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Christian education as a hermeneutical project with special reference to the ascension of Christ

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Christian Education as a Hermeneutical Project
          with special reference to the Ascension of Christ.

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This thesis offers a broad ranging overview of Adult Christian Education,
approached from the standpoint of the facilitation of Understanding.

We introduce nine questions central to this subject, and these form the
thesis' overall structure and content. Continuous interaction is made with
educationalists currently working in A.C.E., especially in the United States.
We interact especially with J.M. Lee and T.H. Groome.

Chapter I.1 considers the nature of God's activity in A.C.E. programmes, and
seeks to justify a moderate interventionist model of revelation, against
M. Wiles particularly.

Chapter 1.2 propounds a matrix of twelve Aims possible in A.C.E. Our overall
definition of A.C.E. focusses on Discipleship and Maturity (L.O. Richards).

Chapter II.1 focusses on the content of A.C.E. We here concentrate upon
Christian doctrine, illustrated in the Ascension. Detailed exegesis of the
Ascension texts highlights the work of G. Lohfink.

Chapter II.2 addresses the nature of the person being educated. Drawing on
D. Cairns, J. Macquarrie we discuss the nature of the Imago Dei, and
education into the Imago Christi.

Chapter II.3 offers extensive justification for hermeneutical theory forming
the underlying dynamic for learning theory pertinent to A.C.E. In dialogue
initially with Heidegger, Bultmann and Gadamer we construct a model for
A.C.E. with power to promote interpretative ability, and application of faith
to daily life. A special place is reserved for the Holy Spirit's educative
role. We utilize Narrative Theology as a powerful and practical
hermeneutical bridge. (D.E. Miller)

Chapter III features a particular small-scale educational programme carried
out in a Church setting, using the model developed in Chapters I,II.

The thesis concludes by re-emphasizing the multifaceted dimensions of A.C.E.
necessary in order to be adequate to both Christian tradition and experience.
Teaching that facilitates the release of students towards their own "meaning
making" is far more demanding than traditionally required in education which
transmits predetermined content. This is because of the teacher's need to
understand in depth both the subject material (for hermeneutically distanced
understanding) and his students (for hermeneutical fusion of horizons).

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS A

HERMENEUTICAL PROJECT WITH SPECIAL

REFERENCE TO THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

BY

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"Christian Education as a Hermeneutical Project

with special reference to the Ascension of Christ."

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION to my wife Jane Mary Skinner

for her encouragement and patience over the last four years

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

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Introductory Chapter

Section 1

Opening Introductory Comments

This thesis is an exercise in Christian Education (C.E.).
It falls therefore within the general compass of the discipline
of Practical Theology. It originally arose out of an increasing
awareness that there exists an enormous gap between the actual
teaching (in content and method) carried out by Church leaders
and the real life needs, problems, concerns, interests of the
"average" Church member. This is especially so amongst the
Adult members of our Churches, who, generally speaking, seem to
have ceased learning about how their Christian beliefs and
spiritual perceptions might affect the remainder (and bulk) of
their lives outside of Church-related activities. (1) For many,
their faith has not progressed very far beyond a level attained
at Sunday School, and therefore they have ceased to learn in the
religious dimension of their existence.

This thesis addresses itself to this problem and seeks
to offer some contibution towards its resolution. Therefore the
attention of the thesis is most sharply directly towards ADULT
Christian Education (henceforth "A.C.E."), a subject which until
recently has had very little attention in this country. In a
sense all that takes place in the programme of a typical Church
has educative value, whether the sermon and bible Reading,
Eucharist and hymn singing, P.C.C. meeting and Christmas bazaar.
Certainly our Church leaders need to become increasingly aware
that all their ministry is in some way or other functioning as a
form of education; and can therefore benefit from the
application of educational theory. We shall see later that it
will be valuable to delimit C.E. by defining it as an
intentioned (2) facilitation of learning, but this in no way
detracts from the argument that to improve the ability of adults

to learn in theory and practice should be amongst the top priorities of theologians and Church leaders alike. Therefore it can be seen that this thesis deals with a genuine and urgent need.

Practical Theology stands at the confluence of many different academic and practical disciplines. In order to place any subject within Practical Theology on a respectable academic footing rather than to make general intuitive observations, it will clearly be necessary to hold together in some sort of creative tension among other subjects the theory and practice of the following disciplines :-

Sociology; Psychology; Anthropology; Statistical Theory; Philosophy; Operational Research; Human Biology; Educational Theory; Communication Theory.

This is in addition to the differing branches of Theology, the following being most relevant to this thesis:-

Systematics; New Testament Criticism; Biblical Theology; Philosophical Theology; Narrative Theology; Hermeneutics.

It should therefore be abundantly clear that it will not be possible to explore every avenue relevant to the subject, or always rigorously and fully to justify every statement made in this thesis because of the intolerable length which would then result.

However we maintain that it is a valuable endeavour to attempt to tie together the results of researches in these fields as they relate to particular practical problems and issues, otherwise each would retain its basically theoretical stance in relative isolation from other disciplines. Probably the theological sciences have for too long been mainly pre-occupied with abstruse theoretical matters which have

insufficient relationship to the great problems of our contemporary world. This thesis is one small attempt to link theory and practice for the benefit of Clergy and lay-people alike.

This thesis is an exercise in Christian education, and unashamedly stands within an ostensible Christian tradition. Much of what will be discussed will have major relevance for the teaching of any religious faith, usually with suitable "translation". However, for greater usefulness it is here deemed necessary to focus upon the CHRISTIAN tradition as the context for C.E. If the subject were left more nebulously as "Religious Education" then the consequent loss of precision and application would be serious, especially since the thesis is designed to be of practical assistance to Church leaders and members in actual parish/church situations. It will become clear during the course of the thesis what is to be designated as special or particular about the "Christian" dimension to adult education.

A major symposium held at Chicago University Divinity School in 1981 addressed itself to the subject of Practical Theology in rigorous terms. (3) We have discovered that Don Browning and other contributors share concerns very similar to this thesis and approached the heart of the matter in ways analogous to us. The intention of the symposium was to review the theoretical foundations for Practical Theology so that it no longer exists as an appendage to Systematics and Biblical studies in particular.

J. Burkhart (4) argues that many of our present problems stem from Schleiermacher's division of the disciplines of theology into philosophical, historical and practical. (5) Although Practical Theology was described as the "crown" giving purpose to the other two disciplines, in effect Schleiermacher's proposals, argues Burkhart, have tended to

reduce practical theology to a preoccupation with application
and technique. (6)

We seek to help redress the balance by setting A.C.E.
upon a firm theological and theoretical footing so that it is no
longer merely drawing practical ideas or techniques out of the
results of Systematic or Biblical theology. This we aim to do
through a dynamic, praxis-orientated approach undergirded by
hermeneutic theory. Burkhart (7) in effect argues for this, and
is joined by D. Tracey in advocating a praxis-orientated
foundation sublating theory and practice :-

"Theology is the mutually critical correlation of the meaning
and truth of an interpretation of the Christian fact and the
meaning and truth of an interpretation of the contemporary
situation serves as a general rubric informing all forms of
authentically theological reflection". (8)

We therefore stand with Don Browning in emphasizing the
vital role of Practical Theology, along the following lines:-

1. It is to be an enterprise of the whole Church, no longer
    bound to the clerical paradigm. (9)

2. It is to be a _critical_ discipline reflecting on the
    Christian tradition and its texts (at a distance) (10)

3. It should relate faith to various forms of secular
    knowledge "in genuine interaction with social,
    psychological factors that constrain and channel the action
    possibilities of the people involved". (fusion) (11)

4. It must examine or test the results of this hermeneutical
    process by the discipline of Christian social ethics
    according to a hermeneutic of the moral praxis of the
    Christian Community. (12) This thesis is attempting

just this within the field of Adult Christian Education, but focussing upon (2), (3) above.

SECTION 2   Nine Questions that form the Structure and Content
             of this Thesis

2.1 Introduction

This section looks at 9 questions that we perceive are emerging as common to many Christian educationalists writing at this time.   These questions are either specifically raised by them, or can be seen as arising from their particular approaches.   Our intention at this point is not to give detailed analysis of their positions, or offer extended comment.   Rather we will bring the major questions to light, offering brief comment on how we will attempt to deal with these questions later in the thesis.   In particular we aim to show how these emerging problems are addressed by the field of Hermeneutic Theory.

We have chosen a fairly small, but we argue, representative sample of those currently writing on Adult Christian Education (A.C.E.).   We do this to highlight the extent of the current debate, and the range of answers that can be provided:-

J. Hull:- Social Science analysis. Critical approach. Liberal
          Theology.

J. McKenzie:- Social Science approach. Fairly extreme liberal-
          critical position.

G. Moran - Via Media approach. Stress on Relational dimension.
          Revelation within "experience".

Secular Theorists:- P.Jarvis, M.Knowles, R.Lovell. Experience
        and Needs centred.   .

J. Smart:- Conservative Theologian. Teacher centred. Traditional
        Protestant

J. Westerhoff:- Faith-Development. Formative in Christian
        Community

        Discussion of theoretical foundations of A.C.E. is at
present an area of intense debate, especially in the U.S.A.
There is a realization that for too long A.C.E. has had no
properly developed theoretical basis, relying mainly to date
upon the insights and thinking of secular education.   The
materials actually used for educational purposes have been
produced mainly from a pragmatic outlook with generally poorly
analysed blending of secular theory with "Christian" moral
principles and doctrinal content.   In this country, this truth
is only just being realised, but in the U.S.A. a large number of
differing theoretical positions in A.C.E. have been developing
for some time.   The survey mainly considers American writers who
have been active within the last 10 years (13) Two writers of
particular note, J.M. Lee and T. Groome, will be considered in
greater depth later in the thesis rather than at this juncture.

2.2 Question 1. What is the role of Theology in A.C.E.? The problem of Revelation, and God's distinctive role.

Many theorists actually seem to operate with A.C.E. models which do not assign to God any particular place of direct relevance. They assume that God "stands back" from the educational process, working entirely immanently according to the normal laws of human psycho-dynamics.

McKenzie for instance is dismissive of God's distinctive role, especially modes of operation according to the "Blow Theory". (14) In essence, McKenzie believes that by developing the very best educational programmes we necessarily and therefore most effectively enable the Holy Spirit to operate, since he works best through the highest standard of humanly devised educational dynamic programmes. For McKenzie Theology occupies an advisory role and it can be used to reflect at some distance upon A.C.E. activity. (15) Since A.C.E. is primarily an _educational_ activity it is educational theory that should provide the macrotheory by which students' needs are assessed, appropriate programmes are developed, and evaluation takes place. (16) If we allow this then we ask whether there is any difference between A.C.E. and any other educational enterprise, bar possibly noting its breadth (encompassing moral, aesthetic, spiritual or relational values), and content. The content of A.C.E. will specifically focus upon Christian doctrine, ethics, spirituality; although it need not only concentrate upon those areas that form the principal concern of education.

However, traditional conservatives such as J. Smart assert that God is the proximate source of all education. He therefore sees Theology as continuing to have a vital function in Church life. (17) He claims that Theology is the Church "looking at itself and inquiring as to where it is failing to be the Church of God". (18) Thus Theology has the critical

functions of exposing confusion and uncertainty. He places
Education within the department of Practical Theology (see
Section 1), focussing upon preaching, teaching the Word of God.
(19)   Theology has another role, that of examining and
facilitating man's response to God subsequent to God's
revelatory disclosure to man. (20)   Thus Smart affirms the
revelatory nature of A.C.E., with Theology playing a major
role.

According to this approach the Educator's job is to
prepare the ground to the best of his ability, teach as well as
possible, yet permit God to do whatever He may wish in and
through this endeavour. We must ask about the role of the Holy
Spirit in A.C.E., does he make any specifiable difference? Or
do we better concentrate upon the teaching act itself?

Moran has adopted a relatively sophisticated approach in
Interplay (21). He attempts to occupy some middle ground in
this debate about God's role in A.C.E., and the relative value
of educational and theological principles in A.C.E.   He
attempts (22) to retain God at the centre of R.E., because he
is central to life: "The most high God in Judaism is at the
same time the God among His People". God is both transcendent
and immanent, there being an interplay in human life of these
attributes.   We must ask if this "both/and position" can be
sustained.   Moran also examines the position of Religion in
Education. He believes (23) that R.E. is born of the meeting
of education and religion. He seeks to avoid use of the term
Theology, for this represents literal discursive and factual
language – but one form of the whole. Therefore he advocates a
dialogue between religion and education (24) wherein both
parties change to some degree without abandoning their
respective pasts – critical yet affirmative of each other.
Moran concludes a discussion of revelation in Chapter 4 by
saying (25) that we must uphold the aesthetic meaning of
revelation – the invitation to discover the divine in the

present experience of humans and non humans. R.E. is to offer this invitation. But is it sufficient to deny scientific revelation for the sake of aesthetic revelation? (26) Is he honest to the full impact of revelation in Scripture and Tradition? In Chapter I.1 we must study the role of Theology or Religion in A.C.E. so as to define clearly its role and delineate the form and function of revelation within it. J.M. Lee will be studied since he has propounded a more cogent defence of the immanentist position than any other contemporary religious educationalist, and like McKenzie severely restricts the function of theology in R.E.

2.3. Question 2. What are the aims and objectives of A.C.E.?

There is considerable diversity in response to this question from practitioners of A.C.E. The following give an indication of the possible sets of aims:

Catechesis (nurturing within the Christian faith-tradition)
        (27)

Praxis-Liberation (reflecting upon action that leads to
        increased social/political awareness) (28)

Conversion - Transformation (individual renewal or change in
        perspective) (29)

Knowledge (growth in intellectual understanding) (30)

Many of these aims have at the centre a need for changed understanding or an enhanced ability to interpret correctly experiences and information.

One of McKenzie's main aims is to encourage critical thought. It is a mode of thinking that is dialogical,

inquisitive and radical. (31) The teacher aims to help people assimilate new experiences into their developing experience-base, thus "making meaning". (32) Indeed what is learnt in A.C.E. may be less important than how it is learnt. (33) This seems to be consistent with a hermeneutical approach, for it is dialogical. We ask whether hermeneutical theory may be able to synthesize or correlate with other educational aims as expressed here.

J. Westerhoff (34) adopts as his overarching educational aim enculturation into the Christian Community. He explains this lucidly in Chapter 3. "Catechesis focusses therefore on both formation, the growth of persons, and transformation, the change of persons within a community of faith". (35) Thus through Catechesis "faith might be made conscious, living and active". He defends this aim against the charge of indoctrination by arguing that through such education people are not only influenced, but because of their free minds and wills are also able to influence the community. The ultimate aim of R.E. for Westerhoff is to help people find their pathway to God. He gives 3 such paths (36).

Affiliative - Experiencing
Illuminative - Reflective
Unitive-Integrating

The distinguishing of such differing types of path is helpful because we are thereby shown how the primary overarching aim is expressed in secondary aims capable of concrete expression in Objectives. This is pursued in Chapter I.2, where we will see that Westerhoff's aims, for all their breadth, are very different from McKenzie's, or Moran's because of their establishment within the confessing faith-community.

G. Moran discusses various meanings of adulthood, and from a sound elucidation of this concept he proceeds to

formulate aims that will address this movement to adult maturity. (37) He believes that an adult is someone who has reached a degree of maturity and wholeness, who is increasingly able to integrate apparent contradictions or opposites. (38) He cites three areas of integration:

Rational/Non-Rational (39)
Dependence/Independence (40)
Life/Death (41)

Moran proceeds to develop an educational model which will help achieve this aim. The model consists of two types of education: schooling and laboratory (see 2.9). The distinctive religious aim of R.E. is to help people achieve wholeness of being by a continual journey from the world to God and back again; God being found ultimately at the centre of all existence. (42).

Finally, we must in Chapter I.2 discuss which aims should become uppermost from within the Christian tradition, especially as discerned in Scripture. This will require interaction with the biblical tradition so that the aims of Jews and the early Church can be set alongside our proposals, ensuring that A.C.E. is authentically Christian in process and content. We will compare our approach with that of T. Groome because his approach is also a hermeneutically-based one. (43)

2.4. Question 3: What is the appropriate subject-matter
          of A.C.E.?

According to McKenzie we need to include a broad sweep of subject matter within A.C.E., ranging from biblical studies to practical life-skills. This belief of McKenzie stems from his argument that Religion is a mode of being in the world, a personal response and lifestyle. (44) The central task of A.C.E. is not to teach Theology so much as to help people

reflect on life experiences in the light of the central values
of their religious faith (45)   Thus McKenzie would like to
include   themes   other   than   those   that   are   explicitly
religious.(46)   He gives three main content areas for the local
Church (47) :-

1.   Explicitly religious topics.

2.   Activities to help meet everyday needs (eg how to get a
     job).

3.   Adult leisure-time endeavours (eg backyard gardening)

We ask in Chapter II.1 whether it is right to include in a
church-sponsored programme courses or material which is far
removed from the ostensible heart of the Christian faith.
Even if it is theologically justifiable, perhaps practical
shortage of resources will prevent this.   We put this question
as McKenzie does.   What validity is there for making an
ontological distinction between the sacred and the secular? Is
religion co-extensive with life? (48)

     J. Westerhoff in <u>Will our Children have Faith?</u> (49) also
broadens his discussion to include various features of Church
life.   In Chapter 3 he lays out various matters for attention
in educational programmes especially as they relate to
corporate life.

     Firstly, Ritual (50), for the content and context of
R.E. must centre upon Worship.   Its educational function should
be explored (for instance, life-crisis rites helping people
understand significant moments of life (51)).

     Secondly, Experience (52), for the aim of R.E. is not
just to tell the Christian story but also to allow the story to

image or symbolically conceptualize an individual's life experiences. Experience is a prime content for R.E. (53).

Thirdly, Action itself must form the content of R.E. (54), so the Church becomes an agent of societal, economic and cultural change. Such activity is part of the content because they are in themselves learning experiences. (55) We will see in Chapters I.2, II.1 that Westerhoff here draws close to Groome, Freire and other Liberation Theologians. Westerhoff's subject matter for A.C.E. is very broad, but differs from McKenzie in that only directly Gospel-sanctioned activities are to be pursued.

Discussions in Chapter II.1 must also investigate the extent to which A.C.E. should centre on ideas (eg transmission of doctrine) and/or involve action related or affective content. A contrast to this possibility is advocated by K. Nichols in Orientation (56) and by Smart. (57) For instance Nichols: "I should like to underline the importance of the doctrinal dimension. It has no absolute primacy. But it does have a controlling function"; "It ensures continuity and identity." (58) These remarks are important because Nichols' approach, typical of traditional Catholicism, shows him to be at odds with many modern theologically acute educationalists.

Smart in Chapter 6 sets out the shape and content he desires for educational programmes centred upon the Church. The content consists of teaching knowledge of the Scriptures (59), initiating into worship (60), growth in fellowship (61), teaching church history (62) and training to be the Church of God. (63). Such Smart labels "education for discipleship" (we return to this theme in Chapter I.2) His approach represents a classic statement of Protestant educational content - but in the light of the insights of McKenzie or Westerhoff it may be too narrow. Chapter II.1 must examine this issue closely,

especially the question of the propriety of teaching doctrine in the contemporary Church.

Subsequent to this discussion we will proceed in Chapter II.1 to focus upon the doctrinal content of the Ascension, our prime instance of teaching concern for this thesis. We prepare in our detailed studies to teach the Ascension in Chapter III according to the theory developing through this thesis.

2.5 Question 4. What are the needs, interests of the adult being educated? What is the essential nature of MAN?

In considering who is being educated we study the relevance of a person's intellectual, emotional and personal capacity to the educational programme. We wish to consider the nature of adulthood, for there are many characteristics of adult life that uniquely will be addressed or engaged in good educational programmes (see also 2.9 and discussion on Andragogy). We cannot simply construct and carry out an education programme on the basis of teaching a certain content matter in disregard of who is being educated. We will do well to heed Erikson's (64) and Fowler's (65) theses which attend to life-cycle theory and faith-development. These highlight the need for A.C.E. to help adults through crises or transition points in life. For too long A.C.E. has treated its participants as all of one undifferentiated mass, but effective A.C.E. will not only study people's personalities, spiritual development, personal needs, but will probe to the depths of people's psyche as far as this is possible.

Thus we address in Chapter II.2 the question of a doctrine of man, preparing to engage discussion on the existence and contours of the Imago Dei in man. As a result of this we hope to be able to justify a model of a human bein g that will enable account to be taken of the great variety of

our species in intellect, culture, spiritual development and
personality. We hope that our interpretative approach which
searches for relevant keys to unlock mental/psychical doors
will be of assistance here. (see 2.6)

In Chapter II.2 we must look at problems that people
bring to A.C.E. J. Hull is particularly helpful in What
Prevents Adult Christians from Learning? (66) How does A.C.E.
really engage with the deep problems Christians face due to
Cognitive Dissonance? (67) Hull demonstrates that deep
responses such as guilt, despair, aggression, bafflement, fear
are widespread amongst Christian adults. In Chapter I Hull
considers the effects of Modernity upon Christians:-

Bureaucracy (68), an emphasis upon Rationality (69),
Individualism (70), Futurity (71), Liberation (72), Plurality
(73).

Such influences are subtle but far reaching and
powerful, causing Christian adults to become defensive,
confused, doubtful, fearful.   These problem areas need
addressing so that people break through to new levels of
understanding, re-integration of self and re-application of
faith to society. (74) They must be helped to "re-ideologize
their living faith in Jesus" (75). His concept of adult needs
seems rationalistic – a true adult is one who can uphold his
ideology in the face of external pressures.   We recognise
however that in Chapter 5 Hull does talk in terms of a
partnership in learning between ourselves and God (76). In
Chapter 4 Hull undertakes a deeper investigation, in effect
affirming a Freudian view of man. Such an approach to A.C.E.
thence becomes experimental, engaging our deepest psychic
drives (77) Because of this, A.C.E. would require to present
powerful images, such as of God, to remould our unconscious
life. (78)

We feel that Hull's analysis is the poorer because he omits any discussion of the Imago Dei - that dimension to a human which is related to God and can enter relationship with Him. We hope to show in Chapter II.2 that a unique province of A.C.E. is the fostering of relationship with God so that the Imago Christi may be formed in the Christian.

We here finally note the comments of Moran who devotes considerable attention to the meanings of Adulthood. (79) In a series of provocative questions (80) he inquires about the distinctiveness of adulthood relevant for A.C.E. He argues that although adulthood as commonly understood (meaning rational, objective, productive, successful, self-sufficient) has validity, yet it is not sufficient as a complete portrayal of adulthood (81). The usual meaning needs the complement of further characteristics of maturity, integration, wholeness (82). Moran seems to move beyond Hull in Chapter 4 by describing the religious journey to adulthood. Thus his doctrine of man does include a major place for the need for growth towards God (83). However, we must ask of Moran the theological and biblical basis for his assertions. To uphold the Imago Dei requires considerable justification in the face of modern scepticism.

2.6 Question 5: What is learning? How does it take place?

It is appropriate to draw at this point not only upon religiously-oriented educators but also from the secular field. Much can be learned from the considerable researches of those who have been professionally involved in the field of Adult Education for very many years. As we learn from them, we need of course to offer a Christian critique. R. B. Lovell in Adult Learning (84) discusses how an individual's unique personality affects the mode of learning. The following variables are seen as relevant:

intelligence (85), personality (86), impulsivity/reflectivity (87), serialist or holistic approach to study (88), self-concept or self-image (89), motivation (90), perceived or unperceived needs (91).

We agree that a person's learning style is bound to be profoundly affected by the incidence of such variables. Lovell (92):- "Each individual is unique and his learning will be most effective when his personal strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged and taken into account". Thus as the educator becomes aware of the diversity of personal learning styles he will be wise to attempt allowance for them in his programme content, presentation and 1:1 interaction especially. This thesis is at one with Lovell in advocating a broad, multi-faceted approach to education.

P. Jarvis in Adult and Continuing Education (93) sets forward the learning cycle for an individual, as influenced by yet influencing his culture. (94) His theory revolves around the individual interacting with his culture. (95) This dialectical approach is highly relevant for hermeneutics. He says, "Learning occurs when there is a dynamic tension between the individual and the agencies of transmission of the culture

of the Society". The process unfolds thus (96). Culture is transmitted by various agencies to the individual who receives and processes it; The individual decides to accept or reject the results of the process, and subsequently integrates the decision to the rest of his self. He may externalize it and thus effect the culture itself. This is a form of hermeneutical spiral. (Chapter II.3) Accepting Jarvis' proposals as far as they go, we ask, does God affect the learning process in a distinctive manner, if so how? This is a vital issue for Chapter II.3.

Hull, as we saw in 2.5, looks at adults' learning difficulties in the face of Modernity. (97) He moves forward positively when considering G. Kelly's "Personal Construct" theory, and the suggestions of psychoanalysts S. Freud, K.Jung regarding the learning process. Thus learning involves self-affirmation (98), and an in depth resolution of cognitive dissonance (99) so that belief structures grow to congruency with an individual's experience of life. Hull uses Personal Construct theory (100) in his delineation of possible learning paths for Christian adults. Personal constructs exist as a set of variables formulated to make sense of past experience and used to anticipate the future. (101) Valuable as such insights are, we need to see whether the Christian world-view needs to amend or extend what Kelly has achieved.

We thus see that the underlying dynamics of learning must be one of the central concerns of this thesis. We submit that a utilisation of hermeneutical theory provides the most appropriate and powerful means of facilitating learning - one that correlates easily with Christian theology and tradition.

Westerhoff's approach to adult learning is close to his denotation of child learning - the dynamic is a formative rather than a critical learning style. For him the learning dynamic is faith. (102) In A.C.E. we nurture four different faith-styles.

Experienced, Affiliative, Searching and Owned. (103) He says "We also need to provide experiences that help persons move from one style of faith to another." (104) We accept the vital importance of faith as a dynamic in Christian learning (indeed operative outside overtly Christian settings). It is clearly a biblical concept and consistent with the experience of many Christians. We will integrate this in Chapter II.3 as an initiatory and sustaining dynamic for A.C.E.

J. Fowler also highlights the dynamic of faith in the Christian's growth to adulthood. We progress to different stages of faith through our lives and A.C.E. assists this movement. (105)

Thus an analysis of the dynamics of learning appears to lie at the heart of our concerns, and Chapter II.3 is crucial to this thesis. We will relate a hermeneutical educational methodology to the case of the Ascension as a means by which students may learn to interpret their life experiences more deeply. In this context also we will utilize Narrative Theology as a possible hermeneutical bridge between the Christian tradition and experience. (106)

2.7 Question 6: How do we discover learner Needs? - the role of Sociology

We proceed at this point towards more practical matters relevant for an A.C.E. programme. It is clearly necessary to discover the needs of adult learners as a preliminary to setting up the programme. We clearly need to draw upon the technical expertise of Sociology methodology for this part of the educational enterprise. In actuality, many A.C.E. practioners rely upon their own discernment, previous expertise and life-experiences to determine these needs. Others simply use pre-packaged courses or for instance the Lectionary.

McKenzie strongly criticises Christian educators who project their personal hunches, perceptions and interest on their learning group. (107) He desires A.C.E. to be based upon empirical research. Data yielded by decision - oriented research in a particular parish or local Church must be considered in the design of religious education programmes for adults. (108) A.C.E. must seriously understand the contemporary adult, and shifts in modern consciousness. Hull devotes no space to empirical methods of assessment of adult needs but his approach does draw upon the Social Sciences to highlight areas of learning difficulty. (109) His approach is ultimately very positive. (110)

A very different approach seems to be adopted by J. Smart, who basically puts all the onus upon the teacher to decide what gets taught and how, with scant regard for individual needs or learning styles. In Chapter 6 he considers the shaping of the educational programme on the premise that it will lead people into faith and life of the Church of Jesus. (111) He devotes no space to any discussion of the role of sociological investigation of learner's needs, although (112) Smart desires that R.E. become both Bible and needs centred. Smart argues (113) that students certainly do not always know

what is best for them. "We need to know them (our students) in the depth of their being ...." (114) Such knowledge "comes to us only as God ...... sets their lives in the light of his truth". We must in Chapter III discuss whether Smart's programme, relying so much on teacher discernment of student needs, is sufficient to enable an accurate understanding for A.C.E. It is just the sort of approach that McKenzie criticises heavily.

M. Knowles in The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (115) summarizes forms of data required for building such a model:-

1. Discovery of the "individual learner's perception of what he wants to become, what he wants to be able to achieve, at what level he wants to perform" (116). This could be termed a qualitative assessment made by the learner according to his own self-concept.

2. "Organisational perceptions of desired performance are obtained through systems analyses, performance analyses ...." and various pertinent organisation reports, appraisals and studies. (117) This is more of a quantitative assessment of the situation.

3. Societal perception may be obtained from reports by experts in professional journals and other relevant literature. (118) According to Knowles these different perceptions are amalgamated within the diagnostic process which will lead on to the formulation of programme objectives. (119)

Knowles' comprehensive analysis is helpful, the implications for A.C.E. are clear. Assessment is required of personal needs/goals, Church Communities' objectives (linked to doctrine, ethics, liturgy), and the needs of wider society (the practical outworkings required). We have interest however in a

fourth area of assessment or perception, the spiritual dimension. We need in Chapter III to define what may be distinctive about this, and how such may be measured. Does God have His own particular assessment of need and development programme - if so how might this be found, and how does it impact upon other assessment? Does the Holy Spirit obviate or relativize our search for needs assessment, or is there a way of combining empirical assessment with spiritual discernment?

Finally we note that our empirical research must lead to assessment of students' stance towards the Ascension. Our analysis must help us to select aspects of the Ascension which may relate to the actual needs and interests of our client group. A survey and interview will be required, along with more generalized perceptions.

2.8 Question 7: What is the role of the teacher in A.C.E.? How does he best communicate?

In the view of some educationalists, the teacher is a transmitter of knowledge, who plays the determinative part in setting the curriculum and producing the detailed lesson-plans. Thus the teacher would be the principal receiver of revelation and principal interpreter. We have already noted in Smart the very powerful role he gives to the teacher. In Chapter 5 Smart commences by asserting that all we do in R.E. must be a valid continuation of what Jesus (especially) and the early Church did. (120) Thus since Jesus proclaimed the Word of God, instructed in the truth of the Gospel and trained others to exercise His Ministry. (121) Smart argues that Christian educators must do likewise today. Here lies the theological foundation for Smart's strong belief in the teacher's authority. We consider this in various places in the thesis, but especially in Chapter III

According to McKenzie the teacher acts as Manager of the instructional situation (122). The teacher "structures the learning situation and orchestrates the process whereby learners achieve the objectives of instruction". (123) This style of management varies on a sliding scale from dominative, persuasive, consultative, consensual to compliant (very low teacher control). McKenzie argues (124) that the appropriate role should vary according to the relevant educational programme.

M. Knowles claims to have progressed from an authoritarian view of teaching to a facilitatory role – even on occasions where one would expect the teacher to be dominative due to his expert technical knowledge. (125) In Appendix G (126) he expands to show how "Releasing Leaders" differ from "Controlling Leaders" in eight ways. Such leaders or teachers can by their teaching style creatively release the energies of others in a manner exceeding all other approaches. We note Knowle's approach with great interest, and in Chapter III. see how this can be translated into a Christian setting.

2.9 <u>Question 8: Actual Procedures that we adopt in A.C.E.</u>

McKenzie puts forward various procedures for programme planning based on a collaborative approach to A.C.E. (127). Such amounts in effect to the following:- (128)

1. Assessment of needs, interests sociologically – a prior stage, see 2.7 (129)

2. Formulation of instructional objectives (stated in
    behavioral terms)

3. Selection of resources to utilize.

4. Selection of techniques to adopt.

5. Sequencing of instructional acts within the actual
    programme.

6. Realistic evaluation to assess effectiveness of
    programme (see 2.10)

We ask, is McKenzie's approach realistic, adequate and
justifiable? McKenzie desires involving adults in all the above
6 stages, pro-active initiators acting as resources in
themselves. Is this very egalitarian approach feasible or
indeed theologically justifiable? When might such an approach
not be appropriate? In Chapter III we consider this in the
context of practical strategy. We argue that at each point of
our programme design elements of interpretation enter in. But
how do we translate a general statement regarding Hermeneutics'
relevance into actual practice? We proceed in Chapter III to
demonstrate how this works out in the actual teaching programme
of the Ascension briefly described there in its implementation.

M. Knowles explains the Andragogical model of A.C.E. in Chapter
3 of The Adult Learner. His basic assumptions have been accepted
by many adult educators, although there are critics. (130)
Knowles justifies six major differences between Pedagogy (child
education) and Andragogy (Adult Education) (131), in brief they
could be phrased thus:

1. Adults need to know why they need to learn something before
undertaking to learn it.

2. Adults need to be able to take responsibility for their
learning path.

3. Adults' experience of life must be affirmed as a resource
for learning.

4. Adults learn when they are ready to learn in order to cope with life's experiences.

5. Adults are task or problem centred in their learning.

6. Adults are most responsive when learning to the prospect of inner rewards such as self-esteem, fulfilment.

It can be seen that such is a charter for person-centred experiential learning - most contemporary secular educators agree. See especially A. Tough Learning without a Teacher (132)

Thus the set of procedures that Knowles advocates focusses upon experience-based programmes such as discussion, debate, practical experience, application, learning "in situ". He therefore takes a different line from Westerhoff - who desires formative learning (enculturation). Westerhoff sees the value of worship and the sacraments. We learn to live into our Baptism (133), and to respond to God's gracious presence in the Eucharist. (134) He gives a much greater place to a teacher conveying knowledge of the faith-tradition. Smart also effectively makes the teacher a transmitter of the Word of God. His methodology emphasizes the role of Sermons, Talks, Lectures.

2.10 Question 9: How do we evaluate A.C.E. programmes?

Most educationalists now see it as vital to evaluate adequately in A.C.E. There is considerable debate about how this should be done - using qualitative (general descriptive discursive) methods and/or quantitative (more rigorous statistical measurement) methods. Without some evaluation our thinking will be vague, undisciplined and based on hunches.

McKenzie strongly supports rigorous evaluative procedures. He complains (135) that most R.E. teachers "are

minimally interested in generating empirically based, conclusion-oriented findings". We cannot just rely upon a "collection of deductively reasoned 'thought pieces'". He demands (136) :-

(a)   Conclusion-Oriented empirical research to develop an adequate research resource.

(b)   Decision-Oriented empirical research to improve the quality of decision making by R.E. teachers.

McKenzie offers various specific recommendations: that evaluation assesses the degree to which instructional objectives are met quantitatively, and/or unobtrusively assesses to what degree these are met through class discussion (qualitatively). (137) Those writing outside the field of R.E. have for some while seen evaluation as indispensable. (138)   Lovell alerts us to the immense range of possible approaches - it is a highly technical field that our concluding Chapter can only address in the form of a broad overview. We will comment on qualitative/quantitative approaches, construct certain helpful valid critera of assessment of A.C.E. in the context of the Ascension programme.

Finally, we discuss the problems of evaluating spiritual progress such as "x felt he drew closer to God". Is this a significant statement even if it cannot be evaluated very effectively or at all? Might God evaluate A.C.E. in His own way, and reveal the narrowness of our methodology? Should we break the empiricist stranglehold upon evaluation? In our concluding Chapter we attempt some further brief response to these questions, in the context especially of the Ascension programme. We will ultimately evaluate the main arguments of the whole thesis in the light of the practical programme and theoretical discussion entered into. Thus we will evaluate critically the statements made in Section 4 of this Chapter.

2.11 <u>Concluding Comments on the Questions pursued in this thesis</u>

Thus we discern within this Chapter the complex nest of problems, questions and issues within which study of hermeneutics promises much, because of the key dynamic role of interpretation at various stages. Hermeneutics as originally understood concerned principles of biblical study, but indeed the whole of our existence can be considered as necessitating the ongoing task of interpretation. To make sense of any new piece of information some interpretation of it is required. Education is itself concerned with the communication, discovery, reception and assimilation of new ideas, experiences or information. Since hermeneutics broadly conceived studies how new information is understood and related to existing knowledge, we see the relevance of it to education. A.C.E. shows to people how the resources of our faith-tradition enter in. Hermeneutical theory will help discriminate between the need for passive reception by the learner or dynamic praxis-oriented discovery. It will help us see the roles of teacher, student and God.

We especially attend in the thesis to the activity of God in hermeneutics since this is an area either neglected or under severe criticism. We thus contend in this thesis that to develop an individual learner's understanding of his experience, environment, faith-tradition, consciousness, psyche, fellow human-beings, divine revelation, lies at the core of A.C.E. and concomitantly at the centre of hermeneutical practice. We do acknowledge the danger of so pursuing the need for <u>understanding</u> that it becomes our god. We recognise there will be occasions when a student learns (in the sense of belief or application to life) something yet cannot be said to have understood it in an intellectual or conceptual sense. Indeed that which is learned may run against his normal expectations or rationalized beliefs.

A large range of biblical passages when taken at their most natural, intended meaning imply a teaching role to the Holy Spirit (139).

R. Laurentin in a Catholic survey gives a measured yet positive verdict on the Holy Spirit's activity: "The renewal is helping to restore essential values that are central to revelation itself". (140)

J.D.G. Dunn, a noted Protestant biblical theologian, states "Jesus' experience of God embraced non-rational as well as rational elements - dunamis to heal as well as exousia to proclaim - and he regarded both as valid and important manifestations of God's Spirit". (141) If Jesus sets a pattern for all Christians to follow, then surely we must help others to live in this way for the sake of a very needy world.

In a profound sense therefore we may understand perhaps in our psyche or spirit even mysterious, paradoxical phenomena even though strictly irrational. A hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. must give scope to such possibilities, attested by many Christians today. We note that Scripture testifies to this in a number of significant places, generally arguing that God remains always sovereign, and that at times we must humbly accept that His behaviour may lie beyond complete understanding, or confound us. His ultimate mystery of Being is thus intentionally (indeed probably necessarily) preserved. (142)

Realization of this can broaden or amend our concept of understanding and its function in our lives, ensuring its personal relational context. Recalling the biblical dynamic of personal faith (2:6) is hermeneutical theory in a broad educational setting undermined ? We forestall any reduction of understanding to an impersonal entity by firstly making frequent reference to the underlying power of the Holy Spirit as the personalizing energiser within the hermeneutical process.

Secondly we will wish to emphasize that the highest forms of understanding are personal-relational; between ourselves and God, in community-relationships, and in the depths of our personality.

In an important sense the movement of this whole thesis represents in form the dynamic operation of the Hermeneutical Spiral (Chapter II.3). If we can successfully demonstrate this, then we add considerable strength to our argument that A.C.E. is correctly represented as a hermeneutical project.

Section 3   Comments on Methodology

Section 2 of this Chapter has highlighted a number of
fundamental questions that seem to be emerging from the debate
as it stands at present.   The order in which these questions
were dealt represents an intentional movement.

Firstly   Broad conceptual and theoretical questions regarding
the role of Theology and Educational Aims.   (Chapter I)

Secondly   Specific questions regarding subject matter, who is
being educated and the nature of the learning process.   (Chapter
II)

Thirdly   Practical   questions   concerning   the   Educational
Programme: Needs   Assessment,   Teacher   Role   and   Methodology.
(Chapter III)

Fourthly   We evaluate the whole enterprise to learn lessons for
the future.   See Summary in Appendix A.   We believe these
questions should be considered in any educational enterprise, as
they portray the ideal direction of development in an A.C.E.
programme.   The approach lends itself to a systematization that
gives precision to the work of A.C.E.   (Concluding Chapter)

This discussion brings us to the practical nature of this
exercise.   Various writers in C.E. have complained that there is
far too much speculation from theologians, clergy and other C.E.
practitioners, and insufficient attention to empirical research
to test programmes. (143)   This thesis   therefore attempts   to
ensure an empirical anchorage.   The author is an Anglican
Clergyman, and thus has particular opportunities to conduct
research among his parishioners, bearing in mind the danger of
selectivity and bias.   We will acknowledge the limitations
further in Chapter III.   But it should be noted that there are
also valuable benefits to be had.   This short programme aims to

be illustrative of the theoretical arguments developed through the course of the thesis. Yet it also acts to test the thesis, and it may well be that the programme reveals the need for certain amendments to the proposals adopted earlier. We hope others may care to take up suggestions herein, and also test them out in the field-situation.

The thesis focusses on the Ascension as a test-case for grounding our approach in a specific area. Chapter II.1 provides a solid biblical basis. In Chapter III we describe how aspects of this doctrine might be selected so that our learning group find it relates to their needs, interests and life concerns. We approach A.C.E. initially in this case "from above" but relate the material to participants' experience "from below". (See Chapter I.2)

This thesis is attempting to cover a considerable amount of ground, and in view of space limitations there must be many limits imposed upon the degree of detail we can enter into. Some limitations will be inherent, arising from the author's own presuppositions. Others will be self-imposed, and we will try to make clear what these are by means of disclaimers placed generally in the introductory or concluding sections.

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APPENDIX to Introductory Chapter
Nine Questions which form the Substance of this Thesis

Qu.1   What is the role of   ChI.1   Consideration of Revelation
        Theology in Adult   Model for divine activity.
        Christian Education?   J.Lee.

Qu.2   What are the general Aims   ChI.2   A set of Aims for A.C.E.(12)
        of A.C.E.? Can these be   Key aims of maturity and
        related to a single   discipleship as overall Aim.
        overarching Aim?   T. Groome

Qu.3   What is the appropriate   ChII.1   Which Content is most
        subject Content for   appropriate? Specific
        A.C.E.?   example of the Ascension
                                                 texts in detail.

Qu.4   Who is being educated?   ChII.2   The Christian doctrine of
        What are the needs and   Man in the Imago Dei. His
        interests of   need for salvation and
        contemporary adults?   wholeness.

Qu.5   What is learning? How   ChII.3   A.C.E. as a hermeneutical
        can it be best   project. Study of
        encouraged? What   conditions facilitating
        dynamics are most   Christian understanding
        appropriate?

Qu.6   How do we discern   ChIII   Introduction to research
        individual's or group's   on Belief and Sociological
        needs? How and when do   methods. Illustration in
        we use Sociological analysis?   actual programme.

Qu.7   What is the function and   ChIII   Delineation of procedures
        authority of the teacher?   the teacher takes in
        What role does he take   practical programme. See
        before and during Sessions?   also Conclusions.

Qu.8   What are the actual   ChIII   Specific Programme used
        methods that should be   with Congregation group.
        used in A.C.E.? A   See also practical
        Taxonomy of approaches.   implications ChI.2, II.3

Qu.9   How do we evaluate   Concluding Chapter:
        programmes? What general   Review actual programme
        Sociological techniques are   and re-evaluate the whole
        most appropriate? How does   procedure utilized in
        practical evaluation affect   hermeneutical approach.
        our theoretical models
        utilized.

CHAPTER I.1

REVELATION

1. Preliminary Comments

2. The Nature and Form of Revelation

    2.1 Introduction

    2.2 Revelation as Personal

    2.3 Revelation as Propositional

    2.4 Revelation as God's Historical Act

    2.5 Further Amplification on the Means of Revelation

3. A Model of God's Activity within the World

    3.1 Introduction

    3.2 The approach of J. M. Lee

    3.3 Comments on Lee and defence of Interventionist Model

    3.4 Conclusions

    3.5 Phenomenological Distinctions between 2 overall Models

4. Revelation and its impact in Christian Education.

Section 1   Preliminary Comments

      The first question that we address ourselves to is very
significant for the form of A.C.E. which we wish to develop. The
question of revelation relates to a model of God's activity in
the world, individual's lives and thus in A.C.E. We discuss in
Section 3 the two major models - Immanentist and Interventionist,
but there recognise that some sort of combination is also
possible.

      However before discussing these matters we choose to start
by looking at the general form that God's activity might take in
communicating with men and women.   We will propound a clear and
usable definition congruent with the model of A.C.E. developing
through this thesis. We then explain our definition in detail in
the remainder of Section 2.   It is from such an argument that we
proceed to the more generalized model - we feel a sustainable
direction of argument.

      In Section 4, we set forward the relevance of our discussion
to the developing A.C.E. model denoted as a hermeneutical
project. We recognise this is a foundational area of Theology,
of considerable and continuing debate - we cannot give full
arguments for every position taken, and so at times must call on
the researches and conclusions of others, or give general
illustration of the direction of argument. Yet since in A.C.E.
the question of revelation is central, affecting origins, mode
and reception of new knowledge we feel the beginnings of an
attempt must be made.

Section 2

2.1 Introduction

We will begin this Section by setting out a definition of "Revelation" which will be used as a foundation for this Chapter and our chosen approaches to Christian Education. We will then proceed to expand and justify this in dialogue with others who have written in this area and in the light of Scripture itself. There are many possible ways of construing revelation, but in this thesis we will focus upon revelation as a diversity of form of communication between God and Man (primarily God to Man). We therefore exclude from our discussion purely human inspiration or the area of natural revelation.

Our definition will be phrased in multivariate terms for the following reasons (to be justified in due course):-

1. The biblical material implies a diversity of forms of revelation.
2. Human experience of the divine bears testimony to such a diversity.
3. The differentiated and social nature of God the Trinity would make it likely that God reveal Himself in diverse ways.
4. Normal human interaction and mutual disclosure can be seen to be of a multi-faceted nature. We would consequently expect that in God's dealings with mankind He too would exhibit similar diverse modes of relations.

Yet despite this reasoning we will also place a major weight upon one particular component of the whole:-
1. Without a central primary focus we fail to have a unifying force that binds the various components of revelation together.
2. We will justify in detail (in Section 2.2) that the primary category for God (biblically) is that He is personal. Humans

are most fundamentally seen as persons. Thus interchange between God and humans must be at its heart of a personal nature.

On this assumption we now set forward our definition of revelation in answer to our question for A.C.E. "How does God have a role in Christian Education?":- "Revelation is the many faceted process by means of which God personally communicates with human beings. This He does through direct relationship, concrete action, verbal proposition or mediating symbol".

In order to assist us in our assessment of these four modes of revelation we will make use of a number of soundly based criteria put forward by A. Dulles in <u>Models of Revelation</u> (1). The first is faithfulness to Scripture and Christian tradition. Secondly he stresses the importance of internal coherence. The third test he terms "plausibility" - does it agree with what is accepted as true in other areas of life? Fourthly he maintains revelation should be adequate to contemporary experience. Fifthly revelation should result in practical moral fruitfulness. Sixthly it should demonstrate theoretical theological fruitfulness. Lastly the form of revelation should have value for dialogue with other faiths.

2.2 <u>Revelation as personal</u>

We maintain that in revelation the primary content and means (process) is that of God Himself, as expressed in Christ.

Christianity is unashamedly a religion which stresses the ultimate value of the personal as the most real, surely something with which most would agree, at least in the "western" world. Thus it is true to the Christian tradition to maintain that God reveals Himself to all mankind, and this revelation becomes effective when people consciously respond to Him. As God reveals aspects of His character he simultaneously invites a response to Himself as Person, that His creatures might enter relationship

with Him. The most fundamental quality revealed consistently through the history of divine-human encounters is that of love. (2). Many other personal qualities of God as revealed in encounter/disclosure could be listed. (3)

Indeed very frequently in Scripture God "speaks" or reveals Himself in some clear way - this must be admitted as the undeniable intention of the biblical authors whatever credibility we might assign to the narratives. Some say indeed that the whole biblical story is of God's search for friendship or partnership with mankind, and that God has always sought as a first priority to enter relationship with man (4)

This aspect of revelation may come about through mystical experience - immediate dialogical encounter, or it might be rather more indirect - God revealing Himself in Nature, or in some particular activity. But in so doing the Christian contends God reveals aspects of his nature, being, will.

He reveals Himself not so much by means of a purely intellectual reading of Scripture or meditation upon religious symbol/sacrament but essentially revelation occurs by the personal activity of the Holy Spirit (5). We thus break away from objectified abstract or "remote" pictures of God. Yet in spite of revealing aspects of His personhood the traditional belief in God's transcendence preserves this mystery and otherness (6) and consequently all such revelations will be partial and incomplete (although true). There need be no philosophical difficulty about this (7) because this partial unveiling yet retained mystery occurs also at the level of inter-human communication; we return to this later.

How can we conceive this particular form of revelation actually occurring, especially bearing in mind the danger of labelling God as a person, when we are finite and God is infinite? G Kaufman (8) has encouraged us only to call God a

person in the formal sense of the term providing a structural analogy/model which represents aspects of possible relationship with Him in His "economy" (not "immanence").

J. Baillie (9) prefers to conceive of revelation in highly personal terms. This approach sees revelation as being an unveiling of God's hiddenness in a disclosure of His "being" in events (10). He agrees with A. Farrer (11) that this revelation occurring as it does in images and symbols retains a strong element of mystery, but nevertheless aspects of God are truly revealed, or else image-making becomes a purely mechanical, impersonal process. This Baillie argues, means that revelation is sufficient for us, but not so glaringly obvious that all human freedom of inquiry is destroyed (12). Baillie also contends revelation occurs in event, but it is the personal dimension first and foremost that he upholds as primary.

G. Moran (13) maintains that revelation is a continuing process wherein God meets man in an ongoing movement of love drawing men to Himself. Thus God reveals Himself in order to invite men to enter into relationship. God's revelation according to Moran reaches its highest point in Christ, for Christ is God's revelation. The person of Christ shows in his own permanent "I-thou" dialogue with God the possibilities that lie open for our spiritual lives. (14)

Moran's position is strongly Trinitarian for he also asserts that the interior testimony of the Holy Spirit lies at the very heart of the revelatory process. Through the Holy Spirit God acts in human consciousness (15). Thus revelation has a fixed, objective content but continues also as God reveals Himself personally to draw people to Himself. Thus Moran's view of revelation, as Baillie's, is that it is essentially personal, God initiating processes that draw man to Himself in lived relationship. But in so far as Moran leaves room for other

dimensions to revelation , his position is close to that of this thesis.

Kaufman believes that the model operative in inter-human relations provides a very helpful analogy for the revelational process occurring between ourselves and God.(16) In developing a relationship with another person we reach out "beyond ourselves" towards another. We also operate as it were on the premise that the person with whom we enter relationship actually transcends his/her own ego. We cannot gain a direct grasp of another person's real ego-centre, but can over a period of time build up a "working model" of it in our minds. (17). This is so with our process of "getting to know" God. Kaufman proceeds to say that from a sequence of experiences of the economic God we begin to build up an imaginative construal (termed "available" God) of the immanent (termed "hidden") God (18). It is agreed that Kaufman's model is a very helpful analogy for understanding how personal revelation develops, but he says in one or so places that we receive no direct experience of God, and ultimately he is in grave danger of severing the connection between the immanent God and available God. This would leave us only with (possibly fictitious or idolatrous) symbolic representations of God, and a loss of meaning to the notion of a genuine relationship between the immanent/real God and humankind. As an "Anchor Symbol" God is an imaginative construct useful in a practical rather than speculative sense. (19)

We protect ourselves against charges of a philosophical and abstract approach to revelation by insisting that Christ is the ultimate summit and focus of God's personal communication. The New Testament points us to the centrality of Christ as being the fullest possible revelational expression of God the Father (20). The New Testament clearly states that although no one has seen God, yet Jesus Christ, Son of God, has made God knowable in a unique manner. Thus we are led to affirm that in Jesus God's revelation of Himself is made most vivid and complete.

K. Barth (21) maintains very strongly that the only form of revelation that he can countenance is that of Scriptural proclamation focussed upon the person of Jesus Christ. His dialectical theology accentuates the chasm betwen God and Man, a chasm that is crossed purely by the grace of God as He freely chooses to reveal Himself. Barth indeed claims that there is no human point of contact with the saving grace of God - it is the Holy Spirit alone who gives man saving knowledge.(22) Thus revelation for Barth is solely at the initiative of God, not due to the mental processes and reasoning of humans. Barth frequently states that the content of revelation is Christ. Revelation occurs as humans proclaim the original words of Scripture faithfully and the Spirit thereby communicates God's truths to mankind.(23) Barth's doctrine of revelation is Trinitarian as well as Christocentric. Only Christ can bridge the chasm between an infinite God and finite man. He can do so because he is the God-Man, who is uniquely able to cross the divide, bringing salvific knowledge of God to mankind. Thus in asserting that revelation is personal, Trinitarian, Christocentric and at the initiative of God, this thesis stands with Barth and neo-orthodoxy.

2.3   Revelation is Propositional

To claim revelation is propositional is to uphold the view that there is real doctrinal, ethical, historical, factual truth to be found in the content of revelation. This assertion is contentious especially since we also argue that this content is intended by God to have real lasting significance and validity. Without such content-laden proposition revelation is in danger of remaining ambiguous, with a high degree of subjectivity and temporality. Propositions clarify, certify, objectify and give some sure ground base from which vantage point one might better be able to assess the veracity of other forms of revelation (in

content and form). J.Astley argues: "our experience of God must be transcribed into propositions about Him if we are to give any content to His revelation of Himself", for "the notion of an essentially non-propositional revelation is ...a rather vacuous one". (24)

We do recognize the need for a careful interpretation of these propositions since biblical propositions are always presented in a particular context (historical, cultural, theological, personal). However even though propositional revelation is mediated through an individual's presuppositions, cultural filters, personality, this need not necessarily force us to retreat, abandoning claims to objectivity, providing we take proper precautions when interpreting. We therefore need to construct rules for testing whether particular interpretations are reasonable and valid. (see Chapter II.3).

As we survey Scripture and reflect upon personal experience we can begin to conceive propositional revelation as being of two different orders. First order revelation is that communication from God that is directly mediated either in verbal form (25) or in specific sensations or feelings (e.g. a strong sense that God is directing a certain course of action) (26).

Certain doctrines of Scripture are so revealed eg "The Second Coming". (27) A substantial proportion of the Pentateuch is given over to an exposition of the Jewish Law Code: this is clearly classifiable as propositional for the original recipients as well as for us today. Again God reveals His power to Job in a direct propositional manner in Job 40,41. Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians 7 about marriage and divorce lie in the same category. (28) Paul's faith was based upon the concept of revelation, not abstractly but experientially. He firmly believed that he

had received the gospel that he proclaimed by revelation from God - this visually, and yet also by the Word of the Lord. C.Cousar comments on Galatians 1:12 "though the word 'revelation' in Paul can refer to a particular disclosure made to an individual in a mystical or charismatic sense - it can also describe the unveiling of a reality hidden from the world but made known to others by the activity of the Spirit". "It is in this latter sense that God intends the Word here." (29)

Thus first order propositional revelation is according to the biblical witness immediate, specific and verbal/conceptualised.

Second order propositional revelation arises from an earlier event of some kind that then provokes a process of reflection/interpretation. Such propositions are second order descriptions of these primary revelatory experiences:-

i   Personal experience of the nature, intentions of God
     (see 2.2) (eg God is love, the Glory of God
     (Isaiah 6)

ii   God's action in the course of the world's events
     (see 2.4) (30)

iii Symbolic mediation (see 2.5) (31)

Thus second order propositional revelation is reflective yet still specific and verbal/conceptualised. As we move to interpretation we must distinguish between these two "orders" and between the original recipients of revelation and a subsequent reader/listener for whom the impact and meaning will differ.

Non propositional accounts of revelation will give rise to propositions as descriptive accounts (2nd order) of the nature and intentions of God. Propositions in Scripture may have this status.

Propositional revelation has traditionally been the focus of attention for conservative Evangelical and Roman Catholic scholars such as J. Packer, (32), C. Pinnock (33), M.Schmaus (34), K. Rahner (35). At times some have probably put too great a weight upon this as the major form of revelation. A recent more sophisticated defence of this position has come from P. Helm in The Divine Revelation (36). At the outset of his book Helm pronounces in favour of revelation being personal and activity based, but claims that primarily God must (necessarily) reveal Himself in proposition (37). Otherwise, he maintains, that which might be revealed in Scripture, or experience, will tend to remain ambiguous, vague and subjective. Helm advocates, and argues philosophically for a propositional revelation which is historically firmly rooted. (38) Thus, he says, in propositions concerning Himself God reveals Himself in words (embedded in history) which are actualities or realities which are meant to invoke a response in the receiver.

Helm maintains against Barth that the truth of revelation depends upon its objective historical and therefore literal truth (39). He is unhappy with the notion of Scripture as "becoming" God's Word, and wishes to accord to the actual words of the Bible the status of "Word of God". The connection between the Bible and God's contemporary Word is one of propositional meaning. This special revelation is infallible in the sense that the propositions therein contained are endorsed by God. Special Revelation is "a set of propositions revealed by God of matters not otherwise discoverable by the human mind". (40) It is guaranteed by God and can be identified as deriving from Him in a number of

ways. Helm believes there is external justification for the
Word of God as well as internal justification, but that
ultimately it is purely a matter of personal decision as to
the nature and force of the authority of Scripture in the
life of the believer (41). Helm draws a strong link between
Scripture and its propositions as of fixed, "given" validity,
but places less weight upon the notion of continuing
revelation, especially if it is not directly related to the
Bible (42). We argue that this is too restrictive, for
there are other forms of revelation which have a rightful
place in the Christian tradition, of a more "immediate",
subjective nature.

2.4 Revelation is God's action within history

There have been considerable doubts raised by
philosophers, theologians, historians and scientists about
the intelligibility of the notion of a transcendent being
"outside our time and space" entering occasionally into the
affairs of this world. Many scholars have argued that the
notion of an interventionist God incurs severe problems:
Scientifically because such interventions entail unexpected
and unrepeatable infringements of the laws of Science.
Theologically, because such a God would seem to be partial
and biased. Philosophically, because of the disturbance of
normal cause and effect relationships and lack of
empirically sound proof. Historically, because of the
uncertain reliability of the documents themselves and events
recorded. It would seem that modern rationalism applied to
discussion of the possibility of miracles, if followed to a
conclusion, leaves no room for God's action in nature or
history, either in general or specific terms. This must
inevitably lead to Immanentism, Deism, Agnosticism, or
Atheism.

Kaufman (43) offers a possible solution to this problem. God's activity in the primary sense lies in the whole course of salvation-history. Within this purposeful master-act we can then make sense of the individual acts recorded in Scripture, and a truly valid theological account of the meaning of history (44). Just as a modern conception of our "secular" world consists of an inter-related web of causal relationships, so Kaufman argues, we can discern a network of God's acts which fit into His overarching purpose (45). God is an "agent" with "intentions to realise in and through His Creation". The solution is ingenious but will not convince a sceptic who rejects the existence of such a master plan. It also gives rise to a picture of God who does not ordinarily intervene in human affairs who is utterly impossible to affect by prayer - not a portrayal of the biblical God.

We agree with G.E. Wright (46) that the most characteristic hebraic portrayal of God is that He is a God who acts into history, in a sense becoming part of the history of our world. He is not aloofly impassively detached. We will in Section 3 set forward various reasons why a Christian should uphold the notion of an interventionist God. God reveals his Nature and Will through His acts in history. This is especially so in the realms of salvation. Events such as the Exodus, Sinai (47) Christ's Passion, Pentecost (48) are paradigmatic events which affect God's dealings with men and women as He acts for their salvation. Yet in addition Judaic-Christian beliefs about God also maintain that God continually acts in various more mundane ways in the lives of individuals through the whole of human history. These acts are also inviting from us a response of faith for salvation. Many interventionists also believe God reveals Himself in other forms of action within the world:- sacred or secular affairs, "signs and wonders" such as healing, demonic deliverance, miracles of the Holy Spirit (49) Any event can

be interpreted in a variety of ways - certain events such as
the Resurrection invite a restricted range of possible faith-
responses.   Other events such as an individual's answered
prayer can be interpreted as coincidence, or as an act of
God.   Revelation as "event" must be seen as a total
structure of event AND its interpretation by individual (and
Community) - whether it is a "clear" historical act or
continuing experience in the life of a person of faith.

     ` For H. R. Niebuhr (50) the problem of revelation arises
from the problem of historical relativity - that all
knowledge is conditioned by the standpoint of the observer.
Thus for example God cannot be described as He is in Himself,
but only God-in-human-experience (51).   Consequently Niebuhr
concludes that theology must be confessional in the sense of
its being valid only to assert what oneself as a member of
the Christian community believes. (52) This is not wholly
subjective since an individual can glimpse aspects of what is
really true from his own perspective.   Niebuhr believes that
a reality discloses itself which invites the trust of finite,
temporally-bound man (53).

     Niebuhr proceeds to suggest that the wellsprings of
inspiration in religion are to be derived from narrative
rather than dogma, metaphysics or reasoned apologetic. (54)
Revelation is   personal,   historical   event,   which   is
interpreted by the believer in the context of story, and by
the community as "our history".   He correlates revelation as
personal and event in the continuing revelational experience
of successive events embedded and encountered in history
(55), constituting that part of our own personal life-stories
interpreted as the activity of God in our lives, illuminating
the rest of our life (56). We use our hearts/imaginations to
make sense of this experience, activated by images such as
are found at the heart of the Christian faith.   We receive
revelation as we imaginatively interpret our lives by the

great salvific images - but most of all from Christ Himself (57). Niebuhr regards Christ as the highest platform for interpreting the experiences, aspirations, of our lives. (58)

R. Thiemann follows Niebuhr in giving an important place to the category of Narrative (59). He calls his theological approach descriptive in the sense that it focusses upon interpretation and illumination of structures of belief rather than justifying them in a philosophical sense (60). Descriptive theology sets forward concrete Christian beliefs concerning God's identity (61). Narrative most successfully portrays God's identity as an agent rendered in His concrete historical acts. Thiemann gives three very helpful criteria for assessing any account of revelation. (62) Firstly its intelligibility - is it conceptually self-consistent and coherently integrated with other beliefs? Secondly its aptness - is it grounded in a coherent construal of Scripture? Thirdly its warranted assertability - are Christians warranted in asserting their beliefs as true to life's experience?

Thiemann subjects his construal of Scriptural revelation as God's prevenient activity and the Gospel construed as "Narrated Promise" to these tests, (63) and concludes that his approach fulfils these conditions. In effect Thiemann claims that through the narratives of Scripture we can discern the promises of God enacted in history, and shown to be true in people's individual lives. In the form and content, mode of delivery and fulfilment of these promises we can discern the identity of God Himself. The unique identifying claim of the Christian God is that "The God of Israel raised Jesus Christ from the dead" (and will do the same for the faithful believer) (64).

Humankind can therefore be caught up into the narrative flow, and the promises of Scripture become promises true for

him/her also. This paradigm of Narrated Promise sets God and humanity as essentially in relationship (contrast Barth's position), and thus generates distinctions within that bond. A key text in this regard for Thiemann is 2 Cor 5:19 (65) but this would seem a very selective base in Scripture from which to argue. From a consideration of the remainder of 2 Cor 5 it would appear that Paul is discussing only a gradual process whereby people accept Christ as their Lord and are henceforth reconciled to Christ. This does require a positive response from the individual if the two-sided relationship is to develop as it must.

For those in rebellion against God (it would seem by all accounts to be the majority) there will be a relationship at a formal level that is incomplete or fractured because of sin/evil. This must be dealt with - but Thiemann does not bring this matter into his consideration despite his discussion of the ontological distance separating God from humanity (66).

Nevertheless, Thiemann's point that Narrative integrates a central literary genre with the organising image of God thereby rendering the identity of God through His acts recounted in Scripture is an important and, in the view of this writer, very valid approach to the problem of revelation (67). God's identity is construed in this way according to an intention - action model.

2.5 Further Amplification on the means of Revelation

2.5.1 Revelation can be mediated through symbols

We must make reference to this mode of revelation because it has been highlighted by many scholars in recent years (eg S.McFague Teselle (68) G.Kaufman, A.Dulles). A.Farrer writes "The great images interpreted the events of

Christ's ministry, death and resurrection, and the events interpreted the images; the interplay of the two is revelation." (69) We accept that the power of religious and non-religious symbols to disclose truth can be extremely strong.   Through symbols such as the Cross, a Dove, Light, Water (70). understanding of God the Trinity and various Christian doctrines can be facilitated.   Symbols can stimulate our non-rational faculties to imaginatively form models or pictures of God   and their power should be utilised in A.C.E.   This approach also emphasizes the human dimension to appropriation, and that God uses natural objects to communicate Himself.   A.C.E. can make much of this in worship and   appreciation of God's presence in the natural created order.

A. Dulles (71) for instance considers a number of classic modes of revelation, and proceeds to denote revelation as "Symbolic Disclosure". (72) He defines Symbol as an external sign working on the human consciousness that has feeling, spiritual power and depth (73).   They have doctrinal content of a self-involving nature (74) The deeds of God count as revelation when seen as symbols of His presence.   Thus God becomes clearly known by Symbol (the notion of "Mediated Intimacy or Immediacy") (75).   Christ as the summit of revelation is the revelatory symbol (76).   We acknowledge that Symbols assist the reception of the three forms of Revelation of 2.2 - 2.4, but we depart from Dulles in giving it such a central position.   He stretches its meaning so much that it becomes too vague.   The concept can become impersonal, and replace God's personal initiative, as well as the Holy Spirit.

Stage 1:   God's initiative

God   ————————————⟫   Act   Humankind

immanent   Personal   Word

                     Revelation   Personal

                                                   Encounter

Stage 2:   Man's response

God   ⟨————————————   Prayer   Humankind

economy   Personal   Reason

                     response   Symbolic

                                                   representation
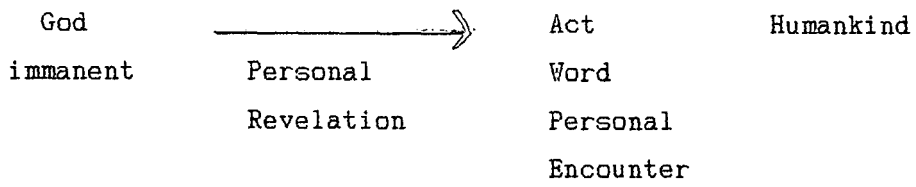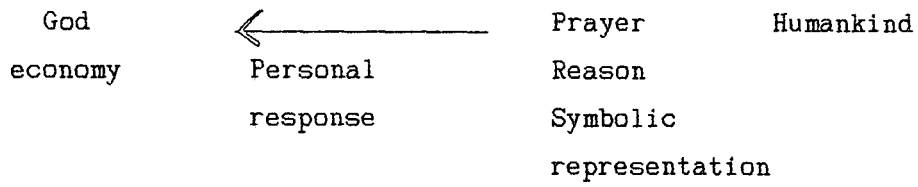
2.5.2 Revelation is fundamentally at God's initiative, but humans have a key role to play in interpreting this revelation meaningfully

One of the central concerns of Thiemann is to uphold the prevenience of God (77) - the primary action of God in initiating human history, personal development and salvation. He says that without acceptance of this truth of God's initiative many Christian doctrines as traditionally understood must be re-expressed or abandoned (eg Creation, Grace, Sacrament, Incarnation, Justification). Ephesians 1,2 upholds this in the strongest possible manner (78). We follow here also Barth (79) in emphasizing the initiative of God, for it is philosophically necessary to admit that the finite (man) cannot unaided comprehend the infinite (God). A bridge has to be built primarily at the initiative, and by the power, of God.

But humans have a crucial role in reaching to God; appropriating the content of revelation, understanding it and gradually forging a developing body of knowledge under the Holy Spirit's guidance, and through our human reason (80). We are thus led to Christian maturity (81) as we develop abilities for understanding and interpretation.

Thus we accept that revelation must (82) be necessarily accommodated within the thought forms of the person assimilating it. Important influences include:

personality, emotional state, cultural background and world-view.

Reception of revelation leads immediately to interpretation of it for otherwise it could find no place in a person's conscious awareness. A.C.E. can assist subsequent interpretation or re-

interpretation. Such is not necessary of course for it to be valid and highly meaningful - but we argue that there is great value in this endeavour for the individual concerned and for others who may benefit from it.

2.5.3 Revelation has a fixed base (a given-ness founded in Christian Scriptures) yet also it has a progressive, developmental dimension

Revelation is progressive according to God's developing relationship with His creatures but such revelation does not as it unfolds contradict the underlying sense of what was earlier revealed to man, especially the definitive revelation given in the Christian New Testament/Covenant. We accept that certain statements of Scripture have no significance in detail today, yet the underlying spirit or principles remain true nevertheless; for example principles of holiness/separateness, modesty, respect (83). Without therefore a context of certain fixed authoritative propositions the believer has no sure basis for making judgements about contemporary, progressive revelation, and will be constantly in danger of launching out in ways of his own choosing with no restraint or guidance accepted from the fixed received tradition.

Our multi-faceted notion of revelation argues for fixed and yet continuing revelation. This progressive dimension prevents us from fossilizing revelation within ancient books and ensures a freshness and openness to our relationship with God.

D. Brown in The Divine Trinity (84) devoted an important foundational chapter to this subject. He defines revelation as being "the unveiling of truth by God through His intervention in some aspect of the world". He actually rejects the three most commnonly accepted models of revelation: Speech, Acts, Person (85).

Brown argues that revelation is a divine dialogue, that is "a process whereby God progressively unveils His truth about Himself and His purposes to a community of believers but always in such a manner that their freedom of response is respected". (86) This supposedly gives due weight to the past deposit of Scripture which conditions present experience, enabling us to test it. Although Brown dismisses formulations of revelation when seen solely as Speech, Acts, Person, his definition actually leaves room for all of these forms - the first and third especially must occur if Brown's definition is to have any real meaning. His position supports our contention that revelation must be a compounding of differing components in order to give a proper breadth to this disclosure.

Biblical justification for progressive revelation can be found rooted in the charismatic gifts that depend on ongoing divine revelation (Prophecy, Tongues, Knowledge, Wisdom, Interpretation) (87) The manner in which God revealed Himself in the lives of so many leaders in the Old and New Testament (including arguably in Jesus Christ, the New Man) implies that such was to be the norm, not exceptional or for a limited dispensation. J.D.G.Dunn: "Each Church becomes Christ's body through charisma ...through the interaction of the whole range of charismata, manifesting the unity of grace through the diversity of grace's gifts." (88) Dunn also demonstrates the importance of personal revelation for Paul, as a manifestation of the Spirit for wisdom, guidance, ecstatic experience - and "expected that other believers would enjoy similar experiences". (89)

Since Christ (the summit of revelation and the fullest possible revelation of the divine) (90) revelation has progressed not in terms of genuinely new propositions (doctrinally) or definitive acts of God in history but in terms of the outworkings of this revelation in History, Theology, intellectual endeavour, and most of all in individuals' lives.

2.5.4 <u>Revelation is of a general nature as addressed to all</u>
<u>mankind yet it is also the personal address of God to specific</u>
<u>individuals</u>

The first tenet of this proposition scarcely requires
additional elaboration in the light of the foregoing discussion.
God's revelation is not only available to the Christian Church,
but also is a word of invitation and challenge to the whole of
humanity. It is valid and available whether people choose to
respond or not. The force of this general revelation lies in
specific action verbs such as listen, obey, love, repent,
believe. Initially addressed to only a small tribal group,
thence to a national grouping, as the Old Testament progresses
the invitation is gradually extended to all of the world. (91)
In the New Testament the evangelistic addresses of Acts uphold
this notion of a general revelation (92)

The position of this thesis is that God also continues to
address particular individuals in continuation of what he is
purported to have done in the Scriptural narratives.   God
reveals Himself to those who open themselves to receive from
Him, for instance to give:

Guidance and re-direction

Confrontation and challenge, discernment and opportunity

These occur within the context of the individual's
developing relationship of love towards God - the personal
dimension of revelation is prominent here. God uses a diversity
of means to bring such purposes about: Charismatic gifts;
spiritual intuition or insight; vision in prayer, meditation or
contemplation; ministry of fellow Christians; God's address
through study of His Word in Scripture; insights gained by
analysis of God's activity in personal or wider contemporary
history. R. Laurentin surveys the importance and future of the

charismatic renewal noting the considerable diversity of forms of revelation embraced in it. Above all else the renewal adds to the personal relationship believers enjoy in Christ, a sense of immediacy of God's personal revelatory presence. (93)

One of Downing's criticisms of revelation is the lack of empirical proof of the reception of revelation (94). But M. Wiles (95) feels the epistemological question is insuperable: the evidence he says is always too ambiguous to be able to affirm divine intervention in specific cases. He proceeds to argue against B.Mitchell that empirical evidence does not suggest, let alone require, a root in direct divine revelation. (96) He feels Christian theology can be built without revelation (seen as a privileged divine communication), treating the Bible writers as inspired in the same way as an artist, playwright. (97) This Chapter has been attempting to show Wiles' position is inadequate to Scripture and human experience.

The approach of J. Astley utilizes the analogy of telepathy. (98) By this we may enter an intimate relationship with God of the kind ultimately in view in the Scriptures (99). Although we reject our terms of analysis being set by Logical Positivism (this being only a partial account of human existence, because so much of value to us is not empirically demonstrable), even on their terms the I-Thou relationship with God akin to the husband-wife relationship (100) can be observed:-

i   Increasing time spent together (enjoyment)

ii   Growth of testimonial language (love, worship, praise)

iii Change of lifestyle and inner character (eg self-lessness)

iv   Gradual grasp of inner mystery and purposes/will/desires

We here propose the following empirical criteria to assess whether a purported revelation is truly from God:- that it has caused a behavioral change in the individual concerned; that new information was received, fresh perception or a change in attitude occurred in the mind of the individual; that it led to fruitful alteration in the individual's relation with others in the community. In addition the truth-content of revelation needs always to be tested against general "worldly" experience, and against its congruity with Christian tradition, Scripture, other Christians' experience, and the perceived pattern by which God seems to have addressed individuals over the course of Christian history.

Section 3

3.1 Introduction

Underlying many of the issues raised in Section 2 lies the question of God's action into or within the world. An Immanentist such as M. Wiles (101) is only prepared to accept that God acts in a general yet personal way within the world. God has general purposes to fulfil in the world yet limits Himself to act only through the free decisions of men and women who co-operate to align themselves with these creative and redemptive intentions (102). According to Wiles this approach, although not clearly sanctioned by Scripture can find some measure of support there. (103) This model helps overcome a whole nest of difficulties which accompany in varying ways, the Interventionist model (eg Freedom, Evil, Miracles, Election) (104) We offer further comments on Wiles' in 3.4, especially his attempt to retain a model of a God who is personal in dealings with mankind.

This thesis intends to give support for a moderate Interventionist position whereby God acts specifically into His world on various occasions for special purposes. Ian Knox

devotes a book to a consideration of these issues in the context of Religious Education (105) He writes of the tension between God's transcendence and immanence which he believes it to be frequently difficult to reconcile. (106) As a result of Knox's survey he concludes that these two metaperspectives are aspects of the one truth. Each is at times the more adequate to life's experiences. Knox (107) seeks to integrate these two approaches so that they both have a part to play in education that is experiential yet catechetical. This integrationist approach is akin to the position of this Chapter. (108)

A diverse range of revelatory media accompany various different modes of intervention; personal disclosure, historical action, specific propositions. Yet such action does not over-ride human freedom, or responsibility, nor give undue privilege. (109) However we argue that normally God works immanently through His laws thus creating a world of reasonable security and predictability. Such a double model we claim to be operative in A.C.E. We recognise pupils generally learn according to patterns and principles observed in education generally. But we wish to permit an openness in distinctively Christian oriented education for God to specifically reveal truth to those who seek it. Other writers who broadly argue for this position are L.O.Richards, (110) J.D.Smart, (111) Wayne Rood. (112)

Section 3.2 The approach of J.M. Lee

J.M. Lee is probably the Christian educationalist who is currently most cogently opposing an Interventionist model of God. (113) Lee characterizes his position as a "Social Science" approach to teaching Religious Instruction (henceforth "R.I."). He defines teaching as "that orchestrated process whereby one person deliberately, purposively and efficaciously structures the learning situation in such a manner that desired learning outcomes are thereby acquired by another person". (114) Like

McKenzie, Lee wants to base his learning theory upon the facts of human behaviour and the dynamics of the learning process, without regard to the intervention of God, or an assumed prior theological position. (115) Theology, being speculative, rational and abstract, should confine itself to reflecting upon teaching practice or delivering some lesson content. (116)

Lee is very opposed to the "Blow Theory" of R.I., based on Jn3:8 "The Spirit blows as He wills". This theory appeals to the mysterious, unpredictable activity of the Holy Spirit. (117) Thereby, says Lee, all manner of poor, haphazard educational practice and sloppy evaluation can be legitimated. (118). Lee argues that the manner in which Christian truths are acquired is not generically different from the way that a learner grasps any subject. (119) Since any theological or "spiritual" factors cannot be controlled or predicted by the teacher he must ignore them, working only with those variables that can be effected in the cause of excellence in teaching. (120)

Lee argues strongly for an Immanentist position on the basis that "All reality is God-soaked". (121) Therefore the R.I. teacher's task is to actualize for the student the God who dwells in all aspects of the educational environment. (122) Lee follows Process Theology in holding to God's presence in all reality. In perhaps his most philosophically sophisticated statements he argues for R.I. to be a mediator of religion and instruction, substantive and structural content. (123) A synthesis is forged through a "dynamic subsumption" of these previously distinct realities - at a new ontological level. (124)

Section 3.3 <u>Comments on Lee in the context of a defence of the</u>
            <u>Interventionist Model</u>

We offer here some brief comments on aspects of Lee's
position, whilst giving some justification for our chosen model
of divine activity.

Firstly, we notice a lack of scriptural exegesis within
Lee's substantial works, he appeals to it selectively and in
general terms. In contrast we believe considerable Scriptural
support can be provided for God's actively intervening in a
range of ways within His world. (125) Reductionist arguments
fail to do justice to the strength of such intention in
Scripture,   however   philosophically   or   scientifically
problematic:-

Statements that "God spoke", or "The Word of God came" (126)
Frequent disclosure of God's specific Will and Word to His
Servants. (127)

God is seen to be active with His People in their space-time
history (128)

Secondly, Lee's position is akin to a Behaviourist's
(Chapter II.2).   He desires to foster "desired learning
outcomes", and claims something is only learned if there is
measurable behavioural change. This, we submit, narrows the
sphere of God's activity in individual's lives and how A.C.E.
can promote this. Many Christians argue that God has intervened
in significant ways or taught them valuable lessons (eg "a new
appreciation of God's presence in the Eucharist"), and such
testimony must be respected. Such a position avoids the danger
of our individuality being swallowed up in the overarching
process of God's general activity. Against Wiles (129), but

with D. Brown (130) we agree that a Theistic Interventionist explanation fits best with many believers' experience.

Thirdly, we argue that Lee sets up Theology as an "Aunt Sally" (dry, speculative, remote from religious life). This thesis is illustrating that Practical Theology is a central discipline in Theology, concerning practical study of God's gracious activity in the world, in dialogue with other branches of Theology. On this basis Lee's criticisms are less telling.

Lastly, we note that Lee gives little role to Christ, especially in salvation. Lee turns him into a "Cosmic Principle" (131) using Scripture selectively (132), hardly the person described in the New Testament. Against Wiles we argue that in Christ's Incarnation God uniquely acted in the world, demonstrated in his resurrection the basis, not the product, of faith. (133). We cannot enter extensive discussion here, but it does seem that Wiles is robbing Christianity of its genius, following a well-worn track trod by such as Schleiermacher. We argue that the "Incarnational Principle" exemplified in Christ sets a pattern for God's re-creative and redemptional activity in the midst of the concrete actualities of life by incarnating His personal presence and powerful action in those open to receive this.

Section 3.4 Conclusions to the Interventionist-Immanentist
            model

There are two major aspects of our model of divine activity that we wish to particularly uphold, both of which pure Immanentists such as Lee or Wiles seek to retain in their model, but which we do not consider they ultimately achieve successfully. The first concerns a role for the Holy Spirit, the second is to place God's personal revelation at the forefront of His activity. Both receive some justification in their models but on their own terms of reference. We argue the

Interventionist has a far stronger case for their establishment
in the ostensibly Christian faith-tradition.

Regarding the Holy Spirit, we are prepared to assert
firstly that the Holy Spirit is sometimes mysterious and
unpredictable: according to John 3:8. We must not be prideful
and try to reduce God to fully understood processes and forces.
However it is accepted that normally people learn in the
predictable ways that Lee would subscribe to by the Holy Spirit
working within the World.

Lee is not being fair when he asserts that the Holy Spirit
is "dragged in" by most Christian Educationists in order to
provide explanations for the shortcomings in their own theories
and methods (134). Actually where "unexpected learning" occurs
this may be due either to the Holy Spirit or just as possibly to
quirks of human personality in the best conceived educational
programmes. This does not mean that one's macrotheory has
broken down, but rather that our macrotheory needs to be kept
sufficiently open or broad that it allows for the possibility of
God's freely chosen intervention. The Holy Spirit thus has a
specific role in engifting, empowering and teaching individuals
in a personal individual manner.

Thus to say that the Spirit is a factor in C.E. is to say
that petitionary prayer is meaningful, revelation is personal,
many clear statements of the reality, work of the Spirit in
Scripture are supported, the Spirit is a person. (135) This
safeguards indeed a fully Trinitarian position which Lee and
Wiles have lost by assigning no specific role to the Spirit, and
turning Christ into a cosmic principle of the Father, (as
J.Lee) or example of a man wholly responsive to God (as
M.Wiles).

Regarding the second main point, we accept with Wiles that
an Immanentist position can uphold God's personal involvement

with the world – a deep meeting with those who freely understand and respond to His general Call on their lives. (136)　We recognise that to deeply explore God's general redemptive intentions can promote relationship, as opposed to the effect of simplistic communications.　Yet we argue that the essence of a personal, individual and special relationship is best preserved in the Interventionist account, in analogy with a Model of God our heavenly Father. (137)

1. Specific instruction and guidance in time of need, showing interest in His children.

2. An intimacy of affection and love that is lacking in Wiles' account of God's generalized activity, entering into our joy and suffering.　Wiles' account seems cool and remote. (138)

3. The giving of special help and assistance when asked for as we recognize His power and our finiteness.　We are not just left to cope while He spectates.

4. Gifts and graces from God as a token of love – as a father is wont to decide to "bless" his child.

5. Forgiveness and specific restoration of relationship when we come in humility and repentence.　Wiles has no account of personal forgiveness, but this is psychologically important to us.

Section 3.5　<u>A Phenomenological distinction between an Interventionist Act of God and Immanentist activity</u>

It is asked, how can we empirically determine whether an event is due to God's Intervention or not?　We require to offer

a phenomenological account, offering here three examples of how we might achieve this. All are relevant for A.C.E.

a. Was the event unexpected scientifically or historically, it not being a case of normal cause and effect? For instance a rapid healing inexplicable to the medical profession, or a conversion for no discoverable psychological or material reason.

b. Were there manifestations of spiritual power or charismata of an evident nature? For instance: sudden inspiration, foreknowledge or discernment which were unattributable to prior knowledge, or physical demonstrations such as an experience of great power or spiritual authority.

c. Was the person or group concerned convinced that God had indeed acted in this specific way for a valid reason? For instance as a response to particular petitionary prayers, or from very strong feelings or emotions. Such personal testimony must always be taken with great seriousness.

We offer these, recognizing that allegations made of an Intervention by God will _always_ be the subject of controversy.

Section 4   Summary and Conclusions: Revelation in Christian
Education

4.1   In this final Section we summarize the insights and
arguments of this Chapter with direct and immediate
application to our central concern of A.C.E.   We have seen
that there is justification for a broad and inclusive approach
to the subject which conceptualizes revelation as objectively
given yet continuing, operating in four dimensions.   This
corresponds to a revelatory God who is at work in this world
predominantly immanently, yet on occasions for various reasons
will intervene in the normal cause/effect relationships.

We aim to correlate our understanding of revelation
with particular notions of inspiration and aspects of the
hermeneutical spiral to be outlined in Chapter II.3.   We
summarize our arguments in the diagram on page   .   This sets
out in a flow chart the incidence of revelation at differing
points in the education programme's development for both
teacher and student.   We summarize our proposals under 3
headings, corresponding to the 3 major forms of revelation
especially argued for in this Chapter.   The symbolic form of
revelation is operative under each of the other three
Categories - it is an important form but it is most
appropriately considered as it impinges upon the other 3
forms.

4.2   A.C.E. concerns itself with Propositional revelation

The most prevalent form of education is still linked to
the growth of knowledge or information.   We affirm that the
mind has a vital place in A.C.E. - intellectual development
must remain a key function.   Thus A.C.E. should by various
means encourage participants to receive and understand
propositional revelation.   By this we mean the building up of

knowledge of Christian tradition:- Scripture, Liturgy, Ritual, History, Doctrinal formulation. Especially for the Christian we acknowledge the need properly to understand the _original_ revelation, to discuss how God was at work originally in the Biblical period of the Jews and the primitive Christian Church.

Hermeneutically this involves helping the student to stand at a proper _distance_, correctly to grasp the nature of the propositions of the foundational faith. Examples of how this may be achieved are through individual and communal Bible Study, or through disciplined analysis and theological reflection. Here indeed lies the prime place for the exercise of theological reflection guided or facilitated by the teacher and in student interaction. Reflection upon the great symbols of our faith is also appropriate here - that people are rationally aware of their powerful influence.

We thus enable students in A.C.E. to discuss the process of how the initial revelation was transmitted, and grasp the essential content relevant today. The student will succeed if he can grasp the force of inspiration as measured by the original prophetic insight and awareness of the salvational activity of God and how it was subsequently conceptualised into the flow of Christian tradition. He will grasp also the immanent and interventionist activity of God as expressed in the given-ness of propositional revelation.

4.3 A.C.E. acknowledges Revelation in Event

We have seen the strong arguments for upholding the self-revelation of God through historical event. It is a mistake to think that revelation only occurs when the subject is passive or reflecting in a detached manner. In A.C.E. the individual needs to perceive revelation of dynamic truth occurring in the midst of the actions of God or human beings.

This will help him to learn to perceive revelation in the present or more recent past circumstances of his life.

Thus an individual experientially learns to discern revelation in event as he observes world events or reflects upon his own or others' lives. The teacher can often facilitate this form of learning even more powerfully by leading the individual or group into practical social-political activity of various kinds, encouraging an openness to revelation in the very process of engagement with the activity., A wide diversity is possible from a worship service to gardening for an elderly lady, to participation in a demonstration or rally.

As the first form of revelation encouraged use of the mind, so this encourages use of the body as a recipient yet expression of revelation. The accent here is upon continuing revelation, an openness to the present situation and a desire to receive ongoing revelation from God or in another sense from other human beings participating in the programme. We recognise that for powerful and accurate assimilation of such revelation within the Christian tradition a proper base provided by propositional revelation (4:2) is of indispensable value.

Hermeneutically this aspect of the process of A.C.E. focusses upon presuppositions, an analysis of the present world and especially one's own bias or expectations. We catch these prejudices (in the widest sense) "on the move" from within action of varying types. In terms of Inspiration, we are reaching out for insights into the contemporary situation in order to ascertain how God is at work in the world - especially His immanent activity for re-creation and redemption.

4.4   A.C.E. encourages the flow of Personal Revelation

We have noted on various occasions that A.C.E. must be above all else a person-centred enterprise.   Relationships should be fostered with God primarily, but also (and crucially to this end) with the teacher, other fellow students – indeed with all whose life they touch.   Thus revelation as a personal encounter is central to the A.C.E. enterprise – it has been much neglected in recent years at the expense of over-concentration upon propositional or event revelation. Personal revelation affects the most fundamental part of the human – his psyche or spirit (see arguments of Chapter II.2). As an individual opens up to receive (and also transmit) personal revelation, so a growth to wholeness of personality will occur.

Traditionally personal revelation has been promoted through worship, prayer, contemplation – but much has been left to the individual.   We include here also the role of deepening interpersonal interaction amongst programme participants as being of immense value for religious-social formation.   We note here again the role of symbolism – traditionally seen as a very impersonal form of revelation, but rightly used it can also be a vehicle for receipt of personal revelation.   Individuals must be assisted to translate religious symbols into meaningful terms that speak to personal experience and interaction with God.

The notion of inspiration is at its most powerful at this point, for we here open students to receive the very life of God, deepening relationship that is in itself an inspiration because such is of God Himself.   We note that all three persons of the Trinity are here involved: God the Father is the initiator of revelation , the very source of it.   Christ we have seen is the summit and goal of revelation – the revealer.   The Holy Spirit is the means or dynamic of

revelation - the teacher, guide and empowerer (from whom gifts and fruits derive). Christocentric education focusses upon incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, in discipleship growing like Christ, involved in his work, knowing more of his personality. Christ-centred education must be personal- revelational, the true heart of A.C.E.

Lastly, we note that hermeneutically personal revelation causes the fusion of horizons for the individual. It is as the individual forms relationships that understanding is best facilitated because true relationship with God (the ground of all being) is the goal yet ground of all knowledge. It is within this personalistic dimension of A.C.E. that the possibility of a revelational intervention occurs also, for as the expectations of God continue to grow, so the openness to His intervention in one's own, or other's lives grows also.

Biblical studies show that God intervenes for reasons - to demonstrate His love for human-beings and from His desire to assist them when problems or needs arise. . God does not intervene impersonally - but as we draw ever closer to Him in relationship, and in compassion reach out towards our fellow men. Thus personal revelation is found to be the true centre of A.C.E., and leads to an expectation of personal disclosure or activity such as the interventionist is concerned to uphold.

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CHAPTER I.2

Aims and Objectives in Christian Education

1.   Introductory Comments.

2.   Contemporary Aims in A.C.E.

        2.1   Divine Revelation v. Human Experience

        2.2   Personal Holistic Growth v.Social Political Activity

        2.3   Fidelity to will of God v. Liberation

        2.4   World denying v Celebration/Affirmation

        2.5   Enculturation v Pluralized Education

        2.6   Relational, Personal to God, v. Analytical, Abstract
               Rational

3.   Overarching definition for A.C.E.

        3.1   Overall Aim in general.

        3.2   Overall Aim, specifically stated.

        3.3   Explanation of Aim as defined.

        3.4   Relationship of Aims A to Aims B

4.   Specific case of Model presented by T. Groome

        4.1   A summary of Groome's Aims for A.C.E.

CHAPTER I.2

Section 1. Introductory Comments

     The intention behind this Chapter is to place most of
the diversity of approaches that have been taken within A.C.E.
into a categorizing scheme or matrix as a preliminary to a
description of the overall Aim we propose for A.C.E. We will
try to set forward correlations between the differing
approaches by means of producing a series of 6 continua (see
Sections 2 and Appendix 1.2.A). As we attempt this we also
comment upon contemporary educationalists who we perceive
subscribe to various of these 12 Aims. We recognise the danger
of introducing here a simplistic approach - pigeon holing in
too neat a fashion, failing to do justice to the rich diversity
of possibility. But we believe for the purposes of a
comprehensive approach to A.C.E. such an attempt is worthwhile.
Any given individual could in fact support any mix of Aims A or
B, but on average they will tend to place themselves nearer the
left "A" or right "B" set of Aims. Emphasis on Aims A tends to
come from traditional and conservative scholars, on Aims B from
liberal and radical scholars.

     We will argue in Sections 2 and 3 that any specific
educational situation will tend to require an interplay (1) of
various Aims; but this Chapter hopes to clarify which might be
most valid on any one occasion. Our own position will tend to
favour Aims "A" on average over the course of time, and this we
justify in Section 3. But on any single occasion we will
normally emphasize either end of the relevant continuum,
depending on the parameters of the educational situation. This
gives a cutting edge to A.C.E., and is closer we believe to
Jesus' own radical teaching approach.

At the outset we believe it important to distinguish between Aims and Objectives in A.C.E., and we do so here, following current practice:-

An Aim is a longer term generalized goal - giving direction to A.C.E. endeavours.

An Objective is a fulfillable, more specific shorter term goal. It is an Aim that has been translated into specified statements of intent for an A.C.E. programme.

According to R. Holley aims are important for derivation of practical tasks. (2)

Section 3 builds upon the more specific Aims of Section 2 to formulate and elaborate an overall unifying single Aim for A.C.E., expressed particularly in terms of discipleship and maturity. The 6 pairs of Aims can then be seen to expand and give direction to the overall Aim.

Finally, Section 4 compares our Aim/s for A.C.E. with those of T. Groome. He has been chosen partly because of his current influence, but mainly because his hermeneutical dialectical approach is akin to ours (3). He differs in the emphasis he gives to the 12 Aims - some he does not consider at all, but generally he is closer to the "B" end of continua than the "A" end.

Section 2 Contemporary Aims in A.C.E.

2.1

Divine Revelation (1A) or Human Experience (1B) as the starting
    Point for A.C.E. programmes

The approach to A.C.E. stressing the Revelational nature
of Christianity has been the most traditional amongst
educationalists.   These approach A.C.E. in a deductive manner,
proceeding from belief/doctrine to practice/experience.   Such
emphasize that A.C.E. begins by aiming to teach propositional
revelation focussed upon the Scriptures or Church Tradition.

The fourfold revelational content of the Christian faith
is then communicated according to the functioning of the
hermeneutical spiral (distance-fusion) as set out in Chapter
II.3.   This standpoint tends to stress the need for Christian
doctrine and ethics to be normative - the starting point and
continual judge of Christian orthodoxy.   The primary aim of
A.C.E. thus becomes knowledge which is then applied.   J. Smart
is one of the foremost exponents of this approach. (4) It is a
position traditionally occupied by main-stream Catholicism (5),
Traditional Centre (6) and Evangelical Protestants.(7)

As we saw in Chapter I.1, there are now increasing
numbers of Christian theologians and educators who are
focussing upon what they see as the vital need to begin A.C.E.
at the point people have reached in their existential life-
situations.   A.C.E. proceeds here to build upon these
experiences and enable people to interpret or understand them.
Many would advocate as the next stage in the educational
process bringing in the resources of the Christian faith in a
manner that assists in this interpretation (the special skill
of the A.C.E. teacher) This type of A.C.E. is inductive, for

we help people to interpret their life experiences in the light of the Christian message, yet using other philosophies, ideologies, sciences also. (Hermeneutically a stress on fusion). The following advocate this approach strongly, Groome (8), Freire (9), Illich (10), Lee (11), various Liberation Theologians (12) and notably Wingeir (13) in <u>Working out your own Beliefs</u>.

2.2 A.C.E. as individual growth to Wholeness (2A) or as a Social-Political activity (2B)

Those who conceive the A.C.E. enterprise as a highly individualistic matter tend to concentrate upon the need for an individual to be helped to grow as a whole integrated person. Various differing dimensions can be emphasized; moral, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, bodily. For some this focus upon changing the individual is over-played and leads towards introspection or egocentricity. Thus for quite a few writers of this perspective A.C.E. has become basically a therapeutic exercise concerned with inner healing and self-actualization. But there is great importance in this approach, according to which A.C.E. must assist a person's development towards full attainment of his/her potential in the image of God, Groome (14), Kelsey (15), Moran (16), Hull (17), Fowler (18) and Richards (19) give greatest attention to this educational aim.

Other contributors to A.C.E. theory emphasize what they regard as the essential political-social referent in A.C.E. Groome for instance labels A.C.E. as a "political activity with pilgrims in time". They argue that A.C.E. must concern itself with enabling changes in society and its attendant power structures offering challenge to the injustices, exploitation and structural evil therein. This radical, perhaps revolutionary dimension to the Gospel is being increasingly realised by Christians of almost all theological stances, and it is surely overdue. But certain holders of this outlook, especially those Liberation Theologians most influenced by Marxism tend to stress only the social implications of the Gospel. See especially P.Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (20). We refer also to Groome (21) and Bonino (22), as representatives of a broader position.

2.3 The Aim of A.C.E. is to engender fidelity to the will of God in obedience (3A) or to achieve autonomy through developing critical awareness (3B)

There are many writers in the evangelical and Catholic traditions (eg Nichols (23), Westerhoff (24), Richards (25), Baumohl (26)) who stress that the aim of A.C.E. must be to enable an individual to learn to live and grow in ever closer response to the Will of God. Such a person is taught to become a servant, who lives in obedience to Christ and in mutual submission to other people - the State included. (27) Thus obedience is the hall-mark of this approach - it tends towards heteronomy. K.Nichols writes "Faith involves giving reasonable assent to certain propositions", yet "faith is our ...personal response to God". (28) We do not all possess latent powers for self-actualization through our own abilities. Such a person learns to accept passively the will of God and/or the teachings of the Church. Yet there are many positive advantages to this aim that must be borne in mind (eg loyalty, servanthood, quietude) in an age when authority is rejected by so many, purely because it is an authority. The Christian's ultimate source of authority is God and He is freely chosen.

In stark contrast lies Aim 3B - the enablement of autonomy. The object here is to develop critical awareness through what Mezirow calls a "Perspective Transformation". (29) By this means people become able to break free of the bondages of society, political systems, cultural institutions and rituals, institutionalized religion and false gods. Some also include on such a list an aim to remove individual psychic bondages. Theologians such as Freire in Latin America use the term "conscientization" (30) - this technical word denoting the ability of a person to become aware of the manipulative and oppressive powers of their society. Thus this Aim is concerned with the theme of Liberation - as are Aims, 1B, 2B, and it is

not surprising that many supporting 3B support 1B, 2B also.
See Groome (31) and also here McKenzie (32) Hull (33).

We note the term "Critical Awareness" is much in vogue
at present. It can be philosophically oriented (a rational
evaluation of alternatives) or morally oriented (a moral
evaluation of cultural values). In the context of the active,
ethically slanted notion of this Aim we choose the second
alternative as paramount.

2.4 The Christian life is modelled after the Cross - world
denying or ascetical (4A), or it is essentially celebratory,
affirming around the symbol/reality of the Resurrection (4B)

There is a very strong, but today diminishing tradition
in Christianity that stresses the world-denying aspect of the
faith. According to this perspective people are encouraged to
sit loose to the values of this world with its highly
materialistic bias. For many the world is seen to be under the
power of evil, man in a state of general rebellion, and thus
all men under threat of God's condemnation. (34)

These argue that A.C.E. should instruct people how to
conquer sin, deny the pull of the world's pleasures and thus
live simply. The polarisation encouraged here sees the world
in terms of darkness/light and stresses the presence of
spiritual warfare (35) Hermeneutically the decisive event is
the Cross because it delivers a decisive "No" against this
present world order with all its sinfulness. The Christian in
denying self and the world, is to take up his Cross daily to
follow Christ. There are a few educationalists who offer some
support for this position (Smart (36). Baumohl (37)) but
generally it is advocated by theologians in the Monastic, Black
Pentecostal and Reformed Protestant theological traditions.

However, those especially of a more immanentist or humanist outlook tend to highlight the good in the world, affirming the doctrines of Creation, Reconciliation or Redemption as at the core of the Christian faith. Those with a strong Sacramentalist theology also join in celebrating the presence of God, entering into and transforming the natural order. Thus A.C.E.'s task is to encourage and enable people to build upon the signs of God already at work in prevenient grace. Hermeneutically the Resurrection is the key Christological event. Those from a Charismatic position highlight the Pentecost experience and its affirming consequences. Educationalists such as Lee (38), Miller (39) adopt this aim and underpin it with a Process Theology.

2.5 A.C.E. is to enculturate to a specific faith-tradition (5A) or should enable development of the pluralized religiously educated person (5B)

Many Christian educators wish to educate people to grow in faith within a specific faith-tradition. Probably this will be more narrowly defined in terms of denominationalism or "Churchmanship". This derives from a theological methodology which can be characterized as confessional. Many Church Schools used to pursue this goal, which can be technically labelled "enculturation". This is perhaps the primary covert objective behind most of the normal activities of church life, at least in the Minister's mind. This aim, ensuing in the Catechesis movement, is very important for motivating Catholic education (see K. Nichols' Cornerstone (40)) A.C.E. thus nurtures an adult towards full mature understanding of his own Christian tradition so that he might take up his place in community life. Amongst Protestants, reference can be made especially to Westerhoff (41) or Richards (42)

In very stark contrast,   lie those who seek to produce
a "religiously educated person".   Many school R.E. teachers
promote this outlook - helping students differentiate between
differing Christian or non Christian faiths or ideologies in an
analytical manner.   The individual may or may not be
subsequently assisted in making a decision in favour of one of
the alternatives.   If not he/she may well become sceptical of
them all.   In its sophisticated forms as upheld by Hull (43),
the person will in due course see the inter-relation between
all world views.   Perhaps the individual might reach Fowler's
Universalizing Faith (Stage Six)- achieved when one has
supposedly passed beyond particular expressions enshrined in
credal beliefs and deeply grasps the nature of their essential
one-ness, in a comprehensive vision of truth (44).

2.6   A.C.E. focusses on Commitment, fostering a personal
relationship with God (6A), or is rationalistic, analysing
religion phenomenologically. (6B)

Many Christians and Educationalists claim that at its
heart Christianity is personal, a matter of the heart and
feelings. For such, the main aim of A.C.E. must be relational,
enabling people to grow in friendship with God. There may be a
high value placed upon personal inter-human relationship, seen
as a response to the love of God seen in each other. Yet
conversely such love leads back to increased love for God. In
this relational bonding commitment deepened relationship can
grow through prayer, worship, meditation. A.C.E. should,
according to this position, promote relationship in all its
activities as a hermeneutical content and process (see Chapter
II.3) The following give special support to this: Moran (45),
Kelsey (46), Richards (47).

Yet there are other educationalists such as Holley (48),
Hull (49), McKenzie (50) who favour a stance that studies
religion phenomenologically (in a descriptive analytical mode
whilst entering for this purpose as empathetically as possible
into the religious practice under consideration). They see the
aim of A.C.E. as being to foster religious insights or deep
perceptions into the mystery of the world, nature of religious
ritual, manifestations of God. Such encourage all approaches
that develop a rational descriptive understanding of the
Christian faith. One's specific faith-commitment is immaterial
here, God is seen as an object of study rather than as one with
whom to form a deep relationship. Some writers who advocate
this position leave room for spiritual perceptions but this is
not the prime means of investigation. Groome for instance
devotes much space to faith, but the ultimate weight is not
upon the relationship of love with God as a person for His own
sake. (51)

SECTION 3

3.1

        We have now observed the range of possible positions
that one can occupy in respect of A.C.E. aims. It is clear
that there are innumerable varieties of emphasis that can be
given to these different aims. For aims where there is
discussion of emphasis related to a particular continuum,
educationalists place themselves much nearer one end of the
range than the other as part of the overall direction they
take. Some have a richer diversity of objectives than others.
For instance R. Holley has a fairly narrow set of overt
objectives, namely that A.C.E. should foster religious insights
into the mystery of God, studying this analytically. However
we will see that Groome has a rich diversity of aims, another
reason why we study him in detail.

        The position this thesis takes is that A.C.E. has to
embrace a rich diversity of aims and objectives in order to be
adequate both to the wide range of human needs, and also
faithful to the teachings and experience of the Christian
tradition. (52) Thus the 12 different aims highlighted will
all at times find a position in the overall A.C.E. programme.
This does not mean each aim will be equally strongly stressed
with the same regularity. In general this thesis is somewhat
to the left of centre, emphasizing Aims "A" rather than "B".
This will be justified in due course, but arises from our
definition of A.C.E. expressed in terms of attainment of <u>mature
discipleship.</u>

3.2

We wish to express our overall aim in A.C.E. according to the following definition: "Adult Christian Education aims to enable individuals to grow towards Christian maturity in a manner uniquely appropriate for themselves as liberated, radical yet loyal disciples and friends of Jesus Christ"

Within this generalized aim we propose a set of 6 pairs of aims (arising from Section 2) which can assist in this:-

1. A mature Christian disciple must primarily learn to become responsive to the revelation of God in its various forms (process content as Personal, Propositional, Event, Symbolic). Yet he will also learn to interpret his and other's experiences in the light of his knowledge of the Christian revelation.

2. A mature Christian disciple should learn to grow in personal wholeness (eg self-integration, self-acceptance, fulfilment, holiness). Yet he will be increasingly involved with the world as a co-transformer of Society towards the vision of the Kingdom of God.

3. A mature Christian disciple is a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and must learn to live in conformity to the Will of God. Yet he will also learn to grow in critical awareness of the world he lives in, as his overall perspective towards the world is transformed by exercise of his mind.

4. A mature Christian disciple will learn to discern the powers of evil at work in the world - taking up his Cross, prepared to suffer as he confronts them in the name of Jesus. Yet he will also co-operate with God to discern signs of hope in the world celebrating the presence of Resurrection life, building on what is good in Holy Spirit power.

5.   A mature Christian disciple must learn to become a committed member of his own faith-tradition and local Christian Community. Yet he will also learn to stand back as occasion demands with some degree of objectivity, critically re-interpreting his own faith in response to his experiences of life and especially encounter with other religious denominations or faiths.

6.   A mature Christian disciple must learn to grow in deepening intimate fellowship with God. Yet he must also learn to have a degree of objective detachment so that he does not become overwhelmed in subjectivity.

3.3

      We have utilized two main word-concepts to describe what we seek to achieve in A.C.E. These represent in essence what responsible adulthood comprises:

1.   Maturity

      The goal of maturity has been specifically highlighted by R.C. Miller - it is marked by "poise, originality and disinterestedness ..." (53) Some of the key biblical texts that mark this out as a characteristic are:

Ephesians 4:13. We are to become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (context: discussion of spiritual gifts)

Phil 3:15, 1Cor 2:6, Heb 5: 14, 6:1. A message of wisdom concerning the mystery of God will be received and understood by the mature. The mature will understand the solid food of advanced doctrine.

Col 4:12, Ja 1:4 Maturity concerns being assured, able to stand firm against doubts, temptations, pressures. Perseverance is valuable in attaining this.

Thus maturity is valued highly in the New Testament. A mature person

a. Has Spiritual <u>understanding</u> of deeper truths of the Christian revelation.

b. Is being <u>solidly established</u> as a Christian - unmoveable by doubt or temptation.

c. Is <u>growing in or into Christ</u> to attain the spiritual moral stature and deeper knowledge that is required to exercise spiritual gifts. (54)

2. <u>Discipleship</u>

L. Richards places a high priority upon discipleship - as defined in terms of being like Christ. But we feel a more dynamic, action-oriented definition is required. (55) The key biblical texts derive from the proclamation, teaching of Jesus:

Luke 9,10 Disciples were to do Jesus' work of mission, witness.

Mt.16:13-20, Lk.14:26-33. Disciples were to be committed, loyal to Jesus personally - giving a personal faith response to him.

Mt.11: 1.5:1,2. 13:10-17 The disciple as a close confidante of Jesus also received in depth teaching and explanation.

Thus, as it assists our A.C.E. practice, a disciple is one who is, or has

a.   Received and understood Jesus' teaching

b.   A firm personal loyalty to Jesus as a friend, at whatever
     cost.

c.   Involved in Jesus' work in mission, works of power and
     compassionate care.

Conclusion: We note a considerable similarity between the
              threefold characteristics of maturity and
              discipleship. (56)

     This definition of A.C.E. also highlighted the 4 word-
concepts Uniqueness, Liberation, Radicalness, Love.   We now
comment briefly on these :-

1.   While we uphold the value of the communal context of A.C.E.
(see further Chapter II.3 on the Community influence in
Hermeneutics) we also argue that ultimately each individual
must be treated as unique.   Thus each should grow to maturity
in a manner specially appropriate for their pilgrimage towards
God (57).

2.   The note of liberation is upheld very strongly in
Scripture.   It is a key feature of life in the Kingdom of God
(section 5).   We are to be liberated from the power of evil
(personal or structural), from our own inner failures, fears
and darkness, from the imposition of unjust powers (religious,
social, political) and finally from bondage to legalism – for
we are now under the free grace of God. (58)   In the light of
this many sided stress upon liberation, it is important to
pursue it at the forefront of our educational programmes.

3.   The heart of Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom is deeply
radical in his desire to overturn the commonly accepted
maxims/laws of that generation.   His teaching frequently

scandalized (59). Jesus' ethical relational charter for the
Kingdom as in Matthew 5-7, Luke 4:18-21, 6:17-49 epitomizes the
radical nature of the Christians' lifestyle and attitudes.
A.C.E. programmes that emphasize this will train Christians to
make real impact in our world.

4. The relational aspect of our faith has already been
stressed - for Jesus sought personal companions loyal to him.
He wanted the love of his disciples. God also consistently
demonstrates His love to humans and desires a loving response
(60)

Section 3.4 Relationship of Aims A to Aims B within the
Christian tradition

3.4.1.

We discuss in this Subsection the relationship between
the 6 sets of Aims and the Christian tradition, especially as
exemplified in Scripture. We believe that each of the Aims can
find support from within Christian tradition, but that greater
stress can be normally found upon the "A" rather than "B" Aims.
We offer here a few brief comments upon each set of Aims,
recognising that much extended biblical and theological
investigation would be required for a comprehensive
justification:-

AIMS 1

Jesus and Paul taught out of revelation and from a position of
authority (61). Greatest weight is placed upon the
revelational dimension of Christianity (Chapter I.1) (62). Yet
Jesus and indeed many other biblical leaders built upon
experiences of life to provide from them insights and profound
interpretation of their meaning (63).

AIMS 2

Jesus was plainly concerned for the development of a whole
person: mentally and physically. Paul urged development of a
sound mind (64). Greater stress lies there because of the
priority of an individual's relationship with God (65) (66).
Yet Jesus and other prophets confronted religious/political
institutions and powers when seen to be corrupt or ungodly
(67).

AIMS 3

Jesus exemplified in his own life obedience to His Father, and
urged this pattern on others. The Apostles sought for and
obeyed the Holy Spirit (68), However the theme of freedom
(inner and external) is strong in Scripture, as is the need for
transformation (69). But our true freedom is found
paradoxically in obedience and service (70).

AIMS 4

There are many exhortations towards a life of self-denial and
cross-bearing. (71) This world is transitory and sinful (72).
It is therefore only after conquering evil and enduring
suffering and trials that we can dare to celebrate (73) (74).
Yet the note of praise and joy in our faith is strong when
built upon solid victory over evil, darkness, rather than
indulgent escapism. (75)

AIMS 5

Jesus gives much teaching that seems exclusivist and "narrow"
(76). Much Apostolic teaching concerned conformity into
properly ordered Church life (77). Hints of a more
universalistic stance, based upon God's fair judgement, are to
be found but are much more scattered and obscure (78) (79).

Above all else God reveals His love for His People, and desires from us a loving response (80) (81). He seeks worshippers and a depth of intimate relationship (82). Calls for a more detached analytic approach to religion are rarer in Scripture but not absent. We find Jesus engaged in reasoned debate (83), and Paul called people to develop the mind of Christ. (84)

3.4.2

Building upon the arguments of 3.4.1, we aim to demonstrate here the nature of the dialectic operating between Aims A and B. In A.C.E. we believe that a place should be found for emphasizing at times both Aims in any given continuum, that each may stimulate yet draw strength from the other. We argue that to pursue a particular aim without also attending to the other aim in that continuum will eventually inhibit development of the very aims we desire to foster — it happens because of an imbalance, distortion or introversion occurring therein. Thus for instance to pursue a path of self-denial or cross-bearing without some regard for the celebratory dimension to life is likely in due course to lead;

Firstly, to undue seriousness/intensity, even psychological disorder:

Secondly, to a gradual lessening of the drive towards "other worldliness" until ultimately a static position that can be held in good conscience is reached when inspiration has died, or when some "acceptable" norm has been attained.

The dialectical relationship between Aims A and B can be portrayed thus:

AIMS A   AIMS B
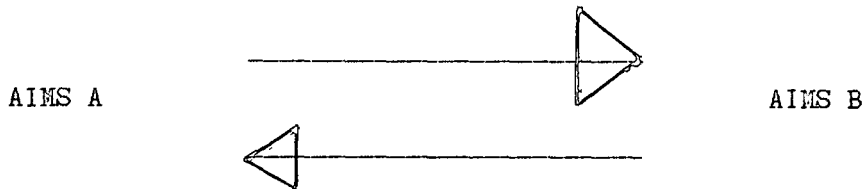
By this we represent the greater weight of authority that we wish to place on Aims A - providing an interpretative context for Aims B. Yet we allow Aims B to enter dialectical interplay with Aims A to question, modify or develop Aims A further. This dialectic fits well with our hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. because the dialectic is an interpretative praxis-oriented one, as we now propose to demonstrate. This is most effectively achieved by considering each set of Aims in turn:-

AIMS 1

Revelation in whatever form it is transmitted (Chapter I.1) must be at once actively interpreted in terms of the individual's life concerns, experience and world view. Yet in the Christian tradition we have seen that it should generally have greatest authority. This revelation is utilised to interpret other life-experiences through theological reflection. Yet conversely our experiences of life do have considerable impact upon our understanding of revelation - especially those aspects that we select as most meaningful to us.

AIMS 2

A.C.E. should focus upon growth of personality, that is self-understanding, especially of our status as children of God. From the wonder of such realization should then naturally arise a compassionate desire for involvement in the problems of other

people's lives.   Without this expression desire for self-actualization will tend to egocentricity.   Yet premature involvement in the problems of others, places demands upon the individual that they have not the stature to cope with.   Yet we recognise that understanding of oneself can be powerfully facilitated through understanding others.

AIMS 3

A.C.E. should help people to interpret correctly the forms that God's revelation takes.   The gift of discernment is indispensable for Christian maturity, but this requires continuing inspiration through the Holy Spirit.   However, in course of time the individual learns wisdom and gains a degree of autonomy proper to maturity.   But God the Father still calls for dependency upon Him just as Jesus exemplified, for we never reach a position of omniscience,   and pride is a major danger.

AIMS 4

We note that for Jesus the Cross with its accompanying agony had to precede the glory of the Resurrection.   No short cut is open to us either.   Self-renunciation is a proper response to an interpretation of the fallenness of our world with its pain and deprivation.   Hermeneutically we are then led to affirm the recreative power of God, and experience the release of Resurrection power into this world.   Paul correctly argues that in God's design "out of weakness comes forth strength".

AIMS 5

We have argued that a particular confessional stance is unavoidable, even desirable in A.C.E., as a hermeneutical context for interpreting other aspects of existence.   It is by developing understanding of one's own faith: rituals, liturgy, history, doctrines, ethics, spirituality, that we grow to

understand the ideologies or faiths of others better. Yet by grasping the inner meaning of others' beliefs we grow in ability to interpret our own faith-tradition.

AIMS 6

Our relationships with other beings, especially God, are in many ways very mysterious - yet central and fascinating to us, and thus to A.C.E.   Relationship is an indispensable context for understanding much of life.   Yet analytical and detached judgements are necessary to prevent pure emotionalism or sentimentality.   But on their own in religious matters they can become distorted or sterile because they emerge from a wrong spirit, or fail to recognise the depth of personal investment in a belief or relationship.   A.C.E. helps growth in dynamic balance of these two aims, yet gives priority to the relational.

3.4.3.

In summary of this Subsection, we set out in Appendix I.2.B the Content and Process central to the furtherance of these educational Aims.   The "process" here represents the most appropriate educational formats promoting learning of the "content".   Each is to work together in harmony.

We acknowledge the comprehensiveness of this approach consonant with a diversity of revelatory modes (Chapter I.1), and the varying needs, situations, personalities entering into the educational situation.   Out of this diversity the teacher must select those Aims leading to specific Objectives that will be most helpful to achieve them.   We admit that such a comprehensive definition and 12 Aims puts us in danger of overstretching ourselves severely or ending in fragmentation. We argue for a unity in this diversity through -

a. One overarching Aim focussing on maturity, discipleship.

b. One overall Dynamic-Hermeneutical theory (Chapter II.3)

c. A common development of programme (Chapter III)

d. A unity in God's overall purposes in consistent activity
    (Chapter I.1)

Section 4

In this last Section, we look at the position of T. Groome in some detail, as his position is expounded in <u>Christian Religious Education</u> (85). His position is similar to ours because of his hermeneutical approach, but his emphases as we have seen in relation to our discussion of Aims are somewhat different.

4.1

<u>A summary of Groome's aims for A.C.E.</u>

His approach pays close attention to the three time tenses, claiming they are all important in C.E.

a. Past reference (86) People need to know the story of the Christian faith community within which they now stand - it is vitally part of their heritage.

b. Present reality (87) The starting point for C.E. must be a person's present experience, especially of the activity of God in their lives. Such experience is a key place to engage people's interest.

c. Future hope (88). The Christian faith tradition generates a vision for the future regarding world possibilities. Such is encapsulated in the reality of the Kingdom of God, the seeds of which are already present. (89) Thus C.E. for Groome is education in cognizance of the past, present and future in such a way that the individual can be helped to change the course of his own history as he journeys in time towards his future vocation. (90) Groome's approach to A.C.E. involves plenty of discussion regarding the need for praxis/action, and for him A.C.E. is inescapably a political activity. (91)

In Chapter 4 he maintains that C.E. must foster a life of faith, a lived response of agape love. (92) This faith, the object of development in A.C.E., has 3 dimensions: Believing

(cognition - we link to propositional revelation), Trusting (we link to personal revelation and loyalty to Jesus), Doing (we link to revelation as event) (93)

It should already be seen that Groome is advocating a very broad set of objectives for C.E., corresponding to a comprehensive definition of faith: relation to God, cognitive knowledge, affective bonds, and behavioral change. Thus in Chapter 5 Groome proceeds to delineate C.E. as a lifelong developmental process inolving the whole person progressively becoming free of external constraint and inner compulsion (see Chapter II.2) (94)

In Chapter 6 Groome argues that C.E. should promote a critical dialectic between self and society; a critical reflection upon the nature of society, the church, his own personhood. (95) Yet in Chapter 7 as a balance to these political social emphases, Groome stresses the need for growth in knowledge and love of and for God and others we encounter. (96) A truly biblical way of knowing, the goal of C.E., must be relational, experiential, active.

In latter parts of his book, especially Chapter 9, Groome sets out the implications of his earlier discussions. He shows how C.E. works in practice. Discerning and naming present action, critically reflecting upon it, dialoguing amongst ourselves, critically analysing the Christian faith-story, being spurred on by the future vision of the Kingdom of God. (97)

In essence Groome promotes a dialectic between people's life-experiences (stories) and the Christian faith (the Story). This provides the hermeneutical dynamic that lies at the heart of his approach, for this mutual re-interpretation occurs in each case at 3 time tenses. We seek to discover what is true in the Story that addresses our own stories (98). This narrative

based dialectic is utilised in Chapter II.3 as a hermeneutic
bridge.

Ultimately then, Groome wants people to live in the
freedom of the Children of God (Rom8:21) (99). He desires
educators to foster critical analysis (especially of society),
aiding interpretation of present experience, to encourage the
transformation of society, and personal growth to wholeness
(part of which is development in relation to God).

In terms of our categorization Groome places more stress
upon the "B" aims, stressing personal experience, social action,
personal transformation, yet remaining firmly within the
Christian tradition and moderately personal in his emphasis upon
relational love.

Section 4.2

Links between Groome and this thesis: a summary

4.2.1

The whole of Groome's approach is, as we have seen, an
exercise in Hermeneutics, the search for understanding functions
as a key dynamic at various stages in the whole process. Indeed
the whole underlying objective is to enable the growth and
formation of Christian understanding: of present action and
experience, of oneself as a person , of others and of society
also, of .the Christian faith-tradition's Story and Vision, and
of what one must do to play a part in building the Kingdom
(100). Groome emphasizes the earlier stages of this process
more than we do but it is accepted that we must allow space for
a critical reflection upon action and experience in their own
right before prematurely bringing in the Christian faith story
and Vision. This contrasts with most traditional Christian
education, but we must not swing too far in the opposite

direction by too strongly divorcing interpretation of experience per se from the Christian revelation. We do however wish to emphasize (Aim 6B) the role of detached abstract reflection which is not necessarily directly related to an immediate action; this too can assist in the development of Christian understanding.

4.2.2

A link between Groome and this thesis is established through our common stress on Story (see Chapters II.3 and III) as of key assistance for hermeneutical approaches to C.E. Story acts as a bridge or resource to assist the fusion of horizons (Chapter II.3). Groome widens the use of story to include the whole faith tradition (101). There is value in doing so, but we must beware detracting from the specific ultimate authority of the Scriptural tradition. Narrative can have special value for those less articulate or able to abstract in an intellectual fashion. Stories can have considerable power just in their telling, especially if done creatively. We register our uneasiness with Groome's approach in so far as stories are rationalised, rather than at times (Aim 5A) simply being allowed to stand in their own right, possibly facilitating formative enculturation within the Christian faith-tradition.

4.2.3

Our discussion-based approach (see Chapter III) correlates well with Groome, but he tends to keep this as the sole formal means of education. We continue to stress the need for teaching in the form of sermon, lecture, talk as an opportunity for people to hear a Word from God. Other educational techniques, including use of A.V. aids, art forms, 1-1 discussion are also important, so Groome's methodology is probably too narrow. (102) We saw in Section 2 that Jesus and others in the Christian Scriptures taught with considerable

authority - they did not use rationalizing or discussion based methods such as Groome concentrates upon. Thus we desire to put more stress on Aim 1A, the Deductive approach to A.C.E., and give place to the proper authority of a teacher according to God's anointing for that Ministry.

4.2.4

Groome's emphasis upon praxis agrees with our approach. A key objective of this thesis is to narrow the credibility gap between a person's professed or formal faith and faith-in-action. We learn in the midst of activity by reflecting upon it, as well as through more passive reception of information or ideas. We wish to put rather less stress upon proof of understanding being evidenced in action, continuing to see the importance of an individual's inner psychic development especially in relationship with God. (103) Indeed Jesus' teaching method seems to put greater stress than Groome upon modelling - imitation without constant critical reflection in praxis. We also argue that there are occasions when it is appropriate simply to take compassionate action as it is needed - seeing any learning in terms of personal growth as a by-product rather than (as in a praxis approach) as part of the intentional learning. (Aim 2A)

4.2.5

Groome shares with this thesis a dynamic picture of A.C.E., a strong forward movement towards the Christian Vision by means of Kingdom engendered activity. This forward direction contrasts with those models that uphold safe, careful guarding of past deposits of faith (104). It contrasts too with models that dwell too much on pure interpretation of present experience, with no empowered future vision to provide a sense of future direction. Wingeier for instance fails to give an overall Christian vision to give coherent direction to his

approach. Yet we part company with Groome in so far as he
devotes no attention to less activist A.C.E. activity.
According to Aim 6A we must leave space for prayer, worship,
contemplation for we accept with C.M. Wood that the principal
aim of Christian understanding (of Scripture) is the knowledge
of God. (105), (106). There is a proper place for "the journey
inward" and various forms of therapy of a much more passive
nature. According to Kelsey Christianity is not just about
ideas, but about knowing the spiritual world in and beyond our
Psyche. (107)

4.2.6

Both positions seem to be in method (Chapter III) akin to
Scriptural methods of C.E.:-

Action   ⟶   Reflection   ⟶   Further
Experience   New Material   Action
                           Guidance
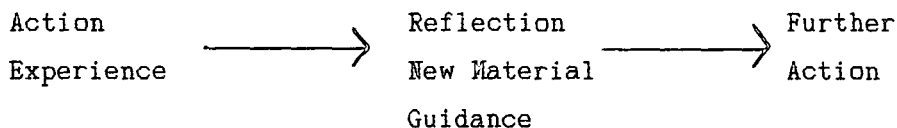
No methods receive biblical enshrinement, but perhaps at times
both our methods are too complex in comparison to those of
Jesus. Yet we feel that Groome's approach fixes attention on a
prophetic style of A.C.E., but omits the equally Biblical Wisdom
tradition (108) The wisdom tradition values knowledge accrued
over time "in fear of God". (109) The context here is not so
much action-reflection, but leisured reflection in the context
of passivity (Aim 3B, 5B) so that the mind of Christ may be
formed in us.

4.2.7

In their theoretical foundations both models draw upon a
philosophical background that is more Judaeo Christian than
Greek. In epistemology we "know" through action and

interpersonal intimacy. In teleology, we have definite goals, and a conclusion to history under the consummated Kingdom of God. However in metaphysic we place greater weight than Groome upon a theistic model of God's intervention and activity within history. Groome's position is more immanentist - God works within history and individual's lives, yet does not intervene directly, thus we do not therefore assign Him a key role in this process of C.E. in a dynamic overt sense. We believe there to be a real underlying metaphysical difference between us here. Thus we note the absence of a role for the Holy Spirit with Groome in providing inspiration, Spiritual power, gifts and an immediacy of the grace-ful presence of God specifically enabling us to achieve the tasks in front of us. (110) The charismatic movement has potentially much to offer in implementing Aims 3A, 2B; "for its members the presence of grace is the Spirit's power inwardly experienced, reshaping and transforming the felt inner self". (K.Nichols, (111))

4.2.8

A basically dialectical method/model is at work in both Groome's work and this thesis. This assumes the form of a dialogue, a mutual reshaping, learning. Groome, however, has an equally balanced dialectic with apparently identical weight placed on Our Christian Story/Vision and Our Experience/Present situation. (112) This thesis however accepts the Biblical revelation (as interpreted) as the ultimate authority for a Christian, even allowing for questions of biblical interpretation and the shifting nature of our understanding of it. In other words, Groome allows for a more radical questioning (and potential rejection) of the Christian Story/Vision, especially in its details, than this thesis will allow. Groome's ultimate authority lies in the dialectic itself, the dynamic of praxis. We have argued that such authority lies in God as He reveals Himself to us (historical and contemporary faith) Thus our own model becomes:-

Theology		Christian Religious Education
theoria of Christianity	⟷	praxis of Christian
faith tradition		individual and community in
mediated mainly		belief and consequent action
through Scripture		

We also argue that the context of Groome's dialectic is not sufficiently diverse and in Chapter II.3 we seek to show that worship, celebration, and spiritual warfare, cross-bearing, personal decision and repentance have a key role to play in facilitating this dialectic (Aims 4A, 4B).   V.B.Gillespie regards conversion as a basic way of achieving personal identity and self transcendence. (113)

4.2.9

Finally, we note the crucial importance of freedom as an Aim in A.C.E. (114)   But because Groome links this too closely to the contemporary consciousness of freedom and social liberation, his analysis is too restrictive and partial.   We argue that it is possible to be free even in the midst of persecution, enslavement, physical illness or material splendour.   External or psychological freedom are not the prerequisites of spiritual freedom.   True freedom lies in a deep consciousness of one's status as a child of God, beloved, restored into right relationship with God, the ultimate ground of our existence. (115)

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28. Nichols (1978)   67-9

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32. McKenzie L. The Religious Education of Adults Alabama 1982 26

33. Hull   85   He seeks to re-idolize the experience of faith

34. See Jn 14:30 ("Prince of this World"). 1 Cor 7:31 ("This world is passing away") or 1 Pe 2:11 ("we are strangers and alien to this world").

35. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Ephesians 6

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45. Moran G. Education towards Adulthood Dublin, 1979 Chapter 4

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49. Hull Chapter 4, eg 185

50. McKenzie   Chapter 1 and Appendices

51. Groome Chapter 4

52. L. Richards wants A.C.E. to communicate LIFE in its fullness, the life of Christ 13-16

53. Miller R.C. 161-2

54. K. Nichols places high value on maturity of faith: Nichols (1978) paragraph 6; Nichols (1979) 85-8

55. Richards L. 20, 22, 54, 70

56. Baumohl 15-19

57. See Romans 14:10, 2 Cor 5:10, Eph 2:10

58. See Gal.3:23-9, 4:1-11, 4:26-31, 5:1-23 (especially v.1)

59. See John 7:25-30, Matthew 21:42-6

60. Parable of the Prodigal Son Lk 15:11-32 or Paul in Rom 9:15-18 or Ephesians 2:4

61. Jn 5: 17, 19, 14-31; Jn 8:38; 12:49,50. Mt 5:38, 9 Gal 1:12

62. Nichols (1978) para.108 places great stress on Revelation but notes the necessity of human understanding and relating of experience.

63. Joshua 7, Joel 1, Luke 21:1-4, 5-28

64. Lk 9:37-43, 18:35-43, Jn 14:27, 16:33, Rom 8:6, Eph 4:23

65. 2 Cor 5:10 "We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ."

66. Smart (1954)   159

67. Lk 1:46-55, 13:10-17, 19:45-8   Jn 7:14-end

68. Mt 19:17, 28:19,20.   Jn 15:10   Acts 13:4, 16:6, 20:22

69. Jn 8:32-6, Lk 7:36-50, Rom 12:1,2   Amos 4-7

70. Rom 6:18,22   Gal 5:13

71. Mt 6:19-34, Lk 9:23,4

72. Jn 15:19, 18:36.   1 Jn 2:15-17

73. Westerhoff (1976)   35-42 concentrates upon individuals, and their conversion

74. Revelation 2:7, 17;   3:5, 12, 21

75. Mk 2:13-17, Jn2:1-11, Phil 4:4   2 Samuel 6

76. Mt 7:13, 14; 15:24, Jn14:6

77. Mt 13:17, Phil 3:17, 2 Thess 3:14, 1 Tim 6: 20, 1

78. Nichols (1979)   45-9 argues that it is not possible to temporarily suspend belief in religious investigation.

79. Malachi 1:11, Lk 13:29, Jn 10:16, 14:2, Romn 8:39, 2 Cor 5:19 Col 1:20

80. Mt 6:5-13, Hebrews 7:19, 10:22   James 4:8

81. Kelsey M. (1977) adopts a highly relational path for A.C.E. Utilising the insights of Jungian psychology he demonstrates an approach based on prayer (Chapter 2) and love (Chapter 3). See eg p.36

82. Mk 12:30, Jn 4:23, 4   Rom 8:15

83. Mt 23, Lk 20:20-6, 27-40

84. 1 Cor 2:16,   Phil 1:9, 10

85. Groome   203   Note 22

86. Groome   191-193

87. Groome   184-191

88. Groome   193-195

89. Groome   25   and detailed exposition   49-51

90. Groome   196-7

91. Groome   15-17

92. Groome   63-65

93. Groome   57

94. Groome   98, 9

95. Groome   126

96. Groome   141-5

97. See a detailed exposition in Chapter II.3

98. Groome   He illustrates this in practice in Chapter 10

99. Groome quotes Rom 8:21 in a Synopsis of his approach in
     O'Hare P. (editor) Foundations of Religious Education New York,
     1978   87, 8

100. Groome   263-5

101. Groome   192

102. For broader approaches in practice see Lee (1985), Richards,
     Durka G. and Smith J. Aesthetic Dimensions of Religious
     Education New York 1979

103. Kelsey M. (1977) Chapters 4, 5 and Miller R.C. Chapters 11, 12

104. Nichols (1979) 31

105. Wood C.M. The Formation of Christian Understanding Philadelphia
     1981   30, 112

106. 2 Peter 1:4

107. Kelsey M. 76, 77, 81

108 See Lee's eulogy on Wisdom   159-161; in Lee (1985)

109. Proverbs 1:7, Ecclesiastes 12:13,4

110. Groome. We discovered one reference, on p.198 - where he states
     the need for the presence of the Holy Spirit. But he continues:
     "we must never simply appeal to the Holy Spirit". Thus he
     wishes us to make our own efforts to discernment. Thus Groome
     basically ignores the Holy Spirit.

111. Contrast Nichols (1979)   77

112. Groome   195-197.   He labels the process "Present Dialectical
      Hermeneutics".

113. Gillespie V.B. <u>Religious Conversion and Personal Identity</u>
      Alabama   1979

114. Groome   Chapter 5

115. Romans 8: 1, 2, 11, 14-17, 28-30

APPENDIX I.2.A

Range of Teaching Aims

1. Revelational
    Teaching people to understand
    and assimilate Scripture and
    the Doctrines of the Christian
    faith. (e.g. to learn,
    understand meaning of the
    Ascension of Christ).

    Experiential
    Enabling people to understand and
    interpret their experiences and
    needs, especially in the light of
    the Gospel. (e.g. experience of
    losing one's job).

2. Individual Growth
    Helping people to grow into
    the image of God in which
    they were made. Enabling
    people to become whole (e.g.
    Able to accept themselves).

    Social-Political Transformation
    Challenging and Equipping people
    to change Society in their
    thinking and practical action. (e.g.
    Action on Nuclear Disarmament)

3. Fidelity or Heteronomy
    Leading people to hear and then
    obey the Holy Spirit and the
    Will of God for their lives
    more accurately (e.g. What
    is God saying to me
    about my use of money.)

    Autonomy
    Teaching people to grow in critical
    awareness of themselves,
    institutions and Society. Fostering
    a "perspective transformation". (e.g.
    a careful decision about use of
    time)

4. Denial or Cross-bearing
    Causing people to perceive
    where self-denial is needed
    in the face of worldly greed,
    materialism. A realisation
    this world is not permanent
    but passing. (e.g. self-
    sacrifice for the good of
    another)

    Celebration or Resurrection
    Encouraging people to see where
    God is already at work in
    resurrection-power. Celebration of
    the goodness, beauty of life (eg
    appreciation of sacraments,
    effective signs of God's presence)

5. Specific Enculturation
    Assisting people to grow into
    their chosen faith
    denomination and their Church
    Community. (e.g.teaching the
    meaning of Baptism)

    Pluralizing or Universal
    Provoking people to empathetically
    stand in other's faith-traditions
    or ideology – to see interrelation
    of their faith with others
    (e.g. Islam)

6. Relational or Devotional
    Fostering student's relation-
    ship with God, that they may
    grow to love Him as a friend.
    Yet also facilitating relation-
    ship of genuine openness with
    other people (e.g. experience
    of worship which touches a
    person's heart, affections).

    Analytical
    Development of student's minds in
    an abstract manner to stand back
    and analyse their faith and all
    relationships. (e.g. what is my
    relationship with God founded on
    ("cupboard love?"), or what
    difference does prayer make?)

APPENDIX I.2.B

Hermeneutical focal-points of each of the 12 Educational Aims

AIM A.   B.

1   CONTENT The Word of God in   C: Experiences of the World
            Scripture   Concerns of the self
            Prophetic Revelation now.

    PROCESS Lecture, Sermon,   P: Discernment in engagement
            Spiritual "Word" gifts.   with life's experiences

2   CONTENT Oneself as made in Imago   C: Radical Ideologies (Marxism)
            Dei.   dialogue themes Exodus, New
            Doctrines of Salvation,   Creation and Kingdom of God.
            Holy Spirit.

    PROCESS Personal contemplation,   P: Active involvement in Society
            counsel.
            Group discussion, therapy.

3   CONTENT Example of Christ   C: Doctrines of Creation, Fall.
            Spiritual "Discernment"   Philosophy, Human Sciences.
            gifts.
            Intention of Sinai lawgiving

    PROCESS Living obedient Christian   P: Debate, Dialogue. Individual
            life. Ministry, Mission   reflection and reading.
            to hear God in action

4   CONTENT Doctrines of Cross,   C: Resurrection of Christ.
            Satan/Evil.   Function of Worship
            Study of Christian saints   Eschatology

    PROCESS Facing frankly pains,   P: Experience of Worship and
            dilemmas darker side to   celebrating all good of
            existence. Meaning?   world

5   CONTENT Jesus Christ: God and Man   C: Study other ideologies and
            Study of Church tradition   world-beliefs.
            especially of Sacraments.

    PROCESS Observing and participat-   P: Debate with other faiths
            ing in aspects of   Experiential observation.
            Church life.

6   CONTENT God our Heavenly Father;   C: Study of Wisdom Tradition.
               His attributes and desires   Engagement with discursive
               for relationship, especially section of Bible, e.g.Pauline
               in Scriptures, other's   epistles, Jesus' diatribes.
               experience.

       PROCESS Prayer. Meditation.   P: Distanced reasoned reflection.
               Silence. Openness to   Self-awareness. Discussion
               committed and self-   and Debate
               giving relationships.

CHAPTER II.1

What is the appropriate subject matter for Christian
Education?   EXAMPLE - The Ascension

1.   General Introduction

       1.1   General Content areas for A.C.E.

       1.2   Demonstration of how Understanding lies at the
               heart of all Content areas

       1.3   Justification yet limits to a broad ranging approach
               to A.C.E.

       1.4   Particular areas of Concern for A.C.E.

       1.5   Why teach Christian doctrine?

2.   Introduction to the Ascension

       2.1   Why study the Ascension?

       2.2   Textual Problems

       2.3   Chronology of the Ascension

       2.4   Literary Genre of the Accounts

       2.5   Status of Luke's Ascension - other parallels

3.   Exegesis of Luke 24:50-3

4.   Exegesis of Acts 1:9-15

5.   Summary of findings from Biblical research

    5.1   Ascension as Rapture

    5.2   Ascension as Doxological Climax

    5.3   Ascension concluding successful mission

    5.4   Ascension and the Old Testament parallels

    5.5   The Chronology of the Ascension

    5.6   Ascension begins a new era

    5.7   A portrayal of Luke's distinctive Christology

6.   Historical-Literary Status of Ascension accounts

    6.1   Introduction

    6.2   More Conservative position

    6.3   Liberal History of Religious approach

    6.4   Ascension as realistic narrative-fiction

7.   Set of Contemporary understandings of the Ascension

CHAPTER II.1   THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST"

Section 1.   What is the appropriate subject matter for
              Christian Education?

1.1

        In Chapter I.2 we considered in detail the various
possible Aims that could be pursued in A.C.E.   Each Aim has
associated with it various areas of subject content.   We
commence this Chapter by summarizing seven general areas of
concern:-

A   The owned experience and needs of the person.   A.C.E.
assists interpretation of their experience, perhaps offering
therapy or counsel as required.

B   Problems, injustice in society.   How the Gospel of the
Kingdom addresses these.   It invokes not just reflection upon
action, but compassionate activity itself - often the best
learning is a by-product of selfless action..

C   Formative education into aspects of Church life.   Teaching
(with plenty of first-hand experience) regarding how liturgy,
worship, sacraments foster   participation in the life of the
Church Community.

D   The individual's knowledge of, and relation with   God in a
spiritual growth of deepening relationship.   Concomitant to this
lies the fostering of human relationships in a spirit of love.

E   Knowledge of Scripture, and an understanding of doctrine, especially an impartial account of the streams of theological tradition within the Christian faith.

F   Other "secular" areas of human knowledge and world religions. This involves an in depth understanding of these in their own terms as well as in relation to the Christian faith.

G   Leisure interests and learning to celebrate and affirm life in enjoyment of God's Creation.   Understanding facilitates intelligent appreciation of the wonder of life..

1.2

        Each of these areas requires at its centre the development of understanding, by which we mean the grasping of the meaning of the subject material in its essence. Each must also be interpreted so that its meaning and implications are related to wider aspects of the individual's life.   Thus we believe that hermeneutical theory applies to all seven subject areas because it concerns a general theory of learning and its key dynamics. We   give an   example from one of the content areas of 1.1. :-

F.   Understanding another World-View or Discipline (eg Economics) involves perceiving its underlying dynamics and causal relationships   as theory bears upon practice.   This generally requires considerable educational expertise from within the relevant area.   Especially this is important in an individual's vocational area and in other areas pertaining to daily life.   A person working in commerce can be helped to understand economic powers as they affect his job, for example. Subsequently they can be assisted to understand them in the context of their Christian faith and its critique of economic theory.   It is important   to develop a Christian Mind,

distinctive in its analysis of other positions from an intelligent, perhaps radical, interpretative stance.

1.3

We are thus following up the lead of L. McKenzie (1) and J.M. Lee (2) who, as we have already observed, strongly advocate a broad ranging approach to A.C.E. :-

a. Religion should affect every aspect of daily life and not in effect become compartmentalized. Christianity as a world-view should address attitudes and value systems, affecting both private thought and public behaviour. God has concern for the whole of His Creation and it is therefore incumbent upon Christians to share this same outlook.

b. Yet this does not imply that the Church commits itself to teaching every conceivable subject area. Some subjects are best left to the specialist disciplines which have far greater knowledge and resources. Yet Theology can offer critique upon the wider ethical, social, philosophic implications of these disciplines. Other subjects are best left to specialist groups spanning several local Churches or a Para-Church grouping. Other areas are of greater importance for more mature Christians and should not divert the attention of younger adherents of the faith. Finally the Church may desire to teach a particular area, yet not have the resources to do so. Therefore much as we emphasize (a) in theory, for reasons given here there will be many practical restrictions. Yet the intention in A.C.E. should always be to broaden areas of concern and relate A.C.E. to as many of life's experiences as possible.

1.4

We therefore argue A.C.E. should focus at times upon any of the 7 aforementioned areas but especially upon Areas A, C, D and E.

A.   We highlight personal development where the subject is the participant himself, and the context consists of his experiences, needs and concerns. A fairly unstructured teaching programme is involved here, highly related to the needs of the person and group. Educational planning focuses on techniques for facilitating this development rather than producing pre-set programmes.

C.   We recognise that the individual is formed in Community and gains therefore much of his identity from relationships within it. Thus A.C.E. recognises the importance of group identity and personal friendship. Apart from facilitating this informally, more formal attention can be given to the underlying dynamics of relationships and ethical components of this. By this means individuals more intelligently learn the art of developing friendships and gain much of considerable importance both for themselves and the Community.

D.   Growth in relationship to God is clearly furthered through prayer groups, worship, sacraments. This falls into an area which has not been traditionally the department of education. We need to consider the educational implication and dynamics of these activities. Programmes can be developed to foster this, but much learning in this area will occur as a spin off to an activity that is not pursuing this as its primary goal (eg worship for God's sake alone).

E.   This is the area most traditionally the concern of the education "department". It should be ensured that this occurs in a very broad setting. We must not just present a doctrine

in a somewhat impersonal "pure" form. To this end we must select aspects which are relevant to people and which they can gradually grow to understand. We should relate these especially to the current needs of the Church as well as the individual. We need also to discern the mind of God according to what He wants covered at any given time.

1.5

In this thesis we choose to concentrate upon a doctrinal area under "E", the Ascension of Christ.

Why then teach a Christian doctrine such as the Ascension?

Firstly because this forms part of the historic tradition and foundation of the Church. Those interested in Christianity need to know more about the doctrinal content of the faith as a knowledge base.

Secondly the Christian faith enshrines certain specific facts and beliefs. There are of course many disagreements over essentials and non-essentials, but nonetheless there do exist certain basics. For instance the claim "Jesus is Lord" is a primitive and fundamental belief. But to believe this entails at the same time holding to other beliefs (here: Jesus existed and is now alive in another world).

Thirdly, each Christian doctrine does have important implications. These are ethical, affecting lifestyle; personal, affecting one's personality and relationships; cerebral, affecting our actual thought processes and attitudes; These implications must be derived not artificially but in a natural and logical manner. Paul frequently provided theological and doctrinal foundations as a ground for his ethical exhortation and his linking of them offers us useful guidance.

Fourthly, we require a proper objectivity, so that we are not continually choosing what suits theological fashion, contemporary attitudes or philosophy.

It is not currently fashionable for educationalists to attend to the teaching of doctrine, but we believe that without this the interpretative base for adults seeking to live authentic Christian lives will become impoverished and powerless in course of time.

In constructing an educational programme in any given doctrine we need to decide how to present it, what aspects will be presented and in what way. Ideally we choose a range of such methods over a period of time. We can assess this through a survey, personal conversation, intuition or spiritual discernment. But prior to this we need to set out as fully and completely as possible the relevant foundational constituents of the doctrine in more objective, and overtly academic terms. We use the various disciplines of Theology - whether Biblical, Systematic, Philosophical, Ethical, Historical. Such will form the hermeneutically distanced base or resource for subsequent utilisation in our educational programme. It is this base, solidly grounded in biblical exegetical Theology that we attempt to construct in the remainder of this Chapter.

Section 2   Introductory Questions concerning the Ascension
            Accounts

2.1   Preliminary Comments

      Most of this Chapter considers the Ascension, with the
objective of setting out the basic material relevant to an
educational programme teaching this doctrine.   No apology is
made for the abstract nature of this Chapter, for A.C.E.
requires high calibre subject content as a resource for the
teaching programme, as argued in 1.5.   We must respect
the insights of biblical theology and try to avoid subsuming
their insights to educational needs, interests, the result
of which can be a presentation with little substance.

      Why has the Ascension of Christ been chosen as the
subject of this programme?   Many consider it a marginal
doctrine.   Firstly it must be remembered that we offer this
as but one   specific and illustrative case-study in
hermeneutically based A.C.E. In addition   we offer the
following justification for our choice:-

1.   Biblically there are two narrative accounts of the
occasion.   Their comparison yields interesting insights into
Luke's mind.   The accounts have many difficulties for the
contemporary   mind,   thus   leading   us   to   interesting
interpretative problems regarding how the accounts may
become relevant for Christians living in the late 1980s.

2.   Theologically the meaning of the Ascension is a matter
of dispute.   Its meaning has often been confused with the
Exaltation.   Thus it will be interesting educationally to
discover the impact of new proposals for belief upon the
congregational group.

3.   We believe the Ascension doctrine to be more important than usually ajudged.   It represents for Luke a crucial goal of his narratives of Jesus' life, and in the early Church. This programme aims to rehabilitate the Ascension in the lives of ordinary Christians.

4.   Pragmatically the relative lack of academic material reduces the research for us to manageable proportions.   The work of Lohfink which we consider in this Chapter is the major study of this subject, and we utilize his thorough researches with appreciation of his labours.

Thus we aim through the Sections of this Chapter to develop material that can be utilised in various ways in an educational programme (Chapter III).   This Section seeks to survey some background questions or issues regarding the Ascension preparatory to the exegesis of Lk.24:50-3 and Ac.1:9-11 in Sections 3 and 4.

2.2   Textual Problems

By and large the texts of Lk.24:50-3 and Ac.1:9-11 are accepted as reliable as they stand in the main body of the Nestle Kilpatrick Greek text.   However, questions have been raised about the words "And was carried up to heaven"in Lk.24:51.

These are omitted in some manuscripts and are regarded as a Western "non-interpolation".(3)   This leads us to ask therefore whether this explicit reference to the Session was actually part of the original Lukan manuscripts.   If this is not so then we would have to admit that these words were added later in the Eastern texts.

Now scholars such as J.Davies and Fitzmeyer (4) argue to retain the phrase as original. They consider that the textual variation is best understood as being caused by western copyists omitting the phrase so as to remove the apparent chronological contradiction between the Gospel and Acts. This is a very possible explanation, and allied to the fact that most manuscripts do retain the phrase argues in favour of the view that the phrase is original. Metzger also comments that the western omission may be due to scribal oversight occasioned by "homoeoarcton". (5)

M.C. Parsons in a recent dissertation reopens the argument by preferring the shorter text. He maintains the longer ending is occasioned by a later scribe wishing to heighten Luke's Christology (6)

Apart from this the textual problems are minor, and can be considered in the context of the exegesis itself.

2.3   Chronology of the Ascension

There are a number of questions that come under this heading, generally concerning the relationship between the two Ascension accounts. Some, on studying the accounts consider that Luke describes two different events. Others point out the fact that Luke in Acts 1 seems to place the Ascension 40 days after the Resurrection, but in Luke 24 it appears to take place on the same day or the one following the Resurrection (even at night (7)). Some scholars have argued that Lk.24:50-3 is a summary of Ac.1:6-11 and so has no independent status of its own at all - it may or may not be Lukan.

K.Lake (8) among others supports the view that Luke/Acts was originally one work. They argue that when the

work was divided a redactor added v.50-3 in order to round the Gospel off, and also wrote Ac.1:1-5 as an introduction to Acts. Such a theory would help explain the recapitulation of Ac.1:1-11. Against this it can be argued:-

1. It would be natural for Luke to lay a foundation in Ac.1:1-11 in the commissioning and departure of Jesus before proceeding to record the mission of the Church - Jesus now being present in spirit. Thus it can certainly be argued that Luke intentionally wrote in this manner in order to begin Volume 2 in a literarily correct manner.

2. C.F.D. Moule (9) has shown that a stylistic analysis on Luke 24 and Acts 1 supports the Lukan origin of all this material - any editor would have done well to imitate Luke's style.

3. P.A. Van Stempvoort (10) makes out a convincing case, showing clear links between Lk.24:50-3 and the rest of the Gospel: notably that such begins and ends in the Temple, and with a Priestly action.

4. Metzger (11) believes Ac.1:6 is a likely authentic reminiscence based on old Jewish messianic expectations of the disciples: "Lord will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" This tells against the presence of a redactor.

Some scholars have argued that two accounts are being described in Lk 24 and Acts 1. But we follow J. Davies (12) who convincingly shows that there are several close parallels between the two events described in Luke 24 and Acts 1. These parallels support the usual claim that there was only one Ascension.

The apostles are told not to leave Jerusalem until the coming of the Spirit.

They await the fulfilment of the Father's promise.

They are to preach to all nations bearing witness to Christ.

After the Ascension the eleven disciples return to the city.

They continue steadfastly in prayer.

Whatever view one takes regarding the authorship of the two accounts, it looks very likely that only one event is being described in the two narratives. Fitzmeyer accepts the discrepancy in chronology and is not unduly worried. (13) He accepts that we will probably never know Luke's reasons. He argues that both accounts describe in effect the same event, a decisive movement from "Jesus's" period to the "Church's" period.

Our final question regarding Chronology concerns the vexed question of the 40 days. In the Gospel account the story from Lk.24:1 onwards does seem to read like a continuous narrative. There may be a break in time after verse 32 or 39, but it does not seem to be of 40 days in length.

J.Davies (14) is convinced that the Ascension (in fact an invisible Exaltation corresponding to earliest kerygma) took place very shortly after the Resurrection, quite possibly during the night after it (see verse 29). He further supports the chronology apparent in this account over and against that of Acts 1 by claiming that this agrees with the verdict of the rest of the New Testament.

Now if both accounts are Lukan, then surely he must have been aware of the apparent contradiction between this account and that of Acts 1. We must ask why he might have wished to let this remain:-

i   Perhaps Luke had two independent accounts of the
    Ascension and decided to use both since they were
    of equal value and reliability to him (15); this
    being quite acceptable to Jewish tradition.

ii Perhaps the account of Acts 1 was received later,
    after Luke 24 had been completed, and Luke could not
    or would not change anything that he had written in
    his Gospel.

iii Maybe he used two differing accounts for theological
    reasons each making a different point. We shall
    discuss this in more detail later. Lohfink asserts
    strongly that Luke was here exercising his creative
    skills, and that in all probability such a potential
    inconsistency would not have worried him.(16)

iv The 40 day period was "holy" time. We should note the
    significance of the number 40. 40 days in LXX is the
    preferred number for a long period of time with
    theological relevance (30 references to "40 days" but
    the next most frequent is just 9 references to "10
    days") (17) It seems unlikely that Luke would have
    intended the number to be taken literally.

v From the point of view of making apologetic and
   polemical points to Jews or Greeks it was important
   to Luke that he showed that there was no doubt that
   Jesus did indeed rise again, showing himself to them
   over an extended period of time. Menoud says (18) that
   40 days does not _date_ the Ascension, but rather it
   extends the period of appearances. This would tie in
   with traditions such as those behind 1 Cor.15:3-8
   indicating a special period of resurrection appearances
   that came to an end at some point.

vi There is a typological basis for holding to a 40 day
    period, to be found in the stories of Elijah. In
    1 Kings 19:7,8 it is stated that after 40 days Elijah
    went up the mountain. In 2 Kings:2 there is the story
    of Elijah's translation up into heaven. (19) We have
    here useful evidence of the traditional Jewish
    expectation that men of great spiritual stature would
    not experience death. Such men had in fact a special
    mission to accomplish at the very end of their ministry
    for this 40 day period before being taken by God to
    heaven. Luke's story fits very well with a tradition
    that clearly would have been current among Jews in
    Luke's day.

vii Luke is widely considered to be the first apostle to
    establish the Church's calendar. He draws out events
    in time, separating them in such a fashion that decisive
    moments in Christ's life could be celebrated at
    different moments in the Church's year (20). Thus it is
    thanks to Luke that we celebrate Ascension 40 days after
    Easter and Pentecost a further 10 days subsequent to
    that. Whether Luke intentionally created this scheme or
    merely faithfully recorded what the earliest disciples
    claimed really occurred remains an issue for debate.

Conzelmann comes down in favour of an artificiality to the scheme of Luke, a development theologically from the original Kerygma (21). He labels it a scheme of "Salvation History" which in effect considers that Luke "historicized" the events of Jesus' life in order to give historical weight to his scheme of sacralisation of time.

We therefore see considerable evidence in support of the 40 days of Acts 1:3 being an artificial scheme or literary composition of Luke's, for reasons we have still to fully explore. We conclude this subsection by noting 3 cautionary points which could lead us to understand Luke's intentions somewhat differently: (22)

1. According to Lk.1:1,2 and Ac 1:1,2 Luke clearly intends to write an ordered, historically researched account of what Jesus did and said. This stated intention must be respected.

2. There are possible breaks in the account at verses 32-33, 49-50. It may be that Luke compressed the account to arrive at the climax with rapidity - possibly for dramatic effect or because his scroll was almost complete.

3. We might expect Jesus to remain after any sort of physical resurrection to teach, encourage and reassure his disciples rather than quickly return to heaven.

On that basis we could accept Luke's statements in Lk.24 and Acts 1 as both correct in chronology.

2.4 Literary Genre of the Accounts

We consider here a crucial question that will be introduced here and followed up further in Section 5 and 6 of this Chapter.

We enter this debate by highlighting the obvious problem of the cosmological world view represented in the accounts. It is generally accepted that first century Jews thought in terms of a three storeyed world. R. Bultmann especially considers the implications of this on the biblical writers (23). The Jew represented the sky as the margin of heaven itself, yet knew the danger of localizing heaven. For example 2 Chronicles 2:6 states that the heavens cannot contain God, and Psalm 8 exalts God far above the heavens and earth. (24) We must beware assuming the Jews to be as naive and primitive as some scholars would have us believe.

So did Luke intend his description to be taken literally? J.D.G. Dunn (25) believes that he did because this was the world in which Luke was bound to operate. It is possible that we are right to take the account literally, contrary to many scholars, for the following reasons :-

1. Christ may have accommodated his departure to the world view of the disciples. Luke does not say that they saw Jesus enter heaven - that would stretch the bounds of credulity impossibly far.

2. It is a priori impossible to imagine a more effective means of demonstrating to the disciples the theological truth of the return of Jesus to the Father. Such physical proof is consistent with that of the Baptism and Transfiguration in validating a decisive moment in Jesus' life before the disciples' eyes.

3. In believing God chose to exercise extraordinary power through the course of Jesus' life it would be consistent to argue that God acted in power at the conclusion of his life also. He would then be able to ascend with a physical cum spiritual body of a nature not previously known. We note events such as John 20 with Thomas' discovery of Jesus' physical presence. However it is hard to agree with Milligan (26) that Jesus' Ascension was

<u>necessary</u> as a removal of his body from this space-time dimension, for we cannot impose conditions of necessity upon Jesus in that way.

Whatever we say about the alleged event, it was portrayed in an impressive and decisive manner. We have no indication that the disciples expected to see Jesus again before the Parousia. Paul does not claim his visions of 1 Cor.15, Acts 9 are of the same order of historical space time reality as in Luke 24. Did Luke deliberately make the first appearances concrete in order to distinguish them from Paul's? According to D.P. Fuller (27) Paul was "abnormally born". Fuller argues that the terms by which the disciples witnessed to the resurrection are very different from those used by others, especially by Paul.

We must place alongside these considerations the considerable use that Luke makes of Old Testament imagery and typology. Luke shows himself on many occasions to be a highly creative, even if sometimes factually erring, writer. Lohfink concentrates upon this dimension to Luke's literary skills, arguing that Luke consciously created Ac.1:9 according to a rapture scheme (28). Lohfink researches in great detail the features of various sorts of Ascension in Jewish and non Jewish tradition: Journey of the Soul to Heaven, Rapture, Heavenly Journey, Taking up of the Soul, Ascension at the end of an Appearance. (29) He concludes that the Rapture motif corresponds most closely to Luke's account, and is paralleled by accounts of Enoch (30), Elijah (31), Ezra (32) Baruch (33). His judgement is based upon the occurrence of similar characteristic motifs:-

Narrated from an earthly point of view.

The Witnesses are important in the event.

The account is told soberly and concisely.

God takes the initiative and action.

The whole body is taken up.

Motifs of mountain, cloud, heavenly verification.

Subsequent veneration of the person concerned   (34)

Lohfink does not think that it is directly dependent upon
any known rapture story. Either Luke created the story himself,
or the Church grew to see the Ascension/Exaltation event as a
rapture since it was the most useful available type.   But
alternatively this may be how Jesus actually went to heaven,
conforming to the typology of the most respected Jewish
tradition. Whatever answer is provided to this problem, Luke
would seem to have had various rapture stories in his mind as he
wrote his story. He wrote creatively, showing knowledge of the
general form that an Ascension had taken in the past in Jewish,
Greek-Roman literature and tradition. Closest parallels exist
with the rapture of Elijah.

R.H. Fuller (35) considers that "the Ascension is conceived
in more primitive terms than we should expect in such a late
document as Luke/Acts". So he thinks that Ac.1:9-11 represents
the more primitive form of belief in Jesus' Assumption,
contrasting the later Christian development conceiving the
Ascension as primarily an Exaltation.   This reverses the
arguments of many Scholars.

M.C. Parsons uses modern literary tools (especially drawing
on the notion of framing expounded by Uspensky) to demonstrate
the narrative closure of Lk 24:50-3. The narrator withdraws to a
distance, taking the reader with him. (36) Conversely the
narrative in Acts 1:6-11 draws the reader into the new beginning
through the literary device of intense activity of the scene
depicted therein. (37)

We thus are able to see that there is tension here between various possible understandings of the status of the accounts, each having merit; at this point we note the possibilities and defer further discussion.

2.5 Status of the Ascension for Luke - its parallels and
      function

We anticipate that a study of the way that Luke treats the Ascension both antecedently in his Gospel and retrospectively in Acts, will prove most helpful in assisting our interpretation of the accounts. Such has proven to be the case in the researches of other scholars.

For instance, one of J. Davies' (38) greatest contributions to the study of the Ascension lies in his thesis that the Transfiguration of Luke 9 is a pre-figurement of the Ascension recorded in Acts I. Without entering into all the details here we feel satisfied that indeed they are very close. For example both incidents have reference to: a mountain, the Parousia, white clothing, a cloud, the commissioning of the disciples.

These parallels almost force us to conclude that Luke styled his accounts in Luke 9, Acts I upon each other (perhaps a cross-fertilisation of ideas took place). Davies shows that where Luke alters Mark's account of the Transfiguration, he does so in a way naturally consistent with this theory (39)

Why should this close parallelism exist? What were Luke's reasons for doing this?

Firstly, Luke uses the incident in Luke 9 as a turning point within Jesus' ministry - see Chapter 9 verse 51. It functions therefore as an important moment of decision and new direction in the life of Christ. Jesus' self consciousness of his unique

relation to his heavenly Father developed decisively at this time and a new more intimate relation to his Father occurred. (40) The same leap in understanding occurred in Acts I.

Luke 9 verse 51 is a rare explicit reference to the Ascension prior to its event and thus is of great interest. The verse shows that Luke regards the Ascension as the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry rather than the Cross or Resurrection. Thus we have further evidence to support the thesis that Luke regarded the Ascension as of great importance.

Secondly, the parallelism of Elijah typology is shown to be important to Luke, see Lk.9:30.

Thirdly, at the Transfiguration Jesus entered the cloud of the divine presence, but only temporarily. This foreshadowed Jesus' permanent entrance to divine glory at the Ascension, his mission on earth now complete.

We note that the Ascension can be argued to have an important function in Acts - for instance within the speeches which are recorded in such a way as to reveal Luke's own theological interests.

Chapter 2:33 Jesus' exaltation according to Peter was part of the story of Jesus' life. It was also a description of his present status at the right hand of God. There is no specific reference to the scenes of Luke 24, Acts I, but the Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord is an essential prerequisite to Acts, and in particular the possibility of salvation which Jesus now offers.

Chapter 5:31 There is explicit reference here to a definite act of exaltation and session to the right hand of God. Luke needed to have included in his story such a descriptive account as 1:9-11 in order to render the speech here intelligible. From 1:9-11 we know as a fact that Jesus has gone to the Father. The theme

of witness is also important. The apostles are unique witnesses to the life of Christ and their witness to the visible exaltation -Ascension is a vital part of this.

In other speeches Jesus' exaltation is presupposed, but no explicit statement of the event of Ascension is given. Yet without an Ascension the statements of, for example Ac.3:21, Ac.7:56 would be founded on conjecture or private spiritual experience alone.

It seems that it is the Exaltation of Christ which has the important theological function in the kerygmatic preaching of the speeches of Acts (41). But a historical Ascension event of some kind also receives support, at least implicitly. The Exaltation may or may not be the same event as the Ascension event recorded in Luke 24 and Acts I and we must not come to premature conclusions. This matter will be pursued further in Sections 5 and 6.

SECTION 3 Exegesis of Luke 24:50-53

In our exegesis of these verses we do not feel comment needs
to be provided upon every Greek phrase, but rather we concentrate
upon those that are of significance or cause controversy.

Verse 50 Ἐξήγαγεν "He led out"

This verb is distinctively Lukan. There are parallels with
the Emmaus story of Lk.24:15; 28:9. The theme of journeying is
popular with Luke, but it is not possible to trace any special
allusions which Luke might be making with this word.

Βηθανίαν "Bethany"

Bethany is also mentioned in Lk.19:29 in the context of
Jesus' journey into Jerusalem prior to the Passion. Bethany lay
on the Eastern side of the Mount of Olives, and can be said to be
one with it topographically (42). This mountain was a place of
generally recognised eschatological expectation. See Zechariah
14:4.

Εὐλόγησεν "He blessed"

Here we have Jesus' highly significant solemn act of
priestly blessing. It is a unique occurrence in Lukan writing,
but this need not mean the passage is non-Lukan or non
historical. Jesus may have done this in respect for Jewish
liturgy and tradition. Compare this with Ecclesiasticus 50:20,
which shows a number of close parallels (raising of hands –
blessing – worship of God (43). The action of blessing was very
important for the Jew for it symbolized, indeed actualized,
something of very great power. Once released a blessing had
irresistible force towards the recipients of it (44). See
Genesis 27.

· It is to be noted that Enoch blessed before his translation.
See 2 Enoch 56:1, 57:2, 64:4.

Verse 51 διέστη (from διίστημι found only three times in the New Testament, all in Luke). "He departed"

And so, having given the blessing, Jesus finally departed from the disciples. Luke often describes the departure of supernatural visitors using a verb with ἀπ αὐτῶν see Luke 1:38, 2:15, 4:13, 9:34-36.

ἀνεφέρετο "He was carried up"

Here Luke states that Jesus was led up to heaven, not under his own power but presumably by the power of God. The verb ἀναφέρω is an unusual one here, since the normal technical term for it was ἀναλαμβάνω. The use of the imperfect tense here implies that Jesus' departure was gradual. Whether the disciples saw this happen is not stated explicitly, but the implication from the tense of this verb is that they did see him ascend towards heaven.

The normal usage of this word is "to offer sacrifices", and it may be that Luke chose this word because of its cultic associations. Perhaps he deliberately avoided using the technical term for "rapture", and (compare Ecclesiasticus 50) thus was able to stress the cultic or doxological element, the essential uniqueness and mystery of Jesus' Ascension (but note Lohfink's firm belief that Luke's "Ascension of Christ" was of a rapture genre).

εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν "into heaven"

Jesus ascended into heaven. In the Acts' account this is especially stressed, but it is only mentioned here once.

There is no mention here of the heavens opening to receive Jesus. This is a little unexpected but nothing more may be derived from this. Luke's account is here very "matter of fact".

Verse 52 ὑπέστρεψαν "they returned"

Having witnessed this extraordinary event, the disciples returned as instructed to Jerusalem, the place Luke's gospel started (1:5) (45) Note again the stress on the disciples' part in the event. There is no comment upon what actually happened to Jesus at this point, or subsequently. No theological significance is derived by Luke from this event. There is no statement of his Exaltation to the right hand of God.

προσκυνήσαντες "they worshipped"

This verb is omitted from the main text of the Nestle-Kilpatrick Greek text. I.H. Marshall (46) thinks that this verb should be in the main text for there are many manuscript attestations to it. If we do include it, we have here the first mention of the disciples worshipping Jesus in Luke's gospel, and this is highly significant for Luke's theology. Indeed Lohfink (47) demonstrates that Luke has deliberately avoided using this verb before this point, in stark contrast to Matthew's more liberal use of it, especially where he introduces it into Markan material at 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25 (28:17) whilst Luke does not. Luke wishes to emphasize the importance of this event, especially in terms of praise to God. The temple is of some importance to Luke, as we shall see in the Book of Acts.

χαρᾶς μεγάλης "with great joy"

"Joy" is a favourite Lukan motif. It appears especially in the story of Jesus' birth (Luke 1), but also in 2:10, 8:13, 10:17. The Gospel thus opens and closes on a note of joy at the power of God at work in Jesus Christ.

Verse 53 εὐλογοῦντες   "praising" (God)

The normal Greek word for this action would be αἰνέω .
Perhaps Luke used the word εὐλογέω   because it was already in his mind, see verse 50.

Note that worship is here offered to God for the marvels that they had seen. The reader is shown that this should be his response also to the wonderful story of the life of Christ. Fitzmeyer writes "only Luke has the courage to depict his Christian Community engaged in what it should be doing". (48)

Section 4 Exegesis of Acts 1:9-11

Once again we only comment upon phrases or words that warrant this.

Verse 9 βλεποντων αυτων "Being seen by them"

According to Lohfink, the rapture genre requires the presence of witnesses. That Jesus was seen by these men is important for the theology of the book of Acts - where the theme of witness is important.

επηρθη   "he rose" (vertically)

When Jesus had finished speaking to and commissioning his disciples, he was taken up while they looked on . Luke's choice of words here tends to emphasize the concrete rather than mystical connotations of this event. This is significant as we shall see.

νεφελη   "the cloud"

This cloud bearing Jesus away is no fog hiding a mystery but rather Luke's emphasis is upon a royal chariot that bears him to divine glory (49). The reference is to the story from 2 Kings 2 of the chariot bearing Elijah away in triumph. This seems to be the primary reason for Luke's mention of this cloud. According to Daniel 7:13 this cloud is an eschatological symbol, a chariot bringing the one like the Son of Man to earth, the "ancient of days" there returning to rule the earth. Clearly Luke makes use of this well known belief when he refers to Jesus returning to earth in the same way that he departs at the Ascension verse 11.

The cloud was the favourite Jewish term for designating the presence of the Glory of God (50). God could never be seen, but the cloud of His PRESENCE could be. See Exodus 16:10, 24:18 (the glory of the Lord appeared in a Cloud) or Ezekiel 1: 28,29 (the cloud hid the glory of God from being seen full on). It was therefore entirely appropriate that Jesus should ascend to heaven in a cloud.

$\overset{\mathsf{C}}{\mathsf{U}}\overset{\diagup}{\pi}\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\nu$ "It took him away"

The cloud got under Jesus, bearing him away so that the disciples could see him no longer.   The verb tense seems to imply that the process took a certain period of time - not instantaneous.

$\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\nu\iota\acute{s}o\nu\tau\epsilon s\ \overset{\frown}{\eta}\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu$

Verse 10   "They (the disciples) were looking on intently"

The   experience   recounted is a favourite one of Luke, and is rather picturesque.   A charming picture is painted of the amazed disciples craning their necks as they sought to catch a last glimpse of Jesus and the cloud.

$\overset{\backprime\backprime}{\alpha}\nu\overset{\diagup}{\delta}\rho\epsilon s\ \overset{\diagup}{\delta}\acute{\upsilon}o\ \overset{\mathsf{3}}{\epsilon}\nu\ \overset{\mathsf{3}}{\epsilon}\varsigma\overset{\frown}{\eta}\varsigma\epsilon\varsigma\iota\ \lambda\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\overset{\frown}{\alpha}\overset{\iota}{s}$

                         "Two men in shining apparel"
appeared suddenly before the disciples.   Luke does not state that these were angels, but such an implication is clear enough.   It is frequently the case that angels appear when a supernatural occurrence of great significance occurs, but this is not stereotyped in Luke.   These angels are additional testimony that there has been an important communication between this and another world.   Angels appear in Luke 1, 2, 22:43, 24.   They do not appear in Luke 3 or 9, but the angels' place is taken by the voice of God himself, thus confirming Jesus' status and authority.

Whether Luke creatively introduced these angels in order to make a theological point, or merely recorded past tradition, is unclear.   But Lohfink (51) in an extended treatment of this phrase shows that only in Luke is $\overset{\diagup}{\alpha}\nu\overset{\diagup}{\delta}\rho\epsilon s$ used to mean angel - and he argues from this that this phrase derives from Luke rather than from the tradition.

Lohfink (52) then demonstrates with considerable persuasiveness the literary parallels with Lk 24:4-9.   The sequence of the same motifs agree precisely and the structure of the two scenes is also almost identical.   In Acts 1 Luke

omits the reaction of the participants to the angels and their message. At all points at which terminology of Lk24:4-9 and Ac1:10-12 agree it is in redactional contrast to Mk 16:5-8. Lohfink proceeds to argue that Luke constructed Ac:1:9-11 on the basis of the story of the empty tomb (53)

However, against this argument it can be said that two approximately identical situations involving angels are likely to have fairly similar terminology and structure, and the similarity here could easily be fortuitous.

Verse 11: τί ἑστήκατε βλέποντες ; "Why do you stand looking?"

The disciples are mildly rebuked for continuing to look into the sky. Two reasons present themselves. Perhaps they were in danger of adopting an attitude of sentimental reminiscence to the Jesus they had known. There was much work to be done, and the disciples were being urged by the angels to look to the future and the ministry of the ascended Christ (54).

Alternatively it is possible that the disciples were being taught a lesson in eschatology - that they were not to expect to see Jesus for some time, an unspecified but lengthy period. Note how this calmly dampens enthusiasm that Jesus would return in the very near future. This, claim some scholars, is a reflection of the change in eschatological perspective caused by the non-appearance of Christ. They claim it was one of Luke's objectives (55) in the book of Acts to demonstrate that since Jesus was not going to return very quickly there was a job to be done; firstly in recording the history of Jesus Christ and the early church (history had a new significance and permanence); and secondly in proceeding to preach and demonstrate the good news of Salvation.

$$\overset{\text{>}}{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\eta\mu\phi\overset{\text{<}}{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma \ \overset{\text{>}}{\alpha}\overset{\text{'}}{\phi} \ \overset{\text{c}}{\upsilon}\mu\overset{\text{^}}{\omega}\nu$$

"who was taken up from them"

Note that here Luke uses a different word for the Ascension to that used previously in this passage or in Luke 24. The verb $\overset{\text{>}}{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$ was the more used (technical) one. It has been noted by Flender (56) that Luke delights in using a variety of differing words which all have practically the same meaning. Sometimes Luke uses a certain word for a particular theological reason , but we should beware reading too much always from this practice of Luke in using such a variety of words - it may be purely for literary variety.

$$\overset{\text{>}}{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma \ \tau\overset{\text{`}}{o}\nu \ o\overset{\text{>}}{\upsilon}\rho\alpha\nu\acute{o}\nu$$ "into heaven"

This phrase appears four times in this short passage - more, it might be thought, than strictly necessary. Luke clearly wishes to emphasize the point.

$$o\overset{\text{`}}{\upsilon}\tau\omega\varsigma \ \overset{\text{>}}{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota \ \overset{\text{`}}{o}\nu \ \tau\rho\acute{o}\pi o\nu$$ "He shall come (back) in the same manner". Luke significantly shows that the manner of the Ascension to heaven is setting a pattern for the manner of the Parousia from heaven. It is possible that one of the major objects of this whole incident is to set out the form and the timing of the Parousia (57). The account links very well with Paul's understanding, see 1 Thess 4:17. In early Christianity $\overset{\text{''}}{\epsilon}\rho\chi o\mu\alpha\iota$ was a frequent term for the Parousia. Its usage here may lend weight to v.9-11 being part of early tradition.

Verse 12 $\overset{\text{>}}{\alpha}\pi\overset{\text{`}}{o} \ \overset{\text{>}}{o}\rho o\upsilon\varsigma \ \tau o\overset{\text{^}}{\upsilon} \ \kappa\alpha\lambda o\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu o\upsilon \ \overset{\text{>}}{E}\lambda\alpha\iota\overset{\text{^}}{\omega}\nu o\varsigma$

"From the hill named Olives"

We are told for the first time that this story occurred on the Mountain of Olives. We have already seen that there need be no conflict between this statement regarding the location of the Ascension and Luke 24 (58)

A mountain is frequently a place of special revelation. But Lohfink (59) maintains probably correctly, that Luke makes

nothing of this motif since   he introduces it at the end of
the story as the Mount of Olives.   Luke wishes to achieve
schematic localisation of the scene close to Jerusalem.   For
Luke the single alternative place for Jesus during the
Passion-Ascension other than Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives.
The Ascension could not be in the city because he appeared
only to certain chosen witnesses.   This may be due to Lukan
creation, redaction or actually have been the case.

$$\overset{c}{o} \; \overset{\backprime}{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu \; \overset{?}{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\overset{\backprime}{u}s \; \overset{c}{I}\epsilon\rho o\upsilon\sigma\alpha\lambda\overset{\backprime}{\eta}\mu \; \sigma\alpha\beta\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau o\upsilon \; \overset{\backprime}{\epsilon}\chi o\upsilon \; \overset{c}{o}\overset{\prime}{\delta}o\upsilon$$

Luke has little interest in typographical details normally,
but here he wished to show that being only a Sabbath's journey
away from Jerusalem, by Jewish law it was actually at the same
place (60)

     Lohfink (61) claims that for Luke, Jerusalem is a spatial
symbol of the continuity between the time of Jesus and the
time of the Church.   He proceeds to argue that since we have
such a specific Lukan conception of the need for post-Easter
events to be in Jerusalem this phrase at the very least is due
to Luke's own composition.   Lohfink's exegesis may be correct
but it does not necessitate the conclusion that Luke created
this aspect of the narrative or artificially placed the
Ascension at the Mount of Olives.

Section 5

Summary of Findings from Biblical researches on Ascension
Accounts

5.1   Ascension as Rapture

We acknowledge that Lohfink's categorisation of the
Ascension as a Rapture has considerable persuasiveness (62).
We note that the accounts are given with great restraint,
lacking embellishment with supernatural phenomena. There are
of course certain supernatural phenomena such as angels, a
cloud like a chariot, and a vertical ascension in space - and
these remain an interpretative problem. The accounts are also
very brief and stated as a matter of fact.

We note also that the focus in the Ascension accounts is
largely upon the disciples as witnesses of the event. (63).
This is important for Luke's theme of the disciples' witness
in Acts to the resurrected and exalted God. It would appear
that Luke's intention is to recount an historical space-time
event, and this is consonant with statements in Lk.1:1-4 and
Acts 1:1,2 - but as we shall see - there are other reasons
that might lead us to question this judgement.

5.2   Ascension as Doxological Climax to Luke's Gospel

We accept with Stempvoort the strong doxological
significance to the Gospel account. (64) We are impressed
that v.52 is the first record in Luke of the disciples
worshipping Jesus. Thus Luke builds his final parting scene
around Ecclesiasticus 50:2-4 because it contains many
ingredients useful to him. Especially we note the motif of
the High Priest lifting his hands to bless the Temple
congregation.

Thus we have a triumphant conclusion to the Gospel – Jesus' immediate exaltation to God's right hand is not specifically mentioned, but the implication is strongly there. Scholars such as Lohfink, Haenchen believe the account has been created from the original kerygma of an invisible exaltation in the earliest tradition (see Section 6), but this need not be unquestionably accepted. But we certainly can accept with Luke that Jesus has now departed for glory to His Father in total triumph, as Lord (65)

5.3 Ascension as a Final Parting at the Conclusion of a Successful Mission

J. Davies has well demonstrated two important passages giving parallels to the Ascension, that Luke may have utilised. The first (66) concerns the story of the angel Raphael in Tobit 12:16-21. Raphael brings his errand of mercy to a successful conclusion and then returns to heaven. Davies compares this with Lk.24:50-3 and highlights close typology. This theme of "successful mission" fits well with Luke's clear intention at the end of Luke.

We have seen that the other parallel is a prefigurement in the account of Lk.9:28-36 (67). We believe the parallels here are of greatest significance because Luke clearly makes the connections himself, showing that the temporary glory of the Transfiguration was to lead to a permanent glory at the Ascension. Drawing upon the theme of journey Luke shows how Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem (68) and ultimately reached his intended goal after his Humiliation, Death and Resurrection. Thus the Ascension represents the final fulfilment of Jesus' purposes in His Ministry on earth. Thus we accept with Davies that Luke constructed his account with care, perhaps enabling the perceptive reader to discern the inner significance of the Ascension as triumphant fulfilment.

5.4   The Ascension parallels in Old Testament stories and motifs

We have seen that Luke builds upon many Old Testament stories and invests his own account with meaning by allusion to them. This is true whether the event itself is fictional or real. The parallel is especially notable in regard to Elijah as in 1 Kings 19 and 2 Kings 2. and we feel Jesus' comparison with Elijah is of considerable significance. Jesus is likened to Elijah as a man of holiness, power, authority, on a prophetic mission from God.

Thus our grasp of Luke's literary ability as a story teller is strengthened - and it will be important to try to communicate this to our participants in the educational programme. Indeed it is the narrative dimension of the Ascension stories that will be of considerable interest to us in Chapter II.3 and Chapter III as we build thereby heremeneutical bridges between the tradition and contemporary experience. We shall make use of our discernment regarding Luke's literary skills to aid our story - telling of the Ascension as Jesus' passing into the presence of God and entering his glory. We recognise that Luke may well have been searching for adequate words to convey the mystery and uniqueness of that occasion.

5.5   The Chronology of the Ascension

The Ascension occurred soon after the Resurrection, but we are not forced to accept that it occurred within a day of it. The forty day period is either an actual period of approximately that length or a holy period of time created for Luke's theological purposes. We note the theological significance of the forty days which Luke clearly appreciated as he wrote his Ascension account. Thus, because we cannot draw speedy conclusions upon the chronological consistency of

the two accounts, our conclusions regarding this are in part
dependent   upon   one's   view   of   Scripture   and   theological
perspective (see Section 6 and Chapter II.3)

The position of this thesis is that some historical
space-time event occurred at the Ascension, however it
precisely occurred (69).   It seems to be most naturally
represented as such, and functions as such in references made
to it in the rest of Acts.   We believe it would be
responsible and honest to indicate to the students our
preferred position (as teacher).   But the diversity of
position that can be arguably supported means that a
responsible education programme must lay out all different
possibilities with justifications and implications,   for
discussion and decision by the student (sections 6, 7)

5.6   The Ascension as the beginning of a new Era

The Ascension in Acts 1:9-11 functions as a powerful
beginning to the new era of Salvation History - the era of the
Church (70). We have observed that the Ascension is recorded
in a way similar to that of the rest of Acts - as prima facie
history. Yet we are led to suspect that on many occasions
Luke has begun with received facts but proceeded to fill out
details in a creative manner consonant with his theological
purposes. Especially we expect this with the evangelistic and
apologetic speeches of Acts. The Ascension functions as an
important reference point in certain speeches and the theme of
the apostolic witness to the events (including Ascension) of
Jesus' life comes through clearly (71). Thus, just as the
Gospel Ascension account concludes Part One in impressive and
satisfying fashion, so in Part Two it gives a powerful
beginning to the era of the Church. Thus we see the Ascension
as a hinge between two eras of Salvation History, and as such
vital to Luke's interests.

5.7 The Ascension portrays Luke's distinctive Christology

Moule has pointed out that through the Ascension Luke demonstrates henceforth Jesus will be temporarily absent physically but present by His Spirit guiding the Church in its missionary endeavours. (72) D. Fuller agrees that it sets forward the basic theme of Acts - the work which Jesus continued to do as the risen and ascended Lord. (73) I.H. Marshall argues for the importance of the Ascension from his exegetical conclusion that the major Christological motif is that Jesus Christ is the risen and exalted Lord who offers men salvation because he has this spiritual authority to do so. (74). Thus we observe that the continuing Lordship of Christ is established more firmly through the Ascension accounts.

We note also that the era of the Church is also the era of the Holy Spirit, demonstrated in Acts as working to glorify Jesus with great power. The next event subsequent to the Ascension is that of Pentecost. We thus surmise that the Ascension points forward towards the coming of the Spirit, and is essentially complemented by it, for virtually nothing occurs in Acts between these two events (75)

Lukan Christology is filled out still further in the Ascension because Luke uses it to make a vitally important point regarding the Parousia. The disciples would not see Jesus again until the Second Coming "in like manner". (76) The effect of Luke's construction of the Ascension accounts is to show that the Parousia will be delayed for some while, and in Acts he proceeds to show that this represents opportunity for mission and witness as exemplified in the history of the primitive Church. (77)

Section 6   <u>The historical-literary status of the Ascension</u>
            <u>accounts</u>

6.1   <u>Introduction</u>

       This Section proposes to discuss a major set of issues
that will be of concern for participants in an educational
programme.   We need to discuss whether the Ascension is an
historical event of some kind, or alternatively a myth or
fictional realistic representation of a spiritual truth.
Inevitably linked to the genre of these accounts is the
question of their meaning, for at heart we want to know how
Luke intended to convey truth (78).   We ask: does Luke need to
be   literally and/or historically accurate to offer
trustworthy justification for   upholding twentieth century
faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?   We know that
history had real importance for a Jew, but how accurate a
portrayal need it be to give adequate foundation for faith?
What then is the relationship between biblical history and
theological truth?

       We will summarize the discussions in this Section
around the 3 major interpretative positions that can be taken
up with regard to these accounts.   As well as setting forward
in brief the different positions we will also give the
advantages and implications of each.   This will be in such a
form as will be of ready use in our educational programme.

6.2   <u>The more Conservative position</u>

6.2.1

       This position is held by more traditional scholars.   It
has been notably upheld by Stempvoort (79), Benoit (80) and
Milligan (81).   Moderate evangelicals such as Marshall (82)
and Maile (83) support it, as do orthodox Catholics such as

Fitzmeyer (84). Earlier positions had equated the Ascension with all New Testament statements about the Exaltation or Enthronement (85). These positions failed to do justice to the invisible Exaltation kerygma prevalent in the New Testament that we now see contains many meanings or implications formerly ascribed to the visible Ascension. These must now be separated in chronology.

6.2.2 Chronology of Events

1. Resurrection A physical revivification three days after death

2. Immediate Exaltation and Session to the right hand of God This is an invisible event, part of the movement of ascent from the grave.

3. Period of Resurrection Appearances from heaven. Jesus had a unique spiritual yet physical body. The objective: teaching and rekindling faith.

4. Visible Ascension as a final appearance and departure to heaven after a "40 day" period of holy time.

This is a real yet mysterious historical event - not able to be fully or literally described. Luke set it out according to the world-view at that time. Jesus may have accommodated himself to their world view in clearly demonstrating that he would no longer be present to them in this mode.

5. Continued Appearances but of an obviously different inner spiritual or visionary nature to reassure, guide, inspire. Paul's vision is an example but this had a unique status because it validated him as an Apostle.

6.2.3 Advantages and Implications of this position

1.   This takes seriously Luke's claim to be a reliable
historian (86). He appears to be faithful to Markan tradition
although adding his own interests, and so in this instance we
anticipate his reliability in respect of material received
(oral or written) regarding the Ascension (87)

2.   Taken more widely, not only is Luke's status as a reliable
historian upheld - this position also reaffirms the overall
reliability of Scripture (88).   We do not seek a priori
harmonizing for this is not theologically respectable, but
this position has the advantage of generally reconciling
Luke's own accounts with each other and with the rest of the
New Testament.

3.   The Ascension accounts do seem to follow on from or lead
into other narratives in Luke 24, Acts 1 in a natural manner.
In these Luke appears to be recording historical event, and he
gives no indication of transferring in the Ascension to a
different literary genre (eg of myth or realistic narrative
fiction) (89) (But all of Luke 24 and Acts 1 might be a
product of Luke's creative imagination based upon minimal
factual material.)

4.   A visible Ascension is a highly appropriate end to Jesus'
earthly ministry.   A material historical demonstration of
spiritual   realities   seems   very   consistent   with   the
"Incarnational Principle" of God's involvement in human space-
time reality. (90)   Subsequent to this Ascension it appears
the Church did not expect to see him materially again.

5.   A visible Ascension is important for the concept of
Witness that is taken up as a theme of Acts.   Without some
historical foundation to the Ascension the concept of Witness

fails, since the Exaltation-Ascension is an intrinsic part of
the disciples' proclamation (91). Luke was not out on a limb
in historicizing the kerygma, but preceded by Mark!

6. This position is able to uphold Luke as a creative
theologian as well as reliable historian (92). We can accept
that an event occurred whilst not necessarily accepting Luke's
account as literal fact. An agnosticism about the exact
details of the event is quite acceptable bearing in mind
Luke's liberal use of Old Testament motifs and typology and
his use of New Testament prefigurements (93)

6.3 History of Traditions approach: Ascension as myth.

6.3.1   This position in many ways sought to sweep away the
views of conservative, orthodox theologians. It utilised the
full power of critical exegesis. Pioneers of the older
liberal position such as Bultmann (94) basically saw the
Ascension as a particularly good example of a myth. It
expressed the "other worldly" reality of Jesus' exaltation in
pictorial terms understandable to people of a first-century
world-view.

6.3.2   In general they proposed an order of historical
development of the Ascension-myth as follows:-

1. The most primitive tradition accepted the Kerygma of an
immediate exaltation to heaven. Thus at this point the
Ascension was a purely invisible event like the Exaltation.

2. Acceptance of the legend of the empty tomb led to the
desire to further comprehend the Easter experience of the
exalted Jesus.

3. Jesus' appearances gradually were elaborated more grandly
and realistically out of their faith and reverence for him.

4. In due course it became necessary to portray a separate return of the Risen One to heaven, to bring an end to the appearances (95)

This approach leaves as an open question any connection between the Ascension legends and Exaltation sayings. K.Lake (96) says that the story-myth arose as an answer to the question:- "What happened to Jesus' risen body?". Such scholars in effect argue that objective proof can never be a proper ground for faith. Bultmann (97) argues primarily from Paul (especially 1 Cor 15) that the accounts of the empty grave are legends, and that appearances after the alleged Ascension (to the 500 witnesses or Paul) reveal the error of the early Church in allowing or causing such a myth of the Ascension to develop as a way of terminating the resurrection appearances. (98)

6.3.3 Advantages and Implications of this position

1. The history of development of the Ascension myth proposed by this approach seems to be what we might expect to occur over a period of time in Christians' developing understanding. It places the Ascension in the same broad stream of development over time as the myths of Jesus' Birth, Baptism, even Resurrection. (99) This position continues to uphold the value of an history of traditions approach, using an overarching theory allying Form and Tradition Criticism to ascertain the Sitz im Leben of Scriptural narrative and discourse. (100)

2. The cosmological world view of the first century Jew corresponded to the picture of the Ascension in Luke-Acts. The Ascension appears to be a perfect example of a myth (101), and this perfect fit makes us suspicious that it did literally physically occur. We thereby keep a proper hermeneutical distance between first and twentieth century

world views. Through this approach we take our eyes off objectification of the Jesus of history which is an unnecessary distraction, and focus on the Christ of Faith. The tyranny of historical research and its demand for proof is thus broken for metaphysical proof can never be subject to the vagaries of historical proof or disproof

3. All meaningful interpretation of the Ascension inevitably demythologizes it. (102) Thus to recognize it as myth assists our understanding of the Ascension as a faithful way of expressing Jesus' return to his Father. The Ascension Myth becomes a vehicle for relaying personal spiritual truth. (103) Thereby we strengthen the need for naked faith that trusts in God's word without requiring additional support. Thus we recognise the power of myth, expressing truth in a way that no literal statement can. This is not a weak option but focusses on the personal existential meaning, always the goal of our studies. A conciliatory, balanced approach is given by J. Heuschen:-

"The ascension of the Lord is a real event which however because of its supernatural and unearthly character cannot be strictly proved, but only believed. That which can be proved historically is the faith of the disciples in this ascension of the master. We can also historically prove that this conviction of their faith was well founded". (104)

4. Finally, this position argues against Position 6.4 that Luke would have been very bold to write his material at odds with the prevalent thought of the early Church unless he was sincerely mistaken regarding the meaning of the Exaltation kerygma. He does not seem to be polemically inclined in this regard.   Nor is Luke accurately understood as creating wholesale fiction - for his desire to be faithful to the tradition of the Ascension that he had received would have been paramount to him.

6.4   <u>Modern Liberal Approach - Luke as Creative</u>
        <u>theologian</u>

6.4.1   As we have seen in preceding Sections, the most
persuasive advocates of this approach are G. Lohfink (105),
E.Haenchen (106), H. Conzelmann (107).   They make many
observations upon Luke's literary style, handling of Gospel
material (compared with Matthew, Mark) and distinctive
theological stance (as compared with Paul for instance), as a
creative theologian.   These theologians bring to our attention
the way in which Luke creatively writes up his materials or
creates   stories,   discourses   according   to   overarching
theological schemes.   Following Conzelmann they understand
Luke as schematizing his accounts within an   understanding of
successive epochs of Salvation History.   According to this
mode of interpretation Luke   is taken more seriously as a
theologian and literary artist than as an historian.   Indeed
for these the majority of scenes and narrative in Acts
consists of idealized scenes, concretisation of ideas or
theological truth and reconstruction of the early history of
the Church which support Luke's peculiar understanding of
history (108)

6.4.2   Lohfink in particular argues that the Ascension
story is only found in Lukan material (109) (or material
closely dependent upon Luke).   Thus he would claim the
following chronological order of development:-

1.   It is the Exaltation kerygma that is the earliest in the
Church.   This was dominant for many years - up to Justin and
Irenaeus.   Luke's scheme of history was not held by the broad
primitive central stream of Christian thought (110).

2.   Stories of the Resurrection appearances existed, and
gradually were made more realistic.   During this period there
may have developed a prototype story of a final appearance.

At least Haenchen and Conzelmann reckon on the existence of
this (111).

3.   Luke himself was the first actually to concretize the
Exaltation of Christ, placing it after several weeks of
appearances, and shortly before the Pentecost event.   These
modern liberals do not seem to criticize or demean Luke for
doing this - rather they seem to applaud his theological
artistic skills and reckon that his concretization of
theological truth was legitimate according to accepted canons
of the day (112)

4.   M.C. Parsons also argues for the literary craftsmanship
of Luke.   Each variation between the two accounts is due to
the literary function each performs in its narrative context
(113)

6.4.3   Advantages and Implications

1.   This approach recognises that there is little textual
support for a visible Ascension outside Lukan-dependent texts.
(114)   Most texts which seem pertinent in the New Testament
actually relate to an apparently invisible more primitive
Exaltation closely linked to the Resurrection. (115) We thus
acknowledge that the non-Lukan Exaltation held sway for a
number of centuries, and that Luke created the later approach.
(116)

2.   This position testifies to Luke's great creativity.   He
uses many powerful motifs and typology in highly imaginative
yet effective ways. (117).   Rather than Luke lacking integrity
in misleading us, this approach claims that ancient
historiography fully legitimates such style. (118)   Thus Luke
is accepted as powerfully rendering the theological reality of
Christ's Ascension in narrative form, providing a useful
hermeneutical bridge for A.C.E. (see Chapters II.3, III)

3. The Ascension if not a created Story, fits almost too well into Luke's scheme to end the Gospel and begin Acts. It would appear so convenient for his many theological interests that we are clearly led to suspect its purely Lukan composition (for instance in countering Pauline cosmic or mystical Christology (119)) He used pre-existing materials such as the stories of Elijah (120), Raphael (121), the High Priestly blessing (122) and New Testament prefigurements (123) as a basis for his own accounts. However, we do note that Lohfink's method of studying motifs to see if "unique" to the writer may not be foolproof, and does not negate Position 6.2 above.

4. Further support for this position lies in the non-tendentious nature of this explanation of the Ascension for modern man. It clears the way for a greater spiritual appreciation of the story - Jesus' departure for his Father which will be true for us one day also. (124) Luke's reputation rises because we realise he is not naively accepting an Ascension myth (against 6.3) but writing sophisticated narrative truth. His abiding influence in creating what we now classify as "Salvation History" and the Church Calendar is recognised. (125)

5. Finally, this position gains liberation from an overbearing doctrine of Scripture that demands literalism or harmonization. We can recognise the diversity and open texture of Scripture which attests to the truth of God at work in Christ. The implication of 6.4 is that Scripture is not infallible but remains authoritative and inspired albeit in a different manner from the Fundamentalists' perception.

Section 7

Contemporary Understanding of the Ascension

This final Section sets out in summary form a number
of aspects of the Ascension which have emerged from the
studies of this Chapter. Quite a number of these are
actually true independently of the position set out in
Section 6 that one might decide to adopt. These "meanings"
have emerged through theological reflection upon our
exposition of the biblical texts undertaken in Sections 2-
5. We hope that the correlation to people's lives is also
fairly clear, for this is a key objective in our thesis.
These will be pursued further in Chapter III as we piece
together the actual elements of the educational programme,
for the meanings remain abstract until personally
contextualized. We relate also the possible relationship
of each meaning to one or more of the twelve educational
goals of Chapter I.2.

We hope that it is clear that these possible
understandings of the Ascension have not been plucked from
the air, but follow naturally as a summary of this Chapter.
We have of course not had sufficient space to survey the
rest of the New Testament for additional implications of
the Exaltation-Ascension. However the majority of
implications given here relate most closely to the
Ascension because they follow from Luke's narratives.
Implications from the remainder of the New Testament might
link much more closely to the Exaltation (especially
passages from Paul on the Cosmic Christological theme, or
from Hebrews on the High Priesthood of Christ). These
implications are not to be seen as a set of abstractions,
but as guidance for the teacher, who, being aware of them,
can offer them at appropriate points as a means to the
hermeneutical fusing of horizons, yet he must not do so in

such a way as to short- cut the earlier biblical, theological labours.

1.   Jesus' return to heaven led him to a still deeper relationship with his Father. We too will return to God our Father in a relationship deeper than that attained during this life on earth. The Ascension for all of us, as for Christ, is a homecoming. (Education as Personal Growth, and as a development of relationship with God) (126)

2.   As Jesus ascended into heaven and was exalted he sets a pattern for our ascension in spirit to God our Father (127). For Christ's relation to God is the archetype of our ultimate relation to God. We can actually ascend daily to God in our spirits in prayer. The Ascension is thus the meeting of man and God in God's place (128). (Education as learning to interpret experience, and as fostering relationship with God)

3.   The Christus Victor theme is important in Christ's triumphant defeat of cosmic powers of evil (129). We too are involved in Christ's defeat of evil, following his triumphant procession to glory. (Education as Liberation and Social/Political activity)

4.   It was God who raised Jesus Christ and exalted him to his right hand. It is God also (not ourselves) who exalts us to sit with Him in heavenly places (endowed daily with spiritual authority) to rule, under God, this planet. The Ascension is ultimately a statement about the power and glory of God (130) given by grace to man. (Education as Social/Political act, Fidelity and Celebratory)

5.   Jesus Christ is now exalted as Lord and King. He should therefore be worshipped and revered by us, as we

acknowledge His daily and eternal Lordship (131). We
follow the example of the disciples in their response to
Christ. (Education as Revelational, Relational, Fidelity)

6.   In the Ascension Jesus declared his work to be
complete, His saving ministry accomplished (132). This is
a source of confidence for us that all in effect that
needed to be achieved for our salvation has now been done.
(Education as Celebratory and affirming of the value of
life)

7.   In the Ascension is metaphysically held together
Christ's transcendence, glory, divinity, "otherness" and
immanence, humility, manhood, "nearness". These fuse in
the Ascension. Aspects of this are true for us also as we
become like Christ and unite with him. The Ascension is a
metaphysical bridge between finite and infinite. (133)
(Education as Relational)

8.   The Ascension especially sets a pattern for the
Parousia. Christ will return as he departed whatever form
this actually takes. We have in the New Testament a
specific hope that one day this present pattern of world
history will end, as Christ returns. The Ascension acts as
a guarantee of this, yet reminding us the Parousia still
lies at some distance in the future. (134) (Education as
Revelational, Celebration)

9.   The Ascension is a necessary prelude to the bestowal
of the Holy Spirit as in the Pentecost experience of signs,
wonders and spiritual gifts.(135)   It is the ascending
Lord who gives spiritual gifts to us for power and
ministry. The presence of the Spirit and attendant
authority in Jesus' name could be argued according to John
to have been given subsequent to the Exaltation. We await,

yet continually seek, the Spirit's power and gifts.
(Education as Personal Growth, Specific)

10. Jesus' exaltation as Lord and Saviour formed the
indispensable part of the Good News proclaimed in Acts by
Peter and Paul. These were witnesses to his Ascension as
to the rest of his life. We can and must witness to his
Ascension, for the Ascension brings an "eschatological"
pause into the heart of the Parousia. (136). We witness to
the activity of our exalted Lord. Our witness is not
identical to the first disciples but has the same basis of
faith. (Education as Liberationist, Political, Social)

11. The disciples were told at the Ascension not to
continue to gaze upwards because this showed the wrong sort
of nostalgic retrospective feelings (137). They were told
that there was a job to be done and to be ready to get on
with it. We must also beware looking backwards to past
experiences (religious or otherwise). Instead we must look
on to future work to be done and good things in store in
future. (Education as Celebration and Denial)

12. At the end of Luke Jesus pronounced a blessing upon
the disciples. We are heirs through the Ascension to that
very blessing. This blessing has a real meaning for us,
for as we receive it this has great effectiveness and power
for our daily life and work, (overtly Christian or not).
(Education as Specific Enculturation and as Personal
Growth)

13. The overall response of the disciples to Jesus' life
was great joy. Luke means us (the reader) to respond to
the story of his life with equivalent joy. The Ascension
indeed reminds us of our need for joy as a grateful
response to the Christian story. (Education as Liberation,
Celebration)

14. The Ascension acts as an important link of continuity between Jesus' life and the era of the Church (138). We now live in the era of Salvation History characterized by the Church - the locus of God's saving activity. We need all to find a place in this era of God's activity entrusted to us. (Education as Specific - Enculturation).

15. Luke's work as a creative theologian reminds us of the need to be imaginative, creative regarding the established truths of our faith. But just as he acted responsibly in his use of the materials, so must we do the same. We need to aim for greater creativity in our faith, in our response to the Creeds, as we grasp the inner significance of Christian doctrine. (Education as Liberation, Analytical)

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CHAPTER   II.2

WHO is being educated - the nature of MAN

1.   INTRODUCTION

2.   Man in the Image of God

        - The Imago Dei
        - Contrast with Behaviourism
        - Education into the Imago Christi

3.   Man's Problems: Sin, Evil and the Fall

        - Use of Genesis 3 account
        - Confronting Sin in A.C.E.
        - Contrast with Marxist theory of Alienation.
        - Political - Social Aspects of A.C.E.

4.   Man's Possibility of Healing and Salvation

        - Biblical Overview
        - Contrast with Freudian Psychoanalysis
        - Dealing with Guilt in Repentance

5.   Summary. Outcomes. True nature of those educated

        - The dynamic of Synergy
        - Human Transcendence
        - Seven Goals of Human Learning

Section 1 <u>Introductory Comments</u>

At this point in the thesis we proceed to answer the question: "Who is being educated?". We thus need to give some account of a Doctrine of Man. We enter debate here with the Human Sciences such as Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology. In this Chapter we particularly enter into dialogue with three major views of human nature.: Behaviorism, Marxism and Freudian Psychoanalysis. By hammering out a position in dialogue with these views, we aim to grasp better the inner dynamics and potential of the human psyche so that A.C.E. addresses these more effectively.

It is our contention that Theology and the Social Sciences are different sets of disciplines, each offering a legitimate standpoint upon the totality of human knowledge and experience. Problems occur if a given discipline strays without good warrant outside their sphere of expertise to become too all-embracing. Yet we are at one with Macquarrie (1) that in such an atmosphere of restraint each scientific discipline can make useful comments upon each other's positions. Thus for instance we can utilise empirical psychological data but also theological anthropology (2) in constructing a theory of human development.

In general we propose to follow M.VanLeeuwen (3) in adopting a "Constructionist" approach to our study. We thereby commit ourselves to an openness to the possibility of interpreting human behaviour according to its higher (perhaps transcendental) meaning. We avoid a reductionist approach that looks for lower meaning in human behaviour. The sociologist P.Berger gives us an example of such a non-reductionist approach in <u>The Rumour of Angels</u>. (4)

We also intend to adopt, in line with our hermeneutical dynamic a view of human nature as dynamic. We speak not of a

human being so much as a human becoming. (5) Thus man is full
of potential or openness, a portrayal essential to the success
of our arguments of this Chapter.

Section 2.   Man in the Image of God

The central question that has occupied the attention of
many theologians across the centuries relates to the question of
the nature of the Imago Dei, both in the light of biblical
research and in the context of various contemporary
understandings of man's nature. (6)   It is pointed out by
D.Cairns that although only three passages in the Old Testament
make reference specifically to the Imago Dei, the biblical
understanding thereof is witnessed to and amplified throughout
the Old Testament (7). Cairns considers in detail the form this
image takes: Man is distinct, special, responsible, dignified -
he is lifted above the natural world due to his special
relationship with God. (8)   This is in spite of the Bible's
counterbalancing emphasis upon human failure, sin and guilt.
Man thus possesses his own proper glory. (9) Psalm 8 shows that
this glory is not derived purely from participating in the glory
of God, but is a distinct entity - a gift of God.

At this point we feel it important to make a significant
philosophical distinction between the formal and material
characteristics of the Imago Dei, which will clarify the
argument of this Section.

1.   We define the formal characteristics of the Imago Dei as
those fundamental to humanity, such as Rationality, Freedom,
Self-Awareness, Openness to relationship with God, (10). We have
here pre-requisite conditions for the development of the
material characteristics.   We note that Moltmann sees openness
as the key to all these areas (11).   Donald Evans in Struggle
and Fulfilment (12) gives detailed consideration to foundational
attitude virtues.   The sixth is friendliness - a "readiness and

willingness to risk the self by entering into intimate "I-Thou relations of love". (13)   The crown and fulfilment of this is friendship with God. (14)

2.   We define the material characteristics of the Imago Dei as those which give content to the Image.   These could be termed the key attitude-virtues, such as Responsibility, Integrity, Fulfilment, Honesty, Compassion, Trust, Agape love. (15)   We are thus here concerned for instance with how freedom is to be used, or how a relationship develops and manifests itself.

We will argue in this Section that the formal aspect of the Imago Dei has been marred or defaced due to the Fall.   Yet it is still present in humans because such is essential to what constitutes humanity, and forms the base by which God can appeal to Man in offering friendship.   The material aspect of the Imago Dei has been more severely harmed in various degrees by sin, and it is this that Christ has come to renew through His Incarnation.   Thus the material, as well as formal aspects of the Imago are seen portrayed in the qualities or virtues of Christ.   A.C.E. understood in this way is education into the material characteristics of the Imago Christi, (16) built on the basis of the formal characteristics of the Imago Dei.

J. Houston (17) says that the Image of God biblically understood from Genesis 1:26,7, 5:3. 9:6 consists of

a. Man's unique status and responsibility before God - giving him dignity and significance,

b. Man's dominion and authority over the rest of the natural world,

c. Man as a relational being relates vertically to God and relates horizontally to other humans but only in Christ (18)

Many other writers pick upon other implications of accepting man as being in the image of God. D.Jenkins (19) sees man as the crown of creation. He has dominion over the world and as God's representative is a steward of it. (20) K. Barth (21) claims that man is unique because he is confronted by the revelation of God and called to ever-new levels of being in partnership with Him as a Child of God. A. Peacocke (22) claims that man in God's image is His representative, functioning as Priest, Steward, Interpreter, Co-Worker, Fellow Sufferer. J. Moltmann (23) asserts that in a real sense the Imago Dei is a set of potentials that have not yet been fulfilled - but are in the process of so being attained. Again W. Pannenberg (24) states that the image means we are interiorly ordered to the operation of God's providence to achieve the destiny for which we have been created. We are originally meant to engage in a movement of self-transcendence towards the Other who embraces the world.

We contrast this impressive list of assertions about human origins and potential with Behaviourism - an approach to the study of man that has been extremely influential during the middle part of this century mainly due to its popularization by B.F. Skinner (25). Subsequent to a paper by J.B. Watson (26) psychology has increasingly become part of biology, and human behaviour (eg learning ability) said to be akin in most if not all ways to that of other animals. Based upon repeated experiments usually upon animals such as pigeons and rats Skinner and fellow researchers claim that learning can be achieved by conditioning reflexes and shaping response (by means of reward-punishment or reinforcement). Skinner rejects inner activity or consciousness and says human freedom, dignity and responsibility are an illusion. (27) He advocates abandoning mental entities because they have no greater explanatory power than his own empirically derived causal laws. (28) Skinner aims to predict and control human behaviour to shape a perfect society. (29)

Writers such as M.VanLeeuwen recognises some valuable contributions from behaviorist techniques to our understanding of human behaviour, and similarities between human behaviour in learning and that of animals. (30) But they object when such move out of their sphere of competence to claim Behaviorism as the only way of viewing man in the totality of his life. (31) Against Skinner et al the following points can be made:-

1. Certain patterns of thought cannot necessarily be always read off from a person's behaviour (eg unfulfilled or longer term higher intentions, values, goals, sensations and emotions)

2. N. Chomsky (32) claims in learning to speak we gain an increasing sophistication - creativity, very complex abstract structural language forms, religious and transcendental language that have no basis in Skinner's scheme.

3. VanLeeuwen (33) points out the existence and power of counter-control, where participants influence the psychologist-experimenter or where they may be contrary just for the sake of it.

4. The procedure of extrapolating results on animals (or lower I.Q. humans) in highly controlled environments to normal I.Q. individuals in free/open environments is highly dubious. It cannot be done without good empirical research to back it up.

5. A human's ability to reflect ("reflexivity") or analyse testifies to human freedom from slavish adherence to his environment, instincts and heredity. Thus Skinner's portrait is narrow and too passive.

In contrast to the Behaviorist's narrow approaches which do not correlate with what many people find most important in their lives (eg self-sacrifice for a relative stranger, or asceticism, or purely pleasurable creativity or the frequently

attested sense of the numinous) we adopt with for example T.
Kitwood (34) a wider more dynamic and open outlook on humans in
the image of God. We uphold man's consciousness as an active
reflexive centre whereby he can structure his own life as he
desires. (35) Persons are thus not treated as objects but as
personal subjects for respect and consideration. (36) A proper
study of human behaviour observes personal relationships (eg the
role of friendship per se), and approaches life as an inter-
connected whole. Persons are seen holistically (37). With J.
Macquarrie we recognise individual human powers where at least
some measure of free action is possible. (38) For these reasons
a Behaviorist account of man's nature is inadequate.

We note in passing that an alternative path classically
trodden by theologians who wish to give an account of a
Christian doctrine of man is to argue for the existence of the
Soul. (39). Swinburne for instance argues that a person is a
soul together with whatever body is linked to it temporally.
(40) He argues that it constitutes our personal identity (41).
The metaphysical problems here are immense, and for our purposes
it is preferable to proceed by means of an analysis of the
Image of God in man.

A.C.E. therefore must address this Imago Dei, and we
understand this occurring most deeply when people are led to
being open to the power of God working with and in them to bring
them to full potential. These basic powers of the Imago
distinguish us from other animals and form the special concern
of A.C.E.

A.C.E. thus in its goals and programmes aims firstly to
create the awareness in its participants of their immense
potential - a broad deep dynamic vision. A.C.E. will enhance
the individual's belief and understanding that they are indeed
the crown of creation, special to God. The fostering of the
individual's relation to God ("closeness to the divine reality")

(42) is demonstrated to be of great importance. Fowler (43) takes a similar stance in claiming that our vocation is indeed to become partners with God in God's work with the world. Thus A.C.E. should confront, challenge and call forth faith and response to God in for example care, restraint and servanthood. (44)

Section 3 Man's Problem: Sin, Evil and the Fall

The word and concepts underlying "Sin" have never been fashionable, particularly in the present age. Christian teaching on the Fall has been an acute problem area for most theologians and Christian apologists. This has been so especially because of the difficulties underlying the Garden of Eden story of Genesis 3 in respect of its apparently primitive mythology.

We need not enter the discussion here of the status of these accounts, but believe valuable insights can be drawn from not only Genesis 3 but other biblical passages which attend to man's "fallenness" (45). We sum up the range of consequences of man's rebellion and sin in three ways:-

Firstly human experience attests to our frequent awareness of disobeying God, or being untrue to our conscience. By opposing what we at heart feel to be right, a process of alienation, deceit, guilt, delusion and pride is set into motion. As conscience is resisted, so its power of perception or moral judgement gradually weakens. (46)

Secondly, this rebellion operates not only at the moral level, but also at a relational level - between humans, but especially with God. Houston reviewing the Hebrew words for sin (47) highlights the most fundamental problem of the human condition as characterised by Shagah. (48) Our problem is radical sin; man living as if he were God. The pervasiveness and

destructiveness of this at a corporate level are profound - it is our root problem. New Testament writers such as Paul (49) knew full well the insidious power of sin - even at work in themselves. Because of this he saw the need for an even more powerful solution in the Cross. (50) At base, however, this second understanding of sin sees its cause as broken relationship with God.

Thirdly we broaden the concept of sin towards a cosmic dimension. The effects of sin cannot be contained within ourselves, or to particular relationships, but spread to the whole order of existence. Kant defined "Radical Evil" as the moral perversity of the ego in the light of its distorted relation to the world. "Our propensity to evil consists in the subjective ground of the possibility of deviation of maxims from the moral law". (51) According to Pannenberg sin consists of our failure to achieve our intended destiny of self-integration and fulfilment. It is a destruction of human identity. (52) We could quote many writers from the range of human sciences and arts who could testify also to the far-reaching cosmic effects of man's evil inclinations. (53)

An analysis from the perspective of Hegel and Marx highlights the problem of alienation (or to use Marx's term "estrangement") whereby in Marx the worker is separated from his work as it is stolen by the Bourgeoisie and is separated by the power of the State's self-interests from his fellow man. (54) The word alienation has been widely utilised to describe aspects of man's state of inner imprisonment or isolation in society. According to Marx's analysis alienation at its deepest level is man's separation from not only the product of his labour and other human beings but also from himself. (55) Yet it remains a societal problem needing solutions not only at an individual but very much (the overall stress) at the level of the community. Marx claimed man has no individual nature (we are the totality

of social relations around us) - our social being determines our consciousness. (56)

Marx's solution was to change the human nature of each individual, seen as part of the greater whole. He desired man's liberation, and the formation of a New Man - fully realised, complete, led by feelings of great love. (57) Man, it is acknowledged, has to be changed along with the conditions of existence. (58)

There is much of value in Marx's and his successors' analysis and solutions - for instance the need for concrete ethics, practical action, concern for the here and now of life. Marx's concern for conversion/repentance is similar to that of Christianity, especially reminding Christians that such must occur in the midst of praxis and engagement. Marxism teaches us to resist all spiritualizing tendencies rife within Christianity and A.C.E. (59) Sin must not be spiritualized or individualized, for we must see its structural, economic and corporate implications.

But we concur with J. Bonino (60) that Marxism is inadequate because it does not take seriously enough the depth of man's alienation as manifested perhaps in self-interest, love of power, tendencies to violence and oppression, and desires for higher forms of meaning or satisfaction in life. It therefore fails to address the root problems of human existence. Christians hold to a more radical dis-ease at the heart of so much that is unjust in our society. Whereas alienation is defined at a societal level (economics, social rituals, class struggle), Sin is defined as rebellion against God Himself, sustainer of the cosmos. (61) D.W.D. Shaw (62) argues that the God Marx rejected was the one Hegel had presented - but a personalistic God offers a much stronger defence against Marx. Macquarrie (63) says that alienation is a vague, confusing word - partly because it is used in different ways by different

people and partly because its valuation can be either neutral or negative. According to Macquarrie (64) Sin as a more radical reality is a transgression of the natural order of things, a condition more than an act.

Thus, providing the Christian accepts the full depth of sin in the senses given, we have a thorough comprehensive and realistic analysis of man's condition. Bonino and Gutierrez are heavily indebted to the Marxist analysis in the Latin American situation, yet say that it is only the power of solidarity love in the Gospel that brings about the necessary dynamic for change, (65) and that the mobilizing dream is the restored relationship God-Man (66).

A.C.E. must address itself to these profound issues, and take up the challenge in the social-political sphere of the causes of our crises. A.C.E. must acknowledge that evil is of a very broad and deep nature, and that therefore the programmes of A.C.E. must highlight in a responsible manner both individual and corporate sin (within the Church or wider Community). A disengaged, comfortable approach to A.C.E. denies this necessity but we argue that A.C.E. needs to address the real issues of life, and the wide problems individuals cause through their self-centredness. There are occasions when people must be confronted with their "inner darkness", and A.C.E. has a responsibility to issue a call perhaps to brokenness or crucifixion as a prelude to true resurrection healing and wholeness. G. Carey (67) reminds us that a call to personal repentance is sometimes an essential part of A.C.E., hard as this may be. In A.C.E. we must be quite specific, sometimes ruthless, in naming sin or evil where it exists. A feeling of generalized alienation or sin produces feelings of impotency and despair. When we identify specific objective guilt then we can offer people the possibility of real progress and transformation.

Thus A.C.E. has as one of its roles a prolegomenon to salvation as people are led to interpret the world, and their lives in the light of God's laws, principles, patterns for life, including the joy and the pain therein.

Section 4   Man's Possibility of Healing and Salvation

The biblical message is an intensely positive, hope-full one.   There are many biblical passages that mention the possibility of healing and salvation in its fullest sense becoming a reality for individuals, communities, even nations who choose to respond to God's gracious invitation.   In the Old Testament there are many passages that propound a visionary picture of a world returned to God, where Shalom, wholeness to existence has returned (68)

Elsewhere in the Old Testament in, for example, the patriarchal narratives it is clear that God continually offers hope of reconciliation and renewal to individuals who turn from sin back to God's paths. (69)   In the New Testament, especially in Paul's writings there is a great deal written about the redeeming and reconciling work of God either in an individual or a cosmic sense restoring in Christ all things to Himself (70) These passages imply that a personal faith response is required for "incorporation into Christ" and reconciliation to occur. Elsewhere it is stated that one can fail to enter into this salvation, facing adverse judgement and condemnation. (71)   We thus see that A.C.E. needs to include a call to decision for God, indeed to a conversion - that the possibility of salvation might become a reality for salvation is not an automatic process or event. (72)   It has to be appropriated, and the crucial job of A.C.E. is to facilitate or encourage a personal faith-response to the "Good News" of Jesus Christ.   In the widest sense A.C.E. is a missionary activity.   R. Crump Miller (73) says "Evangelism and education"   come together within the overall purpose of Christian Education, for "to evangelize is to

confront persons with Jesus Christ, so that they will put their trust in God through Him, and by the power of the Holy Spirit live as Christ's disciples in the fellowship of the Church". Miller distinguishes this from indoctrination or authoritarianism because it is the person of Christ who is presented, not teacher's opinions or Church law. (74)

David Cairns (75) says that the Image of God is mentioned only twelve times in the New Testament, but where it does occur it is within some of the greatest passages. He discerns three senses of meaning:

Firstly, where it describes Christ's singular divinity and divine sonship (76).

Secondly, the main sense of this phrase is to describe the likeness of God into which believers enter through faith in Christ (77)

Thirdly, but more marginally, it describes man's humanity. (78)

Cairns' comments and exposition are very pertinent, and give us, especially in his second point, a very powerful set of goals and ideals for A.C.E. of a truly visionary nature. According to Cairn's thesis A.C.E. must bring about or enable the formation of the image of God in its participants. (79) This must not be weakened into innocuous ineffectual statements about "following Christ", or being Christlike, true though these worthy objectives may be. If we follow Cairns correctly then the thrust of the most visionary scriptural passages (80) holds out the ultimate prospect of unity with Christ in holiness, yet also in inner nature (see Section 5).

Thus a major, far-reaching goal for A.C.E. for which Cairns contends in his arguments (81) upholds the image as a sharing in divine glory, as we are conformed to the image of God

in Christ.   Thus the Image of God (82) is man's capacity to respond to the Call of God, an endowment witnessed to by our response.   We nurture this in our A.C.E. endeavours.

J. Moltmann (83) claims we have a Messianic calling to the Imago Christi, and that Jesus sets forward a pattern of a new fulfilled perfected humanity.   A.C.E. needs to be ultimately Christocentric, with Christ as the focus, pattern, goal of our activity.   In Christ by justification and through the subsequent process of sanctification the sinner receives by grace that which has been lost by sin and enters the path that leads him to be God's glory in the world.   (84)   Moltmann terms this as "Gloria Dei" (85)

We compare at this point in our assessment of human destiny and vocation, the approach to healing and salvation adopted by S.Freud (86) and many others in the Psychoanalytic tradition (especially C. Rogers (87), C.Jung (88), M.Kelsey (89))   We shall see that their analysis of man's deep interior dilemma is very close to that of the Bible, but falls crucially short at a number of places.   (As with Behaviorism and Marxism it is no coincidence that their analysis is so close because they are exploring God's world as the Christian is - yet their analysis is incomplete without acceptance of divine revelation).

According to Freud we are machines driven by a relatively constant amount of sexual energy or libido, which can at times cause painful tensions that can be eliminated only by acts of physical release. (90)   We are therefore a mixture of conscious and unconscious drives.   Freud alerts us to the power of the unconscious in influencing mental processes and physical behaviour - much greater than we are normally aware of. (91) The basic principle of release he labels the "Pleasure Principle".   This contrasts and frequently conflicts with the "Reality Principle" which informs us what to seek or avoid to survive. (92)   Much Psychoanalytic method aims to discover how

these Principles interact for a given individual, and where distortions may have occurred that require healing/therapy - these can be of value in aspects of A.C.E. also (93).

Freud devotes considerable attention to the problem of guilt, and the role of conscience. These operate when we feel tension between our actual behaviour and our innate moral code. (94) In Freud's scheme these are tensions between the Ego (our normal self) and the Superego (our conscience, usually seen as exercising strict authoritarian control over us). (95) "Salvation" in Freud's scheme is achieved by reducing the power of the Superego (our inhibitions), and increasing the strengths of our Ego. We thus gain mastery over ourselves as we understand and accept ourselves in our inner nature, as products of both past experiences and present energy drives. (96) This can often be achieved by a person unearthing and re-living their past (in the presence of a counsellor) through the recounting of traumatic events that have led to the individual's problems through operation of guilt feelings about the event - subsequently repressed and interiorized. (97) In a sense the counsellor takes on the role of God, acting as a catalyst or provoker of movement to a higher consciousness perhaps through cathartic release. With Jung however the ultimate guidance does come from God - understood as an archetype lodged in the deepest levels of our collective unconscious. His methodology frequently tries to draw upon the psychic power of this God to elicit meaning, love, faith, hope, understanding. (98)

H. Darling (99) offers a very useful overview of the main criticisms of Freudian analysis and healing techniques. In his judgement Freud's denotation of guilt tends to treat it in effect as illusory (100), to be swept away, broken or transcended. It is seen as a negative entity, an obstacle, and thus in effect trivialized to "shame" or remorse. A. Adler, a secular psychologist, vehemently disagrees with Freud's destruction of the dignity of man, and locates true wholeness in

a social re-adjustment founded upon love. (101) This is for a Christian too shallow an understanding, for Scripture shows us that guilt is real because related to absolute moral standards of God, and human rebellion against the way our lives should be led. (102) Guilt has to be faced positively, as God's present judgement upon our lives. It can be viewed positively by the Christian because it functions to make us aware of how we should be living before God, and the latent possibilities of living in grace and renewal towards our true potential as God's Holy People. (103)

Thus a deeper positive grasp of our guilt and problems of our unconscious leads us according to Darling to deep repentance as the doorway to salvation - by living out our repentence (an inner event) "we can undo the outer event on a spiritual, moral plane". (104) Repentance needs a place in A.C.E. when it is seen as a salvific enterprise. It restores our broken relationships with God - the primary ground of our existence. Guilt is thereby absolved and destroyed. This in itself has considerable therapeutic value in releasing people from their bondage to the past. Reparation exteriorizes sin and builds towards the future, as we move out of Freudian over-introspection towards positive investment in the Kingdom of God. (105) This recognises the power of God to effect these changes - many of which people find in experience it to be extremely if not impossibly difficult to resolve unaided. Evenwith a very good therapist it may not be possible. According to Macquarrie our Conscience points the way to what we ought to become. (106) It is a rational selective principle (as per Butler), also it is a feeling emotional response to external authority (as J.S. Mill). (107) Heidegger argues that the Conscience is a call or summons to creative moral growth and authentic existence. (108). Leslie Stevenson points out how deterministic Freud's view is because in Freud any overt action has to have some hidden cause. (109) Freud's theory has almost the status of unfalsifiability - presetting what causes we permit to present

behaviour and thoughts. For example Stevenson asks - are <u>all</u> dreams disguised wish fulfilment? (110) D. Shaw asks - is religion really by definition a universal obsessional neurosis? (111) Counter evidence in both cases is claimed to exist in abundance.

We thus see that valuable as some Psychoanalytical method and therapy may be, and similar though the goals are to Christian salvation (healing, wholeness, harmony between Body, Mind, Soul/Spirit), a deep Christian response is more powerful and adequate to human relationships. This is because Christianity views the fundamental salvational need as a restoration of relationship with God. It is becoming evident that a deep process of healing in its fullest sense (redemption, reconciliation within, to others and God) is the central distinctive province of A.C.E. To be effective and stir people to be truly engaged in this quest A.C.E. must place before people in both a general and personally specific sense a vision of what they as individuals and as a community can or are to become in Christ. Thereafter practical assistance can be given to achieve this long term goal in shorter stages. As this vision is rooted in people's conscious and unconscious minds, it will develop (under God) its own power and authority to generate desires, and personal plans to achieve the goal. (112) A.C.E. teachers put themselves at the service of those who need such help on the journey. This approach is not narrowly spiritual, but in due course embraces the whole of an individual's existence-relationship with God, interpersonal friendships and wider outworkings in the world. As a hermeneutical enterprise it entails helping individuals truly understand themselves (eg in terms of their past history) and then interpreting the resources of faith, and God's guidance to achieve complete salvation.

Section 5 <u>Summary. Outcomes. True nature of those educated.</u>

D. Jenkins (113) writes "the defining characteristic of every human being lies in his or her potential personal relationship to God in Jesus Christ", and again "Jesus points us in the direction of true fulfilment of possibility or mystery of personal-ness". (114) We concur with these thoughts, and thus the need for person centred and Christocentric education. These ideas are increasingly being developed by theologians of diverse traditions, and we need to build upon them in A.C.E. in a practical manner. (115)

The dynamic needed for this process to occur has been termed that of Synergy. This is an important theological concept, utilised by Fowler (116). Synergy is understood by Fowler as a dynamic interacting fusion between the human potential for transformation and the transforming activity of the Holy Spirit. The basic requisite for synergy is human openness to work with the Holy Spirit. (117) Fowler discusses this process in the context of his seventh stage of faith termed "Universalizing Faith". (118) But he recognises that Synergy is possible before that stage (perhaps essential to attain that stage?). We find this a helpful concept because we are arguing in this thesis for the need for A.C.E. to encourage and enable students to become open to the powerful dynamic of the Holy Spirit because under His inspiration the hermeneutical spiral of understanding (Chapter II.3) can operate most effectively.

We thus express the process of synergy hermeneutically as:

1. The student tries as best he can to understand and interpret the subject of concern or interest, yet may not fully succeed because of his own failings.

2.   He attempts to be open to the transforming dynamic power of
the Holy Spirit in expectancy yet humility

3.   The Holy Spirit gives new inspiration and assists his powers
of understanding to grasp more completely and truly that which
he seeks to interpret.

      Paul expresses this theological process in terms of the
necessity for a "renewing of our minds" Romans 12:2; this is a
crux verse for A.C.E.

      We draw close to Eastern Orthodox views of the visionary
potential of man. See V. Lossky In the Image and likeness of
God (119) "The Son has become like us by the incarnation; we
become like Him by deification, by partaking of the divinity in
theHoly Spirit, who communicates the divinity to each human
person in a particular way". There is a considerable danger in
emphasizing too much the relatively scarce texts such as 2 Peter
1:4, and in effect getting carried away in over-enthusiasm about
the notion of deification. We still remain creatures distinct
from our Creator even in heaven (120) and we can end up in just
deifying our self-consciousness - but the point of Lossky's
remarks is taken for in A.C.E. we generally need to raise our
sights regarding man's true vocation.

      Macquarrie devotes considerable space to describing man's
transcendent possibility and future. (121) Transcendence he
defines as a qualitative MORE whereby we exceed the limits of
our existence. Macquarrie draws attention to 2 Cor.3:18, 1
Jn.3:2, 2 Pe.1:4 as key incentives for us to grow in the glory
of the image of God. (122) The validity of people's claims to
experience the reality of God has "a prima facie case ... as
one deeply rooted in the human condition".(123) The theme of
Transcendence has been popular amongst many secular writers, and
they attest to this fundamental feature of humanity -
representing in our arguments the image of the transcendent God

in us.   For instance Nietzche talks of our vocation as
"superman", for indeed man is a thing to be surmounted. (124)
The existentialists J.P. Sartre and G. Marcel saw Transcendence
as fundamental to humanity, reflected in our central desire to
"Be",   (125).   The direction of Marx and the "Frankfurt School"
in particular is similar in its theoretical exaltation of man:
he becomes God. (126)

We endorse Macquarrie's positive affirmations that one of
man's key defining characteristics lies in his self-transcending
powers, viewed we argue in relation to God.   We believe such
powers can be more effectively justified and promoted by
reference to a transcendent Being (Chapter I.1.)   According to
Macquarrie (127) we may justifiably consider the experience of
human transcendence as a strong clue to the transcendence of
God.   Just as God transcends Himself in reaching out and
emanating to this world to realise His purposes, so too we can
reach out beyond our world, finding fulfilment in that "Other"
than ourselves.   In A.C.E. we point people to signs of
transcendence as clues to the transcendence of God.   We must
ensure that A.C.E. does not for ever remain at a purely mundane
or superficial level but educates towards transcendence.

In envisioning, prompting, guiding people towards the
Transcendent, through our potential for self-transcendence we
realise freely that ultimately this must be a work for the
individual, and a work of God.   We cannot attain advanced levels
of transcendence purely through other's ability - or even our
own.   This realisation is important, for there is a danger
amongst many who currently formulate A.C.E. programmes in
believing that providing we get our programmes "right" then all
the problems besetting the Christian Church will or can be
solved.   In this way programmes become a substitute for faith
(in God) and a purely human work, and this in course of time
will lead to an impoverishment and loss of power in A.C.E. (128)

Whether we believe in an interventionist or immanentist model of God makes no difference in this regard.

We must here also, in face of our discussions in Section 3 underline the importance of the social-communal context of A.C.E. We develop the image of the Social Trinity in ourselves and form identity in Community. We grow as redeemed beings especially in God's community - the true Church. G. Mead (129) "The self is essentially a social structure arising in social experience". The Christian Scriptures often talk in terms of the redeemed people of God, and New Testament images of the Christian and the Church continually re-emphasize this truth (130) Thus A.C.E. as it considers who is being educated must attend closely also to group dynamics, formation of relationships, and the person's social interaction - giving openings for practical engagement in the world around, and revolutionary activity of a socio-economic nature.

Thus, as we have in this Chapter followed the movement from the original Imago Dei, through man's Fall (the problem of sin and evil) to the means and appropriation of salvation (man's destiny and vocation to one-ness with God), we summarize this Chapter by identifying goals of human learning :-

1. Dealing with SIN. The need for repentance and radical inner change. This highlights the moral dimension whereby the way of godliness in imitation of Christ is the way also of true human-ness.

2. Enabling formation of IDENTITY. We accept the need for inner healing, and spiritual formation. Linked to this growing self-acceptance is also communal acceptance, especially within the Body of Christ.

3. Fostering the growth of DIGNITY, and a sense of Worth. We recognised (section 2) with the Behaviorist school that we are

akin to animals in many ways; but we parted company in discerning that we have a genuine freedom, reflexive self-awareness, right of dominion (and responsibility) that marks us out as special. We find dignity as A.C.E. leads people to a sense of fulfilment and practical achievement. Our deepest sense of worth grows as we realise that we are children of God.

4. Developing social RELATIONSHIPS. We recognise man as a social animal. He is made to live and develop within community. The Kingdom of God - God's rule and reign - is particularly concerned about the building of good relationships. A.C.E. must never subsume its programme content wholly to the more ultimately important matter of the maturing and building of loving relationships - most of all with God Himself.

5. Inspiring SPIRITUAL development and encouraging the onward movement of self-transcendence. We note with R. Otto, man's deep need, fulfilled in so many of the world's religions, for worship, ritual-act and "I-Thou" encounter with God. (131) A.C.E. must recognise and then inspire further this deeply religious instinct lying in man to reach out to the mystery of God's Creation.

6. Satisfying human instincts for INQUIRY. We have God given capacities and powers of thought - the ability to use REASON in a wide variety of ways. This rational dimension needs to be satisfied so that belief is built. Macquarrie wants to encourage belief, seen as an opening movement in a person both "becoming" (132), and transcending his limits. Such belief does not require conclusive proof because we cannot understand all there is to know, but it requires sufficient supportive evidence to give intellectual credibility to its actions. As Christians we express this as developing the mind (in this case reasoning ability) of Christ.

7.   Expressing of faith and life in CREATIVITY.   Humans have
deep desires to produce objects of beauty, and impart VALUE .
In its widest sense this leads to cultural development.   In a
more individualist sense we see the need for A.C.E. to stimulate
and nurture the imaginative powers of humans.   This should occur
not only in purely spiritual terms, but also in concrete
expression (drama, dance, music, visual art-forms etc.) Through
imagination we grasp the significance of God's revelation in
Symbol, Sacrament, Creation.

        Thus as we close this Chapter we propose to sum up the
total purpose of A.C.E. as it operates in all these different
modes, and as it responds to man's differing stages of need, as
essentially SALVIFIC.   We here conceive of salvation in its
broadest terms - while emphasizing the continuing existence of
the total spiritual environment to the enterprise.   Salvation is
to be conceived of in A.C.E. as the development of the whole
person into the image of God - overcoming thereby all that
hinders him reaching full potential as a child of God.   Each
individual is assisted in his personal faith-journey or
pilgrimage, attaining new stages of faith (133) whilst being
helped to understand in praxis the various developmental life
crises (biological, mental, spiritual, social or incidental-
unexpected) that he undergoes. (134)   The Imago Dei consists of
many aspects, but most important it is man's ability to
transcend these conditions of his existence to attain a degree
of integrity, wholeness, fulfilment, self-acceptance, form deep
loving and personal relationships, and to enter intimate
worshipful friendship with God the Trinity.   To this ideal
A.C.E. must ultimately attend in all its practical expression.

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CHAPTER II.3

What is Learning? How is it fostered?"

"Hermeneutics provides overarching model and dynamic for
     A.C.E.

1.   Introduction

     1.1 Principles of Adult Learning - Stephen D. Brookfield
     1.2 The linguistic meaning of "Hermeneutics".
     1.3 Hermeneutics applied to Christian Education

2.   General Hermeneutical Theory

     2.1 The concept of Horizon
     2.2 Pre-understanding
     2.3 Distance
     2.4 Fusion
     2.5 Facilitating the Hermeneutical Spiral
     2.6 Second Stage Hermeneutical Models

3.   Theological and Biblical Hermeneutics

     3.1 The status of Scripture
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     3.3 The Holy Spirit

4.   Further influences upon the formation of Understanding

     4.1 Introduction
     4.2 Tradition
     4.3 Community
     4.4 Worship
     4.5 Imagination

5.   <u>Narrative as a Hermeneutical bridge for A.C.E.</u>

     5.1 Importance of this Category

     5.2 God and Story

     5.3 Scripture and Story

     5.4 Characterization of Story in Scripture

     5.5 Stories of our times

     5.6 Teaching and Learning in Narrative Hermeneutics

6.   <u>Summary and Conclusions</u>

     6.1 Overall Models

     6.2 Teaching as a profound Ministry

     6.3 A response to Brookfield's statements

APPENDIX II.3.A   Hermeneutical Approach to Adult

                   Christian Education. (Examples of

                   five Second Stage hermeneutical

                   models)

Section 1. <u>Introduction</u>

1.1

At this point we approach an area central to ourargument
and the Model of A.C.E. which we wish to formulate.   It
concerns the question of how adults learn,   and   the
consequences for our underlying theory of the dynamic of
A.C.E.   It is impossible to review the enormous volume of
literature on how adults learn,   but a recent book by Stephen
D. Brookfield (1) fortunately achieves this in part for us.
He sets forward eight principles of Adult Learning which he
claims would today command wide acceptance amongst educators
and trainers of adults. (2)   We begin this Chapter by
stating and briefly explaining these principles.   These are to
form a foundation for the arguments ensuing later in this
Chapter.

Firstly, adults learn through all of their lives.   The
concept of "lifelong learning" is now universally   accepted -
to be a human being is necessarily to be a person who
continually grows in knowledge and understanding.

Secondly,   adults   learn   at   particularly   important
transitional stages of their lifespan just as children do at
theirs.   This correlates with Lifecycle theory which examines
crisis periods and age-related development such as marriage,
childbirth, job change, menopause, retirement, bereavement or
facing one' <u>own</u> death, which are particular times when an
individual is open to learning.

Thirdly, adults show diverse learning styles - they learn
in different ways according to their own style.   Since adults
respond to respect and appreciation of self worth this
diversity needs to be valued and utilised in A.C.E. also.

Fourthly, adults like learning to be problem centred and meaningful to their life-situation. Problem posing arouses great interest and sets a challenge which humans seem to generally take up.

Fifthly, adults like learning to have immediacy of application. The "banking" theory of knowledge criticised heavily by P.Freire is widely practised in A.C.E. but is not particularly effective (3)

Sixthly, past experience affects current learning for good or ill. Indeed experience is an increasingly powerful tool in adult learning in practical or discussion oriented settings.

Seventhly, learning is aided when the adult subscribes to a self concept of himself as a voluntary learner and is thus motivated and confident.

Lastly, adults have a tendency to "self-directedness" in learning. The Educator can work towards facilitating the learner to make his own discoveries and proceed at his own pace.

This eight point list of findings forms a bedrock for our answer to the question "How do adults learn?".(4) But of itself it has only the status of a list of empirical and theoretical statements which do not necessarily cohere together within an overarching theory. Brookfield (5) says that many have attempted to formulate a general theory of adult learning but failed because of adults' idiosyncratic learning behaviours, arising from differences of physiology, culture, personality. We propose to formulate an overarching theory for the inner dynamics of how adults learn, using the insights of hermeneutical theory.

1.2

"Hermeneutics" has been variously defined. In its
broadest sense it is both the art and science of
interpretation. G. Ebeling reminds us that the Greek word
hermeneuein means "to put into words", "to expound", "to
translate or interpret". (6) The Greek word arose from the
god Hermes - the heavenly messenger. Thus Hermeneutics
relates to "communication" in its widest sense, and here we
retain the idea of dynamic movement and human interrelation.
"Hermeneutics" to many non-scholars sounds very technical and
abstruse, usually linked to study of written texts. It did
originally so arise but it has gradually expanded to concern
what humans do for every conscious moment of their lives.
Thus the "text" is now understood as being a metaphor for
anything (spoken utterance, past or present experience, work
of art etc) that requires understanding and interpretation.
This subject is therefore central to human life and lies at
the centre of the dynamics of human learning.

J. Firet places what he calls the gift of hermeneia at
the centre of his attention; "God offers himself to us for
understanding". (7) We accept with him that the Pastor's role
in preaching (kerygma), teaching (didache), pastoral care
(paraklesis) is a hermeneutic activity because it is a
ministry of the Word - and the Word itself has a hermeneutical
function. (8) As God comes to us in His Word a moment of
understanding is created.

1.3

Two articles (10,16) have been published recently that
demonstrate convictions similar to this thesis and make
application to Educational Theory yet do not develop this very
far. We note also that T. Groome's approach is broadly in
this stream (9) (see Chapter I.2)

H.E. Everding (10) asserts that teaching is interpretation, for indeed all life is interpretation - it being the most basic act of thinking. Hermeneutics therefore provides a proper frame of reference within which to develop educational theory, since the locus of hermeneutics as teaching is about the transfer of meaning. (11)

Hermeneutics reveals the dynamics of the teaching-learning act, by studying it according to this paradigm the teacher can develop his programme in more effective ways. Thus (12) Everding draws out the educational implications:-

Firstly, we must respect the student's own ability as an interpreter;

Secondly, the student's ultimate goal must be expanded to encourage him to understand the text and himself in relation to the text.

Lastly, the teaching style must be participatory, for the student (13) learns to interpret by actually engaging in it. It will be more important for him to learn how to interpret fruitfully then to amass large quantities of material already assimilated by the teacher.

D. E. Miller also attempts to bring together the Bible and life-experience as related in the discovery of meaning (14). Miller offers broad support for the importance of establishing a powerful dialectic between present practice and Christian story which leads to practical action in a 6 stage programme. (15)

R.L. Conrad (16) also adopts a hermeneutical approach. He says that the goal of teaching must be to transform not simply to inform the student. "Informing" relates to what the text (in a wide sense) meant. "Transforming" relates to what

the "text" means for an individual's life NOW.(17)   This is a
hermeneutical   movement   from   past   to   present   and   future
possibility.

Conrad proposes construing Scripture as the record and
revelation of God's action in judgement and grace in relation
to   the   conflicts   of   human   existence   (18)   He   defines
"conflict" broadly as "inner tugs of war for which there is no
logical   solution".   The   article   spells   out   in   brief   a
"creative conflict" model for C.E. which uses this notion of
conflict   as   a   hermeneutical   key   for   linking   biblical
narrative and   teaching with   the present experiences of the
individual student (19)

Firet's broad elucidation of hermeneia focusses upon the
second   "moment"   of   the   process,   which   he   terms   the   Agogic
moment.   At this point understanding (first stage) leads to a
change in mental-spiritual outlook (20). Agogy relates to the
motive force inherent in the coming of   God acting to change
people   powerfully.   (21)   We   accept   with   Firet   that
understanding must ensue in active change, the two aspects are
complementary.   (22)   Firet   characterizes   the   Pastor's
(including Educator's) task as a Change Agent;   his dynamic
view of practical Theology is   close to our own. (23)

We note also the approach of D. Wingeier who establishes
a "Faith Translation" model by means of which meaning can be
discovered   in   the   everyday   experiences   of   life   (24)   His
method assists people to become self-directed learners through
interpretation   in   the   light   of   the   Christian   tradition   and
what they believe God is saying to them. (25) His approach is
inductive but in the search for understanding he places great
weight upon the resource of Scripture. (26)   He stands close
to our own objectives and methodology - but in view of his not
following   the   implications   overtly   into   A.C.E.   we   do   not
consider his work in further detail.

SECTION 2

2.1

At this point we need to stand back a little from our early
identification of the role of hermeneutics in A.C.E. and examine
the philosophical history and derivation of Hermeneutical
theory.   In particular we want to look in detail at the
Hermeneutical Circle or Spiral of Understanding, which functions
at the centre of Hermeneutical theory.   J. Smart points out that
hermeneutics is a comprehensive term as applied to Scripture and
indeed all secular texts (27)   It covers linguistics, textual
criticism, literary analysis, historical exegesis, theological
criticism as well as purely practical aspects of interpretation.

H. Gadamer has been perhaps the most influential of all
scholars writing on this subject.   His seminal Truth and Method
provides   indispensable   groundwork   for   development   of   the
Science/Art of Hermeneutic Theory in its broadest sense (28).
He aimed to leave behind Dilthey's psychological objectification
of the text.   It was he who first introduced the idea of horizon
of meaning.   The term "horizon" indicates the limits of mental
sight (ie comprehensible meaning) existing for a given person in
a historically relative culture that   separates him   from
another person with different horizons. "Horizon is a range of
vision that includes everything that can be seen from a
particular vantage point" (Gadamer) (29)

We first consider the given text and its "world".   We
respect the distinctiveness (the first horizon) of the given
text by maintaining a proper distance between it and ourselves.
We interpret the text on its own terms according to various
specific interpretative rules.   Next we become aware of the
second horizon, that of ourselves as interpreter; with all our
personal and Twentieth Century concerns and beliefs.   Thirdly,
we seek to fuse these two horizons by discovering the

commonality of horizons linking us to the original horizon.
Further recent developments and particular "Second Stage"
hermeneutical theories will be outlined later in this Section.

We now expound in a little greater detail the various
components of the Hermeneutical Spiral as set out below:-

"Text" -   Interpreter -
  to be   Seeks to
understood ___▷_____◁__ _ Understand
            From "distance"
            to "fusion".
            Text addresses
            interpreter and
            vice-versa
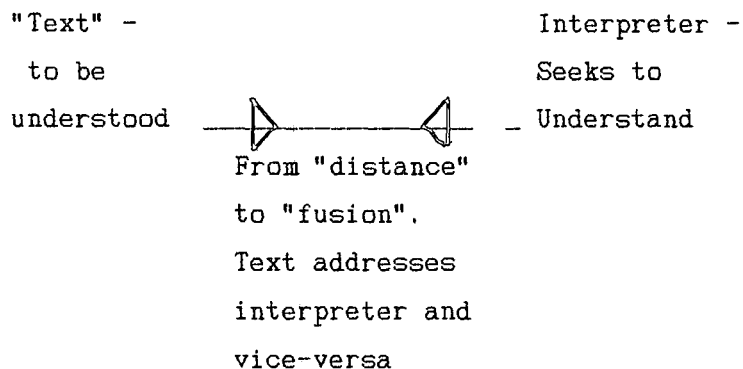
"Author's"   Interpreter's concerns
intention,   culture, beliefs,
World-view,   presuppositions.
presuppositions.

2.2 Pre-Understanding

Clearly the acquired beliefs, cultural background,
interests, concerns brought by the interpreter to the
interpretative situation will exert considerable influence upon
the future course of interpretative development.

First, we look at the insights of Heidegger. His major
concern lay with the question of Being which he identifies as
the phenomenological investigation of pure consciousness. (30)
This question preoccupied him in his earlier years. One of his
key concepts is Dasein, which he defined as "the manner of Being
which man himself possesses". (31) In other words it refers to

man in his subjectivity. Heidegger is here interested in studying how man comes to an understanding of himself.

We begin, he says, with a vague provisional understanding of Dasein, which is gradually clarified and deepened by self-interrogation and analysis. (32) Through this we begin to get a better idea of our true identity. Understanding is rooted in possibility or potentiality within our Being. Thus although it is indefinable yet it is very real, hidden deep within us. Interpretation is a working out of those things which are already understood within the depths of our being (33) It is grounded in prior attitudes which actually help our understanding to occur.

Heidegger's hermeneutics are at root existential. He makes no reference to a God as such in the process. Yet in many ways "Being" fulfils the same role, and indeed a reference to a transcendent entity is essential for the success of the theory which he develops. Yet his definition of a transcendent entity would be very different from a Christian one.

Bultmann, like Heidegger also claimed that we cannot see the world correctly without reference to our own existence. (34) He went on to infer that we cannot talk about God in purely abstract or objective terms., Truth must be appropriated subjectively, and thus our pre-understandings have an important part to play in the understanding of truth. (35)

Bultmann's major concern was with the pre-understanding of the biblical writers. He claims the New Testament by its very nature invites demythologisation. (36) Their assumed world of reality differed very considerably from that of Twentieth Century man. The First Century Christians believed in a three storey universe, angels, demons, a six day Creation. (37) Modern man does not believe in this configuration of reality and so with different pre-supposition cannot easily grasp the basic

Scriptural truths. Bultmann believes with Heidegger that the deepest concerns of man, questions of existence, especially of God, are identical over the ages, in spite of the vast gap in cultural and historical pre-understanding, and that Scripture addresses itself to these concerns of man's self-awareness before God. "The Question of God and the Question of myself are identical". (38)

D. Ferguson gives a helpful general definition of pre-understanding as "a body of assumptions and attitudes which a person brings to the perception and interpretation of reality or any aspect of it". He gives a taxonomy of it as consisting of 4 elements: informational, attitudinal, ideological and methodological. (39)

What are the practical consequences for our thesis of these insights? We accept that in A.C.E. we must be aware of various influences affecting a group's and individual's pre-understanding. One important influence here is the Church. Few churches encourage open-mindedness or speculative thinking. Many churches in effect set limits upon the degree of radical thinking which is acceptable, and indeed the very questions asked. To trespass beyond such unspoken limits can engender suspicion or hostility.

In A.C.E. we need to consider what theological tradition (if any) in the broadest terms has greatest influence upon our learning group. We could investigate this through interviews, surveys or more informal reflection. It is possible that on deeper analysis individuals are found not to conform to the group "theology", or teacher-expectation. We need to investigate people's attitude to scripture – its status, authority and how they use it in practice. We can look also at people's attitudes to the supernatural (of great importance as we focus on the Ascension).

In fact many Christians are not prepared to honestly re-
think established beliefs because to do so is too demanding and
threatening. Nor do people find it easy to understand biblical
texts in new ways; it requires elasticity of thinking. We bear
in mind Heidegger's comments on our preconceptions of belief. A
person's predisposition to think about these issues is important
- but it might not be directly related to any factors which
could be surveyed.

2.3 Distance

We must next consider the "distance" between ourselves as
interpreters and the original "world" of the text (or that to
be understood). The "author" stood in a different horizon of
meaning to ourselves, and the tools of Historical Criticism will
be of particular use in helping us to understand the text in its
own terms. This problem of distanciation need not necessarily
be a major difficulty because viewed positively, it can be a
resource, aiding new unexpected insights or challenges from
outside our particular horizon. We must be prepared to accept
that we personally and our culture, world-view, beliefs may not
have a monopoly of truth. We must therefore allow the text to
question our own questions and presuppositions.

Heidegger's later work formed an important philosophical
background to the work of Fuchs, Ebeling among others as they
developed the New Hermeneutics (40) Fuchs in studying Jesus'
parables draws on Heidegger's concern for the notion of Dasein's
being-in-the-world and its essential relatedness to it, showing
then how Jesus stands alongside the hearer in his world.
Heidegger bemoaned the fact that people were increasingly
falling out of Being   through idle talk, curiosity and
ambiguity. (41) He wanted to restore man's historical Dasein by
revealing the dead end that Platonic thought had led western man
into. Due to Plato "a dogma has been developed which not only

declares the question about the meaning of Being to be superfluous, but sanctions its complete neglect". (42) This is philosophically serious since the distinction made in Platonic thought has given philosophers an opportunity to concentrate on externals, material entities, empirical proofs and set aside essence, spirit, the inner life or quality, feeling and ontology as of secondary value in philosophy. Heidegger desires that appearance and inner reality be reunited. The Being of Dasein, says Heidegger, is to be viewed in its wholeness as care (sorge), which comprises anticipation, companionship, freedom from angst (nameless fear) (43). Thisleton comments: "The hermeneutical circle allows Heidegger's philosophy to embody not only truth about Dasein but truth which has been disclosed through Dasein's self-awareness and decision"; "Heidegger's view is anthropocentric in spite of its operation.". (44)

Turning to Bultmann we see that for him faith should abandon all external or "this-worldly" grounds of security such as history or miracle (45). He asserts that according to the principle of justification by faith we no longer need focus on the Jesus of history (46). For Bultmann the essence of the New Testament consists in the religious life portrayed rather than in dogma or myth (47) The hermeneutical task of fusion consists of a search for the text's inner existential meaning, as we set aside respect for the text with its own world view (48) We set aside the mythological form of the New Testament and focus on its existential meaning. He rejects therefore any supernatural intervention in history and advocates a search only for the personal value of the Scriptural accounts rather than any more objective facts or propositions therein (49)

We do not believe that Bultmann's programme is true to the self-consciousness of Scripture. All the evidence seems to show that the Biblical writers passionately believed God had intervened in historical events , miracles and mighty deeds, and

of course especially in Christ. They appear to state as much on numerous occasions (50)

If we were to follow Bultmann's programme of removing the mythological husk in order to leave the existential kernel the effect in practice is not only to remove the needed protection of the outer husk but also to attack the inner vitality of the kernel. We argue that myths have considerable power in their own right and must be left as part of the total kerygma. Thus the total and dynamic unity of event (whether mythical or not) and accompanying meaning can be left to perform their own hermeneutical function.

Scripture makes objective assertions, for instance about the nature of God, man's relationship to God, and God's action for man's salvation. The "Incarnational Principle" is to be seen in all God's dealings with man. (51) Such assertions prevent us being forced to say that the question of God and of myself are identical, that we cannot see the world correctly without reference to our own existence. Or as J.L. Austin (52) says "For self-involving or performative utterances to be effective, some particular (this worldly) state of affairs must be true".

Thus, we reiterate the need to pay due regard to the distance of the text, entering respectfully into its own horizons and the author's intention. We can do this even if imperfectly because the questions addressed are in many ways similar to our own. We must not overstress the problem of distance. Indeed many even outside the Church still hold to aspects of the Biblical world view (eg answered prayer).

We accept that it is not possible ever to achieve "pure" objectivity in our pursuit of the horizon of distance because of the range of personalities involved within the hermeneutical process, each with prejudices and presuppositions. Bultmann

argues convincingly that good exegesis engages our presuppositions and gives fruitful results – a search for pure objectivity is sterile because it is unrelated to life concerns. (53)

Yet there is value in moving to higher degrees of objectivity for the sake of providing commonly agreed reference points . A hermeneutically "distanced" interpretation will generally consist of several alternative interpretations of the text, together with arguments for or against each position with accompanying observations upon background influences and subsequent implications of accepting the particular position. This we have attempted with the Ascension in Chapter II.1.

2.4 Fusion

At this stage of the interpretative process we use every means available in order to complete the hermeneutical circle. The concerns of the text are brought to bear directly upon the contemporary concerns of the interpreter in order to challenge, inform or encourage him. Gadamer designates this the Fusion of horizons (54). Perhaps more dynamically we call this stage the collision of horizons between interpreter and interpreted. We must allow the possibility that a text "speaking" to us in this way from a different culture, era of history, perspective, viewpoint, might challenge or overturn our own position. Too often we smugly assume that our perspective is privileged to "look down upon" alternative interpretations whether of a text, experience or any phenomenon.

As we have noted, Heidegger said that for something to have meaning it must be explicitly related to the concerns of Dasein and our life situations. The facts and dogmas of life become meaningful only to the subject who stands within its world of reference (55) Truth is not only propositional but relates to experience in the realm of Being.

us and our very questions/presuppositions. We must flee all meanings confirming us in our self-complacency.

Thus Gadamer wants to cultivate an attitude of openness to the text, letting its freshness challenge us. Genuine understanding will then occur as horizons fuse. This is _in itself_ application, for this fusion is creative, not merely reproductive of what is already there. (63) The language event here generates something genuinely new, transcending our previous understanding or consciousness (64). Thus, says Gadamer, truth emerges not by rigorous analysis or rationalism but through a dialectical process of questioning whereby our language-tradition encounters and speaks to the finite questioner in his own language. (65)

2.5

Thus in interaction with Bultmann Heidegger and Gadamer we propose the following:-

1. We must learn to anticipate the creative dynamic power of the texts, analagous to a work of art. Literary appreciation has a real place in hermeneutical practice. (66) Hermeneutics is an art and a science at one and the same time.

2. Fusion occurs once we have sympathetically entered the horizons of the text on its own terms in its own world. Its very "strangeness" can often speak to us.

3. We must focus on the experiential witness of Scripture, especially where the authors testify to God. We can use this to discover our own true self-identity.

4. We must be prepared to reason through the propositions, or affirmations of Scripture. It has an objective, cognitive dimension to challenge our minds.

5. The present meaning of the text should link to the original _intention_ of the text and arise naturally from this. Yet we recognise the multiple human authors of any text, and the past and present intentions of God, which may well lead to a diversity of interpretations, all of value for particular purposes.

In order to facilitate a fusion of horizons in A.C.E. our programmes will need to study the horizons of the learning group. They will ascertain not only individual and group needs, overtly expressed, but also those the teacher feels should be faced. There will be a more likely fusion of horizons if the programme takes up current issues and questions on people's minds.

The A.C.E. programme will need to be CREATIVE, and stir people's imaginations (See Section 4) The programme needs a proper balance between subjectivity and objectivity - yet it is not necessary for both to be present in each   lesson   in complete balance.

But A.C.E. must   ensure that textual exegesis is responsible, honest and true to the original textual intentions not losing the horizon of distance that acts to counter the power of present day opinion.

Tackled in this way through a responsible fusion of horizons we should help people open themselves in new ways to the creative and dynamic power of the Ascension texts, letting these remould their thinking, giving them new experience of the radical quality of these narrative accounts. At a deeper level they may understand themselves better in terms of their own existence, consciousness of their own identity, and relation to God.   Individuals may become   more aware of how they themselves learn, make decisions, broadly interpret Scripture, and conceive of the transcendent world.

It should not be thought that growth in understanding occurs through just one traversal of the hermeneutical circle. The development of understanding is an open-ended   affair that requires repeated exercise at each stage of the process. This is why it is misleading for us to talk only about a hermeneutical circle. We do better to conceive of it as being a series of loops in the form of a spiral of understanding that grows and moves asymptotically towards its goal of full and complete understanding of the text, individual self, other people, and God Himself.

At times there may be a necessary or unfortunate regress of understanding, but we must overall in A.C.E. be optimistic of the possibility of achieving full understanding.

In certain areas (eg knowledge of God, understanding of mystery, grasp of doctrine) the major part of this process will only be completed after death. (67)

Growth in UNDERSTANDING and Interpretative
Skill

"Text"   "Present Experience and Understanding"
(interpreted)   (interpreter)
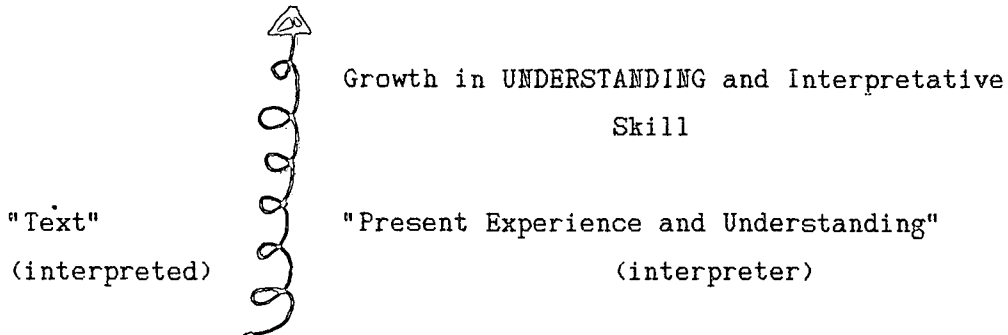
From within this generalized and widely accepted understanding of the hermeneutical spiral operating at what we label a First Stage level, there have in recent years developed a number of theories that spell out in greater detail the most effective way of construing the relationship between interpreter and interpreted. We label these "second stage" models, because they build upon the basic hermeneutical dynamic in specific ways. These models, some relevant to A.C.E., are briefly explained in the next Sub-section.

2.6 Second Stage Hermeneutic Models

2.6.1 General Usage of the "New Hermeneutic".

This places particular emphasis upon the need for present day fusion of horizons. The school labelled "The New Hermeneutic" was developed especially under Ebeling and Fuchs, following the lead of Heidegger and Gadamer (68) These stressed the vital need for empathetic engagement of the text with the hearer. They wished for truth to have the interpreter as its object, utilising the text as a hermeneutical aid for understanding past experience (69). They established firm connections between the kerygma of Jesus and his historical existence. Fuchs: "To have faith in Jesus' words" means to

repeat Jesus' decision. It means in effect, to have faith in the historical Jesus (70). The Word was then to perform its own hermeneutical function.

The above writers were especially interested in Jesus' parables. They felt that the parables' genius lay in their ability to engage with the horizons of the listener, shattering pre-conceived ideas and existing horizons of thought. (71) The "New Hermeneutic" is less interested in the written form of the text itself (the "words") and more interested in the meaning behind the words (the "Word" - the ultimate and challenging reality) (72) Consequently they have a powerful theology of the Word of God. For them it is the ultimate ground of understanding. The Word comes direct to man as he engages the verbal text.

We raise here a few questions about the approach that the "New Hermeneutics" adopts towards the biblical text. Firstly, we ask whether such does not stress "fusion" to the neglect of "distance", with the consequence that interpretation becomes an overly subjective affair cutting loose from the objective moorings provided by the historical-critical method.

Secondly, for performative utterances to be effective in convincing people, do not certain propositions need to be _true_ as well as appealing or challenging? We must be careful of biblical hermeneutics being purely transmuted into the study of aesthetics or literary appreciation.

Thirdly, we suspect that existentially based hermeneutics actually works subtly to reduce self-understanding to a form of self-consciousness. We are doubtful that a theory of self-awareness is the same as one of true self-understanding, and understanding of God, and it is these second that we predominantly seek in hermeneutical theory.

2.6.2 Specific Examples of Second-Stage Models

Within the last 10-15 years various specific and highly useful models have been suggested, and we here briefly review four of these that have applicability within our Ascension programme:-

1. READER RESPONSE: This model aims to study the impact that the text's author intended upon his readers/hearers - perhaps to surprise, challenge or criticize, encourage, confirm or edify. (73)

2. AUDIENCE-CRITICISM: In this we observe at a distance how biblical characters, especially Jesus, encountered individuals or groups. We observe their impact upon their given audience. (74)

In either (1) or (2) hermeneutical fusion recreates the original situations so that a similar impact is made on contemporary hearers. (75)

3. SPEECH-ACT: This approach uses a structuralist approach to language-coding and decoding the text to determine the structures of the author's mind. P.Ricoeur has successfully achieved this with symbols. (76)

4. ACTION-THEORY: By this we discover how texts performed as products yet instruments of action in the original setting. We then imaginatively discern how the text can be used today as an equivalent instrument. (77)

Models (3) and (4) link to the psychologizing approach of Dilthey (78), Wink (79). See Thisleton's review of this type of model. (80) These use overtly psychological techniques to help us identify deeply with biblical types or personalities.

2.6.3 Comments and Correlation of Models

We argue that these different models can be used to complement each other, but require an overarching model to give unity and coherence. Appendix II.3.A sets out these models within a comprehensive system.

The overall model which we find useful is provided by P.Hanson's "Hermeneutic of Engagement" for it affirms two central criteria upheld in this thesis. (81)

1. It is a dynamic model, engaging this-worldly realities pertinent to the rule and reign of God's Kingdom.

2. It is a highly personal model, for its ultimate goal is to open the believer to the living transcendent Divine Presence.

We set out Hanson's basic model, but have developed it further for the purposes of A.C.E. in this thesis.

Firstly We are to perceive the unfolding purposes of God, in biblical and subsequent history, engaging with His People. This we can perceive in the teleological vector, the creative/ redemptive unfolding of God's purpose amongst His historical People (82) We see it also in the cosmic vector, a progressive reaching out of God's People in past time towards a fuller embrace of the cosmos. (83). At a distance we thus observe the progressive unfolding of God's purposes amongst His People. "Biblical confessions", are rooted "in real happenings of history". (84)

Secondly We engage with the present issues of our world. We discern the activity of God embracing all of reality (85) God is waiting to be discovered at the heart of contemporary experience. This process corresponds to the analysis of presuppositions in the classic statement of the hermeneutical

spiral (86).   There is an exegesis of the world, ourselves included in this subjectivity.

   <u>Thirdly</u>   We engage the future as we look to God's ongoing activity.   We thereby encounter God at the heart of this movement.   We hold in tension the Visionary revelation of God with the Pragmatic dimension (87).   The repetitive patterns of the past and present give hermeneutical clues for the future.   We must simultaneously engage both with God and His world.   The ultimate fusion occurring is highly dynamic as we engage the creative/redemptive activity of God, and are open, as were the prophets, to God's Reform whilst respecting the given Form of the Christian tradition. (88)

SECTION 3

Theological and Biblical Hermeneutics
The Status of Scripture.   The role of the Holy Spirit

3.1

We begin this Section by considering the status and
authority of Scripture as it relates to the believer's or
unbeliever's life.This will have immediate repercussions for
the use of the Bible in A.C.E.

The question we wish to discuss first relates to the
issue of the nature of biblical authority,in terms of its
theoretical status and practical impact.   There have been a
number of contentious technical words used in this debate that
have tended to act as slogans thrown between the protagonists
in what we regard as an unnecessarily aggressive polarising
manner (89).   We clarify our position by grouping the key word
concepts into two pairs:-

1.   Inerrancy and Infallibility

D.Carson claims that Scripture is inerrant in all matters
where it makes clear assertions, whether in the fields of
faith, history or science (90).   Contrary to some critics he
denies that inerrancy is an alien category imposed on
Scripture.   He claims that the Bible qualifies for the labels
inerrant or infallible as we find it to be true and reliable
through actual investigation (91).   He and many conservative
evangelicals   such as J. Packer   believe Scripture to be
inerrant because the author is God.   It is a "fully biblical
notion - namely the total truth and trustworthiness of biblical
affirmations and directions, as a consequence of their divine
authenticity and as the foundation for their divine authority
as revelation from God". (92)   Because He superintended the

writing of His Word He guarantees its reliability (B.B. Warfield's "Concursive Theory" (93) again reappears). Many scholars (e.g. J. Barr) (94) still firmly believe that these scholars are in this position because they were led there by dogmatic assumptions rather than genuine presuppositionless exegesis.

Our response is that the Bible writers and Jewish-Christian tradition, seem to regard the Bible as generally trustworthy, and deriving from God as the ultimate author. But problems often have arisen when the words themselves become legalistically binding in minute detail. The words inerrant and infallible" do not occur in Scripture, and neither does the general idea of the precise and literal word for word exactness of the text. Thus 2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pe 1:20, Jn 10:35 gives us no clear mandate for upholding the ipsissima verba of the text as inerrant or infallible. In this regard we accept the criticisms of J.Barr and J.Dunn (95) that these Scriptures could only in the writers' minds have referred to particular sections of Scripture (the Canon was not of course established in those days). But an exegesis of these verses shows that they do not necessitate a position labelled inerrant or infallible even of the Scriptures to which they refer.

Thus Warfield's conceptualization of Scripture in these terms is a late Nineteenth Century phenomenom, and such stems from a capitulation to a precision-making scientific world-view. Concerns for this were not existant in earlier Church history. Indeed both within Scripture itself and the subsequent history of interpretation demonstrate that there was fairly considerable freedom in the use of the actual words of the texts within new situations. According to J.D.G. Dunn: "The authoritative scripture is that which is interpreted into the contemporary historical situation".(96)

In the light of this we prefer not to use these categories because firstly they do not seem to be true to the self-consciousness of the authors ofScripture, and secondly because such leads us away from an understanding of Scripture that is helpful for our interpretative endeavours. This is so since it focusses on the outer verbal form of the text rather than the ever-fresh divine intention or eternal inner spiritual significance of the content.

2.   Inspired and Authoritative

We now turn to this pair of word-concepts which technically uphold the special quality of Scripture, and its ultimate derivation from God. Such words signify one's belief that God stands behind the words of Scripture. He was the chief instrument in bringing them into being and He guarantees their continuing power and relevance for today. Two theologians who convincingly support this position are J. Smart (97) and P. Achtemeier. (98)

P. Achtemeier develops a relatively sophisticated and multi-layered view of inspiration in a thoroughly human context. Thus he claims the Biblical texts are the product of the revelatory will of God which illumined anew for the authors in each stage of biblical history, the preceding traditions (99) The Scriptures are products of various authors wrestling anew with the transcendence of God and His relationship to their present/past traditions and beliefs. Therefore we must grasp our scriptural tradition in like manner as we re-interpret it dynamically under the Will of God. (100) When Achtemeier turns to the nature of Biblical inspiration, he demonstrates that the Bible normally has little to say about itself. Indeed it points away from itself and its own status to the someone/something greater than it, especially to God. (101)

Achtemeier points out that the notion of inspiration relates to the life of the community producing it, more than to the work of specific individuals. Hence our present day hermeneutics must also be inspired (by God), dynamic (through human engagement), dialogical (between God, tradition and existential situations), occur in the context of community, and above all witness to God's action in Christ.

Smart is concerned with the authority and interpretation of Scripture especially as it relates to Homiletics (102) He emphasizes the power of God's Word when properly proclaimed to break through to the listener with great effectiveness; this is the true goal of hermeneutics. In such a revelation event God confronts/encounters man in judgement and mercy for the powerful authority of the scripture is so great. (103)

For Smart, the authority of Scripture lies not so much in human statements about it, as in the profundity of the message it contains, and so its authority cannot be fully explained (104) This Word is God's way of being with man in the midst of history as presence and power. Smart states that it is by responsible dialectic hermeneutics that the true authority of Scripture is recovered (105)

We follow also the view of Scripture proposed by P. Hanson: he emphasizes Scripture as dynamic, open and rich in its diversity of witness. The Bible most of all expresses living relationship with God and our fellow-men, and issues a call to a living and responsive faith. (106) Firet also highlights in Paraklesis the immediacy of God's presence as biblically attested, to address, encourage and call forth (107)

With Smart, Achtemier and Hanson we uphold the Bible as: -

1.   Bearing the authority of God for the original community,
and throughout the history of the Church to the present day.
It testifies to and is the paramount vehicle for the revelation
of God. (108)

2.   Being inspired by the living God: for the original
writers of Scripture, during   the history of redactional
development of the text, and through the history of
interpretation to the present.   We thereby testify to the
continuing revelation of God in His Holy Spirit.   It is this
that enables us to talk meaningfully of the possibility of
revelation according to the mind of God. (109)

The hermeneutical and educational implications of such a
strong denotation of the authority and inspiration of
Scripture are as follows:

1. When interpreting any biblical text it is inevitable that
in due course one's own preferences/ideas grow in prominence.
An A.C.E. session can often begin by a study of the text, but
subsequent discussion leaves the text far behind. The text can
rapidly lose its authoritative stature whatever explicit
statements are made to the contrary.   We must constantly
recognise not simply the authority of God (this can become an
abstraction) but the person of God embedded and to be
encountered in textual study. The ultimate authority relevant
for hermeneutics is the presence of God revealed in reverent
and exemplary interpretation.

2. The inspired quality of Scripture has vital significance in
hermeneutics.   At a distance we appreciate the effect of
inspiration giving a special quality to the text and affecting
its community in various ways.   In fusion we seek the
continuing inspiration of God as we open ourselves to His
Spirit in our present day interpretation.   A.C.E. must
encourage genuine critical openness to the Text and to God at

the same time. The manner of inspiration of the original text
can instruct us to prepare to receive inspiration in like
manner. Thus our hermeneutics will attempt to remain
continually drawing upon the dynamic inspiration of God as He
enlivens our thought processes. This positioning of students
towards God in the midst of the intense activity of A.C.E.
programmes is a considerable task. Hermeneutics is thus seen
as a partnership between the authoratitive inspiration of God
and human labours - a fine balance needs to be struck.

3.2 How we construe Scripture in biblical hermeneutics
     2nd, 3rd stage

        Those writing in the field of Hermeneutics have now
generally accepted the   model of Section 2, and devote
attention to discerning hermeneutical keys for setting forward
their specific second stage hermeneutical programmes and thence
third stage hermeneutical practice.

        These hermeneutical keys relate very closely to how they
construe scripture. D. Kelsey (110) demonstrates that his
selected sample of theologians construe Scripture in a variety
of irreducible ways (ie there is no single hermeneutical second
stage   method) according to a priori assumptions made to
legitimize their theological proposals. (111) This makes
their exegesis look viciously circular.

        We will in this brief section survey a range of ways of
construing Scripture.

1. A very popular and, we believe, powerful way of
construing Scripture is to see it as concerned with the theme
of liberation. (112) At its best this is portrayed   by
theologians as both an inner and world affecting activity.
This approach is a hermeneutic of event that interprets God's

activity in the light especially of the Exodus, the ethical norms of the Kingdom, prophetic denunciation of abuse of power. Hermeneutics is to be carried out in a praxis oriented manner, in the midst of human activity, for there can be no detached exegesis.

2.   Many exegetes construe Scripture in terms of Christ. (113) We observe how Barth accomplishes this by asking "What does the text ultimately say of Jesus Christ?". Christological hermeneutics is faithful to much of the New Testament but we must beware attempts to do this with the Old Testament. Hermeneutics must therefore frequently look to the founder of our faith, His person and His life; but we recognise that not every text will be consciously about him. Ultimately it should enable a deepened relationship with Christ, and a lifestyle increasingly consonant with his example (114)

3   We will observe in detail in Section 5   the popularity of construing Scripture as a narrative of God's soteric purposes. (115) Revelation is expressed in story form in an overarching story within which are short stories illustrating the form of the whole. The stories of Scripture rightly interpreted become instrumental towards our justification and righteousness, (116). Story-based hermeneutics offers one of the finest hermeneutical bridges currently available. (117)

4.   The Bible can be construed as the normative literary articulation of the religious experience of the Jews and early Church. (118) The true goal of "distanced" study is to see the promise and presence of God experienced amongst His People. In fusion we aim to learn how God may come to be truly among us in our contemporary experience. This construal of Scripture has great promise because of the deep widespread importance of religious experience. According to Marino the basic biblical experience is of dying and rising - this is what salvation is in essence. (119) Hermeneutically based A.C.E. will seek to

link students' faith stories with the Christian tradition.
P.Ricoeur is also concerned with this approach to Scripture,
taking up the themes of testimony and witness. (120)

5   A further final possible construal of Scripture picks up
Hanson's second stage hermeneutical model, the call to
transcendence in engagement with God the Dynamic Transcendence.
(121) This construal interprets Scripture as a call to self-
transcendence, the movement beyond the mundaneness of life
towards new awareness, authentic existence, new possibilities
of being. At a distance we look at the Call of God upon the
lives of biblical characters, we see also how they responded
and the consequences. Thence using the power of imagination we
proceed to fuse horizons by discerning the implications for
ourselves as interpreters and the possibilities ahead. (122)

     We have considered but five possible construals of
Scripture which might find a place in a generalizing model of
A.C.E. Several more are provided in Section 5, but our lists
are illustrative rather than exhaustive. These approaches are
all comfortably placed within the overall model construing
Scripture as about the Kingdom of God - His dynamic rule and
reign. The diversity of approaches is to be expected in the
light of the diversity of Scripture and diversity of human
needs. (123) It will be the task of the A.C.E. teacher to
decide which construals will be most relevant for particular
purposes. A major advantage of utilising various differing
construals is that it helps obviate the danger of a few
selected texts or sections of Scripture, ideas or doctrines
becoming unduly privileged. Certain theological approaches now
popular succumb to this danger - it fails to do justice to the
diverse needs and problems of our world. (124) J.A.Kirk chooses
the "Kingdom" theme as central because it is general and
because it calls for a radical transformation of relationships.
We thus follow the "full-orbed" approach of G. Fackre in our
construing of Scripture in the hermeneutical enterprise. (125)

Acknowledging the inspiration of Scripture, we seek to be open to ever new ways of construing it as God purposes for us, whilst remaining under its authority as the Word of God.

3.3   The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics

This part must be read in conjunction with comments made in Chapter I.1 on the question of God's intervention in this world.   We offer further observations here because many consider the Holy Spirit to be a vital means of understanding. If indeed the Holy Spirit is a key factor in hermeneutics then we can uphold a difference between General-Secular hermeneutics and Religious-Theological hermeneutics.

We begin with Calvin.   His solution to his own derived doctrine of man as fallen, perverse, trapped, lies in a powerful pneumatology.   The Holy Spirit acts as our guide and authority for understanding Scripture, and indeed all spiritual realities.   (126)   "The authority of Scripture is sealed in the hearts of believers by the testimony of the Holy Spirit". He claims the inner witness of the Spirit authenticates the authority of Scripture.   God "speaks" as we read Scripture. (127)

Thus we cannot read or study the Bible as any ordinary book, but we require the Spirit as guide.   Without him our thinking is man-centred, fallible, speculative.   Calvin's hermeneutics give therefore the strongest possible place to the Spirit in enabling the formation of Christian understanding.   A truly distinctive hermeneutic is upheld and justified in a way which many find hard to accept, because our contemporary view of man has changed.

K. Barth starts from a very similar position to Calvin with the strong assertion of the huge qualitative difference between God's and man's capacity for understanding. (128)   He

makes the devastating statement "The word of God can only confront and illuminate man as truth and reality if seen to run counter to his whole natural capacity to understand". (129) This implies a radical discontinuity between man and the Word of God which cannot be bridged by human-centred hermeneutical principles.

Barth supports this position by reference to passages such as 2 Corinthians 3:14-18, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. The arguments here imply that the Word of God is not an experience of man, but God's decision about US. (130) The gulf is bridged by the Spirit making the Bible become the Word of God for us. Thus in an identical manner to Calvin, he requires a strong theology of revelation and the Spirit to enable finite man to be capable of apprehending God's truths.

Barth characterizes the man-ward movement of God as occurring in three stages.

Firstly, there is the primary revelatory occurrence – the Word originally spoken by God. (131) This is enshrined in Scripture for the sake of succeeding generations. This Word is then brought to life in the contemporary preaching of the Church by the Spirit's leading. God is not imprisoned in past revelatory acts but is sovereignly free to express Himself through Scripture today. The Holy Spirit also enables within us a response to Christ and his claim to Lordship.

Barth's major hermeneutical stress is upon finding the present meaning of the text, re-creating the experience – for example of justification – of the original writers within our present situation. He claims that the text's meaning is what it says to you and me today. D. Ford argues convincingly that Barth takes seriously the narrative sense of Scripture and uses it to offer powerful contemporary fusion of text and experience. (132) We obtain through wrestling with the words

of the text the meaning (the Word) by a dialectic process involving total engagement. Barth gives strong justification, which we accept, for the need of the Holy Spirit as a power within our hermeneutics. Because like Calvin he sees man as fallen and finite, he needs the initiative/movement of God's Spirit as a means for humans to understand Scripture and receive authentic Words from God.

Finally, we consider the article by J. Frame <u>The Holy Spirit and the Scriptures</u>. (133) Frame begins his article by stating in summary fashion various ways in which the Holy Spirit is involved in the Scriptures. He is the author of revelation. (134) He supervised the inscribing of Scripture. (135) By the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit he enables the hearers of the Word to savingly appropriate it. (136) We agree; without needing to quote proof texts it is clear from the corpus of Scripture that the Holy Spirit has been and is now at work in these three areas of revelation, inspiration and internal testimony. These become three essential features of our hermeneutical theory, operating both in the original texts, and in our present day interpretation, understanding and application. We thus argue that the Holy Spirit has an important role to play at every stage of the hermeneutical spiral and thence in A.C.E. theory and practice also.

The Holy Spirit's role in the fusing of horizons, in particular, makes a real difference in hermeneutics, arising from His internal testimony. Through such means we can and do meet with God as we enter intimate communion with Him. The Holy Spirit overcomes our resistance to sin and opens our eyes. He transforms our attitudes so that we come to acknowledge gladly what may have rational justification yet still leave us cold. Thus says Frame, the Spirit and the Word form a joint witness to us. (137) The sovereignty and ultimate freedom of God's Spirit is seen in His ability to drive the truth home to our frequently obtuse or obstinate minds.

It is of importance for our hermeneutical procedures that listening to Scripture is not merely a transaction (impersonally) between ourselves and a specially inspired book. Rather, as we correctly read Scripture, we meet God Himself. Calvin: "We feel a divine energy living and breathing in it - an energy by which we are drawn and animated to obey it, willingly indeed ..." (138)Millions of Christians testify to this fact and do not believe it is mere projection. Our Hermeneutics must give due weight to this testimony of frequent experience. (139) But we note the danger of pure subjectivity and super-spirituality of claims for private revelation. We must "test the spirits". (140) The Word of God must act as arbitrator over teaching claimed to be "of the Spirit".

The human aspect of this operation of God's Spirit lies in the dynamic of Faith. Faith - reaching out towards that which is unseen - assists the formation of Christian understanding because it comprises a reaching out in expectancy for new experience and knowledge.. Faith is a gift of the Spirit, but requires that we exercise it to proceed to new levels of Christian maturity and discipleship. Its dynamic creative power - common to all humans, is brilliantly expounded by Fowler. (141)

To this end we must grow to understand the Spirit's distinctive functions as revealer, inspirer, enlivener and empowerer, thus learning in A.C.E. to receive the guidance God gives through him. We note Thisleton's remarks that "the Holy Spirit works _through_ the normal processes of human understanding and neither independently of them nor contrary to them". (142) The Holy Spirit wishes to bring to us the contemporary meaning of God's Word, but most of all to mediate the presence of Christ to us. We must welcome Him because our natural pride and dullness inhibit our attempts at understanding.

SECTION 4

Other influences on Adult Learning as approached through
    Hermeneutical Theory

4.1

        Those who follow the principles of Hermeneutics in A.C.E.
must not claim what would be a spurious purity of approach,
focussing only on the contemporary individual and his growth of
understanding.   Too many Protestant interpreters have been
guilty of such individualism.   We ensure that this will not
happen, by looking at four major influences upon the
interpretative act.   These are: Tradition, Liturgy/Worship, the
influence of the Christian Community, and the power of
Imagination.

        We particularly wish to see how these influences might
assist or perhaps hinder understanding.   Thus we shall attempt
to engage three Concerns:-

1.   Consider what sort of influence these areas exert in
     practice for development of Christian understanding.

2.   Determine at what points these make impact in the
     hermeneutical spiral.

3.   Indicate certain specific ways in which we may encourage
     these factors to work to our advantage in A.C.E., and
     mitigate any detrimental effects.

4.2 Tradition

     C.F. Evans (143) reminds us that the Scriptures themselves
consist of traditions of past events, hero-stories, religious
teaching, and experience of God.   These Scriptures were formed

into their present state according to historical, cultural and personal influences and are therefore part of the tradition. Thus we cannot neatly disentangle Scripture and Tradition. Evans claims that Scripture and Tradition approximate to each other, (144).

The New Testament is ambivalent towards tradition, applauding it when representing faithfulness to past stories of Christ or his teaching. (145) Yet it was seen as negative and destructive if it consisted purely of human ideas or ritual. (146) Their attitude offers guidance for hermeneutics to seek out the intended sense of Scripture in preservation of the past and discernment of God's mind. Yet we beware interpretation seemingly representing human prejudice or vested power interests.

We thus accept the positive role of tradition in so far as it influences our Canonical Scriptures, and interpret in awareness of this _using_ such tradition as a guide. We utilise subsequent tradition (theological, ecclesiastical, cultural, historical) in a more careful manner - balancing the value of past interpretative insights alongside the need to be ever open to the contemporary situation and God's unfolding will.

We thus accept with Fackre that the function of tradition in relation to Scripture is heuristic. (147) It can assist our interpretative endeavours providing it acts in A.C.E. in a ministerial, not magisterial capacity (148) We pursue hermeneutics within the inherited trajectory of interpretation whilst recognising this trajectory has further to lead us. (149)

Specifically regarding the Ascension we must note:-

1. Tradition at work in the formulation of original accounts.

2. Tradition of exegetical interpretation of texts.

3.   Hermeneutical procedures of varying theological traditions.

4.   Discernment of one's own favoured tradition (as teacher)

5.   Grasp of how one's students are affected by tradition.

6.   How theological tradition can hinder true understanding

7.   Where to utilize the power of tradition to assist faithful interpretation.

4.3 Community

The task of interpretation has been seen by Protestants as an individualistic matter, between himself and God alone. All are now discovering that the effect of Community-Church, friends and wider society is also very considerable in moulding their understanding. In addition many now have realised that Community is a valuable influence upon them. Small Study or Fellowship Groups have established themselves in Church life.

We need to understand the hermeneutical influence of the original Community, as well as the contemporary Community. The Scriptures developed in part to assist the Community, giving it self-identity and a justification in face of various assaults. (150) This was expressed in terms of rituals, customs, institutions, authority and ethical values. As we study these influences we are helped to see how these can address current communal concerns in fusion of horizons. We also perceive in A.C.E. how these influences affect individual's style and content of learning for good or bad, as a prelude to remediary action.

D.E.Miller places the Community influence central in Christian Education (151), for it must act as the proximate teacher for a Christian, (152) The dynamic life of the Community

provides fertile ground for holistic growth (153) because the whole Community in the ideal undertakes theological activity.

We thus seek in A.C.E. to build upon the positive hermeneutical function of Community following for example the "Base Communities" of Latin America. (154)

1. As Fackre reminds us, there is great stimulus from thinking alongside others. (155)

2. This communal style of hermeneutics is best practised in the midst of compassionate activity. This is a praxis model-reflection amidst action. (156)

3. The teacher here provides the Community with researched material relevant to their concerns - this is his specialist gift. He can draw on Jewish-Christian Community experience at a distance.

4. As well as the Community being encouraged or challenged there must be a place for individual growth and spontaneity.

5. We must ensure also that the individual and communities' relationship with God develops, and is not subsumed in its own interests. Such hermeneutics, following Dryness, (157) tells our story, hears God's story and merges the two together in relationship.

4.4 Liturgy, Worship, Prayer

G. Wainwright reminds us that Scripture developed in the context of a worshipping Church. (158) Doctrine was formulated to some extent through the use of reason, but powerfully within the liturgical settings. (159) Scriptures have been understood in a liturgical setting since that time. We achieve fusion hermeneutically as we gather in worship and liturgical

celebration. Worship must exercise powerful influence upon interpretation for it "acts as a hermeneutical continuum for the Scriptures". (160)

D.Hardy and D.Ford adopt a similar approach, reminding us that praise and celebration are central to our existence. (161) For them also praise has a hermeneutical function in all of the Christian's activity. (162) Paul's doctrinal formulations, for instance often led him to worship the God of whom he wrote. (163)

The consequences for our hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. are in brief:-

1.   A.C.E. must remind people of the doxological significance and formation of Scripture (distance). We teach the function of praise as an interpretative force representing in Scripture the communities' or individual's response to the salvational activity of God. (164)

2.   Prayer and worship in A.C.E. must breathe the Spirit's life to hermeneutics to prevent them being cold and analytical. (165) A.C.E. should cause its programmes to flow in and out of worship in an uncontrived manner seeing it function also as a teaching aid.

3.   Our interpretative studies must lead to a greater appreciation of God in wonder, love and praise – not pride in accumulated knowledge. Indeed liturgy keeps us humble because its conservatism restrains the pursuit of the latest beguiling interpretative fashion .

4.   Teaching on biblical hermeneutics must be given in the context of teaching on prayer and worship. The interpretative function of the Liturgy and Lectionary is considerable and must be appreciated. (166)

5. Thus liturgy powerfully unifies our hermeneutical endeavours in A.C.E. around key central themes, doctrines, the Canon of Scripture, and above all to "Jesus Our Praise". (167) S.Sykes recognises the identity of the Christian faith as located in its desire to worship God in Jesus Christ. (168)

4.5 The Hermeneutical power of Imagination

Hermeneutics appears to be a highly intellectual activity. To overcome this A.C.E. can help people develop creative and imaginative powers. According to G. Macdonald the imagination is that feature of man's being acting as a clue to the Imago Dei, because it is a reflection of God's creative activity. (169) J.McIntyre believes we can use the Imagination to extend the boundaries of pure intellect. (170) McIntyre demonstrates how the imagination can enable more powerful interpretation of Parables. (171) See also A.Wilder on the Parable of the Sower. (172) Other writers such as R.Alter (173) have allied the use of imagination to a grasp of the literary qualities of Scripture so as to assist people to enter the thought-world of the Bible author or event described.

We argue also that imagination can help in understanding doctrine, ethics, and the majesty of God Himself. Many sections of Scripture have utilised imaginative powers and require us to study at a distance how the authors expressed themselves (distance) and in fusion to allow equivalent creative powers to be reawakened in us now, (174) McIntyre also demonstrates how the imagination can integrate otherwise disparate insights around key Christian doctrines such as Creation, Incarnation. (175)

Thus A.C.E. should introduce students to the power of imagination as a means of grasping deeper truths. J.McIntyre acknowledges the value of the Charismatic movement in stimulating the imagination. He says the Holy Spirit is "God's

imagination let loose and working with all the freedom of God in the world ...". (176) L.Ryken claims that art forms such as biblical literature can re-arrange our world - their strangeness appeals to us. (177) Imagination thus opens our eyes to alternative worlds, helping us probe the mystery at the heart of our faith. (178)

We thus broaden our A.C.E. programmes to include utilisation of pertinent art-forms, and especially the literary status of Scripture, recognising that imagination has a unique function in stimulating deep, perhaps a-rational understanding.

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Section 5 Narrative as a Hermeneutical bridge for A.C.E.

5.1 Introduction: Why has the category of story such
     potential

     We wish to demonstrate in this Section that the
interpretative power of story has widespread applicability in
the communication of Christian truth, for it assists the
bridging of the gap between Christian tradition and a student's
contemporary experience. A.C.E. must, we contend, utilize the
power of story to help people live more faithful Christian
lives.

     It is evident that in daily life we are continually
engaged in story telling and listening to the recounting by
others of anecdotes. A.C.E. can build on the observation that
good stories invariably engage the interest of others, and
utilize techniques found successful in informal conversations.
Yet stories are important to us not merely because they engage
our imagination or help form common bonds between people within
a shared world but because they resonate within us as powerfully
true. (179)

     G.Stroup (180) discusses the role of story in the
development of self-identity. He builds on an influential paper
by S. Crites who alerts us to the essentially narrative quality
of human experience. (181). Stroup claims that we are the
stories of our lives, for the smaller sub-plots (eg a promotion
or love-affair) weave together to form the overall plots of our
lives (eg of our career, love-life) - which constitute our
unique personality. (182)

     J. Shea similarly claims that stories shape our
experience and also reflect our shaping of it in the eyes of
others. (183) By re-telling the stories that are important to

us we can make sense or construct meaning (in personal or cosmic terms) of our apparently disordered directionless lives. (184)

R. Roth has analysed the function and status of story in great depth - he claims that it is a fundamental category of reality: "Reality is a plot that continuously unfolds in many ways - often surprising sometimes radical, absurd, comic, tragic or mysterious". (185) We concur with Roth that reality itself is probably more helpfully and realistically analysed in terms of its narrative quality than in terms of ontological-metaphysical systems, for these are artificial constructs, abstractions at least one stage removed from the average person's experience and questions of life. (186) Narrative according to Bausch is perhaps the fundamental category of existence. (187)

5.2 God and Story

Navonne and Cooper claim that God is revealed and yet finally intended through human stories. (188) We accept that God has bound knowledge of Himself to human history according to the Incarnational Principle exemplified in Christ. We study the interventionist and immanentist activity of God enacted in the story of this world and individual lives.

J. Shea claims that stories of God originate and flourish in the relational flow between humankind and mystery. (189) The mystery of God generates mythic activity and storytelling, but essentially in relationship. Thus "Christian stories of God create worlds by disclosing the foundational contours of the God-Humankind relationship". (190) Stories describe and facilitate relationship between God and man, a principal concern of this thesis, centring as it does on personal revelation. A shorthand way of telling the story of man and God is to tell the story of Jesus. (191) In this we can study within our

existing relationship the links between our stories and the
Story and stories of Jesus.

How do we achieve this? P. Ricoeur advocates a return to
a "second naivete" to recreate the power of the original story
of Jesus. "For the second immediacy that we seek and the second
naivete that we await are no longer accessible to us anywhere
else than in an hermeneutic; we can believe only by
interpreting." (192)

5.3 Scripture and Story

Clearly the Scriptures are full of narrative, and some of
these stories have considerable significance for the rest of the
Bible. Von Rad argues that there are certain foundational
narratives operating at the core of the Old Testament,
especially Deuteronomy 26:5-9. This core of Scripture, for
instance the stories of Abraham or Moses, (193) are seen as of
salvational significance, signs that God was, and still is at
work for His People. (194) In the New Testament clearly the key
narrative is that of Christ, especially his Crucifixion and
Resurrection. Thus, although much of Scripture is not actual
narrative, most of it is an elaboration, thanksgiving or
theological reflection upon these narrative accounts. (195)
A.C.E.'s task of interpretation is to locate individual's and
the contemporary Communities' stories within the foundational
biblical stories also, showing how each reinterprets the other.

To achieve this A.C.E. must attend to the special
qualities of the biblical narratives. Auerbach analysed the
story of Abraham and Isaac and concluded that Old Testament
narrative claims to represent the only world of ultimate
meaning, attempting to overcome the reader's own reality. (196)
Its history-like quality acts to substantiate its wider claims.
Thence the commonplace is seen as the natural sphere for the

understanding of reality. (197) History becomes the bearer of the sacred (198) Amos Wilder also believes that Biblical language "immediately" lays hold of reality in all its dimensions, cosmically as well as individualistically. (199) Thus biblical narrative must question our contemporary narrative because it represents the reality of God to us. (200)

We thus surmize that imaginative yet faithful retelling of Biblical stories has a continuing place for adults as well as children. But the stories must be told in an adult way and adult meaning made available. To this end, in A.C.E. we respect the literary form and mimetic power of Scriptural narrative in a sophisticated manner. R. Alter illustrates various powerful ways of doing this in practice. (201) Thus the authoritative power of the text is released to re-align our disordered stories with the open movement of God's story. (202)

5.4 Characterization of Story in Scripture

Many have sought interpretative keys for construing the underlying meaning of Scriptural narrative. Here are a few illustrations:

J. Navonne sees Scriptural stories as travel stories of God. An inner journey of the Spirit corresponds to the outer narrative form of the journey. (203)

J. Dunne construes Scriptural stories as descriptive of men's search for God in time and memory. We learn to "pass over" from their standpoint to personally experience companionship with God in time. (204)

S. Hauerwas assesses stories in terms of their effectiveness in helping us to live what he calls "truthful lives", in a deep ethical sense. (205)

G. Fackre argues that biblical stories are basic beliefs
interpreted in the biography of God. (206) He recounts the
major episodes of Creation, Fall, Covenant, Christ, Church,
Salvation and Consummation in narrative form. The prologue and
epilogue of the Story is God Himself. (207)

In view of this rich diversity of construing Scripture
the teacher must responsibly present alternatives so that the
student is given maximum opportunity to discover how biblical
narrative might address his Story/Stories.

5.5   Stories of our Times

In   our   hermeneutically   oriented   approach   through
narrative we have begun by considering story at a distance. To
assist the fusion of horizons we must devote attention to our
preunderstanding as expressed in the stories of our lives. The
stories of our times are affective, concretizing responses to
the myths of our age, and conversely the myths of our society
act to generate our own stories. We require to discern which
myths are recurrent (for instance "wealth brings happiness"),
and which are not in continuity with the biblical era (for
instance "animal sacrifice appeases an angry God")

Mircea Eliade conceives of myth as providing us with our
most basic structures for perceiving the pattern of reality
underlying the world. (208) We seek to address these in A.C.E.;
here are a few powerful today (209) :-

"The Perfect Society or Classless Utopia", "Noble Origins - the
perfection of our roots", "Revolution when Antipathetic Powers
will be Overthrown", "The Self Made Man or Entrepreneur", "To be
beautiful is to be Happy and Popular".

A.C.E. must bring these myths to consciousness, and this can be
achieved in part through Narrative. We thus reveal our

presuppositions embodied in myth. The next stage is to consider the foundational questions generating such myths; regarding identity, origins, significance, security, hope. In fusion A.C.E. attempts to address these questions with the narrative form of Christian myths that deal with these perennial issues. Most Christian myths have the inherent power to achieve this.

5.6 Teacher and Students' role in Narrative based A.C.E.

We propose that the teacher sees himself as a Storyteller, Story-elicitor, Story-listener, and Story-interpreter. (210) These represent movements that will vary in order in a flexible education programme. Students participate in these four activities in creative partnership, for stories are a mutual creation - often at their richest when spontaneous. (211) However, the teacher's responsibility is to take the overall initiative, and we propose he proceeds as follows:-

1. The teacher must be thoroughly conversant with the Christian Storybook - for it is this that finally acts as the authority in A.C.E.

2. Informally and formally the teacher listens to the stories told by his students. He also becomes acquainted with other stories of the world.

3. He prepares to present stories relevant to his students' stories, drawn from the Storybook and wider Storyland in this "Story-shaped world". He should try to present these in the context of the overall story of God.

4. To encourage spontaneous Story-telling he should establish an atmosphere of trust founded upon strong relationships.

5. He presents the stories in the lesson bearing the syllabus (or perhaps Lectionary) in mind, but addressing deeper questions

of life and pertinent foundational myths so that he tells "from depth to depth".

6.   He encourages those present to share stories whether directly relevant or not - but makes clear the initial agenda so that students know what sort of stories are being sought.

7.   The teacher listens to the stories of his students and begins to interpret them, discerning what needs, expectations, problems, hopes, joys might be there - what should be affirmed and what challenged.

8.   Without imposing his patterns of thought he makes meaning available to his students for consideration and discussion. Three elements exist, drawing upon Bausch's Six Stages (Learn, Own, Contemplate, Pray, Share, Celebrate the Story) (212):-

a.   Help interpret according to the student's frame of reference
b.   Help interpret according to the biblical story of redemption in Christ
c   Help interpret prayerfully in accordance with God's perspective. With Groome (213) and Fackre (214) we do so in accordance with God's overarching Story and Vision of the coming Kingdom of God.

9.   In discussion the teacher encourages response of a frank and open nature. Further meanings may emerge at this stage.

10.   Near the conclusion of the Session he draws together the various stories with their accompanying   interpretations . He summarizes in his own and the students' terms. He proposes or elicits appropriate action which the group could take, for stories must lead listeners to decision. (215) Possibilities include: Prayer, Worship, Personal Resolution, Political-Social action, Further Storytelling, Compassionate Involvement with the stories of other's lives.

SECTION 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Overall Model

We have been developing through this Chapter a
generalized hermeneutical model which will have usage in A.C.E.,
particularly with reference to the teaching and learning of
Scripture.

Our proposed model is set out in Appendix II.3.A. In
this we show how we move from the widely accepted model of the
Hermeneutical Spiral (stage 1) to a range of possible construals
of Scripture that can be allied to possible hermeneutical models
(stage 2) From there we move to a Third stage where we
formulate sets of general andragogical procedures to help us to
achieve these goals. Stage 4 consists of numerous specific
programmes that are based on our hermeneutical approach at
"higher" levels. The Appendix gives an example for each of our
five construals or models

We need, in opening up the full dimensions of the
biblical message in each hermeneutical model to be constantly
discovering what we call "hermeneutical keys" at all levels -
themes in Scripture which interact in a meaningful way with
issues which are, or should be, of concern.

We add to the five examples at Stage 2 five further
"keys":-

(6) "Inner Conflict". The need for inner healing,
reconciliation, peace - but not bought cheaply

(7) "Celebration of Life". A call to worship, creativity,
joy with God in His Creation.

(8)   "Sacrifice". Altruism, Servanthood. The need to follow Christ's way of suffering with disinterestedness. Dying to oneself. The Cross as a paradigm.

(9)   "Wisdom and Purpose". We build upon the Wisdom Traditions' call for a life of meaning, direction, prudence, thoughtfullness.

(10)   "Community". God's desire to build for His Name a people to proclaim His truth, bring glory to Him. Themes of love, unity, fellowship, witness.

We provide an overarching hermeneutical key that will act to bind together these ten second stage "keys" in the fundamental theological notion of the Kingdom of God. We cannot enter extended justification of the centrality of the Kingdom. T. Groome, whose work we surveyed in Chapter I.2, focusses also upon the notion of Education for the Kingdom of God (216), and believes most New Testament scholars accept its centrality for Jesus. (217) We gave adequate justification for the centrality of the Kingdom in Chapter I.2 (218). Our aims for A.C.E. as delineated in Chapter I.2 therefore find expression in a hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. using this story and vision of the Kingdom as the overarching "key" to enable the interpreting of contemporary experience in the light of Scripture. We then utilize the more specific second stage hermeneutical keys, especially that of the "Hermeneutics of Engagement" outlined by P. Hanson in Section 2.6.3.

Subsequent stages of the overall Model are not shown. These lead us to specific lesson plans (stage 5), and sub procedures (Stage 6, 7) which need not concern us now. Surrounding this model, yet not identifiable at any single point in it, we have the other important factors influencing our interpretative procedures: Holy Spirit, Liturgy and Worship, Tradition, Community, role of Imagination. Finally we use the

hermeneutical bridge of Narrative Theology as a powerful dynamic
to fuse horizons in practice.

6.2   Teaching as a Profound Ministry

Disconcerting though this large range of interpretative
influences may be, the A.C.E. teacher need not feel swamped.
The task before the teacher as he constructs his programmes is
to be aware of this rich diversity, and that each can contribute
to the ultimate goal of facilitating student understanding and
application of the particular subject area under consideration.
(219)

We re-emphasize that although these hermeneutical models
have been addressing the question of biblical texts, the theory
is basically valid in wider discussions. In A.C.E. the text can
be extended to include any personal experience, piece of
literature, concrete situation or relationship.

The work of C. Winquist offers the educator considerable
encouragement. He sees teaching as a profound ministry for it
helps people progress from superficial understandings of
experience towards an investment of life with transcendent
meaning. (220) Winquist says that a revised goal of Ministry
should be to encourage and enable people to explore a strange
new world of experience and achieve thereby a transformation of
consciousness. (221) This for Winquist is a hermeneutical task,
for hermeneutics aids forming new categories to understand
critical turning points of religious experience. (222) Ministry
is rightly conceived to be at the heart of Winquist's concerns
as it interprets, and implements imaginatively the possibility
discerned at the heart of religious experience. (223) Ministry
then operates according to priestly and prophetic modes. This
interpretation is an intensely spiritual exercise, the recovery
of the whole self. Winquist joins the group of theologians who

feel that story-telling helps this, by stretching our imagination. (224)

It is evident on the basis of this Chapter that teaching is a profound MINISTRY. (225) Winquist and our thesis are at one in conceiving the heart and call of the Adult Educator as a deeply demanding, awe inspiring one, who has the task of interpretation at the centre of his concern.   Teachers as Ministers are to help people recover lost spiritual meanings within the apparently random surface patterns of existence. The teacher's Ministry becomes almost sacred as he leads people forward and mediates to them the fuller spiritual significance of worldly events, and the complexities of their subconscious minds.

The teaching Ministry in its hermeneutical functioning must work with people to recollect, intensify and transform human stories in the light of the Divine Story through the power of its breadth of analysis.   From identifying interpretative concepts as hermeneutical keys the teacher leads people towards personal appropriations of meaning.   The teacher as Minister helps people to place God accessibly at the centre of their conscious life, rather than at the non-empirical transcendent boundaries where sadly most Christians usually leave him.

6.3 A response to Brookfield's statements

At the outset of this Chapter, we noted 8 features about Adult Learning which today command widespread acceptance.   How does our hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. relate to these points?   We will look briefly at each of them and make what seems to us to be the key relevant comment.

1.   Lifelong learning is essentially a process of continuous development of understanding that grows as experience and fresh knowledge is interpreted anew.   This never ceases while we are

conscious because it is part of being human to be an interpreter.

2. The vital need at each major transitional point in life is to understand the experience being passed through and to interpret it in terms of one's personal beliefs. Applied hermeneutical theory helps an individual to do just this.

3. We have demonstrated the value of a variety of approaches in A.C.E., each being fitted to the person's favoured learning style. Thus one overarching theory leads to a fruitful variety appropriate for each individual.

4. A hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. focusses upon experience and tries to help people reflect upon and understand the problems of life. Thus it is "problem-solving", although it grants a place also to a more general catechetical requirement on occasions, particularly at the outset of the Christian life.

5. Praxis oriented hermeneutics as in Liberation Theology has a significant place in the comprehensive theory of this thesis. This approach clearly has great immediacy of application. The very notion of interpretation implies an immediacy of life application.

6. Experience is recognised as a great resource in hermeneutical approaches to A.C.E. We build creatively on positive experience but also seek to re-interpret experience that has been misconstrued from a Christian perspective.

7. A hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. places great weight upon the innate capacities of its participants. Such approaches by their demonstrated belief in the learner's ability to interpret experiences of life, reinforce his self-concept as a learner.

8. "Self-Directedness" is a major underlying goal to our approach. A learner must be increasingly assisted to be able to interpret his life experiences and Christian faith through his own gradually developing knowledge and skills. But self-reliance must not be pursued in opposition to a proper dependency upon God, nor lead to false pride in one's own ability.

Thus we demonstrate that the 8 point catechesis of contemporary adult educators generally fits with our developed hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. Indeed our basic dynamic adds justification, resilience, power and integration to these eight principles. Our theory we claim, has more comprehensiveness and greater explanatory power than the more piecemeal approach of many modern secular theorists and practitioners.

Hermeneutical Approach to Adult Christian Education

1st Stage		Generalised Hermeneutical Spiral:-			
		Horizon of Text related to Horizon of Interpreter			
		Successive traversals of Spiral lead to development of Understanding.			
		(Study: Horizon, Presuppositions, Distance, Fusion)			
2nd Stage		Particular Hermeneutical models based on interpretative keys to unlock meaning of Scripture and Experience.			
Examples	Liberation The NEW man (Action Theory model Hermeneutics of Suspicion)	CHRIST God's Man (Reader-response model)	SALVATION New Life (Existentialist)	TESTIMONY to God's Word or event (Structuralist model Speech Act)	CALL TO TRANSCENDENCE (Psychological empathy Models of the New Hermeneutics)
3rd Stage	↓	Set of general andragogical procedures to adopt as appropriate:-			↓
	Praxis Theological Reflection in context of action (Prophetic)	Obedience Discern Christ in Scriptures. Develop relation with God in Christ (Gospel)	Story-Telling GOD'S activity in history. Call of God on our lives. (Acts, Narratives)	Our experience/ stories. Testimony to God's work in us. New life. Resurrection at work. (Pauline texts)	Imagination and foster openness to new possibilities in face of mystery of God. (Apocalyptic, Parables)
4th Stage	↓	Specific Programmes to be adopted in pursuance of these objectives.			↓
One example	Status of Exodus as universal pattern for God's concern for human social liberation.	Christ's demand upon us to accept Him as Saviour, Lord. All areas of experience to be re-assessed.	Study of what is involved in responding to a call for repentence.	Our experience of peace and reconciliation in the light of Christian activity, global wars, tensions in relationships.	What it means to be Son of God, or to participate in God's deity.
5th Stage	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

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221. Winquist   22

222. Winquist   24

223. Winquist   26

224. Winquist   45-6. On 41-43 he sets out a 3-stage programme for
     Ministry

225. See also   Rom 12:8, Eph 4:11, 1 Cor 12:8.

CHAPTER III

Description of the pilot programme in A.C.E.

1. Introduction.

2. Preparatory Research for Programme.

    1. Objective of research.

    2. Definition of belief.

    3. Problems in research: how to overcome.

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3. Preparing and Conducting the Programme.

    1. Theoretical model for teacher to follow.

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    1. What is evaluation? A definition.

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APPENDIX   IIIA   Brief Profile of the 12 individuals
                       interviewed.

APPENDIX   IIIB   Statements used to survey attitudes/
                       beliefs of Programme participants
                       (Likert Scaling Method).

APPENDIX   IIIC   Responses to Questionnaire before and
                       after the Programme from the 10
                       participants.

CHAPTER III

Section 1   Introduction

The bulk of this thesis has been devoted to the
development of a theoretical model for a hermeneutical
approach to A.C.E., but this is a practical subject, and
therefore an adequate treatment of it must have a practical
dimension also.   To this end we give a description in this
Chapter of an actual educational programme that was carried
out in order to illustrate some of the principles of A.C.E.
deemed important in this thesis.   Not only will we
demonstrate our convictions in practice, but also within the
bounds possible with a small sample, offer an evaluation of
the programme in terms of its effectiveness.   In the
Concluding Chapter we will utilize the evaluation to enter
into mutual critique with the theoretical model developed in
this thesis to see where modifications might be appropriate.
We invite other interested parties to enter this continuing
debate through practical research also.

The programme has been carried out at the author's
Church where he was Curate for just under four years.   In
fact three separate programmes were run over a five year
period - but for reasons of space, only the third programme
is described - it represents a development of earlier
attempts.   The Church is Anglican, broadly "Evangelical-
Charismatic", with a good mix of ages and social classes.

We regard the programme as a modest pilot, and do not
make far-reaching claims for it - but the author of this
thesis discovered that granted these limitations,
nevertheless a considerable amount of value can be learned.
We conclude this Section by summarizing the main limitations
of our programme:-

1.   The author chose what he considered to be a representative sample of individuals to form an ideal size of working group, 12 in number.   See Appendix III.A for a brief tabular profile of these.

2.   The teacher was evaluator and also author.   We recognise problems of bias resulting from this - however we aim to assess the effects of bias.   We argue that this arrangement will in fact simulate many other real-life A.C.E. situations.

3.   The programme is relatively short - four sessions of two hours, together with a Personal Study Course.   In the ideal it would be longer, and part of a comprehensive Church Education Programme - but the author was not in charge of the Church. In addition at this stage we did not wish to impose too much on people who had been volunteered.

Section 2 Preparation for the Programme. Researching
         Belief

2.1   Objectives of Research

        There are two necessary prime areas of interest for
our investigation so that a firm empirical base for our
programme can be formed. We have argued in this thesis for
the importance of orienting it towards the needs, interests,
knowledge and understanding of our group members; and these
we attempt to discover in two directions as we prepare to
teach the Ascension:-

1. What do people believe about the Ascension as measured by
knowledge of the facts, and understanding of the
implications?

Behind this lie questions about people's view of the Bible,
notably its status and authority and how they interpret it.
Note   Chapter II.3 Section 3.1.

2. What are the individual's life concerns and current
interests? We need therefore to research people's background
- not only in religious terms but also the more general life-
stories they have to recount.   We need to discover their
current problems and areas of interest which can be addressed
but to research in a sensitive manner. Some insights into
people's preferred learning styles will also be valuable.

2.2   Definition of Belief

        We need to gain a clear understanding of what we are
actually investigating in theoretical terms. Beliefs are of
varying depth and significance for us, and we require to
discriminate between the levels of belief that our researches
are discovering. Rokeach defines belief as the way in which

the mind organizes itself. (1) Our "belief-disbelief system" forms a framework for understanding our perceived universe of reality. (2) He distinguishes between central intermediary and peripheral beliefs (3) - and we clarify this multi-layered depiction of our belief-disbelief system as follows:-

1.   PRIMARY BELIEFS: Deep,   pervading   understandings constituting   a   basic   World-View.   These   are   generally dogmatically   held   and   usually   operate   at   a   subconscious level.   We find it hard to step outside these beliefs (for example about God's existence, or how He acts in the world).

2.   INTERMEDIATE ATTITUDES: These constitute moral values and particular religious beliefs or doctrines (for example about the Ascension).   These we will find it easier to bring to the surface in our researches but most people do not tend to articulate them explicitly.

3.   PERIPHERAL OPINIONS: These are the commonly expressed views on life, the content of conversations above the purely superficial.   (for   example   "Communists   are   dangerous", "People do not rise from the dead").   Most of these can be researched quite easily, and can lead us towards discovering their   attitudes and beliefs.   They are less well integrated than the other two levels, and more easily changed.   An individual   may   have   many   opinions   which   are   in   fact inconsistent with each other.   Our researches will therefore begin with the eliciting of opinions, and move from that point towards delineation of attitudes and deeper beliefs.

2.3 Problems in research and how to overcome them

Four problems in particular seem to stand out, and we describe these proceeding to show how they may be practically overcome:

1. Firstly, we can encounter the problem of Self-Deception (4), whereby individuals either do not know what they believe about a particular subject or alternatively give a false account under mistaken impressions. In order to deal with this we need to help people marshal and articulate their thoughts. The researcher can legitimately give some direction to the sample and prompt their thoughts without imposing his own views upon them. We can therefore provide pre-coded statements for them to respond to.

2. We may encounter deliberate deception and other forms of bias due to the deliberate response of the individual (5). He may for instance not wish to expose doubt or upset the interviewer. To mitigate these problems the researcher must build good relationships and allow people to tell stories informally, so that they may relax and in due course truly speak their mind.

3. Pre-coded statements or questions might not be phrased in a way that enables people to express what they really mean. (6) We must try to gain access into people's minds, even prior to constructing the full survey. We can achieve this by intelligent observation and through a non-directive section to the survey or interview so that people respond to questions using their own vocabulary and conceptual framework.

4. We must accept that many people do not hold their differing beliefs, attitudes and opinions in a consistent and fully ordered system. (7) We must not postulate more

coherence than exists, but allow for syndromes of half-belief, uncertainty and confusion. We must analyse the results with care, not merely drawing out what seems convenient, fully rationalized or synthesized.

2.4   General Methods Used to Research the Sample

Sociological researches have developed a considerable range of methods in order to investigate people's beliefs, attitudes and opinions. Broadly they can be split into two paradigms(8):-

QUALITATIVE   This investigates behaviour from within the respondent's own frame of reference, and interprets from within that system. (9) Methods appropriate for this will be exploratory, descriptive and inductive. Single cases are not subsumed to generalized results. In this mode G.A. Kelly has developed " Personal Construct" theory (10). By this we invite people to describe the world as they see it. We analyse their ordering of the world according to the Constructs they make to discriminate between different perceptions (eg Meaning/Meaninglessness) (11). We cannot hope to match this degree of sophistication, yet in our researches we will remember the general approach Kelly argues.

QUANTITATIVE   This paradigm focusses upon empirical, objective, mechanistic measurement (12). Results of researches are interpreted statistically. Quantitative methods test generalized hypotheses such as "What is individual X's attitude to the authority of Scripture?". It is also outcomes oriented, and has great usage for measuring the effect of a programme (13). We aim to use a Quantitative method, again in a restricted sense because of the small number of participants. We will use a sequence of pre-formulated statements and questions according to what is

called the Likert scaling method. (14) L. Francis has used this widely in his surveys of beliefs. (15) According to this in response to various statements the individual places himself on a standard continuum of response, from "Agree Strongly" to "Disagree Strongly". By building up sets of responses to precoded opinions we can begin to derive underlying attitudes or beliefs. (16)

2.5 Description of the Research itself

The Group of 12 was chosen according to the following general criteria:-

i.   To be broadly representative of the mix of ages,
      occupations, attendance length (Christian maturity) at
      the Church itself so that the project group would be
      heterogeneous.

ii   The group is nevertheless not to be seen as a fully
      representative sample of the whole "congregation" both
      because it is far too small and because each
      participant was personally invited by the researcher.

iii   They had not volunteered to join the course, and they
      were not selected because of the near certainty of
      full attendance that they would give.

iv   All those originally approached did actually
      participate in the survey.

The interviews were carried out, generally at the individual's own house, during February 1987. They usually lasted between one and two hours, this appearing to be perfectly acceptable to the forewarned participants. Most of the research was through interview, but part was through a

written survey (Part 5) undertaken in the presence of the interviewer.

The procedure and outline of interview was as follows:-

(Detailed interview plan available for inspection as required)

1. Introduction and outline of purpose of research

2. Initial factual questions, concerning for instance age, occupation.

3. Story of individual's Faith-Journey and opportunity to reveal current needs. Initial inquiries regarding understanding of aspects of Christian doctrines. We use general insights of Kelly's Personal Construct Theory to discern the person's frame of reference.

4. Educational experience in secular and ecclesiastical terms. We seek also to discover the individual's preferred learning style.

5. Attitudes to six areas pertinent to the education programme. We use the Likert scaling method to achieve some quantification in the following areas (using a total of 36 statements - 6 for each) (See Appendix III B)

a. Effectiveness of interpreting experience in the light of their faith.

b. Motivation to grow in understanding of the meaning of Christian doctrine.

c. Degree of open-mindedness to changing their beliefs

d. Attitude to possibility of errors in the Bible.

e. Attitude to Biblical interpretation, especially whether
    to be literal.

f. Beliefs and attitudes concerning the Ascension

6.   This presents the Ascension texts themselves to the
participants in order to ask some detailed, searching and
provocative questions.

7. A brief appreciation of their participation plus further
information regarding the projected course.

2.6 <u>Brief Comments on the results of the Interviews</u>

        We do not intend to give full details of the
responses obtained within the compass of this thesis. Such
can   be   provided   as   required,   within   limits   of
confidentiality.

    We provide here just a few important observations of use
for Section 3, representing in each case the clear majority
view:-

1. Many of the group see Christianity primarily in terms of
relationship with God (or other Christians). This links to
Chapter I.1 on Personal Revelation.

2. Very few can assess changes in their beliefs over the
years, or of the impact of specific doctrines upon their
daily life - they are all bundled together. This area of
difficulty needs addressing in A.C.E.

3. The notion of understanding something (eg a doctrine) is hard for people, and an area of confusion. "Conviction that it is true" seems more important than "understanding".

4. The group tended to accept beliefs without apparent doubt. Orthodoxy of belief, including of Scripture, is important. We need to be careful how we challenge the cherished beliefs of this group - any approach must be very positive.

5. The Bible was held in high regard as the Word of God and totally trustworthy.

6. Many learned best in informal ways, including Group Discussion, Conversations, and Private study.

7. Confusion over Biblical interpretation and desire for help here was revealed, linking to Chapter II.3. Their knowledge of the Ascension was shown to be weak and in need of supplementation. For example only 2 realised that Luke alone gives a narrative account of the Ascension.

Section 3   Preparation and Conducting of Actual Programme

3.1   Theoretical Model for the Teacher

We wish to set out here a practical model for the production of an actual A.C.E. programme concerning the Ascension. Further theoretical comments, especially on the hermeneutical nature of the enterprise are reserved for the Concluding Chapter. This model follows through the actual stages involved:-

1. __Preparation Stage__ ("Distance")

The teacher begins by familiarizing himself with the subject matter through requisite research. We have attempted this in Chapter II.1 in the case of the Ascension. This material is to be interpreted by the teacher and held as a resource by which meaning can be made available for the students. This sort of programme, being more open-ended, needs-based and praxis-oriented requires the teacher to be better prepared than would be so for traditional pre-determined lesson planning. The teacher must prepare for a range of potential, necessarily at times unforeseen, demands.

2. __Perception Stage__ ("Revelation")

At this stage the teacher must attend to the results of any survey, interview or other means by which he has begun to discern the needs, interests of his group. He will already be aware of their present knowledge and interpretative skills in the areas of concern. As he begins to relate the content material to the group he therefore attends to the students themselves. He will also open himself prayerfully to receive revelation from God's Spirit as we argued in Chapter I.1. God will guide throughout the programme whilst people are receptive to His immanent or intervening activity. The teacher responds to general and specific revelation.

3. __Actual formulation of Programme and Session plans__

The teacher, after bearing in mind external requirements such as for a Syllabus, clarifies his prime Aims. In Chapter I.2 we gave twelve, and argued that only a few could be followed at any one time. From there the teacher needs to decide on the actual selection of material to be presented or made available during the session. He will be wise to attend

to the power of story-telling (Chapter II.3) He will decide
on the best forms of presentation, and so set out the session
plan itself - whilst being prepared to amend it when
necessary according to the exigencies of the situation.

4. <u>Enactment Stage</u> ("Fusion" or "Collision")

The teacher now carries out the programme or session as
in (3), but adapting to the contingencies of the situation -
especially to the responses of the participants, and their
own agendas. The lesson comprises a careful collaborative
venture of meaning-making. The goal is to enable
interpretation of relevant material and a growth in
understanding of God, the World, Others and Self. However, we
note that the teacher must retain overall control of the
situation - morally and as proximate director of the Session.

5. <u>Outcome or Performative Stage</u>

We anticipate that <u>new</u> stories can now be told in the
students' lives. These we will wish to evaluate (Section
4):-

1. Spiritual Development - New alignment to God's creative
and redemptive story of the stories of each individual's
life.

2. Intellectual Development - Growth in knowledge for
instance of the subject content. Growth in interpretative
ability will be even more valuable since learning should be
of "process" as well as "content".

3. Personality Development - We hope the individual will
grow in self-understanding, self-acceptance, integration and
wholeness of being. He grows to interpret his place in God's
plan and in the community.

4. Practical Action - This should emerge in some fashion
from the programme. Participants should be motivated to
appropriate compassionate action. We have noted that
learning can occur in the midst of action or as an unintended
but welcome by-product of it..

6. Evaluation

See Section 4 where we show formal and informal means to
do this. We re-emphasize the collaborative nature of this
venture, in the joint activity of learning - the movement
towards maturity and faithful discipleship (Chapter I.2) Yet
we re-affirm the crucial role of the teacher in initiating
this process, and enabling it to continue - sometimes more
overtly, sometimes more covertly. We have justifed also the
importance of all discussion, debate, reflective thinking, to
be carried out consciously in openness to the activity of
God's Spirit.

3.2 The Actual Programme undertaken

This particular programme comprised four group sessions to which all of the twelve people interviewed were invited, and also a set of Study Notes on the Ascension (14 days of readings). The Study Notes consisted of Bible readings (including from the Apocrypha) together with comments and questions. Participants were encouraged to make their own notes in response, and if possible to provide an extra copy for the teacher. We present now a brief overview of the four sessions:-

Session 1 The Status and Authority of Scripture

Our discussions theoretically in Chapter II.3, and observations upon the Survey 2.6 Comment 5 show that help was required to dispel some of the evident confusion about the nature of the authority of the Bible as it affects Christian learning.

i. Sharing of participants' own views on the Bible as discovered by the interviews, together with opportunity for informal responses.

ii Discussion concerning why our beliefs about the Bible make a considerable difference in practice. Explanation of key descriptive words: Revelation, Authority, Inspired, Normative.
Discussion in response about how participants perceive the Bible's status.

iii Study in small groups about the Bible's view of itself using classic texts such as 2 Pe 1:20,1, 2 Tim 3:16, Jn.10:35, Mt.5:38,9.

iv   General discussion, eliciting ideas from group, about
how the authority and impact of the Bible might be increased
in practice.

v   Reflection period, whilst members decide on their
personal response to the Session.

Session 2   Interpretation and Hermeneutical Spiral

     The survey had also discovered the difficulties that
many experienced in interpreting the Bible and applying it to
daily circumstances (notably doctrines).   We aimed to
introduce the notion of Hermeneutics in very simple terms -
demonstrating its relevance not only to the   study of
Scripture, but to many other aspects of life.

i.   General Introduction, including explanation of what we
do when we interpret anything in terms of seeking meaning.

ii.   Share their survey responses to understanding and
application of various doctrines.   Provoke discussion around
2.6 Comments 2,3 and 4.

iii.   Introduce with considerable explanation and
illustration the notion of the Hermeneutical Spiral,
focussing on Distance, Pre-Understanding, Fusion.   Suggest
how this dynamic works in everyday experience (eg
understanding another person in conversation, interpreting a
situation encountered that seems problematic).

iv   Turn to the question of Biblical interpretation, and
suggest a limited number of principles to aid accurate
understanding.   Invite participants to suggest problematic
Scriptural passages so that these ideas may be illustrated in
specific instances.

v.   Provide a handout based upon D. Ferguson's 10 principles for their study at home and comments at the next Session. (17)

Session 3 <u>Story-telling, its importance in our lives</u>

        At this point with some background provided we intend to focus our attention fully upon the needs, interests and stories of the participants. The importance of relationship has been discovered, and we must build upon this insight. (2.6 Comment 1). To provide background to the Story of the Ascension (Session 4) we intend to look at the Bible as a Story Book and consider the theme of "Journey".

i.   Explain responses to the third section of the survey, and their enthusiasm for story-telling. Seek to discover why this was so.

ii.   Invite them to share in pairs any good stories they can tell which take up the theme of journey - in a physical, relational or spiritual sense.

iii   Discuss how they felt as they told or listened to stories.

iv   Explain the way our own stories fit into God's Story. Describe the stages of God's Story of redemption. Discuss how we align our stories to God's Story, and where participants feel they are achieving this already.

v.   The Bible is a Story Book. What are their favourite stories and why? Discuss what are the most important Bible stories.

vi   Give a handout explaining steps to relate their stories to the Bible's stories. (18)

Session 4 The Ascension Story - its meaning today

Much of the preparatory background to the Ascension texts has been intentionally covered by the Study Notes. Session 4 builds upon the Study Notes and the preceding three Sessions to bring the lessons gained to bear upon the Ascension. Our approach begins with the participant's own needs and interests as well as beliefs, and provides interpretative guidance by suggesting various implications of the Ascension that might be relevant for them.

i. Discuss their response to the Study Notes. Broaden this to a sharing of how they feel emotionally, what needs they currently have, and what questions are upon their minds.

ii. Invite the members to write down a personal creed of belief - what is important to them about the Christian faith? Ask people to share these in pairs, and then selectively to the whole group. Discuss what this reveals about their priorities - what they seek after in the Christian faith.

iii Provide a Handout which gives a set of possible meanings of the Ascension taken from Chapter II.1, Section 7. Explain the simplified Theological Reflection model (Final Chapter). Give space for their leisured reflection, to discern meanings of the Ascension that are personally relevant. Invite them to share their discoveries, with the group.

iv Conclude in prayer and worship.

Section 4 Evaluation of the Programme

4.1 What is Evaluation? - A working definition

According to R. Ruddock, evaluation relates to processes and programmes. (19) In contrast we assess individuals and we appraise possibilities. W. Popham argues that evaluation is the determination of value, and that evaluation is dependent upon the values we use to judge the activity. (20) Evaluation is therefore closely linked to the values we have interest in, and so is never context-free. E. House says that evaluation is an aid to making choices, and so needs to be selective in what it studies. (21)

Our view is that evaluation in A.C.E. is a partly subjective and partly objective enterprise. It is objective in the sense of needing to use commonly accepted criteria and standards (for example: if people consistently attended a course then this indicates a certain success especially if it was voluntary). It is subjective in the sense that the teacher has certain evaluative criteria which may not be universally important (for example, that relationships grow between members and towards God) (22) Our evaluation includes determining firstly the purpose - the action to be taken as a result; secondly how to collect, select and analyse the information; thirdly who the audience for this information will be and how to communicate it to them effectively and persuasively. (23) We note the existence of the "Hawthorne Effect" (24) whereby changes in performance arise in part from the participant's awareness of being studied. We sought to overcome this to some extent by not telling the students in advance that they were to be re-assessed at the end of the programme.

4.2 Specific Comments, especially relating to a
     Hermeneutical approach

        There are a large number of different methods of
Evaluation in this highly sophisticated field - Ruddock gives
a summary of fifteen.   (25)   Most have applicability to
education - but we have no space to consider them in detail
here.   To assist in deciding which to use we specify some
important pertinent comments :-

1.   We aim to evaluate a range of areas, from the
individual's standpoint; Cognitive skills, Affective skills,
Psycho-motor skills, Spiritual development. (26)

2.   We measure programme success according to the
participant's own comments (qualitative) and the re-trial of
the Likert scaling (quantitative).

3.   The general approaches that we discern to be most
important are firstly the degree of behavioral attainment of
the stated programme goals. (27) Secondly we attend to the
group's own decisions about the effectiveness of the
programme. (28)

4.   In addition to evaluation from the participant's stance
we also argue for a relevant place for the researcher's
comments. (29)   He has been a participant member of the group
- a teacher and a learner who seeks to improve the programme
in part from his experience during the sessions, and so has a
right to contribute his observations providing they are
clearly stated to be such.   (30)

        Two further comments are pertinent here when evaluating
a hermeneutically oriented programme.   Firstly, we aim to
evaluate gain in understanding and interpretative skills -
such are, we acknowledge, difficult to measure, but we will

judge from this perspective. Following J.Firet we can look for the agogic moment, the moment of change in perception, behaviour. (31) Secondly, we seek to interpret in an intuitive manner the activity of God in A.C.E. assisting development of the participant's understanding. (See Chapter II.3, Section 3.3) Elusive to highlight as this may be, the effort of exercising the spiritual gift of discernment we believe to be important, but we must offer perceptions (or listen to their comments on this) with care and integrity. (32)

4.3 Description of Evaluation

The evaluation actually consisted in the following components. The first four components comprised a set of Response Sheets which were returned in due course to the author for his analysis

a. A general evaluation of the Course. Six questions were asked focussing upon feelings, future desire to participate, and the participant's overall grasp of the material.

b. Specific evaluation of each lesson of the Course. Six questions were asked for each. We inquired about general lessons learned, material found to be difficult. There were also some specific searching questions about knowledge and understanding gained from the sessions. We sought practical application and suggestions of additional matters to follow up. (These were intended to challenge participants personally as well as to gain information)

c. Quantitative analysis in the form of a re-test of the Likert attitude-scaling method. We use the same 36 statements as originally - but recognise that changes in response may be due to many factors not directly arising from the subject-content of the Course. But this is acceptable,

because intentional A.C.E. must always take its place alongside other forms of informal learning and be modest in its claims - it is but one constructive influence within the whole.

d.   Questions concerning the Study Guide.   Again a mix between eliciting of feelings, gain of knowledge, and openings for future use.   Some participants also provided their own written responses to the Guide's questions.

e.   Informal observations made during or after the Course should also   be taken into account.   No formal follow-up interview was attempted - but it could prove valuable if participants are willing, on a later occasion.

f.   Participant observations by the researcher himself, concerning his own intuitive perceptions and his discernment of the behaviour and attitudes of the group members during and after the sessions.   Perceptions of the revelatory activity of God are relevant here also.

4.4   Initial Comments on the actual Evaluation

Considerably more extensive details of the Evaluation are available for inspection if required.   Further comments are also made relating to the overall Model for A.C.E. in the Concluding Chapter.   At this stage we offer a few comments of immediate interest.

1.   An overall attendance rate of over 60% was considered satisfactory bearing in mind the criteria of selection of the original survey group (Section 2.5).   The final session was the best attended of all.   This percentage makes allowance for two who could not attend at all - for reasons see Appendix III.A.   In every Session numbers were sufficiently high to enable the programme to run satisfactorily.

2. Six of the participants wrote on their Evaluation Forms
that they positively enjoyed the course, especially those
parts which included discussion and activity. They found
them extremely thought provoking, and seven claimed to
understand a little more about the areas under discussion.

3. Many felt too much material was presented in sessions 1
and 2, and this clearly stretched the intellectual capacity
of about a half of them to the limit. Intentionally less
material was given during the course of Sessions 3 and 4, and
this change was received favourably. A much longer Course
would obviously be preferable to achieve proper absorption of
the material.

4. On the evaluation sheets people tended to have difficulty
in stating specifically what lessons they had learned. Yet
some claimed to have changed their attitudes towards the
Bible and the Ascension. The re-test of the Likert Attitude
Scaling Questionnaire indicates that overall there were a few
changes in these areas: more openness to the possibility of
non-literal understandings of the Bible, a greater freedom to
interpret the Ascension accounts. (see Appendix III.C)

5. The majority (7 of the 10, and it transpired, the two who
failed to attend at all) would attend another, similar,
course in the future. By the end of the Course a definite
"group solidarity" had been built - a considerable success
for only four sessions. We gain further evidence of the
importance of affective feelings in the success of A.C.E. -
in this case that the time and energy expended was worthwhile
to them.

6. The final session, by most people's verbal assessment was
the most successful; it particularly came to life when people
felt

a. A sudden mutual rapport, we felt united - a warm love
   towards each other.

b. The presence of God's Spirit revealing personally
   applicable truth. This led to the desire as expressed by
   them to pray and thank God for his felt presence. This
   adds experiential justification to our Comments on the
   Holy Spirit in A.C.E. (Introductory Chapter 2.11, and
   Chapter I.1, 3.3 - 3.5), and we pursue this in the
   Concluding Chapter.

CHAPTER III   References

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12. Dooley Chapter 2 supplies a theoretical overview.

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    See Chapter II.3, Note 234, and Section 6.

18. Drawing from Alter R. _The Art of Biblical Narrative_ 1981.
    See Chapter II.3, Notes 215, 216 and Sections 5.3, 5.4

19. Ruddock R. _Evaluation - a consideration of Principles and_
    Methods 1981   7

20. Popham W.J. _Educational Evaluation_ 1975   1 - 15

21. House E.R. _Evaluating with Validity_ 1980   16-18

22. Nisbet J.D. and N.J. Entwistle _Educational Research Methods_
    1970 devote Chapter 15 to the "considerable skill and expertise
    required to interpret results accurately".

23. Popham summarizes this in terms of Context (educational needs),
    Input (programme design), Process (implementation), Product
    (value of programme).   35-38

24. See Dooley 155, 6 for a full description and account of the
    origins of this phenomenum.

25. Ruddock   43-68

26. Popham   57-60 lists the first three.

27. Popham Chapter 3 advocates behaviorally stated objectives
    because they are clear   48, 9

28. Popham Chapter 4   78-80 opts for decision oriented research

29. The practice of "Participant Observation" has many advocates.
    See Denzin N.K. in Bynner and Stribley (editors) 37-43. See
    also Babbie 37-8

30. Wiseman J.P. in Bynner and Stribley (editors) 113: "The
    qualitative researcher is not unlike the detective in the classic
    murder mystery".

31. J. Firet _Dynamics in Pastoring_ 1986. The goal of
    nurture is conversion and change 199-203

32. Biblically:- 1 Kings 3:9,12, Daniel 2:21, Hosea 14:9,
    1 Cor 2:14, 12:8,10, Phil 1:10 and many references in
    Proverbs to discernment as a form of wisdom (eg 16:21, 17:24)

Brief Profile of the 12 individuals interviewed

Classif-cation Number	Age	Sex	Occupation	How long a Christian (years)	Frequency attends Church (times per week)
1	30-40	F	Teacher	10	1
2	50-60	M	Teacher	25 +	1 or 2
3	20-30	F	Nurse	17	2 or 1
4	30-40	F	Housewife	7-8	1
5	21	M	Technician	10	1
6	49	M	Manual	9	1 or less
7	50	F	Computer Consultant	15	1 or 2
8	37	M	Carpenter	1	1
9	24	M	Scientific	7	2
10	65	F	Housewife	20-22	2
11 #	40	F	Housewife	2	1 or less
12 #	33	M	Pharmicist	10	0, 1 or 2

Did not attend Course:-

11. Marital problems - husband returned suddenly from abroad.

12. Family pressures - parents hostile Sikhs, problems with baby.

Statements used to survey attitudes/beliefs of
Programme participants (Likert Scaling Method)

1. I often feel there is little connection between my Christian faith
    and my daily experiences of life.

2. The teaching of Jesus frequently affects the way I look at my life

3. Christianity should keep out of Politics

4. I always try to make sense of my problems and needs in the light of
    God and the Bible.

5. I could give some examples of how my Christian faith has affected
    my life in the past month or two.

6. I rarely find time to stop and think whether my behaviour and
    thoughts are really "Christian".

7. Some Christian beliefs are too complex or obscure to try to really
    understand.

8. I am gradually understanding more about what Jesus' life
    accomplished for Salvation.

9. I could not give you any examples of new things that I have
    learned in the past month about my Christian beliefs.

10. Christianity is all a matter of simple unquestioning faith and trust

11. My understanding of the nature of God, Father, Son and Spirit, is
    growing week by week.

12. I am prepared to put time and energy into understanding better
    the meaning of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

13. My basic/core beliefs are now fixed - I am very unlikely to
    change my mind.

14. No amount of evidence could change my belief that Jesus is Son of
    God.

15. My beliefs about Infant Baptism could be wrong!

16. It is possible that Jesus was not born of a virgin.

17. I have probably misunderstood the Bible's teaching on some
    Christian doctrines and beliefs.

18. I am prepared to let someone convince me that I should alter
    some of my less basic/core beliefs.

19. The writers of the Bible were human - and therefore probably made a few mistakes.

20. The Bible is without any errors or discrepancies at all.

21. God could not have allowed any errors in the Bible - this would mislead us!

22. The Bible writers do not necessarily all think in terms of historical/factual accuracy as we do.

23. I can allow a few inconsistencies in the Bible without this affecting its basic trustworthiness.

24. The accounts of the life of Jesus in the 4 Gospels MUST be made to fit together or doubt is cast on the reliability of the 4 writers.

25. Everything in the Bible must be taken as literally correct - at its face value.

26. The message of a Bible Story can be true even if in part/whole it is not literally true.

27. The Bible must be re-interpreted in today's situation - and its original meaning (e.g. on matters of morality, sexual equality and roles) may then change.

28. The Bible writers always meant us to read their stories literally.

29 As a piece of literature the Bible must be interpreted creatively (non-literally if necessary, e.g. as allegory, poetry, symbolic representation).

30. It is possible (and may be valid) to interpret the story of Adam and Eve as a non-literal picture of man's continual fall from God in disobedience.

31. The Ascension of Christ is not a very important doctrine for the Christian to believe in.

32. It does not matter to me at all how Jesus ascended into heaven.

33. It is possible that Luke does not mean us to take his accounts as representing a historical event - he may have written creative fiction to get the truth over in the clearest possible way.

34. Luke could not find adequate words to describe the Ascension EVENT literally. He used the best pictures, images and symbols he could to describe the occasion.

35. The Ascension makes a lot of difference to how I live my life, and I could say how.

36. The Ascension was and is important for my Salvation, and I could
     tell you why.

APPENDIX III C

Responses to Questionnaire before and after the Programme from the 10 participants

Qu	Before AS	A	NC	D	DS	AVERAGE	After AS	A	NC	D	DS	AVERAGE
1.	–	2	1	3	4	D	–	3	1	3	2	D
2.	4	5	1	–	–	A	5	3	–	1	–	AS
3.	1	–	–	4	4	D	1	–	–	4	4	D
4.	4	3	2	1	–	A	1	5	3	–	–	A
5.	3	7	–	–	–	A	2	7	–	–	–	A
6.	–	–	–	8	2	D	–	1	–	6	2	D
7.	1	3	2	2	1	Spread	–	2	3	4	–	D just
8.	2	7	–	1	–	A	3	6	–	–	–	A
9.	1	1	3	4	1	D	–	2	1	6	–	D
10.	2	1	–	7	–	D	–	3	1	4	1	D just
11.	2	4	–	3	–	A	1	5	2	1	–	A
12.	3	6	1	–	–	A	2	6	1	–	–	A
13.	4	4	–	2	–	A	2	3	2	–	2	A
14.	6	4	–	–	–	AS	4	5	–	–	–	A
15.	–	5	3	1	–	A	–	4	4	–	1	A weak
16.	1	1	1	3	4	D	–	1	1	3	4	D strong
17.	1	4	5	–	–	A	1	7	1	–	–	A
18.	–	4	3	2	1	A	1	4	3	1	–	A
19.	–	5	2	3	–	A	1	6	2	–	1	A
20.	1	1	1	7	–	D	–	–	1	7	2	D
21.	1	1	3	4	–	D	–	1	2	6	1	D
22.	–	8	2	–	–	A	1	6	3	–	–	A

| | Before | | | | | | After | | | | | |
Qu.	AS	A	NC	D	DS	AVERAGE	AS	A	NC	D	DS	AVERAGE
23.	2	6	1	1	–	A	4	6	–	–	–	A strong
24.	–	2	–	6	2	D	–	2	1	4	3	D
25.	1	3	–	5	1	D	–	1	1	6	1	D
26.	2	7	–	1	–	A	3	6	–	1	–	A
27.	1	1	1	3	4	D	1	1	3	3	2	D weak
28.	1	–	6	3	–	C	1	–	3	6	–	D
29.	2	3	3	1	1	Spread	3	3	2	2	–	A
30.	–	6	1	3	–	A	1	8	1	–	–	A
31.	–	–	1	3	6	DS	–	–	–	5	5	D strong
32.	–	6	1	3	–	A	–	2	2	3	2	D
33.	–	–	–	8	2	D	–	4	1	4	1	spread
34.	–	3	–	6	1	D	2	3	1	4	–	spread
35.	1	7	2	–	–	A	3	5	2	–	–	A
36.	3	5	2	–	–	A	4	6	–	–	–	A strong

Note

Totals do not always add to 10 because interviewees were told that they need not respond if they felt a response to a statement would be misleading.

Key

AS	Agree strongly	A	Agree	NC	Not certain
D	Disagree		DS	Disagree strongly	

CONCLUDING CHAPTER

1.   A.C.E. necessitates a sophisticated multivariate
model.

2.   The Teacher's educational priorities.

3.   Major lessons from the evaluation of our pilot
        programme.

4.   A Model of "Theological Reflection" from below.

5.   Contribution to Knowledge offered by this Thesis
        in the form of summary answers to the nine
        questions posed in the Introductory Chapter.

APPENDIX

A.   Journey of Christian Understanding.

B.   Proposed Christian Education Model

C.   Theological Reflection - "from below".

CONCLUDING CHAPTER

Section   1   <u>A.C.E.   necessitates   a   sophisticated,</u>
<u>multivariate model</u>

We have been trying to emphasize through this
thesis that at all stages of planning and execution many
factors have to be taken into account. We are advocating a
rich multivariate model adequate to Christian tradition and
experience.

According to this approach our Aims are far-
reaching:-

1. The mature development of self-understanding and
    wholeness of being.

2. Powerful and accurate interpretative ability to relate
    belief to life.

3. Openness to question and perhaps change beliefs and
    attitudes.

4. Growth in intimacy of relationship with God; Father,
    Son, Holy Spirit.

5. Action and praxis-oriented engagement in compassion and
    deep love.

We argue that it is desirable to pursue such a breadth of
aims because A.C.E. has in effect concerned itself with
the relatively mundane for too long. (1) Many factors
require to be taken into account therefore to achieve these
aims, for instance, an in-depth consideration of the 9
questions posed. (see Section 5)

This sophisticated model emphasizes the dynamic dimension to A.C.E. in a highly theologically distinctive interaction:-

1. The dynamic of human powers of thought, modelled upon the mind of Christ. These innate interpretative abilities include reason, intuition, feelings or affections, memory, aesthetic appreciation.

2. The dynamic of the Holy Spirit, opening us to participate in the ongoing, creative, resourceful and inspirational life of God.

3. The forward-moving dynamic of faith, which interacts with hope and vision to lead us to the future, exploring new meanings, creating fresh opportunities. (2)

All of these differing dynamics fuse together in a sophisticated manner, unique for any individual and at any one time, and thus in a sense also mysterious. We have attempted to depict the Hermeneutical Spiral as a broad entity that comprehends the whole of life's journey. All experience and information becomes the "text" to be grasped. Yet this Spiral also operates in the minutiae of life's individual episodes and so requires appreciation at that level also. For teacher and learner alike a greater flexibility of thinking should grow in course of time in understanding, interpretation and application within this dynamic. Appendix A sets forward one possible schematization of the Journey of Christian Understanding. (3)

Section 2   The Teacher's Priorities

Teachers of A.C.E. have a crucial role to play in this educational project. Their role is in no way

diminished even though they stand aside to some extent during the lessons themselves. Indeed they should represent the epitome of good learning. The task for the teacher operating in this manner is very considerable, and one response to this thesis by the reader may be a feeling of total inadequacy for the task. (4) Rather than be immobilised in this way, we suggest that the teacher chooses to proceed thus :-

1. He starts with the given situation and sees the possibilities for growth that lie pregnant within it. He gradually learns to utilize methods deriving from a hermeneutical dynamic in a manner sensitive to the past learning experiences of people.

2. He learns to raise both his own and other's sights towards the nature of true Christian vocation. To assist the grasping of this in its depth and richness he will use many methods, take risks and experiment. Too much A.C.E. opts for safety, but the true faith that Christ commended involves risk-taking.

3. Rather than spend too long focussing on the material programme content the teacher must centre on the needs and interests of individuals and the group. As he learns to understand them, and views life from their perspective, so appropriate lesson material will emerge naturally and relevantly.

4. Much of the teacher's time must still be spent in gaining knowledge of the Christian-faith tradition and the wider world for his own immediate benefit. As his interpretative powers grow, so also will the necessary enthusiasm to share it with others, out of his own developing confidence, motivation and commitment.

5. We emphasize the teacher's need to foster the student's personal growth of relationship with God. God will always be the ultimate source of revelation and inspiration for teacher and student alike. From God flows the authority for his privileged position of teacher, a task of considerable responsibility. (5) Out of the teacher's relationship with God prime teaching content will naturally flow, both in revelational content, and in the modelling process, exemplified in Christ.

The teacher's position in relation to the student, and that "wider text" to be understood can be expressed thus in an A.C.E. programme "from above":-

Tripartite Hermeneutics
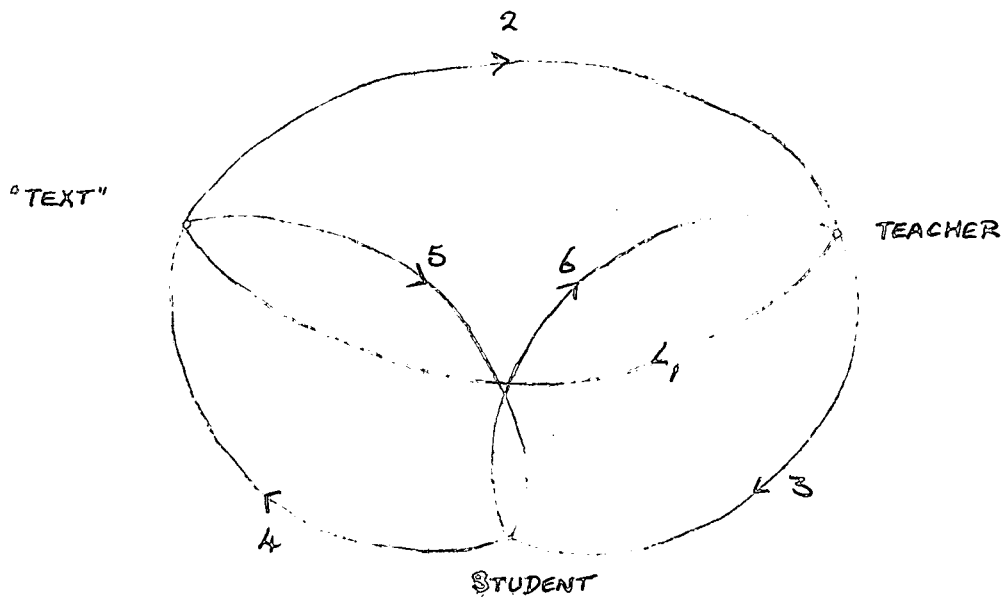
1.   Teacher studies content at a distance

2.   Teacher makes personal and general application in
     fusion.

3.   Teacher presents material necessary as a resource to
     student.

4.   Student asks his own questions of the material at a
     distance.

5.   Student fuses horizons and makes application to his
     life.

6.   Teacher reviews programme, fusing horizons of
     understanding with students.

See further amplification and development in Appendix 2.

Section 3   <u>Major lessons from evaluation of our pilot
            programme</u>

        Some of the more immediate lessons learned from the
practical programme were set out in Chapter III.   This
programme, as in all education, contained some successes
and some failures.   The failures can be viewed positively
provided lessons are learned for the future - this has been
our approach towards any criticisms received from programme
participants.

        The model presented clearly requires years of
further development.   Especially, it is hoped in
collaboration with others, experiences can be shared of the
application of the model to different educational groups
representing for instance a range of: racial groups,
theological traditions, social classes.   Also the model

requires application to other content areas as set out in
Chapter II.1, Section 1. (6).

Since we claim the fundamental nature of our
hermeneutical model portraying how all people actually
learn in practice (especially Christians) the model has the
strength and breadth to be tested in these various ways.

We here note in brief some of the specific lessons
learned from Chapter III that will affect our model and its
outworkings.

1. In view of the vast subject matter of A.C.E. students
must not be overloaded. Our programme in the first two
Sessions proved to be too daunting for some because of the
sheer volume of material. Since this model yields
programme content for a lifetime and is ongoing - it is
probably preferable to proceed in a relaxed manner.

2. Interpretation and the pursuit of understanding is an
advanced and demanding concept. This search for inner
meaning in life's experiences can be threatening
intellectually as the pilot programme discovered in a few
cases. It is all too easy for a teacher familiar with
concepts and enthusiastic about his subject to have
unrealistically advanced expectations. Thus both student
feedback and teacher restraint is essential in
hermeneutically based A.C.E. Most people do not think in
purely abstract, conceptualized terms, and in this context
it is essential to use or invite a large number of
Stories or Illustrations. Our programme grew in relevance
as the material was taught within the learner's own frame
of reference.

3. This model of A.C.E. encourages adaptability to the
needs of the situation, and revelatory insights occasioned
in the lessons themselves. Our own experience testifies to
the impact of dealing with immediately relevant issues that

derive from the participants - but it requires that the teacher be flexible.

4. We reaffirm the impact of the felt presence of God in A.C.E. Listening and quietness have great benefits attached, as we discovered in Session 3. This model of A.C.E., encouraging as it does discussion and activity, must strive to keep an openness to God's loving, graceful and revelatory presence - this requires patient attentiveness.

5. This model highlights in practice a dynamic view of A.C.E. Its methodology and underlying expectations are for change and progress in line with Christianity's model of a dynamic God. Dynamic A.C.E. highly motivates students as we discovered, especially if practical application is seen to ensue.

6. Outcomes from A.C.E. must be seen to be of personal relevance for the students - for they will invest more in the programme if they discern it to offer personal benefit. We discovered that as the sense of relevance grows, so they provide more of their own ideas and insights as a resource in the lesson because they feel involved in a process of discovery.

7. Finally, we must be prepared that not all will respond favourably to this style of A.C.E., because it requires time, energy and openness. Such must be allowed to withdraw, as happened on our programme, without feeling inferior or rejected.

In due course we will desire to include them again in a hermeneutically based programme, but one appropriate to their interests, commitment and ability.

Section 4 A model of Theological Reflection from "below"

A hermeneutical approach to A.C.E. advocates two complementary MODELS : education "from above" which works from the standpoint of the subject matter to be communicated, and education "from below" which begins with the student's needs, interests and agenda. The second of these occupies ground largely unfamiliar to A.C.E., and in this section we briefly explain what we term a "Theological Reflection" model utilising the dynamic of hermeneutics. (7)

The model is summarized in Appendix C, and in the rest of this Section we offer further insights upon how Theological Reflection may be facilitated in A.C.E.

The following questions may be asked to promote this reflective process:-

a.   How does his belief interact with or affect the experience/encounter? Are existing interpretations of belief adequate to explain it satisfactorily?

b.   Can God be named in the experience/event? Is this revelation consistent with what he knows of God? How can God be welcomed into this experience?

c.   What negative powers were active in the event? How can such darkness be confronted and overcome in Christ, both now and subsequently?

d.   What ethical dilemmas lie at root? Is the issue black and white, how can we make use of Christian principles to choose between shades of grey?

e.   How does Scripture address the experience? What analogous stories, teaching or parallels are there? Which hermeneutical key is most applicable to unlock the meaning of the event - see Appendix to Chapter II.3 for specific examples.

f.   How can insights of other areas of thinking be brought to bear - especially the Caring Professions of Counselling, Medicine, Psychiatry?

g.   What broader vision or call to transcendence is offered by the experience? Is there a call to transformation of self or society? What is the eschatological perspective?

h.   How do, or can, Father, Son and Holy Spirit work in partnership in this experience? Their purposes are caring, redemptive and creative.

i.   Where is there need for inner healing - what past hurts, pain or aggression are revealed here? How can true healing be facilitated?

j.   What practical action may be called for as a result of the event/encounter?   How does Jesus' model of compassionate action spur us on also?

k.   What does this reveal of the quality of relationship with others? How can true friendships develop - what steps of repentance, reconciliation are needed to bring this about.

Section 5 <u>Contribution to Knowledge offered by this Thesis</u>
           <u>in the form of summary answers to the nine</u>
           <u>questions posed in the Introductory Chapter</u>

1. <u>Revelation - the role of God in A.C.E.</u>

        We uphold the centrality of Revelation in a
multivariate model of A.C.E. We have centred upon personal
revelation as from God, but disclosure of others in
relationship is linked closely to this. Personal
revelation occurs in the immediacy of intimate relationship
but is also expressed in verbal propositions, concrete
events as well as in other forms such as in symbol. We
attend specially to the propositional form of revelation in
Scripture as derivative or expressive of God's original
revelation in Person, Event, Symbol or prophetic
inspiration. A.C.E. attends to this rich diversity of
revelation and attempts to encourage its active reception,
interpretation and application. We believe that the
Christian revelation and experiences of countless
Christians necessitate a model of a transcendent God
immanently at work in the world, but also on occasions, and
always for good purpose, intervening in a variety of
revelatory forms. A.C.E. opens people to anticipation of
such disclosures, and helps to interpret their implications
- accepting with Nichols (8) the objective and subjective
dimensions to revelation.

2. <u>The Aims of A.C.E.</u>

        We have delineated a total of twelve Aims, all of
which find a place on occasion in A.C.E. We set these in
the form of six sets of continua, giving the possibility of
varying emphases on different occasions as felt
appropriate. These continua act as a matrix to assess the
emphases of different educationalists. Those that we

reviewed upheld only a percentage of the total, and usually veered strongly towards a conservative traditional or towards a liberal radical approach. We argued that the particular aim of confessionally-based A.C.E. is to give a sound interpretative base for use in this increasingly secularized world. Our Aims give us an overview of the Hermeneutical Spiral grouped around the concepts of Maturity linked to Understanding and Discipleship – ensuing in Praxis. aims important for instance to L.O. Richards. (9)

3. The Subject - Content of A.C.E.

The subject matter of A.C.E. is vast, much broader than usually acknowledged. We delineated seven major areas and urged A.C.E. to broaden its horizons. Yet we acknowledged that often A.C.E. only has resources to tackle a restricted range. We argued that the teaching of Scripture and Doctrine is still to occupy a significant position in A.C.E. programmes. In this regard, educators must attend to a distanced understanding of the material and not rush towards a premature fusion to contemporary concerns. To retain theological credibility the resources of, for example, Systematic and Biblical Theology need to be utilised. We demonstrated this in the case of the Ascension. A.C.E. must retain a Christocentric orientation – but this can be a covert influence. We accept with Groome that the prime content of A.C.E. is teaching of the Kingdom of God. (10)

4. Who is being educated - the nature of Man

Once again a multivariate, open, self-transcending perspective was adopted – the high calling of Mankind to be Children of God was emphasized. We argue that A.C.E. attends to education that addresses the Imago Dei to form

the Imago Christi. The Imago Dei is constituted by our key
attitude virtues, and particularly our capacity for
personal relationship, with other human beings, and God
Himself. The personal dimension to A.C.E. emphasized
frequently in this thesis resonates with that held
generally to be most valuable in our lives.
Hermeneutically we focus here on Presuppositions; a
thorough understanding of human needs, interests and
potential that A.C.E. is to engage. We draw on the
insights of the Social Sciences, yet are critical of their
frequent reductionism. (11) In this we follow L. McKenzie
who denotes various components or capacities of man. The
"religious capacity" can orientate us more perfectly toward
God.

5. What is learning - the dynamic of understanding

Our denotation of learning theory seeks to build
upon empirical observations and thereby introducing to
A.C.E. the insights of Andragogy. Learning is a dynamic
affair, and thus the dynamic of Hermeneutical theory fits
well with our requirements. We argue that the more
thorough our grasp of the Hermeneutic theory in its
application not only to written texts and art forms but to
all events, experiences, encounters of life, the more
powerful our A.C.E. promises to be. We highlighted the
distinctiveness of theological hermeneutics in various
ways, especially in the role of the Holy Spirit. We argue
that understanding is fostered through utilisation of a
range of influences, especially the power of Story,
assisting the formation of identity. Chapter II.3 thus
represents the theoretical core of the thesis. C. Wood's
approach is in effect hermeneutical because he focusses
upon the development of Understanding. He believes that
Scripture as it is properly understood functions as the
Word of God in which God addresses the reader, rendering

His identity through, for example, the Narrative forms of
text. (12)   He argues that understanding of the text
consists of three elements: verbal explication, conceptual
mastery and applicative judgement (13);   we have argued
that Christian understanding comprehends not just the
Scriptural text but the wider senses of the text also -
and Wood's thesis, we believe, should be broadened to
achieve this.

6.   What are people's needs and states of
        Understanding

        We argued that it is important to do more than
merely guess at the needs that individuals have -
theologically justifiable though the gift of wisdom or
discernment may be.   There is scope for the use of
qualitative judgements of this sort, but we require also to
use   more   analytical   approaches,   drawing   upon   the
substantial insights of Sociology. Again we propose that a
variety of methods can be utilised that are adequate and
appropriate to our portrayal of human nature and the rich
diversity of educational aims and procedures.   For the
teacher   these   researches   can   provide   a   distanced
understanding of the state of knowledge, interpretative
powers, learning styles, concerns and interests of his
educational group.   He obtains solid empirical data so that
he can plan with much closer attention to their level of
achievement or interest.   This data is also required to
give a benchmark by which the programme may be ultimately
evaluated.   We recognise that deeper levels of belief are
hard to measure - but the attempt is to be made.   We accept
therefore L.J. Francis' urging for the use of Sociological
Analysis to provide firm, empirical basis for A.C.E. (14)

7. What is the role of the teacher in A.C.E.?

We have set forward the teacher's undiminished role in A.C.E. at many points. We gave example of his activity in the pilot programme. A hermeneutical approach is a very demanding one, requiring that he acts as a co-ordinator and enabler of other's development. In regard to the hermeneutical approach, we can regard him as the initiator of the dynamic in partnership throughout with God. But he is not to dominate or act as the fount of all knowledge, because all students have equal access to God and an ability to help collaborate in the task of meaning-making. The teacher's role is also to observe the workings of the hermeneutical spiral as it operates in A.C.E., and facilitate its working for the group and each individual. He teaches "from above" prerequisite subject material and "from below" facilitating their understanding of experience, situations of life, as required. In this regard we agree with J. Smart that the teaching ministry is central within the Church. We have expanded considerably the role it has to play compared with Smart's conservative proposals. (15)

8. What procedures are appropriate for A.C.E.?

We were only able to offer some bare outlines upon this question and demonstrate a limited number of methods in practice. Naturally our comprehensive approach sanctions a large variety of methods. They require to be adjudged according to Christian ethics. We argue that the process of A.C.E. can be as significant for learning as the actual content. We believe that process and content in A.C.E. must work in harmony with each other in order to achieve the desired fusion of horizons. We recognise that more use of informal learning methods is needed in A.C.E. Our programmes need to help open people not only to the

Holy Spirit, but to personal transformation (perhaps in human relationships) so that old habits of thought may be re-cast. D.E. Miller puts this well:- "Spiritual leading comes as persons together search the Scriptures, encourage one another to find a common vision, work together to carry it out, and hope always to be open to the Holy Spirit" (16)

9. <u>How do we evaluate A.C.E.?</u>

We have offered some comments on the programme we attempted in Chapter III - further material documenting the Evaluation is available. We argue that considerably more empirical research is urgently needed into the impact of A.C.E. programmes upon individuals and groups. This programme is a modest contribution, and the author is determined to undertake further investigations. Whilst acknowledging the need for both qualitative and quantitative research to remove the unprofessiuonal nature of so much assessment, we also argue that each individual learns in a unique manner. "Hidden" learning that it is very difficult to evaluate also seems to occur, especially in terms of growth of relationship or intuitive grasp of "spiritual" experiences such as in the Sacraments. R.C. Miller advocates the use of empirical method in Religious Education yet recognises the power and importance of mystery and mystical experience that cannot be so assessed in a narrow scientific-empirical manner, such as Logical Positivists advocate. (17) Evaluation includes a hermeneutically distanced understanding of the operation of the hermeneutical spiral to improve its future dynamics, and is not to be seen as an addendum. In conclusion two cautionary comments must be made:

i. The search for understanding must not become a new god. The dynamics of Hermeneutics should ultimately bring about: compassionate action, depth of relationship and

closeness to the divine reality in the Kingdom of God. We again agree with C. Wood that the Christian understanding of Scripture relates to the Church's use of it. (18) Thus our hermeneutical goal is the use that any understanding is put to in coming to understand the meaning of God. (19) We come to understand God through the meaning of Scripture or any other experience, event of life, Christianly interpreted. (20)

ii   Learning is acknowledged to be an untidy affair for all of us, because we are all idiosyncratic individuals. This places limits on both the possibility and desirability of systematizing the process of A.C.E. into rigid inviolable principles and laws. We rejoice that this is so for ultimately all programmes and theories give way to the rich uniqueness and sacredness of each Adult as a learner growing under the power of Almighty God. (21)

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5. James 3:1

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    1 and 10 broadens A.C.E. to 8 content areas as we have seen in
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7. The model has an affinity to that of Miller D.E. and J.N. Poling
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APPENDIX A: JOURNEY OF CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING

1. NEW IDEA INFORMATION $\longrightarrow$	2. ME NOW $\longrightarrow$	3. PROCESS $\longrightarrow$	4. JOURNEY RESPONSE $\longrightarrow$
(a) Its inherent truth	(a) World View. Beliefs Specific beliefs held. Facts known.	(a) Intellectual tools available. Ability to integrate new knowledge.	(a) Changing of beliefs attitude, wider perspective on issue.
(b) How communicated. Guidance given in A.C.E.	(b) Emotional situation, disposition to consider.	(b) Past-Present Experience. Their bearing upon the new idea	(b) Application to daily life of what learnt.
(c) What God wants to reveal to me.	(c) My spiritual "state" and relationship to God.	(c) Intuition and help from Spirit's enlightenment	(c) Knowledge of God (and self) and relation to God deepened.
(d) Who suggests new idea.	(d) My role, position, stance towards Community	(d) Assistance from Community and their influencing of my processing of idea.	(d) Change in my relation to others within the Community.
Is it true to Scripture?	My own knowledge and beliefs regarding authority of Scripture specifically and generally.	Interpretation of Scripture according to personal hermeneutical principles.	Application of Scripture to lifestyle and consciousness.

```
a  =  Head.  Cerebral sphere
b  =  Heart.  Will.  Emotions
c  =  Spirit.  Relation to God.
d  =  Community Influence.
```

APPENDIX B

PROPOSED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MODEL

SCRIPTURE (AND TRADITION)
(ORIGINAL REVELATION)
The area to be taught decided by
teacher desirably after reflection on
God reveals Himself ⟶ needs of participants and demands of
to teacher syllabus.

Biblical Hermeneutics

esp. Narrative Theology

Teacher forges his own understanding
of the material as he interprets it
Teacher considers class
situation

Participant's own beliefs Teacher prepares to present material
attitudes and presuppositions
- discovered by survey, ⟶
observation, informed (content and method unite within best
discussion. andragogical approach)

Presentation

Group initially receive presentation
and begin to understand it. (not only
word but sacrament, symbol, numinal
experience contribute here)

God reveals Himself to ⟶ Group discuss material

individual Group and Individuals in it form their
own views on subject, primarily using
reason.

Group disperse

Individual makes a personal faith response to received Revelation of God
in light of previous discussion and subsequent thinking - in context of
prayer and for praxis.

Revelation as Revelation as Revelation as Act/Event
personal encounter propositional

Personal growth Improved grasp of Practical outworking in
towards God content of faith in daily life as a
(Spiritual response) itself and as Christian disciple.
related to rest of (Practical Application)
knowledge.
(Intellectual response)

APPENDIX C

<u>Theological Reflection Model - from below</u>

Distance   Experience, Encounter or Event

                            │
                            │   Immediate Interpretation
                            ↓

Fusion   Storage in Memory as Story

                            │
                            │   Further Reflection - questions arise
                            ↓

Distance   Formal educational setting
                  Recount to Group the Story

                            │
                            │   Story and issues clarified in Group
                            ↓

Fusion   Shared Experience in Context of
                  Theological Reflection.

                            │
                            │   Interpret Experience collaboratively
                            │   in the light of the Christian faith
                            ↓

                  Meaning emerges to individual
                  and Group. Growth in Maturity

Praxis
                            │   Further reflection, perhaps in midst
                            │   of action
                            ↓

                  Personal growth. Compassionate action.
                  Practical Discipleship.

                            │
Distance   │   Analysis and Evaluation of Model in
                            │   general by teacher and students
                            ↓

                  Overall perspective on learning process
                  Refining and Development of Model. Ability
                  to reflect theologically in midst of life's
                  experiences on own.

                            │
                            │   Ongoing movement of growth by
                            │   Teacher and Students.
                            ↓

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