Christian Education Ministry in the 21st Century and Beyond

A 30-Hour Full Credit Graduate School Masters and Ph.D. Level Course in a One-Week Format

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Modified Syllabus/Course Structure

Needs of the Learners:

1. Felt Needs (Needs the students have that they already know they have):
    a. The teacher should ask the students what they would like to learn in this course. Then be sure to include what they want to learn in the most applicable session.
    b. There are several ways to ask the students for this information, including verbal questions from the teacher in the first session of the course, asking the students to write anonymously on 3 x 5 cards given to each person, or dividing the class into small groups with the task of listing the desires of the students in that group. However, keep in mind that though two of the benefits of this large and small group work are the triggering of needs that any one individual may not think of and more of an idea as to how widespread are the needs mentioned, nevertheless some individuals may not feel comfortable sharing what they would like included in the course, so all three of these means of student input will likely yield the most helpful information.
    c. For this course, I obtained many of the felt needs of the students with the help of the seminary before my travel to Asia. Many needs were mentioned, more than could be addressed during the class. As much as possible, I worked the students' felt needs into the lesson plan below; to address those needs for which there was not enough time in class, I sent within two weeks after the class a written response to each of those needs, a response which every student received. Those felt needs and my response are in Appendix C.

2. Unfelt Needs (Needs the students have that they are unaware they have, pertaining to the subject matter of the course)—All the students need to learn how to develop and implement the following competencies:
    a. An understanding of, and ability to explain, how human learning occurs.
    b. New teaching methods that will help God's people learn and apply his Word in their lives.
    c. An understanding of and ability to write lesson plans and to write and modify curricula.
    d. The knowledge of and how to write Level III objectives.
    e. The knowledge of and ability to explain and apply historic Christian systematic theology and to help others do so as well.
    f. Key factors in leadership and administration applied to the church.
    g. An understanding of and ability to explain the historic Biblical and integral educational dimension of worship.
    h. An understanding of diffusion research and its application to facilitating the successful implementation of innovations in the church.
    i. An innovative plan for effective Christian education now and in the future with special applications to Christian education in the country in which God has called them to serve.

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While our human condition has not changed, and will not in this phase of life, and while the Bible will always remain the same, from generation to generation the needs of each age cohort change, as a given generation's needs will require an emphasis on certain Biblical doctrines that the prior and succeeding generations did and will not need to the same degree. For example, the current inclination of young adults in the early 21st century to avoid the church, requires an emphasis on the importance of the church, including teaching the doctrine of ecclesiology. Address these needs in courses, classes, seminars, family education, corporate worship, personal conversations, and in all other educational settings.

Goal:

This course will help the participants learn the meaning, and key aspects, of what constitutes a plan for effective Christian education in the 21st century and beyond, according to the Bible and sound scientific human learning research consistent with God's Word. They will do so with conscious attention as to how to implement this aspect of Christian education in their own ministry to which God has called them, with a specific focus on their particular vocation.

Objectives:

In the field of education, objectives are specific stated intentions and planned, observable, and measurable outcomes written in terms of what students will be doing, which are designed to accomplish the goal of the course, the accomplishment of which will meet the students' needs. The most effective objectives are called behavioral or performance objectives. These are statements of how the students are expected to act in specific observable and measurable ways, which have been carefully written by the teacher (e.g., those below) and given to each class member by or at the first class session, the accomplishment of which will assure the teacher(s), and also the students themselves, that each student has developed the competencies that the lesson has been designed to help him or her learn and be able to do. The teacher can add any other objectives that may be required to meet needs that he or she becomes aware of in the first part of the first lesson, or that arise later in the course.

The most effective of these objectives are called Level III objectives. Level III objectives contain three parts: a specific *measurable behavior*, *how well* that behavior is to be demonstrated, and the *conditions* under which the behavior is to be performed. All four levels of objectives are explained in the accompanying writings for this course, but the focus is on the Level III category.

Since human learning involves three related domains, all of which exist on a continuum in the brain's cerebrum, the Level III objectives are written for all three dimensions: cognitive (dealing with knowledge and understanding, e.g., objectives 1-15 below), affective (including feelings and attitudes, e.g., objective 16), and behavioral (including applicatory actions, e.g., objectives 17 and 18, and possibly 13, if the work has already begun), all three dimensions of which are taught in the Bible. (Cf., e.g., John 14:21) Such objectives are essential in order to engage our cognition and understandings, as well as feelings and affect, which lead to the action the Lord expects and that gives evidence of genuine faith that saves us. (John 14:21; Ephesians 2:8-10)

For further information, see the essays and PowerPoint programs I've written and posted on the Christian education page of my Website, *From Acorn to Oak 12* and on my academic Website.

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The minimum behavioral objectives for this lesson follow. Knowing their students' needs, including those above and any others they've added, each teacher should consider whether any other objectives should be added in this course.

By the end of this lesson each participant will be able to do the following:

1. List verbally or in writing, and define all three domains of human learning and development, **and** explain how they relate to each other and at least one way how each is essential in order to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (John 14:21; Ephesians 4:13)

2. Identify and verbally or in writing explain each step of at least one teaching method you learned in this course that you intend to use in your own teaching.

3. Verbally or in writing, list in order all six parts of the "Discrepancy Assessment Model for Evaluation," (Adaptation of Stake) and explain the following:
   a. what each part means;
   b. the relationship of each part to the others; and
   c. at least three benefits of this model for effective teaching in the church.

4. Verbally or in writing, list in order and explain all seven steps of the schema for lesson planning and curriculum development (Adaptation of Taba).

5. Given a 4 x 6 card, identify and explain all three parts of a Level III objective and write at least one Level III objective for each of the three domains (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) for an upcoming lesson he or she is planning to teach (or for those not presently teaching, for a lesson he or she would like to teach at some time in the future).

6. Explain verbally or in writing at least one reason why Level III objectives are necessary for the most effective teaching, and supply at least three Bible texts that indicate the urgency to employ Level III objectives in Christian education.

7. List verbally or in writing all six themes (doctrines, loci) in historic Christian systematic theology; do so in order; **and** briefly summarize what each one means, giving at least one example for each doctrine.

8. List verbally or in writing, and explain, at least three uses of the six loci of systematic theology in your ministry and at least one way to use each of the books, *Basic Christianity* and *Journey into Joy*, by Dr. Arthur DeKruyter in your ministry.

9. From the Bible texts presented in class, list at least seven characteristics church leaders should possess.

10. Using the Bible texts and social science research presented in class, list at least three positive leader behaviors and three negative leader behaviors.

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11. Using the passages from the Bible on leadership and the social science research on leadership presented in class, evaluate his or her own leader behaviors, citing the following:
    a. at least one positive leader behavior he or she typically does, including especially any on which he or she has received affirmation from one or more other people (e.g., "I've been told that I do well at….");
    b. at least one leader behavior he or she is attempting to improve; and
    c. what, specifically, he or she is doing to improve that behavior.

12. Regarding church administration, verbally or in writing, do <u>all</u> of the following:
    a. List in order all five steps in administration;
    b. Cite at least one example of each;
    c. Identify and describe the five steps of evaluation and the use of the values component in the process;
    d. Evaluate your own ministry style with respect to at least three administrative, including managerial or leadership, insights you obtained from your readings and/or the class discussions, showing how you balance task accomplishment and caring (Christlike love), including for your family. This evaluation should **<u>also</u>** describe how you have begun, or are planning, to apply those insights in your present or expected ministry.

13. Cite, verbally or in writing, at least three means you have already begun, or are planning, to do in your ministry to reduce the likelihood of conflicts arising **<u>and</u>** at least five steps to effectively resolve conflicts that do arise.

14. Identify and explain, verbally or in writing, an innovation you want to implement **<u>and</u>** cite at least three steps necessary for you to take in order to successfully implement the innovation.

15. Participate with others in beginning to develop an innovative multidimensional plan for Christian education in the future, beginning in a guided class forum containing small group discussion including a report by each group in which the students use what they've been learning this week together with their creative thinking and construction of methods of church education to meet the contemporary needs of the global church in the following applications:
    a. The church in their own and in other Asian cultures.
    b. Contemporary global church education internationally for those whom God is calling to serve Him in other cultures.

16. During this lesson, the teacher will observe only positive nonverbal feedback (e.g., enthusiasm, excitement, and joy) and hear no complaints when identifying and explaining the meaning and significance of the three main parts of a Level III objective.

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17. By the end of this course, at least 75% of the class will report to the teacher, verbally or in writing,
    a. that they feel more confident in explaining to others at least one aspect of Christian education that is part of their required work responsibilities, or which they anticipate will be part of a ministry to which they sense they are being called by the Lord to do,
    b. and that they feel more motivated and able to implement needed changes in the current educational practices of their congregation.

18. Within three months of the end of this course, at least 75% of the attendees will report to the teacher or one of the translators (in person, by phone, via text, via email or by regular mail) that they have implemented in their congregation's Christian education ministry at least three aspects of what they learned in this course.

Materials Needed

1. A Bible for each participant; *The NIV Study Bible* is recommended but not required.

2. At least three 3 x 5 file cards for each participant.

3. A digital projector, **or** flipchart (and at least two markers), **or** overhead projector (and at least two water soluble markers), **or** chalkboard (and at least two pieces of chalk and an eraser). If you are using a digital projector, an overhead projector, a chalkboard, or more sophisticated technology, feel free to do so wherever you see the word flipchart. While this curriculum has been designed to be used especially in the majority world, but also elsewhere throughout the globe, those in more affluent countries should be careful of their assumptions of the settings in the majority world. It is true that in some places resources are very limited; however, in a large number of others, sophisticated technology is available and used to a considerable degree. I have been heartened, and helped, by technologically knowledgeable, advanced, and superior students and others in the educational institutions where I've taught in other countries. I have taught in many places where flipcharts and advanced projection technology have been used together in the same setting. Also, I have not lost sight of the fact that too many majority world people look to the West for a model (which I caution them to be careful of doing), and they have adopted many of our Western counterproductive practices along with good ones. Therefore, Western people reading and using this manual should not draw the unwarranted conclusion that what they are reading is inappropriate for, or doesn't apply, in the other countries of the world. I have taught in enough countries to know that all I've included in this course applies to all churches, but with special attention to those in the majority world.

4. A copy of the Project Checklist for each student. See Appendix B.

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Introduction

The instructor and others involved in teaching this course on the seminary level or in a modified manner in other Christian education contexts, should first read the essay, "Christian Education Ministry for the 21st Century and Beyond." This essay provides the Biblical and philosophical basis and framework of the course. It also contains additional information on the subjects in the curriculum.

The course has been taught in a one-week format, consisting of five six-hour days. This format is what follows. The course can also be taught in a more traditional once-a-week course for three hours per session over ten weeks or in another format, such as three days a week for one hour over a ten-week semester. Similar adjustments can be made for shorter terms for those seminaries and other higher education institutions that are not using a semester framework.

In recognition that students vary in their ability level to comprehend highly complex subjects, such as some of those in this course, it is important to be flexible and adjust for the differences in the same course that the students themselves present each time the course is offered. (See the discussion of formative evaluation in the essay, "Curriculum Development and Lesson Planning: For Teachers & for Teachers of Teachers.") *It is more important that the students learn well each subject that is taught, rather than that they hear a lot but don't fully understand what they are hearing and thus are unable to make the applications and see other relationships with the subject matter.* Remember the ancient Greek maxim: οὐ πολλὰ ἀλλὰ πολύ (transliterated *ou polla alla polu*), literally, "not many things but much," or, as the adage is expressed in English: "quality over quantity." It is largely a waste of time and is a miniscule contribution for God's kingdom if the students spend a lot of time in the course but don't learn much, and are thus unable to use the subject matter for the work the Lord has called them to do. As teachers, we cannot fail the students or the Lord by neglecting to make sure the students master the subject, including being able to employ their learning in all applications and relationships needed.

If we have to take more time to help the students grasp some subjects, such as writing and using Level III objectives, then we can do so in a number of ways. We can take more time in class and thus summarize some later subjects we were planning to include in the course, or omit those subjects altogether, referring the students to where they can read that material on their own and inviting them to discuss with the teacher any question they may have. Or, if it is a small percentage of the class that is not able to comprehend certain subjects, we can ask those students who are having difficulty to meet sometime after class for further explanation or remedial help.

Since the subjects in God's Word and in Christian education are very profound, always teach so the youngest and least mature person can understand. In so doing, those more advanced will have a good review and reinforcement of the subject matter; see new applications and relationships they can draw with what you are teaching, especially as you lead them into more advanced material they have not previously studied; and likely learn some new aspects of the subject as well. Define, and sometimes ask the students to define, the complex terms used in order to be sure the class understands what you are teaching. Ask them to complete tasks in class and out of class that will inform you as to how well they are comprehending, and able to

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use, the course content. Accomplishment of the Level III objectives will demonstrate most certainly the learning that has occurred.

Thus, this course framework that appears below is the one used for a 30-hour full credit course all taught in one week's time. The above adjustments can be made by the teacher taking into account the constraints presented by the academic institution in which it is taught and by the needs of the students who attend.

Begin each class with a Scripture reading related to the subject(s) for that day. Then offer prayer for God's guidance that he gives us the knowledge, insight, and wisdom pertaining to the subjects we study in order to understand and apply them in the high and holy calling he has given us to be leaders and teachers of his people; that we all mature in Christ Jesus; that we help others to do so as well; and that through us and the rest of his global church, he extends and nurtures his kingdom in our country and throughout the whole world.

Monday—Wednesday

Necessary Aspects of Christian Education for the 21st Century and Beyond

1. Especially important and valuable research subjects in the field of education and related fields, applied to church education needs for the 21st century and beyond, will be the focus for the first three days. These subjects will be presented and discussed in the light of and in connection with God's Word.

    a. Room format: Arrange tables and chairs in a U-shape or in a circle including the teacher's desk to facilitate class discussion.

    b. Get acquainted. Ask each person to share the following details with the whole class. If the class is very large, do this task first in small groups; then have a representative of each small group report the answer to question four to the large group. Write the following requested information on the projection screen, chalk or dry erase board, or flipchart, so everyone can refer back to the list when his or her turn to speak occurs:

        1) Your name
        2) Where you are from
        3) What degree program you are in at the seminary
        4) Do you sense God leading you in a particular area of ministry? Or, is that unclear right now? Would you like to learn more about how God calls people to ministry? If a significant percentage of the group replies to this question in the affirmative, add this need to the list of felt needs for the course; if only one or two people, or a small percentage of the class, want to learn more about how God calls people to ministry, invite those to meet with you at a break time together, or schedule individual appointments.
        5) How to choose who goes first. (See the text box on page 10 in the course, *Worship: A Course on Worship in the Christian Church*, Second Edition, on the Christian Worship page of my WordPress Website.)

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2. Content of the Course: The content of the course, broadly speaking, consists of the subject matter and the methods for teaching the subject matter. The best of the older teaching methods (including with some ways to use them more effectively) together with some newer methods will be used in this course. The main subjects to be addressed in the first three days of the course are the following:

    a. *The Bible, the Word of God, must be the main subject of study* in all Christian education in the church in every country in every culture. The Word is what all human beings most need to hear, whether that need is a felt need or an unfelt need. We have such limited time with church and community people of all ages, that we cannot waste time on peripheral subjects. See, e.g., Romans 10:13-14; Ephesians 4:11-25; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5.

        1) Teach the Bible directly. Use two dimensions of the direct teaching of God's Word, and in each dimension, be sure to teach ***both*** the original meaning of the Bible text ***and*** its application to our daily life.

            a) Teach an overview of the Bible, such as Bible Digest (using the PowerPoint program and the accompanying Bible Digest Notebook), so that people can have an advance organizer, a basic framework, the context in which to understand the specific verses and passages of Scripture they hear in a sermon, in a class, or study by themselves in their own daily devotions.

            b) Teach specific books of the Bible. Teach primarily with the expositional method, chapter by chapter and verse by verse. God's Word is that important! People love and learn well from this form of teaching Scripture, in classes and in sermons, that helps them understand God's carefully exposited Word and learn how to apply it in their daily lives. Sound research also shows that adults prefer the lecture/discussion method of teaching, so first offer what you have learned in your preparation of the lesson, and then warmly welcome your students to raise questions and comment on what you are teaching.

        2) Teach the Bible indirectly. When it is necessary to offer a course on a specific subject, e.g., theology or stress management, make sure that every lesson is based on and/or consistent with what God's Word teaches on that subject. Refer to, explain, and apply the underlying and related Scripture texts pertaining to the subject being presented and discussed. Be sure to show how the subject matter relates to, is consistent with, and even stems from God's Word, from his special revelation in Scripture and from his general revelation in his creation, including through careful science that is consistent with the Bible. Never offer a class, course, seminar, or program in the church without basing it on the Bible.

    b. We must *teach and employ historically established hermeneutics* (principles of interpretation) that view the Bible as the infallible, inerrant, and unalterable Word of God. (See Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology. This subject is

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vitally important today in which we see so many people trying to reinterpret Scripture passages to fit their own ideology and preferred lifestyle, thus making the Bible say something very different from, and in many cases the exact opposite of, the original Word of God that the Holy Spirit spoke to the prophets and the apostles. For current examples, and why such "Scripture twisting" must never be done, see Chapter One of my eBook, What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love.

One of the axioms of historic hermeneutics is the necessity to emphasize exegesis (drawing out of the text its meaning), contrary to contemporary revisionist hermeneutics that views the Bible as a "living document," revisionism that employs and even emphasizes eisegesis (reading into the text one's own ideas). This latter, grievously flawed hermeneutic, using eisegesis, typically involves what is called "Scripture twisting," in order to, as they say, "bring the Bible into 'relevance with today's world,'" with such unwarranted philosophical capitulation that replaces striving for Biblical correctness with striving for political correctness, in opposition to the Holy Spirit's infallible inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16) that guided the Apostle Paul to command, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world…." (Romans 12:2a)

The textual evidence in the original Greek manuscripts of Romans 12:2a favors the reading, "μὴ (*mē* [not]) ˙συσχηματίζεσθε (*suschēmatizesthe* [conform]),"[1] second person plural, present tense, imperative mood, and a middle or passive voice (the context indicating to this interpreter the passive). Thus, in the present imperative we are commanded to always (durative, continuously, not "one and done") resist the world acting on and manipulating us. We are to shun and carefully separate ourselves from the world, especially its values, this separation being an essential aspect of the holiness to which we are called. (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 2:9) ***The Bible is always relevant.*** *The problem people have is not wanting to obey God's Word. Therefore, we must always teach and hold to the Bible as our ultimate authority and criterion.*

c. This course will use several *teaching methods* for helping students learn God's Word and how to teach the Bible to others. These are a few that will be used, beginning in the first session.

1) Concept Formation:

a) What do these texts have in common? Assign one to each person in the class. Ask him or her to read them in this order, first silently, then to the whole group. Ask the class to listen carefully as each passage is read and to discern what is the theme running through all the texts.

[1] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, WORDsearch 10, p. 749.

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- Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 12:1-4; Genesis 17:1-14; Exodus 4:18-26; Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 28:15; Matthew 7:15-23; Matthew 23:1-3 ff.; Luke 11:27-28; John 13:34-35; John 14:21; Ephesians 2:8-10; James 1:22; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 John 2:1-6; 1 John 5:1-5.

b) After each passage has been read, ask: "What is the main point and common theme of each of these passages?" The class will likely say words to this effect: "The importance and seriousness obeying God's Word to demonstrate to ourselves and others the genuineness of faith that saves and accomplish God's purposes." This is the correct answer, the Biblical basis for this course, and the goal of all Christian education for the 21st century and beyond.

2) Advance Organizer: The advance organizer for this whole course can be seen very specifically in these Bible passages that were just read.

a) Exodus 20:1-17, esp. v. 6

b) John 14:15-27, esp. v. 21

3) Tasks in a game type activity help students learn in engaging ways. We use an uncommon method in the course to teach the names, meaning, and order of the six loci (doctrines) of historic Christian systematic theology, an essential subject to equip the church to much more effectively accomplish the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) in the 21st century and beyond. This is a highly interactive and strongly motivating teaching method that, together with the accompanying PowerPoint presentation, is especially efficacious in helping students learn subjects, their meaning, and their importance, including practical applications to daily life.

d. In the field of Biblical literature, scholars have identified what they refer to as ***major motifs in the Scripture***. A major motif, as explained in the Bible Digest resources, is a word or term, sometimes including related words and terms, that appears throughout the Bible. One major motif that recurs throughout the whole Bible on every page is ***the link between love of God and obeying him, of doing his will, pleasing him***. It is not enough to know about him and his will, he expects those in relationship with him will desire to please, including obeying, him and in fact do so. (See, e.g., John 14:21; James 2:19-24.)

- At the same time, it IS essential to know God's Word, and the essence of his Word in order to do it and to help others to do it, which is a key part of every Christian's calling (e.g., Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15).

e. Thus, for Christian education in the 21st century, as I've written in the introductory essay for this course, in order to reach the most people with their varied lifestyles, life situations, commitments, needs, and desires, we have to ***develop a multidimensional program*** that will help the Lord's church to mature in Christ Jesus, "walk the talk," and live in obedience to Him so the world cannot accuse us of hypocrisy, which God abhors

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(cf. e.g., Matthew 23). This is a very serious matter: too many—only one would be too many but there are many more—people who claim to be Christians are living contrary to God's Word. We're not referring here to people who sin, ask forgiveness, and commit themselves to not repeating such behavior; these are people who are living a sinful and unrepentant lifestyle. This behavior is wrong. (Cf. e.g., Romans 6:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5-6)

Also, throughout the world, famous pastors and other church leaders, have misused their position of authority, e.g., abusing people and functioning in other ways, which dishonors God, Christianity, the church, and many others. This behavior is wrong. (Cf., James 3:1) ***Hence, a caveat: Do not follow those who are famous, just because of all the publicity and talk about them***. Such malpractice is monitored and brought to light by the investigative organization, MinistryWatch, which also monitors and reports on much of the greater good work the church is doing all over the world.

Therefore, it is absolutely essential for an effective Christian education ministry in the 21st century and beyond, that we need to walk in obedience to the Lord and to teach people the *vital importance* of linking word and deed (cf. e.g., John 14:21) *and how* to link word and deed and model Christlikeness throughout their lives, to do so ourselves as teachers, and to help those we teach to help others to do so. (Cf. 2 Timothy 2:2)

Thus, it is helpful and most productive to employ a multidimensional Christian education format for the 21st century and beyond. This format includes the best of traditional education programs but goes beyond them and is categorized in the education literature by the terms formal, nonformal, and informal learning.

1) ***Formal*** Christian education programs, in which many of the traditional programs are retained, feature regular learning opportunities, in particular classes and special course offerings in the traditional program on subject matters all children, youth, and adults need to know, as well as elective courses on subjects important to some. Called formal, their format is offered on a scheduled basis for group attendance, often with an expectation that church members in good standing will attend these offerings.

   Until the latter part of the 20th century in the West, and for some countries in the rest of the world that were extensively influenced by Christianity, Sunday was maintained as The Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10) and devoted to the Lord, specifically worship, morning and evening in many places, and other church activities. During the latter part of the 20th century, an increasing secularization of Western society occurred: professional sports leagues began scheduling games on Sunday morning; stores began opening on Sunday; employment expectations and workload increased; local sports leagues extended their competitive schedules to Sunday, even Sunday morning!; and church people began undertaking their recreational activities on Sunday, such as boating, hiking, trips to the local park, going to vacation homes, shopping, and travel even on Sunday, all of which has resulted in many less people in church on Sunday mornings.

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Due to the above societal and other changes, as well as individual lifestyle choices and other personal and family matters, many people can't and others won't attend scheduled formal classes and other corporate learning opportunities. Therefore, in order to facilitate their sanctification, we need to offer learning opportunities that are flexible and designed to function within contemporary 21st century lifestyles, constraints, and future needs but still provide the content and guidance they must have.

In spite of these contemporary cultural changes, enough people still attend church on Sunday mornings, first and foremost to worship, which provides opportunities to schedule formal and informal educational opportunities. Worship is the time when most of the church comes together; we must maximize this opportunity to facilitate the edification that will equip God's children (young and old) to relate to and serve him ever more effectively in the 21st century and beyond, and since we have such few opportunities to teach God's Word and its applications in our lives, we must provide multidimensional innovative opportunities on Sunday morning while the people are at church and then throughout the week as much as possible.

a) Include *classes for ALL ages*. The following are only offered as examples and models of what can be done. If they are used in whole or in part, especially the adult curriculum, implement them incrementally in stages. Offer a balance between regular course offerings and short-term (minicourse and one-session) classes. Don't try to offer all of them at once. The illustrative adult program shown below developed over 24 years, just one reason for my emphasis on the importance of planning to serve a church or in another ministry for a long time in that place. Typically, unless there are extenuating circumstances, we can accomplish much more for the Lord and his church over time in one place, than we can in short-term stays and moving around from place to place every four or five years or so, and it's not so hard on our family.

    1- See, e.g., "Curriculum at a Glance, Basic Program: Children and Youth."

    2- Formal *confirmation classes* are typically offered at the beginning of adolescence in the middle school years, are required for church membership, and in strong churches are usually taught by the pastor, the youth minister, an elder, or another exceptional spiritually and theologically mature teacher. Such classes have a curriculum and teach the main subject and themes of the Bible and the doctrinal position of the church and the denomination of which the congregation is a part. I highly recommend including the basics of historic Christian systematic theology, in a brief summary that the young people can understand and explain to others.[2]

[2] To do so, include the beginning summaries of each of the six loci of historic Christian systematic theology in the PowerPoint, Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity.

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This brief overview of systematic theology, which can be summarized in one class, helps the youth see the logic of God's progressive plan of redemption in Christ throughout the Bible, as they study and reflect on these six loci or key doctrines in Scripture. Emerging from childhood and engaging their newly developing cognitive ability, called formal operational thought (by Jean Piaget and others in human learning research), that enables them to think logically, this is a strategic time to teach the basics of Christian theology and church doctrine.[3] Doing so fits in perfectly with their increasing ability to think and talk in an adult manner and is often a very interesting and even exciting experience. Consider using the educational game below in Appendix A.

To provide a resource designed to deal with the complexities of the 21st century and beyond, digital versions of a confirmation class are available online. While this opportunity is much better than no confirmation class experience for a family with an unusual situation, it should be the exception rather than the rule. With the Bible's clear teaching that the church is people, never a building or a program, that the church is the visible manifestation of God's covenant with Abraham and the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), and that young people are very socially inclined, in person classes are most to be desired.[4]

These are very important classes, and an emphasis in them, including at the very end, should be that the young people should view the Word of God as being so extensive and profound, with special applications to all phases of life, that they, along with all adults in the church, should commit to the concept of life-long learning: none of us knows all we need to know at the end of our confirmation class and of our confirmation of faith in a worship service soon afterward. This very important learning experience is not a "one and done" phenomenon. Urge them to make church worship and joining a Bible study group a high priority in high school and college, so their faith won't diminish in their young adult years as is occurring with many of their peers. Urge them to make their best friends, and especially those being considered as a possible spouse, fellow Christians who are maturing in Christ Jesus.

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[3] See "Where Historic Christian Systematic Theology Meets and Shapes Youth Ministry: Facilitating Answers to Adolescents' Great Questions of Life" and related resources on the Youth Ministry page of my Website.

[4] During the times when public and some other schools discontinued in-person classes and all instruction was online with the students taking classes at home, and even when the hybrid form of education was instituted, where some students remained taking classes at home and some in-person classes resumed, subsequent studies revealed that the results showed a significant loss of learning together with a significant increase in psychosocial problems such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness. For these and other reasons, in-person classes are to be preferred. However, this reality only applies to school education. It does not apply to the homeschool model of education, which has significantly different characteristics, e.g., in-person teachers and many other interpersonal experiences such as field trips and social networking involving other children and their families.

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3- See, e.g., "Church Education Adult Curriculum."

4- See, e.g., "Church Adult Education Program and Checklist."[5]

5- An example of a minicourse I offered in the adult education ministry at Christ Church of Oak Brook is this one:

> **Public School Curriculum Supplement** 9:30 a.m.
> Christ Church offers this innovative minicourse periodically in Sunday School. At intervals corresponding to the times the subjects are studied in area schools, additional instruction pertaining to each school subject (e.g., history, literature, biology, health, social studies) is taught by a certified public school teacher who is a mature Christian and an excellent teacher in that field. Biblical and Christian dimensions of that field of study, which the teacher is unable to present in the school but which are essential for the students to know in order to be considered fully educated and to be effective witnesses for Christ, constitute the curriculum supplement.

b) A much-needed and strong emphasis on marriage and family education, should include a *required premarital course couples must take before being married in the church*, as was done at Christ Church of Oak Brook in the Western suburb of Chicago during the quarter century I served as Minister of Education in that congregation. View and download without charge the curriculum for this course, Guidelines for Selecting a Marriage Partner (Unabridged Version) on both of my Websites. (See more below.)

c) Offer these classes and *other learning opportunities* on other days of the week as well, e.g., Wednesday evening at the church building; breakfast and evening Bible studies throughout the week in restaurants and other locations; home Bible studies where neighbors are also invited; and Friday evening-Saturday seminars.

d) Other vital and necessary church ministries that are more than educational, still have an integral and essential educational dimension, such as corporate *church worship*. These ministries must be strongly emphasized, and their importance and regular participation explained for the sanctification of God's people. At the same time, pastors and worship leaders must study Biblically-based historic Christian worship and not simply follow what is going on in other churches, for

[5] These resources are on both of my Websites, and more are being added. They are available for anyone worldwide. Mrs. Amy Lay has translated many into Mandarin, and they are available on the Chinese Translations page of my WordPress Website, *From Acorn to Oak*, accessible at either www.fromacorntooak12.com or www.edwardseely.com (both domain names go to the same Website).

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most Protestant churches are omitting very important elements of God's worship that he has taught in his Word and that the church throughout history, until modern times, incorporated in Sunday worship. These elements are essential to God's worship, for personal inspiration, and for edifying and equipping his people for effective service in the high and holy calling he has given us.

- For the study of the Bible's teaching on Christian worship, and in particular the edification aspect of worship, and also for teaching this very important subject to others, see my curriculum, Worship: A Course on Worship in the Christian Church.

2) ***Nonformal*** Christian education contexts include strong children, youth, and adult educational ministries. Examples include those which follow.

a) *Children's* and *youth ministries* that occur on a periodic basis and are considered important and valuable, but are considered supplementary but not required for church membership, function in a nonformal manner. For example:

1- Children's ministries such as *Vacation Bible School* are enjoyable and edifying but for church children largely supply a review of what has been learned in Sunday school and also have a primary evangelistic objective of outreach into the community.

2- Regular *youth ministry* meetings also are supplementary to the basic Sunday school and confirmation classes.

b) *Small group Bible study and fellowship* for youth and adults, opportunities held on days when a group of at least four can meet, with a faithful leader maturing in Christ Jesus, are very important and helpful. Such small groups meet vital needs in all three domains of human learning: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

c) Another valuable and effective educational ministry is called *Workplace Ministry*. The purpose of this ministry is to facilitate the connection with mature Christians in many workplaces, in business, in the professions, and in the labor force, where the attendees hear a presentation from the speaker and discuss with him or her how to witness for Christ most effectively in their work places. I produced such a program for many years in the education department at Christ Church of Oak Brook in suburban Chicago, and it was well received and attended.

To help develop and coordinate this workplace ministry program, I asked a highly respected businessman in the congregation to select and chair a board to oversee this aspect of the church's education ministry, in which we invited spiritually mature, respected, and experienced business, professional, and vocational people to speak in seminars about how they serve Christ in very practical ways each day in their workplace. When workers hear from their peers the practical applications

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of Biblical principles they have heard from the pulpit, they have evidence the Biblical principles work, have a fine role model who shows how to apply those principles in the workplace, and are encouraged to do the same where they spend at least a third the time of each workday.

For churches with more blue collar workers, it is important to include them as well, inviting such a leader in these fields to speak to those in related vocations. In addition, sessions for and led by mature women in Christ, leaders addressing business, professional, and vocational women's issues and opportunities meet unique needs they have. Of course, they also should be included in the above-mentioned workplace ministry programs, for both men and women have many of the same needs.

In addition to the above subjects, where men and women hear from their peers on, and discuss the Biblical implications and applications of, these matters, workplace ministry programs should offer a presentation by a Christian attorney on legal issues pertaining to freedom of religion. LGBTQ+ and other strongly-committed activists with agendas that are well-funded, highly organized, relentlessly aggressive, and frequently hostile, are constantly pursuing sweeping changes in the workplace, many of which seek to force Christians in the workplace to write, speak, and produce products and services that are contrary to God's Word. These Christians are willing to serve all people with their regular products and services that they make available to the whole public, including LGBTQ+ people, and they have been doing so for many years in order to obtain the income needed to stay in and successfully operate their business. Nevertheless, they draw the line when asked to use their gifts, skills, and other resources to make products and services that send a special message that disregards God and his Word and the businessperson's commitment to Christ. In many, if not most, cases the activists are setting up the Christian business owner and then suing him or her. Such litigation is occurring all over the United States and has ruined the businesses of many people, which in turn has caused many of their employees to lose their jobs and much else, but, Providentially, not their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the triune God.

To cite only one of many examples, baker Jack Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cake Shop in Lakewood, Colorado, has already been vindicated in one case in 2018 by the United States Supreme Court, and now he has several other lawsuits against him for his desire to not put messages on his cakes that are contrary to God's Word, the Holy Bible, even though he still willingly serves all people in other ways in his bakery. He has been told he will be sued for the rest of his life. How is that just and fair, even legal? As a result, he has now had to close the cake baking part of his business, which gave him an opportunity to express his creativity and which he most enjoyed. However, the closing of that part of his business has resulted in a such a significant loss of income, 40% of his business, that he has had to cut half of his employees' jobs in order to stay in business. He

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has spent most of the last decade in court defending his Constitutional First Amendment rights, which raises significant questions of justice and fairness, not only for himself but for many others across the country and elsewhere in the world, according to his defense team, the Alliance Defending Freedom.[6]

Christian businesspeople, and especially owners and boards, need legal guidance as to how to speak the truth in love in such matters. In the light of the above circumstances, this is a very important matter to include in a workplace ministry program, and it shows the need for such an educational ministry. Pastors and church boards should also develop, with legal guidance, a policy for their church and any related school to protect them from this type of unwarranted and unjust litigation. My home church asked me to chair the committee to establish such a policy, and we did so with the help of the Alliance Defending Freedom. Providentially, other legal organizations offer such help at reduced fees for churches and related ministries.

The minister or director of Christian education, serving with the workplace ministry board and in other teaching opportunities, can have significant influence through these workplace leaders who are so Providentially placed in their business, professional, and labor force positions. In their daily work they, with the help of the Holy Spirit, are uniquely able to influence their peers for Christ. Included in being a valuable venue offering opportunities to witness for Jesus Christ, indeed for our triune God, the workplace offers many opportunities to demonstrate how Christians' Bible-based orientation is vitally helpful for the success of the business as well as blessing many individuals, who notice the difference between the Christians and those who do not know the Lord. For just a few examples, presentations and discussions include principle and practice in:

1- following God's Word and will that we love (i.e., being patient and kind…not arrogant or rude…not easily angered…not delight in evil…always protect [e.g., 1 Corinthians 13:4-7]) all people (including customers as well as fellow workers) and how that occurs in daily situations as in those above that take place, thus preventing some problems from arising and solving well those that do occur;[7] such love cares for and helps fellow workers and customers who are having personal struggles;

2- being trustworthy (e.g., Exodus 18:21; Nehemiah 13:13; Matthew 25:21, 23; 1 Corinthians 13:6);

3- acting mature and not childish (e.g., 1 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:13);

[6] See, "Homosexuality: An Abbreviated Fact Sheet for Speaking the Truth in Love" and other documents on the Current Issues page of my WordPress Website at https://fromacorntooak12.com/current-issues/.
[7] It is difficult to convincingly accuse these Christians of hate crimes which the opposition continually tries to do.

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4- persevering, never giving up (e.g., 1 Corinthians 13:7);

5- seeking always to do our best, including producing high quality products and services (e.g., Matthew 24:45-51; 25:14-30);

6- and having a servant mentality, helping fellow workers and communicating to the customers that our company, which is composed of people not an abstract impersonal entity, exists to serve them rather than to be served (e.g., Matthew 20:24-28; 25:14-30), all of which come from the Bible; those factors lead to success.

7- Contrast failing companies: factors leading to their decline and demise typically include ignoring these Scriptural values, principles, and commands.

8- From an individual perspective, Christians maturing in Christ and functioning in the above and other ways taught in God's Word, tend to be promoted rather than demoted or ousted. (Cf., Matthew 25:14-30)

The observation above, that many individuals notice the difference between the Christians and those who do not know the Lord, points to one very vital dimension of workplace and all other witnessing. It is exceedingly important to look for opportunities to indicate our relationship with the Lord. If one never mentions his or her connection with Christ, the "witness" is perceived to be to a benevolent humanitarianism rather than to Jesus Christ. That, too, is a very important subject which is addressed in workplace ministries and is effectively done by peers daily doing so in the same workplace as the attendees!

d) Ministries designed to meet the spiritual and other needs of people due to current cultural issues provide an incentive for participation that enables us to extend and nurture God's kingdom. For just one example, both boys and girls who grow up in a single parent home experience a significant loss of what the other parent brings to the family, even when visitation is arranged. Not only Scripture but sound science clearly confirm what most reasonable people know, that children need both a mother and a father. Since separation and divorce are so widespread, and since courts typically assign children to live with their mother, they grow up without a daily strong male role model, parent, and caregiver. As a pastor, it has grieved me to talk with many single mothers over half a century, mostly all divorced, who've pleaded with me to connect their children with male role models in the church. This question also comes privately and quietly from lesbians who have male children.

One nonformal program I began in response to this request from mothers in the church was well-received. Called *Anglers for Christ*, having a double meaning—one referring to the presenting activity, fishing, and the other referring to Jesus' call of us to be "fishers of men," (Matthew 4:19), including little people—in

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which men in the church took children of single mothers fishing. This activity, which many children enjoy, was a catalyst for conversations which can lead to developing relationships that facilitate much learning and development, including sanctification in Christ. It was very well appreciated and enjoyed until, sadly, the board established to run the program had to close it due to legal advice concerning fear of litigation. In the highly litigious United States culture, we need to work on tort reform. A program such as "Anglers for Christ," is an effective education ministry for churches whose size, location, and insurance reduce the likelihood of litigation and in church congregations in countries where these legal concerns are not prohibitive.

Church education ministries in programs that teach evangelism and witnessing can still mention and encourage such possibilities to be done on an individual basis, where the men have a relationship with the single parent family, and/or where the fishing could be done with one or two other men and children, in order to reduce the likelihood of false accusations and litigation and where the church is not liable, since the activities are being done on individual bases.

Of course, a similar program to connect girls and boys, who live with their dads and have limited or no contact with their mother, to women in the church who would provide good female role models for the children should also be offered as needed. A catalyst other than fishing will likely be more desirable for this program, and the mature women selected for this ministry will be able to suggest such alternatives that align with their strengths and experience as well as the needs and desires of the children.

e) *Field trips* are highly informative and inspiring nonformal programs. Examples of such field trips include visiting, and where possible serving in, short-term international missions and local missions; international and national youth gatherings; selected adult conferences; and travel to the lands of the Bible and church history.

3) ***Informal*** Christian educational opportunities include, but are not limited to, the following.

a) Every church should have an ample *church library* of carefully selected Biblically consistent books and DVDs. Such a library is a valuable part of the educational ministry, e.g., for teacher resources, for further reading for students, and for holding reference works on historic and contemporary matters of importance to nurture the whole congregation.

It is standard library procedure to write what is called a "library collection development policy." Church libraries also should have a sound collection development policy that guides the selection of the print, digital, and other resources it collects and the reasons for doing so. For example, reading good

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books and viewing good DVDs, which can be done in one's own timeframe, are valuable resources for faith development and for teachers preparing to teach or lead their classes and groups.

A church library collection development policy, which can be used as a model for other churches, is the one I wrote for my home church in Colorado, which I adapted from the one I wrote for the Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary Ministry Resource Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. I then asked the church library team to reflect on this collection development policy, discuss, and approve it for our church's library. The policy can be accessed at this URL: http://church.immanuelloveland.org/sites/default/files/inserted-files/church_library_collection_development_policy.pdf.

1- The library should provide both nonfiction and fiction. Nonfiction includes resources for the following:

   a- Books, DVDs, and other resources on the subjects offered in the adult courses and youth and children's ministries that the teachers, youth leaders, and children's ministers can use as well as the students themselves.

   b- Books, DVDs, articles, and other resources for everyone in the church that address current issues of the day from a Biblical and theological perspective that is consistent with the correct interpretation of the Bible, i.e., historic established interpretations based on principles in the field of hermeneutics.

   c- Books, DVDs, and other resources that include important information on such subjects as the following:

      1} Accurate commentaries for each book of the Bible.

      2} Sound historic Christian theology. Be sure to include Biblically-based historic Christian systematic theology (*op cit.*).

      3} Church history, wherein we learn how the church in the past managed problems similar to what we are encountering today, including the principles they used to successfully address those issues. We also learn from church history what should be avoided and the negative consequences that occur when not avoiding these matters.

      4} Biblical and psychological guidelines for preventing and, if already existent, managing and overcoming common human problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness and many other personal

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struggles. Here is a huge value of a church library. Much psychology is written by people who are secular, ill-informed, misguided, and who mislead others. The library should contain only carefully selected books written by Christian psychologists who write wisely, in accord with, and based on, with many references to the Word of God. Such psychologists and their writings can be found in the Resources section.

5} Books, DVDs, and Biblically accurate resources for other life matters, including the following:

a} Marriage

b} Parenting

c} Grandparenting

d} End of life matters

e} Current issues, especially those that the Bible addresses directly or which involve Biblical principles

f} Christian engagement with the pubic square (cf. Jeremiah 29:7; Matthew 5:5-16; 1 Peter 2:12)

g} See the Resources section for such materials.

2- Fiction books should include interesting stories about life from a moral and spiritual orientation consistent with God's Word. They are very popular, being that part of the collection that is most used. Therefore, they have extensive influence, as through entertainment they help readers experience wholesome engagement with the problems and possibilities of significant daily life matters, learn the moral message in the narrative, and are spiritually uplifting. As people read how others, fictional or historic, have encountered, managed, coped with, and overcome common, and not so common, problems, they see possibilities that can help them, relatives, other church members, and other friends to work through their challenges.

3- The church's library books' and DVDs' call numbers can be put on a Website together with downloadable digital documents. The Website can also include recommended eBooks, which many people are reading on their digital devices. The same can be done for the school, if the church has an associated school as part of its ministry.

b) A *church bookstore* is another valuable part of an informal education ministry for the 21st century and beyond. Many people would like to not just borrow but

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purchase books, DVDs, and other resources. Then they can have them in their own personal libraries for future reference and loaning to others.

c) A focus on the need to set a time each day for *reading the Bible*[8] *and prayer* is vital. Urge everyone to daily read the Bible, the Word of God, and pray. This exceedingly important devotional time for individuals, for husbands and wives together, and for families together, cannot be emphasized enough. It is absolutely essential to one's relationship with the triune God; to understanding one's identity, calling and maturity in Christ Jesus; and to effective service for the Lord and his church. See the related resources for individual and family devotional time in the courses, Bible Digest and Worship: A Course on Christian Worship in the Church.

1- *Catechisms*, summaries by subject of key Biblical teaching, are denominations' specifically selected doctrines from historic Christian theology, and have been used very effectively throughout the history of the Christian church to help people of all ages learn the truths of God's Word. Catechisms provide a ready resource for future reference when needed. Use the one that is the official publication of your denomination in your personal and family devotions as well as in corporate public worship and teaching. Be sure to use a catechism of a denomination that is in accord with the Bible. Examples of good catechisms are *Luther's Preface* and *Luther's Small Catechism*, *Martin Luther's Large Catechism*, *The Heidelberg Catechism*, *The Westminster Confession*.

2- Offering *devotional guides* for all individuals and families in and associated with the church that are designed to be used each day during the seasons of Advent and Lent are very helpful for cognitive and affective development that lead to the Biblically commanded behavior, including obedience to the Lord's commands (e.g., John 14:21), that God wills for us. Be careful to select those that faithfully interpret the Bible. See the Resources section in this curriculum.

3- *Daily prayer* is essential for maturing in Christ Jesus and for experiencing great joy in immediately connecting with the triune God, the only creator, owner, and ruler of the whole universe, at any moment of any day. It is our loving God's will that we pray to him, and we receive a special blessing from doing so. At the same time, many people do not know how to pray; prayer should be taught in the Christian education program. See, e.g., the brief essay, "Aspects of Prayer according to God's Word."

[8] Careful research by the Barna Group reveals that six out of ten adults who read the Bible state that doing so has transformed their life and "positively correlates to relational and spiritual growth." (https://juicyecumenism.com/2019/05/02/scripture-reading/ (Accessed 10/24/19)

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4- A *"Bring It Home" daily devotional guide* included with the church bulletin each Sunday, reviews, expands on, and applies the Bible texts focused on in worship that Sunday morning, and also strongly affirms the importance of daily reading God's Word and praying, with guidance on how to do both.[9] This daily devotional resource helps people learn more about and apply the Scripture in Sunday's worship service each day of the week, thus helping to put into daily practice the obedience the Lord holds us accountable for doing and which will bless us, our families, and all others with whom we come into contact throughout the week and for the rest of our lives. (Cf., e.g., John 14:21) Here we also have a valuable educational resource to accomplish objectives in all three domains of human learning: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

d) Offer opportunities at least a couple times a month for a ministry such as, "*Ask a Pastor*." I have provided this opportunity throughout my ministry in three church congregations, Fifth Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI; Christ Church of Oak Brook, a megachurch in Chicago's Western suburb of Oak Brook; and Immanuel Lutheran Church in Loveland, Colorado. A friend of mine, who is a Roman Catholic priest, has started a similar ministry in the congregation he serves that he calls, "Q & A with Father A." In the Grand Rapids church, a major part of my work was with youth ministry, and the idea began with them in mind, so I called this informal time, "Rap with the Rev." On Wednesday afternoons after school, any young person who wanted to talk with me about anything could stop by a comfortable location in the church building and join me and the others who stopped by for conversation, snacks, and popular soda drinks that they liked.

In the other congregations, I opened up the opportunity to everyone and called it "Ask a Pastor." Church members and others often would like to speak with a pastor, especially when they are already at the church, but they usually don't have the opportunity, even on Sunday, when the solo or lead pastor is actively engaged in so many other activities that make it difficult to have the desired time for such conversations. Here is an opportunity for associate pastors, indeed all pastors on the church staff, as well as seminary professors, and "retired" pastors to serve in this important capacity.

Since the pastor doesn't know ahead of time what question he or she will be asked, no preparation is required (in a sense the pastor has been preparing ever since seminary, and even before in many cases), and it is a much better use of this theologically educated pastor's time to be talking about vital matters pertaining to God's kingdom and the questioners' spiritual growth than talking about lesser

[9] Such guides can be seen at http://church.immanuelloveland.org/resources/daily-devotions. They're written by the pastor, or another he asks, for each Sunday's church bulletin. They expand upon the Biblical text(s) on which the sermon for that Sunday was based, facilitating the congregation's continuing to think about and act on that or those Bible passage(s).

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matters such as sports, movies, politics, and a host of similar subjects, and to do so at a time when people's minds are on Biblical matters, having just come from or are shortly heading to worship. We have such little time with God's people; it is essential we use the time we do have to help his people mature in Christ and their ability to serve the Lord most effectively. I've had questions from all age groups: children, teenagers, and, mostly of course, adults.

Most questions a pastor has already heard or thought about previously, and many pertain to the Bible passages and the creeds in that day's worship. Occasionally, a pastoral care question is asked pertaining to a personal or family difficulty. For the quite rare and very few questions the pastor is unable to answer completely, the people who asked are greatly appreciative of a call later in the day or within a few days with the rest of the answer to their question.

On the second and fourth Sundays of the month, before and after each worship service, I stand at a lectern in the main traffic area, typically outside the sanctuary and near where people are having a cup of coffee. The lectern is beside a sign, "Ask a Pastor." I'm there with just my Bible, and I'm available for people who want to ask a question or discuss a matter important to them. Each Sunday, a considerable number of people come by to ask one or more questions and talk with me. A considerable number of others say, "I don't have a question today, but I'm very glad you are offering this opportunity; I'll see you on another occasion."

In Chicago, a fellow minister served with me, one Sunday per month at the "Ask a Pastor" station in the main fellowship hall, and one Sunday each month, he and I met with people in an unused classroom. A considerable number of people wanted to sit down with us and talk for a longer period of time, where we conversed with a cup of coffee about whatever topic they wanted to discuss and learn more.

The following is a promotional announcement the church used each week for a period of time after this service was begun. It is still used every week that Ask a Pastor is offered, but it is now usually shortened by omitting some of the questions after the first question.

ASK A PASTOR

Is there a question about the Bible or some other aspect of the Christian life you can't answer or would like to discuss? Why do we believe the Bible is the Word of God and is trustworthy? Why does God allow suffering and evil? How is He involved in the world? What evidence assures us that Jesus physically rose from the dead? Do you wonder what the Bible teaches about a contemporary issue, such as homosexuality, abortion, extramarital sex? Are you trying to make sense out of something and "the pieces don't quite fit?" Is there a question you've always wanted answered but were afraid to ask? No question is "dumb."

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Questions may be spoken or written. Bring a friend if you wish. You are welcome to raise any subject of interest to you and talk about it with Pastor Ed. Stop by the Ask a Pastor sign in the Atrium after both worship services. Only your questions or comments will be discussed. Come when you can; leave when you like. Pastor Ed is a member of Immanuel and a "retired" pastor, college and seminary professor. This opportunity is offered on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

Usually after the first month or so of advertising this opportunity, the above message is shortened to only the last 10 sentences. The notice is primarily publicized via inclusion in an e-mail update the Thursday before each second and fourth Sunday when Ask a Pastor is offered and via a slide in the PowerPoint presentation on the screen in the sanctuary before and after each worship service. People also see the sign and lectern in the narthex near the entrance to the sanctuary on the Sundays the opportunity.

Since more "retired" pastors have joined our congregation, we will likely offer Ask a Pastor every Sunday. This is a "win-win" for the congregation, for the pastors, and especially for the Lord, who has called ordained pastors to a lifetime of service helping His people to mature in Christlikeness, called sanctification in historic Christian theology, indeed, in the Bible itself. (Romans 6:19,22 [Greek, NASB, ESV, NRSV]; 1 Corinthians 1:30 [Greek, NASB, ESV, KJV, NRSV]; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; *et al*. Cf. Ephesians 4:11-16)

This ministry is a good way for "retired" pastors to continue to serve the Lord, especially those of us to whom he has given the privilege and joy of having faithful professors who were especially excellent Biblical scholars, theologians, and pastoral care specialists, to help equip the current saints for Christ's service. We've been given this privilege, and a wealth of experience, which most of the current generation has no clue. We should not die without sharing that great gift and leave the body of Christ bereft of those great blessings.

We also benefit from this means of continuing our ministry. It is a great joy to see people rejoice in a Biblical resolution of their questions and to receive their appreciation for that help. Doing so enhances the meaning of our lives. Such ministry keeps our minds sharp and, sound scientific studies show, reduces the likelihood of dementia or slows it down if that debilitation has already begun. Furthermore, this ministry facilitates conversations with God's people about matters vital to them, and therefore to us. We're already at the church for worship, and this gives us an opportunity to engage in fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ and a catalyst for conversations about significant subjects—far more important than the latest movie that's playing; how our NFL, NHL, or MLB team is doing or will do this year; the skyrocketing crime rate; or the poor showing of our politicians—not that those other subjects should be avoided, but

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contrast the benefits of those discussions with helping people resolve their issues and maturing in Christ, in further preparation for his calling to serve him.

e) *Personal interaction with church members and others* are valuable opportunities to teach and should not be ignored or discounted. Thus, leaders and others should view conversations in the halls of the church building, on phones, and in email as valuable opportunities for helping God's people to learn and apply that learning obediently to the Lord in specific life situations. Not only teachers can help other believers in the Lord to learn, but all Christians maturing in Christ Jesus can help one another grow in our understanding of God's Word and will in daily life. We need to teach this reality to teachers so they can teach others.

f) Emphasize the effectiveness of ***modeling***. Inform the church that we are always being watched, individually and corporately. We watch each other and learn from each other by what we say and do. We model what we believe; what we do is an expression of what we believe and how strongly we are committed to our beliefs. Therefore, some of what we do is a positive model of what we believe and proclaim in accord with God's Word and will, and some of what we say and do is a negative model when it is contrary to God's Word and will. Our behavior clearly indicates our maturity level, in particular how well we function in Christlikeness.

   Furthermore, our behavior influences others. When we do what is immature, other believers often think it's OK for them to do as well. They think, and sometimes say, "Well John does that; it must be OK for me too."

   Of course, since all people sin, including Christians (e.g., Romans 3:23), we will sometimes behave in ways that hurt people, even people we love. When we do, we should apologize, repent, and make a stronger effort to never repeat such behavior. That pleases God, and reasonable people can accept apology and behavior change. They may require some time in order to see that the apology, repentance, and behavior change are sincere and part of an improved track record.

   Corporately, the world watches us and forms opinions about us and what we teach, based on our behavior. If our behavior is too bad, and especially if it significantly impacts others in a harmful way, we negatively affect the world's view of the church, Christianity, and God.

   For all these reasons we must keep in mind the power of modeling. We teach powerful lessons by what we do.

   Relatedly an informal teaching opportunity, which many pastors and teachers dislike, but should view differently, is the feeling of "living in a fishbowl," i.e., the awareness that people are constantly watching how they live. Instead of disliking this reality, church leaders, their spouse, and their families should gladly

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embrace it and view living in a fishbowl as a great opportunity to use the teaching method of modeling, another part of our ministry and one of the most important. If we value pleasing God as our greatest desire, objective, and accomplishment, and pray for his help to do so, he will help us do well. Modeling is not only a valuable teaching method but one that is a high and holy calling from, and honors, God, who views what we do as vitally important (e.g., John 14:21; James 3:1); God's view is a huge incentive to take modelling seriously and to value it. When we or someone in our family do make mistakes, such humanness helps others relate to us. They know we're not normally that way, and, since we have overcome and recovered from the situation, they can too. Therefore, our calling from God is not a burden (Matthew 11:30) but an honor, privilege, and pleasure. Seeing our ministry in that light transforms our view of "living in a fishbowl."

As we do, we can exhibit Biblical family living, one of the biggest needs of people today, especially in the younger generations where many have grown up without an admirable male role model, and sometimes not an admirable female role model, or experience of a Biblical family, and where the models they are viewing in the movies are often despicable! The fishbowl complements, and is part of, our teaching ministry. People are greatly appreciative of church leaders to "practice what they preach." How do I know? They tell me so. Moreover, God tells us throughout his Word what pleases him and what doesn't.

- *Our preaching and teaching explain the Bible's instruction on <u>what</u> to do. Our daily lives show <u>how</u> to do it*!

g) *Encourage mentoring*, seeking out, developing relationships and meeting regularly with people who are older and wiser. Emphasize that teachers and other church leaders, as well as other church members maturing in Christ who are manifesting Christlike behavior, should develop relationships with fellow Christians and make themselves available when people seek their help on many aspects of Christian living.

f. Effective church teaching in the 21st century and beyond, requires knowledge and skills in *curriculum development and lesson planning*. At this point in this course, show the chart on page two of the essay, "Curriculum Development and Lesson Planning: For Teachers & for Teachers of Teachers," which is on the Christian Education page of my WordPress Website and on my academic Website.

1) Use excerpts from this essay to briefly explain the seven steps of curriculum, including church program, development and the effective planning of individual lessons.

2) Curriculum and program planning and development, as well as lesson planning, involves a multifaceted sequence and applications that interrelate and include effective evaluation. A very helpful and useful tool for such planning is Robert E.

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Stake's "A Discrepancy Assessment Model for Evaluation (Descriptive Data) Modified by Edward D. Seely for Christian Education." Access this document on either of my Websites.

g. The learning of how to write *Level III objectives* is essential to effective learning in the 21st century and will continue to be so far beyond the 21st century—all the way until the Lord returns in his Second Coming. Therefore, spend the necessary time on this subject. Some classes will need less, some more, than others.

1) Explain the concept of Level III Objectives, *including why they are so very important in Christian education in order to Biblically and effectively facilitate sanctification*, including obedience to the Lord's commandments, using the above-mentioned essay, "Curriculum Development and Lesson Planning: For Teachers & for Teachers of Teachers." Then, ask the students to share with you an objective for an upcoming lesson. Write the objective a student gives you on the projection screen. Ask if this is a Level III Objective. Ask the students to identify all three parts of a Level III objective; work on this objective as a whole class (if discussion is coming too slowly, start doing so by reforming in the same small groups as earlier) and begin by pointing out the three aspects of a Level III Objective in the objective on the screen. If all three are not present, modify the objective until it includes all three.

2) If the students are having difficulty, as is often the case with this new-to-them concept, take time to use the basic primer on writing Level III Objectives in this PowerPoint presentation: *Christian Education Goals and Objectives with a Focus on Level III Objectives: How to Be Sure that Your Students Are Understanding and Doing What You Have Taught Them* (PPT).

3) Now ask the students to give you another example of an objective they have in an upcoming lesson they have to teach. Again, write the objective on the projection screen and work on it together as a class, beginning by asking them to identify all three aspects of the objective that make it a Level III Objective. If all three are not present, ask the class which one(s) is/are missing, and then ask the students to make the objective into a Level III Objective.

4) Distribute a 3 x 5 card to each student and ask the class to write a Level III Objective for an upcoming class they have to teach or that they anticipate having to teach or would like to teach. Ask the students to sign their name on their 3 x 5 card and turn it in to you. Carefully review the cards after class to see if the students have identified all three aspects of a Level III Objective on their card. Correct any mistakes on the cards. You will then be able determine how much additional time, if any, is needed to be taken in this class to help them learn this vital concept and employ it in their own teaching (and, in different ways, preaching).

5) *Ask the class,* ***"Why are Level III Objectives so very important?"*** *Look for answers that take into account the concept formation activity in which we examined all those*

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*Bible passages for the common theme. Ask the students to recall that theme. Since not only **knowing** God's Word is important but the Word requires **doing** it, we must teach that concept and measure that our students do what we teach them regarding this vitally important theme in God's Word in order to please Him.* (Cf., e.g., John 14:21; 2 Corinthians 5:9; James 2:17-24)

h. Emphasize not conforming to but *transforming culture through the extension and nurture of God's kingdom*. (Matthew 5:13-16; 28:18-20; 1 Peter 2:9-12) The extension of God's kingdom (his rule in people's hearts and minds) is done through our witnessing to Jesus Christ and evangelism. The nurture occurs through educational opportunities the church offers to help people mature in Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-16ff.)

   The extension and nurture of God's kingdom throughout every country is the only hope of our nation and the rest of the world. While not at all to minimize the importance of elections and other forms of the selection of government leaders, no solely human leader, law, police or military force, is able to provide what we need most for the improvement and well-being of our country. It is only through the changing of human hearts and minds—which can only occur through the work of the Holy Spirit—that we can have hope, individually, nation-wide, and throughout the world.

i. Include instruction on the vital importance of *learning to think critically*, i.e., with discernment, and how to do so. Include the following:

   1) Teach an introduction to epistemology, that branch of philosophy that addresses the question of how do we know? Include Biblical apologetics. See a brief introduction in Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology PPT. (See especially Slides 17-29 in this class.) The PowerPoint presentation will help also with the following subjects.

      a) Explain the rational basis for why the Bible is true and trustworthy.

      b) Employ that rationale for examining all other truth claims.

   2) Teach the importance of making connections, drawing relationships between a given subject and its important implications and applications with other subjects and phenomena.

      - For example, when teaching the second (anthropology) of the six main loci, or doctrines, of historic Christian systematic theology, and you are discussing the sinful nature of human beings, ask, "What connection with daily life issues does this doctrine help us understand and address?" If you need an illustration, include in the discussion the movement to defund and even eliminate police departments and not enforce the looting and stealing of merchandise under a certain amount in stores. Ask the students, "In the light of what the Bible teaches about the essential sinfulness of human nature, is the idea many have that humans are

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essentially good, that they just need to be taught the difference between right and wrong, and they'll do what is right (therefore, we don't need so many, or even any, police), a realistic concept and practice? Also, in the light of Deuteronomy 16:20, how should the ignoring of looting and stealing in stores be considered?"

3) Teach the meaning and parameters of science. Today many people substitute science for faith and trust in God; it is readily evident in the news media and elsewhere that many people have made science (i.e., the "science" they agree with) their god.

   a) Science is limited. For example consider the following:

      1- Science, by definition, is limited to the study of that which can be observed and measured. Much of life, even the most important parts of life, lie outside that parameter. Many people are unaware of, and many others disregard, that essential distinction. We must draw that reality to their attention.

      2- Science, therefore, cannot inform us on such questions as who God is and what he is like and on what follows this phase of life, the future individually and corporately. Neither can science determine values, such as what is good and what is bad? The answers to such questions involve a criterion reference (an authoritative standard above humanity to which to appeal) and not a norm reference (an appeal to human opinion with which some people, but not all, agree), which leaves the matter unsettled.

      3- When followed carefully by trustworthy scientists, the scientific method can produce significant results. The problem is that scientists, like all human beings, have sinful natures, which have many motivations to produce results from their research that please certain people, not the least of whom are their benefactors, the people paying them and who are hoping for findings that support their motives for paying for the research. One of the motivations for pleasing the benefactor is to obtain repeat business. (Recall the ancient axiom: "Follow the money.") This is why scholars observe that much of the research in their field "is not worth the paper it's printed on!"

   b) Therefore, we need to help our students construct a realistic and helpful view of science. They need to understand and be able to do the following:

      1- explain the value of science, including that sound science, not faulty science, is a part of God's general revelation (cf., e.g., Romans 1:18ff.);

      2- explain the limits of science; and

      3- explain how to distinguish between sound science and false science. Include a few examples for illustration from the following. Teach the rest in a related course, or to students outside of class who what to know more about this

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subject, for there is not enough time available to explain all of the following in this course. The students typically need most of the time on the very important Level III objectives.

a- Teach the steps of the scientific method and show how easy it is **in every step** to omit all or part of each step or falsify one or more procedures in each step in order to produce the desired results, not the actual reality that exists within the realm supposedly being investigated and to which the findings are being generalized. Since most people, including news reporters, do not examine the actual study, only the findings are reported and the general public is unaware of the (often deeply) flawed study that frequently renders it misleading and virtually worthless.

Even those studies that are "peer reviewed" are unreliable for many reasons. Examples of such reasons include the desire of peers to be liked by their peers, the fear of being publicly rebuked by questioning a study that has a popular public favorability rating, and the fear of being shunned by possible employers, not only corporations by individual solicitors of studies on specific issues and subjects. Again, recall the ancient axiom: "Follow the money."

1} Cite examples of such manipulation in each step of the scientific method. The following constitute the steps in social science research.[10] Abuses of those steps include the following, but not all, errors in social science research that render the results significantly flawed.

a} Step One: State the Problem. Incomplete statements that ignore key aspects of the problem, and thus go uninvestigated, produce results that are misleading and fail to offer or at least suggest effective ways to either solve or at least ameliorate the problem requiring the study.

b} Step Two: Review Relevant Research. Relevant precedent research is selectively ignored, especially that which conflicts with preconceived ideological biases, including expected, hoped for, and planned "findings" of the researcher.

c} Step Three: Establish the Research Plan. This step is manipulated in many ways. One of the major manners of manipulation is called

[10] The plan for research in the natural sciences includes the same steps together with a couple of additional steps involving the citing of hypotheses to be tested. The flaws cited above, and others, are also committed in research in the natural sciences. Thus, we see how easy and often both social and natural science is manipulated to produce desired results rather than an objective description of what truly constitutes reality in the matter being investigated.

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sample bias: the selection of an unrepresentative segment of the population being studied. The primary purpose of a study is to generalize the findings to all, or at least to the majority, of the population, and there are two main ways to do this: to interview every member of the population or to interview a sample of the population. Since most populations under study are too numerous to interview everyone, and where too many people are unwilling to be interviewed or to answer a poll, a sample is usually used.

In careful, sound, science, there are established procedures for selecting a large enough sample that is truly, to a sufficiently high percentage, representative of the whole population so that the researcher is able to legitimately generalize from that smaller number to the population as a whole. The main part of that sample-selection process is randomization, the use of different objective methods of selecting a significantly sufficient number of people to be in the sample, where the scientist has no ability to know ahead of time how the individuals in this sample will respond to the questions asked of them and therefore no way to know whether the desired outcomes will be manifest. That reality is no problem to honest scientists who genuinely want to know and produce true findings.

However, researchers who have a strong motivation to produce certain preconceived outcomes or, more officially "findings," use various methods to select their sample rather than the established random-selection process. There are even ways to manipulate randomizing in order to produce a sample that will provide the desired responses. They want, and can easily obtain, a sample that will produce the results which conform to the scientist's own biases and especially which provide the desired results his or her sponsor, who is paying for the study, wants to see. In order to make the study look legitimate to cursory inspection, some are selected who will respond differently, but who are in carefully controlled numbers to not significantly affect the desired "findings."

Why is that especially important for the scientist? Think about it. He or she not only wants, but needs, repeat business. Again, "Follow the money." Many other motives are also in play.

d} Step Four: Report the Findings of Following the Plan. You already know one main way this step in the study is manipulated in flawed science. First of all, the biased sample has produced the desired findings. Next, the scientist conveniently includes findings that

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match the desired outcome, ignores findings that conflict with the desired outcome, and distorts other data.

e} Step Five: State the Significance of the Research (What the Findings Mean). The first four steps in the scientific method are supposedly objective, and they are when they are carefully followed by honest scientists who follow established procedures and who do not engage in the above and other dishonest manipulations. This fifth step is the only subjective step, so it is the easiest of all the five to insert bias and misleading statements.

Can you see how much of so-called "science" is so flawed that it is referred to as pseudoscience? I remember professors in my Ph.D. program at Michigan State University, which has never been accused of being a conservative institution, saying that "Ninety-five percent of the research in the field of education isn't worth the paper it's printed on!" Now you know why. And now you also know why it is necessary to carefully distinguish between sound science and pseudoscience.

What does this mean? Always beware of such statements as, "Follow the science." (What science?) "Research says…." (What research?) "Experts say…." (What "experts?" Are they truly experts in their field? Many people who have expertise in one area of science, or in another field altogether, speak out trying to be authoritative on specific issues that are outside their field of competency, thus in that field they are addressing, they are only laymen or laywomen, just like anyone else.)

Be sure to keep these realities in mind, and help others do so as well, pertaining to the need to distinguish between sound science and false science. Too many, likely even most, people fail to make that distinction and treat all science the same. In so doing, they become greatly misinformed, misled, and misguided into sometimes serious, even tragic, decisions. For further information and examples, see the essays and other documents on the Current Issues page of my WordPress Website and my academic Website.

2} Include the motivations scientists have to manipulate the scientific method to produce the desired findings.

a} One of the most significant, as mentioned above, is the desire for money. The scientist wants, indeed needs, repeat business.

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b} Motivations for failing to follow the established scientific method and manipulating each step also include the desire to be the first to produce a "study" on an issue in order to "make a name" for him- or herself and advance the scientist's career.

c} Other motivations for shortcutting the scientific method include meeting a deadline, pleasing a superior, ignorance, and laziness. Others exist as well, all of which are further reminders to always challenge statements such as, "Follow the science," and the failure to distinguish between careful, sound, science and pseudoscience.

b- For those who are unable or unwilling to learn how to examine a poll or research study in order to verify the findings, teach them the simplest, quickest, and most effective way to identify false science: compare a reported scientific research finding with God's Word. If it is consistent with God's Word, it is possibly, even likely, true. If it conflicts with the Bible's teaching, it is flawed and false; it is unworthy to be called science. We need to teach this reality and destroy the false god that many have made out of science.

c- See also Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Slides 25-28.

4) Teach some basic principles of logic, especially the logical fallacies. See the primer on logical fallacies in the second half of Chapter Four of my book, What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love.

j. Teach *historic Christian systematic theology*. In addition to the following, include instruction on why this information is so important with reference to the recent research on heresies that even too many conservative Evangelicals believe. These are Christians who emphasize the importance of basing their faith on the Bible, but they have allowed themselves to come under the influence of theological views that are contrary to the teaching of the Bible, for just one example, dispensational theology.[11]

1) Historic Christian systematic theology is vital for the spiritual nurture and maturation of God's people. The study of systematic theology helps people understand the main message and themes of the Bible; to make sense out of life, including one's place in life; and to help others understand and know, be in relationship with, and serve God, and to honor, glorify, and please him. The six easy to remember systematic doctrines that summarize the main message of the Bible make it a good summary of God's plan of salvation in Christ to use for devotional meditations, teaching, and witnessing.

[11] For an explanation of dispensational theology, its serious Biblical flaws, and their implications, see the section on Eschatology on the Christian Theology page of my WordPress Website.

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2) Historic Christian systematic theology is an advance organizer for Bible study. It helps to provide the framework, the Scriptural perspective for the study of God's Word. List and explain the six loci of historic Christian systematic theology. Use the following resources to do so.

   a) Show selected slides from the PowerPoint presentation, "Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity" (PPT and curriculum by Dr. Edward D. Seely), which is on the Christian Theology page of my WordPress Website. Show and discuss slides 17-65; then 52-54, 64; 382-85, 409-410; 470-72; 512-14; 638-41; 940-42; 990. Add any other slides the teacher perceives will meet student needs as time permits. [*Please note that those actual slides cited here in this present publication, may be changed, since sometimes additions are made.*]

   b) Ask the participants to return to their groups in which they have been working. Provide a flat surface on which they can do this task, such as a table or a student desk. Retaining a copy for yourself, distribute a copy of Appendix A below for each individual in each group.

      1- If you have time, ask the students to do this task first individually. Then ask them to work with their small group to come to a consensus of the proper order of the cards.

      2- Since you have a lot of content to cover in this course, time is very limited. Therefore, it may be necessary to omit doing this task first individually and only do it with others together in the small groups. As you instruct the group to do what you want them to do, show them how to do so with your copy of Appendix A. Don't use scissors; just fold and tear along the lines.

         Ask one person in each small group to begin tearing up the sheets and then hand columns to some others so they can help. Ask them to tear out the boxes in each column. Then ask them to make three stacks of the cards alongside each other, with six cards in each column.

         On the left side put the stack of name cards, which contain the name of one of the six loci on each card. In the middle put the stack of six Bible Text cards, each of which cites a Bible passage that is the basis of one of the teachings in one of the loci. On the right side, put the stack of the six cards that have one practical application of one of the loci on each card.

         The next part of the task is for the groups to arrange each of the six name cards in a column in their proper systematic order; second match the Bible Text cards in the middle stack with their corresponding name card; and third

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match the cards in the practical application stack with their corresponding name and Bible text cards. Ask the groups to come to a consensus regarding the matches.

3- Next, ask the group as a whole if they have any questions about the matches, and discuss with them the correct matches. Display the correct matches on the projection screen or flipchart. The correct matches for the task in Appendix A are as follows: A4b; F3d; B1e; C2f; E6c; D5a.

a- Did any group correctly match all six cards of each column correctly? Did all do so?

b- Distribute a copy of Appendix A for each student, so he or she can take it home and make copies for use in their teaching and/or as a model for making a similar learning game to teach other subjects.

c- Such class activities need to be debriefed. The activity concludes with a discussion that should include the following:

1} Ask the group to identify specifically what they learned, including the six main doctrines of the Bible in their logical, historic, systematic order; the Biblical basis of each of these six main doctrines; and six practical applications of historic Christian systematic theology, one for each of the six loci. They also learned an engaging teaching method that effectively helps students learn subjects, their meaning, Biblical basis, and their importance.

2} Ask the "so what" question. Why is it important to know this information?

3} Ask, "Now what?" What will they do with this information, the subject matter and the method? How will they use what they've learned for Christian education in the 21st century and beyond?

4} What can be added? What should be added?

3) *Basic Christianity*, by Dr. Arthur H. DeKruyter is a good introduction to the theological basis for a Christian education program, especially for the cognitive dimension of learning, of spiritual development. It is currently available only in a Chinese translation by Mrs. Amy Lay.

- See also his book, *Journey into Joy*, translated by Amy Lay, including the accompanying video. *Journey into Joy* is also available in English. Both books offer educationally balanced sources of learning and sanctification, the former

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facilitating cognitive growth and the latter focused on the affective domain of human learning and development.

Very importantly, *Journey into Joy* explains the Biblical teaching on the spiritual disciplines and their proper use in church history. The book avoids the superficial current overemphasis on "spirituality," as in the spiritual formation movement, which ignores or downplays the holistic cognitive-affective-behavioral continuum of human learning and development, including sanctification. Much of the popular but misguided spiritual formation movement also thoughtlessly and carelessly contains a considerable amount of non-Christian "spirituality," which many in the field include in their spiritual formation materials, that mislead and mitigate the Bible's teaching regarding spiritual development. For more on this subject, see my essay, "Balancing Bible Study and Spiritual Disciplines," and my PowerPoint presentation, "Joys in Spiritual Discipline," as well as other documents on the Christian Education page of my WordPress Website.[12]

This three-fold emphasis on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of the Christian life leads to higher levels of sanctifying behavior, including the obedience, that the Lord requires on every page of Scripture. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 6:1-7; John 14:21; Romans 2:13. Obedience, and repentance for disobedience, demonstrates the genuineness of the faith in Jesus Christ that saves us.

4) Selected segments (from theology and anthropology) of the curriculum, "Teaching the Course, *Basic Christianity*" by Edward D. Seely, provide further examples of curriculum design and Level III objectives (*op cit.*) for all three human learning domains, which also can be used in other educational contexts. This curriculum is a supplement to facilitate the teaching of *Basic Christianity* by Dr. Arthur H. DeKruyter. This curriculum supplement also contains a variety of teaching methods, and it can be taught as independent units of study.

5) Systematic theology should be taught on all levels, for children, youth, and adult education. Of course, the six loci, the main doctrinal, theological, themes; their Biblical basis; and their logical systematic presentation; are taught in their primary, simplest, and most fundamental forms for children and witnessing to non-Christians. Then they are taught in more depth for teenagers, and more extensively in adult classes, the latter with a basic class, and then with more advanced classes. The six loci are simple but profound; they're easy to understand on the most basic level and become increasingly more profound the more one contemplates and discusses them with others.

Systematic theology is intellectually satisfying; it links with the human capacity to reason. Our ability to reason is one of God's communicable characteristics that he

[12] See especially, "The Spiritual Formation Movement—A Critique and a Call to Renew Christian Education."

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gave us when he made us in his image, albeit in us that capacity is in microcosm what he retains in macrocosm. (See Genesis 1:26-27; Isaiah 1:18; 55:8-9.) God's attributes are unlimited in him; when he created us in his image, the portion of those attributes he gave us to form his image in us, which gives our lives such great value and dignity, are of course limited in us, but, though limited, they are exceedingly significant.

Historic Christian systematic theology is helpful in one other very important way. Systematic theology, with the Holy Spirit's help, equips Christians for more effective battle in the spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18) and witnessing for Christ that is needed in the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. It gives Christians an informed, substantive, and easy to remember and explain guide for speaking the Gospel of Jesus Christ's truth in love.

k. Emphasize several aspects of the fifth of the six loci, *ecclesiology*, the doctrine of the church. Teach why the church is vitally important. Explain the Biblical basis and meaning of the doctrine of the church in God's Word.

1) This doctrine and the understanding and careful implementation of it is especially important in this age when so many young adults and others are staying away from church. We need to help these and all people learn the importance of the church and why they should be part of *the church, the body of Christ, through whom the Lord is working in the world to accomplish his purposes*. This isn't the first time we've had this phenomenon. Remember the uninformed rallying cry of the Baby Boomer generation, "Jesus yes; church no," in the 1960's and '70's? It is likely not the last battle we'll face in the Satanic and demonic spiritual warfare in which we are engaged throughout this phase of life. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

In addition to *Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity*, see the following resources for this vitally important subject for the 21st Century and beyond.

a) "What is the church, and why should I attend?"

b) "What is the church, and why should I become a member?"

c) Sound science offers additional help in the brief paper, "Empirical Benefits of Church Worship."

d) See also the related resources in the Christian Theology page on the From Acorn to Oak 12 Website.

e) A very important issue that church leaders must address, both among themselves and with the whole church, is the matter of why a considerable number of people,

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especially younger people, have left the church and why sometimes it is difficult to obtain volunteer help.

1- Leaders need to examine their behavior. They should ask themselves the following questions:

   a- Am I perceived by others as a careful listener? Have I asked this question to wise people who have the strength to give me true feedback, for the sake of Christ and his church, and not just what I want to hear? (A good person to start with is your spouse.) How am I perceived in other ways; what is my reputation? Do I have changes to make? Have I prayed to God for his help to make those changes?

   b- Do I not only listen well, so I understand the concerns of others, but also so I make any needed changes? Am I willing to make such changes? If not, why, <u>really</u> why, not?

      - This willingness does not mean that every time someone wants the leader to change something, he or she should do so. The matter here involves the leader's <u>ability</u> to discern whether the request is valid and whether her or she has the willingness to make changes that should be made. Is the leader able to sense legitimate concerns that he or she should not ignore, and in those cases is he or she able give up some arbitrary and favorite orientations that may be counterproductive to the best interests of the body of Christ.

   c- Can I explain in my words, exactly what others have told me is their concern, and to do so with <u>their</u> agreement that I have accurately understood what they have told me?

   d- Does their concern have merit? Are they correct in their criticism and desire for change?

   e- Have I met with each person who is leaving the church, in a <u>warm and loving</u> exit interview, in which I am <u>truly</u> trying to understand their reason for leaving? If they are leaving for a just reason, am I willing to try to make the changes needed, to assure them these changes will be made, and to ask them to reconsider and remain part of our congregation?

   f- Am I willing to ask forgiveness for anything I've said or done that has hurt people and led to their wanting to leave the church? Have I done so?

2- Leaders need to help the church staff and all church members to understand the Biblical meaning and applications of "speaking the truth in love." (Ephesians 4:15) Include the following, among other questions, in your

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search for the truth on these very important aspects of the life and work of the church.

a- Have I informed the church, including in sermons and classes, that a major reason young people and others are not attending church services and other events is that they have been hurt by someone in the church? Have I taught God's Word on how we can relate better to all others, including what Biblical love really looks like, so as to not unnecessarily turn people away from the church and the opportunities to worship and learn God's Word, and to experience the unique fellowship with his people?

b- Do I regularly emphasize to the church staff and other leaders the importance of loving all people in, and visitors to, the church? Do we talk about what such love involves? How are we intentionally engaging in doing such loving? What are we doing that we should not do? What are we not doing that we should do? Do we pray asking for God's guidance to be loving to all others always?

c- When I learn of how a teacher, administrator, staff member, or someone else in the church has hurt someone, am I willing to talk with that person about the matter? Am I willing to facilitate the reconciliation of those who have said or done something that has hurt people and led to their wanting to leave the church? Am I willing to monitor agreed upon changes to make sure they are being made and maintained? Have I done so?

d- Do we as a church staff have a servant mentality?

e- Do those of us in leadership positions tend to micromanage those we've asked to be leaders? Do I say "No" a lot to suggestions from other leaders more than "Yes?" (Do an honest count and obtain some feedback.) Can we understand how those who are micromanaged feel and why? Can we understand how people can feel when they've spend a lot of their valuable time volunteering, see needs and make suggestions that are turned down, begin to think that this volunteer position is not the best use of their time, then either resign or decline to serve again when their term expires, talk with others about their decision and why, thus leading to the difficulty over time in obtaining volunteers? Think about it.

3- Church leaders must actively engage the vital matter of young people not attending church worship, or other aspects of the life and work of the church, that has many negative effects. Not only is the work of the church diminished and limited, but the young people themselves and society are adversely affected. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on the United States Surgeon General drawing attention to "the psychological turmoil of our youth."

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> From 2009 to 2019, the proportion of high school students reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness increased by 40%, and reporting suicidal thoughts by nearly as much. In just four years—from 2011 to 2015—youth psychiatric visits to emergency rooms for depression, anxiety and behavioral issues increased by 28%.
>
> …In the United States, suicide attempts by girls increased by 51% this year [2021], as compared to the same period just two years before. It's a global problem; a study of young people worldwide, published this year in JAMA Pediatrics found that symptoms of depression and anxiety have doubled [since COVID-19 began].[13]

Notice the high correlation between this rise in the mental health problems of this age group and the corresponding decline in their church attendance. Of course, no mention is made of this correlation or of the greatest help the young people have: the Lord Jesus Christ and his church. But we can, and must, draw attention to the connection and actively address it.

f) A very important part of church work that has been neglected today, to the detriment of the church and the kingdom of God, is the Biblical and historic practice of church discipline. Many results have occurred that negatively affect the individuals involved and the reputation of the church as a whole. Teach the need for and how to conduct church discipline. For more resources to teach about this subject, see Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology (PPT), Leadership and Administration in the Church: Balancing Task Accomplishment and Caring (PPT), and Leadership Includes Modeling—Leading by Becoming More and More Like Jesus: Guidance from 2 Timothy 2.

   Urge pastors and church judicatories to teach about, restore, and implement church discipline. We need to remind church leaders and the congregation as a whole that failure to properly exercise church discipline makes us all culpable (e.g., 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Leviticus 19:17b) in allowing evil in the church that facilitates and encourages people to sin with presumptuous, often arrogant, impunity and eventually divide the church.[14]

2) Historically, throughout the Bible and to the present day, public church worship has had an integral edification, an educational, dimension. See the curriculum, Worship:

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[13] "The Los Angeles Times on how to get our sad and anxious kids from traumatized to OK," reprinted in the Loveland, Colorado, *Reporter-Herald*, December 11, 2021, p. 4A.

[14] See my free eBook, What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love. Using the "Find" feature, search for "church discipline."

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A Course on Worship in the Christian Church, by Edward D. Seely. See in particular Lesson Four on how historic Christian systematic theology informs our worship planning.

Emphasize engaging in regular, at least weekly, corporate worship,[15] in a church home pleasing to God (i.e., as a member in good standing in a church congregation where the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Bible is faithfully and accurately taught and proclaimed), which is necessary for personal and corporate maturity in Christ. Parents, grandparents, pastors, elders, church teachers and other members should intentionally guide children to do so as well, especially in liturgical churches who faithfully hold to the Bible, or in churches willing to use the historic liturgy or key parts of it. In corporate worship, people long to come into God's presence and hear his Word truthfully explained and applied to their lives and contemporary living, especially in an expository homily. Such church congregations that also use the historic Christian liturgy, including the lectionary Bible texts in accord with the church year, offer the most edifying and nurturing worship services.

a) Teach why the church is important. It is the body of Christ and the main means through whom (the church throughout the Bible always referring to God's people) the triune God is working to accomplish his purposes, bringing to completion his plan of redemption for his creation. It is not an option or something to do when nothing else of interest is occurring. (Hebrews 10:23-25) See the related resources in the Christian Theology page on the From Acorn to Oak 12 Website.

b) Be careful to choose a church home that is part of a Christian denomination that faithfully proclaims God's plan of salvation throughout, and in adherence to, the Bible. Select a church home that focuses on teaching and preaching Jesus Christ's love, suffering (especially in, but not limited to, the horrendous flogging, the beating of the crown of thorns on his head [Mark 15:17, 19], and being nailed to the cross), death, resurrection for salvation for all of us who believe in and follow him, and that also teaches the Lord Jesus' continuing reign, and his eventual return in his second coming for a final judgment, the conclusion of this age, and the initiation of the new heaven and the new earth.

c) The reading of God's Word and the sermons explaining the Scriptures verse by verse are vitally valuable, indeed necessary, for preaching and teaching, preferably sermons and other teaching that are primarily expository. Base the sermons on a passage in the lectionary, especially the three-year cycle lectionary. Use the lectionary throughout each year and observe the seasons of the church year. Offer classes on specific books of the Bible, and go through them chapter

[15] See the worship resources on the Christian Worship page of the Website, From Acorn to Oak 12. The number 12 is the number in the Bible that represents the church, especially in the Bible's apocalyptic literature (the literary genre of such books as parts of Daniel and most of Revelation). From Acorn to Oak signifies the sanctification process, as referred to in such Scriptures as Isaiah 61:3 and Ephesians 4:13).

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by chapter, covering all the verses, explaining their meaning, implications, and applications.

In addition to, not in place of, the lectionary, a sermon series on a whole book of the Bible is very helpful. Keep the readings of the lectionary in the worship service each Sunday, and add to them the passage from the book of the Bible that is the focus for the sermon; link the sermon to the lectionary readings wherever applicable. For more on these subjects, including the importance and use of the lectionary and the church year, see my book, Worship: A Course on Worship in the Christian Church, accessible without charge on both of my Websites.

d) The historic Christian creeds are very important edifying elements in Christian worship, especially the Nicene Creed, which is the most used creed throughout the world. This creed emphasizes the divinity, as well as the humanity, of Jesus Christ in its use of the original Greek term, μονογενής (*monogenēs*), the term used, e.g., in John 3:16 and elsewhere in the apostle's writings, that is translated more accurately as only begotten. Newer translations of the Bible, tragically, do not accurately translate *monogenēs* and thus diminish the correct understanding of Christ Jesus' divinity.

Also, use the original Nicene Creed in the first person plural and the word catholic in the section where the church historically confesses belief in "one holy catholic and apostolic church." The original word catholic, meaning universal or global, should be used in accord with the statement at the historic first general council, the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D. Today, those, mostly Evangelical, denominations that replace the word catholic with the word Christian have erred; the words catholic and Christian are not synonyms. We must maintain and profess in the Biblical teaching of the church that the Lord has called the church, his body, to go into all the world ("all nations," Matthew 28:19) to make disciples for him. This catholicity of the church is what scholars in the field of Biblical literature refer to as a "major motif" (see Bible Digest), a theme that runs throughout the whole Bible. It is clear that God wants people in his kingdom who are from "every nation, tribe, people, and language." (Revelation 7:9; cf., e.g., Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 55:1-7) We have no right, no authority, to change words, especially essential words, in the Nicene Creed and still call it the Nicene Creed.

Occasionally use other historic Christian creeds. See the aforementioned *Worship: A Course on Worship in the Christian Church*.

e) Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, (Ephesians 5:19) including some hymns put to tasteful modern music when necessary. Make sure that the lyrics of the hymns and spiritual songs are Biblically and theologically accurate. Too many musical selections have pleasant music but superficial and even inaccurate words. Many, if not most, people primarily learn their theology from the hymns and

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songs they sing, and they retain and use those words throughout their whole lives.

f) Include all ages in corporate worship, with freedom to move around for young children and to take them out to a place where parents and the children can still hear, and thus participate to an extent, when they become restless. See *Worship: A Course on Worship in the Christian Church* for more on these subjects and, in particular, many of the ways churches are using to engage children in worship, as was always done in Bible times. See especially the video clip of a church worship service in Malawi. Use the "Find" feature or the "Search" bar to quickly locate specific subjects.

g) Encourage more use of art, e.g., as effectively used historically in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

h) Related to corporate worship, and extending its edifying and other blessings, a daily devotional guide to help church members and others to read the Bible and pray is a valuable resource to facilitate the sanctification of believers in Christ, especially when it is linked to the Scripture readings and sermon of the previous Sunday's worship services.

1- A "Bring It Home" daily devotional guide each week that reviews, expands on, and applies the Bible texts focused on in Sunday worship facilitates people's growth in Christ. (See, e.g., such a devotional guide on the Website of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Loveland, Colorado, U. S A., the URL for which is as follows: http://church.immanuelloveland.org/resources/daily-devotions. Church leaders need to strongly affirm the importance of *daily* reading God's Word and praying, with guidance on how to do, and how not to do, both.

2- Another feature of the "Bring It Home" daily Scripture reading and prayer guide that is especially valuable is that the readings from God's Word on Sunday, that are focused on each day, are from the lectionary, the main teachings of the Bible in a three-year cycle, used by churches throughout the world, which means that the church receives the whole counsel of God, in every three-year cycle of the lectionary. Thus churches everywhere that use the lectionary, could use the "Bring It Home" devotional guide, either as written or as a model for developing one of their own. For more on the value of the lectionary and the seasons of the church year, see Edward D. Seely, Worship: A Course on Worship in the Christian Church.

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l. Teach the Biblical, theological, and sound research information pertaining to *marriage* and *parenting*, and other contemporary matters families face.[16] The contemporary views of a significant number of young adults on marriage and parenting are having very negative effects on the family, which is the human basis of the church and society. This serious development needs to be addressed from the pulpit, the classroom, and in other multidimensional innovative ways in the 21st century and beyond.

1) Urge pastors and other Christian teachers to preach and teach on the sanctity of marriage and the very unique and special marriage bond. A strong emphasis needs to be made on overcoming temptations, including proactively avoiding situations where one could be tempted. One very important one is avoiding situations which could lead to temptation to commit adultery. Such a sermon and class should also identify some of the extensive and destructive results of adultery for the two persons who have done so; for each of them pertaining to their spouse; for the life-long negative impact on their children, which is exacerbated when divorce occurs; for the devastating impact on their extended family, friends, church, and community; and especially for the harm to their relationship with God. Former American Vice President Mike Pence has a wise policy regarding having his wife attend lunch meetings with him, when he has to meet with another woman. Also mention the policy in some workplaces of having the office door open when a man is meeting with a woman who is not his wife. This also protects the man, and the church or company from unwarranted and unjust "#Me too" accusations, law suits, and a tarnished reputation.

2) Preach and teach that subjects like divorce, abortion, and all forms of LGBTQ+ are contrary to God's will. They should remember their vows to remain married "until death you do part." It can be done; marriages have endured the worst of all possible experiences. With God all things are possible.

3) Emphasize that parents and grandparents teach children, young people, and adults to ***not*** value popularity and prioritizing pleasing people, but to emphasize teaching children, young people, and adults to prioritize pleasing God, i.e., to make pleasing God our greatest desire, objective, and accomplishment. (Cf. Luke 6:26; 2 Corinthians 5:9) When we please God, we'll please the humans whose opinion is most important. Children, teenagers, and adults all need to know and keep in mind that if we lose "friends" who object to our putting God and his will first, those "friends" never were true friends.

4) Similarly, we also should urge pastors and other Christian teachers to teach children, young people, and adults to be careful in our choices of our best friends, those who we allow to influence us and shape our values and opinions. They should be fellow

[16] Be careful to select Biblically-based and scientifically sound resources for such Christian educational offerings. The following are some other such resources in addition to those I've produced and hyperlinked: Dr. James Dobson, Family Research Council, Focus on the Family.

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Christians who are maturing in the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 5:9) Note also the evidence from sound sociological science on cohort influence, which reveals that human beings typically have no more than five people that they allow to influence them, and the influence of those people is significant. For Christians that close cohort should consist of fellow believers in and followers of Jesus Christ who are not spiritual infants but are growing in their sanctification.

m. Provide instruction on the need to witness for Christ and how to do so most effectively. Very inspiring and encouraging reports of the extensive and continuing growth of the church in the majority world, including Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere should be taught in Christian education ministries, in order to encourage Christians in the West, where the number and percentage of Christians is not increasing as it should, and in some places has declined. Continually prioritize and keep before the church the Lord's Great Commission and how to engage in that mission most effectively in the 21st century and beyond, including with constant prayer that God helps us corporately and individually to work in and for the extension and nurture of his kingdom as he has called and is equipping us to do.

   Especially in those countries where people can engage matters in the public square, Christians should speak the truth in love pertaining to God's will on current issues pertaining to the peace and prosperity of the place where God has led them to live and work. (Jeremiah 29:7; Matthew 5:13-16; Ephesians 4:15; Acts 17:16-34; 18:9. We must also not sin by omission; cf. Leviticus 5:1; 19:17.) To help people to serve the Lord in this form of witness, consider using the curriculum, Christian Witness in the Public Square—Increasing Your Comfort Level to Speak the Truth in Love: Is Pleasing God Your Highest Priority? and the related resources with it.

n. Offer instruction on the *gifts of the Spirit*, what they are, how to identify which are yours, and how to use them most effectively to serve the Lord and his church. Include in this instruction a correction of the misunderstanding and errors pertaining to certain spiritual gifts. For help in doing so, see Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology. For example, using the "Find" feature, search for tongues and other subjects.

o. Planning, organizing, staffing, developing, directing, implementing, evaluating, and managing a Christian education ministry that will most effectively meet the needs of the church for the 21st century and beyond requires skillful *leadership*. Thus, we need to teach what leadership, including administration, in the church in the 21st century and beyond looks like; how such people are selected and cared for, including when they err; how to help them with their continuing education and how they treat themselves and others; and how this ministry best functions in accord with God's Word and will.

   1) Church educators are called by God to lead his church into new and effective ways to innovate, address, overcome, and manage the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. This leadership includes envisioning, planning, gaining and maintaining the required support, and implementing an innovative multidimensional educational

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ministry to facilitate the sanctification of the church and the accomplishment of God's purposes. The head of, and others in, the education ministry need to develop and use key leadership skills, including learning how such a multidimensional program involving many people should be administered and progress.

2) The initiation of innovations needed now should be done with attention to helping the congregation develop a willingness to identify other needs as they arise and an understanding of how to address those new needs with new educational and other ministries in the future. Such preparation should include the willingness to employ new methods to meet future, now unknown and unpredictable, needs but with a commitment to not changing the Word of God, who does not change. (James 1:17; Malachi 3:6)

   - When teaching about the need for change, it is also important to teach how to know when change is needed. First, what were the reasons for the current tradition? What needs was the current tradition designed to meet? Are those reasons for the current tradition still valid? Does this particular program, or other tradition, need to be replaced or only modified?

3) In addition to knowing God's Word and historic Christian systematic theology, education leaders emphasize the need to also know sound and careful science and related studies in the leadership and administration literature. Sound science refers to that which is consistent with the Bible (called God's special revelation in historic Christian systematic theology), and it is part of what is referred to in theology as God's general revelation. (Cf. Romans 1:18-20) The Holy Spirit uses careful science, science that adheres to the established scientific method, in educational theory, to help liberate leaders from conforming to the constraint to idolize past or present "heroes" and other models. Such sound science (*op cit*.) frees God's education leader from fads and other popular but un- and often counter-productive programs and other ill-conceived notions.

   a) The PowerPoint presentation, "Leadership and Administration in the Church—Balancing Two Key Dimensions of Leadership: Initiation of Structure and Consideration," is a course in itself.

      1- For the purposes of this course, include the following slides, or selections from or summaries of them, that introduce key aspects of this subject, meet the needs identified above in this course that that will help the students accomplish the specified objectives for this course, and indicate the need of and source for further learning.

      2- Show and discuss these slides, or as many as time allows, for this course: 1-10; 15-84; 96-102, 104-105; 106-118; 119-126, 129-130, 132-150; 151-156. Since time is not available to adequately present, explain, and discuss all the slides, even these selected, ask the students to read them ahead of class, and

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then highlight the segments of each of these slides that are most applicable to the present course on Christian education for the 21st century and beyond. See also the related essays on the Leadership and Administration page of my WordPress Website.

b) As we've seen above, the leaders responsible for beginning, managing, and overseeing the Christian education ministries that will meet the church's needs in order to serve the Lord Jesus Christ most effectively in the 21st century and beyond, must have the knowledge, wisdom, and skills to design, develop, and implement such a multidimensional ministry. They must also be aware of and effectively use insights from a body of cross-cultural research that facilitates the changes needed.

It is one matter to perceive the needs and put together an innovative plan to meet those needs, and another matter to successfully put such a plan into place to produce effective outcomes. On paper it may look good to the leaders, but there is a lot more to making it operational so it can accomplish the objectives. A large part of putting the plan in place is the need to foster its adoption by the church. Until its adopted, it's not used and no one benefits from it. It does no good on the shelf.

p. Designing and developing innovative Christian education ministries for the 21st century and beyond, will require gaining their adoption by the church and other sectors of the surrounding social system. *Research on the Diffusion of Innovations* offers much help for implementing innovative and effective plans for Christian education now and in the future.

1) Developing a multidimensional plan for Christian education in the 21st century and beyond will necessarily require new programs and other innovative ministries. As we engage in this planning, curriculum development, and implementation of these innovations, we can expect some controversy and resistance. Not everyone likes or welcomes change.

2) Extensive and sound empirical research, involving the special psychosocial dynamics within individuals and social systems pertaining to innovations, yields much help for us in implementing new and effective plans, while at the same time preventing where possible, managing, and resolving, controversy. An excellent body of sound science called diffusion research, a subfield within the field of communication, has grown out of many international cross-cultural studies, which have shown that the steps in the process of social systems adopting innovations occur in a predictable manner. Human beings in social systems throughout the world tend to function in similar ways—when it comes to hearing about, responding to, and diffusing, or spreading the knowledge and adoption of—innovations. The knowledge of this process and its implications is very helpful in fostering the adoption of innovations in a social system, including in a church, which is also a social system.

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When leaders either don't know about, or fail to use, the insights that have come from this research, the results include their innovations being unnecessarily rejected—thus depriving the church of those further means of maturing in Christ and facilitating the extension and nurture of God's kingdom—and frustrating the leaders, among other undesirable outcomes. Much more concerning, it is also difficult to see God being well-served by having good ideas rejected.

a) To facilitate teaching this very important subject, ask the students to read and come prepared to discuss my essay, "Defusing Fear of Innovations: Facilitating Change in the Church." Since this subject is a course in itself, use this part of this course to introduce the students to, and acquaint them with, this important subfield of communication research by explaining the following key aspects of diffusion research, using the respective slides in the program, Defusing Fear of Innovations: Facilitating Change in the Church PPT.

b) Define the following terms. Explain what is so significant about each term that affects the adoption of innovations, with special application to a church or a Christian school.

    1- Social system

    2- Innovation (Emphasize the importance of understanding and managing these aspects of an innovation.)

        a- The phenomenon includes not only products, ideas, and services that are actually new.

        b- Newness has denotations and connotations that affect people's willingness to adopt anything new *or perceived as new*. The innovation may not be really new at all, but if it is new to the people in a social system, it carries with it key attributes of newness that affect the actual acceptance, adoption, and diffusion of any new product, program, policy, idea, or service.

    3- Diffusion

    4- Homophily

    5- Opinion leader

c) Identify and describe the phases of both corporate and individual decision-making about innovations.

d) Identify and explain the five attributes of an innovation that affect its adoptability.

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e) Explain the cosmopolite-localite continuum; identify the five types of people in a social system, their place and number on the continuum; and discuss how to use this information effectively to successfully facilitate innovations in the church.

q. *For any of the cognitive objectives* you have not as yet observed the stated behavior, distribute file cards as needed, and *ask the students to give you the stipulated responses*. Be sure to ask them to sign their name on each card. Or, you can verbally ask the class, corporately in session, or selected representative individuals, and/or those about whom you have a special concern, in or outside the class (especially outside and individually for those about whom you are concerned in order to avoid embarrassment and to facilitate their responses), to do the behaviors specified in the objectives. Review the instruction as needed, for any objectives that are not accomplished as you intend them to be. Doing so in class, will help those who need the remedial help and be a good memory refresher and reinforcer for those who have accomplished the objectives. Further, in the discussion you and others in the class will think of and mention additional aspects of the subject that are valuable to know.

r. If there is time yet on Wednesday, *answer questions and address any other student needs* that have been identified before the first session, in the first session, or in subsequent sessions. There will likely be no time for addressing those matters on Thursday or Friday. It is important to address all the felt needs the students have expressed, but there may be so many, as in this course, that not all will fit into the subject parameters or time limits of the 30-hour course. For those needs the students identified that transcended the time limits of the course, write your answers to those questions/needs and email them to the whole class after the final session.

Pertaining to those subjects the students raised in the needs assessment for this course, for which there was no time to address them, I wrote my answers to the questions and also referred them to additional sources in a document I prepared after the course and sent to them within two weeks of the conclusion of the course. That document is included below in Appendix C.

Thursday—Friday

Planning Christian Education Ministries for the 21st Century and Beyond

1. A lecture/forum on planning effective Christian education for the 21st Century and beyond will be the focus of the last two days of the course. **Do your very best to not shorten this unique and very important part of the course.** As you enter Wednesday morning, if you see that you may not have enough time for a thorough discussion of the remaining subjects planned for the first part of the course, summarize the key aspects of those subjects and refer students to the resources cited above where they can find the further information on their own.

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a. One of the most valuable and enjoyable aspects of adult education, and graduate school education in particular, is to include insights of highly educated students who have been walking with the Holy Spirit for many years and who have important knowledge, wisdom, and experience to contribute in and for Christian education both now and going forward. Some of them have been and still are pastors, or have served in other related church work, who are now in a program studying for a higher degree. Many are second-career people, who have worked in other professions, whom the Lord has called to serve in the church; they can use much of what they have learned in their previous career(s) for their vocation in church ministries. For just one example, people who have had a successful career in sales are able to share very useful insights into marketing new education programs and also for effective evangelism and witnessing. This section of the course will actively engage the students, many of whom have acute awareness of the needs of their peers and others, in creative thinking and planning for the future.

b. A guided class lecture/forum containing small group discussion is intended to focus on the students' use of what they've been learning this week together with their creative thinking and construction of methods of church education to meet the contemporary needs in the following applications:

    1) The church in Taiwan and other Asian cultures

    2) Contemporary global church education for those whom God is calling to serve Him in other cultures

c. Present a <u>brief</u> lecture reviewing and highlighting key aspects of the main subjects from Monday through Wednesday, which are essential for effective Christian education in the 21st century and beyond and that will equip the church to accomplish, with the Holy Spirit's help, the mission the Lord Jesus Christ gave to us. Emphasize those subjects that are most important to meet the needs of the church, and of your students at this point in time in your and their geographical location or in the country to which God is calling them. Include both those needs that are always present in every age, and those that are newly emerging as well as any that can be foreseen coming in the future. However, unless you have the gift of prophecy, or some sound and insightful information, don't spend time on forecasting the future. Keep this first part brief, simply reviewing relevant key points for accomplishing the task.

d. Then, ask the class to form and work in groups with others who have a calling from the Lord to serve in either the same or similar areas of ministry as their own calling. For example such groups as the following could be formed:

    1) Pastors

    2) Pastors or ministers called to focus on (or, if they're yet unsure, especially interested in) church education

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3) Those called to (or are especially interested in) youth ministry

4) Those called to (or are especially interested in) a music ministry

5) Those called to (or are especially interested in) evangelism and missions

6) Those called to focus on (or are especially interested in) pastoral care ministry. (Why is pastoral care included in a course on Christian education? There is an aspect of pastoral care ministry that involves learning and development, including some teaching. Furthermore, church educators, especially those who are ordained, are often asked for pastoral care, especially by those who have been working closely with them or who they know well—people who ask not only for themselves but also for family members and friends. They want help from you, so help them as much as you can. Then, if they require additional counseling or other pastoral care, offer to refer them to a trustworthy Christian and Bible-based counselor with expertise in the area of their need. *Be very careful in referrals*; a high percentage of "counselors" are either non-Christians, immature Christians who lack wisdom, or not Bible-based, and they confuse, mislead, and harm people in many other ways. If you don't know of a strong Christian counselor who is mature, Bible-based, trustworthy, competent and caring, do research to find one before referring this person to such a counselor. It is good to follow up with this person to monitor how he or she is doing and for prayer.)

7) Other ministries

e. <u>Assign the groups this task</u>:

In the light of what you learned Monday through Wednesday, together with any other insights from group members, each group is to form a plan for Christian education in the 21st century and beyond in the area, vocational and geographical, wherein they are being called to serve. Allow the groups to spend most of Thursday and, if needed the first part of Friday morning, to develop their plans with as much innovation and detail as possible. Ask them to include the following:

1) The plan itself,

2) How the plan will be implemented, and

3) How the plan will be evaluated (focusing on Level III objectives)

2. As early as possible on Friday, so each group has enough time to report, bring the groups back together, and ask each group to report to the whole group its plan for effective Christian education in the work to which they have been, or are interested in possibly being, called to serve the Lord and his church. Ask the whole group to listen carefully for any plans the other groups mention that could be implemented in their own ministry.

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3. Close the last session and the whole course with prayer for each attendee, for his or her own church, for the church in Taiwan and other countries represented, and for the global church. Ask that the Holy Spirit leads us all to minister ever more effectively by maintaining, and if necessary improving upon, good and effective traditions, while at the same time guiding the development of complementary innovative programs and services for the most effective Christian education ministry throughout the 21st century and beyond.

4. The above content, together with the accompanying important discussion of each subject, is more than enough for this full 30-hour course. The teacher may have to reduce and simply summarize some subjects due to their profundity and extensiveness. When time constraints require omitting some important related subject matter, consider one of these alternatives:

    a. Offer to meet with the students outside of class, e.g., at break times or at lunch. Doing so is effective especially for those students who have a particular need or interest in certain subjects that are important but that do not necessarily apply to all the students, at least to the same degree. Of course the invitation to meet outside of class is given to all students in the class. I've always found that the students value those meetings and that they are especially helpful and well-received, as also occurred during this course.

    b. Cover those subjects that could not be included in this course in another course in which they are focused on in their entirety together with their related dimensions; for example, Bible Digest, Defusing Fear of Innovations: Facilitating Change in the Church; historic Christian systematic theology, and Leadership and Administration in the Church: Balancing Task Accomplishment and Caring. Encourage the students to take that or those other courses for the additional information on those vital subjects for Christian education in the 21st century and far beyond. Refer the students to the additional writings pertaining to those subjects, e.g., in the following resources.

Resources

The following is a list of resources that will help teach this course. Please also consider the comments that accompany some of the resources.

1. Selected excerpts from essays and PowerPoint programs on all but especially on the Christian Education, Christian Theology, Christian Worship, and Church Leadership and Administration pages of the Website, From Acorn to Oak 12 (www.fromacorntooak12.com or www.edwardseely.com) and the Website, https://seelyedward.academia.edu/

2. Selected excerpts from essays and PowerPoint programs on the Chinese Translations page of the Website, From Acorn to Oak 12 (www.fromacorntooak12.com) that have been translated by Mrs. Amy Lay.

3. *Basic Christianity* and *Journey into Joy*, by Dr. Arthur H. DeKruyter.

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4. Resources listed in the footnotes of, and elsewhere in, the selected essays and PowerPoint programs used in the course.

5. Other carefully selected Web courses and other resources can be used, but leaders must vet them. Some good ones are as follows:

   a. For church pastors, educators, and other leaders. See, e.g.:

      1) WORDsearch Bible. See, e.g., https://www.wordsearchbible.com/products/46586-a-christian-s-pocket-guide-series?g=C672

      2) Barna Group barna@barna.org.

      3) The Langham Partnership https://us.langham.org/ what-we-do/.

   b. For lay and professional church members and church leaders. See, e.g.:

      1) Billy Graham Evangelistic Association https://billygraham.org/.

      2) Colson Center for Christian Worldview colsoncenter@colsoncenter.org.

      3) Discipleship and Mission Workshops, 3DM info@3dmovements.org

      4) Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk https://drjamesdobson.org/. This organization offers resources via email at enews@enews.drjamesdobson.org.

      5) Focus on the Family https://www.focusonthefamily.com/. This organization offers resources via email at Focus on the Family email@email.fotf.com.

      6) Ligonier Ministries https://www.ligonier.org/.

      7) Middle East Resources, Rev. Bassam M. Madany at www.unashamedofthegospel.org and https://bassammichaelmadany.academia.edu/. This is a very trustworthy and authoritative resource on Islam, written by a pastor and scholar who is a native of Syria, and proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Arabic over the Back to God radio program for almost 40 years. His brief articles inform people all over the world of the Qur'an- and Hadith-based Islamic agenda of which too many Christians and the rest of the world, especially the West, are dangerously unaware.

      8) James Found (www.foundbytes.com) James Found is an educator, former missionary in Asia, and university professor. His Website offers much valuable information for the above subjects to resource church leaders and members for Christian education in the 21st century and beyond.

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9) The Navigators https://www.navigators.org. This organization offers resources via email at The Navigators email@navigators.org.

10) Personal Growth Resources http://foundbytes.com/.

11) Samaritan's Purse updates@e.samaritan.org

12) The Voice of the Martyrs https://www.persecution.com/.

13) Youth camps, such as Camp Concordia fun@campconcordia.org.

6. Attendance at courses and seminars presented at, or sponsored by, Bible colleges and Christian organizations (e.g., the Langham Partnership) and seminaries (e.g., independent seminaries such as Logos Theological Seminary and denominational seminaries such as the Lutheran Church/Missouri Synod) that faithfully hold to and teach the Word of God, is especially helpful for current but also future church leaders. An important caveat: Over time, individual lay Christians must be very careful in selecting an institution of higher learning, and even the instructors, for not all are equally trustworthy and competent. Furthermore, as leaders come and go, the faculty and administration of seminaries and other denominational institutions of higher learning change. The major source of such changes is typically ill-advised and misguided subsequent appointees to the boards of trustees of such institutions, who err in their philosophy, theology, and practice of leadership selection in decision-making to replace retiring faculty. Thus, as seen throughout history, institutions that were established to be faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ often choose leaders, board, administration, and faculty, who do not follow in the original mission of the institutions' founders.

   Obviously, the above is not to say that all professors and others are intentionally false prophets and evil. Not at all. Many are fine and faithful teachers and leaders. Some are simply grievously mistaken and have identified with faulty interpretation of Scripture. Others are reprobate and committing heresy and apostasy. In any case, as Jesus said, "Watch out." (See these passages and their context: Matthew 7:14ff.; 16:6 [NRSV]; 24:4; 26:41ff.; Mark 13:37; Luke 21:36; see also Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 6:1; Philippians 3:2; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:15; 1 Peter 5:2). As in education today in general, the main problems in the church have come from leadership, much of which can be traced to their teachers. A basic principle I've observed over many decades is that teachers teach as they have been taught. This reality is indicated by the truth in James 3:1. Therefore, we all need to be watchful and to help others be watchful as well.

   Here is another example of the need to help people think critically, as in making applications with the Biblical teaching on anthropology, described above. Teachers, too, are sinners (Romans 3:23) and make unintentional, and sometimes intentional, errors. We need to help our students make those discernments, even with us, their teachers. I invite my church and seminary students, and pastoral seminar attendees, to carefully think about what I am teaching, and if they have any disagreement to ask me about it, telling them, "If I cannot

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support everything I say with God's Word, you don't have to believe it." We are also to admonish one another as needed. (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)

FOR CHURCH LEADERS' CAREFUL ATTENTION:

1. The above list of resources is highly recommended but should be considered as illustrative and not exhaustive. Many other good corporate and individual resources exist.

   - Always be alert: As mentioned above, organizations change as current leaders think of new ideas and as new leaders with different theology and other perspectives join. Some leaders of Christian organizations are weak and "cave in" when outspoken advocates of ideologies contrary to the Bible make accusations and threats and even become angry and shout loudly when opposed. Sometimes those new ideas and new leaders are not in accord with God's Word and will or even with the original founders of the organization. The organizations and ministries listed above are currently (as of 2021) doing excellent work for the Lord, and most have been doing so for many years. Nevertheless, since leadership transition is a very significant challenge that is not always well done, be sure to constantly keep God's Word and will as the highest and most authoritative standard to vet all organizations and ministries while considering using their services. And vet vigilantly and continuously.

2. Church leaders must intentionally guide less mature Christians in their selection of resources, especially independent resources, including Christian resources, for not all are of acceptable quality. For example, not all have sound and Biblically consistent theology and philosophy. Also, not all are based on careful sound science, part of God's general revelation (e.g., Romans 1:18 ff.), and the preceding discussion.

3. Christian education for the 21st century should make careful use of the new presentation and other technologies. The word, careful, is important. As much as technology can facilitate the accomplishment of educational objectives, it can also interfere and function counterproductively. Not only children and young people, who are glued to their smart phones, but also older people allow their digital devices to divert them from developing relationships and maturity in Christ, which is counterproductive to an essential part of ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, in particular the fellowship of the ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*, typically translated church), literally, "those who are called out" to be holy to and serve God. It is no wonder why loneliness and depression are so rampant today and increasingly so. This reality should be one of the unfelt needs addressed in both formal and nonformal educational programs in this century.

   Nevertheless, as always, we can and should use technology to help people mature in Christ. To cite just a few examples, churches and Christian schools should invest in smart boards, which enable teachers to write and bring up on the same surface PowerPoint programs with creative, extensive, and highly motivating graphics, videos, and previously prepared texts

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that can be stored and made available for students to review, as well as others throughout the church, the community, and worldwide.

Formal and nonformal courses, seminars, Bible studies, classes, and other shorter and longer term learning opportunities, as well as meetings, can be held via face-to-face sessions such as with Zoom video conferencing, which permits people throughout the whole church and others they invite anywhere in the world to join the class or group. Those who are ill or disabled can also participate and be blessed by what they are learning and can contribute. They can do so, as with the rest of us, with others with whom they are in contact, in person or in writing, e.g., letters to the editor of the local newspaper, social media outlets, letters to government representatives—all very important means of service to the Lord.

Churches and schools making use of these and other electronic means of instruction, will not only help their members and friends to become connected who might not otherwise be able or inclined to do so, for shorter or longer periods of time, but they will be able to offer evangelistic and educational learning opportunities for people in hard to reach locations. These churches and schools will also be well-positioned to connect with one another during crises such as the coronavirus COVID-19 epidemic, when many countries shut down their normal daily functioning and limited physical interaction, even requiring people to stay at home (but still have access to the Internet), and which continues with coronavirus variants.

One key principle in this matter is to use technology and not let technology (ab)use us. Digital technology should be used prudently; nothing can replace human, especially the *ekklēsia* fellowship face-to-face in the presence of one another, but for others, such as those who are only able to participate digitally, it is a very valuable means of maintaining contact and fellowship with the body of Christ, and in the Triune God's worship, with both the church militant and the church triumphant.

4. Contact Christian schools, seminaries, Bible colleges, and also Christian education curriculum publishers. Urge the former to require their students and the latter their writers to use Level III objectives and explain in their teaching and preaching and in their curricula the Biblical and educational rationale for doing so as presented in this course, including also avoiding the displeasure and especially the wrath of the Lord (Luke 3:7; 21:23; Romans 1:18; 2:5,8; 3:5; 12:19; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10) and overcoming the bad reputation among some that Christians and the church have for not practicing what we preach, verbally teaching what we believe but acting the opposite (e.g., Matthew 7:15-23, esp. v. 21).

   To be sure, God is love. (1 John 4:8) Clearly, all of his attributes come from his love, including his also being holy, i.e., separate and pure from all that has been defiled by sin and evil. God is not only holy, but he is holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8), the way the Hebrew language expresses being most holy, which means that he is completely separate from sin and evil and will allow none of that in his presence. It is not insignificant that of all God's attributes, this is the only one that is repeated three times.

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At this point in church history, especially in the West, an overemphasis on God's love to the exclusion of his holiness has resulted in multitudes ignoring God's attribute of being most holy: holy, holy, holy. The consequence has been the downplaying or ignoring of the vital importance of obeying God's Word and will, with the corresponding thought by many who claim to be believers that they can do whatever they want, and God, who is all love, will simply forgive them and everything will be just fine. Such people must have lost, never read, or are ignoring Romans 6, and many other passages, in their Bible to their possible peril (cf. the Matthew 7 passage above), forgetting that believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ have been called to be holy. (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 2:9-17; cf. Hebrews 10:10) God's love is easily seen in his call for us to be holy to him and separated from evil; in so doing, we honor and please him, serve him ever more effectively, and we also keep out of a lot of trouble.

For more on this very important subject see the PowerPoint, Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology. Churches, publishing companies, seminaries, and Bible colleges need to balance their teaching of God's love and his holiness, and pertaining to the latter that he is especially holy, holy, holy. Likewise, we need to include in our teaching and preaching what the Bible truly teaches about the fear of God.

God, who is also most holy as well as love, requires obedience and the fruit of good deeds, not at all to earn our salvation, but as evidence of the *genuineness* of the faith that saves us. (Matthew 7:15-23; John 14:21;15:8; Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 4:23-25; Colossians 1:9-14; James 2:14-26) Level III objectives will help teach that lesson effectively so that the church will please, honor, and glorify God much better in the 21st century and beyond.

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Appendix A: Historic Christian Systematic Theology
A Matching Task
The Six Bible Doctrines, Bible Text Bases, and Practical Applications

Bible Text Basis	Bible Doctrines	Practical Applications
[3] …Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4]…was buried…was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [5] …appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. [6] After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living…(1 Corinthians 15:3-6) 1	Theology (The Doctrine of God) A	A statement from the Bible that indicates continuity with loved ones in Christ together with God forever. a
[8] For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— [9] not by works, so that no one can boast. [10] For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:8-10) 2	Christology (The Doctrine of Christ) B	Since God is sovereign, we can have peace of mind and sleep well. b
Then God said, 'Let us make man in our own image…. (Genesis 1:26) 3	Soteriology (The Doctrine of Salvation) C	The body of Christ is global, composed of people of every race and color, all of whom are loved by Christ Jesus and for whom he died, and his followers are to love as well. c
I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. (Job 42:2) 4	Eschatology (The Doctrine of End Times) D	Here is one of the most solid bases for valuing all human beings, including ourselves, as deserving respect, no matter what other people think of us. d

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Then I saw a new [καινός (*kainos*), new (in nature or in quality)] heaven and a new earth…. (Revelation 21:1) 5	Ecclesiology (The Doctrine of the Church) E	We have assurance that we will be raised from the dead and live forever with God and other believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. e
After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude, that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. (Revelation 7:9) 6	Anthropology (The Doctrine of Mankind) F	We must do good works (James 2:24; Matthew 7:21), but unlike every other religion, we are ***not*** saved ***by*** good works ***but for*** good works. Good works show the genuineness of our faith in Jesus Christ that saves us. f

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Appendix B: Course Project Checklist

Christian Education in the 21st Century

Rev. Edward D. Seely, Th.M., Ph.D.; Translator, Mrs. Amy Lay

January 2020

Content

In a meeting with the professor of record, or Pastor Chou, and/or in the course paper, by the end of this course, each student will be able to do the following:

[ ] List all six themes (doctrines) in historic Christian systematic theology; do so in order; **and** briefly summarize what each one means, giving at least one example for each theme.

[ ] List and be able to explain at least three uses of the six themes in your ministry and at least one way to use the books, *Basic Christianity* and *Journey into Joy*, by Dr. Arthur DeKruyter in your ministry.

[ ] List and be able to define all three domains of human learning and development, **and** explain why each is essential in order to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (John 14:21; Ephesians 4:13)

[ ] Pertaining to the schema for lesson planning and curriculum development (Adaptation of Taba), list in order and explain all seven steps, **including** their specific parts that we studied in class.

[ ] Given a 4 x 6 card, identify and explain all three parts of a Level III objective and write at least one Level III objective for each of the three domains (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) for an upcoming lesson you are planning to teach (or for those not presently teaching, for a lesson you would like to teach at some time in the future).

[ ] List in order all six parts of the "Discrepancy Assessment Model for Evaluation," (Adaptation of Stake) and explain the following:
(1) what each part means,
(2) the relationship of each part to the others, and
(3) the value of this model for effective teaching in the church.

[ ] From the Bible texts presented in class, list at least seven characteristics church leaders should possess.

[ ] Using the Bible texts and social science research presented in class, list at least three positive leader behaviors and three negative leader behaviors.

[ ] Using the passages from the Bible on leadership and the social science research on leadership presented in class, evaluate your own leader behaviors, citing the following:
(1) at least one positive leader behavior you typically do,
(2) at least one leader behavior you are attempting to improve, and
(3) what, specifically, you are doing to improve that behavior.

[ ] Cite at least three means you have already begun, or are planning, to do in your ministry to reduce the likelihood of conflicts arising **and** at least five steps to effectively resolve conflicts that do arise.

[ ] Identify and explain an innovation you want to implement **and** cite at least three steps necessary for you to take in order to successfully implement the innovation.

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[ ] Cite at least one Biblical text and the theological basis for administration in the church and in other Christian organizations.
[ ] Regarding the administration section of the course:
  [ ] List in order all five steps in the administration of church ministry.
  [ ] Give at least one example of each.
  [ ] Identify and describe the five steps of evaluation and the use of the values component in the process.
  [ ] Evaluate your own ministry style with respect to at least three administrative, including managerial or leadership, insights you obtained from your readings and/or the class discussions, showing how you balance task accomplishment and caring (Christlike love), including for family. This evaluation should **also** describe how you have begun, or are planning, to apply those insights in your present or expected ministry.

Format

[ ] Record the above information in a paper that is no less than fifteen (15) pages in length.
[ ] Typed with 12 pt. font
[ ] Double spaced
[ ] Correct grammar
[ ] No typos (Did you proofread your paper to eliminate typographical errors?)
[ ] Paginated
[ ] Due by 4:30 PM Friday

NOTES:

1. Sources of information to accomplish the checklist requirements: Written handouts, class lectures, class discussions, conversations with the professor and the translator, and essays on these two Websites, www.fromacorntooak12.com (or www.edwardseely.com) and https://seelyedward.academia.edu/.
2. The underlined items are those students most often overlook; please don't omit them or any others on the checklist, since we must follow the seminary guidelines for grading. To receive a grade of A, all information must be present. Second chances are possible only for grades less than C.
3. You are very welcome to talk with us during any part of the preparation process at any time.

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Appendix C: Responses to Questions Raised by Students Pertaining to Their Felt Needs

Christian Education in the 21st Century

Rev. Edward D. Seely, Th.M., Ph.D.

January 2020

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: As mentioned above, these questions that the students raised, as part of the felt needs assessment done prior to constructing the curriculum for this course, are very profound and complex. The time in this course required to teach the most essential subjects, which included their unfelt needs, only permitted a limited response in class to some of the questions; others were included at more length. All are answered here. Several questions overlap, and some of my responses below to specific questions can also be applied to other questions. The following document provides further explanation for each of the questions, including the identification of other resources that can help, in addition to what has already been said in the course, pertaining to these matters.

Since the course had students from several countries, all from Asia, other Christian educators can obtain an awareness of these felt needs they should take into account, not only elsewhere in Asia, but most if not all these needs, with the exception of part of Number 11, are common throughout the world. It can be used as a resource for teaching this course elsewhere and for constructing other course curriculum materials. The following are my answers to their questions, which I sent to them within two weeks after the conclusion of the last class. I have included additional comments in this introductory note, in Question 15a, and within the brackets of Question 16a.

1. How to deal with or prevent the divorce of Christian couples due to disputes over financial management?

    a. PREVENTIVE: Offer Christian education programs to help prevent such problems.

        1) Log In to the From Acorn to Oak 12 Website: www.fromacorntooak12.com or www.edwardseely.com. All my Website resources are free. On the Home Page menu, select Chinese Translations and Marriage; see in particular the following essays:

            a) "Guidelines for Selecting a Marriage Partner" (Don't miss page 11.)
            b) "Is Divorce Harmful to Children?"
            c) "Is Cohabitation an Option for God's People?"
            d) "Sermon: Discerning God's Will Regarding Marriage"

        2) Preach sermons and teach in other contexts on these subjects.

        3) Offer a premarital seminar that is required for all members in the church who wish to be married. For the subject matter, use the above document, "Guidelines for Selecting a Marriage Partner," which can be taught as a course over several weeks

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or as a weekend seminar. Advertise the course in the community, and invite couples who wish to have a fulfilling marriage to attend the course or seminar.

4) Offer Bible study classes and courses on historic Christian theology, such as *Basic Christianity*, to help people come to know who God, including Jesus Christ, is, what he is like, what his will is, and what he requires; essential aspects of human nature; how the Holy Spirit works in our lives; God's calling; what salvation means and involves; how to develop the mind of Christ; the need for the church and how it functions; and the hope we have only in Christ. Urge church members and friends to attend.

5) Teach my PPT, "Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity." In the Search bar of the PPT, type Marriage. Scroll through references to marriage. Use specific slides as resources for teaching many subjects.

6) Since money problems are a major factor in marital discord, see Dave Ramsey materials, which have helped save many marriages. He and his organization have produced excellent resources for all ages: www.daveramsey.com. See in particular the following Ramsey resources:

a) Financial Peace
b) Money & Marriage

b. THERAPEUTIC: Christian education and pastoral counseling can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, overcome and change such behavior that is occurring.

1) Urge the couple to attend and use the Dave Ramsey resources included above in the PREVENTIVE section; mention that they have helped save many marriages. DVDs are available.

2) Offer pastoral counseling, where couples can meet with a pastor and/or a professional with expertise in financial management, e.g., a maturing believer in the Lord, who is a banker or a successful financial planner.

a) If a professional is to be involved, carefully select him or her. Make sure he or she is a believer maturing in his or her relationship with and obeying Jesus Christ, has a track record of such spiritual maturity and also business success, and that he or she views this role as a voluntary ministry outside of work; this service is not a means of obtaining new business.

b) In pastoral counseling, include the following:

1- Prayer

2- God's will

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a- God's hatred of divorce (e.g., Malachi 2:6; Matthew 19:1-9) and his help to heal a marriage is possible when the couple is willing to work through their problems
b- The importance of forgiveness should be included.
c- See also above Website resources and their accompanying passages from the Bible.

3- Help for the couple to restore their marriage

a- Reassure them that restoration of their marriage is possible.
b- Ask both of them to commit to restoring their marriage (otherwise they are not going to make a serious attempt to do so) and to meet with you.
c- Employ the standard marital counseling method, including the following:
1} Meeting first with both husband and wife as a couple, then with each individually, and then with both together as much as needed.
2} In sessions with both spouses present together, helping them develop listening skills, e.g., asking one (Spouse A) to begin, and after he or she briefly presents his or her concern, ask the other (Spouse B) to state in his or her own words exactly what Spouse A said. Then ask Spouse A if Spouse B correctly understands. Spouse A should correct any misunderstanding. Then reverse the process for Spouse B. (Do this throughout the counselling sessions, and ask them to use this skill in all their communication at home.)

2. Actual divorce rate is very high (including Christians) in Taiwan. In facing of the increasing number of no-marriage people, how can we respond or advise them?

a. PREVENTIVE: Offer Christian education programs to help prevent such behavior.

1) See the From Acorn to Oak 12 Website: www.fromacorntooak12.com or www.edwardseely.com. On the Home Page menu, select Chinese Translations and Marriage; see in particular the following essays:

a) "Guidelines for Selecting a Marriage Partner"
b) "Is Divorce Harmful to Children?"
c) "Is Cohabitation an Option for God's People?
d) "Sermon: Discerning God's Will Regarding Marriage"

2) Preach sermons and teach in other contexts on these subjects.

3) Offer Bible study classes and courses on historic Christian theology, such as *Basic Christianity*, to help people come to know who God, including Jesus Christ, is, what he is like, what his will is, and what he requires; essential aspects of human nature; how the Holy Spirit works in our lives; God's calling; what salvation

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means and involves; how to develop the mind of Christ; the need for the church and how it functions; and the hope we have only in Christ. Urge church members and friends to attend.

4) Teach my PPT, "Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity." In the Search bar of the PPT, type Marriage. Scroll through references to marriage. Use specific slides as resources for teaching many subjects.

5) Offer courses and weekend seminars on these marriage and divorce subjects, addressing the causes, painful realities, the future if changes do not occur, and Biblical and theological solutions pertaining to these issues.

6) Emphasize, as we discussed in this course, that a major reason why younger people are postponing marriage, or not marrying at all, is due to their observation of much marital discord, and they don't want that pain in their lives. Explain that sin is the constant factor in all human relationships, that no type of living arrangement will eliminate sin and the pain it brings, but that marriage in Christ offers by far the best means for doing so, because of the following:

a) Marriage is God's plan. It is the only male-female relationship involving sexual intimacy that God approves; all the others are various types of fornication and adultery that are contrary to, offend, and disobey God's will and that result in serious harm to people he loves.

b) While sin is not eliminated in this phase of life, sin is overcome by Christ who makes it manageable for his people through his Holy Spirit's sanctification in believers' lives, and marital commitment in Christ gives the greatest sense of peace, joy, and fulfillment in the marriage relationship, especially knowing that we have chosen the way of life that pleases God.

b. THERAPEUTIC: Christian education and pastoral counseling can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, overcome and change such behavior that is occurring.

1) Offer pastoral counseling.

2) Select from the THERAPEUTIC section in the preceding question those recommendations that apply to this question.

3. How to Solve the Church Problem of "Absent fathers in the family" – due to non-responsibility in the family for Men?

a. PREVENTIVE: Offer Christian education programs to help prevent such behavior. In addition to resources mentioned in the PREVENTIVE sections above, include the following:

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1) Teach the roles of males and females in children and youth ministries.
2) See, e.g., the document "Guidelines for Selecting a Marriage Partner" on the Marriage page of my Website.
3) Offer Bible study classes and courses on historic Christian theology, such as *Basic Christianity*, to help people come to know who God, including Jesus Christ, is, what he is like, what his will is, and what he requires; essential aspects of human nature; how the Holy Spirit works in our lives; God's calling; what salvation means and involves; how to develop the mind of Christ; the need for the church and how it functions; and the hope we have only in Christ. Urge church members and friends to attend.
4) Teach my PPT, "Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity." In the Search bar of the PPT, type the word male. Scroll through references to males. Use specific slides as resources for teaching many subjects.

b. THERAPEUTIC: Christian education and pastoral counseling, can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, facilitate the overcoming and changing of such behavior. Employ some of the following in your PREVENTIVE program.

1) Preach sermons and teach in other contexts the God-given identity of men and women, and how they complement each other, each completing what the other does not have. Explain the Hebrew כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (*kĕnegdô*), suitable; like his counterpart; literally, like his corresponding opposite, as God reveals in Genesis 2:18.

2) Offer a Parenting Course.

3) Establish and Maintain a Men's Ministry, which would include men's Bible study groups, classes, seminars, and retreats that would include the information in this section with a strong emphasis on male identity; spiritual, biological, and relational characteristics; strengths and vulnerabilities; calling, including leadership; love; and function.

4) Establish and Maintain a Women's Ministry, which would include women's Bible study groups, classes, seminars, and retreats that would include the information in this section with a strong emphasis on female and male identity; spiritual, biological, and relational characteristics; strengths and vulnerabilities; calling, including male leadership; love; and function.

5) Ask fathers to have a particular responsibility in the church ministries.

6) Urge married couples and families to have a daily time of devotions (Bible reading and prayer) together as a couple and as a family.

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7) Give exposure to men in the church who are older and wiser, who have a track record of being fine husbands and fathers, and who can be a role model, even a mentor, for younger men.

8) Offer a Grandparent Ministry. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 4:9 and related Bible passages pertaining to grandparents, such as Psalm 78:1-7; Proverbs 17:6; 2 Timothy 1:5.

4. The marriage Pharisee in the church. Everyone knows that their marriage has always been a problem. On the surface, the illusion of happiness is maintained. In fact, even the grandchildren know the truth. Even the pastor pretends it's all right.

   a. Talk with the pastor and explain how important it is to address these concerns. <u>In addition</u> to the applicable information provided on the above questions pertaining to marriage, consider the following as ways to address this question.

   b. Offer courses on marriage in the church's education program. For example, offer instruction on and resources for such subjects as the following:

      1) Keeping God, his Word, his will, and what pleases him, first in the marriage relationship (including agreeing to make pleasing God our greatest desire, objective, and accomplishment)
      2) What the Bible teaches about marriage
      3) Daily reading God's Word and praying together only to the triune God
      4) Daily developing the marriage relationship in love
      5) Listening skills
      6) Conflict resolution
      7) Regular encouragement to maintain marital commitment, that problems will always be a part of any relationship (that there is no such thing as "a perfect marriage" in a world where "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" [Romans 3:23]), and that problems can be worked through and overcome with God's help, directly in people's hearts and minds, in their souls, and through others in the church.
      8) Worshiping together as a couple and as a family with the church on a regular, at least weekly, basis
      9) Review the curriculum documents that were offered as part of this course.

   c. Teach my PPT, "Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity." In the Search bar of the PPT, type Marriage. Scroll through references to marriage.

   d. Teach *Basic Christianity* and include this matter in Anthropology.

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e. Pastoral care ministry
   1) Prayer
   2) Counseling
   3) Classes
   4) Encouragement and related aspects of the above subjects

5. Are there any special considerations in the design of children's (6-12 years old) ministry in which unbelieving parents and single-parents are involved?

   a. Include children of unbelieving parents and single parents along with other children in the ministries of the church applicable to their age range.

   b. Relate to such children with the same love and care you do for the covenant children of believers, and of those who have both a mother and dad in your church, but keep in mind that those whose parents are unbelievers and those who do not have an intact family have special needs. Always be sensitive to how they feel when talking about family matters. Ask the children of unbelievers to invite their parents to church activities.

   c. Be sure to teach them the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and *Basic Christianity*, the six loci, according to their level of understanding.

   d. Invite the children of unbelieving parents to the special course for all church children who are preparing to make confession of faith.

6. In addition to listening to children's narratives of parental quarrels and praying with the children, how to design a combined children's and pastoral ministry to teach and strengthen the function of the family?

   a. Use the curriculum development plan presented in this course, especially the essay, "Curriculum Development and Lesson Planning: For Teachers & for Teachers of Teachers," in particular my adaptation of Hilda Taba's model of curriculum and unit development that begins with an identification of the felt and unfelt needs of the learners for whom the educational ministry is designed, as we discussed in class.

   b. Offer classes explaining the Bible's teaching on marriage and family for all ages, according to their level of understanding.

   c. Offer *Basic Christianity* for all ages, according to their level of understanding, and include marriage and family conflict as illustrations of sin in the anthropology section. Be sure to include hope for overcoming conflict in the soteriology section when explaining sanctification.

   d. Invite all people, believers and unbelievers, to attend all Christian education and worship opportunities.

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e. Invite single parents to attend classes, courses, and other learning opportunities that are offered for all parents. Offer classes for single parents, who have unique needs.

7. What are the things to face, prepare and do for pastoral inheritance, handover?

   a. Recall the discussion on this subject in our course.
   b. See the PPT, "Leadership and Administration in the Church: Balancing Task Accomplishment and Caring" (at www.fromacorntooak12.com on the Chinese Translations page and on the Church Leadership and Administration page).

8. Are there methods to energize and promote a congregation that is stagnant, comfortable, and ignoring the Great Commission?

   a. Teach the *Basic Christianity* course.
   b. Teach the *Bible Digest* course (using both the PPT and the Notebook) that is on the Website at www.fromacorntooak12.com or www.edwardseely.com) on the Chinese Translations page and on the Christian Education page.
   c. Use the information in the research on the diffusion of innovations that was presented in the course and which is on the From Acorn to Oak Website.

9. How to help the worship team to grow on both the skill and spirituality.

   a. In addition to what we discussed about worship in this course, have the worship planning team meet regularly, and teach them about worship in the Bible and throughout church history, including Biblical principles of worship, including liturgy.

   b. Use my course, Worship: A Course on Worship in the Christian Church, which is on the Christian Worship page of my WordPress Website and on my academic Website. Keep checking the Website (www.edwardseely.com or www.fromacorntooak12.com). Look at such a teaching process as a long-term plan.

10. How to promote the church to help brothers and sisters become more involved in missions.

    a. Teach *Basic Christianity*; emphasize missions and Christian witness in the ecclesiology section.
    b. Teach and preach on the Bible's teaching about how to witness effectively.
    c. Hold mission festivals.
    d. In teaching, use such methods as reality practice role play.
    e. See the resources on my Website, including the links there to the related information on Jim Found's Website.

11. How does the church respond to social issues when Taiwan's political stance is clear - Two countries two systems?

    a. As teachers of God's Word, we sometimes have to speak prophetically, part of which pertains to pointing out and explaining how a current matter is inconsistent with

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God's Word and will. The whole world, all creation, belongs to God. As Abraham Kuyper, the famous and outstanding Dutch and Reformed theologian, journalist, and Prime Minister of the Netherlands, in his inaugural address at the dedication of the Free University in Amsterdam, which he founded, said in this frequent quote, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

God has called us to proclaim his Word and his will. All secular governments throughout the whole world make mistakes. The laws they sometimes make are imperfect and even wrong. At that point, we leaders in his church must speak up, for the sake of the church and for the society; this is the prophetic part of our office. Church people, especially, look to us for guidance. This is often not pleasant but necessary. God will help us, directly and through others.

Pertaining to the society and its culture, we must also keep in mind that for those who do not believe in, or ignore, God, they think the law is supreme. They believe that if something is law, then it is permissible and right to do, which of course is wrong from the Biblical perspective: many human laws are unjust. As we discussed in our course, there are two standards of evaluation: a criterion reference and a norm reference. The highest criterion is God, infinitely more so than all else. When God is ignored, the standard of evaluation in such people's minds becomes a norm reference: e.g., the opinions of peers and pubic mores on the horizontal level that are motivated more or less by human sinfulness. Many laws are counterproductive, and over time will produce more and more negative effects that will harm forthcoming generations, which effects must be mentioned. None of that is pleasing to God, and when he gives us the insight as to what is occurring and its likely outcome, our calling is to speak the truth, albeit in love (Ephesians 4:15), but to speak it.

b. When the social issue pertains to a matter that is addressed specifically in the Bible, such as marriage, divorce, fornication, or homosexuality, or to an issue where a Biblical principle applies, such as abortion, we who have been called to teach God's Word must do so, preaching on and teaching the relevant Bible passages and applying them as God would have us do in obedience to him.

c. When the social issue is political, Dr. Arthur DeKruyter, author of the book and course, *Basic Christianity*, has given some good advice. He wisely said, a basic principle in deciding such matters is this one: Where a matter is political in nature and where it is Biblically possible for fellow believers to hold contrary positions on the matter, it should not be addressed in the worship service. It is an educational matter.

d. One way such teaching is effectively done in an educational context is to make an announcement and publicize it in various ways that the issue will be discussed on a separate occasion. One example of such an announcement would be: for those who are interested in this issue, on Tuesday evening, March 3, at 19:30, a group will

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gather to discuss the matter at (this specified location). Such a discussion could include a panel with certain people who have special backgrounds pertaining to the issue. A pastor or Bible teacher should be one of the panel members and present the Biblical perspective on the matter. He or she should speak first in order to provide an advanced organizer for the rest of the discussion of the issue.

e. You could also publish an essay or a small book on the subject on your own, or on the church's, Website, as I have done on the Current Issues page of the From Acorn to Oak Website.

12. In the promotion of church ministry, very often after a Pastor is hired, the leaders of the church just let go and ask the pastor to take the full authority and responsibility. How can Pastor keep the enthusiasm and passion of church leaders to continue involving in the growth of church?

a. Include instruction on this matter in your adult education program. One resource is my PPT, "Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity." Present the especially relevant sections in Soteriology and Ecclesiology, the Biblical doctrines of salvation, including sanctification, and of the church, including in particular the parts pertaining to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the nature of the church, calling, mission, and organization.

b. See also the especially relevant parts of my PPT, "Leadership and Administration in the Church: Balancing Task Accomplishment and Caring."

c. Provide leadership education for current leaders and for new leaders as to what is expected of them, as revealed in the Bible and in historic Christian theology. For current leaders, such as the church board (the session or consistory in Presbyterian and Reformed churches), some of this education can be done in a segment of their regular meetings, for example during the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

d. Pray for these leaders. Also, pray with the leaders in their meetings, and periodically with the whole congregation during prayer in corporate worship and on other occasions, such as special prayer meetings, that the Lord raises up people for specific responsibilities who will serve him with joy and with enthusiasm!

13. How to help children who have been growing in the church to truly know God and grow strong in their faith but not abandon it? (Current status: Putting aside faith when they leave home for university study. Some may decide to believe Jesus in their old age.)

a. PREVENTIVE: Offer Christian education programs to help prevent such behavior. In addition to resources mentioned in class and in the PREVENTIVE sections above, include the following:

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1) See the From Acorn to Oak 12 Website: www.fromacorntooak12.com or www.edwardseely.com.

   a) On the Home Page menu, select Chinese Translations and/or Christian Theology

      - See the PowerPoint: "Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity." See in particular the Ecclesiology section.

   b) On the Home Page menu, select Christian Theology/Ecclesiology/What is the church, and how is God using it?

      1- "Empirical Benefits of Church Worship"

      2- "What is the church, and why should I attend?"

      3- "What is the church, and why should I join?"

2) Hold parenting classes, and inform parents of what they need to do, that should include the importance of doing the following:

   a) Personally obey God in their daily lives, thus providing a Biblically consistent, non-hypocritical, God-honoring, respectable, and winsome role model for their children.

   b) Help parents teach their children to do what educators call transfer of learning. As they go through the day and observe life issues and other matters with their children (e.g., news stories, gossip, bad jokes, filthy language, people doing and saying other things contrary to God's Word), parents have a golden opportunity to teach their children how what they just observed conflicts with God's Word and will—lessons they will remember and use from then on at related points in their lives.

      Also use positive behavior to teach children in daily life situations. In addition to using observations of negative acts to teach God's Word and will, look for and point out positive behaviors. Showing children examples of deeds that are consistent with God's Word and will, especially those done by Christians, are very important teaching aids. These real-life behaviors demonstrate how realistic obeying God is; how easy to do it is; how helpful it is; and they provide a model and encouragement for how do to so that will be remembered throughout life.

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c) Urge parents to include daily Bible reading and prayer, individually and as a family, in order to prepare their children for education in secular contexts so they will maintain and grow strong in their faith in and their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

1- In family daily devotional times, typically after supper or at bedtime, also include singing some of the great hymns of the faith with their rich and historic Christian theology and also newer popular songs, but be careful of both—especially of the latter—be sure the songs are consistent with the Bible and historic Christian theology. Too many newer songs lack theological and Biblical accuracy, depth, and meaningfulness, and too many are insufficient for facilitating the sanctification that will produce the maturity to overcome university and other secular influences, much less provide the information and strength to witness well for the Lord.

2- Singing sound (valid, free from error) historic hymns and sound newer songs is a very helpful way to employ the important affective (as well as cognitive) component in human learning. ***However, they must be carefully selected***! *Spend the time necessary to do so*, for they are powerful tools of instruction! Such music helps teach Biblical theology in powerful ways; in fact, some studies have shown that is how many, if not most, people have learned their theology. My professors used to say that the great Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, said, "Let others preach; let me write the music!"

- An important caveat: Older hymns must be examined vigilantly before being used or recommended, as well as the newer songs. Some older hymns, or at least one of the verses, should not be used or recommended. Fewer of the older hymns have Biblical or theological problems, because over time their flaws have been filtered—edited or eliminated—but some flaws have slipped through and remain. Newer songs are still going through that filtering process which church history provides, so they need more careful vigilance. Pastors, teachers, worship and other church leaders need to provide that vigilance, for the average lay person and parent is either incapable, unaware, or unwilling to do so.

d) Urge and help parents teach their children to be ***very careful*** in their choice of friends. (*op cit*.) Teach the parents their great need to monitor carefully those choices their children make. The children must choose as their ***best friends*** *only fellow believers, who are maturing in the Lord*, indicated by,

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e.g., voluntarily choosing to worship God regularly in a church that faithfully proclaims God's Word and obeying the Lord in their daily lives. (Cf., e.g., John 14:21.) Be friendly (i.e., loving, as Paul defines it in his first letter to the Corinthians, 13:4-7) to all, but don't choose as best friends unbelievers, or even believers who are stagnated in an early stage of the sanctification process and only thinking and acting as spiritual infants; neither are able to offer the wisest and most helpful model for living and opinions on which to rely. Only choose for best friends those who are fellow believers ***maturing in Christ***—those whom they allow to influence their thinking—those who in the sociological literature are referred to as one's reference group. This advice is applicable to adults as well as to children.

e) Teach parents to teach their children how to think critically, i.e., with discernment, how to evaluate which views they are exposed to, and the people expressing those views, not only in school but throughout their lives. Christian parents must teach their children how to determine which views are consistent with God's Word and, therefore, should be accepted ***and*** which views are contradictory to God's Word and, therefore, should be rejected.

f) Teach parents to teach their children to only consider marrying a fellow believer who is maturing in the Lord. For more information, including Bible text references, see the document mentioned above that is on my Website, "Guidelines for Selecting a Marriage Partner."

g) For other trustworthy resources on marriage and family, and in particular on the subject of this question, see the following:

1- Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk (https://www.drjamesdobson.org/)
2- Focus on the Family (https://www.focusonthefamily.com/)
3- Family Research Council (https://www.frc.org)

3) Establish and maintain a children's ministry. For Bible classes and courses, see the curriculum models I developed at Christ Church of Oak Brook (near Chicago, Illinois, USA) that were distributed as part of this course, as guides for church school planning.

4) Establish and maintain a youth ministry. For Bible classes and courses, see the curriculum models I developed at Christ Church of Oak Brook that were distributed as part of this course, as guides for church school planning.

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b. THERAPEUTIC: Christian education and pastoral counseling, can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, facilitate the overcoming and changing of such behavior. Employ some of the following also in your PREVENTIVE program.

1) Refer to our discussion of this subject in class, in particular pertaining to the Millennials, Gen Z, and younger adults and children.

2) Reach out to college students personally. Ways to do so should include the following as much as possible:

a) Communicate directly by text, email, personal notes, phone, Facetime, visits if possible, and when they are home at vacation breaks (individually and in a group).

b) Communicate indirectly through their parents, other relatives, and friends.

c) Encourage the students to meet regularly with other students who are Christians maturing in the faith. Urge them to worship together at least weekly, on or near campus, with a church faithfully proclaiming God's Word. Urge them to also daily read the Bible and pray.

3) Form a committee to be a ministry team that regularly prays for and also reaches out to college students, during the year and when they are at home.

- When they are home, e.g., at summer break, have fellowship meetings with food and a brief presentation/discussion on related topics, especially including their felt needs. Ask them what they would like to discuss in these times together. Be open to including all subjects of interest to them.

14. When there is a shortage of human, material, and financial resources, how can we help children of all ages beside accompanying them to do homework?

a. Offer a Christian education program conducted by volunteers. Use the Taba model for curriculum/lesson planning and program planning that I have modified for Christian education that we discussed in class, and which is mentioned above and is on the Chinese Translations and Christian Education pages of my Website, in the essay entitled, "Curriculum Development and Lesson Planning: For Teachers & for Teachers of Teachers."

b. Explore the possibility of a parents' group partnering to meet with children by subject. For example, those parents who have sufficient ability in math could tutor the children in math; those with skills in science could tutor in those subjects in which they are competent. The same could be done by those with skills in music art, and grammar. Visit local museums and other cultural centers, and while doing so, offer a commentary on what the children are viewing from a Biblical and theological perspective.

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c. Ask church school teachers to relate their Bible lessons to subjects the children are learning in school (one catalyst for such discussion would be to regularly ask the children to relate their lesson to their school subjects) and to make any relevant comparisons and contrasts.

d. Help parents to do the same as in section "c" above, by asking the children each evening at supper what they learned in school, and also to comment on subjects they are watching with their children on TV, or are observing with them elsewhere.

- Include this subject in parent classes and in special parent seminars. Teach parents the vital importance of spending time with their children and discussing these matters. For example, teach parents how to respond when they ask their child(ren): "What did you learn in school today?" and the children say, "Nothing." Don't let that response drop. Pursue it. The parents should know what the subject matter their children are studying is, and ask the children pointed questions, such as, "What did the teacher say today about your study of religion in ancient Egypt?" (or about the origin of the world, or about social issues, etc.—whatever in their course work could be in conflict with what the Bible and historic Christian theology teaches, or that could be a helpful illustration of what is in God's Word, or on which God's Word could give the children very important additional information.)

e. Ask older believers to lead church children and youth field trips to local historical sites. Ask them to lead church groups of children and their families to visit area museums. Invite friends. Consider follow-up sessions for further discussion.

f. Give opportunities to other believers to speak with children about their lives, what they've learned about life, and what life was like when they were growing up. Ask parents and children to invite these older believers to visit with them, e.g., as a special dinner guest, and to request they share from the abundant knowledge and wisdom they have.

15. How to design appropriate lesson plans for young children (2-4 years old) so that they can know Jesus systematically?

a. We need to keep in mind that human brain development is limited in logical thinking until the emergence of the stages Jean Piaget in his research referred to as concrete operational thought (ca. ages 7-11) and formal operational thought (ca. age 12 or the beginning of adolescence). In concrete operations (mental functioning), the child begins thinking logically but about concrete, i.e., specific, subjects, objects, people, and events. Formal operations include the ability to understand general ideas, the form of a concept, and not just the concrete, specific, limited aspects of it and reason accordingly. Piaget, and others whose research parallels his, found that formal operational thinking occurs at the time, and facilitates the

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development of, adolescence. Logical thinking is of course the cognitive framework of systematic theology.

However, prior to adolescence we can, and must, teach a lot about Jesus, and the related subjects in the six loci of historic Christian systematic theology that constitute the main themes throughout the Bible, the Word of God. It will just take until and into adolescence before the children can begin "putting all the pieces together" and formulating an understanding of historic Christian systematic theology. With this scientific understanding of human cognitive development, in all ages we can teach the basic information within each of the six loci, but, pertaining to the years you mentioned in this question, in the earliest years, we must use as many specific examples as we can.

As always, begin with the questions children raise and answer them briefly in ways they can understand and for as long as they have interest in talking about the subject. It is important to daily read the Bible, shorter passages in the children's early years, especially in translations and other versions children can understand, and pray with each child individually, such as at bedtime, and as a family, for example in a devotional time after supper. Those Bible passages will have aspects of each of the six loci in them. If your family has breakfast together, pray thanking God for your food and drink and asking him to help you please him, do well, and overcome any problems you encounter that day. Such experiences will be formative in the spiritual development of your child(ren).

On all occasions, look for an opportunity to work into conversations illustrations of how one or more of the six loci pertain to that conversation or experience. Whenever possible, use questions. Questions are especially effective in facilitating learning; notice how often Jesus used questions to teach. For example, on a beautiful starlit night with the moon glowing brightly, or when viewing a magnificent mountain valley, we can ask, "Did you ever wonder where all this beauty came from? Do you know? We read in the Bible, which God gave to us, that it is all from him. Isn't God's creation beautiful?" Another example would be to say, "In the Bible God teaches us that he is the one who gives us every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). Therefore, we always want to thank God for the good food and drink he has given us."

If you are watching the evening news and a story on a criminal activity is presented, you can say, "See, there is another example of what the Bible teaches about how bad sin is and why we should not disobey him." You can then ask, "Which of God's commandments did that person break?" Also, we can say to a child as we're leaving our home and locking the door, "Do you know why it's important for us to lock our doors when we're not at home? This is an example of how God's Word protects us, by informing us that all humans are sinful and that we should lock the doors to keep out those people who would want to enter when we're away and take valuable items from us or destroy our home." You can also teach little ones in this

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age range that "Just as children disobey their parents, we have all disobeyed our heavenly Father, who is perfect and will not allow into his presence people who have sinned, but thankfully because of his great and unending love, he sent Jesus to make it possible for us to be forgiven of our sins and sinfulness and to come to heaven and live with God and all his other forgiven and cleansed people."

At Christmas and Easter it's especially easy to talk about Jesus; however, each day we have countless other opportunities, e.g., closing a prayer in Jesus' name and then explaining that because we believe in Jesus and obey him, he hears our prayers. He also makes it possible for us to live with God forever. We can mention and explain that our faith (defined in Hebrews 11:1) comes because of the Holy Spirit working in us in our minds and hearts enabling us to believe and to grow in our understanding of God and our relationship with him. Explain that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all part of the one and only true God. Just like the sun has three distinct parts, the ball of fire, the light, and the heat and are all one and are acting at the same time, so also the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all one God and each working in specific ways.

As you participate in God's corporate worship with the church, you can explain a bit of how important the church is. It is the main way God lets the world know about him and his plans for all his creation, including how to be saved from their sins and have eternal life with him. It's through the church that God also helps people all over the world in other very important needs they have, e.g., for food, water, shelter. In those conversations, you can tell the children that because of sin, everyone will die, but those who believe in Jesus as their only Savior and Lord will live forever with him and all others who believe in him. Jesus will return, destroy all evil, and God will make a new heaven and a new earth with no more death, sadness, crying or pain. (Revelation 21:1-5)

Of course, these are only a few examples of how to teach children from two to four years old the basic content of the six loci. There is much else you can say, over time and on many different occasions, that they can understand; in so doing, you are teaching basic information about each of these six main themes of God's Word and providing a valuable foundation for their further learning. This would be a good class to offer in the church for parents and grandparents, the children's first and most important teachers. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; 4:9)

b. Use the curriculum planning information and the six loci of historic Christian systematic theology presented in this course (*Christian Education in the 21st Century*). Pertaining to the theology, present it in the simplified terms the children can understand at their age level as in the preceding examples.

c. Use the curriculum model from Christ Church of Oak Brook (near Chicago, Illinois, USA) that was distributed as part of this course, as a guide for church school planning.

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d. Since curriculum writing takes a long time, and since it is not the best use of your time to "reinvent the wheel," whenever possible, use a good Sunday School curriculum that is consistent with the Bible and historic Christian theology. Since most if not all published curricula employ only Level I and/or Level II objectives, you will likely have to modify the Level I and Level II objectives to make them Level III objectives. In addition, you may also need to add more Level III objectives.

e. Remember the axiom I mentioned in class: Use curriculum; don't let curriculum use you. As teachers called by God, directly in our minds and hearts and confirmed by the church, we must teach God's Word. The Bible can never be changed; it is the revealed Word of God, perfect, infallible, and without error. The authors of the Bible wrote with the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

However, curriculum materials, that are designed to help teach the Bible, are written by human beings who are fallible, not only in their understanding of God's Word but also in their methods of teaching it. Therefore, the Bible cannot be improved, but curriculum materials can be improved, and where they can be improved, they should be improved.

As teachers we are called to help our students increase our love for God and his Word, and properly interpret, understand, apply, and obey God's Word in our daily lives. Level III objectives can tell us how we and they are doing in accomplishing this calling.

16. How to plan a nurturing program for secondary schools, high schools and college second-generation Christian youth to grow a sound Biblical faith and spiritual experience?

a. One of the students, who was in our class, is already planning such a program. Ask for his input. [I included his name in this paper to the other students.]

b. See also my comments above and other resources offered in this course, e.g., my adaptation of Taba's model.

c. Use the curriculum models I developed and used at Christ Church of Oak Brook (near Chicago, Illinois, USA) that were distributed as part of this course, as guides for church school planning.

17. How to plan a Church school for the mixed-age children (5-12 years old) ?

a. Use the curriculum model I developed and used at Christ Church of Oak Brook (near Chicago, Illinois, USA) that was distributed as part of this course, as a guide for church school planning.

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b. Use a good Sunday School curriculum that is consistent with the Bible and historic Christian theology. Since most if not all published curricula employ only Level I and/or Level II objectives, you will likely have to modify the Level I and Level II objectives to make them Level III objectives. In addition, you may also need to add more Level III objectives.

c. See also comments above that apply to this question.

18. How to integrate the core Christian teaching (systematic theology) into preaching or discipleship training?

a. Recall our extensive discussion of this question in the section on the six loci in this course.

b. Teach people to teach the six loci of historic Christian systematic theology, which are very easily remembered and which they can teach in the following and other contexts:

1) In a five-minute witness to a non-Christian, where a summary of the main points of the Bible are presented in a logical manner

2) In a 20-minute or more sermon highlighting the main points of the Bible

3) In a 10-week course (e.g., *Basic Christianity*)

4) In a weekend seminar

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

1. See other resources on my Websites mentioned above, at either URL: on my general Website at www.fromacorntooak12.com or www.edwardseely.com and on my academic Website at https://seeyedward.academia.edu/.

2. All my Website resources are free. They may be downloaded, used, and shared at no cost.

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