strong, inclusive, and attractive program for adults is all the more urgent when we face the facts squarely that these adults make the decisions; control the home, school and community; set the social, political, economic, educational and religious standards; pay the bills; influence completely the lives of youth and children. Because they are so responsible they become either our greatest opportunity or our greatest stumbling block - not to say menace.

"The day for an attractive, aggressive, demanding adult work strategy is upon us."¹

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1. Administering the Church Program, Course 2, p. 29.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A. Introduction

The Protestant church has organized denominationally and interdenominationally to build and execute an effective program of Christian education for adults.

On the interdenominational level there is the United Christian Adult Movement which is administered by the International Council of Religious Education. The definition and purpose of this movement will be presented in this chapter with a brief indication of its present activities.

Within the denominations of the Protestant faith some type of Adult Christian education is carried on in every group whether labeled specifically as such or not. From the large number of denominations in existence five denominational programs of adult Christian education have been investigated. The Protestant Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, the Northern Baptist Convention, the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America have been selected. These five denominations were chosen from a list of the ten largest denominations in the 1947 World Almanac as being representative of the major Protestant bodies, and not solely on the basis of work done in the field of adult Christian education. In so far as revealed in available material, the current emphases in adult Christian education in each of these denominations will be presented.

B. The United Christian Adult Movement

1. Definition and Purpose

"The United Christian Adult Movement is a voluntary fellowship of Christian forces serving in the field of adult work and united in an interdenominational emphasis upon education and action in personal, social and world relations. The purpose of the 'movement' is the making of the life and teachings of Jesus the practical basis for living; to vitalize men and women through the spirit of Jesus; to increase the effectiveness of the church in adult education; to provide a means for the voluntary cooperation and participation of denominational, interdenominational and other Christian agencies in the field of adult education in one united approach; to furnish a channel through which the cooperating groups can share their experiences, leadership and materials. The 'movement' recognizes the value of other character-building agencies and will seek to cooperate with them wherever their objectives and methods are in harmony with the Christian ideal."¹

2. Present activities

The United Christian Adult Movement was organized at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin in July, 1936, not as an organization but as a movement. In the summer of 1946 a National Adult Work Planning Conference was held at Lake Geneva. The reasons for this conference were many. It was the first post-war conference of the United Christian Adult Movement, and it was concerned with the problems facing the church during the post-war years. The denominational and interdenominational leaders in attendance were confronted with immediate questions on meeting the needs of those displaced through war industries or service in the armed forces, reaching the unchurched with the Gospel, uniting Christians in civic and social action, restoring stability and vitality to Christian family life, bringing a deeper conviction of the church's world Christian mission and re-awakening and strengthening the personal spiritual life of church members. The purpose of the conference was to suggest broad outlines

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 98.

for a vital and complete adult work program in the local church and community.¹ "The aim is to relate all the agencies, resources and program elements available for adult work in a dynamic and functional way to the critical spiritual needs of adults in our day."²

C. Current Emphases in Representative Protestant Denominations
in Adult Work

1. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America

For several years the Protestant Episcopal Church has had no official director of adult work. The denominational leaders considered a separate department of adult work a duplication of work which was being carried on satisfactorily through other channels. All of the program of the church is adult work in some phase and, therefore, a special department involved additional complicated machinery which was considered unnecessary. However, in the fall of 1948, a new director of adult work will assume duties in the national headquarters, and plans are under way to coordinate and further develop the work now being done in dioceses and parishes.

"The fields of particular interest are an understanding and appreciation of the missionary program of the Church, the encouragement of greater efforts in evangelism, and understanding of the Church's social obligations in the world's life and intelligent participation in it, and the development of the religious life in adults."³

The Protestant Episcopal Church has organized its Christian education program in terms of specific objectives at each age level, and has listed means of fulfilling the objectives, as well as typical experiences at each level in order that an evaluation of Christian

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1. Cf. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, pp. 98, 101.
2. Plan Book, American Co-operative Christianity, 1947-48, p. 38.
3. Tell Us About the National Council, p. 29.

growth may be made according to Christian education standards.¹ Very little literature is available concerning the various aspects of adult work carried on by this denomination at the present time, but when the new director of adult work assumes duties a new program of adult education will be launched and supplementary literature will be published. Forth, a monthly periodical of the Church, indicates emphases and needs in the church-wide program for adults.

Mention should be made of the distinctive contribution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the field of work among isolated peoples. This work is little publicized, but a very splendid program of social service and evangelism is being carried on among the blind, shut-ins and people without access to a local church; and in some areas work with the deaf is provided. The Protestant Episcopal Church serves where other churches are not able to support work of this nature.

2. The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church has published a large amount of literature on every phase of adult work. The Crusade for Christ in the Methodist denomination, the New Life Movement of the Church, from 1944 to 1948 was the beginning of a series of similar movements which have been launched over the past few years in other denominations.

Very thorough preparation and assistance are given in the detailed guides for launching, promoting and administering a program of adult Christian education. M. Leo Rippy writes that:

"No official body of any great denomination ever gave more careful consideration to its administrative setup than did the United Conference of 1939² and the General Conference of 1940 of the Methodist Church."

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1. Cf. Christian Education, Guide I, pp. 34, 35, 41, 42, 47, 48.
2. M. Leo Rippy: The Work of the Adult Division, p. 12.

Legislation passed at that time provided for the organization of the educational work of the church in three divisions of which one was the adult division. In each division the approach was to be church-centered. The Crusade for Christ has kept this church-centered approach uppermost. Excellent materials are available through the Methodist Publishing House covering every area of the adult Christian education program, with special materials for young adults, adults in the small church or small community, evangelism: personal, educational and visitational, leadership materials, helps for the Christian family, a correlation of church and home religion, suggestions for social action, political action, recreational and dramatic activities and complete listings of available short-term study courses through the denomination and the International Council of Religious Education.

The Methodist Church has been a denominational pioneer in adult work, and has made accessible to other denominations the splendid publications outlining and giving directions for an adequate adult program in a local church. The Christian Home, a helpful magazine for parents, is published monthly with excellent suggestions for family worship and helpful articles on various aspects of family life.

3. The Northern Baptist Convention

The Northern Baptist Convention has prepared concise and helpful booklets for 1947-48 mapping out plans and suggesting materials for use with young adults and adults. Each book is organized in the same way, giving first an introduction to the age group, areas of group interest, types of discussion meetings and suggested elective courses. The second section is devoted to study and resource materials covering the fields of Administration, Baptist History, Bible, Camping,

Personal Devotions, Dramatics, Evangelism, Home and Family Life, Home Department, Leadership Education, Missionary Education, Missions: Overland and Overseas, Periodicals, Personal Faith, Recreation, Social Progress, Stewardship, Uniform Lesson Materials, Visual Aids and Worship. Mimeographed leaflets are distributed listing literature on Christian Marriage, Family Life and Home Making, elective short-term study units for adults, suggestions for organizing young adult groups, methods of planning a young adult program of study and discussion and listings of visual aids on home and family life. The Northern Baptist Convention also uses many of the publications and study courses recommended and provided by the International Council of Religious Education. The Baptist Leader, the magazine for church and church school workers, contains items of special interest to adults in a section entitled the "Adult Leader"

The Northern Baptist Convention has developed an adult conference program with considerable success. Conferences for young adults, adults, business and professional women, and family camps are a vital part of the adult education program of the denomination. This year some of these conferences will be conducted on a national scale.

The materials on adult work distributed to churches of the Northern Baptist Convention consist largely of available resource materials rather than an exhaustive treatment of the field. The Adult Reporter is circulated among leaders in adult groups giving timely suggestions for the adult program. It is edited by the Director of the Department of Adult Work and Family Life.

The use of literature published by the International Council of Religious Education and other denominations makes duplication of effort unnecessary. The field of greatest emphasis is that

of home and family life, and the compilation of suggested resources in this area is exceptional. The Northern Baptist Convention Crusade for Christ movement has given impetus to the thought and effort directed in the field of adult Christian education. The need for a total program for adults in the church constituency is being stressed throughout the denomination.

4. The Presbyterian Church in the United States

For the past ten years the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. has been developing its adult work program in a more effective way placing special emphasis upon Men's Work and Joint Adult Work.

"Since 1937 the Executive Committee of Religious Education and the Committee on Woman's Work have been cooperating through a Joint Committee on Adult Work, to assist . . . in strengthening their adult program."¹

The scope of the activities covered by the Joint Committee include cooperation with the interdenominational program of the United Christian Adult Movement and with other denominations. The Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church U.S. have published jointly some literature for use in the adult program.

Within the denomination the greatest stress in the past few years has been on work with young adults. Approximately three hundred new young adult groups have been organized within the last two years in the Southern Presbyterian Church. Conferences have been held and are being planned for the future for young adults and for adults. Men's conferences have been another successful venture attempted by this church. Emphasis is placed upon the home and the Christian family also, and work is being undertaken with the senescent members of the church.

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1. 86th Annual Report, 1947, p. 36.

A significant contribution of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. lies in the field of Adult Bible Study. Through the work of the Committee on Woman's Work advance has been made in the preparation of attractive and helpful Bible study materials. This emphasis upon the use of the Bible is evident in the entire adult work of the church. Literature circulated in the churches includes suggestions for Bible study for young adults and for men. Other denominations are awaking to a realization of the spiritual and moral values inherent in an intelligent and attractive Bible study program and are following the example of the Southern Presbyterians in this field.

A program of aggressive adult work has been in progress for several years now, and the 86th Annual Report notes:

"Our children and youth will feel the results of this informed and active participation on the part of our young adults, our men, our women and our older adults."¹

A large variety of material is available in practically every area of adult work, the planning committee, the men's work, the Men-at-Montreat Conference Digest, organizational helps, young adult helps, elective study and discussion courses, materials on the Christian home, suggested literature for the church library, leadership materials and excellent practical Bible study courses. The material for older adults was compiled jointly by the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. The Presbyterian Survey, a monthly periodical, contains current information on the adult program of the denomination.

5. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. has broadened the range

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1. 86th Annual Report, 1947, p. 39.

and scope of curriculum for adults during the past several years in order to include in a more effective way the Church's concern for the entire field of community and world problems and tensions.

"There is a definite trend within our denomination toward correlating the many program approaches to adults into more of a balanced, unified pattern so that a broader base of knowledge and participation may be achieved with more adults in our constituency. Thus our program elements of missions, evangelism, stewardship, social education and action, family life, etc. become parts of a coordinated whole. We have a strong national inter-board council - to help achieve this."¹

"We see, also, considerable advance with regard to procedures and techniques in adult education. Formerly the church has seemed content with three or four standardized and quite conventional methods for arousing the educational interests and activity of adults. Today, short-term courses, along broad elective lines, cutting across organized groups, are increasingly popular while the pace in organized class study along traditional lines is being maintained as well. Drama, music, the open forum, the informal discussion group technique, the panel, book reading clubs, informal leadership training groups, schools of religion, schools of missions, family nights at the church combining some of these features, increased social recreational activities, etc. are dramatizing the untapped possibilities in the adult field."²

Five strategic areas in which the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., is focusing its adult work program are the training of church leaders and officers for intelligent participation and leadership in the total program of the church, the stress on men's work with the aim of using the church's manpower in every area of the church's activity, the development of an adequate young adult program, an effort to strengthen American family life through marriage education and counseling and parent education, and the "Adult Study-Discussion-Action Curriculum and Techniques"³ which are being developed at the present time.

Local churches are provided with instruments for reviewing

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1. Letter from Richard E. Plummer: op. cit.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

and evaluating their program of adult work with suggestions for revision to improve effectiveness.

The introduction of the New Curriculum in the fall of 1948 inaugurates a new trend in emphasizing a correlated program of Christian Education for the church and home. This is in line with the strong emphasis upon Christian family life.

The young adults have also received a large share of attention in planning the adult program. The most recent development in this field is the organization of the Geneva Fellowship, a national denominational organization for the young adults of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

Helpful literature is available in every area of adult work through the Department of Adult Work. Most of the literature is attractively compiled and illustrated. With the trend toward brevity and compactness, a wide variety of specific areas are treated separately rather than comprehensive booklets covering the entire program. The monthly periodical, Presbyterian Life, a new publication of the denomination, will feature items of current interest and value in the field of adult work.

The emphases in the adult work program are carried out in conjunction with the New Life Movement of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. with the aim of introducing "New Life" into the program for adults.

D. Summary

The work of adult Christian education is conducted in the Protestant Church through interdenominational and denominational channels. The United Christian Adult Movement provides material and assistance for the denominational adult work enterprises and cooperates in the promotion of united activities such as conferences, National

Family Week, World Day of Prayer, and World-Wide Communion Sunday.

Denominational endeavors as represented in five major Protestant bodies supplement and enlarge upon the materials provided by the International Council of Religious Education through the United Christian Adult Movement, and adapt them to meet their own particular needs. Each of the five denominations investigated publishes a monthly magazine featuring significant trends and ideas for a productive and progressive program of adult Christian education.

The Protestant Episcopal Church looks to the future for a fully developed program for adults. The recent appointment of a director of the Adult Education Department involves a reorganization of present policy concerning adults in the church program. With the wealth of resource material available through the International Council and other denominational headquarters and drawing upon the experience of other groups tangible evidences of progress should be fairly rapid.

The Methodist Church has rendered outstanding service in the field of adult work as a pioneer. The comprehensive treatment of nearly every phase of the adult program with the "church-centered" emphasis has challenged other denominations to study, evaluate and revise their own programs. Materials are detailed, complete and vital.

The Northern Baptist Convention has benefited from the work done by the International Council and other denominations. No effort has been made to duplicate materials, but available materials have been incorporated into the program of the denomination. Excellent resource lists for the young adult and adult program have been compiled and distributed.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States has made a

distinct contribution through the excellent Bible study source materials and through the program of adult conferences. Men's Work, Young Adult Work, and the Christian Home have been areas of special emphasis. Helpful literature has been prepared or secured from other sources so that complete information is available in every area of adult Christian activity.

The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has undertaken ventures in the field of adult education similar to the other groups. The emphasis has been upon coordinating and unifying existing elements of the church program giving special attention to the Young Adults, Family Life, Men's Work, Training of Church Officers and the "Adult Study-Discussion-Action Curriculum and Techniques."¹ Attractive stream-lined literature with useful suggestions has been prepared in each area of emphasis.

From this study of these representative denominations it is apparent that through movements such as the Crusade for Christ of the Methodists and Northern Baptists and the New Life Movement of the Northern Presbyterians, new impetus has been given to the church's program of adult work. The Protestant Church is aware of the challenge of giving adults a full-orbed program of adult Christian education and is seeking by every available means to meet the needs in this field.

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1. Letter from Richard E. Plummer: op. cit.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary

During the past decade significant changes have occurred in the field of adult education. World War II introduced atomic energy as an unprecedented destructive force, and as a result adult education leaders have attempted to gear the program of adult education to the demands of an atomic age.

In the first chapter of this study the current trends in modern educational theory relating to adults have been briefly noted. There has been a marked shift in emphasis in modern secular education. Adult education has come to a pre-eminent position. Educators realize that the education of children and youth is not enough. As individuals mature their needs and interests expand, and new opportunities for education are considered essential at each level throughout life.

In secular education the program for adults is organized to cover nearly every phase of adult interest and activity. The emphasis is upon providing education for all of life. The trend is along the lines of an accelerated program with specialized courses of short duration. Adults are being called upon to make adjustments to changing conditions of this day, and often the every-day life experiences are a challenge for further education. Adults today live in an age which has become study-conscious.

The change of emphasis in secular education from youth to adults and the consequent revision of philosophy, objectives and methods in adult education have significant implications for the program of adult Christian education in the Protestant Church.

In chapter two, the developing currents of adult education in the church have been studied in the light of the new developments in secular adult education. Adult education is considered the "key" to the world situation and, therefore, the church has been revising its educational program in order to give constructive Christian guidance and training to its adult constituency.

The present influence of the Protestant church upon society is being undermined by the potent forces of secularism. The church itself has become imbued with secularistic attitudes and methods. With the church's decreased influence has come a corresponding lack of prestige. Lack of genuine convictions, loss of vital spiritual life and failure to recognize social responsibilities are indictments which are being directed at Protestantism today.

In view of its critical position the church has been endeavoring to correct existing weaknesses and to regain a place of respected Christian leadership. Most Protestant denominations have adopted aggressive programs of evangelism and Christian education to meet the challenge of the world in an atomic age. The United Christian Adult Movement's National Adult Work Planning Conference in 1946 was an interdenominational attempt to recommend "broad outlines and specifications of a vital, rich, attractive program of adult work for the church and community."¹ From denominational endeavors and from the National Adult Work Planning Conference have come suggestions as to the changing nature of the church's task in the fields of missions, evangelism, Bible study and other study courses, social education and action and stewardship.

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1. Looking Ahead in Adult Work, p. 101.

The missionary enterprise of the church is now considered a single task. The division between "home" and "foreign" missions is disappearing. With the current concept of "one world" the need for a united world-wide Christian church is obvious. The ecumenical movement is growing and is of significance for the world-wide Christian mission. There is an understanding between new, young churches and older churches through the program of missionary education being given today. Specific problems of relief, restoration, anti-Semitism, uprooted and migrant groups, the American Indian, the Negro and the rural population of America have been considered in this connection.

In the program of evangelism the church is seeking to incorporate every legitimate means of reaching the unchurched. These means include personal evangelism through lay-visitation, mass evangelism, educational evangelism, group evangelism, printed evangelism and evangelism through the use of audio-visual aids. The church now recognizes that evangelism is not completed when persons become church members, "but that it is effective only when men and women are fully attracted to and established in a satisfying fellowship of study, worship, activity and work."¹

Bible study is regaining a position of importance in the church adult program, but the emphasis has changed from acquiring Biblical knowledge to making the teachings of the Bible effective in daily life. Also the trend is away from the traditional type of adult Bible class to the use of short-term Bible study courses.

In the field of social education and action, the church has extended its scope of operation to include World Order, Relief and Rehabilitation, Civic and Political Action, Minority Rights and

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1. Administering the Church Program, Course 2, p. 29.

Group Tensions, Church and Social Welfare and a Christian Economic Order. These areas of social activity were considered individually at the National Adult Work Planning Conference and recommendations for future endeavors were proposed.

The necessity of strengthening the emphasis on Christian Stewardship has been mentioned. The principle of stewardship has not changed but its importance is now considered in a broader aspect, and, therefore, it has been necessary to enlarge the church's vision in this respect and advocate more strongly than ever the privilege and responsibility of being Christian stewards.

New emphases in the field of parent education have been developing since the beginning of World War II. The problems of modern life relating to the Christian family have been briefly treated. Proposed methods for strengthening the Christian home include an effective pre-marital, post-marital and family life counseling program and an adequate program of parent education. The need for giving priority to Christian family life in order to restore the home to the center of life and to Christianize this basic institution of human society has challenged the church, and new efforts are being made to adapt the Christian education program to provide effectively in this field.

Previously neglected areas in the adult Christian education program where special stress is being laid are the fields of young adult work, older retired persons and men's work. Appropriate programs providing fellowship, opportunities for worship, instruction and service have been instituted in many churches for these peoples, and the response has been gratifying. Young adults are responsive to an attractive and stimulating Christian education program, and new techniques are being developed for strengthening and extending

this work. The increase in the number of persons past sixty-five years of age who are capable of normal activity has caused the church to engage in a study and experiment of possible program channels to make provision for them. Men's work is an expected emphasis in view of the present stress on the use of laymen in the church program. Some denominations are incorporating an effective program for men into their church life. The need for education of men in Christian faith and service is being met through well-balanced organized activities.

In the third chapter of this study, a summary of the work of the United Christian Adult Movement and a brief survey of the contributions in adult Christian education of five leading denominations, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, the Methodist Church, the Northern Baptist Convention, the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has been given.

B. Conclusion

In this study of the current emphases in adult Christian education it has been found that adults respond to an active vital Christian education program. In every phase of its adult work the church has attempted to reach and meet the needs and interests of its adults. In the light of the present world situation the emphasis upon the total work of the total church is significant. The church pleads guilty to the charges of weakness and failure in the past, but efforts to correct and improve former inadequacies indicate renewed life and influence in the days ahead. The trend is toward a unified, co-ordinated and vital Christian education program for adults, and present emphases and trends in previously neglected fields of adult work substantiate this. It has also been seen that new machinery is

not needed so much as new techniques in using the existing program channels.

Since World War II adult Christian education has received new attention on the part of the church, and continued study, review of achievement and evaluation is imperative for the successful fulfillment of the church's function. It has also been advocated that an adequate program of adult Christian education, recognizing the changing nature of the church's task, reaching into every area of human life, centering in the basic social institution, the home, and through the organized channels of the adult program meeting the deepest needs of men and women, will guarantee the effective Christian education of youth and children.

Therefore, it can be stated that the primary function of the church lies in its recognition of the need of adult Christian education and its provision for its adult constituency that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may effectively influence every area of human life and thought.

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