

# Nurturing Spiritual Growth: A Review of Adult Christian Education among Episcopal Church Congregants in South California

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## Abstract

Christian education has grown, expanded and diversified during the late twentieth and the beginning of the twenty first century. With more emphasis being put on meeting the educational needs of diverse ages within the church, various developments have characterized adult education programs. These programs which aim at meeting adults' spiritual and educational needs include single adults and small group ministries which provide informal times for fellowship, Bible study, caring and prayer groups. Outreach programs include the seeker services and short-term mission trips, and para-church events like Promise Keepers. This paper is a review of literature on adult education. The author makes reference to a study undertaken in Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Los Angeles within the Southern California region. The key elements discussed in this paper include a *historical overview of Adult Christian Education in America where the author points out the non-formal learning context. The paper also explains the Christian worldview integration focusing on the New Testament perspective of the goal of Christian Education. In this, the author points out some of the motives that propel spiritual maturity. Some biblical references are made such as the occasion of the Epistle to the Philippians, the message of the Epistle to the Philippians and puts forth some of the exhortations for living the Christian life with reference to Philippians 3:1-16. Finally the author discusses some of the implications for the book of Philippians chapter 3 in relation to motivation for Christian education.*

**Keywords:** Christian Education, Spiritual growth, Motivation, Adult participation, Episcopal churches, South California

## 1. Introduction

Christian education for adults is a very important task for the church to fulfill. Since people continue to grow throughout adulthood, the need to learn also increases (Downs, 1991). Schuster (1999) noted that, "Adults who are in the process of ongoing change and learning tend to broaden their sense of purpose and diversify the sources of meaning in their lives.... Although adults continue to do much of their generative work in occupational and family settings, there is new evidence that people find many ways to "leave their mark" often through creative, altruistic, or spiritual pursuits" (pp. 17-18). Barna (2001) pointed out that there has been an increased interest in spiritual matters among adults in America, and that one out of every six church adults participates in discipleship groups for spiritual growth.

For the longest time, the church has been an institution where people have turned to, to meet their learning needs. Brillinger (1995) states that:

Churches are in a unique position to offer opportunities for people to refine or renew their vision of their lives, their faith community and world. They minister to people at all phases of the life cycle... through study groups, liturgy, committees, and outreach programs. The church has the opportunities to facilitate intentionally people's faith, learning and development throughout their life span. (p. 67)

Every church therefore, must invest in its adults. Though children and youth are important and often referred to as "the church of tomorrow," adults are the church of today and they shape the lives of children far more than church leadership **alone** can (Daniel, 1999, p. 194). The Christian education of adults should be concerned with understanding adults' learning needs and providing programs that effectively meet those needs. For adults, Christian education should not be viewed as a onetime event but as a lifelong process aimed at motivating learners to grow more and more into the image of Christ.

Adults' religious motivation varies from one person to another. Religiosity is defined as the degree to which religious beliefs, attitudes and behaviors permeate the life of the individual (Kauffman, 1979). Allport's (1966), and Allport and Ross's (1967) approach to religious motivation which originated from studies of religion and racial prejudice has had the greatest impact on empirical studies of psychology of religion. According to Allport, some individuals may be intrinsically motivated in that they live out their religion, while others may be extrinsically motivated in that religion serves the self. Understanding how adults express their religiosity is one of the aspects discussed in this paper.

Among the few studies that have been done on adults' participation in church based learning activities, they have indicated that spiritual growth or development has been one of the highly motivating factors for adult

participation (Utendorf, 1985; Fortosis, 1990; Wilson, 1992; Atkinson, 1994; Isaac, Guy, & Valentine, 2001). Brillinger (1995), comments that “adult **learning** in a religious context is more than simply ongoing learning of religious information and perspectives. It includes the development of adults as spiritual people (p. 81). The question of why adults participate in educational activities is not only limited to general adult education but also applies to the field of adult Christian education in the **church**. Jordan (1986) puts it well when he states that:

The challenge confronting churches is to address the interests and life needs that motivate adults to learn, to feature learning methodology appropriate for adult learners, and to offer opportunities for adults to learn in the midst of life’s complex issues and prepared schedules. Given the motivation, and opportunity, adults will learn. (pp. 263-264)

Therefore, understanding the reasons for participation of adults in congregationally sponsored Christian education learning events will enable churches and Christian educators better prepare to meet the educational needs and desires of the adult learners in the churches and in turn increase participation. The reasons for educational participation also determine the curriculum, the methods of teaching, the available resources, leading to the overall success in assisting the members and the church to reach the desired goals.

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1. A Historical Overview of Adult Christian Education in America

Christian education has developed over the years. Niblette (1984) notes that from the beginning of time; the religious instruction of adults has been the foundational lifeline for the growth and development of God’s people. Formal adult educational instruction in the early church was reflected through the movements of two main schools namely: Catechumenal school which was established for the purpose of the practical working out of Christian theological principles for everyday life, and Catechetical school which was established for the purpose of developing an intellectual apologetic with regard to the Christian faith (Price, Carpenter, & Chapman, 1932).

The establishment of Sunday school in the late 1700s marked the beginning of modern Christian education. The first adult school whose purpose was to meet the needs of younger women in lace and hosiery factories is said to have been started in Nottingham England in 1798. It was run by William Singleton who was a Methodist and Samuel Fox a Quaker. The main focus was on reading the Bible and then writing from dictation or copies (Rowntree & Binns, 1903). Later between 1814 and 1815 more adult schools which offered non-denominational Bible classes were founded in London. As Kelly (1970) notes “they usually met on Sunday mornings and afternoons, and were run by voluntary teachers, and generally their aim was to teach reading especially from the New Testament” (p. 152).

At the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, several institutions and associations committed to adult religious education were developed in America. One of the most famous institution which came to be known as the Chautauqua movement was founded in 1874 in New York State, by Bishop John Heyl Vincent and Lewis Miller of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The purpose of the institution was to provide further training and education to Sunday school teachers during the summer months when they were away from their classes. In addition to the in-service aspect of the instruction, the program also spread biblical instruction and popular education using many of the same methods that became popular in the Sunday school movement which was also prominent at this time (Elias, 2002).

According to Grattan (1959), Vincent outlined the basic philosophy of the Chautauqua movement as:

All of life is educational but the true basis of education is Christian faith; all knowledge becomes sacred by its relationship to God; those who receive no cultural education in early life desire it more avidly in later life; the intellect is to be developed through reading, reflection, and production. (pp. 72-74)

Vincent considered religious education and all education as a right and duty, and believed that adult years were uniquely suitable for learning because adults bring to the learning process valuable experience from life (Elias, 1993).

The Chautauqua institute designed an eight week summer program which would run for five or seven days, with morning afternoon and evening sessions. Morning sessions were usually devoted to Bible study. The remainder of the program consisted of varying lectures of both the scholarly and moral uplifting variety (Tozier, 1934). The Chautauqua institution spread to hundreds of communities within the United States and was never affiliated with any one denomination. Thousands of people attended the institute per year, and for those who could not, there were courses for home study groups and lectures were sent out to supplement the material furnished from the organization’s publishing house. The Chautauqua movement however declined in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Gould, 1961).

For the purpose of promoting Sunday schools and to encourage greater participation, various associations have been founded. They include the American Sunday School Union (1824), the International Sunday School Association (1907), and the National Sunday School Association (1945). Many of these associations have held conventions at least annually to encourage and train volunteer leaders and teachers (Reed & Prevost, 1993).

Adult Sunday school classes among other Christian education programs are perhaps the core of adult

education in most congregations. Sunday school has been an agency of the church designed to teach Bible to adults in local church ministries. The Sunday school allows adult learners to gather in groups smaller than corporate worship service. Classes provide warmth and caring, and service opportunities can be planned and carried out through classes (Daniel, 1999). “If a church is to develop committed disciples of Jesus, serious emphasis must be placed on the training and mentoring of the new converts. Intentional steps to spiritual development must be implemented based on comprehensive knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Word of God. Sunday school offers a cost-effective, efficient format for systematic mentoring of the new converts to full discipleship” (Gourlay, 2013, pp. 26-27).

## 2.2. Non-formal Learning Context

Adults come to learn with an array of experiences and lifelong constructed knowledge. The concept of learning is often described as the acquisition of new knowledge. Livingstone (2001), and Selman and Damper (1991), state that learning occurs along three dimensions namely informal, formal and non-formal. Adult Christian education programs in the church and in the community are either carried out in informal, formal, or non-formal educational settings. For the purpose of this study, we investigated those programs that are carried out using non-formal forms of learning as emphasis is on developing competency rather than earning credentials. However, in order to best understand non-formal education, it is better to compare and contrast it to both informal and formal education.

Informal education has been viewed as learning that goes on in daily life and it is considered as the oldest form of learning. Informal education focuses on the process of socialization in learning, and it is generally unorganized, unsystematic and unintentional.

Scribner and Cole (1973) noted that many things are learned more effectively through informal processes, a good example being language learning. Conner (2003) states that, informal learning describes a lifelong process whereby individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge from daily experience achieved in the educative influences and resources in his or her environment, from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media. According to the European Commission policy document (2001), informal learning is defined as:

Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or “incidental”/ random). (p. 33)

Formal education has dominated policy thinking for a long time, shaping the ways in which education and training are provided and coloring people’s understanding of what counts as learning (European Commission, 2000). Formal learning includes the hierarchically structured chronologically graded education system that runs from elementary school through to the university. Eraut (2000) presents five features of formal learning as “a prescribed learning framework, an organized learning event or package, the presence of a designated teacher or trainer, an award of qualification or credit in form of degrees and diplomas, and the external specification of outcomes” (p. 12). The European Commission (2001) policy document summarizes the definition of formal learning as:

Learning typically provided by an education or training, institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s perspective. (p. 32)

Formal education is therefore usually compulsory, where the teacher’s evaluation of the student is of great importance for it determines the level of diploma and degree awarded to the students. Learning does not only take place in the classroom and the recognition of this reality is leading to greater attention being paid to the non-formal dimensions of learning (Eraut, Alderton, Cole, & Senker, 1998). Non-formal education refers to learning that takes place outside the formally organized school and typically does not lead to certification. It is usually associated with adult literacy programs and continuing education for adults (Walter, Morgan, & Walter, 1996).

Non-formal education is change-oriented, deliberate, planned, staffed and financially supported. It is functional unrestricted as to time and place, usually responsive to the need and is an effective tool for development (Ward, 1995). “The term *non-formal education* has provided a contrast, its major use emphasizing new and different change-oriented education. Non-formal education usually means highly functional learning linked specifically to particular social innovations” (Ward, 1995, p. 7). Ward (1974) also pointed out that non-formal education is principally voluntary; that individuals perceive a concrete benefit from participating. Unlike enrolled students within degree programs, participants are attracted to non-formal programs because they offer new knowledge, desired skills, or direct assistance in their attempts to better understand themselves and the world. Since non-formal education tends to be intentional, need-based, highly functional, change-oriented, and learner-driven, it is a versatile educational approach.

This paper does focus on adult participation in Christian education programs within the Episcopal Church,

which are carried out in non-formal modes of learning. These programs are intentional, voluntary, need-based, highly functional, change-oriented, and learner-driven, whose emphasis is on developing competency rather than earning credentials. The main objectives of these programs include the study of faith and formation of new skills within the local church. These programs include: adult inquiry **classes** which explore the churches' history, traditions, and practices; adult forums where discussions on various topics of life based on biblical principles are carried out, and intercessors guild which covers topics on prayer, support groups, adult Bible study **classes**, adult Sunday school groups, growth groups and support groups. More churches have also started getting involved in missions which has proved to be an educational opportunity for adults. As Christian adults participate in activities and events within the educational ministry of the church, they grow in Christian maturity and in the ability to influence their world for Christ.

### 2.3. *Christian Worldview Integration*

This section presents relevant biblical and theological literature related to adults' motivations to participate in Christian education programs within the church. Three main areas in this section include a broad New Testament perspective on the goal of Christian education, exegesis of Philippians chapter 3, and implications of Philippians chapter 3 in relation to motivation for Christian education.

#### 2.3.1. New Testament Perspective on the Goal of Christian Education

One of the most motivating factors for adults to be involved in Christian education programs in the local church is the biblical mandate for growth in one's faith. The goal of Christian education is expressed in the exhortation, "... let us press on to maturity..." (Hebrews 6:1, NASB). The New Testament clearly expresses that God's will for every believer is to attain spiritual maturity (Anderson & Saucy, 1997). The goal of spiritual maturity is to have the character of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). Paul states that the goal of his teaching is to "... proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ" (Colossians 1:28, NASB). Paul was interested in believers not remaining as spiritual babies, but in becoming spiritually mature (James 1:4).

Growth in one's faith is motivated by a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. As a result, a follower of Christ becomes more like Him. Therefore, a spiritually mature person is described as one who is like Jesus, who has Christlike character. Spiritual maturity is demonstrated by having the power and wisdom to do what is right with the right spirit (Steele, 2001). It is a process that enables believers to grow in their faith (2 Corinthians 10:15), in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord (2 Peter 3:18), and in love (Ephesians 4:16) together as a body of Christ. Spiritual maturity is intentional and all encompassing, which includes the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of believers (Richards, 1975).

#### 2.3.2. *Motives that Propel Spiritual Maturity*

Downs (1994) describes the process of becoming spiritually mature or more like Christ as involving three aspects. He states that for believers, "Spiritual maturity is a matter of holding on to correct beliefs, loving God more deeply, and living in growing obedience to God. Together these three aspects are necessary for spiritual maturity" (1994, p. 59). Christian maturity is marked by stability (Ephesians 4:14), love (1 Thessalonians 3:12; Ephesians 5:1), humility (Philippians 3:13-15), moral excellence (2 Peter 1:4; Ephesians 4:13, 24), a motivation for God's concerns (1 Timothy 1:5), spiritual wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:1-10), doing the will of God (Romans 12:2), and a servant attitude (Philippians 2:3-5) (Holloman, 1994 & Ryrie, 1989). Henderson (1983) concurs that maturity is the goal of Christian education, and maturity equals Christlikeness.

##### 1. Knowing God

Christlikeness broadly involves knowing God, loving God, and obeying God. Christlikeness involves having knowledge of the Bible. The Apostle Paul encourages Timothy to continue in his faith through perseverance and by constantly learning more of God's word. The ultimate purpose of scripture is that the men of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:14-17). Wilhoit (1991) indicates that the Bible rightly plays a central role in Christian education, because it is God's instrument for promoting spiritual growth and fellowship with him. Phillips (1996) comments that, "The knowledge of God involves not simply propositions about God, but encountering and embracing God as Lord, so that God becomes the center of the believer's desires, affections and knowledge" (1996, p. 459).

Jesus Himself defined eternal life as knowing Him: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). In his first epistle, John declared, "And we know that the son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true..." (1 John 5:20). Packer (1973) emphasizes the importance of knowing God when he states "For what higher, more exalted, and more compelling goal can there be than to know God?" (p. 34). The Christian life is a lifelong process, where believers need to "grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18a).

##### 2. Loving God

Christlikeness entails believers loving God. Kuhl (2001) asserts that, "the essence of God's character is expressed in the declaration 'God is love' (1 John 4:8) (2001, p. 439). God has demonstrated love in everything

He does (Schaefer, 1996). God's loving is the basis for human loving. Humanity, in responding to God's love, is to love as God loved (1 John 4:11) and as Christ loved (John 13:34). Smalley (1984) points out that, "In John, mutual love is clearly grounded in the love of God, and is a sign of faith" (p. 61). Hence, Christian love is first and foremost to be directed to God (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

Believers are commanded to love God with their whole being. God desires nothing from us more than our love. Lewis and Demarest (1996) note that, "God made us to love him and our hearts are restless until they find their highest fulfillment in him" (Vol. 2, p. 58). Jesus summed up the greatest commandment as "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. And the second is this: you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). Steele (2001) notes that "this quality of love is not something we have at new birth; it is something that must grow in us" (p. 659). God takes the initiative in loving believers, and their love of God is derived from that (1 John 4:10, 19). Whatever love that believers have is given to them by God (1 John 3:1). Love will lead to a desire to obey God's will and to observe his commandments (1 John 5:3), and the perfection of love for God is seen in those who keep his word, as indicated in 1 John 2:5 (Guthrie, 1981).

### 3. Obeying God

Christlikeness is a matter of living in growing obedience to God. Scripture indicates that Christians are expected to obey the ordinances of God (Acts 5:29, 32; John 14:21-24; 15:10). The obedience that Jesus demands from believers is a wholehearted commitment to the perfect will of God. This leads believers to find their true self in a life of obedience to God, because God knows what is best for them (Guthrie, 1981). One evidence that believers are children of God is continued obedience to the commandments of God (1 John 2:3-5). Jesus said that those who love him would keep his commandments (John 14:15), and He further indicates that His own love for the Father was evidenced by him obeying the Father's commandments (John 14:31). Peter, speaking of Christians, calls them 'obedient children' (1 Peter 1:14) (Elwell, 1988).

Believers are not without an example to follow in their life of obedience to God. Jesus himself is a perfect example of complete obedience to God. Jesus "emptied himself taking the form of a bond-servant, and humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross" (Philippians 2:7, 8). Hebrews 11 gives examples of Abel, Noah, Abraham and Moses, whose obedience to God is derived from their faith for Him (Elwell, 1988). Obedience to God should be a continuous process. This is evidenced clearly in Paul's words "So then my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

The New Testament, therefore, focuses on the absolute necessity of Christian maturity, the goal of which is Christlikeness. Christian maturity involves knowing God, loving God and obeying God. Edwards (1982) emphasizes that spiritual maturity is not something an individual could produce, but is rather a result of a working of God, a result of God's changing work in an individual. Moreover, Christian maturity is never reached to the extent that Christian education stops in the life of the believer.

While the New Testament speaks of spiritual maturity as a motivating force in the life of the believers, the Apostle Paul models this involvement in the life of the church. A prime example of Paul's motivations is articulated in his letter to the Philippians. In particular, chapter 3 of this letter spells out key motivating principles for his continued growth and development. He exhorts the Philippian church to follow his example. The contemporary church would do well to examine his argument and follow his examples as well. In the following section, after presenting the occasion of the letter and the message of the book, Philippians 3:1-16 is discussed in light of Paul's motivation for maturity and exhortation to Christian living.

#### 2.3.3. The Occasion of the Epistle to the Philippians

The challenge to keep growing in faith was demonstrated by Paul and his missionary companions, Silas, Timothy, and Luke who founded the first church at Philippi during the second missionary journey (ca. AD. 49). This came as a result of a call at Troas to enter Macedonia to help there (Acts 16:12-40). The Christian congregation at Philippi is regarded as the first group of believers in Europe and served as a source of support for Paul's continued journey toward Christlikeness (Cousar, 2001). The church was born in a situation of crisis, knew hardship and persecution from its inception (1 Thessalonians 2:2), and proved to be most loyal to Paul (Philippians 4:14-16), and possibly was the church dearest to him (Fee, 1995).

It is known that Paul was in prison (Philippians 1:7, 13, 14, and 17), when he wrote the epistle to the Philippians, although theologians do not seem to agree on the location of his imprisonment (Lighter, 2000). This imprisonment was serious (Philippians 1:20-24, 30; 2:17), for his trial could result in either life or death for him. Paul links this imprisonment with his ministry, claiming that he had been put there 'for the defense of the gospel' (Philippians 1:16), and that both the imprisonment and the attendant circumstances had served to advance the gospel rather than to hinder it (Philippians 1:12) (O' Brien, 1991).

Paul remained faithful in his call despite opposition and persecution. He exhibited unusual tenacity in his progression toward the goal of spiritual maturity. While Paul's primary purpose in writing this letter was to thank the Philippians for the gift of money that they had sent to ameliorate his situation in prison (Philippians



4:10-19), he reveals his motivation for staying steadfast. He wanted above everything else to convey his continuing deep affection for them all (Philippians 1:3-8) and bring them up to date on the news about his own circumstances (Philippians 1:12-16; 2:24). The Philippians had been praying for him (Philippians 1:19) and their partnership motivated him to stay strong (Philippians 1:5). Paul also wanted to motivate them to rejoice irrespective of their circumstances just as he himself had learned to do (Philippians 2:18; 3:1; 4:4). He held Epaphroditus as a motivational tool, and told them how Epaphroditus had risked his life to carry out their orders and to fulfill the work of Christ on their behalf (Philippians 2:25-30) (Hawthorne, 1987).

#### 2.3.4. Demotivating Factors

Paul takes the occasion to address certain trials and difficulties that the Philippians were facing, and that were demotivating them in their spiritual growth (2:17; 3:1; 4:2-3). Suffering as a result of opposition seemed to be undermining their growth and joy in the Lord. Paul reiterates this demotivating force by explicitly stating the opposition they were facing in four key passages in the letter. In 1:14-17, Paul speaks of brothers who spoke the word of God and preached Christ. But these “brothers” did so with impure motives, envy, rivalry and selfish partisanship, hoping thereby to add to Paul’s suffering (Hawthorne, 1983; Cousar, 2001). Second, Paul further urges the Philippians not to “be frightened in any way by those who oppose you” (1:27-28) (Fee, 1995). Third, Paul warns the Philippians against his opponents, whom he refers to as “dogs, those who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh” (3:2-3). And fourth, he continues to highlight how they, have become enemies of the cross (3:18-19). They are people who have opted out of life in Christ and have chosen to become enemies (Fee, 1995; O’ Brien, 1991).

Paul’s opponents were Judaizers. They had been causing problems by threatening the Philippians and trying to undermine the firmness of the Philippians in the gospel (1:27-29) by teaching the necessity of keeping the Jewish law, including circumcision and regulation about food. They proclaimed a message that righteousness and perfection were attainable “now” (3:12-15) which came by submitting to circumcision and complying with certain ritual laws (3:19). The unbiblical message of the Judaizers motivated followers by offering visible and tangible tokens of God’s favor in the present, not in the future and invisible world (Hawthorne, 1993). Paul counters the Judaizers in chapter 3 with a forceful teaching about justification by faith which is motivated by trust in an unseen relationship with God. He chose to express his theology through his personal experience and defines proper motives for spiritual maturity. He had lived the message of the Judaizers and found it lacking (3:2-21).

Paul’s sense of urgency in combating these opponents is in line with his personal experiences when he lived in his status as a Jew. Formally he put his confidence in the “flesh” and found this method unable to move the will. Hence, he sent Epaphroditus (2:25-30) to remind the church of the dangers of these enemies to spiritual growth and warned them to be on guard (Silva, 1992). Fee (1995) asserts that “what Paul is concerned about is their ‘Christ-likeness’ which in this letter is clearly spelled out as ‘God-likeness (= godliness)’” (p. 52). Therefore, Paul wrote this letter to motivate the believers in Philippi to continue in their journey toward spiritual maturity by following his example of faith.

#### 2.3.5. The Message of the Epistle to the Philippians

Paul’s letter to the Philippians is intensely intimate and personal. The church at Philippi, was deep in his affections (1:7), and for this reason, he diligently dealt with the controversial issues that the Philippian believers were facing (2:1-4; 3:17-19; 4:2-4). Paul exhorted them to be joyful, humble, steadfast, self-sacrificing, united and to live for Christ in whatever circumstances they were in.

The epistle begins with a relatively short salutation (Philippians 1:1-2) in which Paul identifies himself and Timothy as servants of Christ Jesus, and reminds the Philippians of their unity as saints and of the gracious nature of the gospel. Paul then proceeds to offer prayers for the Philippian believers (1:3-11), prayer as thanksgiving for their partnership in the gospel, in every kind of way (verses 3-8), and prayer as petition for continued fruitfulness in living out the gospel in Philippi (verses 9-11). Paul’s affection for the Philippians was so strong that it was the selfless affection of Jesus Christ himself. Fee (1995) points out “Thus the whole passage abounds with joy and affection, focusing primarily on the Philippians’ role of “partnership in the gospel” (p. 73).

Referring to his own situation, Paul goes on to demonstrate in 1:12-26 how the principles for effective partnership in the gospel were working to further the gospel in his own trying circumstances. Silva (1992) asserts the apostle discerned what is best in regard to the advancement of the gospel. Rather than hindering the gospel, Paul’s imprisonment had actually resulted in its progress (verses 12-18). Then in verses 18b-26, Paul reveals the deepest motives of his life. He expresses unbounded joy on account of his assurance of salvation, and makes it clear how that salvation is not in any way threatened by the possibility of death. Finally, he reassures the Philippians (verses 25-26) by expressing his confident hope that he will be released from prison (Hawthorne, 1983).

As Paul turns his attention to the affairs of his readers, he appeals for the need of unity in the face of the opposition that they were undergoing from outside (1:27-30). In 1:27, the apostle offers what has been considered a highly significant demand, which calls for the believers to conduct their lives in a manner worthy of

the gospel of Christ. The subject of what constitutes a worthy walk runs through the entire epistle. This worthy walk consists of unity (1:27c) and steadfastness (1:28-30), and here Paul admonishes the Philippians to remain steadfast and united in the midst of opposition. Standing in one spirit, and as with one soul, they are to strive as members of the same team for the furtherance of the gospel (O' Brien, 1991).

In chapter 2, Paul continues to urge the Philippian Christians to achieve a unity based on true humility (2:1-4). Picking up the theme of unity in (1:27b) he exhorts them to demonstrate unity and humility towards one another (Fee, 1995). Paul elaborates on the theme of humility by citing Jesus Christ as the ultimate example of one who humbled Himself (2:5-11). This magnificent passage, which is considered to be the most important section of the letter to the Philippians, provides a marvelous description of Christ's self-humbling in his incarnation and death (verses 6-8), together with his subsequent exaltation by God to the place of the highest honor (verses 9-11) (O' Brien, 1991). It is this humble, self-emptying, self-sacrificing mind after which the Philippians are to pattern their relationship.

In light of Christ's example (2:6-11), and again picking up on the theme of walking worthy of the gospel (1:27), Paul encourages his readers to continue their good record of obedience, to work out on their salvation (2:12-13), to avoid dissension within the community by living as God's blameless children (2:14-16), and ends on the motif of their rejoicing together in their mutual suffering (2:17-18). In 2:19-30, Paul concludes this chapter not only to inform the Philippians about Timothy and Epaphroditus, who were fellow workers, but also to present them as godly examples of men who modeled the qualities commended in 1:27 of life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

From using Jesus and his fellow workers as examples of those possessing qualities worthy of the gospel, now Paul in chapter 3 embarks on exhorting his readers by using his experience and life as a model to follow. Using strong language, the apostle warns his readers of the serious dangers of the Judaizers who were evidently advocating circumcision (3:1-3) (Fee, 1995). Paul himself had every reason for confidence in his life as a Jew (3:4-6), but he now sees all that as "loss for the sake of Christ" for to know Christ is much more important (3:7-11). Paul makes it clear that he has not reached perfection, and he is motivated to press on towards the goal of laying hold of Christ and being awarded a prize at the end of the race. He encourages the Philippians to join with him and to have the same Christ-centered motivation that he had (3:12-16) (Carson, Moo, & Morris, 1992). In (3:17-21), Paul contrasts two opposed patterns of behavior, his own and that of the enemies of the cross and urges his readers to imitate him (3:17-21). He concludes the chapter with an admonition to stand firm in the Lord and once again expresses his joy and affection for them (4:1) recalling the same themes in (1:27; 1:4; 2:12; 1:8; 2:2; 2:29).

Chapter 3 possesses characteristics that are unique to the letter, though it bears similarities threading the whole letter together. Silva (1992) points out that the parallels between chapter 3 and other chapters is evidenced by sections that Paul repeats and reflects on such as the concept of knowing Christ (2:6-11; 3:7-11), the concept of citizenship (2:27-28; 3:20) and the reference to the cross of Christ (2:8; 3:18) all express similar thoughts. Silva (1992) thus disputes the notion that chapter 3 was the work of later editor, "There is no manuscript evidence supporting the view that chapter 3 is an interpolation" (p. 166). Significantly, important parallels in the letter places chapter 3 at the center of Paul's spiritual thoughts. At this point in the epistle, Paul turns his thoughts more directly to deal with the false teachers and exhorts his readers to live a Christian life.

In chapter 4, Paul again revisits the theme of unity (4:2-3) which has been a concern to him throughout the letter (1:1, 18a, 27; 2:1-4, 29; 3:15). Paul then continues to encourage his readers to find the source of their peace and joy in God alone, who in Christ is near and sustains them in every circumstances (verses 4-7), and then provides a list of virtues worthy to meditate on and urges them to imitate him (verses 8-9). Paul ends the epistle with a thank you note to the Philippians for their gifts to him through Epaphroditus (verses 10-20), some final words of greetings (verses 21-22) and a benediction (verse 23).

#### *2.4. Exhortations for Living the Christian Life (Philippians 3:1-16)*

Philippians 3 stands as such a powerful passage in the letter, that it provides an insight into the driving motive in the life of Paul. Tenney (1985) states "to Paul, all of life was summed up in Christ. To 'gain' him, to 'know' him, to 'be found' in him, and to attain the goal set in him" (p. 328). Paul intends for his readers to have this same kind of motivation and to emulate him as they seek to grow and mature in their Christian life.

##### *2.4.1. Qualities of True Believers (Philippians 3:1-6)*

Paul begins this section by strongly warning his readers to watch out for the evil workers. In (verse 1), after the apostle recalls the exhortation of (2:17-18), which urges the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord in spite of their suffering, he proceeds by using strong language to warn them of the dangers of the Judaizers, whom he refers to as "dogs," "workers of evil," and "mutilators of the flesh" (verses 3-4). These three negative characterizations are expressions intended to malign the moral character of the Judaizers and contrast with the positive characteristics in verse 3 which is a motivational factor of how believers in Christ are true circumcision contrary to the opponents' views (O'Brien, 1991). The purpose of this warning was to make it clear to the Philippians that the free gift of grace provided through Christ made them disciples, not what they could do such as being

circumcised. What believers do is a result of faith, not a prerequisite of faith. Thus, true believers have three common characteristics that prove their standing before God, they worship in the Spirit of God, they boast in Christ Jesus, and they have no confidence in the flesh.

In order to bring the point home, Paul uses his own personal testimony to illustrate how his personal privileges and past achievements, indicate what trusting in the flesh means (verses 4-6). Paul had impressive credentials, in terms of upbringing, nationality, family background, inheritance, orthodoxy, activity, and morality. Melick (1991) points out that “. . . characteristics of heredity and achievement reveal that Paul’s accepting Christ did not occur because he was marginally Jewish.... He had seen a better way and had chosen to follow it” (p. 130). Paul intended to show that human achievements, no matter how impressive cannot earn salvation and eternal life with God.

#### 2.4.2. Gaining the Knowledge of Christ (Philippians 3:7-11)

The supreme desire to know Christ is a worthy goal for any Christian believer. To know Christ is to love him, to serve him, and to identify one’s life with him. Knowing Christ means not only feeling his presence but especially living in faithfulness to God and his word day by day, a concept that serves as a motivating factor for believers to continue in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ (MacArthur, 2001).

For Paul knowing Christ was his most important goal as expressed in the following verses:

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:7-11) (NASB).

In these verses Paul continues with his personal testimony, but now turns to the startling change in orientation that occurred when he encountered Christ. Having set up in verses 4-6 the merits and achievements of his former way of life, he now explains how he has come to reject his old way of thinking in favor of the much greater advantage of knowing Christ and sharing in God’s righteousness by faith. Using the image of gain and loss account Paul compares the advantages that he enjoyed as a Jew (3:4-6) with those that have come to him as a result of his being in Christ. “But whatever things were gain to me”, Paul writes “those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ” (3:7) (Carson, 1996). Christ alone had become the object of Paul’s confidence. Christ as a supreme gain had become the overriding concern of Paul’s life. Hooker (2000) writes, “There is no doubt that the gain of being ‘in Christ’ far outweighs the value of everything Paul once possessed” (p. 527).

Paul continues to explain what he meant by counting all things as loss for the sake of Christ. The goal of all this loss was to know Christ (verses 8, 10), to gain him (verse 8) and to be found in him (verse 9). Paul’s motivation continues to be Christ and whatever Christ wants for him. The merits of Christ that are his through faith far surpass his personal merits. Fee (1995) points out, “for Paul, it is not simply ‘because of Christ’ that he considers all things as loss, but ‘because of the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord’” (verse 8) (p. 317). The advance in this statement is that the knowledge of Jesus excelled what Paul had before. The word “surpassing” suggests something of more excellence than that to which it is compared (Melick, 1991). The Christ whom Paul desires to know is the Christ who emptied himself and was obedient to death as reflected in (2:6-11). For Paul therefore, to know Christ as Lord means to acknowledge his actions as the self-revelation of God and to recognize Christ’s claims by adopting the pattern for his own life (Hooker, 2000). Knowing Christ Jesus, then, describes the fundamental reality of Paul’s life, the relationship which suffuses, empowers, and motivates all that he is and does.

Another goal that caused Paul to count all other things as loss was that he might gain Christ (verse 8). Here, Paul clearly developed the idea of exchange and replacement. His former values have become losses, because they have been replaced by the surpassing gain of a relationship with Jesus Christ. Thus, Paul implies that the gaining of Christ requires the loss of all former things, because to be rich in Christ, means to be rich in him alone, not in him plus in other gains (Fee, 1995).

Hawthorne (1983) notes that the goal of gaining Christ (3:8) here has the idea of the present and future tense, in that Paul has both gained Christ and is yet to gain Christ. Therefore, other things are a loss for the purpose of living in the newness of Christ’s life in him (1:14-15). Believers need to turn away from their past life in order to gain Christ. Here we are reminded of the words of Jesus ‘Whoever loses his life for my sake . . . will save it’ (Mark 8:35). Paul does not mean by gaining Christ you are in new realization of a principle of morality. Instead he confirms that Christ himself is the eternal life-giving God, whose throne is in heaven, where he awaits the true believers to be His citizens (3:20). Paul affirms his arguments on the utter dependency on Christ not mere speculative legalistic ideologies brought by the opponent of faith in Christ. Paul is not listing particular religious duties the Philippians would perform to be accepted, as the opponents advocate, but defines to



individual believers the character that postulates their entry into heaven by Christ as their way (Silva, 1992; Fee, 1995).

A third goal that caused Paul to count all things as loss was that “he may be found in Christ” (verse 9). Here Paul speaks of his position in his new relationship with Christ. His desire to be in Christ meant to be in union with the Lord and thus to have the covering of Christ’s righteousness surrounding him and the resources of Christ available to him. Significantly, Paul defined being in Christ in terms of righteousness. Being found in Christ means being clothed with God’s righteousness rather than one’s own, for fellowship with God is always based in righteousness (Melick, 1991). Paul claims no righteousness of his own which would be of a legalistic nature, but one that is strictly through faith in Christ. Paul asserts that true righteousness is obtained by abandoning one’s efforts and exercising faith (Silva, 1992). Paul’s ambition to be found in Christ is a day by day aspect, which will be realized on the day of Christ only if he is continuously and progressively living in him during this mortal existence (Bruce, 1989). The implications of this for Christian believers today is that God’s initiative must be met with human response. Right relationship with God is established by one’s faith in Christ, meaning by one’s continual confession of total dependence upon Christ for the necessary true righteousness and by one’s personal trust in and surrender to Christ (Hawthorne, 1983).

By counting all as loss and by gaining Christ (verse 8), and having obtained the righteousness from God through faith in Christ (verse 9) Paul further aims at a more intimate and personal knowledge and experience of Christ, by desiring to know Christ in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings (verses 10-11). By “knowing Christ by the power of His resurrection” meant the living power that proceeds from the risen Savior and reveals itself in the believer by working a total renewal of life in him. What Paul desires is a deep, experienced knowledge of the living and life-giving Christ (Bruce, 1989).

Paul also wanted to know Christ in the fellowship of his suffering, meaning that he wanted to participate in those sufferings, to know Christ better by experiencing sufferings just as Jesus did (Philippians 1:29). This experience of faith comes about when believers are united with Christ. For Paul, knowing Christ also meant identifying with his death. This involved participating in suffering and being conformed to his death. Through fellowship in suffering, Paul was becoming like Christ in his death. Paul uses the word *Koinonia*, meaning “sharing” or “fellowship” which reflects the idea of partnership in the gospel (Philippians 1:5). Being united with Christ in his death was a spiritual reality, but being conformed to his death was a daily process of living (Melick, 1991). Hooker (2000) states, “It is the power of Christ’s resurrection that is at work in Paul’s life, even in the midst of suffering, and that provides the assurance of his own future resurrection” (p. 529). Christians must be ready to become like Christ in his death, and being conformed to Christ’s death ought to be an ongoing process in every believer’s life (Luke 9:23).

For Paul, conformity to Christ’s death in the present will be followed by “resurrection from the dead” at the end (verse 11). This concept of resurrection from the dead serves as a reminder to believers that they have not yet arrived at their final destination. Their resurrection lies in the future, and just like Paul, they ought to go on being conformed to Christ’s obedience and death, which is a daily process of living, if they are to attain the resurrection.

Fee (1995) asserts “knowing Christ” is the ultimate goal of being in right relationship with God; and “knowing Christ” is both “already” and “not yet” (p. 326). To know Christ becomes to Paul a motivating factor. Thus, the goal of every Christian believer ought to be, to know Christ more fully and personally (Philippians 3:15, 17). This is a lifelong process, and leads Paul in Philippians 3:12-14 to discuss the spiritual discipline that motivates him to press on towards the goal of knowing Christ.

#### 2.4.3. Pressing on Toward the Goal (Philippians 3:12-14).

Spiritual maturity should be the objective or goal of every Christian believer. The Christian life is a lifelong pursuit of Christlikeness. Life in Christ is a progress toward a goal, a process, not an achievement, as expressed by the apostle Paul in verses 12-14.

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-14) (NASB).

These verses express the fact that Paul’s desire to know Christ is not yet a fully accomplished reality, but it still motivates and energizes his life toward the supreme goal and prize of heavenly union with him (Bockmuehl, 1998). Having an awareness of his imperfection, Paul presses on in order to apprehend that which is his in Christ. Paul speaks of a concerted, strenuous pursuit intended by all means to take hold of the heavenly prize for the sake of which Christ Jesus (3:12b) took hold of him on the Damascus road (Bockmuehl, 1998).

One of the key words that Paul uses in Philippians 3:12, 14 is ‘I press on.’ “The present tense of the verb *dioko* indicates ongoing action. Paul pursued that which he had not yet attained; that is, moral and spiritual perfection” (Lewis & Demarest, 1996, Vol. 3, p. 16). Hawthorne (1987) points out, that the words “I press on” in

relation to the Christian life focuses on the necessity for striving, for constantly pursuing, for resolute determination in order to make life's aim, which is Christlike character and conduct, a reality.

In Philippians 3:13, Paul describes his Christian life as involving the continual forgetting of what is behind and the relentless centering of his energies and interests on the course that is ahead of him. No present attainment could lead him into thinking he already possessed all Christ desired of him (Kent, 1987). Paul indicates that he permits nothing to divert him from his course. He describes the singleness of his purposes and his intense effort through the imagery of a runner whose aim is to finish the race and win the prize (O'Brien, 1991). Focusing on God, on the goal of true Christian race, alone keeps believers looking and moving forward, and allows for living out the meaning of the cross, all in the awareness of one's penultimate condition as one awaits for the perfect to *come* (Desilva, 1994). The apostle Paul expresses the importance of forgetting or removing the obstacles of the past that might prevent a believer from running the race of the Christian life and the importance of continuous concentration on the things that lie ahead. There is a need for concentration and effort in the Christian life, if one is to advance in the knowledge of Christ.

Paul gives the biblical basis of learning in his injunction "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (3:14). The goal (Gk *skopos*, found only here in the New Testament) denotes the finish line which the runner has in *view* (Martin, 1975). Fee (1995) points out that, "For Paul the goal is the eschatological consummation of what is already his in Christ... and is concerned only that the Philippians follow him in keeping a firm grip on their certain future, and that they are not distracted along the way with lesser things" (1995, p. 348).

Paul's purpose of running straight toward the finish line is in order to win the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus (O'Brien 1991). "The prize is identical to God's call and was to be found in Christ" (Hawthorne, 1983, p. 155). Expanding on the concept of God's call, Fee (1995) explains that: "First God has 'called' Paul to himself, which will culminate in glory; second that call, which began at his conversion, is heavenward in terms of its final goal; third, God's call found its historical and experiential locus 'in Christ Jesus'; and fourth, at the end of the race Paul will gain the prize, the tangible evidence that the goal of God's call has been reached" (p. 349). God has called believers, summoning them out of their rebellion and sin into fellowship with himself in Christ on the ground of his reconciliation on the cross. This is the "upward" calling that leads to God himself. The responsibility of believers is to remain 'worthy of his calling' (2 Thessalonians 1:11), and to press on to finish the course with patience and courage, looking to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Paul was actively pressing on toward knowing Christ. He had by no means reached the final stage of his sanctification. This testimony of Paul reminds believers today that there must never be a stalemate in their spiritual growth (Zuck & Walvoord, 2000). Paul expresses a different attitude in his work in striving for Christ. He acknowledged full dependency on Christ and is even willing and ready to suffer and die with Christ. This contrasts with his previous life, when he worked under the law and boasted about how much he had achieved by following the law. Hence, Paul's style of pursuing Christlikeness, which is in the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering, is with the enthusiasm and the persistence of a runner, and his determination to continue pressing on is a model that all believers should emulate in their Christian life (3:15, 17). To know Christ fully and completely ought to be the prize for which all believers should be striving for.

#### 2.4.4. A Walk of Maturity (Philippians 3:15-16)

Maturity is a matter of refusing to focus on the spiritual attainments of the past and of realizing how much effort must be expended on the course that lies ahead. One mark of spiritual maturity is desire to go on with Christ (Thielman, 1995).

Paul in verses 15-16 includes himself among those who are 'perfect' (Gk. *teleios*). In the New Testament the word "perfect," which has its roots in the Old Testament, is used to refer to obedience, wholeness, and maturity. Theologians have attempted to differentiate the use of the word 'perfect' as it appears in Philippians 3:12, 15. Vincent (1968) argues that "in verse 12 Paul is speaking of absolute perfection, such as would relieve him of the necessity of further striving, whereas in verse 15 he is speaking of relative perfection-'full grown', 'mature', in contrast with childish ignorance and weakness, as in 1 Corinthians 2:6; 15:20 and Hebrews 5:14" (p. 112). Lewis and Demarest (1996) further assert that "the use of *teleios* in Philippians 3:15, has the meaning of spiritual maturity rather than absolute moral perfection" (1996, Vol. 3, p.190).

Paul encourages the mature to have the same attitude and goals that he has. He recognizes that he has not yet achieved his great ambition of fully gaining Christ, but as a runner, he presses on determinedly, aiming to finish the race and win the prize (3:12-14). Hawthorne (1983) summarizes Paul's thought by stating "all of us who claim to be perfect must have the attitude that Christian perfection is in reality a constant striving for perfection" (p. 156). The greatest challenge for believers is that striving for perfection or seeking to be mature is not a onetime event, but is something that should be continuous throughout their lives and that would require their total focus and maximum attention. Perfection in this life will always be a goal, never an achievement.

Believers should not only have the attitude of gaining Christ fully, but should consistently keep living by that same standard to which they have attained (3:16). Paul here calls upon the Philippians to continue to live in

conformity to the gospel which has continuously been proclaimed to them, and the understanding of which they have already attained (O'Brien, 1991). This same call also applies to Christian believers today.

#### 2.4.5. Implications of Philippians Chapter 3 to Motivation for Christian Education

In Philippians chapter 3, by referring to his life experiences and setting an example, the apostle Paul lays down some guidelines in relation to motivation for Christian education. As indicated earlier, the goal of Christian education is maturity, which indicates being conformed to Christ. The following aspects can guide the adult Christians as they seek to participate in educational activities within the church.

- (1) Christian maturity has more to do with our pursuit of Christlikeness than with conformity to the law. Thus, our motivation ought to be toward knowing Christ more.
  - (2) Paul's image of the Christian life as a race reminds believers that they have not arrived at their final destination. The Christian life is a journey toward a destination.
  - (3) In this life, the goals of gaining Christ, being found in Christ, and knowing Christ always remains beyond the individual, demanding one's continual endeavor. This calls for believers to continue pressing on.
  - (4) Christians should be intentional about their growth. This calls for discipline in the area of worship, prayer and reading scripture. The more mature, the more motivated one is in Christ, the more motivation one experiences to continue to grow.
  - 5) Biblical motivating factors ought to be paramount factors that influence adults to be intrinsically motivated to participate in Christian education programs in the church, as they seek to grow and mature in Christ.
- In light of these implications, adult Christian education is a vital aspect in the life of the church. The church should offer opportunities for adults to grow in their spiritual lives as they seek to be like Christ.

### 3. Conclusion

Different forms of acquiring education ranging from formal, informal and non-formal greatly affects the degree through which knowledge is acquired due to the learning environment and the perception individuals have towards these different forms. Christian education programs within the Church, are carried out in non-formal modes of learning. These programs are intentional, voluntary, need-based, highly functional, change-oriented, and learner-driven, whose emphasis is on developing competency rather than earning credentials. The main objectives of these programs include the study of faith and formation of new skills within the local church. As Christian adults participate in activities and events within the educational ministry of the church, they grow in Christian maturity and in the ability to influence their world for Christ.

Christian education focuses on supporting the believers' growth in Christlikeness. Hence, the believers' goal of learning to be like Christ should be a lifetime commitment. This carries with it an understanding that one has a continuing responsibility to pursue the purposes to which Christ has called the believer. In pursuing Christlikeness, believers are to continuously study and learn the scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14-17), and not allow themselves to settle for whatever they have already attained. They must press on to full maturity.

The biblical basis of learning is given by Paul in his injunction "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14), and in his instructions, "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on, so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12). Paul's image of the Christian life as a race reminds believers that they have not arrived at their final destination and thus can never rest on their laurels. In this life, the goal always remains beyond the individual, demanding one's continual endeavor and beckoning one to move forward (Hooker, 2000).

In order for Christians to grow and to be conformed to the image of Christ, first they must accept the responsibility for their own continued growth and learning. This can be derived from participating in Christian education programs in the church as well as being in fellowship with other believers. Second, they must accept the biblical responsibility toward God and toward other believers. And third, they must be willing to live a purposeful and practical life centered upon God.

### 4. Recommendations

The field of adult development provides important insights into the kinds of transitions, developmental tasks, and changes in personal meaning that mark the journey of adulthood. Understanding the many ways adults change and grow alerts adult educators to the dynamics of adult Christian growth. Since adults participate in education activities due to life's transitions, a longitudinal study measuring adult participation in educational activities in different point in time needs to be done to provide a better understanding of how one's participation relates to one's life transitions.

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