

The Presbyterian Church and Adult Education

A Series of Articles on the Need, the Purpose, the Program of Adult Education

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III. PURPOSE: "THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE"

In the two previous articles we have seen how the Presbyterian Church is planning a Presbyterian Adult Program. Naturally, one of the first questions to be faced was this: *What should the program seek to accomplish in the lives of adults?*

In seeking to answer this question a very interesting procedure was undertaken. The representatives of each congregation, from the standpoint of the local church, made statements which brought out—(a) the objectives or purposes of that phase of the program; (b) the activities and procedures suggested through which the objectives stated might be realized; (c) the relationship of this particular program to other phases of the total adult program in the local church; (d) the relationship to corresponding elements in the total on-going program of the church in the other age groups.

The committee studied and discussed documents prepared on the above bases and, following this discussion, a study was begun which has resulted in the preparation of a statement of the general objectives of the adult program of the Church. This statement attempts to set down in definite form all the things the church desires to see accomplished in the lives of men and women. As far as possible it seeks to state what is involved, as far as adults are concerned, in becoming a complete Christian who enters into the fullness and richness of the abundant life in Jesus Christ. ~~While what follows is hardly what one might call "popular reading," it will bear careful study and thought. It is formulated with the purpose in mind of accomplishing four things:~~

1. To keep in the forefront the great central objective, "Christian personality."
2. To include in the first objective a statement, from the standpoint of the individual, particularly in this relationship to God, of what is involved in a growing Christian personality and life.
3. To indicate in the three subsequent statements (Objectives II, III and IV) what is involved in living the Christian life in the major areas, in and through which Christian adults express their individual and group life and come to their highest development and most significant growth.
4. To include in the very statements themselves the largest degree of achievement, aggressiveness, accomplishment, active participation and self-direction that should characterize men and women who are purposefully entering into God's life, and into his purposes and plans for all his children.

The desired outcome of Christian education in the individual is a growing Christian personality. As far as adults are concerned, a program of Christian education which has a purpose in view will be planned to realize in the lives of men and women the following objectives:

Objective I

Christian education seeks to lead adults into a progressive and continuously developing Christian experience which issues in Christ-like character and conduct and in dynamic Christian living. This involves:

1. Faith in a personal God as the supreme reality in human experience and a vital personal fellowship with him.
2. A knowledge and appreciation of Jesus Christ which

leads to faith in and acceptance of him as Saviour and Lord; which manifests itself in daily life and conduct, and through an increasingly loyal and effective participation in his cause.

3. A growing knowledge, appreciation and use of the Bible and of the best religious experience of the race as expressed in religious literature and art, and in life itself.

4. The progressive achievement of such a vigorous, personal Christian faith; the development of a Christian interpretation of life and the universe as expressing the Divine purpose and plan, and a philosophy of life, based upon this interpretation, which functions in all life's situations; participation with God and with one's fellow men in the varied activities that have to do with the advancement of the Kingdom; an increasing purpose and ability, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the exercise of Christian controls in all the situations of daily life which are faced by adults.

Objective II

Christian education seeks to lead adults to contribute constructively to the building of a Christian home and family life in which all the richest values of Christian faith and life are conserved, enhanced and made increasingly significant for every member of the home and through the home for the community, the nation and the world. This involves:

1. The recognition of the home as the basic educational institution, a miniature democracy, in which every member has definite rights, privileges and responsibilities.
2. The increasing disposition and ability on the part of adults to make the whole atmosphere of the home genuinely Christian.
3. A growing respect for and appreciation of the personality of others, and the common sharing as far as possible on the part of each member of the home in the life and experience of the other members of the group, and especially the disposition and ability on the part of the adults to enter helpfully into the life and experiences of children and young people.
4. The practice of such relationships between members of the home or family group and participation in such activities as will result in a genuine sense of partnership in the development of a Christian home and family life.
5. A recognition of the privilege and responsibility of Christian parenthood and purposeful preparation therefore; a realization that the experience of parenthood itself is an opportunity for Christian growth and development and the use of every possible means by which this experience may be made most significant and meaningful.
6. Making the home a school in Christian living in which the religious values of the every-day experiences of life are recognized and used as means to the development of Christian character.
7. The discovery and the use of those special religious activities which will contribute to the development of a Christian home life and of the Christian faith and character of each member of the family.
8. Intelligent, full and hearty cooperation between the home and the church.
9. Cooperation with and participation in those community programs, organizations, agencies and activities which may be of help in developing a more Christian home and community life.

Objective III

Christian education seeks to develop in adults the ability and disposition to enter creatively into the life and work of the church as the organized society of Christians and the chief agency through which the cause of Jesus Christ is to be advanced. This involves:

1. A recognition that the church should be a Christian fellowship in which children, youth and adults may altogether develop Christian character through sharing responsibility, each in proportion to his ability, and the acceptance by adults of primary responsibility for planning and achieving such a fellowship in the church.

2. Intelligent, active and efficient membership in the church.

3. Making the church a place for the practice of the Christian spirit which becomes a creative power in leading men and women into dynamic Christian living.

4. Participation in constructive Christian service in and through the channels of the church and related agencies.

5. An increasing disposition and ability to carry the load of leadership.

6. An increasing disposition and ability for intelligent, loyal, and helpful followership.

7. Such continuous restudy and revaluation of the church in the light of modern knowledge and life as will contribute to the progressive realization of a church which more and more perfectly expresses the Christian concept of the will and purpose of God for the world.

Objective IV

Christian education seeks to lead adults into a growing ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the building of a social order

throughout the community, the nation and the world, which increasingly embodies the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This involves:

1. An increasing recognition of the fact that in the Christian conception God himself is at the center of all life, involved in and active in every social situation and in every social process.

2. A growing sense of personal responsibility for the actions of the social group of which the individual is a member.

3. A growing reverence and respect for the personality of other human beings.

4. The disposition and ability to see the religious implications inherent in social situations and problems whether of economic, industrial, political or of other sort.

5. Constructive criticism of one's own personal behavior in all social relations as well as of the present social order, with a view to discovering such solutions of social situations and problems as will result in the realization of the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

6. An increasing sense of responsibility for and skill in dealing with social situations and problems, not on the basis of past practices, but rather through the discovery and application of those solutions which will afford the largest opportunity for the development of Christ-like character in all concerned.

7. An increasing sense of responsibility for such helpful criticism of and intelligent participation in various political and governmental processes as will advance the Kingdom of God through manifesting the spirit of friendship, brotherhood neighborliness between man and man; between social groups; between races and tongues, and between the nations of the world.