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EDUCATING CHRISTIANLY: THE REIGN OF GOD
AS A PARADIGM FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by

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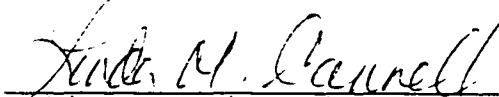
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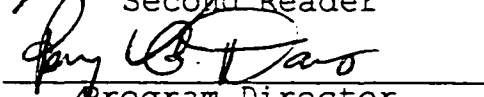
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ABSTRACT

This study contributes to the continuing discussion regarding Christian education's purpose, nature and identity. The research examines what understandings for Christian education's purpose, scope, context, process, participants, and timing the biblical motif of the reign of God suggests when it serves as a paradigm for educating Christianly.

The research concern addresses six matters: (1) the growing frustration over the crisis in Christian education, (2) the proffering of solutions which bring little resolution to the crisis, (3) the need for a guiding principle or paradigm to direct Christian education, (4) the recognition that the crisis involves an analysis problem, (5) the necessary role of theology in guiding Christian education, and (6) the growing awareness that the reign of God provides a direction for understanding Christian education's identity.

This study first examines the concept of *paradigm* and *paradigm change*, as expressed by Thomas S. Kuhn and elaborated by others in theology, religion, and the social sciences. Second, using the concept of *paradigm* as a framework for analysis, the crisis in Christian education is examined. A case is made that suggests Christian education's crisis is largely a paradigmatic one. Third, the shape of a

paradigm for Christian education is discussed, concluding that theology serves a paradigmatic role for guiding Christian education, and specifically that the biblical motif of the reign of God meets certain criteria, expressed by D. Campbell Wyckoff, for consideration as a viable paradigm. Fourth, a theology of the reign of God is presented focusing primarily on the theologies of George Eldon Ladd and Howard A. Snyder. Fifth, theological statements regarding the reign of God are juxtaposed with Wyckoff's six educational categories in order to draw implications for educating Christianly. Twenty-four implications are presented. Finally, it is concluded that the biblical motif of the reign of God effectively serves as a foundational paradigm to guide Christian education.

This study includes discussions concerning the influence of theology and social science upon Christian education and their interrelationship, as well as the role of educator as theologian.

Recommendations for further research are offered.

To Lynne, whose continual support and encouragement
enabled this to be a labor of love, and
to Heather and Hilary, whom I have
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CHAPTER 1
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

John Milton stated that education has a Christian purpose. "The end of learning is to repair the ruin of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, imitate him, to be like him" (Clark 1988, vii).¹ Morton Kelsey states that the goal of Christian education ". . . is to create the conditions wherein individuals, in all their complexity, may develop to their maximum potential, embodying as much of the Spirit of God as possible" and that this is the primary task for which the church exists (Kelsey 1977, 147). Within such a context the term "Christian" in Christian education is much more than an adjective describing a peculiar content. Christian education is an act; an act essential for the equipping of Christians to think and live Christianly, being salt and light in the world. To be educated Christianly is to act out the will of God in and through the routines of daily living. Such Christian living necessitates the acquiring of a specific worldview (Downs 1993, 146), which in turn provides the essential guideline for living. Biblical and theological disciplines

¹Quotation attributed to John Milton has no reference citation in text.

focus upon describing this worldview, but the development of such a worldview, so that thinking and action is congruent with such a worldview, is the task of Christian education.

Yet, Christian education has been struggling in effectively fulfilling this task; the typical ways the function of Christian education has been expressed in church and school are increasingly seen as ineffective and failing.² Educators are raising questions to address these concerns. How is Christian education to be understood? What is its purpose, its nature? What principles are to guide its practice? What foundations must it be built upon? What is necessary for Christian education so that it can educate Christianly? These questions grow out of the sense that something is not right in Christian education. Various

²In 1993 the Search Institute published *Rethinking Christian Education* which comprised responses from various educators to *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations*. This study involved over eleven thousand adults and youth in six U.S. Protestant denominations. The responders in the above mentioned volume focused on Christian education.

William Willimon in his chapter entitled "Pastors as Teachers," commented that

the research shows a vast need for more mature faith among our people. When tested for their levels of mature faith, using the criteria of the study, our people are indeed "like people without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). What is perhaps more disturbing, they have had such little exposure to Christian teaching that they do not even know how much they lack. They do not appear to set a high priority on their own need for Christian growth. Their faith is disturbingly limited to the subjective, the purely personal, and the vague. The need is there. (Willimon 1993, 51, in David S. Schuller, ed., *Rethinking Christian Education*)

responses to these questions are given, foundations are reexamined, educational philosophies are considered with the hope of uncovering a missing ingredient that will help set Christian education back on its proper course.

It would seem that such concentrated investigation would generate a clear response to the crisis, but such is not the case. Solutions are proffered, yet the nature of the crisis itself is unclear. Consequently, solutions are given in a vacuum.

In recognizing the crisis John Westerhoff states, "the church's educational problem rests not in its educational program, but in the paradigm or model which undergirds its educational ministry--the agreed-upon frame of reference which guides its educational efforts" (Westerhoff 1976, 6). In order for Christian educators to deal with the crisis it is important that they come to realize that Christian education's problem is largely a paradigmatic one. Yet in noting this, one comes to realize that Christian education's problem is a theological one as well because theology serves a paradigmatic function in Christian praxis. Therefore, not only should Christian education teach a worldview, but it ought itself to be shaped by such a worldview or paradigm.

It would seem that a clearer conception of the state of Christian education in crisis and an expressing of an adequate paradigm should be the basis for change in how Christian education is understood and carried out in the

educational ministry of the Church and within the theological school. Christian education would become more integratively connected with the Church's discipling and equipping ministry, helping persons to integrate faith and life more effectively. In the theological school Christian education would not be relegated to the Practical department, but seen as an integrative partner in preparing persons to do theology within the daily routines of life. Therefore, an analysis of the concept of paradigm and how it offers a framework for dealing with the state of crisis in Christian education is a vital first step before effective solutions can be offered.

Research Problem

Harold W. Burgess, in stating the continuing crisis in religious education, and by inference Christian education, argues that "one factor contributing to this perplexity concerning nature and purposes seems to be that no common methodology for analysis and synthesis has been fully established" (Burgess 1996, 14). Though this is not the only problem, Burgess does provide an important beginning point in addressing the crisis in Christian education.

As Christian education uncovers its crisis, it must also move beyond its crisis. Robert R. Drovdahl suggests that Christian education must seek a settledness by beginning to function paradigmatically--". . . [to] possess a dominant and widely accepted framework guiding its activity" (Drovdahl 1991, 7). Therefore, Christian education must begin with

developing a methodology for analysis and then build on that analysis in presenting a framework or paradigm that is able to guide its activity.

This study seeks to contribute to the continuing discussion regarding Christian education's purpose, nature and identity by addressing both of these issues. First, it seeks to understand more clearly the state of crisis in Christian education by focusing on the concept of *paradigm* and *paradigm change*, particularly as presented by Thomas S. Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962, 1970, 1996), as a methodology for analysis. Second, by building on an understanding of the concept of *paradigm* and an analysis of the crisis state in Christian education, this study further concentrates on demonstrating how a theology of the biblical motif of the reign of God effectively serves as a foundational paradigm to guide Christian education in understanding its purpose, nature and identity so that it can effectively educate Christianly. Therefore, the focus of the research problem is to examine what understandings for Christian education's purpose, scope, context, process, participants, and timing the biblical motif of the reign of God suggests when it serves as a paradigm for educating Christianly.

Research Concern

Religious education and Christian education have always struggled with the expression of their identity and purpose. The crisis in religious and Christian education has

been ongoing. The 60s and 70s were filled with religious educators wrestling with foundational questions; however, as Burgess noted in 1996, little progress has been made because religious educators still have difficulty in expressing the nature of religious education (Burgess 1996, 14).

Whereas the 1960s and 1970s revealed this crisis of identity and purpose within religious education,³ Christian education has received much more serious attention, notably since the mid-1980s, because evangelical educators are emphasizing the uniqueness of Christian education in contrast to the more broad and pluralistic discipline of religious education.

The research concern addresses six matters. These are (1) the growing awareness and frustration over the crisis in Christian education, (2) the proffering of solutions which bring little resolution to the crisis, (3) the need for a guiding principle or paradigm to direct Christian education, (4) the recognition that the crisis involves an analysis problem, (5) the necessary role of theology in guiding

³See especially the papers of the 1967 symposium on "Religious Education As A Discipline" in *Religious Education* 62, no.5 (September-October 1967): 387-430. D. Campbell Wyckoff and others attempted to give structure to a definition of religious education. See also the articles by John Westerhoff entitled "A Discipline In Crisis," *Religious Education* 74, no.1 (January-February 1979): 7-15, by Kiernan Scott entitled "Three Traditions of Religious Education," *Religious Education* 79, no. 3 (Summer 1984):323-339, and by Cora Marie Dubitsky entitled "Religious Education: Profession and Academic Discipline." *Religious Education* 84, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 273-282.

Christian education, and (6) the growing number of educators recognizing that the kingdom or reign of God provides a direction for understanding Christian education's identity.

The State of Crisis in Christian Education

All too often confusion is expressed, within both church and theological school settings, regarding the principles which are to guide Christian education's practice, and give it identity. Ted Ward, two decades ago, reflected upon the problem inherent in the present practice of Christian education. In stating "Christian education is neither," Ward sought to introduce his ". . . twin complaints that Christian education, as a field and as a largely seat-of-the-pants occupational practice, was neither a good example of *education* nor of *Christian*, as a descriptor of education" (Ward 1997).

Jim Wilhoit supports the concern that Christian education is in crisis; as a discipline it ". . . is not doing what it is supposed to do" (Wilhoit 1986, 9). He suggests that many directors of Christian education have settled for methodologies rather than discerning purpose and thereby reduce Christian education to mere technique. It is this ". . . current focus on the urgent and the immediately relevant [which] has too often deprived Christian educators of a needed sense of direction" (Wilhoit 1986, 10).

Westerhoff is ". . . convinced that the very foundations upon which we engage in Christian education are shaking" (Westerhoff 1976, 6). The root of the problem, in

his opinion, is that Christian education has been functioning under a schooling-instructional paradigm, meaning, "our image of education has been founded upon some sort of a 'school' as the context and some form of instruction as the means" (Westerhoff 1976, 6). However, he contends that there is a dearth of effective structures for overcoming this crisis.

Robert W. Pazmiño also recognizes the existence of a crisis but is more comfortable with its presence. He suggests that the nature of Christian education is such that it lacks a ". . . framework or concept that serves to guide all thought and practice" (Pazmiño 1988, 13). Rather than search for a consensus amongst educators, Pazmiño advocates that each generation of Christian educators reconsider the foundational questions in order to remain faithful to the gospel (Pazmiño 1988, 14).

Many Christian educators recognize that their discipline is in a state of crisis, yet as long as the reasons for the crisis remain unexamined, the crisis will only be perpetuated. Christian educators will struggle for decades, as religious educators have, in being unable to give adequate identity to Christian education.

Solutions Bring Little Resolution

In response to the crisis, many Christian educators have been diligent in offering solutions, while others have often sought quick remedies. For example, Westerhoff, Lawrence Richards, and Pazmiño present carefully expressed

considerations in attempting to deal with the issues inherent in Christian education's crisis. In response to schooling approaches, Westerhoff suggests enculturation in the context of a faith community (Westerhoff 1976), and Richards offers a theology of Christian education which grows out of an understanding of the church (Richards 1975); Pazmiño offers a careful reexamination of foundational issues (Pazmiño 1988). Yet, other educators, drawing on insights from various theologies and philosophies, the social sciences, and general educational theory, have sought to proffer theological or secular educational paradigms for adaptation into Christian education. Yet, uncritical adaptation of paradigms or models can raise more problems than it solves (Lamport 1988, 39).

Though many proposals provide theological and social scientific insights useful for understanding Christian education, they have not necessarily been able to provide solutions which are comprehensive enough to deal with the problems, nor have they been able to garner consensus. Though solutions are necessary, educators must come to recognize that offering solutions is not the place to begin in dealing with the crisis. Rather, the beginning place must be in dealing with the *why* of the crisis, before a *what* is proposed. As long as such an analysis is delayed Christian education will struggle with being effectual.

The Need for a Paradigm to Guide
Christian Education

Though the necessary process of adequately framing the state of Christian education in crisis is often overlooked, there is an awareness of the need for a paradigm to direct Christian education or a guiding principle. Westerhoff noted that "every field of endeavor operates out of some frame of reference or identity" (Westerhoff 1976, 6). This frame of reference, or paradigm, ". . . guides our work, helps shape our questions, and provides us with insights for solutions to our problems" (Westerhoff 1976, 6).

Though Pazmiño initially expressed comfort with the ambiguity of Christian education, and its pre-paradigmatic character, meaning that it has no paradigm to guide its practices, he nonetheless challenges Christian educators ". . . to develop an integrated understanding of Christian education that will guide practice" (Pazmiño 1988, 14). Pazmiño reiterated this view in *Principles and Practices of Christian Education* stating a ". . . pursuit of a framework for Christian education is to be affirmed" (Pazmiño 1992, 10). However, the framework he advocates is more of a structure for thinking about educational issues, than it is a paradigm for guiding Christian education. More recently, Pazmiño advocated the need for a new paradigm by outlining factors which a new paradigm needs to embrace (Pazmiño 1994, 102-103).

Other voices in the face of the crisis echo the need for Christian education to be guided by a Christian philosophy

or worldview. Drovdahl argues for a settledness in Christian education and asks the question as to "what is required for Christian education to function paradigmatically and possess a dominant and widely accepted framework guiding its activity?" (Drovdahl 1991, 7).⁴ Likewise, Charles H. Nichols calls for an in-depth ". . . look at our philosophical foundations for Christian education" if it is ever to have an impact in the next century (Nichols 1991, 17), and George R. Knight advocates the need for a Christian philosophy to drive the practice of Christian education (Knight 1989, 151-152). Christian educators seem to be seeking a guiding principle for Christian education upon which there can be consensus.

D. Campbell Wyckoff recognized the need for such a consensus years ago by suggesting that education be built upon the clear articulation of a guiding principle. Though he did not utilize the term paradigm, his description of the function of a guiding principle is similar to that of a paradigm. He stated that a guiding principle gives direction to philosophical beliefs; it is the perspective or worldview upon which philosophical beliefs are built. Wyckoff related that a guiding principle is necessary in order to ". . . make the particular thrust of Christian education evident" (Wyckoff 1959, 86). He stated

⁴However, as is too often the case, his article focuses upon expressing a solution rather than seeking to analyze the crisis adequately.

. . . that the guiding principle would suggest, infuse, and steer the whole matter: it would be at the heart of the setting of objectives; it would guide and check every procedure and method employed in the curriculum; it would serve as a guide to the selection of curriculum content; it would suggest how Christian education should be set up, run, and improved; it would serve as a guide to pruning out any administrative system and device that was not really germane to the church's faith, life, and work. (Wyckoff 1959, 86)

He further noted that the guiding principle is the focus for other principles and it is the ". . . means by which educational and theological insights become translated into practice" (Wyckoff 1959, 87). For Wyckoff this guiding principle for Christian education is clearly the Gospel (Wyckoff 1959, 92).

Educators are setting the stage for reasoned discussion about an integrated understanding of education that is Christian. However, the progress is slow and the voices are far from united; the timing is right to focus upon a clearer understanding of the concept of *paradigm*.

An Analysis Problem

Burgess suggests that a common category system is needed to guide analysis (Burgess 1996, 19). Yet, Burgess' approach does not go far enough in dealing with an analysis of Christian education in its present state of crisis. The categories presented are more relevant for deriving implications from an underlying paradigm, rather than defining the problems inherent in the crisis. Another kind of methodology for analysis is needed.

Indeed, what is needed is a framework which can get at understanding Christian education in its state of crisis. Such a framework is proposed in this study--the concept of paradigm. The concept of paradigm can help educators by giving a way of thinking and analyzing what is going on in Christian education in the midst of its crisis. It is helpful because it provides a construct, or map, for guiding the discipline forward through its period of crisis. It helps educators to organize their assessments and ideas concerning their work.

Kuhn's concept of paradigm (1962), and its developments--disciplinary matrix (1969), and theory and theory choice (1977), along with insights from Kuhn's critics and others, provide direction for a framework for analysis. However, since Christian education can be considered a theological discipline (cf. Wyckoff 1967, 392), this analysis must also give attention to the role of theology.

The Role of Theology

Westerhoff insightfully remarks that ". . . a new paradigm cannot be created in a vacuum. Christian education is dependent upon theological underpinnings, a fact we have forgotten on occasion" (Westerhoff 1976, 24). Wyckoff noted in describing the characteristics of an adequate guiding principle or paradigm for Christian education that it needed to be theologically adequate (Wyckoff 1959, 87). Also, Nichols in articulating the need for Christian philosophy to

guide Christian education highlights the necessary role of theology in developing a guiding principle or paradigm. He remarks, ". . . all people have a set of presuppositions or assumptions, ideas which they believe are true but difficult to prove. . . . For those of us in Christian education, we call our presuppositions *theology*" (Nichols 1991, 19).

However, he indicates that the problem in Christian education ". . . is that many Christian educators, while believing in a Christian set of presuppositions (theology), operate on the presuppositions of secular thinking" (Nichols 1991, 19).

Therefore, as educators are involved in the task of analysis and synthesis in Christian education, there is a need to take theology seriously and to engage in the theologizing task. Yet this is often overlooked by Christian educators, leaving the task of theology to theologians. Wyckoff remarked that ". . . some Christian educators . . . have used non-theological studies of education as ways of guiding Christian Education while avoiding critical theological discussion" (Wyckoff 1995, 13).

Expressing a clear purpose for Christian education involves theological reflection. Wilhoit has stated:

Many educators have . . . failed to grasp the central role that theology inevitably possesses in Christian Education. Theology is central not only because it is the content of Christian Education . . . , but also because it most directly deals with the presuppositions laying behind Christian education programs. (Wilhoit 1986, 27)

However, preconstructed theological systems cannot simply be applied to Christian education. Rather, the further step of fleshing out a biblical paradigm needs to be taken. Also, theologizing cannot be haphazard; it must also be properly connected to educational theory.

Randolph Crump Miller gives articulation to the role of theology in the task of Christian education. He states:

The clue to Christian education is the rediscovery of a relevant theology which will bridge the gap between content and method, providing the background and perspective of Christian truth by which the best methods and content will be used as tools to bring the learners into right relationship with the living God who is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. . . . (Miller 1950, 15)

By this Miller means that theology becomes a tool for the effective development of an educational approach that is Christian. Not only is Christian education's task to teach theology, ". . . but [also] to use theology as the basic tool for bringing learners into right relationship with God" (Miller 1950, 6). Theology provides perspective for Christian education, as well as for all other disciplines.

The Focus on a Biblical Paradigm
--The Reign of God

Though Christian educators have contributed much to the ongoing development of Christian education by proposing a number of theological and social scientifically driven solutions, they have not developed a sufficient theologically adequate guiding principle or paradigm which is comprehensive enough for Christian education because they lack a perspective

which the concept of *paradigm* provides. Wyckoff, in 1959, began to uncover the shape of such a paradigm by stating that the only adequate guiding principle for Christian education is the Gospel (Wyckoff 1959, 92). However, it is more accurate to express the Gospel as the Gospel of the kingdom, for in this manner the evangelists clearly expressed and understood Gospel.⁵

It seems that Christian educators have left the Gospel, which underlies an understanding of Christian education, largely unexamined. The problem is not that the Gospel is denied, rather that the Gospel is left unexamined in relation to giving direction to Christian education's practice and identity. What is not so clear is how it is to be understood and how it is to be applied to Christian education beyond the mere providing of content. This is a critical oversight, which, as demonstrated in this study, is the clue for discovering and understanding the guiding principle or paradigm for Christian education.

Though differing educational paradigms offer valuable insights for the doing of Christian education, they do not directly aid in helping Christian education find a unique identity which embraces its theological and social

⁵Robert H. Mounce states that the word for Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) is used only by Matthew and Mark, though Luke had an understanding of it. He notes that "in all but one instance Matthew . . . describes *euangelion* as the gospel 'of the kingdom,'" and to which Mark refers to as the "gospel of God" though ". . . many manuscripts read 'the gospel of the kingdom of God'" (Mounce 1984, 473).

scientific natures. They do reveal that Christian education awkwardly acts as a hybrid discipline, a discipline influenced by the social sciences, which gathers insights from other educational agendas and somehow Christianizes them vis-à-vis the Gospel. In the presence of this hybridization of Christian education, there is a need to hear once again Lois LeBar's caveat that the search for what is to guide Christian education must find a point of focus that can be directly attributed to Scripture, rather than pursuing each new trend proffered by the latest educational agenda.

A chief reason for the lack of life and power and reality in our evangelical teaching is that we have been content to borrow man-made systems of education instead of discovering God's system. Secular educators do not give central place to the unique revelation of God's Word that is communicated by God's Spirit. Our distinctive content calls for distinctive treatment. (LeBar 1958, 19)

A growing number of Christian educators have in essence heeded LeBar's concern by focusing on the biblical motif of the kingdom or reign of God as the central message of Christ's ministry and the Gospel, suggesting that it be considered as a metaparadigm, or foundational paradigm, for understanding the nature and purpose of Christian education. A growing body of literature focuses on the interrelationship between the reign of God and Christian education. Thomas H. Groome in *Christian Religious Education and Sharing Faith* proposes that the reign of God ". . . best expresses the overarching telos of being Christian and thus evokes the *metapurpose* of Christian religious education . . ." (Groome

1991, 14). He indicates that "it provides the ultimate hermeneutical principle for what to teach from the tradition, the primary guideline for how to teach it, and the direction of its politics" (Groome 1991, 14). Though Groome gives credence to the reign of God as the metapurpose for Christian education, he nonetheless gives greater focus to those tasks which he recognizes as ". . . more immediate and interrelated pedagogical tasks of educating, by God's grace, for lived Christian faith and for the wholeness of human freedom that is fullness of life for all" (Groome 1991, 14). For Groome the reign of God represents a guiding principle for education; however, Groome's focus in relation to the reign of God involves preparing people to be agents for the reign of God, rather than attempting to draw out educational implications which are more comprehensively founded on the reign of God as an educational paradigm.

Others have joined Groome in considering the reign of God as a vital paradigm for Christian education. Francoise Darcy-Berube asserts that the reign of God is at the heart of Christian ministry and education and needs to be recognized as the dominant image (Darcy-Berube 1995, 22-28). Graeme Goldsworthy offers the reign of God as educational curriculum. He perceives that "the kingdom structure provides one way for understanding the unity of the Bible within its diversity" (Goldsworthy 1983, 50). Daniel S. Schipani points to the centrality of the reign of God as a guiding principle for

Christian education because ". . . the pertinence of the Kingdom message and expectation of the coming Kingdom are essential to help us recapture the whole biblical thrust" (Schipani 1984, 87). Doug C. Brewer argues for considering the reign of God as a paradigm for Christian education because it has become a prominent theme within the Christian community since the mid-1970s (Brewer 1990, 41). However, he limits his discussion to proposing the reign of God as a motif, rather than actually developing implications for education. He concludes stating:

Thus, the concept of the kingdom of God presents today's Christian educator with both great *potential* and significant *problems*. On the one hand, the kingdom "seems to provide a unique framework into which one may fit both biblical and modern concerns"; Ron Sider is "more certain today than ever that this is the biblical vision and practice that the church everywhere desperately needs." However, with various Christian groups currently making such diverse claims about it, the church also needs to develop a more unified understanding of what the kingdom of God means, and how it applies in the present, before this potential can be realised. (Brewer 1990, 51)

Further, Darwin K. Glassford, in 1991, expressed that the Reformed doctrine of the kingdom of God provides an understanding for developing a philosophy of Christian education, because the reign of God was a central theme in Jesus' teaching (Glassford 1991, 5-6). However, his discussion of the reign of God is not focused enough and does not deal adequately with the tensions inherent in its understanding.

These proposals represent, more or less, the extent to which the Gospel of the kingdom or reign of God has been examined in relation to understanding the task of educating Christianly. Brewer laments that, though the kingdom or reign of God is prevalent in evangelical circles, very few juxtapose the reign of God with education (Brewer 1990, 42).

Indeed, the kingdom or reign of God as a paradigm for Christian education deserves serious consideration. Not only do a growing number of educators believe that it could define the purpose and nature of Christian education, but also, the theme of the reign of God has been central to the theological task of both mainline and evangelical theology in the twentieth century. Stanley J. Grenz notes that the theme of the reign of God ". . . has been directly influential as the integrative motif for several theological proposals and indirectly important as the underlying theme behind several theological movements . . ." (Grenz 1992a, 11). Jürgen Moltmann argues the centrality of the reign of God for theology when he states, "Whoever becomes involved with Jesus, becomes involved with the *Kingdom of God*. It is inescapably so, because the concern of *Jesus* was and is the *Kingdom of God*" (Moltmann 1993, 5).

Moltmann's assertion makes clear that the most important reason that the motif of the reign of God needs to be considered in relation to Christian education is that the message of the Gospel of the kingdom or reign of God was, and

is central to the understanding of Jesus and his ministry. George Eldon Ladd asserted that "modern scholarship is quite unanimous in the opinion that the Kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus" (Ladd 1974, 57). Howard Snyder agrees that the reign of God is a central biblical theme but adds that ". . . it can be understood in very different ways" (Snyder 1993, 1). Leonhold Goppelt expresses that "everything else is related to [the reign of God] and radiates from it" (Goppelt 1981, 43). The phrases *basileia tou theou*--"Kingdom of God" and *basileia ton ouranon*--"Kingdom of heaven" occur numerous times in the New Testament writings, primarily in the Gospels where they are used exclusively in relation to Christ's ministry. Therefore, it becomes evident that the biblical theme of the kingdom of God--or God's reign--is a central motif in understanding Christ and his ministry on earth. Since Christian education has at its center the person of Christ, it can be argued that the theme of the reign of God has central significance for understanding Christian education as well.

Research Procedure and Outline

In having outlined, above, the present crisis in Christian education, the need for a new paradigm, and the presentation of the motif of the reign of God as a promising paradigm, this study proceeds employing a five step procedure.

Chapter two examines the concept of paradigm and cognate concepts such as paradigm change, disciplinary matrix,

and theory choice as expressed by Kuhn, his critics, and others who have utilized Kuhnian insights in non-scientific fields. Specific questions to be addressed are (a) How are the concepts of paradigm and paradigm change and related concepts to be understood as delineated by Kuhn and others? (b) What are the characteristics of paradigm relevant to this study?

Chapter three focuses upon the significance of the paradigm concept for Christian education. Specific questions to be addressed are (a) What significance does the concept of paradigm have for Christian education? (b) Using the concept of paradigm as a framework for analysis, how can the present state of Christian education be defined? (c) What is the shape of Christian education in a time of crisis?

Chapter four investigates the motif of the reign of God as a promising foundational paradigm for Christian education. The role of theology will be discussed in relation to the concept of paradigm and the crisis in Christian education. Out of this juxtaposition the argument is made that an adequate paradigm for Christian education requires a biblical and theological paradigm, to which the motif of the reign of God is presented as the most promising candidate. Specific questions to be addressed are (a) What is the relationship of theology to the concept of paradigm and Christian education? (b) Why the reign of God? How is this

biblical motif significant in relation to the discussion of paradigm and theology?

Chapter five examines the reign of God. Specific questions to be addressed are (a) How is the reign of God to be interpreted? What are the interpretive tensions in understanding the reign of God? (b) What insights of Snyder and Ladd and others assist in understanding the motif of the reign of God in relation to the interpretive tensions? (c) What statements can be made which describe an understanding of the reign of God useful for Christian education?

Chapter six investigates what the understanding of the motif of the reign of God suggests for Christian education and educating Christianly. Wyckoff's six educational categories of purpose, scope, content, process, participants and timing will be utilized as a framework for deriving implications. Specific questions addressed are (a) How are implications to be drawn from an understanding of the reign of God? (b) What are Wyckoff's six categories? (c) What does each statement of the reign of God suggest for each of Wyckoff's categories in relation to Christian education?

Chapter seven restates the purpose of this study, summarizes the conclusions of the various chapters and evaluates the relevance of the motif of the reign of God as a paradigm for educating Christianly.

Assumptions, Terms, and Delimitations

In this section a number of assumptions, terms, preliminary definitions and limitations are described.

Christian Education and Religious Education

Often religious education and Christian education are used interchangeably by educators but a more careful distinction needs to be made. Darcy-Berube has questioned the validity of using the terms Christian education and religious education interchangeably citing that Christian education has too many limited or negative overtones (Darcy-Berube 1978, 121). Also, Wyckoff has noted that Christian education has a unique focus and must be viewed as a theological discipline because it deals with God's self-disclosure through revelation (Wyckoff 1967, 391).

James Michael Lee makes a good distinction between religious education and Christian education in expressing that "religious education is nonconfessional in nature; it specifies only that mode of education whose outcomes are perceived to be generically related to the divine" (Lee 1978, 41). On the other hand, he states

Christian education is that mode of religious education whose outcomes are perceived to be behaviors . . . as being either (1) specifically and distinctly Christian, or (2) congruent or compatible with Christianity. (Lee 1978, 42)

Though Wyckoff would claim that Christian education sharpens religious education, other religious educators regard Christian education as a specialized theological subcategory

with a unique subject matter. Religious education is indeed more broad and pluralistic--able to be applied to all religions, whereas, Christian education has a specific theological focus and is the purview of Protestantism and Catholicism. This study will confine itself to dealing with Christian education, though useful insights can be culled from discussions within religious education.

Educating Christianly

In using the term "Christian" as an adverb rather than an adjective the intention is to talk about the act of Christian education in a dynamic sense. The term "Christian" is most often used in connection with nouns such as education, spirituality and so on, however, since Christian living is a dynamic affair, Stott has associated the term with verbal forms, hence "Christianly" (Stott 1984, 73; cf. also Downs 1994, 66; Gaede 1985, 19). Therefore, in this study in depicting the dynamic nature of education, it will be referred to as "educating Christianly."

Paradigm

Darcy-Berube presents a short definition.

"Paradigms are the lens through which we view the world. They are the mental framework we impose on our perceptions in order to give them coherence and make sense of them" (Darcy-Berube 1995, 14-15, citing Robert Humphrey 1993, *Catechetical Renewal*

Network). Westerhoff provides a brief synopsis which further captures the idea expressed in the term *paradigm*.

Every field of endeavor operates out of some common frame of reference or identity. Most often we take this orientation for granted; it guides our work, helps shape our questions, and provides us with insights for solutions to our problems. The paradigm within which we labor tells us what to do and provides us with a language to share our efforts with others. (Westerhoff 1976, 6)

As will be evident, these definitions of the term *paradigm* are largely dependent on the work of Kuhn and his interaction with his critics.

Reign of God

The terms "reign of God" and "kingdom of God" are used interchangeably in this study, though for some theologians they represent two different understandings of the concept. The basic meaning attributed to this concept in this study is that which refers to the rule of God, or God's reign being made manifest. Ladd stated that the kingdom of God ". . . means primarily the rule of God, the divine kingly authority" (Ladd 1984, 608). He further states that in the New Testament "the kingdom of God is the divine authority and rule given by the Father to the Son," and "Christ will exercise this rule until he has subdued all that is hostile to God" (Ladd 1984, 608). In this sense "reign of God" will be interpreted and presented as a paradigm for educating Christianly.

Interpretive Tensions in Relation
to the Reign of God

Snyder presents six interpretive tensions or polarities which exist in understanding the kingdom or reign of God. These tensions or polarities are (1) Present versus future, (2) Individual versus social, (3) Spirit versus matter, (4) Gradual versus climactic, (5) Divine action versus human action, and (6) The Church's relation to the kingdom in terms of whether the Church and the kingdom are the same or different (Snyder 1991, 16-17). For the sake of this study, three of the six tensions will be examined in presenting the reign of God as a paradigm for educating Christianly. These three tensions, which are at the fore of much current discussion are (1) Present versus future, (2) Divine action versus human action, and (3) Individual versus social.

Though each tension is of importance, these three were selected for the following reasons. The present versus future tension has been at the forefront of New Testament scholarly debate since Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, at the turn of the century, focused on the apocalyptic element in Jesus' teaching. Ladd noted that though there is consensus in understanding the reign of God as both present and future, ". . . the relationship between the present and future aspects of the Kingdom continue to be vigorously debated" (Ladd 1974a, 3). It is this perennial concern over this tension which marks its consideration as important for this study.

The divine action versus human action tension is one that is connected closely with the current discussions of Christian social ethics and liberation theology. Modern theology, in attempting ". . . to grasp the implications of a sovereign God for Christian life" (Chapman 1993, 142) has focused upon ". . . the positive function of human activity" (Chapman 1993, 143). Liberation theologies have embraced this relationship between God's sovereignty and human action in prescribing a Christian social ethic. Such a social ethic focuses upon God being in relationship with humanity and the world in dynamic relationship with God (Chapman 1993, 143). This tension in understanding the reign of God marks it as a vital one for study.

The individual versus social tension is one that captures the history of fundamentalism and evangelicalism in the twentieth century. In the first three decades of this century the progress of the Evangelical Awakening of the eighteenth century was halted. The rise of premillennialism fostered a narrower individual focus concerning spirituality to the neglect of the Christianity's social responsibility (Bosch 1991, 403-404). Change within evangelicalism came through the catalytic writings of Carl F. H. Henry, the *Wheaton Declaration* (1966), and the July 1974 *International Congress on World Evangelization* in Lausanne in which the focus of evangelism, which had been connected with a more individual focus, was connected with Christian social

responsibility. The relationship between evangelism and individual spirituality and social responsibility was further strengthened in 1982 through the *Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility* in Grand Rapids (Stott 1984, 28-30). Yet, for a number of evangelicals, the tension of individual or social is one that still remains. The reign of God has largely to do with God ruling in their own individual lives and less focus is given to a grander cosmic perspective which embraces the larger social perspective. Individual responsibility for discipleship and holiness is fostered, rather than regarding personal responsibility for spirituality within a social or societal context. Snyder notes that it is such "individualistic conceptions of the kingdom [which] can undercut the transforming power of the kingdom both in the church and in society" (Snyder 1991, 55). It is this concern for evangelical Christians to maintain a mutual focus on individual spirituality and social responsibility which denotes this tension as important.

Primary Focus on George Eldon Ladd
and Howard Snyder

In developing understandings regarding the reign of God, this study focuses on the theologies of the kingdom as discussed by Ladd and Snyder. Both represent an evangelical perspective and bring a comprehensive perspective, though by no means agreeing in every particular. However, other

evangelical and non-evangelical voices, such as Moltmann's, who are significant theologians of the kingdom, will be brought into the discussion to shed light on issues raised by Ladd and Snyder.

A Note on Inclusive Language

This study is written using gender inclusive language. Quotations will, however, be in the form they were originally published. In using gender inclusive language, the use of "him or her" is cumbersome and so the terms *they*, *their*, or *them* will be used to refer to an indefinite singular pronoun. The basis for this usage is cited in Groome's *Sharing Faith* (1991).

The National Council of Teachers of English now permits use of *they*, *their*, or *them* to refer to an indefinite singular pronoun--a return to the practice of medieval English. Contrary to how we were taught, instead of "Everyone knows he is to decide for himself," it is now grammatically acceptable to say, "Everyone knows they are to decide for themselves." . . . (Groome 1991, 4)

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF PARADIGM

Thomas S. Kuhn's concept of paradigm has affected the scientific field and other disciplines which have adapted his insights and those of his critics in understanding their practices. Yet, as Gary Gutting notes,

. . . there is need for a great deal of work on the extension of Kuhnian ideas to the analysis of non-scientific communities. It is here more than anywhere else that the power of Kuhn's thought still remains untapped. (Gutting 1980, 19)

Through an analysis of the history of science, Kuhn observed that normal science is practiced in accordance with a certain set of commonly held beliefs and that changes or revolutions in scientific discovery came about only through seeing things in different ways, in short, through shifts in paradigms.

Some Christian educators have suggested a new paradigm for Christian education or have utilized the language of paradigm only to set it aside. For example, Drov Dahl states that the paradigm of "meaning making" is helpful for resolving the issues in Christian education inherent in its crisis (Drov Dahl 1991), while Pazmiño states that Christian education is preparadigmatic, having no paradigm (Pazmiño 1988, 13). However, these suggestions or conclusions are premature. Christian educators have not taken into full

account the richness of the concept of *paradigm* and *paradigm change* in addressing the present crisis state in Christian education.

That such a close examination could prove fruitful is evidenced within the discipline of theology through the published papers of a symposium held in Tübingen in 1989. This collection of essays focuses upon and discusses paradigm change in theology.¹ In contrast, the discipline of Christian education has yet to enter into such an intentional discussion (a) to discover the existent paradigm that drives much of the present practice of Christian education, (b) to be able to analyze the crisis and the shortcoming of such a paradigm, and (c) to define or propose an effective paradigm or paradigm shift for Christian education in order to facilitate new understandings and practice.

¹*Paradigm Change in Theology* (1991) is a collection of essays from a symposium which convened in Tübingen in 1989 to discuss whether a unifying theme or paradigm could be found in Christian theology in the presence of the divergent theories, methods and structure which exist in theology today. As a beginning point for the symposium's discussion, Thomas S. Kuhn's concept of paradigm was introduced. In defining paradigm as "an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by members of a given community," the symposium conveners--Hans Küng and David Tracy--raised several questions.

Do we find ourselves in a new paradigm in this sense? Does this new paradigm--if it exists--display constants, in spite of all the differing theories, methods, and structures which make up the patterns? What are these constants, which the different Christian theologies have to presuppose if they wish to give a scientifically responsible account of the Christian faith for our time? (Küng and Tracy 1991, xv)

Characteristics of Paradigm and Paradigm Change

It is necessary for Christian education in its crisis state to recognize that first and foremost there is a problem of paradigm awareness or identification. Solutions given to deal with the crisis or suggestions for new paradigms first require an understanding of the present paradigm or structure of Christian education. Kuhn's proposals and engagement in dialogue with his critics, as well as the adaptation of his work in other fields, have fostered an understanding of the definition and principles of the concept of paradigm.

Definition of Paradigm in the
Writing of Thomas S. Kuhn

The term "paradigm" is derived from the Greek term *paradeigma* meaning "pattern, model, example," "however, Kuhn's own use of the term was derived from linguistics, where it refers to patterns of declensions, conjugations, etc." (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 120). Kuhn connected paradigm closely with "normal science." He stated that "normal science" fostered research that was ". . . firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice" (Kuhn 1970, 10). He noted that these achievements were

. . . sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity . . . [and these achievements were]
. . . sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of

problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve. (Kuhn 1970, 10)

It is such achievements that Kuhn referred to as "paradigms" (Kuhn 1970, 10).

However, Margaret Masterman suggests that Kuhn used the term in twenty-one different ways (Masterman 1970, 61; cf. Kuhn 1970, 181). Masterman suggests that Kuhn's usages fall into three main categories: metaphysical, sociological and construct paradigms (Masterman 1970, 65). The metaphysical categorization is the broadest level which comprises unquestioned presuppositions (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 118). The narrower concept is the sociological category which relates to ". . . the shared commitments of any disciplinary community . . ." (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 118). The narrowest sense is the construct paradigm category which relates to ". . . the concrete accomplishments of a scientific community" (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 119).

In reply to Masterman, Kuhn responded that most of the differences are due to stylistic inconsistencies; yet, he did contend that two different uses of the term need to be separated (Kuhn 1970, 181, 182). Kuhn's first sense viewed the concept of paradigm in a broader, more global sense as a "disciplinary matrix" (Kuhn 1970, 182), relating to Masterman's second sociological category. It is

. . . "disciplinary" because it refers to the common possession of the practitioners of a particular discipline; [and it involves a] "matrix" because it is

composed of ordered elements of various sorts, each requiring further specification. (Kuhn 1970, 182, also 1977, 463)

Paradigm as a disciplinary matrix ". . . stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community" (Kuhn 1970, 175).

However, a disciplinary matrix may be limited to a ". . . subculture of a community. It does not [necessarily] refer to the beliefs of an entire discipline (e.g., biology) but more correctly to those beliefs of a specialized community (e.g., phage workers in biology)" (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 118-119).

The second sense focuses more narrowly on one component of the disciplinary matrix. Kuhn denoted this usage of paradigm as "exemplars" in which ". . . concrete puzzle-solutions [are] . . . employed as models or examples . . ." (Kuhn 1970, 175). This was the most central meaning of paradigm for Kuhn and the basis for what he considered normal science as demarcated from nonscience (Kuhn 1970, 175; 1977, 463, 471; Eckberg and Hill 1980, 119, 120). By "exemplar," Kuhn meant ". . . initially, the concrete problem-solutions that students encounter from the start of their scientific education, whether in laboratories, or examinations, or at the end of chapters in science texts" (Kuhn 1970, 187). To this initial understanding are added examples of

. . . technical problem-solving found in the periodical literature that scientists encounter during post-educational research careers and that also show them by example how their job is to be done. (Kuhn 1970, 187)

Masterman clarifies this concept of Kuhn's by noting that paradigms as exemplars provide ". . . a concrete 'picture' of something A, which is used analogically to describe a concrete something B" (Masterman 1970, 77). Exemplars help scientists see that problems are like other problems in order for them to find solutions to puzzles within normal science.

It is important to note the relationship between these two senses of paradigm. Exemplars, as stated, represent more specific concrete examples in puzzle-solving, while the disciplinary matrix represents a broader constellation of beliefs. The majority of research is done on the exemplar level in science, and it is here that puzzles are solved and also remain unsolved. However, what directs research within the exemplary sense is the disciplinary matrix. It is only as a growing number of unsolved puzzles accumulate that the disciplinary matrix seeks out a new way of viewing reality, and once a shift or change takes place, then the disciplinary framework can set the new direction exemplars should take to find concrete solutions to previously unsolved puzzles.

It is apparent from the criticism Kuhn received that the paradigm concept was not well understood by the scientific community. Therefore, in his second edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) he added a postscript in which he responded to his critics and expanded the concept of paradigm to include the ideas of "disciplinary matrix" and "exemplar." However, that seemed to raise even further

questions, and so in the 70s, Kuhn began speaking in the broader sense of paradigm utilizing the terms "theory" and "theory choice" (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 142-143). In Kuhn's discussions of theory and theory choice he returns to his earlier conceptual framework of consensus within a disciplinary community in which he viewed development in science as going through phases of consensus, lack of consensus, and an establishment of new consensus (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 133). Kuhn also associated theory and theory choice with ideas such as persuasion and conversion in the making of choices and in being guided by theories (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 252-253, 257-258).

Kuhn's intention for the meaning of paradigm can be best summarized through *Weltanschauung* theory. Suppe relates that *Weltanschauung* theory states that one's worldview ". . . shapes the interests of science, how phenomena are viewed, the demands it makes on the theories, and the criteria of acceptability it insists on for theories" (Suppe 1977, 135). Suppe, though he critiques Kuhn on his ambiguous use of paradigm, nonetheless recognizes that Kuhn primarily intended a much broader understanding of the concept of paradigm.

Definition of Paradigm in Non-Scientific Fields

What has attracted persons in other fields is Kuhn's broader definition of paradigm as consensus, used in a sociological sense as disciplinary matrix or theory, in which he attempts to describe the structure of consensus that guides

a discipline's understanding of itself and its activities. Many in other fields have added to an understanding of the concept of paradigm and provided corollary terms to describe the importance of a guiding consensus. Though some take ownership of the term paradigm, others utilize terms which describe what Kuhn initially meant by paradigm--framework, guiding principle, worldview, integrative motif.

John J. Clancy, speaking from the vantage of business, suggests that paradigms ". . . are fundamental beliefs about the world--how it is organized, how it is structured" (Clancy 1989, 177). Likewise, Joel Arthur Barker states that the concept of paradigm provides "the basic way of perceiving, thinking, valuing, and doing associated with a particular vision of reality" (Barker 1992, 31, 32).

Eberhard Jüngel in analyzing the concept of paradigm from a theological perspective suggests that paradigm in the broader sense ". . . is an orientation framework which provides guidelines and standards for the activities of the human mind" (Jüngel 1991, 298) and suggests that paradigms can lead to consensus within a group (Jüngel 1991, 298). Küng, in describing the insights Kuhn's concept of paradigm has given him for understanding development in theology, chooses to speak of ". . . interpretive models, explanatory models, models for understanding (*Verstehensmodelle*)" (Küng 1991, 7). Küng chooses to use the broader Kuhnian term, disciplinary matrix, which is "'an entire constellation of beliefs, values,

techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community'" (Küng 1991, 7; citing Kuhn 1970, 175). The theologians at the symposium more or less accepted this broad sense of paradigm in relation to theology (cf. Ogden 1991, 287-288).

In theology, theologians often ". . . order their presentation of the Christian faith around one specific concept" which organizes and guides interpretation of various doctrines (Grenz and Olsen 1996, 115). The organizing principle is referred to as an "integrative motif" and ". . . provides the thematic perspective in light of which the theologian understands the other theological concepts and give them their relative meaning and value" (Grenz and Olsen 1996, 116). Grenz and Olsen further suggest that a truly helpful integrative motif provides also ". . . the theological bridge that joins Bible, heritage and culture" enabling the theological message to be relevant for today (Grenz and Olsen 1996, 116).

Schipani in commenting on Wyckoff's use of the term of guiding principle for Christian education states that it is ". . . an essential principle for the interpretation of objectives, method, curriculum and administrative guidelines (Schipani 1984, 190). Schipani's comment emphasizes that Wyckoff's curricular categories are directed by the guiding principle.

The concept of worldview (*Weltanschauung*) is also used to describe paradigm. In relation to theology, Albert M. Wolters defines worldview as ". . . the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things" (Wolters 1985, 2). He further elucidates that a worldview functions as

. . . a *guide to our life*. A worldview . . . functions like a compass or a road map. It orients us in the world at large, Our worldview shapes, to a significant degree the way we assess the events, issues, and structures of our civilization and our times. It allows us to "place" or "situate" the various phenomena that come into our purview. (Wolters 1985, 4)

Therefore, whether one speaks of paradigm, disciplinary matrix, integrative motif, guiding principle, or worldview the same idea is in mind; a shared set of views that guide understanding and practice. In this sense, Kuhn stated, a paradigm is ". . . particularly revealing of the nature of things" and is able to guide research in a way that enables precision, reliability and scope of methodology in pursuit of increased understanding (Kuhn 1970, 25, 26).

Definition of Paradigm Change in the Writing of Thomas S. Kuhn

Though Kuhn's earlier work was often misunderstood, he nonetheless attempted to show through historical evidence how growing anomalies in a present paradigm eventually led to a state of crisis within science. The state of crisis served as a catalyst for a perspective change or a shift in paradigm to a new paradigm which restructured how science was understood and done (cf. Kuhn 1970, 52-173).

Anomalies

For Kuhn any shift in paradigm began with an ever increasing number of anomalies in relation to a present paradigm or theory. Anomalies are discoveries or observations that do not fit ". . . the paradigm-induced expectations that govern normal science" (Kuhn 1970, 52, 53). Normal science operates on doing scientific work within an accepted paradigm and advances are made within the paradigm in a cumulative manner. However, from time to time observations are made which seem to not fit the paradigm and these are set aside as anomalies to be dealt with at another time.

The advent of anomalies does not immediately result in a crisis, nor a paradigm shift; most anomalies are eventually incorporated into the present paradigm.

Though [scientists] may begin to lose faith and then to consider alternatives, they do not renounce the paradigm that has led them into crisis. They do not . . . treat anomalies as counterinstances, though . . . that is what they are. (Kuhn 1970, 77)

The fact is there are always some discrepancies or anomalies and "even the most stubborn ones usually respond at last to normal practice" (Kuhn 1970, 81). This is to say that more is required than an anomaly to cause a paradigm change.

Anomalies that eventually lead to a paradigm shift, Kuhn labels as significant anomalies.

A significant anomaly can be identified by its stubbornness to be subsumed under normal practice. First, a significant anomaly refuses to respond to the structure of

normal practice. No matter how gifted the specialist, no amount of manipulating the structure of normal practice, is able to deal with the issues raised by the anomaly. Second, an anomaly that was originally set aside as insignificant continues to arise to create doubt regarding the present paradigm. These anomalies cannot be continually pushed aside and ignored because they become too prevalent (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 226). As significant anomalies accumulate crisis develops.

Crisis

Kuhn defines crisis as (a) an increased complexity of solutions that more and more seem not to be in harmony with nature, (cf. Kuhn 1970, 68, 69), and (b) an increasing vagueness and the decreasing utility of a particular theory (Kuhn 1970, 71). Crisis is a ". . . prelude to the emergence of new theories" (Kuhn 1970, 85); it is the awareness that something has gone wrong (Kuhn 1970, 181). Kuhn noted, "it follows that if an anomaly is to evoke crisis, it must usually be more than just an anomaly" (Kuhn 1970, 82). The transition to crisis takes place when ". . . an anomaly comes to seem more than just another puzzle of normal science" (Kuhn 1970, 82).

Kuhn remarked that when normal science recognizes that it is in the midst of crisis, it seeks to resolve the crisis in one of three ways. They are either resolved by the cumulative advancement of normal science through extended

exploration within the existing paradigm, or they resist new approaches for explanation and are set aside for a future generation to resolve, or ". . . a crisis may end with the emergence of a new candidate for paradigm and with the ensuing battle over its acceptance" (Kuhn 1970, 84).

There are two effects of crises. "All crises begin with the blurring of a paradigm and the consequent loosening of the rules for normal research" (Kuhn 1970, 84). This enables research to become more creative in exploration, to try out new approaches in order to find a way out of crisis.

Though not all changes in paradigms are preceded by crisis, Kuhn maintains that crisis is the usual prelude. Crisis is what motivates a community to begin to examine its underlying paradigm; it is a ". . . self-correcting mechanism which ensures that the rigidity of normal science will not go unchallenged" (Kuhn 1970, 181).

Transition From Normal Science to Extraordinary Science

Hoyningen-Huene relates, "When a crisis affects a given field of research, research practice in that field changes progressively by comparison with normal science" (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 233). The term Kuhn applied to this changed practice in a time of crisis was "extraordinary science" (Kuhn 1970, 82). In extraordinary science an anomaly or anomalies become the primary areas of research, and many of the researchers ". . . may come to view its resolution as the

subject matter of their discipline" (Kuhn 1970, 82-83). For these scientists their field no longer looks the way it once did.

Kuhn noted that extraordinary research can be identified by four symptoms: "the proliferation of competing articulations, the willingness to try anything, the expression of explicit content, the recourse to philosophy and to debate over fundamentals" (Kuhn 1970, 91). Perhaps the most visible or audible symptom is the ". . . openly voiced dissatisfaction with the previous governing theory's aptitude" (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 233). Practitioners articulate their discontent with the present paradigm; it is not doing what it is supposed to do, or it is not handling the growing number of anomalies; something is wrong.

The second symptom results in an unharmonious chorus of voices as competing articulations are expressed. Old regulations for problem solving are still used, but in the midst of crisis they are ". . . increasingly modified and supplemented . . ." (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 233). Also, the longer the crisis, the more disharmonious the situation becomes. "Throughout the period, there is no consensus over either the proposed modifications of and additions to the old theory or the proposed replacement theories" (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 234).

The third symptom is aligned with the second in that it is characterized by a willingness amongst practitioners to

try many different things ". . . whose results can be predicted only vaguely, if at all" (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 234; cf. Kuhn 1970, 88-89). This involves searching for understandings and data that would not have been possible under the more restricted confines of normal practice. The atmosphere is more open for the acceptance of new discoveries which will help in the development of new theories (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 234).

The fourth symptom involves a

. . . recourse to philosophical analyses of the foundations of the previous research tradition. This strategy amounts, above all, to an attempt to make previously implicit regulations explicit for purposes of testing them. (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 234; cf. Kuhn 1970, 88)

Paradigm Change or Revolution

There is no predetermined method for how to create a shift to a new paradigm. "Often a new paradigm emerges, at least in embryo, before a crisis has developed far or been explicitly recognized" (Kuhn 1970, 86), or "in other cases . . . considerable time elapses between the first consciousness of breakdown and the emergence of a new paradigm" (Kuhn 1970, 86). Kuhn noted that ". . . the scientist in crisis will constantly try to generate speculative theories, that, if successful, may disclose the road to a new paradigm . . ." (Kuhn 1970, 87).

Paradigm change is by no means an easy process; it is revolutionary. Kuhn noted:

The transition from a paradigm in crisis to a new one from which a new tradition of normal science can emerge is far from a cumulative process, one achieved by an articulation or extension of the old paradigm. Rather it is a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications. During the transition period there will be a large but never complete overlap between the problems that can be solved by the old and by the new paradigm. But there will also be a decisive difference in the modes of solution. When the transition is complete, the profession will have changed its view of the field, its methods, and its goals. One perceptive historian, viewing a classic case of a science's reorientation by paradigm change, recently described it as "picking up the other end of the stick," a process that involves "handling the same bundle of data as before, but placing them in a new system of relations with one another by giving them a different framework." (Kuhn 1970, 84-85)

Normal science develops through the revolutions of paradigm change because no single paradigm is able to encompass all problems. When a growing number of anomalies are not adequately explained through "normal science" new explanations are sought and new patterns or paradigms result. New paradigms gain a foothold ". . . because they are more successful than their competitors [other paradigms in use] in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute" (Kuhn 1970, 23). As anomalies are explored, new ways of understanding or interpretation are sought until ". . . the anomalous has become the expected." This requires more than an adjustment to a current paradigm; rather it calls for seeing nature in a different way (Kuhn 1970, 53). Further Kuhn explained,

by focusing attention upon a small range of relatively esoteric problems, the paradigm forces scientists to

investigate some part of nature in a detail and depth that would have been otherwise unimaginable. And normal science possesses a built-in mechanism that ensures the relaxation of the restrictions that bound research whenever the paradigm from which they derive ceases to function effectively. At that point scientists begin to behave differently, and the nature of their research problems changes. In the interim, however, during the period when the paradigm is successful, the profession will have solved problems that its members could scarcely have imagined and would never have undertaken without commitment to the paradigm. (Kuhn 1970, 24-25)

Suppe summarizes Kuhn in stating, "Thus, before a disciplinary matrix is rejected, a replacement must emerge, and the scientific revolution consists in the switch of allegiance from the old to the replacement disciplinary matrix" (Suppe 1977, 145).

The New Paradigm and Change of Worldview

Kuhn likened the process of being persuaded to a new paradigm as undergoing a conversion experience. A change in perspective occurs; a whole new way to understand and to do science is embraced. He described this conversion experience as the complete transition from one paradigm to another (cf. Kuhn 1970, 204; Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 257-258). As increasing numbers of the scientific community embrace the new paradigm, the revolution takes place, a new paradigm is established to guide a new understanding of normal science.

Kuhn pointed out that a new paradigm changes the way scientists look at and understand the world changing the way they go about their research.

When paradigms change, the world itself changes with them. Led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments, and look in new places. Even more important, during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they looked before. . . . [P]aradigm changes do cause scientists to see the world of their research-engagement differently. (Kuhn 1970, 111)

Excursus on Kuhn's View
of Reality and Truth

Kuhn has been criticized for being a relativist in stating that "the world itself changes." However, careful examination reveals that it is a misunderstanding to conclude that Kuhn is a relativist and that he has no room for objective reality. When Kuhn spoke of "change of world" he was speaking of the phenomenal world (cf. Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 31-33) which describes how the world is perceived, rather than how the world actually is--"world-in-itself." It is important to understand that paradigm relates to perception and how, through paradigmatic revolutions, perception changes. Paradigm is a construct that a person or community uses to interpret and understand the world, and so as shifts in paradigms take place, so does one's understanding or perception of how the world is structured.

Yet, in understanding this, Kuhn is still criticized as having no place for truth in his view of reality. In addition, some authors charge ". . . that science and scientific change become fundamentally irrational under Kuhn's account--that the acceptance of theories becomes a subjective enterprise which is fundamentally unempirical" (Suppe 1977,

150; cf. Scheffler 1967, *Science and Subjectivity*, 74-89). But this, too, is an oversimplification and misunderstanding of Kuhn.

In defending himself, Kuhn argued that ". . . one scientific theory is not as good as another for doing what scientists normally do. In that sense I am not a relativist" (Kuhn 1970b, 264). However, he is wary about applying the label "truth" to scientific developments. It is not so much that Kuhn has no category for what is true, rather, to talk about truth in the context of paradigm and paradigm change is meaningless and somewhat irrelevant (Kuhn 1993, 330). Science recognizes that its theories are fallible. As science develops, the scientific community discovered that an older theory or paradigm was ". . . believed to be true in its time but was later abandoned as false" as new understandings came to light (Kuhn 1970b, 264-265). Kuhn maintained that there is "no shared metric" to compare adequately one assertion in one paradigm with another assertion in another paradigm in order to determine which one is closer to the truth (Kuhn 1993, 330).

It seems that those criticizing Kuhn on this point are seeking to force an agenda of "objective truth" on Kuhn's work and are seeking to discover what he has to say about it. But this is to miss Kuhn's agenda. He spoke about changes in perspectives, rather than attempting to articulate a concept of truth. Kuhn recognized that the empirical senses will

never grasp hold of absolute or objective truth; it is a continual process of development (cf. Kuhn 1970b, 265; 1993, 330). His focus was on describing experience and practice, which is dependent on time, place and culture, and not universal absolutes.

From a metaphysical standpoint one could argue that Kuhn was shortsighted in not adequately addressing the issue of truth. Perhaps, it would have been wiser for him to make a statement regarding his concept of truth, but that seems to be more an agenda of his critics, rather than his own. In other contexts, such as in theology and Christian education, the issue of truth's relation to paradigm and paradigm change is of greater importance because the discussion is elevated to a metaphysical realm. It is practitioners in these fields, applying the concept of paradigm to their disciplines, who must take up the truth issue which Kuhn chooses not to do.

Incommensurability of Paradigms

Once a new paradigm is accepted, Kuhn stated that the new paradigm is incommensurable with the old. Incommensurability, the difficulty old and new paradigms have in communicating with each other, is regarded as one of the most controversial ideas of Kuhn's theory of paradigm and paradigm change.

Since new paradigms are born from old ones, they ordinarily incorporate much of the vocabulary and apparatus . . . that the traditional paradigm has previously employed. But they seldom employ these borrowed elements in quite the traditional way. Within

the new paradigm, old terms, concepts, and experiments fall into new relationships one with the other. The inevitable result is what we must call, though the term is not quite right, a misunderstanding between the two competing schools. (Kuhn 1970, 149).

Therefore, in coming to accept a new paradigm, Kuhn maintained that before full communication could take place, an experience of conversion or paradigm shift must take place. What is involved is a

. . . transition between incommensurables, the transition between competing paradigms [which] cannot be made a step at a time, forced by logic and neutral experience. Like the gestalt switch, it must occur all at once (though not necessarily in an instant) or not at all. (Kuhn 1970, 150)

However, many of Kuhn's critics understood Kuhn to say that incommensurable theories are not able to communicate at all, and that theory-choice is solely dependent upon irrational subjective experience (Kuhn 1970, 198-199).

Gutting argues that ". . . incommensurability does not mean that rival paradigms cannot be comparatively evaluated but just that the comparative evaluation cannot be effected by a neutral set of rules and facts" (Gutting 1980, 2). Rather, evaluation of paradigms is dependent upon the judgment of the scientific community ". . . as to the overall significance of the considerations urged by the various conflicting arguments" (Gutting 1980, 3). Gutting notes that this role of the scientific community as the ". . . locus of science's rational authority" represents Kuhn's ". . . most fundamental feature of his account of science" (Gutting 1980, 3).

Kuhn's concept of incommensurability can be understood better through a discussion of language communities and translation. Just as between two language communities translation is required for effective communication, so participants of rival scientific paradigms, who already share much of the same scientific worldview and language, are able to communicate with each other in order to see phenomena from each other's perspective. Indeed, communication might be difficult, but it is not impossible (Barbour 1980, 229; cf. Kuhn 1970, 201-203).

Function of Paradigm and Paradigm Change in
Fields Having Influence Upon
Christian Education

Building on Kuhn's insights, others in fields which have an influence upon Christian education have added insights to the process and function of paradigm and paradigm change. Considered are the views of Hans Küng in theology, Ian Barbour on religion and Christianity, and Douglas Eckberg and Lester Hill, Jr., summarizing usage within sociology, along with Gary Gutting's comments in relation to the social sciences.

Hans Küng and Theology

Küng remarks that the work of Kuhn has been ". . . scarcely noticed in the epistemological reflections of theologians" (Küng 1991, 7). He admits that Kuhn's concept of paradigm has enabled him ". . . to understand more deeply and comprehensively the problems of growth in knowledge, of

development, of progress, of the emergence of a new approach and thus, in particular, the present controversies, also with reference to theology" (Küng 1991, 7). Küng confesses that he would like to take on Kuhn's terminology as his own, however, only to a point.

I do not want to insist on the term "paradigm" or "revolution". For "*paradigm*" in particular--originally understood simply as "example", "classic example" or "pattern" for further experiments--has turned out to be ambiguous. For my own part I am equally happy to speak of *interpretative models, explanatory models, models for understanding (Verstehensmodelle)*. By this I mean what Kuhn meant by the term "paradigm": "an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community." (Küng 1991, 7; citing Kuhn 1970, 175)

Küng also relies on the work of Stephen Toulmin,² in coming to understand paradigm shifts and changes. Though recognizing that Toulmin and Kuhn are in dispute concerning whether science progresses in a manner which is evolutionary or revolutionary, Küng remarks that both agree that "'paradigms' or 'models' change" (Küng 1991, 9).

²Stephen Toulmin criticizes Kuhn for stating that change in science is revolutionary, rather than evolutionary (Toulmin 1970, 39-47). Suppe remarks that both Kuhn and Toulmin, as *Weltanschauung* proponents, agree that worldview is dynamically evolving, yet they do not agree on how to describe this change. Whereas Kuhn regards progress as revolutionary and requires ". . . occasional extensive revisions of *Weltanschauungen* which amount to the rejection of one *Weltanschauung* in favor of another" (Suppe 1977, 135), Toulmin regards progress as cumulative in which ". . . science develops by augmenting the existing *Weltanschauung* with new ideals of natural order which supplement existing ones" which in no way causes a rejection of the present worldview (Suppe 1977, 135).

In drawing comparisons between natural science and theology, Küng notes regarding crisis,

. . . awareness of a growing crisis is the starting-point for the advent of a drastic change in certain hitherto prevailing basic assumptions, and eventually causes the breakthrough of a new paradigm or model of understanding. When the available rules and methods break down, they lead to a search for new ones. (Küng 1991, 20)

Küng points out periods of crisis in theology to elucidate the comparison, highlighting the Jewish and Hellenistic models of understanding of the one Christ-event, Augustine's personal crises causing him to turn away from dualistic Manicheism to faith and neoplatonism, the Donatist crisis, Aquinas and the crisis of Augustinianism, Luther and the crisis of systematic and speculative scholasticism, and the crisis of orthodox Protestantism (Küng 1991, 15, 16). That these crises were initiated by anomalies is evident for Küng, stating that within Roman Catholicism, neo-scholasticism's attempt to uphold certain speculative theses brought out contradictory elements which contributed to its undermining (Küng 1991, 19). Therefore, in theology as well,

. . . the replacement of an explanatory model is generally preceded by a *transitional period of uncertainty* in which faith in the established model is shaken, people see through the existing patterns, ties are loosened, traditional schools are reduced in numbers and an abundance of new initiatives compete for a place. (Küng 1991, 19)

The result is the establishment of *extraordinary* theology alongside *normal* theology.

In discussing the advent of a new paradigm to replace the old, Küng states that ". . . the replacement does

not take place simply through continuous 'organic' [or cumulative] development, . . . [for] it is not a question simply of correcting course, but of a change of course" (Küng 1991, 20, 21). Theologies change from one to another with new concepts, criteria, theories and methods (Küng 1991, 21).

In a word, *the paradigm or model of understanding is changed together with the whole complex of different methods, fields of problems and attempted solutions, as these had previously been recognized by a theological community. The theologians get used as it were to a different way of seeing things: to seeing them in the context of a different model. Some things are now perceived that were not seen formerly, and possibly some things are overlooked that were formerly noticed. A new view of man, world and God begins to prevail in the theological community where the whole and its details appear in a different light.* (Küng 1991, 21)

Küng gives credence to Kuhn's proposition that paradigm change involves extrascientific factors that can be described as conversion (Küng 1991, 27). In theology, factors involved in paradigm change are doubts concerning the present paradigm, the important role played by subjective and sociological concerns, religious convictions, and leading to what can be described as a conversion (Küng 1991, 24-25). What is advocated by Küng, in agreement with Kuhn, is that there are some nonrational factors that are significant in the acceptance of a new paradigm--both in theology and science. Küng makes clear, however, that "it is not a question here simply of an irrational process." He continues;

Nevertheless, even good reasons cannot extort conversion; for it is likewise not a question merely of a rational process. In the last resort it is a question of a "decision of faith"--in the non-religious sense of the term--or, better, of a "vote of confidence." Which model

cope better with the new problems and at the same time preserves most of the old solutions to problems? Which model has a future? This is not so easy to foresee. And since here it is ultimately a question of trust, discussions between the two schools of thought and language-worlds often take the form less of rational argumentation than of more or less successful attempts at recruitment, persuasion and conversion. (Küng 1991, 25)

Küng also deals with incommensurability, which takes on a unique focus in theology. He argues that

. . . every paradigm change shows at the same time continuity and discontinuity, rationality and irrationality, conceptual stability and conceptual change, evolutionary and revolutionary elements. (Küng 1991, 30)

What is unique about theology is that there is no rediscovery of that which will become new tradition, rather "it is a question of a new *formulation of tradition*, admittedly in the light of a new paradigm" (Küng 1991, 30). Küng states that "for theology, the problem of *continuity* appears at a much deeper level" involving truth, which is beyond the frontiers of natural science and experiences within space and time.

Vital questions about the whence and whither of the world and the human, that is about ultimate and original meanings and standards, values, and norms, and thus about an ultimate and original reality as such, are questions of a believing trust--certainly not irrational, but utterly reasonable--or a trusting belief.

The responsibility for dealing with these lies with *theology* as a science (*Wissenschaft*): theology as a rational exposition or account of God. (Küng 1991, 31)

It is precisely this realization by Küng that corresponds with paradigm shifts in Christian education.

Ian Barbour on Religion
and Christianity

Barbour focuses on the aspect of continuity within paradigm change in the Christian context. He notes that "the centrality of the scriptural witness to Christ is without parallel in science" (Barbour 1990, 56). He states that, "each new paradigm [in Christian theology] arose from a fresh experience of the original message, as well as from institutional crises and external challenges" (Barbour 1990, 56) and concludes that "the gospel thus contributed to both continuity and change" (Barbour 1990, 56).

Barbour identifies the context in which the concept of paradigm can be considered within Christianity and, therefore, also Christian education. There is not only a linear dimension to paradigm development within the Christian faith, but always a reaching back, a reexamination of the original message as new formulations are made. The original message, or the gospel, serves as a fundamental foundational paradigm to continuing paradigm shifts.

Barbour, commenting on development within normal theology, argues that much theological work focuses on communication and cumulation within the accepted existing paradigm; however, the process of development also involves shifts in which ". . . considerable reinterpretation, reformulation, and innovation" take place over time (Barbour 1990, 59).

Scripture is unchanging, but ways of understanding and appropriating it have changed greatly, especially since the rise of historical-critical methods. Theology . . . is critical reflection on the life and thought of the religious community, and this implies the revisability of ideas. The Protestant Reformation was not a once-for-all revolution, but rather a vision of a church that is *semper reformanda*, always reforming. (Barbour 1990, 59)

Barbour further comments on the role of conviction and revelation, which add a unique dimension to the appropriation of Kuhn's concept of paradigm to the Christian faith. He notes that

religious faith does demand a more total *personal involvement* than occurs in science, . . . [because] religious questions are of ultimate concern, since the meaning of one's existence is at stake. Religion asks about the final objects of a person's devotion and loyalty. [However,] . . . such religious commitment can be combined with critical reflection. . . . (Barbour 1990, 64)

In relation to revelation, Barbour relates that "divine revelation and human response are always inextricably interwoven" (Barbour 1990, 64).

Revelation is incomplete until it has been received by individuals, and individuals always live within interpretive communities. The God-given encounter was experienced, interpreted, and reported by fallible human beings. . . . There is no uninterpreted revelation. (Barbour 1990, 64)

Barbour, in relating that revelation is always interpreted, raises the important role of paradigm change within the theological task. In appropriating the message of revelation to the current situation, the theologian looks both backward and forward to express the message of the gospel in relevant and current ways.

Sociology and the
Social Sciences

"There have been several attempts to use Kuhn's scheme of scientific structure to analyze the development of sociology. [However,] the results of these attempts have been far from satisfactory" (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 117). In fact, sociologists are not able to come to any kind of common consensus utilizing up to eight different paradigms (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 117). Eckberg and Hill suggest that sociologists have misused the concept of paradigm in its application to sociology, largely because they have given only a cursory examination of Kuhn, not struggling with his later works to discover all that he meant by his concept (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 117, 129). The conclusion is drawn that ". . . sociologists find paradigms scattered all across sociology, but only by corrupting Kuhn's model of science" (Eckberg and Hill 1980, 130).

This raises the interesting question as to why Kuhn's concept of paradigm finds strong correlations with the discipline of theology, but so little with sociology, especially since both help to define or understand Christian education. Gutting, in discussing the concept of paradigm and the social sciences, states that social scientists have a great interest in Kuhnian ideas. However, the problem in social science is that there just is no ". . . emergence of a consensus among the community of practitioners as to the

authority of a given paradigm" (Gutting 1980, 13). He clarifies this in stating:

Various social scientific super-theories have, during certain periods, been in some sense widely accepted, at least among certain sub-groups of researchers. But the sign of Kuhnian consensus is not just some sort of general endorsement of a super-theory but an acceptance that is so strong that it eliminates the need for further discussion of foundational questions about the subject-matter and methodology of the disciplines and enables the discipline to devote most of its energy to puzzle-solving. A consensus that does not have this character will not be sufficient to sustain the practice of Kuhnian normal science. . . . (Gutting 1980, 13)

Yet, in relation to the humanities--history, art, philosophy, religion, Gutting holds more promise for the application of Kuhn's concepts, though he notes that much less use of Kuhn has been made here than in the sciences. In relation to religion, Gutting comments that ". . . some philosophers of religion have offered accounts of the beliefs and actions of religious communities as paradigm-governed" and that ". . . the life of Christ seems to have a paradigmatic status for Christian religious communities" (Gutting 1980, 15,16). Gutting advocates that

there is need for a great deal of work on the extension of Kuhnian ideas to the analysis of non-scientific communities. It is here more than anywhere else that the power of Kuhn's thought still remains untapped. (Gutting 1980, 19)

Characteristics of a Paradigm

Paradigms go through a process from a growing acceptance of a theory of reality, to situating that theory as a pattern for what is normal for a disciplinary community, to

frustration with a growing number of unsolved issues, to searching and shifting to a new theory of reality with the ultimate consequence being the development of a new paradigm. A paradigm, therefore, has certain characteristics that help in understanding its function. These in turn offer useful categories for relating the significance of the concept of paradigm to Christian education.

A Paradigm Defines What is Normal

The term paradigm relates to how a certain community, be it scientists, business persons, or educators, understands and performs its activity. A paradigm expresses what techniques, values, and methods are seen as established. Barbour notes that

a paradigm . . . implicitly defines for a given . . . community the types of questions that may be legitimately asked, the types of explanations that are to be sought, and the types of solutions that are acceptable. It moulds . . . assumptions as to what kinds of entities there are in the world . . . and the methods of enquiry suitable for studying them. (Barbour 1974, 103)

In this sense "a paradigm provides an ongoing research community with a framework . . ." for what is normal (Barbour 1990, 51). Therefore, paradigm in normal science, or in any field, depicts a discipline which is conservative and controlled by tradition. The prevailing paradigm provides an effective framework for solving problems (Barbour 1990, 58) and the search for new theories is abandoned in order to solve present problems which the particular paradigm produces (Clancy 1989, 173).

Likewise in theology, paradigm describes "normal theology." Barbour indicates that normal theology

. . . does indeed show the dominance of *tradition*. The theologian is concerned to develop the potentialities of a particular paradigm. This provides focus and encourages communication and cumulation. (Barbour 1990, 59)

Küng indicates that in Christianity five major historical paradigms have existed to date: Greek Alexandrian, Latin Augustinian, Medieval Thomistic, Reformation, and Modern-Critical (Küng 1991, 10). As each paradigm prevailed, it ". . . provided a framework for normal work and cumulative growth . . . in which the scope of the paradigm was extended and major changes were resisted" (Barbour 1990, 56).

Paradigms are Structures of Perception

Paradigms give structure to reality or how reality is perceived by guiding a researcher's thinking, presenting them with a particular perspective of the world, or what is real. Likewise, the paradigm shaping reality determines the type of tools, approaches, and questions utilized to find solutions to problems or puzzles. The paradigm sets the boundaries for what is considered to be legitimate reality and guides research, until a change leads to altering or shifting a view of reality.

Kuhn stated that a paradigm in guiding an understanding of reality determines the pattern of experimentation. Second, a paradigm enables movement from the experimental to the theoretical in postulating the nature of

things with respect to that particular paradigm that may not be experimentally proved until some time later. In this second relationship, a paradigm sets forth the problems which need to be solved and helps develop the methodology for guiding research (Kuhn 1970, 27). Third, a new paradigm serves to show the limitations of the former paradigm by ". . . resolving some of the residual ambiguities and permitting the solution of problems to which [normal science] had previously only drawn attention" (Kuhn 1970, 27).

In relation to problem solving, new paradigms gain status because ". . . they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute" (Kuhn 1970, 23). As new problems are solved or solutions discovered, which were once undiscoverable, a new vision of reality is created, a new way of looking at phenomena.

Paradigms are Held By Communities

Clearly, Kuhn situated the concept of paradigm in the scientific community. He stated that "a paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm" (Kuhn 1970, 176). Gutting commenting on Kuhn's focus on community relates that Kuhn proposed a new locus for scientific authority. The proposal that Kuhn made is that ". . . science's authority ultimately resides not in a rule-governed method of inquiry whereby scientific results are

obtained but in the scientific community that obtains the results" (Gutting 1980, 1). Later it will be shown how this has relevance and implications for Christian education.

Kuhn wrote that "a paradigm governs . . . not a subject matter but rather a group of practitioners. Any study of paradigm-directed or paradigm-shattering research must begin by locating the responsible group or groups" (Kuhn 1970, 180). Therefore, in relation to paradigm change, the change involved is a ". . . reconstruction of group commitments" (Kuhn 1970, 181).

It is within the context of paradigm's relation to community that Kuhn discussed "disciplinary matrix." He identified four components within a community's disciplinary matrix. The first component deals with "symbolic generalizations." Symbolic generalizations are generally accepted expressions to which a community attaches significance in their problem solving tasks (Kuhn 1970, 182,183). In essence, it represents the common language whereby the standards of a paradigm are communicated with members of the community. When paradigm shifts take place it is these generalizations which are abandoned in order to accept new ones (Kuhn 1970, 184). The second component focuses on shared commitments to paradigmatic beliefs, or as Kuhn put it, they describe commitments to ". . . beliefs in particular models" (Kuhn 1970, 184). It is these shared beliefs that allow a community to determine what constitutes

legitimate research, and explanations as solutions to problems. The third component Kuhn termed "values." He stated that values are more generally shared amongst different communities and, in relation to natural science, help provide coherence giving a sense of community to natural scientists as a whole (Kuhn 1970, 184). These values deal with commonly held principles that govern each community, such as the validity of the scientific method, the need for verification and so on. The fourth component is termed "exemplars." Exemplars refer to the body of concrete problem-solutions that are both common to the larger community as a whole, but also includes the concrete problem-solutions which are specific to a smaller paradigmatic community.

Paradigms Change

What is normal remains effective "so long as the tools a paradigm supplies continue to prove capable of solving the problems it defines" (Kuhn 1970, 76). "History shows that there are changes of paradigm, revolutionary episodes in which one paradigm is replaced by another" (Gutting 1980, 2). It is normal for anomalies to develop within any paradigm because no single paradigm is able to resolve all the problems or puzzles it encounters. Kuhn, in fact, maintained that effective research under a paradigm is expected to produce anomalies and induce paradigm change (Kuhn 1970, 52). When enough anomalies develop which are incapable of being absorbed into the cumulative development of what is normal, crisis with the

present paradigm is likely to result and a mode of fresh discovery ensues.

Crisis opens the door for the search for new theories or paradigms to help resolve the anomalies by relaxing the rules for research, by motivating researchers to be creative. As speculation increases, new models are tried until a new paradigm is formulated that not only addresses the more resistant anomalies, but helps to redefine the field in relation to older problems. Typically, the new paradigm gains slow acceptance and is often criticized. However, it will gain acceptance as more and more of the community "convert" to the new perspective realizing that it is a more encompassing perspective on reality than the former paradigm. The new paradigm, then, becomes the established paradigm for guiding what is normal.

Barker has outlined ten steps that are involved in the paradigm change process.

1. The established paradigm begins to be less effective.
2. The affected community senses the situation, begins to lose trust in the old rules.
3. Turbulence [or sense of crisis] grows as trust is reduced.
4. Creators or identifiers of the new paradigm step forward to offer their solutions (many of these solutions may have been around for decades waiting for this chance).
5. Turbulence increases even more as paradigm conflict becomes apparent.
6. Affected community is extremely upset and demands clear solutions.
7. One of the suggested paradigms demonstrates ability to solve a small set of significant problems that the old paradigm could not.
8. Some of the affected community accepts the new paradigm as an act of faith.

9. With stronger support . . ., the new paradigm gains momentum.
10. Turbulence begins to wane as the new paradigm starts solving the problems and the affected community has a new way to deal with the world that seems successful. (Barker 1992, 205-206)

However, in noting that paradigms change, it must also be noted that paradigms based on the Gospel, as in theology, and therefore, also in Christian education, represent a unique case. As Küng and Barbour mentioned regarding the gospel message, paradigm change involves a new understanding of the original message or tradition, rather than the creation of a new gospel or a new tradition. What does change is the expression of theological formulations, which are based on these new understandings. Therefore, the gospel message presents an unchanging foundation upon which understandings develop and change.

In understanding the concept of *paradigm* and *paradigm change* and their characteristics, Christian educators are helped in addressing the crisis in Christian education. It is in assessing the state of crisis in Christian education in light of the concept of *paradigm* to which this study next turns.

CHAPTER 3
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF PARADIGM
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian education appears to be in a time when what is normal is no longer adequate. Christian education is poised to move beyond its confusion, beyond its present state of crisis. The concept of paradigm, and paradigm change, offers a way to help move the discipline of Christian education toward a redefinition of itself and its purpose.

The problem is that educators have not adequately analyzed the present paradigm which is generating criticism and dissatisfaction. The significance of the concept of *paradigm* for Christian education is that it provides a structure for analysis of the crisis which could lead to a clearer understanding of the "why" inherent within the crisis. Far too often the statements concerning crisis give explanation as to *what* the issues within the crisis entail-- for example, no clear purpose, inadequate understanding of foundations--yet, very rarely is there an indication as to *why* the crisis exists.

Ways in Which the Concept of Paradigm Addresses
Crisis in Christian Education

There are at least four ways in which the concept of paradigm addresses the crisis in Christian education.

The Positive Nature of Crisis

Though crisis represents a state of turbulence and unsettledness, crisis in the present context of Christian education need not be regarded as being a negative state. Crisis, as Kuhn has shown, ". . . is prerequisite to *fundamental invention of theory*" (Kuhn 1977a, 208) and is therefore, indicative of the growth process. Therefore, understanding crisis within the context of the concept of paradigm suggests that Christian education is in the midst of growth, in the midst of a paradigm shift, rather than being ". . . not healthy and vital, [and] as a discipline, . . . bankrupt" (Wilhoit 1986, 9). Too many Christian educators see the crisis as a problem which threatens to undermine the foundations of Christian education, rather than regarding it as a necessary process for the continued growth and development of Christian education. Therefore, recognizing that crisis exists in Christian education ought to signal hope that, as a discipline, Christian education is no longer comfortable with its present state of affairs and is seeking to express its identity and task within a new framework.

Christian education shows many of the signs of a discipline in a paradigmatic state of crisis. Kuhn described

the crisis situation as a time "when research projects go consistently astray and when no usual techniques seem quite to restore them" (Kuhn 1977a, 202). Participants are aware that something has gone wrong with the present state of affairs with one result being a sense of professional insecurity (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 231). Likewise, in Christian education there is a sense that the situation is not right resulting in a sense of unsettledness and confusion. Much activity is generated in an attempt to alleviate the crisis in which different proposals are presented for consideration, though there are varying degrees of focus. There is a tendency to try anything to help move Christian education out of its crisis without first having adequately dealt with the reasons for being in a period of crisis. Therefore, understanding crisis as part of the process of paradigm change can be helpful to educators in seeking innovation more purposefully and with less insecurity.

In accepting that crisis can be positive, the next task is to understand what factors have caused or led to the crisis state in Christian education. It is primarily through the presence of significant anomalies that a state of crisis becomes apparent. Anomalies in Christian education seem to consist in a discrepancy between the biblical understanding of discipleship and the ineffectiveness of a great number of Christians who are participants in current Christian educational contexts. It is not that Christian educators are

working any less strenuously, but rather there is a sense that Christian education is not doing what it is supposed to be doing (Wilhoit 1986, 9). Christians, by and large, are not being effectively disciplined; people express faith, but it seems to have little impact upon the way they live, nor are they being effective influences within society.

The crisis has been further intensified by the introduction of anomalies generated from the social sciences. In an attempt to strengthen failing educational practice, Christian educators turned to the findings of social science concerning the psychology of the learner, developmentalism, group dynamics, the sociology of the learning environment, and so on. The result was that social scientific knowledge further uncovered what was not being considered in Christian education. As social scientific theory was incorporated into educational practice, new approaches led to new problems by raising more questions (Wilhoit 1986, 102). Though new insights were generated, the focus on the social sciences was not adequate enough to overcome the lack of direction inherent in the crisis. Therefore, as such discrepancies or anomalies became more visible in Christian education, educators have become aware that the discipline is in crisis (cf. Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 235; Westerhoff 1976, 9-10).

Educators tend to respond differently to the crisis. First, many problems or anomalies can be resolved within the normal paradigm (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 231; cf. Kuhn 1970, 81-

82). Christian educators will work diligently to conform the anomalies to the present paradigm, so that harmony will be maintained. Fresh insights are gained, particularly from the social sciences, which provide understanding for learning and the learning context, in order to smooth out the apparent problems. A number of recent works¹ seek to strengthen such understandings in order to make Christian education more effective without raising the issue of the presence of crisis.

Second, not all educators will perceive the crisis in the same way. Some view the crisis more seriously than others depending on how much of a threat it is perceived to cause to the normal paradigm (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 231-232). Those who perceive the crisis as more serious attempt to motivate their readers to action by stating the crisis and by presenting a solution for resolving the crisis or to supply

¹For example, (a) Wilhoit, James C. and John M. Dettoni, eds. 1995. *Nurture that is Christian*. Wheaton: Victor Books. This work seeks not so much to reexamine Christian education as to provide a comprehensive understanding of developmentalism and how it relates to Christian nurture. (b) Yount, William R. 1996. *Created to learn*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers. Yount seeks to offer an in-depth understanding of educational psychology in order to foster greater effectiveness in Christian education. (c) LeFever, Marlene D. 1995. *Learning Styles*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishing Co. This book seeks to enable church teachers to be more effective by recognizing that different learning styles exist. Bernice McCarthy notes in the foreword that "our schools need to embrace the need for multiple methods of instruction if we are to reach diverse learners." She further summarizes, "Marlene LeFever's work in Christian education and my work with 4MAT are blended here into a powerful and useful tool for the education ministries of Christian churches" (LeFever 1995, 5).

what is missing.² It is these educators who help other educators begin to see that change is needed in Christian education.

Third, ". . . a crisis may end with the emergence of a new candidate for paradigm and with the ensuing battle over its acceptance" (Kuhn 1970, 84). As yet, Christian educators have not come to consensus on a single paradigm. Though suggestions have been offered,³ these suggestions have not stimulated serious discussion. Christian educators need to recognize that a state of crisis exists and together pursue the issues inherent in crisis before movement towards consensus will develop.

Rather than lamenting the present state of Christian education as being bankrupt, the presence of crisis suggests that Christian education is in a time of extraordinary Christian education, a time for searching for a new paradigm

²For example, Westerhoff, John H. 1976. *Will our children have faith*; Wilhoit, Jim. 1986. *Christian education & the search for meaning*; Drov Dahl, Robert R. 1991. "Toward a paradigmatic Christian education," *Christian Education Journal*; Nichols, Charles H. 1991. "Building the philosophical foundation," *Christian Education Journal*; Smallbones, Jackie L. 1991. "What's wrong with Christian education in evangelical churches today?" *Christian Education Journal* all introduce the state of crisis in the present practice of Christian education. Their writings are a response to the state of crisis by presenting what is needed in responding to the crisis.

³For example both Wilhoit and Drov Dahl make a case for adopting the concept of "meaning-making" as a paradigm for Christian education, which seems to be more of a process than a paradigm. Wyckoff, earlier presented the "Gospel" as the guiding principle for Christian education.

in order to inaugurate a new normal state for Christian education.

Effects of Crisis--Extraordinary Christian Education

Kuhn mentioned that four symptoms exist in times of extraordinary science or practice. To reiterate, these are: "the proliferation of competing articulations, the willingness to try anything, the expression of explicit discontent, the recourse to philosophy and to debate over fundamentals" (Kuhn 1970, 91). Evidence of these symptoms is prevalent in the Christian education literature as Downs describes. "The discipline of Christian education has been wandering in recent years, as if in search of a mission" (Downs 1993, 7). Educators express discontent regarding what is not adequately occurring in Christian education; different approaches are suggested as offering hope for Christian education practice; there is an openness to dialogue and to interact with a wide variety of disciplines in the hope of making connections that will open doors of discovery; there is even philosophical and practical discussion concerning foundations and fundamental issues.

That these symptoms too readily describe the present state of Christian education calls into doubt Pazmiño's conclusion that Christian education is in a preparadigmatic state. Though there are similarities between a prenatal state and an extraordinary state, these symptoms find a

parallel in Christian education. It seems that educators are struggling with the shortcomings of the present paradigm in Christian education because there is an attempt to state the nature of the problems that have fostered the paradigmatic crisis. Yet, there may be little comprehension of the nature of this present paradigm.

However, in stating that Christian education finds itself in a period of extraordinary Christian education also raises a concern as to whether or not there is positive forward movement. Though philosophical discussion regarding foundations and fundamentals exists, it is not prevalent; there is greater focus upon the first three symptoms, as described by Kuhn. Discussion regarding fundamentals quickly shifts to discussion of practical issues and the presentation of another new approach or insight. It is precisely at this point that an understanding of the concept of paradigm and its characteristics is helpful for reexamining what is fundamental for Christian education, especially as it searches for a principle to guide its self-understanding and task.

A Lack of Consensus

An analysis of Christian education in light of the concept of paradigm reveals that there is a lack of consensus concerning the nature of Christian education. Not enough debate is taking place in Christian education concerning this fundamental lack. Educators readily seek solutions to Christian education's problems, without stopping to ask *why*

Christian education is in crisis, or *what* has brought Christian education to this point? Drovdahl is one of the lone voices stating that there is need for a paradigm to resolve the unsettledness in Christian education; however, he does not go far enough. He fails to analyze the issue of paradigm in depth in order to give shape to a paradigmatic Christian education (Drovdahl 1991, 7).

Why is there a lack of consensus in Christian education? Since the social sciences have a strong influence on the current practice of Christian education, solely focusing on them for directing the Christian educational task will inevitably make consensus difficult. As noted previously, Gutting argues that it is difficult, if not impossible, for the Kuhnian concept of paradigm to find adequate integration within the disciplines of social science. Social scientists seem unable to come to consensus on a paradigm or super-theory to guide their disciplines. David Heywood further explains that social science is indeed different from natural science in that social science observes people who have their own frames of reference. Further, a social scientist is not an external observer, but ". . . a member of society whose assumptions are in dialogue with those of the people under observation" (Heywood 1992, 107-109). Due to social scientists having differing views of humanity, Gutting states that the nature of social science inhibits

development of consensus, and so ". . . attempts at Kuhnian analyses are bound to be unsatisfactory" (Gutting 1980, 15).

Yet, the social sciences cannot be ignored as educators seek to develop consensus in Christian education.

As Wilhoit relates:

Due to a variety of factors, social-science research cannot speak with the authority and clarity one might desire. . . . The difficulty of objective validation, its inability to speak on normative issues, and the diversity of results mean that by itself social science cannot provide the foundation for Christian education. . . . Even so, . . . it does have a crucial role to play in our theorizing about Christian education. (Wilhoit 1986, 103).

Since social science--anthropology, sociology, psychology--is an integral part of the nature and practice of Christian, efforts to come to consensus around these disciplines will be difficult, if not impossible. It seems that what is needed is a refocusing upon Christian education's theological nature in order to examine how theology might provide directive criteria for the use of the social sciences in Christian education and, in so doing, enable the discipline to come to consensus.

What, then, are the characteristics of this consensus which Christian educators need to focus upon in formulating a common paradigm for Christian education? Kuhn's redefinition of paradigm as disciplinary matrix (1970) offers some insights. Kuhn stated that a disciplinary matrix, which is the constellation of a group's beliefs, is comprised of at least four components: symbolic generalization, models,

values, and exemplars⁴ (Kuhn 1970, 182-187). Of these four the component having most relevance for Christian educators is "values" because it focuses on those attitudes or commitments which are deeply held among a wide range of practitioners for judging theories or paradigms. Within Christian education the most deeply held values have to do with being Christian and with being educators.

Kuhn stated that values for judging theory represent more of a broad range of accepted ideals within a larger community and that values provide a sense of community to the whole (Kuhn 1970, 184). "Values [are] . . . least subject to variation, both from . . . community to . . . community and over time" (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 148). Therefore, values provide the common core around which community members engage in their theorizing and practice; it provides the ". . . basis for the global evaluation of theories" (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 148).

Yet, a caution is necessary. Having common values for judging theory or paradigms does not necessarily imply that all community members will evaluate theories in the same way (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 150). A theologically-conservative educator, having a different concept of gospel from one who is more theologically-liberal, may evaluate a theory in terms of

⁴For an explanation of these four components see discussion above in chapter 2, pp. 64-65.

gospel quite differently. Second, different values within the same matrix may contradict each other in a given concrete situation requiring the "relative weighting" of values, but even these weightings differ from one community member to another (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 150). Therefore, it is essential to hold to a set of values which are clear and vital enough for the community as a whole.

What values can be considered necessary for Christian education in order to facilitate the development of a paradigm. Since Christian education embraces both theology and the social sciences, the values for Christian education must consider the values of each. Grenz, in addressing theology, relates the essential nature of how it is to be about its task. In summary, he relates that theological expression must be coherent, contextual, integrative, instructional, and comprehensive (Grenz 1994, 5-6). In the social sciences, the essential values drive social scientific expression to be systematic, empirically based, and focused upon social and psychological factors (Monette, Sullivan, and DeJong 1990, 5). Also, in terms of understanding the social sciences as science, Kuhn presented accuracy, consistency, broad scope, simplicity, and fruitfulness as being essential values (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 149).

In integrating the values from both theology and the social sciences, the components of a guiding principle for Christian education, as stated by Wyckoff, are insightful.

Wyckoff states that a guiding principle must be theologically and educationally adequate, simple, and clear (Wyckoff 1959, 87).

It must be theologically adequate. It must thus be theologically central and convincing. It must be able to stand up under the most searching theological criticism.

It must be educationally adequate. It must be informed by, and its implications developed in terms of, the educational disciplines.

It must be simple, in the sense that it may be comprehended in a single proposition, or a brief series of closely related propositions.

It must be clear in that it must be readily, easily, and unmistakably understandable. (Wyckoff 1959, 87-88)

For Christian education, it seems that Wyckoff presents an excellent focus for the values around which the community of Christian educators can agree and an adequate paradigm can develop. The primacy of the theological value provides the key or criteria to overcoming the ambiguity⁵ caused by the influence of the social sciences in education, a key that Miller also recognized in *The Clue to Christian Education* (1950), which is more thoroughly discussed in the next chapter.

A second value is that the guiding principle must be educationally adequate. If Christian education is to lead out individuals towards wholeness in Christ, then the guiding principle must be ". . . dynamically personal and transforming" (Wyckoff 1959, 92). It must be able to take into account the social and psychological nature of humanity

⁵See discussion below on the dual nature of Christian education, pp. 92-96.

and the human condition. It must be able to respond to educational questions so that implications can be drawn for educational practice. Therefore, it must be a principle that can readily integrate the values from the social sciences within a theological perspective.

The two other values presented by Wyckoff focus on simplicity and clarity. An effective guiding principle or paradigm must be easily expressed and clearly understood by the practitioners in a particular discipline. It would seem that values such as these are values around which consensus could be derived in Christian education--at least it provides a starting point.

Wyckoff, in relation to the four values, offered the Gospel as the guiding principle or paradigm that fulfills all these value criteria. Indeed, Wyckoff uncovered the essential role of the Gospel in guiding Christian education and its identity and purpose, which this study further elucidates by focusing on the Gospel as the gospel of the kingdom or reign of God.

Wyckoff, was moving in the right direction in contrast to many educators who merely recognize and utilize the Gospel as a core value in their educational theorizing, rather than as a fulfillment of a number of necessary values. What needs to be recognized for consensus is that the Gospel is a far better paradigm, than it is a solitary value. This is where some of the problem lies for Christian educators.

Educators do not have a comprehensive enough view of the gospel in relation to the Christian educational task.

Besides holding to core values, another aspect of consensus amongst a community is a common understanding of the problems which need addressing (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 134). Consensus helps a group give focused energy to a certain puzzle or problem which can be addressed in light of the same paradigm. In the midst of crisis focus is provided by examination of the chief anomalies which triggered the crisis (Hoyningen-Huene 1993, 233; cf. Kuhn 1970, 82). In Christian education one such focus might be to work together to develop a common paradigm to guide Christian education's identity and task, as Drov Dahl suggests.

A Challenge to Discover What Is Presently Normal

The present criticisms of Christian education in the literature point out that there is something that can be identified as normal; though presently there is strong dissatisfaction with whatever may be described as normal. The important question, then, arises as to what constitutes normal Christian education.

As Christian educators criticize the way Christian education is being done, hints are given as to what the precrisis or normal state of Christian education is. From these criticisms, six aspects of "normal Christian education" can be categorized.

Method Oriented

First, not a few Christian educators have criticized Christian education's reliance on a method- or technique-driven approach. Wilhoit relates that "the current focus on the urgent and the immediately relevant has too often deprived Christian educators of a needed sense of direction" with the implication that method has become the primary focus (Wilhoit 1986, 10). He continues, "method is no substitute for purpose; indeed, if method becomes the primary focus, Christian education is reduced to mere technique" (Wilhoit 1986, 10). Westerhoff, also has noted this tendency in Christian education within church contexts stating that the common state of affairs is that persons turn to "a host of panaceas in the form of methodologies or new variations of the church school . . . and denominations still strive to produce better curriculum resources" (Westerhoff 1976, 5). Phillip L. Kirsch further attests to a method-driven orientation in noting that Christian education is fad oriented indicated by ". . . pastors and teachers . . . intuitively seeking more effective methods" (Kirsch 1982, 47). These comments suggest that much of what guides the present practice of Christian education is not a guiding principle or an educational philosophy but a pragmatic concern for what seems to work in accomplishing the perceived task of educating.

What is lacking in this approach are criteria for judging the adequacy of a particular methodology. In fact a

method-driven Christian education may in some ways be regarded as pragmatism in which the sole criteria for truth is "what works," rather than "what is true" (Peterson 1986, 52-55). Though Christian education practitioners would not deny the concept of ultimate reality, a reliance on a method-driven approach comes close to placing too much emphasis on present experience for guiding action, rather than on an overarching paradigm dependent upon a conception of truth. Clearly, Christian educators ought to be critical of a method oriented Christian education.

A Schooling-Instructional Approach

In conjunction with a technique-driven, or method-oriented approach, there has been far too great an emphasis on a schooling-instructional approach in Christian education, as has been evident through the building of classrooms and educational wings in church facilities. Though this approach has provided helpful learning for many persons, educators have often been unable to see beyond a schooling model. The result has been that educators ". . . continue to let . . . [this approach] define our problem and establish the criteria for choosing questions to be addressed" (Westerhoff 1976, 7).

Richards also states that the traditional schooling model guides much of Christian education in the churches; however, it is inadequate to accomplish the church's educational task. His primary criticism is that the schooling

model has attempted to change persons only at the cognitive level, when effective Christian education needs to embrace the whole person. Richards suggests that the result of a schooling approach ". . . has been the development of a distorted faith: a faith that takes the form of beliefs isolated from the total personality" in which the Bible has been primarily regarded as content (Richards 1975, 71).

Furthermore, Jeff Astley relates that the schooling-instructional approach is criticized because it places

. . . an undue emphasis on the outer and cognitive aspects of Christianity, [it presents] a temptation to control and manipulate learners and to predict learning outcomes, or [it has] a concentration on the objective of the development of critical thinking at the expense of formation. (Astley 1994, 8)

Westerhoff contends that the schooling-instructional approach is one that is pervasive in society, and as a result has had a significant influence upon Christian education. In present society this approach has been rarely questioned and so in society and church it becomes ". . . functionally difficult to imagine or create any significant educational program outside [of] it" (Westerhoff 1976, 7-8).

Content-Focused

A third aspect of normal Christian education which arises out of the criticisms of educators is that it is too content-focused. This is not to indicate that content is irrelevant in Christian education, rather what is at stake is how content to be taught is understood. In being linked with

a method-oriented, schooling-instructional approach, content is perceived in a particular way, whereas in another paradigm, content would be perceived differently.

In the present practice of Christian education, Jim Parsons and Carl Leggo comment that "Sunday School leaves us more committed to knowing content than it does to changing the world" (Leggo and Parsons 1991, 50). While it is important to pass on the content of the Christian message in order to develop biblically literate Christians, it is fundamentally more important to develop followers of Christ who obey and live out the Christian message. Pazmiño relates that the weakness of an exclusively content approach to education includes the ". . . failure to consider absorption and retention of the material by students and the relationships of the content to current and future life," and also, "the acquisition of content may have no relationship with the life of persons and communities outside of the educational setting" (Pazmiño 1992, 20). Christian education must take on a more comprehensive approach in which learners ". . . discover a Christian perspective on various subjects, on themselves and others, and on their community and society" (Pazmiño 1992, 26).

This indicates that content, biblical content, is regarded as that which must be appropriated by learners in order for them to have the needed knowledge to live effectively and in conformity to their religious heritage.

The learner is viewed as a receptacle for the transmitted content, content which will shape their lives, and which must be retained for effective living. Becoming biblically literate is vital; yet there is more to living a Christian life than acquiring correct content. The principles of Scripture must be integrated with daily living.

Little Integration of
Faith with Life

A fourth concern, which is closely linked to the above concern, is a lack of integration of faith with all of life. Groome in *Christian Religious Education* (1980) remarks that there has been difficulty in translating belief into action because faith has been primarily regarded as rational assent to doctrine (Groome 1980, 60). The transmission of content does not equip persons to integrate what they have learned about faith with the daily activities of living. Groome, citing the words of the Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, concludes that "this split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age" (Groome 1980, 60). There is too little emphasis on *praxis* in much of normal Christian education. There is a dire need for *orthopraxis* in Christian education which focuses upon ". . . right practice and reflection on that practice of faith, and the discontinuity of

faithful responses to the challenges of contemporary life in contrast with perpetuating the status quo" (Pazmiño 1994, 24).

Gospel is Too Implicit

Fifth, the role of the Gospel is not fully recognized in the present practice of Christian education. As already stated, many educators regard the Gospel as a core value, as being essential for Christian education. However, the role of the Gospel is restricted. The Gospel either provides the specific content for the task of Christian education, or it is the basis for adapting other educational philosophies within a Christian context. In this latter sense, the Gospel is held as an implicit criterion in which aspects of educational philosophies which are compatible with the Gospel are embraced and those aspects which are not are rejected or realigned to be in harmony.

The problem is that Gospel is more than a core value. It represents a clustering of values; it provides more than content, it provides a worldview, a unique perspective. It provides a paradigm for life and for Christian education. Therefore, the Gospel must not remain implicit in educational understandings, but it must take on an explicit intentional role as that which drives and guides the Christian educational task.

A Fragmented Discipline

Sixth, Christian education is far too fragmented; it is not holistic enough. Downs mentions that research in Christian education has covered ". . . a broad sprawl of topics" which have broadened the field of Christian education, but have compromised the focus on what is central (Downs 1993, 7). Educators speak of developing foundations or implementing new strategies for Christian education, but they all add to the fragmentation of Christian education when they are proposed without reference to a unifying theme or guiding principle. Darcy-Berube relates that a holistic approach is more global and comprehensive and which ". . . can only be attained and deployed over a lifetime . . ." (Darcy-Berube 1995, 18). Such a definition suggests the need for a coming to consensus, rather than a decentralizing of efforts, if Christian education is to come to an understanding of its identity and task.

A Transmissive Paradigm

What do these six aspects indicate? What philosophical framework or paradigm do these aspects suggest for the present practice of normal Christian education? What a fragmented, method-driven, content-focused, schooling-instructional approach which takes the Gospel for granted and has little integration with life issues indicates is that Christian education is greatly dependent upon a transmissive approach in educating Christians for discipleship. Within the

transmissive approach the teacher is seen as a technician upon which learners are dependent to receive what is needed for learning. The goal of education is to inculcate within the learner a religious heritage, to be shaped or molded to conform to the values of the larger community. Such education can be characterized through manufacturing and consumer images, involving processes which are "factory-like," meaning that in the process of learning a person is given what is necessary so that they might turn out as they ought (Wilhoit 1986, 70-71).

A cursory examination of Christian education resources on the market reveals that a method-focused, transmissive dependent Christian education, emphasizing "how to do" Christian education, is indeed the shape of much of what is named as Christian education. Church programs rely heavily on guided techniques to teach the Bible to children, youth and adults, in the hope that Christian education will take place and that effective Christians will be produced. This one aspect of Christian education has been far too normal and frustration with this state of affairs has been one factor in igniting and fueling the crisis.

Paulo Freire criticized this same paradigm in education when he proposed a shift to education as *conscientization*. He described the transmissive paradigm as keeping people in oppression. He states,

the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness

which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. (Freire 1993, 54)

Christian educators' criticism of Christian education can be summarized in Freire's description of education that fails to empower.

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing of deposits. . . . But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. (Freire 1993, 53)

Therefore, to a large extent much of the current practice of normal Christian education, is described as being transmissive. It is apparent from the criticisms of Christian educators that this paradigm no longer leads to effective Christian education. Christian education must seek a new paradigm.

Christian educators are indeed in a time of extraordinary Christian education, attempting to reshape Christian education so that it will empower people for effective Christian living. The concept of paradigm can be helpful in uncovering much of the present malaise in Christian education, as well as open up doors for rethinking Christian education in relation to new paradigmatic structures.

Moving Towards A Resolution of The Crisis

Educators, dissatisfied with the present state of Christian education attempt to bring resolution to the crisis in order to reshape the way Christian education is understood and practiced. However, if resolution is to be effective, certain factors will need to be considered in order to construct an adequate paradigm to guide Christian education.

Dual Nature of Christian Education

The reason for the seeming inability to come to consensus in Christian education may have much to do with the dual nature of Christian education. Education is strongly dependent upon insights from psychology, sociology, and anthropology in order to develop its educational philosophies. The social sciences provide great understanding about the human situation which is necessary for developing educational practice, even Christian educational practice. Yet, as comments by Gutting, Eckberg and Hill indicate, it is very difficult to develop consensus or common paradigms within the social sciences.

Much of Christian education's recent history has focused on developing its social scientific aspect. While it is important not to disregard the role of the social sciences in Christian education (Downs 1993, 14); theology must be seen as a vital and central aspect of the nature of Christian education.

Miller (1950) argued that the clue to Christian education is theology; Wyckoff (1967) stated that Christian education is a theological discipline, and that a guiding principle needs to be theologically adequate (Wyckoff 1959, 87). This points out that Christian education is a discipline also dependent on theology. As Gutting noted regarding disciplines such as theology, which reside within the humanities, they represent fertile ground for the application of Kuhnian concepts.

A way through Christian education's crisis is to fully acknowledge that it embraces both the social sciences and theology, as two sides of the same coin. Of course, amongst Christian educators this relationship is obvious. However, reflection on social science does not always give insight into theology, nor does theological reflection always guide the application of the social sciences to educational method.

Ward mentions that there needs to be less dichotomizing and more integrating ". . . between 'things theological' and 'things sociological'" (Ward 1994, 125). The relation between the social sciences and theology needs to be more explicit. Yet, the question remains as to which one is primary or gives guidance to the other.

It is argued here that theology provides the directive focus for application of the social sciences and around which consensus for Christian education can be

obtained. Social sciences provide insight into the nature of the learner and the learning process, yet, theology gives direction as to how these insights are to be applied, as well as providing criteria for evaluating them in terms of a Christian worldview.

Miller elucidates the primary role of theology in its relationship with social science. He expresses that the social sciences have contributed greatly to the understanding of the educational process (Miller 1963, 45). Yet, his concern is that insights from the social sciences not be arbitrarily accepted, rather the value of these insights need to be evaluated in light of a Christian worldview. He states,

Christian educational theory must not be a footnote to secular [or social science] discoveries. The goals and values of Christian education are derived from Christian theology and not from secular [or social science] methodology. From a theological perspective educational theories and methods are to be evaluated and used within the framework of Christian faith. (Miller 1963, 45)

Therefore, though the social sciences infuse Christian education with valuable insight into the learner and learning, theology infuses purpose and direction for Christian education. Ward concurs stating:

Biblical studies and Christian theology set criteria for the conceptual and methodological shape of the field. Christian educators can pick and choose among the contending educational theories, but in order to be responsible to both academic rubrics and the theological tenets, the choice of theory must be in harmony with the rudiments of Christian values and ideation. (Ward 1995, 7)

Miller concludes, in light of the influence of social sciences on Christian educational theory, that ". . . Christian education comes back to theology for its primary content and its organizing principle" (Miller 1980, 180).

This is a position different of that espoused by Lee who expresses that the social sciences need to primary and provide the directive framework for religious, and presumably, Christian education. Two decades ago, he argued that religious education ought to move out of its strong dependence on theology and rely primarily on social science (Lee 1971, 226). For Lee, the teaching-learning process directed the course of education which ". . . theology is plugged into . . ." (Lee 1971, 229).

Yet, he concedes that theology provides a normative and guiding function, in the practice of religious education. However, he couches his concession in disclamatory language.

My own position is that although theology does indeed serve as a kind of norm for religious instruction, it is by no means the exclusive or even the primary norm. To hold, as does [James] Smart, that theology is normative over such obvious social-science sectors as the learning process is as theologically nonsensical as it is imperialistic. In terms of the many and appropriate theological product and process contents, theology surely exercises a kind of normative function. But this normative function, vital and indispensable though it is, is not the only major normative function in the work of religious instruction. What I am suggesting, therefore, is that theology does not have the normative function in religious instruction. Rather, it plays a normative role, a role which it shares with other key variables involved in the total process of religious instruction. (Lee 1971, 245-246)

He also relates that theology serves as a gyroscope to the educational process.

It is the totality of the process of religious instruction, then, which serves as the guiding norm; the various elements of theology which impinge upon religious instruction serve as a yeast and a wellspring, and yes, as a gyroscope in insuring that the work of religious instruction ever remains faithful to that norm. (Lee 1971, 246)

Lee recognizes the important role that theology plays in the practice of religious instruction or education; however he is reluctant to admit that theology ultimately serves the directive role in guiding and judging social science insights for education that is Christian.

The assumption of this research is that it is important to understand the dual nature of Christian education as both dependent upon the social sciences and theology, but it is equally important to understand the primary role which theology serves.

Need for Intentional Community

Communities share common paradigms that guide their work. Where consensus is lacking, however, what can be said about the community? Some might state, as Pazmiño has, that the discipline of Christian education is preparadigmatic because the community cannot agree on a common paradigm. This may remain the case as long as educators do not fully understand the dual nature of Christian education and give proper attention to the guidance given by a theological focus.

The strong acceptance of a paradigm for a paradigm community eliminates the immediate need for further discussion of foundational questions in order to focus on discipline development (Gutting 1980, 13). There seems to be a greater possibility that evangelical Christian educators could find common ground on theological issues than on social science issues. It is in becoming a community that is solidly grounded in theology that Gutting offers hope. He states that "there are non-scientific communities that embody a consensus strikingly similar to that found in the natural sciences" (Gutting 1980, 15), citing the Christian community specifically. Christian educators, through community-oriented dialogue have the opportunity to influence one another by commonly contributing to issues concerning the development of consensus or paradigm.

Be Explicit About the Gospel

The Gospel for evangelical Christian educators does provide a guiding principle of sorts for education. However, it remains far too implicit in discussions concerning educational issues. What needs to be seen is that Gospel is more than content, it also presents a structure, a paradigm for guiding Christian education, as well as other disciplines. The structure of the Gospel needs to be examined to see what it suggests for Christian education.

Christian education needs more than a course correction. What is needed is a paradigm shift, a fresh

understanding that will enable it to redefine itself and its purpose in light of a new paradigm. These three perspectives concerning the dual nature of Christian education, the need for intentional community, and the necessity of being explicit about the Gospel lay a further groundwork for moving out of the crisis in Christian education, and for developing a consensus in terms of a paradigm for Christian education. The next chapter focuses upon the relationship of theology to paradigm for understanding how Christian education can be moved towards an understanding of itself and its task.

CHAPTER 4

THE SHAPE OF A PARADIGM FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Kelsey conveys that "theology . . . attempts to bring our knowledge and experience of God into relationship with the rest of our knowledge" (Kelsey 1977, 139). Theology in relating all of life to the reality of Jesus Christ serves a paradigmatic function through which life, faith and practice is understood and lived. In relation to Christian education, Westerhoff and others have made clear that ". . . Christian education is dependent upon theological underpinnings" (Westerhoff 1976, 24). Christian education is a theological discipline insofar as one's theological presuppositions provide the paradigm for understanding both theory and practice (Westerhoff 1979, 11).

As already expressed, Lee contests such a perspective arguing that religious education is a branch of social science, rather than a branch of theology. However, Lee has not been able to repress the conviction that theology has a central role in the practice of religious or Christian education.¹ Miller notes the reason for this.

¹This led Lee to publish *Theologies of Religious Education*, edited by Randolph Crump Miller in 1995. In the Publisher's Introduction Lee states "it is my hope, as publisher of Religious Education Press, that *Theologies of*

Christian education involves a point of view, for it is a particular kind of education. It is not secular education with a halo, although the Christian cannot ignore secular insights. Christian education is concerned with the relevance of revealed Christian truth. Theology, which is the truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man, is the determining factor in the development of a philosophy of education, of techniques to be used, of goals to be attained, and of the nature of the learners to be taught. (Miller 1963, 5)

Miller has always been committed to the decisive role of theology in education and even recently affirmed that "theology . . . must be the presupposition of any curriculum" (Miller 1995, 4) in which "the objectives, theory, and methods of Christian education need to be undergirded and perhaps altered by a more self-conscious theological reconstruction" (Miller 1995, 4). Therefore, Miller concludes that "Christian theology is the primary source of Christian educational theory and procedure" (Miller 1963, 7).

Wyckoff, also, supported this theological connection by positing that the questions dealing with the six-fold curricular criteria of ". . . objective, scope, context, process, personnel, and timing" are theological questions, meaning that the biblical and theological disciplines need to be considered in deriving implications for Christian education (Wyckoff 1967, 393). Sara Little also noted that ". . . concern for theology is imperative for the educator, influencing how one selects content and chooses an appropriate

Religious Education will illumine whether or not theology is decisive in religious education theory and whether or not theology controls religious instruction practice" (Miller 1995, 3).

and consistent process for education" (Little 1990, 652). Further, Wilhoit averred that theology has a central and paradigmatic role in Christian education in that

. . . it most directly deals with the presuppositions lying behind Christian-education programs . . . [and that] certain theological beliefs provide the very foundations for Christian education as a discipline. (Wilhoit 1986, 27)

Reflecting on Wolsterstorff's discussion on control-beliefs (see below), Wilhoit states that

theological control-beliefs . . . affect one's conception of Christian education more than do findings or methods of any other academic discipline. By definition one's theology will serve as the primary control-beliefs in any theorizing about Christian education. (Wilhoit 1986, 28)

Though theology's connection with Christian education has largely been as content, its key connection has to do with the providing of structure and direction--a paradigm--for guiding Christian education's identity and task.

However, Little notes, that even though in the present decade educators recognize the role theology plays in Christian education, they do not give it a primary focus (Little 1995, 34). Also, Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller have stated that much of Christian education practice has neglected its theological focus having ". . . become a ministry to support and build up the church, rather than a theological discipline that struggles to understand how the faith is to be communicated so that it can be lived" (Seymour and Miller 1990, 22-23). They call for a ". . . more fundamental understanding of education . . ." which regards

teaching as a theological activity for the ". . . empowering of the people of God to be agents within the public world of God's presence" (Seymour and Miller 1990, 23). Educators have not thought enough about the relationship between education and theology. Likewise, theologians, though ". . . willing to talk about the life of the mind in the service of God . . . [have been] slow to venture into reflection about appropriate practices for implementing those values" (Little 1995, 34). Indeed there is a need, as Choan-Seng Song notes, for theology and education to ". . . join forces and construct education that is theologically informed and theology that is educationally viable . . ." (Little 1995, 34).

In recognizing that theology serves a paradigmatic role for Christian education several questions or guidelines need to be raised so that theology is enabled to function in this distinctive role in the formulation of Christian education's identity and the implementation of its practice. Norma Thompson by asking whether

. . . theology press[es] its claims upon the educational experience in such a way that education becomes more than the utilizing of the findings of the social sciences, philosophy, and general education to teach religious content (Thompson 1978, 619)

illuminates that the dialogue between education and theology must raise questions of a paradigmatic nature. What then is the relationship between education and theology to be? How does theology exert a paradigmatic influence upon education?

Theology and Paradigm

The concepts of theology and paradigm are not foreign to one another. In describing the concept of paradigm and the structure of scientific revolutions, Kuhn at times used theological language. John Watkins points out Kuhn's choice of language in drawing parallels between science and theology, relating that Kuhn twice made reference to practices in science which have similarity to practices in theology (cf. Kuhn 1970, 136, 166) (Watkins 1970, 33). Kuhn also drew parallels with theology and religion with references to initiation into a community (Kuhn 1970, 11, 47), commitments (Kuhn 1970, 5), conversion (Kuhn 1970, 151-152, 155, 158-159), and decisions made by faith (Kuhn 1970, 158). This presents an interesting juxtaposition of theology and the concept of paradigm in which each can be examined in light of the other.

Küng also, has pointed out similarities between theology and science in terms of the concept of paradigm. He states that a theological community, like the natural science community, displays a "normal theology," and an awareness of growing crisis as a starting point for change. Also, both in theology and in science new paradigms replace old ones; there is a dependency on extra-scientific factors, which can be described as conversion in the acceptance of a new paradigm, and that innovation results in the acceptance of a new paradigm (Küng 1991, 11-29).

The question then becomes, how does theology serve as a paradigm? Grenz and Olson explain the function of theology as directive, emulating the role of a paradigm.

Theology

. . . sets forth the uniquely Christian understanding of all reality as this understanding arises from the story about Jesus of Nazareth. . . .
 . . . [and] explores the significance of our beliefs or faith assertions for all of life. . . .
 [Therefore] by exploring these matters, theology provides Christians with needed direction as they seek to live as Christ's disciples. (Grenz and Olson 1996, 45)

In that theology is direction setting it serves a paradigmatic function by guiding the task of reflecting upon and living out the Christian life. Theology, then, provides a way to understand the present structure as well as pointing towards a goal or telos through Christ. Christian education, which is a leading out in the ways of Christ, is dependent upon theology for understanding its direction. Therefore, theology gives breadth and direction to the educational endeavor.

Wolterstorff's discussion on control and data beliefs further connects the concept of paradigm with theology and relates theology's paradigmatic function. Wolterstorff's language expresses ideas similar to those of Kuhn. Data beliefs can be correlated with Kuhn's concept of exemplars and control beliefs with his idea of disciplinary matrix or consensus. Wolterstorff states that "everyone who weighs a theory has certain beliefs as to what constitutes an acceptable *sort* of theory on the matter under consideration" (Wolterstorff 1976, 63). He concludes that ". . . the

religious beliefs of the Christian scholar ought to function as *control* beliefs within his devising and weighing of theories" (Wolterstorff 1976, 66) and that these control beliefs ought to arise out of an authentic Christian commitment to Christ and his teachings, as well as the Scriptures (Wolterstorff 1976, 67-71). In every sense these control beliefs serve as a paradigm guiding the Christian scholar to devise, embrace or reject theories based upon how well these theories fit or do not fit ". . . with the belief-content of his authentic commitment" (Wolterstorff 1976, 72).

David L. Wolfe builds on Wolterstorff by discussing the role of paradigm from an epistemological perspective as presenting a basis for understanding truth. Concepts such as Wolterstorff's control beliefs, or Frederick Ferré's matrix, or even his own expression of webs of belief, are vital aspects in patterning and making sense of experience. Wolfe notes that it is vital to seek out an interpretive scheme, meaning, a paradigm. "*The most general theoretical project is the production of a system of assertions which makes sense out of total experience*" (Wolfe 1982, 51). One's interpretive schemes help shape how reality is understood, how truth is understood (Wolfe 1982, 52). Interpretive schemes serve as a criteria for truth when they display

. . . consistency (freedom from contradiction within the interpretive scheme), *coherence* (internal relatedness of the statements within the interpretive scheme), *comprehensiveness* (applicability of the interpretive

scheme to all experience), and *congruity* (appropriateness of the interpretive scheme to the experiences it covers. (Wolfe 1982, 55)

Clearly theology provides an interpretive scheme in making sense of experience and reality. This theological role also carries over to the educational task. In Christian education theology can act as a paradigm to guide its self-understanding and activity.

Understandings of the Theology/ Education Relationship

There are at least five understandings of the relationship between theology and Christian education (Little 1976, 31). As will be evident, four of the five present theology as serving a paradigmatic role in relation to Christian education. First, theology can be regarded as providing the content of what is to be taught. Howard Grimes notes that ". . . the church has a faith to communicate, and this faith must be stated theologically" (Grimes 1966, 32). In this sense, Christian education is the servant of theology (Westerhoff 1979, 11) in which theological understandings of Scripture, expressed through writings and creeds, provide the community of faith with a common understanding, a sense of identity and mission (Little 1976, 31). Theology, then, has less to do with guiding the practice of Christian education than with dictating the content which is to be transmitted (Thompson 1978, 617). Groome notes that this approach is common in Christian educational circles. The relationship

between theology and education is mostly one-sided where theology is the purview of specialists who interpret the truth of Scripture and Christian education delivers the interpreted truth to the people (Groome 1980, 227-230) using the tools of social science.

Second, theology can be regarded as normative, providing a framework for judging educational content and practice (cf. Thompson 1978, 613, 614). Here, theology provides the norm or "the point of reference for both the what and the how of education" and ". . . theological presuppositions provide the screen for understanding both theory and practice" (Westerhoff 1979, 11). In other words, theology provides the ". . . criteria by which the ideas and the research from other disciplines are judged" (Thompson 1978, 614). The effectiveness of this approach depends on the particular theology chosen and

. . . how much room for the student's freedom and autonomy is made, the extent to which concepts based on experience may be developed, and whether or not the methodology will be one which insists on rational procedures, poetic insight, and a vision of reality as a whole. (Thompson 1978, 614)

In this relationship, theology is foundational to education providing criteria for making educational judgments and requires theology to be concerned with educational issues. Theology as normative acts as a grid to influence not only the content to be taught, but also the educational methods employed.

Third, theology may be regarded as irrelevant to the educational task. Education stands apart from the theological enterprise and itself seeks truth and meaning with no guidance from the theological discipline (Little 1976, 32). In this sense education is itself a discipline in which truth is discovered or uncovered, rather than the conduit through which truth is passed on. However, due to theology's stated role in Christian education, this approach has little relevancy for the practice of Christian education.

A fourth approach views the "doing" of theology as educating. This involves

. . . theologizing about the meaning of experience . . . --the assumption is that God is still active in human history and that the way to be 'educated' is to inquire about the meaning in the events, with reference to God's presence and activity in the past and his purpose for the future. (Little 1976, 32)

This approach recognizes that ". . . all human beings interpret their experiences in terms that might be called theological. They develop concepts of the truth about God in relation to human beings and to the universe" (Thompson 1978, 617). The role of education is to enable persons to

. . . become more skilled at using the religious heritage, . . . to reflect upon current experience, to discern the action of God in history as it is being written, and to examine their own religious ideas for adequacy in meeting life's problems, (Thompson 1978, 617)

Little regards this approach as similar to Miller's understanding of the relation between theology and education.

Daniel Day Williams also defines Christian education in terms of theological inquiry.

Since theology in the church is an interpretation of the Christian way of believing and living, all those who reflect critically upon Christian experience become theologians. Christian educators therefore not only draw upon theological insight provided by the tradition and thought of the church; but they help to create the body of materials and the reflective criticism which make a living theology possible. (Williams 1960, 52)

Therefore, Little concludes that "when this approach is operative, the educative process not only educates, but also develops a substantive contribution to the theological formulations of the church" (Little 1976, 33). In this relationship, education has a vital role in forming theology as well as theology forming education.

A fifth alternative is education in dialogue with theology. In this approach the educational and theological disciplines are independent and along with other disciplines respond to, influence, and inform one another (Westerhoff 1979, 11). Therefore, decisions regarding education emerge out of dialogue and these decisions are continually adjusted as the dialogue continues. Little notes that, in this perspective, theology may or may not serve in a normative fashion (Little 1976, 33). In this view, theology and education can be regarded as complementary tasks in which ". . . the theologian attempts to share . . . a way of thinking . . . on determined questions," whereas the Christian educator ". . . tries to make common the experience of God . . ." (Thompson 1978, 616).

Though there are other perspectives of the theology/education relationship, these five represent the most prevalent understandings. Little mentions that no one approach is "the" way to relate theology and education (Little 1976, 33), except for the approach in which theology is irrelevant because ". . . what happens may be education, but it is not likely to be religious education and certainly not Christian education" (Little 1976, 35). How do the four remaining approaches enable theology to serve in a paradigmatic function in Christian education?

It seems, at first glance, that the most relevant approaches which focus on theology's directive or paradigmatic function are those in which theology serves as norm, encourages theologizing, or enters into dialogue with education. These approaches seem to more readily engage the educator in intentional theological activity in relation to deriving implications for Christian education. However, theology serving as provider of content also fulfills a directive role in that it requires the educator to engage in appropriating and ordering the message of Scripture in a particular systematic structure or in accordance with a particular motif in order to coherently present the biblical content.

Little offers four propositions for consideration by Christian educators to guide the appropriating of theology in the educational task. The first deals with establishing a

theology in relation to the Gospel--a basis from which theology gains its direction for serving as a norm, and the remaining three deal with how theology provides direction to Christian education.

First, *"there is a gospel message which is independent of the various processes by which it is communicated . . ."* (Little 1976, 36). The central reality of the Gospel comes through various theological interpretations of the Gospel, whether a particular theology is expressed through preaching, drama, or even teaching. Theologies then become content to be taught in order to relay the central reality of the Gospel. The reality of the Gospel underlies the differences of expression; ". . . a reality which is not restricted by the words, which exists independently of them and yet is made partially available through them" (Little 1976, 36). The point of focus, as Wyckoff has also suggested, is to sense the guiding principle of the Gospel behind all theological expressions of it.

Second, *"the message, or content, to some extent at least, should help shape the process by which it is communicated"* (Little 1976, 37). Theology in this context serves in a fashion similar to a norm, though the theologian should not

. . . stand outside of the educative process and prescribe doctrinal formulations to be learned by young children irrespective of their level of cognitive development or to direct educators to function solely as technicians, where methodology is viewed as extrinsic to content. (Little 1976, 37)

Little also addresses the role of educator as theologian in this context, stating that the educator take on the stance of a theologian by raising questions about practices in order to reflect upon this educational practices theologically (Little 1976, 37).

Third, "*knowledge is comprehended, synthesized, internalized, changed and enlarged when it is integrally related to issues in human existence*" (Little 1976, 37). In this context the focus is upon "doing theology" in which the doing of theology involves a way of being educated as well as contributing to theology. As theology is done by applying biblical insights to present concerns, new insights are gained for understanding and guiding decisions regarding practice. In this sense, both theologians and educators serve to equip the church to function effectively within contemporary society. "The relationship [between theology and education, then] is organic and is possible only when theology and education are both viewed as dynamic, not static, processes" (Little 1976, 38).

Fourth, "*the theoretical work of the educator necessitates consideration . . . of contributions and insights from . . . theology . . .*" (Little 1976, 38). In this sense education is in dialogue with theology for the sake of mutual benefit. Theology provides the "clue" or direction for guiding Christian education's self understanding. Theology is regarded as a gift of the community of faith to education for

guiding its practice (Little 1976, 38-39). Little concludes that no matter what relationship between theology and Christian education is held as dominant, the health of religious or Christian education is intertwined with that in theology (Little 1976, 39).

Each of these approaches call for a tighter, more integrated relationship between theology and education, in which theology serves a greater role than merely being one foundation amongst others. Groome argues that

we must come to view theology and Christian religious education as equal partners in the vocation of the Christian community to live the faith it claims to believe and to form people in it. Without a relationship of mutual collaboration both enterprises are greatly impoverished. (Groome 1980, 230)

Clearly, theology in this relationship serves a paradigmatic role and each Christian educator must discover or develop a theology and assess it in terms of an understanding of the biblical message in order to guide their Christian educational practice. Groome denotes theology, serving as a paradigm in Christian education, as Christian education's metapurpose or as its ". . . overarching framework and end toward which our more immediate educational purpose is directed and within which it can be best understood" (Groome 1980, 34).

In this light, the contribution of Miller finally is situated in a context which enables a fuller understanding of the connection he was making in stating that the clue to Christian education is theology. Though Miller does not

utilize the term paradigm (he predates Kuhn's initial use of the term by over ten years), his expression of the role of theology in Christian education clearly displays a paradigmatic function. Miller speaks of theology as being prior to the curriculum, or placed in back of the curriculum (Miller 1950, 5). He expresses that "theology provides the perspective . . ." in the Christian educational endeavor (Miller 1950, 6).

Miller reiterated this understanding when he raised the question of the source of educational theory. He remarked that "if Christianity adopts secular theories without questioning them, it will be working for secular ends" (Miller 1963, 45). He further noted that any uncritical acceptance of a secular educational theory and its accompanying worldview will focus on a secular worldview rather than a Christian view of life (Miller 1963, 45). Though Miller has focused on process theology as being the relevant theology, and more recently on ecological theology (cf. Miller 1995), he nonetheless has correctly identified the essential role of theology as being paradigmatic in the Christian educational task, claiming that "the theology one holds determines many of the assumptions, goals, and methods of religious education" (Miller 1977, 38).

In the past three decades, the insights of Miller, and Wyckoff have been eclipsed by religious and Christian education's predominant focus on the social sciences. It is

time to refocus upon theology and to elevate it to a paradigmatic role in expressing Christian education's identity and task. Christian education, therefore, should utilize theology as normative in guiding its self-identity and practices, and contribute to the theological dialogue, as well as develop and communicate the biblical and theological content of Scripture for enabling Christians to live their faith in the midst of life. But which theology? The clue to this theology has been presented by Wyckoff and Little. An adequate theology for Christian education must have the Gospel at its center. This Gospel is the Gospel of the kingdom or reign of God.

Excursus: Educator as Theologian

The Christian educator is not merely a conveyor of theological insight, but is also responsible for contributing to the theological dialogue. C. Ellis Nelson relates that "ministers and educators are theologians because they interpret the faith as they share it" (Nelson 1984, 15). Grimes notes that "the theological conversation is a continuous task of the church, and the Christian educator ought to be actively engaged in it" (Grimes 1966, 40).

As the educator embarks on their role as theologian, Nelson notes that their first concern needs to be the development of an adequate theology (Nelson 1984, 16) and secondly, how they function as theologians (Nelson 1984, 15).

Having a theology does not mean that one has completed an assignment--it means that one has obtained certainty enough to offer his or her beliefs to others. It also means that the educator should exhibit in his or her person characteristics of one who thinks about faith. That means the educator continues to learn, to read, to consult theologians, and to be open to the leading of God's Spirit. The hardest part of this personal quest for meaning is integration. Because theology is mental, there is always the temptation to keep it segregated in the conscious part of the mind rather than to relate our theological insight to our conduct.

Educators who are living examples of persons struggling for faith in order to find meaning in life are a great inspiration to their students. Educators who refuse to think about faith and simply retail preformulated statements about what people thought in former times are stunting the spiritual life of their students. (Nelson 1984, 16)

Patricia O'Connell Killen and John De Beer offer insights into the theologizing process. They express that theologizing involves persons in conversation between their religious heritage and experience in order to ". . . access the Christian tradition as a reliable source of guidance . . . to discover the meaning of what God is doing now in our individual and corporate lives" (Killen and De Beer 1994, viii). Evangelicals would stress not only accessing the tradition, but more importantly, accessing the Scriptures. Current practice in any discipline can benefit from theological reflection, which brings questions and experience to the Scriptural tradition in order to ". . . confirm, challenge, clarify, and expand how we understand our own experience . . ." (Killen and De Beer 1994, viii).

The question arises as to how the educator is to be engaged in the theologizing task. First, the educator must

begin with the biblical material (cf. Carson 1992, 79-82). Rather than starting with other philosophies, and adapting them in accordance with gospel, educators need to bring their educational questions and concerns into dialogue with Scripture. In relation to this, Grant Osborne states that a vital step involves reconstructing one's own preunderstanding of the doctrine or theme being examined. In so doing the theologian brings to the surface their own preunderstandings so that these understandings can be used ". . . positively to study the evidence rather than negatively to predetermine . . . [one's] conclusions" (Osborne 1991, 315).

Third, the theologian must exegete scriptural passages in their contexts in order to derive the author's intended meaning (Osborne 1991, 315). Fourth, it is also important to recognize that Scripture has an inherent unity in it and this unity must be sought out; rather than making the suggestion that Scripture is self-contradictory (Carson 1992, 86). Next, in developing a theology, the theologian must repeatedly judge their formulations in light of exegesis of the biblical text, biblical theology, historical theology, and other contemporary theological models with the final authority resting with the Scriptures alone (Carson 1992, 90-92, cf. Osborne 1991, 315-316). Finally, the theologian formulates an understanding that is in tune with contemporary culture. Formulation of theology, though it does not necessarily change the content, ought to be expressed in new forms understandable

to the present culture. Theological formulation should also seek to bring balance to competing theological understandings (Osborne 1991, 316-317).

Such guidelines enable the Christian educator to engage in the theologizing process. In this way, Christian educators not only dialogue with other theologians, but contribute to the ongoing theological development of the church. Further, the educator as theologian, both by example and through demonstrating the process of theological inquiry, leads learners into theological inquiry so that each person is equipped to think and live theologically and Christianly as salt and light in the world and in order to engage culture as followers of Christ Jesus.

Why the Reign of God?

In the first chapter two broad arguments were made as to why the biblical motif of the reign of God ought to be considered as a viable paradigm for Christian education. Namely (a) a growing number of Christian educators are recognizing that the biblical motif of the reign of God is the central message of Christ's ministry, and so suggest that it be considered as a paradigm for understanding the nature and purpose of Christian education, and (b) it is a motif central to the theological task of the 20th century; Ladd stated that "modern scholarship is quite unanimous in the opinion that the Kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus" (Ladd 1974, 57). Groome adds that the reign of God ". . . is seen by much

contemporary scholarship as the central symbol for understanding the meaning and purpose of Christian faith" (Groome 1991, 15). The Gospel of the reign of God is a paradigm which has always been present, but has been kept implicit. It, therefore, needs to be made more explicit to provide necessary content and to guide the identity and practice of Christian education.

However, the Gospel of the reign of God, also, needs to be considered because, as is suggested here, it provides a more comprehensive perspective in dealing with the problems inherent in Christian education's understanding of its identity, purpose, and practice. Though there have been differing proposals presented for dealing with Christian education's crisis, none are as adequate as the Gospel of the reign of God. Such a central theme in the ministry of Christ, in the message of Christ, in the identity of Christ is one which needs to be carefully examined in order to understand how it affects theology, the Christian life, and not least, Christian education.

However, not all theologies adequately focus upon the reign of God.² Granted, each may have an implicit understanding of it, even an explicit expression regarding the

²In *Theologies of Religious Education* (1995) thirteen theologies are presented and only liberation theology deals with the motif of the reign of God. In other works, such as *Theological Approaches to Christian Education* (1990), the theological concept of the reign of God is not even mentioned.

role of the reign of God, but in no theology does the reign of God exert a central influence, except perhaps liberation theology. Schipani states:

Liberation theology has recaptured the centrality of the biblical symbol of the reign (or commonwealth) of God and has suggested its fresh appropriation in the context of a keen interest in the person and ministry of Jesus according to the gospels. This theology thus underscores the political and eschatological dimensions and import of the Christian gospel in terms of a normative prophetic and utopian vision. (Schipani 1995, 292)

Seymour and Miller, speaking of liberation theology, express the goal of liberation to be the helping of ". . . people [to] embody a life-style of Christian participation in efforts to transform and humanize the world" (Seymour and Miller 1990, 21).

Yet, even liberation theology does not offer a balanced approach to understanding the reign of God. In relation to the tensions of present versus not-yet, social versus individual, divine action versus human action, liberation theology focuses upon the present, social and human action dimensions in understanding the reign of God. What is required is a more balanced approach in paradigmatically utilizing the reign of God for Christian education.

A theology of the reign of God serves as an effective guiding principle for Christian education as outlined by Wyckoff.³ First, the motif of the reign of God is theologically adequate in that it is central to the Scriptural

³See above on guiding principle, pages 79-81.

message and the ministry and message of Jesus Christ. It is foundational for understanding the gospel and the continued activity of God in human history. The gospel of the reign of God expresses ". . . the very soul of theology" (Wyckoff 1959, 92). Second, it is also educationally adequate. Jesus taught concerning the rule of God and how the rule of God touched the lives of people. The inbreaking of the reign of God in Jesus Christ confronts people, engenders a decision, calls for a repentance and a turning to God with the result that persons can grow in wholeness in response to the message of Jesus Christ. Educational implications can be drawn from an understanding of the reign of God so that human beings can learn and grow in light of the reality of the presence of God. The reign of God at its core is ". . . indispensably educational" (Wyckoff 1959, 92) because it leads people out towards ultimate reality and fullness. Third, it is simple. Even though its interpretation is multi-faceted and involves various tensions (Perrin 1976, 31), the idea of God exercising rulership over all creation, is one that can be easily ". . . comprehended in a single proposition" (Wyckoff 1959, 88). Fourth, the motif of the reign of God is clear; the concept of God's rulership is easily and readily understandable at many levels, even though there is always something more to uncover about the mystery of the reign of God. The reign of God was clearly expressed through the parables which Jesus declared, yet those who had ears to hear were able to uncover greater

depths of understanding. Wyckoff, in speaking of the gospel of the kingdom, expresses that ". . . Christian education can center in the gospel and use the gospel as its guiding principle with assurance of its complete adequacy, both theologically and educationally, and with assurance of its simplicity and clarity" (Wyckoff 1959, 92).

The reign of God as a comprehensive perspective is also supported indirectly by the recent work of Pazmiño. In recent years he has begun to affirm the need for a paradigm to guide Christian education, and he outlines the shape that such a paradigm must take in order to be a viable paradigm. He states:

The paradigm embraces multicultural and multicontextual realities. It embraces the whole people of God as active and contributing participants. It consciously seeks to be integrative and holistic of previous theological polarizations that have separated clergy and laity, continuity and liberation, tradition and transformation, conservative and liberal, ecumenical and evangelical, public and private, the church and the world, the sacred and the secular. This paradigm wrestles with the implications of Christ's ministry for all of life while recognizing the contradictions of being *in* the world and not *of* it as a disciple of Jesus the Christ in a religiously pluralistic world and seeking to affirm God's universal truth whatever its source. The new paradigm accepts the challenge of speaking the truth in love while working for justice, righteousness, and peace in personal and corporate life. Finally, it recognizes the essential working of God's grace while seeking to express faith through a multitude of works and ministries. (Pazmiño 1994, 102-103)

Pazmiño's insights are indeed relevant and the factors he describes as necessary for a paradigm for Christian education correlate well with the proposal of the reign of God as a paradigm for educating Christianly.

In order to begin developing a theology of the reign of God, this study now turns to the theologies of Ladd and Snyder, as well as the contributions by others, to develop understandings of the reign of God in light of its interpretive tensions.

CHAPTER 5

A THEOLOGY OF THE REIGN OF GOD

As noted by Wyckoff, Little, and others, the central pivot around which theological formulations for Christian education ought to rotate is the Gospel, or more, specifically, the Gospel of the reign of God. Yet the reign of God ". . . is a tensive symbol, a multifaceted reality . . . that cannot be adequately grasped in a single formula or definition (Meier 1994, 452). Therefore, one approach in theologizing about the reign of God is to consider its tensions. This study relies on the insights of Ladd and Snyder to set the agenda for discussion. The tensions examined are (1) present and not yet, (2) human action and divine action, and (3) individual and social. In chapter six, summary statements on the reign of God are juxtaposed with Wyckoff's educational categories in order to present implications for education that is Christian.

Interpreting Tensions

Norman Perrin notes that the meaning of the kingdom of God ". . . could never be exhausted, nor adequately expressed by any one referent" (Perrin 1976, 31). This creates difficulty for understanding, for as Ladd stated,

"there are few themes so prominent in the Bible which have received such radically divergent interpretations as that of the Kingdom of God" (Ladd 1959, 15). Often interpreters have opted to highlight one dimension of the tension over against the other. However, this has resulted in one-sided theologies of the kingdom, such as, an apocalyptic kingdom of the future, or a kingdom which is solely identified with the Church, or a kingdom inaugurated by human action which transforms present society.¹ Two different perspectives on the need for balance in interpretation are presented by Snyder and Mary Elizabeth Moore.

Snyder argues for balance.

Theologies of the Kingdom which dissolve these tensions, opting wholly for one side or the other, are to that degree unbiblical. A biblically faithful and . . . useful theology . . . will in some way maintain and live with these polarities. (Snyder 1993, 1)

Therefore, it seems more responsible to approach these tensions with a "both/and" rather than an "either/or" construct--meaning that somehow both dimensions of the polarity are vital in relation to a biblical or theological understanding of God's reign. However, Moore, in presenting her model of continuity and change for Christian religious education, suggests that the practice of maintaining balance

¹For a more detailed discussion of various interpretations of the kingdom of God see Ladd (1952) *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God*, 25-60; Ladd (1974a) *The Presence of the Future*, 3-42; also Willis (1987) *The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation*, 1-65, and Meier (1994) *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Vol.2, 237-506.

between tensions tends to dilute interpretation. She proposes that ". . . attempts at delicate balancing . . ." be abandoned and that tensions can only be resolved when both sides of the tension are maximized (Moore 1983, 20). In applying Moore's insight to interpreting the reign of God, this study focuses upon maximizing each aspect of the tension in order to uphold the importance of each polarity.

The Tension Between Present and
Not Yet in the Reign of God

Peter Toon remarks that "Jesus never gave any systematic teaching on the subject of the kingdom, and he used a cluster of images or models to convey his message" (Toon 1980, 44). These images expressed by Jesus give rise to the tension between already and not yet concerning the reign of God. Meier indicates that Jesus' focus was predominantly on future, however, he acted out his message and explained these actions in terms of the kingdom having already come (Meier 1994, 452). Christ spoke of the kingdom of God as future (cf. Matt 6:10, 7:21, 18:3, 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 14:15; 22:16-18), yet, also spoke of the reign of God as present (cf. Matt 4:17, 11:12, 12:28; Mark 1:15, 9:1; Luke 17:20-21). As stated above, many have attempted to deal with the confusion of this tension by focusing on one aspect in contrast to another. Snyder notes that the church in its theological discussion concerning the reign of God has ". . . disagreed not so much over *what* God is doing in the world but over *when* he will do

it" (Snyder 1975, 155). Ladd proposed a mediating position between the eschatological and realized interpretations of the reign of God by proffering the concept of the presence of the kingdom while also upholding its future inbreaking (Epp 1987, 35-37). It is a position which has been largely accepted in the latter half of this century in which the hope of the kingdom of God is regarded as ". . . neither entirely present nor entirely future. The kingdom of God (the uniting of all things in Jesus Christ) is *now here*, is *coming* and *will come*" (Snyder 1975, 156).

Ladd noted that scripture itself gives no single understanding of the reign of God in relation to this tension. It is described as being both future when redeemed humanity will ". . . realize the blessings of His Kingdom (reign) in the perfection of their fullness" (Ladd 1959, 22), and also present--". . . a realm of spiritual blessing into which we many enter today and enjoy in part but in reality the blessing of God's Kingdom (reign)" (Ladd 1959, 22, 23). Ladd related that many have expressed that ". . . the *basileia* is the 'eschaton'--the final eschatological order" (Ladd 1974, 63). If this is the case, Ladd noted, then it would be difficult to maintain an understanding of the reign of God as both future and present. However, he showed that the Hebrew word (*malkuth*) has the connotation of reign, rule or dominion and that "in late Judaism, the Kingdom of God means God's rule or sovereignty" (Ladd 1974, 63). It is this understanding of

basileia which expresses the dual focus of God's reign, that ". . . God is now the King, but he must also become King" (Ladd 1974, 63).

The Reign of God as Future

Snyder avers that it is the consensus amongst Christians that ". . . God is bringing history to a cosmic climax" (Snyder 1975, 155). In this climax "God the King will conquer and destroy all his enemies" (Snyder 1977, 49). Understanding God's reign as eschatological or future focuses upon the end of this present age and the inauguration of the Age to Come in which the final and total destruction of the devil and his angels will take place, with redeemed humanity living in fellowship with God free from the influence of evil (Ladd 1974, 64). Indeed,

the Bible conceives of the entire sweep of human history as resting in the hand of God, but it looks for the final realization of God's Kingdom in a realm 'beyond history,' i.e., in a new and different order of existence" (Ladd 1959, 24).

Ladd attested to the future reality of the reign of God by contrasting the age to come with the present. He noted that ". . . the character of This Age [is] to choke the working of the Word of God. The spirit of the Age is hostile to the Gospel" (Ladd 1959, 29). He made clear that the full reality of God's reign is clearly future.

The New Testament sets The Age to Come in direct opposition to This Age. The present age is evil, but the Kingdom of God belongs to the Age to Come. The Kingdom of God, both as the perfect manifestation of God's reign

and the realm of completed redemptive blessing, belongs to The Age to Come. (Ladd 1959, 31)

Ladd further asserted,

thus we find that the Kingdom of God belongs to The Age to Come and is set in sharp contrast to This Age. In This Age there is death; in the Kingdom of God, eternal life. In This Age, the righteous and the wicked are mixed together; in the Kingdom of God, all wickedness and sin will be destroyed. For the present, Satan is viewed as the "god of this age"; but in The Age to Come, God's Kingdom, God's rule will have destroyed Satan, and righteousness will displace evil. (Ladd 1959, 34)

Ladd, in discussing the Age to Come, pointed out that it refers not to a different world (*kosmos*), but to a different age (*aion*). He related that Scripture makes clear that the biblical language deals with ". . . two periods of time, not to two worlds" (Ladd 1959, 27; cf. discussion 25-39). The significance of this is that the term *kosmos* refers to ". . . the sum and total of everything constituting an orderly universe" (Ladd 1959, 25), while the term *aion* refers not to order or structure, but ". . . designates a period of time . . ." (Ladd 1959, 26). What is inaugurated in the Age to Come is not a new order or structure of things different from that which God originally created, since God has not been dethroned, though Satan exercises power as the god of this age (Ladd 1959, 31), rather it is a redeeming of humanity and restoration of creation to the original order so that creation lives in harmony with God in unending time in the Age to Come.

This realm beyond history, or the Age to Come is inaugurated by the Second Coming of Christ and the resurrection from the dead. Ladd remarked that the disciples'

question to Jesus in Matt 24:3 concerning the sign of Christ's coming and the close of the age referred not to the timing of the destruction of the world, but rather the timing of ". . . the consummation of This Age which will be followed by another age" (Ladd 1959, 27). Further, the resurrection from the dead will bring the present age to a close and inaugurate the Age to Come. Redeemed humanity will enter into the Age to Come through the resurrection in which humanity will no longer be subject to death (Ladd 1959, 27). So Ladd stated, "this Age had its beginning with creation, but The Age to Come will go on endlessly, forever" (Ladd 1959, 28).

This future focus gives hope to the followers of Christ as they look toward the second coming of Christ to bring God's reign to culmination. Both these realities provide hope for the people of God in the midst of this life (Snyder 1991, 38,39). This hope relates to the outcome of history by revealing that human history is moving towards a telos, a goal which God has decreed (Snyder 1991, 148). This hope of the coming kingdom gives strength and certainty to the community of faith until God's reign is fully realized. By understanding God's reign in its future orientation, one comes to regard human history as moving decisively forward, directed by a goal which the vision of God's reign provides.

Therefore, Snyder comments

. . . that *history* is teleological--not random, meaningless, or merely cyclical. Some fundamental story or drama is unfolding--not blindly or by some sort of progressive evolution, but precisely as God's activity in

history through those who acknowledge and serve him, and even through those who don't, as God makes the wrath of humankind praise him (Ps. 76:10). (Snyder 1991, 148)

This *telos* sheds light on the impact the future reality of God's reign has on the present. Anthony Buzzard views the future kingdom as determining the present reality. He argues that ". . . the *future* Kingdom is primary, and the present aspect is derived from it" (Buzzard 1992, 103). Jesus' ministry represented the reality of the reign of God working in advance of its future culmination (Buzzard 1992, 103). It is the future hope, the future reality which determines the course of events, of history. The reign of God in its future reality reaches back, as it were, into the present to direct and guide the present towards the future *telos*.

This understanding is built on insights offered by Wolfhart Pannenberg. He states that ". . . in the ministry of Jesus the futurity of the Reign of God became a power determining the present" (Pannenberg 1969, 133). Essential in this understanding is one's obedience to God, in which obedience is a ". . . turning to the future of the Reign of God" (Pannenberg 1969, 133). Yet, Pannenberg adds that when such turning through obedience occurs,

. . . there God already reigns unconditionally in the present, and such presence of the Reign of God does not conflict with its futurity but is derived from it and is itself only the anticipatory glimmer of its coming" (Pannenberg 1969, 133).

He concludes that ". . . the future [of God's reign] *wills* to become present; it tends towards its arrival in a permanent present" (Pannenberg 1969, 143).

Ladd's discussion concerning history and eschatology in *The Presence of the Future* lends to a similar perception. In speaking of the prophetic promise of the reign of God, he stated that the prophets interpreted ". . . the present in light of the future" (Ladd 1974a, 66). He described the Olivet Discourse as ". . . an interweaving of the historical and the eschatological [in which] . . . it is difficult to say where the historical leaves off and the eschatological begins . . ." (Ladd 1974a, 323). Though Ladd did not directly espouse an understanding of the future effecting the present, because he followed Oscar Cullmann's understanding of time and eternity as linear (cf. Ladd 1959, 25), he nonetheless seemed to indicate that not only God's continuous reign, but also its future aspect effected the present.

He stated that "the eschatological consummation is linked together with what God is doing in history in Jesus, especially in his death" (Ladd 1974a, 325), and that "Christ's resurrection is not an isolated event; it is in fact an eschatological occurrence which has been transplanted into the midst of history" (Ladd 1959, 44). Ladd argued that Jesus' message declared ". . . the *eschatological Kingdom has itself invaded history in advance*, bringing to men in the old age of sin and death the blessings of God's rule" (Ladd 1974a, 326).

Ladd seemed to phrase the tension of the future with the present in terms of one redemptive event taking place in two parts (Ladd 1974a, 322).

Yet, Ladd added a further dimension to what Buzzard, and even Pannenberg, expressed which gives fullness and completion to an understanding of this tension of future and present. Not only does the future consummation of God's reign effect the present, but also ". . . *the very coming of the apocalyptic Kingdom is made dependent upon what God is doing in history through the mission and death of Jesus*" (Ladd 1974a, 325). This is of vital importance because it points out that God in Christ is bringing about the future reality. The good news is that Jesus life, death and resurrection is determinative of God's activity in history. There is no separating the present from the future, nor the future from the present in the outworking of God's reign.

A dominant theme in Snyder regarding the telos of God's reign is the future hope of reconciliation. This hope ". . . has been a pointer beyond this life to something more ultimate and complete--not mere spiritual survival only but a final cosmic reconciliation" (Snyder 1991, 25). The reign of God will bring about final reconciliation in which there will be a new heaven and a new earth (Snyder 1991, 39). Though God's work of reconciliation has begun in Christ, this work is not experienced in its total fullness. Now is only the beginning of the unfolding of God's reconciliatory work which

will be culminated at Christ's future return (Snyder 1977, 50). Snyder expresses that redeemed humanity now experiences a substantial healing in the areas affected by sin, but at the consummation there will be a total healing (Snyder 1977, 50).

The promise of God's reign is ". . . a new social order, a reconciled humanity and environment based on love, justice, holiness, and peace (*shalom* in the biblical sense)" (Snyder 1991, 148). *Shalom* represents God's eschatological purpose for humanity and creation. It is the restoration of the created order; the reconciliation of all things through Christ. God's reign encompasses every area of life and will effect reconciliation in all creation. Snyder reiterates that "God's plan is to 'unite,' 'reconcile,' or 'bring together under one head' all things in Jesus Christ, as Paul repeatedly says (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20; II Cor. 5:19)" (Snyder 1991, 149). In essence what is fulfilled is *shalom* in which peace, health and harmony will be present (Snyder 1991, 149). Snyder relates that reconciliation is integral to God's cosmic design with the center of that design focusing on humanity's personal reconciliation to God through Christ, as well as encompassing the broader scope of the reconciliation of all things (Snyder 1977, 25, cf. also Snyder 1975, 155).

The concept of *shalom* is a Hebraic term, which has as its counterpart in the New Testament the term *eirene*. Both these terms connote peace, wholeness, and completeness. The source of *shalom* or *eirene* is God alone, and is inclusive of

every gift given by God in all areas of life. Those who participate in this peace experience the salvation of God (Beck and Brown 1976, 777). Schipani describes shalom as

. . . a broad, complex concept which connotes a condition of well-being resulting from sound relationships among people and between people and God. It covers human welfare, health, and well-being in both material and social dimensions. Peace, justice, and salvation are essentially synonymous terms for the condition of wellness generated by right (i.e., according to God's will or intention) social relationships. (Schipani 1988, 110)

This shalom or reconciliation is situated in Christ, for it is in and through him that God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself (cf. Col 1:19-20). The New Testament makes clear that this peace is both the gift of the Father and the Son and is ". . . obtained and maintained through communion with Christ (Jn. 16:33; Phil. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:14)" (Beck and Brown 1976, 781). This reconciliation was effected by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and is present to redeemed humanity in the present so that their life is one of salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, justice, and peace.

Humanity participates in this future reconciliation by responding to the message of Jesus Christ in the present as Jesus' conversation with the rich young man in Matthew 19 and the account in Mark 10:30 depict. Those who yield themselves to Christ in this age will receive eternal life in the Age to Come, in the reign of God. Eternal life, the reign/kingdom of God, salvation, the Age to Come are all expressions of the same reality and "they are the promise of the future for those

who in This Age have become disciples of Christ" (Ladd 1959, 33).

The Reign of God as Present

God's reign was manifest in the person and mission of Christ, who regarded ". . . his ministry as a fulfillment of the Old Testament promise in history, short of the apocalyptic consummation" (Ladd 1974, 65). The Synoptic Gospel understanding of Jesus' ministry as being a fulfillment of the Old Testament promises is especially clear through Luke 4:21 and Matt 11:2-6. In the Lukan passage, Jesus declared, after reading from Isa 61:1-2 regarding the coming of the messiah, that "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." The Matthean passage verbalizes John the Baptist's doubts concerning Jesus, and after sending his disciples to Jesus, Jesus responded by citing the messianic prophecy in Isa 35:5-6, that indeed the prophecy was being fulfilled (Ladd 1974, 65). Jesus, throughout his ministry, made known the presence of the reign of God through the healing of disease, proclaiming the news of the kingdom, and casting out of demons. God, through Christ, had begun his work of conquering sin, Satan and death in the present (Snyder 1975, 155).

Ladd stated that specifically it is the accounts of Jesus' casting out of demons which most clearly indicated the presence of God's reign. It is Jesus' action of casting out demons that ". . . declares that he has invaded the kingdom of Satan and has "bound" [Matt 12:29] the strong man" (Ladd 1974,

66). Ladd summarized the importance of the exorcism accounts.

Instead of waiting until the end of the age to reveal his kingly power and destroy satanic evil, Jesus declares that God has acted in his kingly power to curb the power of Satan. In other words, God's Kingdom in Jesus' teaching has a twofold manifestation: at the end of the age to destroy Satan, and in Jesus' mission to bind Satan. Before Satan's final destruction, men may be delivered from his power. (Ladd 1974, 66)

What this expresses about the present reign of God, according to Ladd, is that though God's reign is present, this is ". . . not the eschaton, but rather the kingly power of God attacking the dominion of Satan, and delivering men from his power of evil" (Ladd 1974, 66). Further, "the whole mission of Jesus, including his words, deeds, death, and resurrection, constituted an initial defeat of satanic power that makes the final outcome and triumph of God's Kingdom certain" (Ladd 1974, 66). In this, Satan is still able to exert power, but the reality of the situation is that ". . . his power has been broken" (Ladd 1974, 66).

It is this understanding that led Ladd to maintain the tension between the eschaton and the present. In modifying a model presented by Gerhardus Vos, Ladd remarked that

. . . the Age to Come moves on a higher level than this age, and that the time between the resurrection and the parousia is a time of the overlapping of the two ages. The church lives "between the times"; the old age goes on, but the powers of the new age have irrupted into the old age. (Ladd 1974, 69)

Ladd, went on to express, that "there is a twofold dualism in the New Testament: God's will is done in heaven; his Kingdom

brings it to earth. In the Age to Come, heaven descends to earth and lifts historical existence to a new level of redeemed life (Rev. 21:2-3)" (Ladd 1974, 69). Yet, also God's reign was active in the Old Testament in which God ". . . was acting in his kingly power to deliver or judge his people. However, in some real sense God's Kingdom came into history in the person and mission of Jesus" (Ladd 1974, 69). What Ladd pointed out in his model is that God's reign has been active since creation and has remained active even in the midst of humanity's rebellion and sinfulness. Yet, it is awaiting full expression through the inauguration of the Age to Come in the future.

In that Jesus proclaimed and demonstrated the present inbreaking of God's reign in history, the promised blessings of God's reign are now to some degree present as well. Ladd stated that in the present reality of God's reign a new reality invaded the sinful state of affairs. The presence of the reign of God ". . . demands a radical reaction" (Ladd 1974, 71) by which persons are called to enter into this presence through placing their dependence upon Christ Jesus. Ladd described the present blessing of God's reign manifesting itself as a gift of salvation, forgiveness, and righteousness.

Salvation in the eschaton means the final deliverance from mortality and perfect fellowship with God (Ladd 1974, 73-74). Yet, salvation was also present, or began

in the present and reached into the future (Ladd 1974, 75). Forgiveness was foretold by the prophets as a gift of the eschaton, yet, this gift was manifest in the ministry of Jesus as he forgave sinners (Ladd 1974, 77). Righteousness is not so much an ethical quality, ". . . but a right relationship, the divine acquittal from the guilt of sin" (Ladd 1974, 79) which takes on a reality in the present.

Jesus' ministry invited persons to experience the reality of salvation in the present, and many of his parables were expressive of this (cf. Luke 15). Indeed,

the mission of Jesus brought not a new teaching, but a new event. It brought to men an actual foretaste of the eschatological salvation. Jesus did not promise the forgiveness of sins; he bestowed it. He did not simply assure men of the future fellowship of the Kingdom; he invited men into fellowship with himself as the bearer of the Kingdom. He did not merely promise them vindication in the day of judgment; he bestowed upon them a present righteousness. He not only taught an eschatological deliverance from physical evil; he went about demonstrating the redeeming power of the Kingdom delivering men from sickness and even death.

This is the meaning of the presence of the Kingdom as a new era of salvation. To receive the Kingdom of God, to submit oneself to God's reign meant to receive the gift of the Kingdom and to enter into the enjoyment of its blessings. The age of fulfillment is present, but the time of consummation still awaits the age to come. (Ladd 1974a, 216-217)

Further, this response to God's reign necessitated a personal participation requiring repentance, faith, and obedience (Snyder 1991, 150). Ladd declared that Jesus integrated the proclamation of God's reign and the call to repentance in his mission (Ladd 1974, 107). Jesus declared, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (cf. Matt 4:17,

Mark 1:15). Snyder notes that the call of God's reign ". . . is addressed to the heart and to action. . . . The kingdom of God concerns *allegiance*, and that issue is a line running straight through every human heart and will" (Snyder 1991, 150).

Ladd expressed that, in contrast to the rabbis who bound their disciples to the Torah, "Jesus bound his disciples to himself" (Ladd 1974, 107). The demand of Jesus was that his disciples were to surrender to his authority and to live in obedience to him. "Discipleship to Jesus involved far more than following in his retinue; it meant nothing less than complete personal commitment to him and his message" (Ladd 1974, 108).

Therefore, repentance calls for a change of attitude in the lives of those who respond to Christ and his reign. It calls for a ". . . radical return to God's intention for humanity" (Driver 1980, 49). Toon argues that "submission to God's kingdom is not a temporary activity. . . . The kingdom demands an irrevocable decision. It also demands a radical decision, leading to extreme change" (Toon 1980, 37). Repentance leads to the decision to live in obedience to Christ. Christ's commission to his disciples in Matt 28:19-20 declares that their involvement in Christ's mission necessitates coming under his authority and leading others to submit to Christ's lordship and to be obedient to all that Christ taught.

Schipani comments that this radical obedience to Christ ". . . necessitates that other commitments and loyalties become secondary, or are even canceled in case of contradiction" (Schipani 1988, 88) with the effect that ". . . authentic disciples of Jesus will always be . . . aliens in the midst of smaller 'kingdoms' . . ." (Schipani 1988, 88). Faith, therefore, for the disciple of Christ involves ". . . a practical way of life conceived in terms of commitment, following, doing, and action, that is, a discipleship oriented toward the coming kingdom" (Schipani 1988, 131-132).

Ladd noted that scripture declares a future overlapping that will be present in the millennial kingdom; however, there is also a present overlapping in the present age in which followers of Christ find themselves living "between the times" (Ladd 1959, 42). Therefore, the significance of the present reign of God has to do with inaugurating the overcoming of sin and death in the present. "The kingdom of God has come in the sense that the powers of the future eschatological kingdom have actually entered into the human scene of human history in the person of Jesus to effect a victory over the kingdom of Satan (Ladd 1952, 89).

Ladd maintained that 1 Cor 15:22-26 expressed clearly the fundamental character of the reign of God (Ladd 1959, 42). It states

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom

to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

What stood out as important for Ladd is that Christ's resurrection as the firstfruit is the beginning of the final resurrection. In the historical resurrection of Christ, the hope of the final resurrection is certain. "Christ's resurrection is not an isolated event; it is in fact an eschatological occurrence which has been transplanted into the midst of history" (Ladd 1959, 44). Resurrection is the act that conquers death. Christ's resurrection marked the first act of conquest over death and then at the end of the millennial reign death will be destroyed once and for all. It is when Christ has subdued all his enemies, the last being death, that he will give the kingdom to God his Father (Ladd 1959, 44). Ladd declared that the defeat of the enemies of God is what ultimately the kingdom of God means (Ladd 1959, 44). Since death is the final enemy to be subdued, other enemies are to be subdued before death is finally vanquished. These enemies are sin, evil, and Satan (Ladd 1959, 45).

Though the resurrection of Christ has inaugurated the beginning of the triumph over death (Ladd 1959, 45), it is Christ, through his ministry, which began the triumph over sin and Satan. Christ ". . . proclaimed . . . and demonstrated the Good News of the Kingdom of God by delivering men from the bondage of Satan" (Ladd 1959, 47). It is the binding of Satan that declared the inbreaking of God's reign through Christ in

human history. This inbreaking brought to light the presence of God's reign, though it did not transform the present age into the Age to Come (Ladd 1974a, 149). Ladd summarized the reality of the kingdom's presence in relation to the binding of Satan.

The power of the Kingdom of God has invaded the realm of Satan--the present evil Age. The activity of this power to deliver men from satanic rule was evidenced in the exorcism of demons. Thereby, Satan was bound; he was cast down from his position of power; his power was "destroyed." The blessings of the Messianic Age are now available to those who embrace the Kingdom of God. We may already enjoy the blessings resulting from this initial defeat of Satan. Yes, the Kingdom of God has come near, it is already present.

This does not mean that we now enjoy the *fullness* of God's blessings, or that *all* that is meant by the Kingdom of God has come to us. . . . [T]he Second Coming of Christ is absolutely essential for the fulfillment and consummation of God's redemptive work. (Ladd 1959, 50)

Further, Ladd indicated:

The meaning of Jesus' exorcism of demons in its relationship to the Kingdom of God is precisely this: that before the eschatological conquest of God's Kingdom over evil and the destruction of Satan, the Kingdom of God has invaded the realm of Satan to deal him a preliminary but decisive defeat. (Ladd 1974a, 151)

Therefore, both Ladd and Snyder affirm the present reality of God's reign, yet hold it in tension with its future consummation in the eschaton. The reign of God is future and present simultaneously; it is coming and it is present. However, in its present outworking is it the work of God or the work of humanity? This discussion now turns to the tension between divine action and human action.

Human Agency and Divine Agency
in the Reign of God

"Christians have the audacious hope and make the bold claim that they are building the future in the present" (Snyder 1991, 145). Though both Ladd and Snyder deal with this tension in their theologies of the reign of God, Ladd asserted that the reign of God in its present manifestation is primarily the result of divine action or intervention in human history, while Snyder attempting to hold them in balance, gives much more significant emphasis to the role of human agency, particularly focused through the church.

Moltmann focuses this tension by raising the question, "is the Kingdom of God only a matter of God or also of humans? Can we 'do nothing' or can we also accomplish the messianic works" (Moltmann 1993, 12)? He remarks that this separation of God from his people ". . . invalidates everything that the New Testament says of Jesus" (Moltmann 1993, 12). In that Jesus is both fully God and fully human any statement about God's rule must express that "the Kingdom of God is a matter of Jesus." He continues stating:

In the community with Jesus, people have . . . experienced the Kingdom of God, not provisionally and ambiguously, but rather as clearly as a sick person who has been healed, a sinner who has been accepted, and a lost person who has been found. As a matter of Jesus, the Kingdom of God can really be experienced. And it can really be practiced by humans as well. . . . [as they] become "coworkers for the Kingdom of God" and do the same messianic works as Jesus himself: "Preach as you go, saying, 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons'"

(Matt. 10:7-8). In the sense of Jesus, *the Kingdom of God is therefore also a matter for us.* (Moltmann 1993, 13)

Moltmann names the human activity in cooperation with God's action as "Kingdom of God work," work which the redeemed community in Christ, empowered by the Spirit is to be about. How is this kingdom of God work to be understood?

The Reign of God and Divine Agency

Ladd asserted that the presence of God's reign is solely the activity of God in human history and that humanity's involvement is solely one of reaction or response to it. Ladd was adamant when he stated that ". . . a final conclusion must be drawn: the Kingdom is altogether God's deed and not man's work" (Ladd 1974a, 188). Since his first writings concerning the reign of God, Ladd has stated:

The Kingdom of God is a miracle. It is the act of God. It is supernatural. Men cannot build the Kingdom, they cannot erect it. The Kingdom is the Kingdom of God; it is God's reign, God's rule. God has entrusted the Gospel of the Kingdom to men. It is our responsibility to proclaim the Good News about the Kingdom. But the actual working of the Kingdom is God's working. The fruitage is produced not by human effort or skill but by the life of the Kingdom itself. It is God's deed. (Ladd 1959, 64)

Ladd maintained this viewpoint throughout his life having further expressed that

the Kingdom of God is God's redemptive working in history. It cannot be identified with history, nor is it merely God's working in and through historical events in general. It is more than this; it is God's supernatural inbreaking into history in the person of Jesus. The coming of the Kingdom into history as well as its eschatological consummation is miracle--God's deed. (Ladd 1974a, 189)

Ladd based this on his understanding of the parable of the seed growing by itself in Mark 4:26-29. Ladd indicated that the central message of this parable has to do with ". . . the activity of the Kingdom and not with the identity of the sower. . . . The sleeping and rising of the sower means only that man cannot contribute to the life and growth of the seed" (Ladd 1974a, 189). Ladd suggested that this parable had nothing to do with the gradual development or growth of the reign of God (Ladd 1974a, 190); rather, the meaning lies in seeing that the kingdom or reign of God ". . . is utterly independent of all human effort" (Ladd 1974a, 191). Therefore, Ladd favored the "divine action" side of the polarity because *basileia tou theou* expresses that this kingdom is God's Kingdom, not humanity's. Humanity may work for the sake of God's reign, but it is God who reigns. He stated, "if the Kingdom is the rule of God, then every aspect of the Kingdom must be derived from the character and action of God. The presence of the Kingdom is to be understood from the nature of God's present activity . . ." (Ladd 1974, 81).

Specifically, in relation to the present-future tension of the reign of God, God's action on behalf of humanity has been most notably evidenced in Jesus Christ through whom God's reign has come dramatically into human history (Ladd 1974, 91, cf. 1974a, 188). Yet, Ladd maintained that "it cannot be identified with history, nor is it merely God's working in and through historical events in general. It

is more than this; it is God's supernatural breaking into history in the person of Jesus" (Ladd 1974a, 189). It was a supernatural act and not one dependent upon human action. This was an important point for Ladd that cannot be understressed in understanding his writings. He wanted to make clear that God's reign did not develop naturally, nor did it progress gradually; these in Ladd's mind permitted an understanding of the kingdom's growth as being dependent upon human action. For Ladd the reign of God was pure miracle, completely God's deed (Ladd 1974a, 189).

In contrast, Snyder gives much more significant emphasis in his writings to human agency in the establishment and presence of God's reign on earth. This emphasis is in the context of calling the church to greater faithfulness to Christ. However, Snyder states clearly that God is the one who reigns over all, and that his reign always is. He exercises ". . . continuing sovereign authority . . . over 'all things,' things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible; things present and things to come" (Snyder 1991, 147). God's reign is ever present so that his active rule never ceases (Snyder 1991, 147). Snyder, further notes that "Scripture . . . teaches that the triune God is the primary actor in the drama of redemption . . ." (Snyder 1991, 152), and though God ". . . seeks and expects responsible, faithful human action enabled by the Spirit" (Snyder 1991, 152), Christians can only fulfill their calling by trusting in God's

action and by yielding themselves to the Spirit (Snyder 1991, 152).

Snyder in expressing God's initiating activity in relation to his reign also extends God's primacy to Jesus Christ. In Christ

. . . God's reign has become visible and present in love and power, though not yet fully. In Jesus' life, teaching, healings, and especially in his death and resurrection the power of the kingdom has been decisively demonstrated. (Snyder 1991, 147)

Therefore, "the nature and the character of the kingdom . . . always center in the person of Jesus Christ--both as the source of our spiritual life . . . and as our model and pattern of a new social order . . ." (Snyder 1991, 147).

Though Ladd made clear that God's reign was an inbreaking into history and not just a working in and through historical events, Snyder, focuses God's activity more directly in history. The reign of God is at work in history and not merely a goal toward which history is moving. Snyder's point is that God is the one who acts in human history. God's reign is driven, not by human purpose, but by God's purpose, in which the reign of God ". . . moves toward the *telos*, the goal God intends" (Snyder 1991, 148).

Human Agency and the Reign of God

Ladd maintained that the reign of God is the outworking of the will of God and noted that the reign of God ". . . is related to men and can work in and through men; but it never becomes subject to men" (Ladd 1974a, 194). Ladd

argued the reception of the kingdom is not the coming of the kingdom, rather it is the human response to God's activity and demand (Ladd 1974a, 194). Christ's presence and ministry embodied the reign of God and human beings are confronted by its demands, by its call to repentance and obedience and are invited to enter into its reality. As Ladd emphasized, "the presence of the Kingdom demands a radical reaction" (Ladd 1974, 71). Therefore, radical reaction or human response is the extent to which Ladd attributed explicit human agency in the coming of the reign of God.

However, it seems that Ladd argued strongly for divine agency in contrast to non-eschatological interpretations of the reign of God because he wanted to be clear that God's reign is solely dependent upon God's actions. These interpretations attributed the initial coming of the kingdom to Christ, but its continuing growth as being solely dependent upon human action (cf. Ladd 1974a, 11-23). Yet, elsewhere Ladd did leave room for human action in relation to the reign of God. This was especially evident in his discussions of discipleship and the church.

Ladd noted that the disciples manifested the presence of the reign of God in their preaching and in their actions (Ladd 1974a, 256). Further, the manifestation of the reign of God was not limited to the twelve disciples, but also entailed the mission of the seventy who were to proclaim and give evidence of the kingdom of God (Ladd 1974a, 256-257).

Ladd cited Luke 10:17-18, in which the seventy returned with surprise concerning the power they had exercised, as the most important passage for illustrating that ". . . the Kingdom of God was present not only in Jesus but also his disciples, both in the smaller circle of the twelve and in the larger circle of the Seventy" (Ladd 1974a, 257). But was this also true of the wider fellowship of believers in the church?

Concerning the church, Ladd expressed that the church is not the kingdom, but rather, the church is the creation of the kingdom of God (cf. Ladd 1974a, 263-265). However, the church exhibited the power of the reign of God following Pentecost. Ladd maintained that prior to the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost only Jesus and his disciples were able to exercise the power of God's reign. Even then, Christ's disciples could only exercise this power ". . . at definite times, when Jesus specifically charged them to do so. These powers were not subject to the disciples' control; they were inseparable from the person and authority from Jesus" (Ladd 1974a, 272). Yet, after Pentecost, when Jesus was glorified and poured out the Holy Spirit, the power of God's reign was ". . . now available to all believers, regardless of the limitations of time and space" (Ladd 1974a, 272). The church, in Ladd's understanding, is actively involved in displaying the presence of God's reign. The church's activity in relation to the kingdom involves witness

to the kingdom, being an instrument of the kingdom, and serving as the custodian of the kingdom.

Ladd reiterated that "the church cannot build the Kingdom, or become the Kingdom," but then stated ". . . the church witnesses to God's Kingdom--to God's redeeming acts in Christ both past and future" (Ladd 1974a, 266). Its witness involves both proclamation and activity in which one of its ". . . main tasks . . . is to display in this present evil age the life and fellowship of the age to come" (Ladd 1974a, 268). Ladd concluded that "this display of Kingdom life is an essential element in the witness of the church to the Kingdom of God" (Ladd 1974a, 269).

Also, the church is the instrument of the reign of God. The works of the reign of God are performed through the church as they were through Jesus (Ladd 1974a, 269). The church ". . . is the organ of the Kingdom as it works in the world" (Ladd 1974a, 269). Ladd made clear that in utilizing the church as an agent of the reign of God that God exercised ". . . his rule through men" (Ladd 1974a, 270).

Perhaps the most significant image of the church's activity in relation to God's reign has to do with the gates of Hades not prevailing against the church (Matt 16:18). Ladd argued that the verb in this passage indicates that ". . . death is the aggressor, attacking the church" (Ladd 1974a, 270). Therefore, the gates of Hades will not be able to prevail against the church in its mission of bringing persons

into salvation under the reign of God. In the presence of the church in the power of the kingdom, ". . . death has lost its power over men and is unable to claim final victory" (Ladd 1974a, 270). This subduing of the gates of death takes place in the present, as well as in the final eschatological consummation.

Colin Brown offers a different interpretation of this passage. He argues that the term "overcome"--*katischuo*--pictures not a passive role of the church in which it withstands the attack of Satan, but an aggressive one--one that advances against Hades. Brown suggests that this passage needs to be understood in light of Jesus' prediction of his own passion (cf. Matt 16:21-28). Therefore, just as Jesus entered into death (Hades) and was not overcome by it, so too the church is to advance against the gates of death, to break down the gates, to enter the realm of death and rescue people from the realm of death in order to bring them into the realm of life (cf. Ladd 1974, 116). Then, though Hades attempts to entrap the church within death, it will be unable to do so--the church instead overcomes death with the life of Christ (Brown 1981). Whether the church withstands or attacks the gates of Hades, divine action is evident, but so also is the active involvement of the community of God's reign--the church.

The church is the custodian of the reign of God. This is expressed in Matthew 16:19, in which Jesus gave the

keys of the kingdom to his *ekklesia*, so that whatever the church binds or looses on earth will be bound or loosed in God's reign (Ladd 1974a, 274). Ladd related that the keys of the kingdom refers to spiritual knowledge which may or may not be given to others in order for them to be admitted or excluded from the reign of God (Ladd 1974a, 275). The ministry of the church in its proclamation of God's reign through word and action actively engages in binding or loosing, meaning that the doors of God's kingdom are either opened or shut to persons based on their response to the church's proclaiming of the Gospel (Ladd 1974a, 276).

Ladd asserted that the coming of God's reign is God's activity. Yet, though Ladd avoids giving the role of agency to the church in relation to God's reign, he nonetheless declared that the church enacts a vital and necessary role in making God's reign present and known. Whereas, Ladd kept the church and the kingdom as two distinguishable concepts, he lessened the role the church plays in enacting the reign of God by not adequately maintaining this tension. Yet, Ladd upheld the necessary relationship between the church and the reign of God, stating "there can be no Kingdom without a church--those who have acknowledged God's rule--and there can be no church without God's Kingdom . . ." (Ladd 1974a, 277).

Donald G. Bloesch deals somewhat similarly with this tension in stating that Christians cannot bring in the reign

of God. He expresses his view in tensive language.

We can witness to it. We can be instruments in its realization God may use human action to prepare the way for his own redeeming action. . . . [W]e can set up signs and parables of the kingdom. We can announce the coming of the kingdom . . . [but] we cannot build the kingdom. (Bloesch 1991, 34)

However, Bloesch raises more directly the issue of human agency in asking ". . . whether human beings have a positive role in the realization of the kingdom of God in history" (Bloesch 1991, 26). He argues that Jesus came to establish the Kingdom and that at his resurrection and at Pentecost ". . . the kingdom of Christ was established as a concrete reality in the world, but it remains hidden" (Bloesch 1991, 32). He advocates that the followers of Christ, who now live in an interim kingdom awaiting Christ's second advent, are to have an impact on society, being instruments of God in which the kingdom permeates society as leaven (Bloesch 1991, 32-33). Bloesch has more room, than Ladd, in his thought for human action in relation to God's reign.

Also, in making God's role clear as the predominant actor in relation to the reign of God, Snyder stresses the human role in manifesting the reign of God much more intentionally than does Ladd. With Ladd he declares that Christians do not bring or build the kingdom of God; however, he expresses that Christians are not ". . . to wait passively for its full realization" (Snyder 1991, 153). He states that though followers of Christ are not kingdom builders, they are indeed kingdom workers who ". . . live and serve in the

confidence that 'it is God who works in [them] to will and to act according to his good purpose' (Phil. 2:13)" (Snyder 1991, 153).

Snyder utilizes the term *agent* to refer to redeemed humanity's role--particularly the Church--in relation to God's reign. He recognizes the church as ". . . the only divinely-appointed means for spreading the gospel" (Snyder 1977, 13). The church is the community through which God engages the world. Therefore, he describes the church as ". . . God's agent for establishing the Kingdom" (Snyder 1977, 13) in which the church is an integral part of God accomplishing the purposes of his reign. The term *agent* describes redeemed humanity's or the church's active involvement in God's plan of redemption, rather than being an inanimate tool in God's hands. Snyder summarizes saying,

[God's] action involves "a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things" in Jesus Christ. In this plan not only does God act, man also acts. The Kingdom of God is the work of God; yet within God's plan there is room for man's action. God's grace is that great. So the Church is never a life-less tool in God's hands. It is not merely object but also subject. It does the work of God; yet this continues to be, literally, the work of God. So the Church in relation to the Kingdom is not an event, it is an act. (Snyder 1977, 13)

Snyder points out that this understanding is what Paul meant when he used the term *sunergoi* as fellow-workers or co-laborers with God with the emphasis being upon redeemed humanity working together with God in bringing about the reign of God. Snyder relates that "God in Christ has given men and women the high privilege of working together in history to

make the kingdom fully manifest" (Snyder 1991, 152). What this co-laboring involves is faithfulness and obedience to Jesus Christ because Jesus declared that his disciples would continue his works and even do greater works on earth than he accomplished (cf. John 14:12). Yet, in obedience though these works are accomplished by followers of Christ, nonetheless they are God's works which the Spirit accomplishes through them (Snyder 1991, 152-153).

Snyder, further remarks regarding the new purpose humanity serves through salvation.

The thrust of Ephesians 2:10 is that we are saved by God in order that we may do good works. . . .

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 We are saved, not only for our own sake, but because there are specific things--particular works--which God in his wisdom wishes to accomplish. And he wishes to accomplish these through the activity of those who are saved, in other words, through the Church. God's plan ("that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known") is to be realized . . . through the Church's doing those works "which God prepared in advance." . . .

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 Thus redeemed men and women share in the realization of God's cosmic design. What God has set about to do since the creation of the world--"to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one, even Christ"--is in part to be accomplished by the good works of the saved. (Snyder 1977, 70-71)

Therefore, Snyder understands it to be an integral part of God's purpose to accomplish his will on earth through cooperative activity with his redeemed people. Therefore, the action of redeemed people is essential in "bringing about" the reign of God on earth.

Perhaps the key to understanding human agency in relation to the reign of God is to realize that it embraces the stewardship over the earth which God entrusted to humanity (Gen 1:28). God, rather than usurping the authority he gave to humanity, chooses instead to work through humanity in order to accomplish his purposes on earth, including the further establishment of his reign through those who have been set free in Christ. Throughout Old Testament history God did not usurp the authority he gave to humanity, but established covenants with his creation in order to fulfill his purposes through them--Abrahamic, Mosaic, with prophets. God has chosen to work through his people because he has given them authority over the earth. For God to circumvent human beings in accomplishing his purposes on earth, would be to contradict himself. This is most clearly revealed in God's purpose of redemption which began with the incarnation (John 1:14). God upheld the authority he gave to human beings by becoming human himself in order to effect salvation for humanity.²

²Christ, in coming as a human being, reestablished a stewardship over the earth that Adam and Eve, in a sense surrendered to Satan. Jesus reestablished this stewardship by exercising it in harmony, in cooperation, in consultation with God. As a man, when tempted to perform signs apart from his relationship with God, he refused to be tempted and chose to fulfill his earthly calling through dependence upon God. As a man--who was also God--Jesus Christ reestablished God's reign on earth in order to triumph over the kingdom of darkness by the cross to which the first man--Adam--had surrendered his authority.

Jesus in being human, reestablished this cooperation between God and humanity in exercising godly stewardship over the earth. Likewise, then those who have been redeemed in Christ are empowered by the Spirit of Christ to carry out

Stewardship still places primacy upon God's activity, however, through the salvific work of Jesus Christ, those who participate in this salvation are given the responsibility to work for the sake of God's reign. Therefore, God in advancing his rule on earth, works in cooperation with human action, because that is how God has chosen to work on earth--through his created humanity. Paul E. Billheimer similarly avers,

. . . God . . . invites redeemed man into full partnership with Him, not in making the divine decisions, but in implementing those decisions in the affairs of humankind. . . . The responsibility and authority for the enforcement and administration of those decisions He has placed upon the shoulders of His Church. (Billheimer 1975, 46)

Snyder also focuses on this stewardship when he discusses the economy of God.

God's economy is his plan to bring justice, harmony and health--his perfect *shalom*--to his creation. This he accomplishes through Jesus Christ and the church. The church is God's *oikos* in a special sense, charged with showing forth and helping to bring about God's peace in the larger *oikos*, the created order. (Snyder 1983, 60)

Snyder remarks that "the church is the earthly agent of the cosmic reconciliation that God wills" (Snyder 1975, 156). He asserts that the church has been given the responsibility of exercising its stewardship in God's reign. Citing 2 Cor 5:18-20 and Eph 3:10-11, Snyder relates that the church serves as God's ambassadors who, in the present, declare and display God's nature, works, the reconciliation and redemption that

their ministry of stewardship over the earth in similar dependence upon God.

have come through Christ. "The life and work of the Christian community are intimately bound up with God's cosmic-historical plan for the redemption of the world" (Snyder 1983, 63).

God's telos of reconciliation ". . . confronts and transforms present reality in the direction of *justice*" (Schipani 1988, 86). Citing Jon Sobrino, Schipani states that

. . . to effect reconciliation is to do justice, because "Jesus does not propose to leave people as they are and simply console them in their plight; he proposes to recreate their present situation and thus do 'justice' to them." (Schipani 1988, 86, citing Sobrino 1978, 119-120)

Therefore, Snyder concludes, "it most certainly matters *what* the Christian community does and how authentically it demonstrates the mind of Christ and the values of the Kingdom in its daily life" (Snyder 1983, 63).

The responsibility of stewardship is also expressed through the church's custodial role as it exercises its responsibility to bind and loose. Jesus gave the authority to his church to bind and loose; a binding and loosing which will be recognized and heeded in heaven. Ladd stated that this ". . . authority to bind and loose involves the admission or exclusion of men from the realm of the Kingdom of God" (Ladd 1974, 118). J. W. Shepard saw within the idea of binding and loosing the power given to every disciple of Christ. He stated, "all are stewards (oikonomoi) of the teachings of Jesus and gospel of the Kingdom." He further argued that what is bound or loosed under the direction of the Holy Spirit

would receive the approval and sanction of heaven (Shepard 1939, 305-306).

This suggests that the church, as the embodiment of the reign of God, has an active role in facilitating the presence of God's reign in people's lives. This role is not one that is independently exercised apart from relation to God, but is a role that is performed as stewards under God's authority in cooperation with God's action. God's reliance upon his people in bringing about the advancement of his rule in people's lives cannot be more clearly displayed than in this understanding of authority given for binding and loosing.

Scripture further advocates that followers of Christ are to be active in revealing the rule of God, in demonstrating it, in establishing policies and institutions which permit its influence to be felt, in so living that they become the hands and feet of the Holy Spirit to "incarnate" God's reign in the world. It can be argued that stating the issue in this way points out that human activity is largely a response to God's action--as Ladd suggested, but then what relationship does not involve a response? However, this focus is not to deny the aspect of response, but also includes an aspect of human initiation--an initiation which is a response to Christ's call to repentance and obedience--in society which brings about God's reign in accordance with God's direction--in participation with him in establishing his rule.

In John 14 Jesus tells his disciples that his activity and ministry have been an enactment of the Father's will, an extension and fulfillment of God's purposes on earth (John 14:10; cf. also John 14:24, 5:19, 7:16, 8:28, 12:49-50.) Then, Jesus announces that ". . . anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12). Leon Morris in commenting on this passage notes;

this is probably to be explained in terms of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will come when the Son goes away (16:7; cf. 7:39). What Jesus means we may see in the narratives of the Acts. . . . During His lifetime the Son of God was confined in His influence to a comparatively small sector of Palestine. After His departure His followers were able to work in widely scattered places and influence much larger numbers of men. . . . They were in no sense acting independently of Him. On the contrary in doing their 'greater works' they were but His agents. (Morris 1971, 646)

Therefore, just as Jesus was the agent of the Father, so his followers are his agents continuing to do his work on earth through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This theme of continuing the ministry of Christ is further alluded to in Acts 1:1. Here Luke in writing his second letter to Theophilus makes mention that in his former book he wrote about all that Jesus ". . . began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven." Luke in choosing not to write "all that Jesus did and taught"--i.e., past tense, but rather "all that Jesus began to do . . ." seems to indicate that there was to be a continuing activity of Jesus' ministry through his followers. I. Howard Marshall

notes this peculiarity in Luke's account and writes that ". . . [began] is deliberately used here, so that Luke is associating what Jesus began to do during his ministry with . . . what he continued to do after his ascension . . ." (Marshall 1980, 56). The apostles Peter and John in healing the crippled beggar proclaimed that their ministry was not their own, but an extension of Christ's--"it is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see" (Acts 3:16). Therefore, the activity of Christ's followers reveals their participation with God in the power of the Spirit to continue the ministry of Christ--a ministry which brought in and advanced the reign of God--in order to continue the advancement of God's rule.

A final passage in Matthew reveals human involvement in prayer in bringing about the Kingdom. The petition in the Lord's Prayer which articulates "let your Kingdom come, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" involves disciples in asking for God's will to be manifested, but more is included than praying. Robert A. Guelich noted that "Matthew shows particular interest in the relationship between the Kingdom and the will of the Father (6:10a,b; 7:21; 21:31; 26:42)" (Guelich 1982, 290). Petitioners pray for God's will to be effected here on earth as it is in heaven. Since relationship with the Father is expressed in terms of obedience in doing the will of the Father, for God's will to

be effected on earth the disciples of Jesus are those who must do the will of God. To bring about God's will, is to be about the manifestation of his reign, and that involves human action. If human beings do not live out the will of God, the reign of God cannot grow on earth. Guelich summarized the relationship between God's action and human action in the praying of the Lord's Prayer. He wrote:

By addressing this petition to God in the passive voice, one asks God himself to act by ultimately revealing himself in history both through his redemptive activity and through his own people. Consequently, to utter this petition is not to speak carelessly or thoughtlessly. One makes this petition as an expression of one's offering of oneself for God's service (cf. 5:16 and 6:19-24). . . . (Guelich 1982, 310)

From these passages it seems clear that the biblical perspective holds in tension the polarities of God's action and human action in effecting the reign of God on earth.

Therefore, it seems to be an integral part of God's purpose to accomplish his will on earth through cooperative activity with his redeemed people. Therefore, the action of redeemed people is essential in bringing about the reign of God on earth. In Christ, redeemed humanity in the church has become an active participant, co-laborers with Christ in accomplishing God's agenda on earth. Human action, as it is empowered by the Spirit in cooperation with God's action, encompasses a very direct participation of redeemed humanity in bringing about or advancing God's reign.

This perspective does not diminish the creative priority of God's intervention in human history in

bringing in or creating the kingdom, but focuses on raising the consciousness of the redeemed community that it is not only God's action alone that brings about his rule.

Individual and Social Focus of the Reign of God

The previous discussions of the reign of God dealing with the tensions of timing and action also impinge on this tension, especially in the discussion of how the church is to demonstrate the reality of the reign of God in the present. Jesus in ministering to persons readily expressed the reality of God's reign to individuals. Jesus declared that the reign of God is like a hidden treasure of great value that individuals can find (Matt 13:44-46), or that one must be born again in order to enter into God's reign (John 3:3-5). However, Jesus also expressed a broader social perspective of the reign of God. He likened the reign of God to a gathering of persons at the table of the kingdom of God in which persons from all over would recline (Luke 13: 29). Jesus also presented a social concern perspective when he expressed, concerning the judgment of the nations, that some would be invited to enter into the kingdom who ministered to him by ministering to strangers (Matt 25: 31-40).

Stephen Charles Mott relates that the reign of God in the Old Testament depicts both an individualized and social focus. In the writings of Ezekiel (11:19-20, 20:33), it was evident that an interior change was expected through a new heart and a new spirit in order to obey God's laws, yet, there

were also social and political ramifications in which there would be both deliverance and judgment (Mott 1982, 84-85). Justice would be the social outworking of God's reign in the life of the individual and in the life of society (Mott 1982, 85).

The church's ministry has a social dimension in which it works to demonstrate the reality of God's reign in the midst of society. Mott asserts the social dimension of God's reign in stating that it

. . . incorporates the imperative for social responsibility into God's goals in history. Rather than merely an ethical principle, justice is made part of the story of God's provision--the fall of humanity, the coming of Christ, and the final reconciliation of all things under the sovereign rule of God. We can then understand social righteousness in the context of God's patient toil to win back God's lost creation. (Mott 1982, 82)

The reign of God embraces both a focus on the individual and a focus upon society. It is this tension to which this study now turns.

The Focus on the Individual in the Reign of God

Snyder comments that Protestantism, by and large, has held to an understanding of the reign of God which views it as personal and individual (Snyder 1991, 46). Many of the biblical texts seem to address an individualized focus, in which the indwelling of Christ and the fullness of the Spirit is the point of focus (Snyder 1991, 53). Snyder, in assessing the kingdom model of "inner spiritual experience" notes that it provides persons with an intimate and personal

understanding of the reign of God in which their hunger and thirst for God is met; it offers a source of comfort in the midst of suffering and oppression. An individualized focus fosters hope for persons caught up in difficult circumstances (Snyder 1991, 52-53).

The concern of this individualized focus is God's otherworldly character. In this focus, ". . . God reigns above all in the realm of the spirit, which is eternal and unchanging, in contrast to this present material world, which is passing away" (Snyder 1991, 41). Snyder further outlines this focus, stating

to see and experience the kingdom requires spiritual sight, for the kingdom is not visible in society. Fully entering into the kingdom is an ineffable experience that can't really be shared with another human being. The divine being is God the Spirit, who is unseen but with whom the Christian may have deep inner communion. (Snyder 1991, 41)

The spiritual focus for Christians, then, has to do with Christian perfection, inner experience with God, and "the final goal of the kingdom is the absorption of all things into God" (Snyder 1991, 41).

Ladd, in addressing this tension, spoke more of the individual and individual action, rather than its social implications. He viewed scripture as focusing upon a righteousness of the heart and an active righteousness (Ladd 1974a, 292-300). Ladd declared, as Matt 5:20 expresses, that this righteousness is to be one that exceeds that of Pharisees if one desired to enter into God's reign (Ladd 1974a, 292).

Through the Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaimed his new righteousness which stood in contrast to the Law. Whereas the law condemned murder, Ladd related that Jesus condemned anger as sin (Ladd 1974a, 292).

In Jesus' teaching that which was demanded of the individual was a righteousness that differed from the ethics expressed in the Mishnah. Rabbinical ethics focused upon an outward obedience to the law, whereas Jesus required an inner righteousness (Ladd 1974a, 293). Ladd concluded that "the primary demand of Jesus is for righteous character" (Ladd 1974a, 293).

Yet, Ladd pointed out that this inner righteousness must also be reflected in outward conduct. The two cannot be separated or held in antithesis. He expressed that the parable of the judgment of the nations in Matt 25:41 makes clear that one's inner righteousness, as it is motivated by the gospel of the kingdom, is to result in conduct in keeping with the gospel (Ladd 1974a, 294-295). Ladd articulated this focus on conduct not so much as a social responsibility, but as an individual responsibility in obedience to the gospel (Ladd 1974a, 294).

This focus on an individual appropriation of the reign of God does much to demonstrate the reality of God for one's life and that it is possible to be in relationship with God (Snyder 1991, 53). Yet, in light of an individualized experience of God's reign, Ladd also asked the question

whether Jesus' teaching concerning the reign of God provided any basis for social ethics (Ladd 1974a, 302).

The Social Focus in the Reign of God

Though no ideal social order will be attained this side of the eschaton, the outworking of the reign of God manifests a present impact on society through the church. Much of the emphasis on the social dimension of this tension relates to the enacting of God's reign in the present. Ladd stated that when Jesus declared his followers ". . . to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13-14), he meant that the world was to feel the influence of God's Kingdom" (Ladd 1974a, 303). Though final victory over evil which brings suffering to humankind and the social order is reserved for the eschaton, nevertheless, the reign of God does manifest itself in overcoming evil in the present (Ladd 1974a, 303-304). Therefore, Ladd concluded:

In these principles is implicit a "social gospel," for the reign of God in the lives of people must be concerned with the total man and with the conquest of evil in whatever form it manifests itself. The church is the people of God, the instruments of the Kingdom of God in conflict with evil. (Ladd 1974a, 304)

Snyder, also, expresses the social dimension of God's reign. Snyder views the scriptural understanding of the reign of God as embracing not only the individual, but it also entails a social responsibility. Snyder cites Carl F. H. Henry who states,

the biblical view declares both individual conversion and social justice to be alike indispensable. The Bible

calls for personal holiness and for sweeping societal changes; it refuses to substitute private religion for social responsibility or social engagement for personal commitment to God. (Henry 1971, 107)

Snyder maintains that many who have embraced a social conscience consensus still hold to the viewpoint of ". . . the individual Christian looking out upon the world" who takes on the responsibility for evangelism and social action (Snyder 1977, 25). He declares that what is necessary is a new perspective which ". . . attempts to view God's total plan for his creation" as it is described in Ephesians in which God plans to unite all things in Jesus Christ through the church (Snyder 1977, 25). He states that what this perspective reveals is

. . . not two poles--evangelism and social action--but one cosmic design. At the very center of this design is personal reconciliation to God through Christ, but within the circle one perceives a cosmic plan for the reconciliation of all things. (Snyder 1977, 25)

Therefore, Snyder calls not for a social consciousness, but rather a kingdom consciousness which embraces both aspects of this tension.

Snyder relates five emphases of this kingdom consciousness which holds together both aspects of the individual and social tension. First, a kingdom consciousness embraces a gospel with a cosmic dimension in which "personal salvation is the center of God's cosmic plan, but it is not the *circumference* of the plan" (Snyder 1977, 29). Second, a kingdom consciousness recovers a dynamic view of the word of God. This is not to suggest that there is new revelation, but

Snyder expresses that God's word is presently "living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). The point is that God is still communicating today (Snyder 1977, 29). Third, God is active in present history. Not only has God acted in history, but God is now active in history through the church (Snyder 1977, 29-30). Fourth, Snyder calls for an emphasis on the ethics of the kingdom in which there is a fresh understanding of the demands of discipleship in relation to lifestyle (Snyder 1977, 30). Fifth, necessary to a kingdom consciousness is a Christian view of culture.

Snyder notes that

there is a cultural mandate for the Christian as well as an evangelistic mandate. The gospel concerns itself with all of society, not merely with the institutional church. And God's sphere of action is not limited to the circle of believers but encompasses all of creation
(Snyder 1977, 30)

Therefore, Snyder concludes that evangelicals

often recognize . . . that conversion and Christian community imply a fundamental social responsibility. But this vision must go further. It must take in the whole question of culture and culture formation. What are the implications of the biblical view of reality for art, education, politics, music, philosophy? All these areas affect persons; all are projections of human work and human perception of reality. And all must come under the lordship of Christ. (Snyder 1977, 30-31)

In light of this reality, Snyder challenges the church to recognize its responsibility for living in the present reality of God's reign and this living is demonstrated through differing models. Snyder notes that the presence of God's reign is expressed as (a) the reign of God as institutionalized church in which the church is seen as the

kingdom, (b) the reign of God as countersystem which upholds values which are to be lived out in the present through obedience to the gospel in opposition to the present order, (c) the reign of God as political state in which a new order or theocracy is established that adheres to the values of the kingdom, or (d) the reign of God as christianized culture in which the kingdom of God is involved in the transformation of the present culture (Snyder 1991, 67-111). Snyder focuses largely upon the reign of God as countersystem, describing the church in terms of this model in *Community of the King* (cf. Snyder 1977, 105-116).

Snyder expresses that "the genius of the countersystem model is its affirmation of God's reign as both present and future and as both individual and social without compromising either the power or the gentleness of the kingdom" (Snyder 1991, 84). The reign of God as countersystem ". . . is a way of conceiving and organizing society that is counter to its dominant form at present" (Snyder 1991, 77). In many ways this presents the reign of God as subversive because ". . . it consciously seeks to replace society's dominate values and structures with those of God's reign" (Snyder 1991, 77). This understanding of the reign of God calls for a radical obedience to the gospel in the present age and projects an approach which is prophetic, Christocentric, countercultural through faithfulness to Jesus Christ, and peaceable--God brings about the victory without

Christians resorting force to bring about the reign of God (Snyder 1991, 77,78).

Snyder also elucidates the transforming impact that a view of God's reign had which engages culture in order to transform it--a view expressed by H. Richard Nieburhr's *Christ and Culture* (1951). In this understanding the reign of God is seen as already present, ". . . though not merely as present, or as the inward experience of believers, but as an active, dynamic principle of social reconstruction empowered by God's Spirit" (Snyder 1991, 101). In this view God's reign consists of ". . . a set of values and principles to be lived and applied now in society. Christians are to be transformers, not a countercultural enclave" (Snyder 1991, 101).

The transformative vision of the reign of God further focuses on ". . . social, political, and economic realities and processes. It protests conceptions of the gospel that so stress spiritual and religious concerns that they neglect human suffering and oppression" (Snyder 1991, 102). This is in harmony with what Moltmann expresses. He notes five areas to which a transformative vision of God's reign needs to dedicate itself. These are: (a) the humanization of human relationships, (b) the democratization of politics, (c) the socialization of the economy, (d) the naturalization of culture, and (e) the Kingdom of God orientation of the Church (Moltmann 1993, 14, cf. discussion 14-16). Moltmann stresses that the Church has the

responsibility of enacting the ways of God's reign in society.

He argues that:

If . . . the Church correspond[s] to the Kingdom of God, then it is the Church of Christ. If [it] . . . contradict[s] the Kingdom, then the Church loses its right to existence and will become a superfluous religious community. The Kingdom of God orientation of the Church today means evangelization and liberation. (Moltmann 1993, 16)

Stanley Hauerwas expresses a viewpoint of the church which integrates both the countercultural and transformative understandings of God's reign. He talks about the church as the embodiment of the kingdom in society and lives out its witness as a community of character. What this means is that the community of Christ is to exhibit such kingdom-oriented values that in essence the Church becomes a "contrast model" in relationship to the world. Hauerwas states the kingdom role of the Church in this way.

The way the church must always respond to the challenge of our [politics] is to be herself. This does not involve a rejection of the world, or a withdrawal from the world; rather it is a reminder that the church must serve the world on her own terms. We must be faithful in our own way, even if the world understands such faithfulness as disloyalty. But the first task of the church is not to . . . suggest strategies for social betterment. The first task of the church is to exhibit in our common life the kind of community possible when trust [i.e. trusting our lives under God's reign], and not fear, rules our lives. (Hauerwas 1981, 85)

Therefore, this integration understands that the church as the community of Jesus Christ is to live out the embodiment of God's reign. The church is both counter-cultural--contrasting the social order of the world with the

new ethics of God's reign--and transformative as the people of God radically live out kingdom lifestyles within the world.

It is evident that a true understanding of this tension upholds both dimensions of individual and social. Mott argues that the theme of justice in the social outworking of God's reign is the basis for a Christian social ethic. Mott relates that the justice of "the Kingdom of God represents a standard that is over and above any national culture or political or economic interest. By it all else is measured and to it all else must conform" (Mott 1982, 100). Mott concludes that

we receive the Reign as a gift but with it comes a demand and the power to meet that demand so that we can be channels of God's creation. The Reign of God is not a social program, but faithfulness to its demands for justice necessitates social programs and social struggle. (Mott 1982, 106)

Dealing with the Tensions: Theological Statements

Grenz maintains that "the most important contribution of kingdom theology is its orientation to the future" (Grenz 1994, 28) and that the kingdom ". . . reminds us that ultimately we engage in the theological task . . . from the vantage point of the consummation of God's activity in establishing his will and program for the world" (Grenz 1994, 28-29). The tensions in interpreting the reign of God reveal also that kingdom theology focuses upon the relationship between God and his human creation and how humanity lives in accordance with God's purposes.

Each of the three tensions discussed above present a different aspect for understanding the reign of God. Ladd and Snyder deal with the interpretive tensions in somewhat different manners. Both strive to keep the tension between understanding the reign of God as future and as present in a balance, though they both place much more emphasis on the present. In the tensions involving divine and human action and an individual versus a social focus, Snyder focuses more strongly on human involvement and the reign of God as social than does Ladd. From the preceding discussion, six theological statements are expressed illustrative of an understanding of the reign of God which provide a basis for applying the reign of God as a paradigm for Christian education.

God Is Central and His Rule Is Over All
and Always Present

Scripture affirms that God created everything and rules over all creation. The universe is the realm in which God's sovereignty and rulership is exercised. God's reign is personal because God is the Person who is actively involved in expressing his reign over time and space. God's reign never ceases, nor will it ever cease.

Scripture also affirms the presence of God's reign, though it awaits its full culmination in the eschaton. God's reign on earth became visible and present in the ministry and person of Christ, in whom the reign of God centers until he

returns this reign to his Father. God's reign is present and active today through the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit and demonstrated through the community of Christ--the church.

The reign of God in the present effects God's will in creation. Though Satan attempts to hinder the enacting of God's will, he ultimately will discover that his efforts are to no avail as God's will and purposes are fulfilled in the lives of his people. Satan is bound in the present, awaiting his full and final judgment in the eschaton.

In any application of the reign of God as a paradigm, the declaration of the presence of God is the primary beginning point.

The Reign of God Is the Telos to All of History

Since the Enlightenment, history has been viewed often as a continual progression (Grenz 1994, 782). However, recently, there is a loss of this optimism in humanity's historical progress. There is ". . . the growing conviction that many things are now coming to an end" (Grenz 1994, 781).

Yet, understanding history in light of the reign of God is to regard history with continued optimism, realizing, as Snyder expresses, that all of history has been and continues to be in God's hands and that it is moving towards the goal or telos which God has determined. All of human history is driven by God's purposes and is meaningful in that

"it is the story of God's activity in bringing his purposes to pass" (Grenz 1994, 789).

History, as understood in the biblical sense, and in light of God's reign is not human-centered, but theocentric in which ". . . the acting subject who unites the narrative into one story is God himself" (Grenz 1994, 790). Therefore, in agreement with Ladd and Snyder, Grenz concludes

history is more than the story of human acts. It is the narrative of God's action in bringing creation to his intended goal. Because the unity of history lies in the activity of the one God, biblical faith admits that we can never attain the goal of history on our own. History is not our story--the story of the progress of humankind. Rather, through his saving action God himself brings history to its fulfillment. (Grenz 1994, 791)

This fulfillment is in the eschaton; however, the reality of the consummation of God's reign provides this telos in the present. The reality of the past historical events associated with Jesus Christ, and God's telos, shape the present so that it moves towards the final telos in which God's reign is fully manifest.

The Focus of the Future in the Present Is Shalom

The shape of the telos is reconciliation to God which is descriptive of the biblical notion of *shalom*. *Shalom* connotes the overcoming of evil, peace, wholeness, completeness, as well as embracing the concept of salvation. *Shalom* is a gift from God given to humanity through Jesus Christ.

The fullness of shalom awaits the future action of God when he will restore all to his created order as it passes through his just judgment. However, this shalom is also a present reality in which peace, wholeness and completeness can be experienced by humankind.

Individual people are reconciled to God through Christ, yet, personal salvation needs to be placed in a cosmic perspective (Snyder 1977, 48). As Snyder stated, salvation of individuals is the center of God's plan, though not its circumference. Shalom also embraces the reconciling of all creation to the created order and the destruction of all that is evil so that all creation is in harmony with God. Snyder comments that "the whole created order is God's house, his habitation, though now disordered by sin and human unfaithfulness" (Snyder 1983, 59). And in the midst of this disordered creation, God in Christ has created ". . . a new humanity, a new family or household, which is the present manifestation of the future reconciliation of all things" (Snyder 1983, 59). The church, as the body of Christ, is this new humanity which shares in the responsibility of helping to bring about God's shalom in the midst of the created order (Snyder 1983, 60). Therefore, shalom is the essence of the telos of God's reign.

Humanity Participates in God's Reign
Through Response to Christ

The presence of God's reign demands a radical response from humanity. Those who would participate in God's reign can do no less than submit themselves to the lordship of Christ and his demands because Jesus Christ is at the center of understanding and experiencing the reign of God. Christ's call to repentance, faith, and obedience required disciples, not only to follow after him, but to follow in such a way that there was no turning back (cf. Luke 9:57-62).

The cost of participating in God's reign involves an ethic which Snyder terms as "crucifixion ethics" (Snyder 1977, 189). Crucifixion ethics is life that is focused upon the cross of Christ and what that cross represents. It is a life which voluntarily lays itself down for the benefit of another.

Though this response does not bring about the kingdom, nor build the kingdom of God, yet this radical response involves humanity in the kingdom, so that they are liberated to live in the ways of God's reign doing the will of God.

Redeemed Humanity Is Called to Enact
the Reign of God

Followers of Christ are called to direct their obedience to Christ in such a way that they are enactors of God's will in the midst of society. In participation with God's initiating and continuing activity, the redeemed humanity acts as those who demonstrate the reality of God's

reign on earth, co-laboring with God in bringing about his reign. Being enactors of God's will requires a decision to act intentionally because God has extended to his creation the responsibility of stewardship, meaning, that God's will is done on earth in direct dependence upon an people living in obedience to him.

Therefore, the enacting of God's will in society requires human initiative. God, through Christ, has invited and commissioned humanity ". . . to participate in furthering the divine program" (Grenz 1994, 857). This calls for the people of God to be proactive within society, demonstrating and enacting the will of God in the face of all that is contrary to God. Therefore, redeemed humanity must live in the world in light of God's telos in order to draw others into the shalom of God.

This Obedience Is Lived Out Through the Church in Present Society

The outworking of this calling to be enactors of God's will does not happen solely through individuals, but primarily through the community of faith, the Church. The Church is to manifest itself in a counter-cultural ethic that has a transforming influence within human society. The Church has a social responsibility in effecting God's will on earth in relation to bringing shalom to creation.

In order to bring about shalom, though ultimately it is in God's hands, the Church must exist in relation to

society so that it can witness to and demonstrate the radical nature of God's reign. It is in this way that the community of Christ lives out the vision of the reality of God's reign in the midst of a world that has lost sight of God's presence, so that all of God's creation might be transformed to be in harmony with God through Christ.

Snyder presents a continuum which incorporates the church living counter-culturally to society and the church acting for the sake of transforming society. He relates that,

in some contexts the Church must exist almost exclusively as a counterculture; in other situations society may be so leavened by the gospel that active political and social participation is possible. Between these two poles lies a broad range of likely roles for the Church. (Snyder 1977, 115)

Whether the church is countercultural or transformative in its mission of stewardship, the demand placed upon the church by participation in God's reign is to demonstrate the presence of God's reign in order to draw others into relationship with God through Christ and to have an impact upon society.

These six statements summarize an understanding of the reign of God in relation to these three tensions. These statements provide the basis in this study for illustrating how the reign of God can serve as an adequate paradigm for educating Christianly. The question that must now be addressed concerns itself with the implications for Christian education so that God's people are equipped to effectively live out the Kingdom or live under God's rule in the world.

CHAPTER 6
IMPLICATIONS OF THE REIGN OF GOD
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In developing implications for education that is Christian the six theological statements from the previous chapter are juxtaposed with Wyckoff's six basic educational categories. These categories are helpful in providing an organizational framework for expressing various implications illustrating how the biblical motif of the reign of God can serve as a paradigm for guiding Christian education.

Wyckoff's Six Educational Categories

Wyckoff first presented his six categories within the context of curriculum theory in *Theory and Design of Christian Education Curriculum* (1961). He argued that a series of clear questions were needed to get at the principles that comprise curriculum theory (Wyckoff 1961, 83). He proposed six questions ". . . as the basis for fundamental curriculum understandings" (Wyckoff 1961, 84). Wyckoff revised these questions in 1967 in an article seeking to define religious education as a discipline. He described the focus of these questions as presenting ". . . the basic categories for the discipline of Christian education" (Wyckoff

1967, 393) and expressed them in their present form as ". . . objective, scope, context, process, personnel, and timing" (Wyckoff 1967, 393). Mary C. Boys expresses his categories as dealing with

(1) the objective of *Christian education*, its *why*; (2) the scope, *what* is to be taught and learned; (3) the context, *where* Christian education takes place; (4) the process, *how* it takes place; (5) the participants, *who* are involved; and (6) the timing, *when* Christian education happens. (Boys 1989, 74)

In juxtaposing these six categories with the theological statements derived in the previous chapter, an understanding of Christian education will develop which is guided by the biblical motif of the reign of God.

Implications of God's Reign For Christian Education

In guiding the task of Christian education by the paradigm of God's reign, implications for the praxis of Christian education must integrate theological understandings with educational categories. The six theological statements of the reign of God are restated.

1. God is central and his rule is over all and always present.
2. The reign of God is the telos of all of history.
3. The focus of the future in the present is shalom.
4. Humanity participates in God's reign through response to Christ.
5. Redeemed humanity is called to enact the reign of God through obedience to Christ.
6. This obedience is lived out through the Church in present society.

The implications which follow do not necessarily correspond to each theological statement; however, the theology inherent in

each statement is integrated with Wyckoff's educational categories in presenting implications for Christian education.

Implications for the Purpose of Christian Education

The purpose of Christian education is concerned with Christian education's objectives, its why. It seeks to express the purpose which Christian education desires to fulfill and the reasons for its engagement. Six implications are presented.

First, *education that is Christian embraces God*. A vision of education which is guided by the reign of God recognizes the triune God as central to all of life and history. As Schipani notes, "the affirmation of the reign of God calls for taking seriously the one who reigns" (Schipani 1988, 84). Embracing God is not only the chief purpose of effective Christian education, but it also recognizes that God is the chief participant or actor in education that is Christian. God is sovereign and any understanding of Christian education must be centered in an understanding of God and God's activity.

God's very name declares God as the one who always is (cf. Exod 3:14). This eternally present God is integrally involved with humanity and the growth and development of humanity because God created human beings in his image (Gen 1:27) and remains in relationship with them. Scripture proclaims Christ Jesus, as God incarnate, as the image of the

invisible God through whom all things were created and hold together (cf. Colossians 1:16-17). Jesus' mission declared and demonstrated the reality of the inbreaking reign of God in order to reconcile humanity to God. Jesus not only proclaimed the reign of God, but was and is the key actor in manifesting the presence of God's reign in the midst of creation and humanity. The Holy Spirit is the continuing presence of God in the world today, sent by the Father and by Christ (cf. John 14, 16; Acts 1:4-8). It is vitally important to recognize not only that God is, and God reigns, but that God is still presently active in the world.

Pazmiño notes that God in his continuing activity is also ". . . still about the task of teaching humankind" (Pazmiño 1994, 128). He relates that the work of God,

. . . but especially God the Holy Spirit, is indispensable for effective Christian education. The Spirit guides Christians into all truth and glorifies Jesus Christ in the process God must be recognized as the first teacher, lest human teachers usurp the place reserved for God in the ministries of Christian education. (Pazmiño 1994, 128-129).

Yet, God's concern for the growth of humanity is not limited to Christian education, when "Christian" is understood as a descriptive adjective for the content of education. Wyckoff, speaking of education in general, argues that "education has to be concerned with helping persons to see things as they are and to come to grips with life. Its indispensable emphasis is on human becoming--the development of free and mature persons" (Wyckoff 1959, 110). Therefore, God, being present and active

in all of life, cannot be relegated to the mere sphere of the religious. God is and must be central to all of education.

As Donald E. Miller exclaims,

the great insight of the Hebrew prophets was that God is not merely a local god. The exile brought with it the discernment that God is not concerned about Israel alone, but about the whole of human kind. God was not to be seen as One who simply protected Israel, but as One who is the protector and redeemer of all mankind. The whole world is the locus of God's activity. The whole of human culture is the arena of God's presence. (Miller 1967, 421)

All education, not only religious and Christian education, can be carried on in light of the reign of God. God is not only to be discovered in the study of what he has revealed through Scripture, but also through his creation. Therefore, the study of the physical sciences, social sciences, mathematics, literature, and so forth, is revealing of the God who created *ex nihilo*, who created order out of chaos, who created humanity in his image.

A vision of education that is Christian demonstrates the presence of God in life through those who have yielded themselves to him. Though God may not always be explicitly acknowledged, the presence of God can be demonstrated in education through employing Christ-like characteristics in the relation between teacher and learner, in the pursuit of justice and mercy, in showing compassion for the suffering and oppressed. Education that demonstrates the presence of God is indeed liberating and opens up learners to the influence of the Holy Spirit so that they might become more aware and more

apt to acknowledge the reality and presence of God behind that which is being learned. Education that is Christian can serve as a conduit for God's grace to affect people's lives in order for them to come under the lordship and reign of Christ. Therefore, education that is Christian must first and foremost embrace God.

Second, *education that is Christian focuses on shalom*. Shalom represents God's eschatological purpose for humanity and creation. Shalom is the expression of ". . . God's liberating and re-creating will and action" (Schipani 1988, 85). Through Christ humanity is healed, forgiven, set free from sin, and liberated to live in the presence of God. Yet this restoration is not a mere celebration of God's past activity in Christ, but the reality of God's activity in present human history. It involves a moving forward to the actualization of God's complete and perfect reign when humanity and creation will once again be in complete harmony with God.

Therefore, a vision of education that is Christian fosters shalom bringing about the realities of reconciliation, redemption, salvation, liberation, and justice in life through the educational process. Educational philosophies, agendas, and methodologies need to be evaluated, then, in the light of the shalom of God's reign, in order to judge whether they foster these characteristics in the learning environment and process.

Groome notes that "the purpose of Christian religious education is to sponsor people toward maturity in Christian faith as a lived reality" (Groome 1980, 73). He describes mature Christian faith as having cognitive (believing), affective (trusting), and behavioral (doing) dimensions (Groome 1980, 74-77). Education that is Christian effects growth, by God's help, into such a maturity, a maturity that is descriptive of shalom.

The focus of shalom also permeates every aspect of life. It is not only confined to the religious sphere, but shalom also embraces political, social, and economic spheres. Paulo Freire expressed such a comprehensive understanding for the education of society. "Freire saw the Christian gospel as proclaiming the radical reordering of society in which persons are oppressed" (Elias 1986, 116). He held that society needed ". . . to be founded on Christian principles of freedom, justice, equality, and charity" (Elias 1986, 115). Though, Freire's theology may be problematic for evangelicals (cf. Pazmiño 1994, 49-50), he nonetheless recognizes that the context of shalom is related to all of life, especially to the poor and oppressed.

Third, education that is Christian fosters growth and development towards God's telos of shalom for humanity and creation. In understanding that history is in God's hands and that history is being guided by God to his telos, education that is Christian seeks to guide learners and the application

of their learning towards God's present and future purposes in harmony with God's telos of shalom.

Education by definition is an activity of leading people out (Groome 1980, 5). Groome suggests that there are "three dimensions or points of emphasis [which] can be discerned in 'leading out'" (Groome 1980, 5). These dimensions involve a point from which a leading out begins, a present process, and a future to which leading out moves towards (Groome 1980, 5). In education that is Christian, the future dimension to which education is directed is the telos of God.

In "presenting everyone complete in Christ" (Col. 1:28), education that is Christian seeks to equip the people of God to think and live christianly and kingdomly, to think and live in terms of their roles as stewards in covenant with God as ones who live out the shalom of God's reign. This necessitates growth which embraces an understanding of Christian living that is not confined to religion alone, but is manifested within the larger context of creation. Christian growth and living, therefore, bears upon every aspect and every relationship of life. Schipani states that this shalom of God's reign ". . . symbolizes a new way of being in social relationships involving total renewal in human selves and societal structures" (Schipani 1988, 86).

In effecting shalom, evangelism is an essential aspect of the educational process (Miller 1963, 54). Miller

declares that Christian education's purpose ". . . is to lead each person into a decision to live as a Christian" (Miller 1963, 54). This involves not only coming into right relationship with God through Christ, but also involves fostering wholeness in all of life's relationships (Miller 1963, 54-55).

Schipani relates that conversion and nurture are essential aspects of the reign of God's affect in the life of humanity. It fosters ". . . self-affirmation and integration as well as the freedom for creativity and care . . ." (Schipani 1984, 130) which results in growing ". . . in the knowledge and love of God" (Schipani 1984, 131).

Fourth, *education that is Christian fosters obedience to Jesus Christ*. Obedience often elicits images of oppression, bondage, and blind followership. However, obedience calls for engagement, rather than disengagement. It calls for a discerning, critical mind, rather than an uncritical, unquestioning one. In the Old Testament obedience brought out the full meaning of the term *sama*, that is, "to hear."

It indicates the right response to "the voice" or "the word" of God. To receive the utterance of God in a noncommittal or merely passive fashion is virtually out of the question. "To hear" is to be persuaded . . ., and so to obey. (Whitehouse 1950, 160)

The New Testament builds on the Old Testament understanding. The terms utilized are *hupokoe* or *akouo*. Jesus' declaration of "he who has ears to hear, let him hear" characterized the

call to consider what was expressed and to respond by accepting ". . . his word as a word from God and act in obedience to it" (Young, 1962, 580).

Christ exemplified the critical nature of obedience in the Garden of Gethsemane as he struggled with going to the cross (cf. Matt 26:36-46). Acceptance of his calling involved the critical submission of his mind and self to the will of his Father. Likewise, Paul called for every thought to be taken captive in obedience to Christ (2 Cor 10:5). Obedience is no mere passive acceptance, it is an active, critical engagement of the mind in light of God's will. Groome speaks of obedience in terms of praxis or critical reflection as producing in action; obedience is the substance of Christian faith (Groome 1991, 20-21). The result of such critical obedience is freedom, as Paul declared in Romans 6--obedience to Christ brings freedom from enslavement to sin. Obedience, therefore, requires a critical engagement of the mind, a critical apprehension of what is true.

Christian education's purpose, therefore, within the context of life and creation, focuses on enabling God's people to learn to engage in critical obedience to Christ in order to develop a Christian worldview to guide their thinking and activity in the world. Christian education is to focus on more than transmitting content, it is also to focus on helping people to think for themselves, to think Christianly, to think

in accordance with a Christian worldview in the midst of competing worldviews.

In yielding to Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, humanity is empowered to live in different ways, responding differently in relationships, acting differently in the face of injustice, so that their living in obedience to Christ's commands of shalom, they are changed and able to effect change in the lives of others and in society. Therefore, education that is Christian embraces and fosters obedience to Christ, so that persons yielding to Christ's lordship live out faith that practices shalom through participation with God in demonstrating his reign on earth.

Fifth, *education that is Christian fosters an action-oriented purpose.* A vision committed to enacting God's will in obedience to Christ requires Christian education to have an action-oriented purpose. Christian education must educate and equip the people of God to be actors of God's will, not just those who understand God's will.

The concept of *praxis*--reflective action, is useful for understanding such an action-oriented purpose. Freire speaks of praxis as involving the dimensions of reflection and action in an effective education. It is as people are empowered to name their world and to act that transformation of the world can take place (Freire 1993, 69). Pazmiño, reflecting on the concept of praxis in Latin America writes,

. . . *orthopraxis*, right action or practice, has been emphasized over *orthodoxy*, right thought. Truth is

viewed as a verb in this emphasis on the praxiological element in the message of Christ. José Miquez Bonino has emphasized this perspective in asserting that the goal of truth is not just intelligence but faithful obedience to the will of God. (Pazmiño 1994, 11)

Though praxis cannot be uncritically accepted, Christian education, having an action-oriented purpose, guided by the paradigm of God's reign, has a place for a praxis which reflects upon the will of God in order to actualize the living of God's will in the world.

This praxis purpose extends the mission of Christian education beyond the focus of making Scripture known. Though it is vital that a biblical understanding of God's will is conveyed, the chief mission of Christian education is to foster intentional and deliberate action that exhibits the will of God. Christian education's action-oriented purpose is to form people to live in obedience to Christ, to be actors of the Father's will, in order to "incarnate" the Spirit in the world.

Sixth, *education that is Christian has a corporate focus.* The task of Christian education is often confined to the discipling of individuals, yet, in participating with God in advancing his reign, there is a dependence upon God and upon the community of faith. The reign of God is embodied within the life of the church, though the reign of God is not limited to the church. Living within the reign of God involves cooperative action, because the body of Christ is called to serve together in continuing the ministry of Christ

(cf. 1 Cor 12:12-27). Groome notes the corporate responsibility of the church in fulfilling such a purpose.

To be a credible sign of the Kingdom, it will have to embody within its own structures the values it preaches. Further, it will have to harness its ministry and whole way of being in the world toward helping to create social/political/economic structures that are capable of promoting values of the Kingdom. (Groome 1980, 47)

Therefore, Christian education seeks to educate the community of faith in its corporate understanding and in its expression of its faith in the world--to speak and act out the will of God corporately as a community of salt and light, as a community submitted to the reign of God in the world. This requires Christian education to engage in corporate discipleship--to equip members to take responsibility for one another's growth and discipleship in living out God's reign.

In this way, the church realizes its mission to be countercultural and to have a transforming effect within society. Education that is Christian will focus on equipping the church to live out its countercultural identity so that its ministries will foster transformation. The church's mission is proactive moving against the gates of hell in order to break the bondage in which individuals and society are under. Education that is Christian seeks to equip the church to live in such a manner that God's will is manifested clearly, so that individuals within society yield themselves to God in his reign. In this way Christian education is not a ". . . separate and specialized ministry divorced from the entire life of the congregation but . . . integral and

essential for persons across the life span" (Pazmiño 1994, 136).

What this can effect in the local church is small group ministries, intergenerational learning, and the growing awareness of community, ". . . which intentionally seek[s] to support and teach persons the Christian faith close to where those persons live" (Pazmiño 1994, 136). Teaching and worship become more integrated and the local church regards itself as God's agent in their particular location to effect the presence of God's reign.

Therefore, the paradigm of God's reign fosters a new vision or a refreshing vision of education. It fosters a vision that is inclusive of the wholeness of life, of creation and humanity, of the church in the world. Such a vision can only be discovered and exercised by being centered in and dependent upon God.

Implications for the Scope of Christian Education

The scope of Christian education is concerned with what is taught and learned and is, therefore, concerned with Scripture or the Bible. However, the paradigm of God's reign calls for an appropriation of Scriptural content which is centered in Christ, in shalom, and in action. Five implications are presented.

First, education that is Christian views Scripture dynamically from the perspective of God's continuing activity.

Scripture, inspired by God, is authoritative for belief and action, meant for the salvation of human beings and their growth and development in the ways of God (cf. Rom 1:16; 2 Tim 3:16-17). Therefore, Scripture is at the center of education that is Christian. Yet, how is this content to be understood and appropriated in education that is guided by God's reign?

Though Scripture can be taught so that the learner masters the content and is able to recite the chief emphases, this is not how Scripture is best appropriated. Scripture is much more than a depository for content about God. Scripture is ". . . the record of the mighty acts of God history, the drama of redemption, the story of what God has done and will do for mankind" (Miller 1963, 202). In examining Scripture, one quickly discovers ". . . that God is both the author and the chief actor" (Miller 1963, 202). Therefore, the center of Scripture is God and the primary emphasis of Scripture is God active in human history (Miller 1980, 14). God's activity in human history is displayed in creation, in establishing covenantal relationships with his chosen people, in redemption through Christ, in calling persons to himself through Christ, and in leading people to wholeness, righteousness, and liberation through the present power of the Holy Spirit.

Yet, in establishing God as the center of Scripture, it must also be stated that the Bible is a record of human activity in response to God and his activity. Humanity has been called to respond to God, to be in relationship with God,

and Scripture relates how humanity has responded to God's initiative. Sometimes this response has been in obedience, sometimes in disobedience, sometimes with justice to others, and sometimes with evil intent.

Further, though Scripture is a historical record of God's actions in human history, it is more than the historical record of God's activity. Its prime purpose is not to be an historical account. Scripture is a record over time of God whose action is always present in time. The truth expressed in Scripture is that because God has acted, God still acts, and will act in relation to humanity. Scripture, more than being a historical record, is a record of the nature of God as an acting God. This, by no means, implies that God's revelation is changing, or that it is not yet complete, rather it means that God's Word is *the* word which is present and active (Heb 4:12), and transcends historical timeframes.

In this way Scripture is much more dynamic and present. It opens up people's understanding to see that God is present and active in the present. It enables people to see that it is useful for equipping people to cooperate with God in bringing about his reign. Yet, as a dynamic expression of God's activity, it also calls for dynamic activity from humanity.

Christian education, then, focusing on teaching people to enact the will of God, approaches Scripture as a present, living word, requiring reflection and obedient

action, in order to participate with God in his action for the sake of his reign in the present. Christian education must seek to convey the content of Scripture in accordance with such a dynamic focus.

Groome presents a helpful metaphor--Christian Story and Vision--for understanding such a dynamic view of Scripture, though his use of the metaphor has limitations for evangelicals in terms of his understanding of revelation. Groome talks about Story as relating how God has been active in the lives of his people and how they have responded to his actions and invitations (Groome 1980, 192). Vision points out that "God's intention and promise for creation is the Kingdom" inviting from humanity a present response in order to continue the unfolding of the reign of God (Groome 1980, 193; cf. also further discussion in Groome 1991, 113-115, 138-143).

Westerhoff contends that the content of Scripture as Story must judge human action. The biblical story must inform human action. He relates that "unless the story is known, understood, owned, and lived, we and our children will not have Christian faith" (Westerhoff 1976, 34). The content of Scripture is vital ". . . for in its story we come to know the actor God who creates, redeems, sustains life in the past, present, and future" (Westerhoff 1976, 35).

This necessitates, for example, that the record of Jesus' life in Scripture be examined not only in relation to *what* he said and did--as static content, but examined in order

to discover *how* he integrated his living with the will of his Father; *how* he was obedient; *how* he acted in relation to others in light of his kingdom mission. This "how" focuses on the way Jesus incorporated the principles of God's sovereign reign into his daily living. Such an understanding of Scripture seeks to approach its content from a dynamic and present perspective.

Second, *education that is Christian seeks to teach the necessity of being in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.* Since God is central to the reality of his reign and Scripture centers on God, education that is Christian places a premium on teaching or leading people to be in relationship with God. Scripture displays God calling humanity to be in relationship with him, most clearly and specifically, through Jesus Christ. Jesus effected this relationship through his life, death and resurrection. Miller regards this relational perspective as being central because his understanding of theology is "the truth-about-God-in-relation-to-humanity." He notes that

the Bible is the story of these relationships, in terms of covenants, judgments, and redemption [with] the focal point [being] . . . the story of Jesus of Nazareth who . . . changed our understanding of the relationship between humanity and deity. (Miller 1980, 156)

Therefore, the accounts of God are not meant to be mere stories for cognitive apprehension, but rather are meant to elicit response. Relationship with God is to be embraced,

and so teaching to know God and to follow after Christ is a chief facet of the scope of education that is Christian.

This knowing exceeds acquiring information about God, rather it emulates the Hebraic concept of knowing. Knowing is ". . . an activity in which God takes the initiative, and this initiative is always encountered in lived experience--in events, in relationships, in creation, and so on" (Groome 1980, 141). This knowing also demands an

. . . active *acknowledgment* of the Lord, and that in turn requires obedience to God's will. In fact, God is not *acknowledged* and thus not known unless God's will is done by the person in response to the experience of God. Being possessed by God demands the response of obedience (see Ps. 119:79). (Groome 1980, 141-142)

Such an understanding of knowing calls persons into an covenantal relationship with God that encompasses the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the person.

Following after Jesus is set in the same context. Jesus taught not just to give information about the reign of God, but to invite hearers to repentance and belief in the presence of God's reign. The content of Scripture is to be presented in the context of repentance and conversion. Conversion involves a radical turning from faith that is given by a Christian community, to faith owned after it has been readily examined. "It implies a reorientation in . . . thinking, feeling, and willing; a moving from indifference or one form of piety to another" (Westerhoff 1976, 39). Conversion sets the new stage in which life is now to be lived. Education in this context ". . . means helping persons

to see that they are called, not only to believe the church's affirmation that Jesus is the Christ but to commit their lives as his . . . disciples in the world" (Westerhoff 1976, 41-42).

Therefore, the content of Scripture must be expressed in the context of the imperatives of repentance, conversion, and also growth so that learners are challenged to respond to the call given by Christ. To neglect to do so is to reduce Scriptural content to a static, lifeless record when it is the living message of an acting God who breaks into the lives of persons.

Third, *education that is Christian seeks to teach an eschatological worldview.* Advocates of liberation theology and Freire's approach to education would suggest that the content of education ought to be drawn from the life of the people so that educators would not impose their ideas on the learners (Elias 1986, 125). However, though education that is Christian is also opposed to educators indoctrinating learners, educators do have a responsibility to guide learners to see the vision of the Scriptures so they can embrace an eschatological worldview. Grenz expresses that such an

. . . eschatological hope does not allow us to sit back and wait for God's future. In fact, the apostles spoke out against this type of quietism (2 Thess. 3:6-13). We wait for the Lord's return, of course, but ours is an active waiting. Because we are certain that God will bring his plan to completion we become actively involved in that program. In this way hopeful living means living hopefully. Motivated by hope of the final consummation, we seek to fulfill our divinely given mandate in the world, proclaiming in word and action by the power of the Holy Spirit the good news about God's activity in the world. (Grenz 1994, 855)

The scope of education, therefore, entails also the learning about the concept of worldview, of understanding that what one learns and how one applies learning is largely dependent upon one's worldview or philosophical framework for interpreting reality. This necessitates not only becoming versed in a worldview that is directed by an understanding of God's reign, but it also necessitates becoming familiar with other worldviews in order to discern how the kingdom worldview stands in contrast to them. By developing an understanding of a Christian worldview directed by the paradigm of God's reign, learners can begin to gain a more comprehensive and radical perspective on life through which they view all of life through the lens of God's reign. Further, as they examine the claims of culture and their own present worldview in light of God's reign, they are enabled to experience a conversion to a worldview which embraces the centrality of God for all of life.

Fourth, *education that is Christian seeks to teach the learning of obedience, kingdom-oriented action, a process of living within God's reign.* Even though biblical content fulfills a vital and necessary role in living within God's reign--for God's will needs to be understood, what needs also to be taught is a process in which the biblical content can be grasped and enacted. This involves Christians learning how to live lives that enact God's will throughout life. When Christ commanded his disciples to "teach them to obey" (Matt 28:20),

the teaching responsibility encompassed the process of obedience, not only the commands which required obedience. Therefore, the process of obedience is also the content or scope of Christian education.

Certainly, conversion to Christ is pivotal in the learning of obedience, as is an openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Obedience is a matter of the heart and will, and of one's attitude. The apostle Paul struggled with obedience (cf. Romans 7) when he did not do that which he knew he ought to do. Obedience does not come easily, but obedience is essential for growth in Christ, for growing toward the telos of God.

If God's will is to be enacted in people's lives, Christians need to learn how to do God's will, just as craftspersons are taught to learn *how* to do their craft. Therefore, there is much value in recognizing that the process of obedience is also descriptive of the content or scope of education that is Christian because effective education needs to teach processes by which growth is enabled. Groome, in describing his shared Christian praxis approach, is a good example of teaching an action-focused content. In articulating the methodology of the movements of shared Christian praxis he not only outlines the steps of his methodology, but presents them as content for educating the readers for their engagement in shared Christian praxis (cf. Groome 1991, 153-293). Participants are not only engaged in a

process, they are also learning a process that enables them to be actors of God's reign.

A Christian education that teaches persons how to enact the will of God can find particular relevance in the parables of Jesus. The parables of the kingdom represent a countercultural ethic, which when understood and acted upon leads the community of faith to present a "contrast model" in the midst of society. Jesus meant the content of the parables not just to be cognitively understood, but rather, to challenge the hearers to recognize the presence of God's reign and to lead them into action demonstrating its presence. Donald A. Hagner suggests that parables have a performative function in the lives of learners.

Every reader brings a totality of background and experience that is bound to affect the interpretation of the text. To recognize this, however, is not to capitulate to the conclusion that the text has no meaning in itself. . . . Involvement of the reader in the interpretation of the parables is especially desirable since they were and are meant to be performative . . . as well as informative. That is, they are intended to have an impact on the reader at the level of his or her existence and not simply to convey information: the parables interpret us as much as we interpret the parables. (Hagner 1993, 365)

In that the parables have a performative function, their usage is vital in teaching persons how to act out God's will.

Fifth, education that is Christian seeks to teach the church to live in a countercultural transformative manner in society. Teaching the biblical understanding of the church needs to be within the dynamic context of its kingdom-oriented

mission. Westerhoff summarizes such a dynamic understanding of the church.

The church is best understood as a creation of God, a community of corporate social agents called to bear witness individually and corporately in word and deed to God's intention for human life, that is, to be a radical community for others, a countercultural community biased toward and acting with God on behalf of the oppressed, the hurt, the poor, the have-nots, the marginal people of the world. (Westerhoff 1976, 42)

He adds that the church's mission ". . . is to be a community where Christian faith is proclaimed, experienced, understood, lived, and acted upon in history" (Westerhoff 1976, 42). The church is expressed through many images in Scripture, but each image needs to be grasped and lived out within the dynamic presence of God's reign. The church is never to be static or a reflection of the cultural status quo, but is always to be, as salt and light in society, a demonstration of the real presence of God as a countercultural community which has a transforming influence upon society because it lives in accordance with the criteria God's reign.

In teaching the church to be countercultural and transformative in society, different models can be presented which focus on dynamic representations which show different ways for the church to be a community that engages the world. Snyder (1977, 1983) and Westerhoff (1976a) describe models which focus on justice, social action, liberation; models which are enactments or expressions of Jesus' declaration in Luke 4:18 to proclaim the good news, to release the captives, to heal the sick and recovery of sight to the blind. In this

way, learners will see the church as dynamic and regard its mission as dynamically demonstrating the presence and will of God.

Implications for the Methodology of Christian Education

Method concerns itself with the process in which Christian education carries out its purposes and expresses its content. Miller indicates that the problem of method is a technical one. In developing a relevant theology for guiding the educational task, ". . . the educational problem becomes that of finding methods which will bring this relevance into focus" (Miller 1980, 160). Methods of Christian education must do more than lead the church to cognitive understanding of the will of God, they must also lead participants to kingdom-oriented action which demonstrates the Lordship of Christ in the midst of life. Wyckoff notes that "no method will open God's word to us unless it teaches us to read, to listen, to hear, to decide what his word means for us, and to live accordingly" (Wyckoff 1959, 147). Six implications are presented.

First, *education that is Christian evaluates present educational processes in light of the centrality of God and his reign.* The social sciences express keen insight into human nature and learning, and therefore, are valuable in presenting educational processes which contribute to effective learning. However, these insights cannot be carried straight

over into Christian education without their being evaluated in relation to the guiding criterion of God and his reign.

Lampport notes the distinctive nature of Christian education which demands ". . . a radically different educational philosophy for accomplishing its purposes" (Lampport 1988, 39). Christian education is guided by a God-centered focus rather than ". . . pushed and pulled along the path of secular education" (Lampport 1988, 39). Therefore, in guiding Christian education by the paradigm of the reign of God, it is vital to evaluate methodologies in terms of the purposes that the reign of God calls forth in education that is Christian.

Every educational philosophy and methodology needs to be evaluated in terms of the criteria which a theology of the reign of God gives. Therefore, educational processes which have no ultimate telos to guide their educational objectives do not hold up to the scrutiny of the paradigm of the reign of God.¹ Likewise other philosophies and

¹For example, in his theory of perspective transformation, Jack Mezirow describes

the goal of adult education is to help learners become more critically reflective, participate more fully and freely in rational discourse and action, and advance developmentally by moving toward meaning perspectives that are more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative of experience. (Mezirow 1991, 224-225)

Though, these goals are indeed desirable for adult learners, Mezirow does not place these goals within the context of a telos. There is always a movement towards further inclusivity and openness without this growth being guided, except by further growth. For Mezirow growth is open-ended, rather than understanding growth towards a telos, such as Paul expresses in Colossians 1:29--a movement towards completion in Christ.

methodologies come under the same scrutiny. For example; Groome's shared Christian praxis has much to offer in terms of centering Christian religious education in God and God's Story and Vision. However, his view of revelation is extrabiblical and his approach must be reformulated to embrace an understanding of Scripture which is conducive to the paradigm of God's reign. Progressive education, which focuses largely on the needs of the learner, though offering key insights, needs to be reshaped so that there is a stronger relationship and partnership between God and humanity. The paradigm of the reign of God in providing the criteria for evaluating educational philosophies and paradigms unleashes Christian education to utilize the best insights which sets education free to educate humanity Christianly. The paradigm of God's reign does not limit or hinder educational practice by offering a framework for educational evaluation, rather it liberates education to truly become what it is intended to be - the growth and development of human beings in relation to the God of the universe who has created and seeks relationship with humanity through Christ.

Second, *education that is Christian must involve processes which enable learners to think critically and theologically in relation to God's telos.* Education that is Christian brings the vision of God's telos into the present. This telos challenges learners to assess their present in terms of the future that is to be. This assessment engages

learners in the critical and theological evaluation of their lives. Such a process focuses on leading people to think, live, and act in terms of the larger perspective of a worldview directed by God's reign.

Thinking critically ". . . *emphasizes a rational basis for beliefs and provides a set of standards and procedures for analyzing, testing, and evaluating them*" (Rudinow and Barry 1994, 9). Critical thinking involves assessing and clarifying one's own views as well as those of others and ". . . aims to give . . . a basis for justifying beliefs and for directing further investigations and inquiry" (Rudinow and Barry 1994, 9).

To think critically in terms of God's reign is to think theologically. Education that is Christian, therefore, intentionally engages learners in the process of critical or theological thinking. Killen and DeBeer relate that "the complexity of our present situation makes it urgent that adult Christians learn to think, to feel, to perceive faithfully" (Killen and DeBeer 1994, 15). Christians are called to engage the demands of God's reign in order for it to have a significant impact upon their lives and the life of the world (Killen and DeBeer 1994, 15).

This fostering of critical thinking also focuses on creativity. Stephen D. Brookfield relates that one characteristic of creative thinking is a future orientation in which ". . . change is embraced optimistically as a valuable

developmental possibility" (Brookfield 1987, 116). Engaging in creative thinking involves one in thinking outside the lines, in approaching issues from fresh perspectives. The reign of God provides such a fresh perspective for an enslaved world. The Christian education process must facilitate creativity in order for persons to begin to take initiative in acting on behalf of God's reign. Creativity involves integrating an understanding of God's reign with the issues of society in order to design approaches which demonstrate the presence of God's reign. As co-laborers with God in effecting his reign on earth, redeemed humanity through the church is called to create avenues of hope, love, compassion through ministry, and to be agents in the transformation of society.

Matthew Lipman describes *metacriteria* or *megacriteria* which are of a high level and provide a regulative function in guiding critical thinking (Lipman 1991, 119). In relation to the paradigm of God's reign, it can be said that God's reign provides such a *metacriteria* for guiding critical and theological thought enabling Christians to be embraced and changed by the demands of God's will and to be agents of change in society.

Third, *education that is Christian must utilize educational processes which involve leading toward kingdom-oriented action*. Educational processes must include components which foster action. First, involvement in action means engaging in action. Effective education must include a

behavioral component. Westerhoff, describing his own experience, notes that mere focus on action is not the solution because action that excludes tradition and persons is ineffectual (Westerhoff 1976a, 106). Effective Christian education ". . . has to unite concerns for tradition, persons, and society, with concerns about how people think, feel, and act" (Westerhoff 1976a, 106). Westerhoff says that education that effectually focuses on action is education that enables persons ". . . to do God's Word" and to accomplish this requires a focusing on the person's will (Westerhoff 1976a, 106). Focusing on will involves facilitating ". . . groups of persons to act with passion, after thoughtful reflection, in society, on behalf of God's kingdom-coming" (Westerhoff 1976a, 106). But the focus on the will is not isolated; "the will unites thinking, feeling, and acting" (Westerhoff 1976a, 106).

Second, it is necessary that educational processes lead to decision making. The methodologies of transformative learning (Mezirow), experiential learning (Kolb), adult learning (Knowles), critical thinking (Brookfield), and praxis (Freire, Groome) all contain this emphasis on decision making.² Insights from these theories can be adapted for education that is Christian, so that learning fosters a movement toward effective action.

²cf. Mezirow (1991, 168-169, 156-159), Kolb (1984, 29-31), Knowles (1980, 202, 378), Brookfield (1987, 23-29), Freire (1993, 68-75, 160-164), and Groome (1980, 197-201, 220-223; 1991, 266-281).

Groome, in his methodology of shared Christian praxis, describes the vital process of decision-making in his fifth movement for enabling participants to live out faith.

Movement 5 offers participants an explicit opportunity for making decisions about how to live Christian faith in the world. . . . Whatever the form or level of response invited, the practical intent of the dialogue in movement 5 is to enable participants--by God's grace working through their own discernment and volition--to make historical choices about the praxis of Christian faith in the world. As long as they maintain continuity with the central truth claims and values of Christian Story, reflect the faith of the broader/ learning community--the church--and are creative of the Vision of God's reign, they are likely to be appropriate decisions for lived Christian faith. (Groome 1991, 148)

Many of the educational philosophies built on the understandings of liberation or liberation theology provide a similar action-focused methodology. Such methodologies, however, need to be evaluated in terms of the paradigm of God's reign. Freire, for example, argues for education to be praxis-oriented rather than transmissive. Education leads learners to examine their life situations, reflect upon them, and act in relation to them for their liberation and growth. Likewise, education that is Christian seeks liberation and growth, yet it understands that this growth occurs in relation upon God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, educational methodologies need to embrace or develop methodologies which foster action through obedience to the demands of Christ Jesus.

Fourth, *education that is Christian must use approaches which are relational and involve dialogue.*

Education guided by the reign of God recognizes the integral nature of the relationship between God, Christ, community, and the individual. Christian education approaches, subject to the reign of God, do not focus primarily on individualistic learning, but are enacted in the context of community, because the reign of God is manifested through the community of faith which lives in dependence upon God. Processes which involve community are dialogical in nature. Dialogue involves entering into discussion with other members of the community in order to come to understanding, in order to develop strategies of action. Dialogue involves appropriating the Scripture in order to discern what God through Christ wills. This appropriation of Scripture involves the Spirit of God in opening God's word to the learner (cf. John 16:13).

Educational philosophies and processes which focus on dialogue again offer valuable insights. Freire notes that in dialogue ". . . subjects meet in cooperation to transform the world" (Freire 1993, 148). David A. Kolb, advocating experiential learning, expresses that experiences are shared and interpreted through dialogue (Kolb 1984, 2). The activity of shared dialogue enables the people of God develop a deeper understanding of God's reign which guides their thinking and acting for the sake of the kingdom in the midst of society.

Westerhoff expresses the importance and vitality of dialogue in his discussion of enculturation. Enculturation focuses on interaction between persons within the community of

faith, an interaction that involves a mutuality (Westerhoff 1976, 80). He notes that enculturation

. . . emphasizes the process of interaction between and among persons of all persons of all ages. It focuses on the interactive experiences and environments within which persons act to acquire, sustain, change, and transmit their understandings and ways. In enculturation one person is not understood as the actor and another as the acted upon, but rather both act, both initiate action, and both react. It is the nature, character, and quality of these interactive experiences among people of all ages with a community of faith that best describes the means of Christian education. (Westerhoff 1976, 80)

This understanding of educating Christianly as being dialogical challenges any methodology which values a transmissive approach. There is very little meaningful dialogue in such an approach. Instead, the teacher ought to be a fellow learner who facilitates learning through dialogue, a dialogue which also centers in on dialogue with God.

Fifth, *education that is Christian must engender shalom in the use of educational methodologies.* Shalom is something that is not only to be taught as the telos of Christian education, shalom must also be practiced through the educational methodology. Methods must foster respect for the learner and enable development towards wholeness, and all the qualities which shalom embraces. Because of this, educators must be aware of the influence of the "hidden curriculum." Hidden curriculum points out the discrepancy between what is said to be the process and what actually is the process (Gress and Purpel 1988, 323).

Sixth, *education that is Christian involves the church in educational methodologies which enable it to be transformative in society. The church in living in obedience to Jesus Christ must involve itself in educational ministries which prepare it for Christian action* (Westerhoff 1976, 65).

Freire's concept of conscientization³ presents a way for the church to be transformative in society as it is guided by the reign of God. Freire describes conscientization as that which enables learners ". . . to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1993, 17). Pazmiño relates that conscientization involves the ". . . development of critical awareness [which is] achieved through dialogical educational programs associated with social and political responsibilities" (Pazmiño 1994, 46). Pazmiño further notes that ". . . this process was to bring about critical attitudes in people; and these critical attitudes, in turn, were to lead to a transformation of the world" (Pazmiño 1994, 46). Freire presents a methodology that can be utilized by the church for its countercultural engagement in society in order to effect transformation; yet it needs to be embraced within the context of the paradigm of God's reign.

³Freire's methodology began with participants expressing generative themes for discussion, drawn from their life contexts. These discussions involved coming to a full understanding of the theme chosen, an open discussion of the theme by all involved, and a coming to a plan for action in relation to the theme (Pazmiño 1994, 48; cf. Freire 1993, 76-105).

Groome suggests such a corrective in his shared Christian praxis approach. He adapts Freire's methodology and juxtaposes it with the Christian Story and Vision, as part of his third and central movement. The generative theme, and present action, are judged in light of Scripture and tradition, in which the mandates of Scripture and tradition become necessary for decision.

Therefore, the church in being countercultural and transformative in society must engage the crucial issues of society, examine its stance and role in relation to these issues, discover from the Gospels and Scripture the mandate it places upon the church, and then decide as a community of faith that which will contribute to its countercultural stance and/or the transforming of society.

Implications for the Participants in Christian Education

In a focus on participants the role of teachers and learners must be seen in relation to one another, and also in relation to God. Two implications are presented.

First, *education that is Christian centers in God as the primary actor*. Miller argues that ". . . no education is religious unless it is God-centered" (Miller 1980, 160). Education that is Christian recognizes that God is the chief participant in the educational endeavor. All education, to some extent, is God-centered because human beings are created in God's image. Therefore, humanity can best understand

itself from a theological perspective, and no education can avoid the centrality of God as primary actor in understanding the educational task. As humanity seeks its own growth through education, it can only truly realize its fullness by being in relationship with God through Christ.

Jesus, as God incarnate, is the supreme educator because in his interaction with people he was always teaching (cf. Matt 4:23, 9:35, 13:54). Jesus taught and acted to lead people into the shalom of God's reign. He taught because he had compassion for people because they were as sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34). Jesus, through his teaching, was not only the master teacher, but also the good shepherd who provided the telos of God through his teaching and ministry.

Therefore, not only what Christ taught is important, but why he taught, and how he taught. His use of parables and questions, his listening to persons and entering into dialogue with them show how he went about teaching. One discovers in Jesus his concern for and approach to persons in order to lead them into the fullness of shalom in life under the reign of God.

Further, God, through the Holy Spirit, guides humanity in their growth to his telos. The Spirit has been sent by the Father and the Son to walk alongside those who have surrendered their lives to God through Christ. The Gospel of John declares that the Spirit's role is to continue the ministry of Christ and to guide persons into all the truth

(John 16:13). The Spirit does not teach or direct on his own initiative, but his leading coincides with the telos of God. Smallbones argues that "right relationships with God, others, and self, so essential to being Christian, are impossible without the Spirit being in control" (Smallbones 1990, 110). The Spirit is God present with humanity in order to lead them to relationship with God under his reign. Therefore, Schipani affirms that ". . . God's Spirit [participates] in the midst of the learning community that is called to embody the gift and the promise of the new creation under the lordship of Christ" (Schipani 1984, 123). Therefore, as Pazmiño expresses, ". . . the work of Christian education is God's work" (Pazmiño 1994, 134).

Second, *education that is Christian regards people as respondents to and partners in God's initiating activity in enacting God's reign on earth.* Since God is the primary actor in education that is Christian, human beings participate with God through interaction with him. Pazmiño expresses the relationship between humanity and God as a partnership in education, as well as indicating that this partnership involves other persons (Pazmiño 1994, 134). God and redeemed humanity participate together in bringing about the reality of God's reign on earth. This is the partnership that God has elected through his covenant of stewardship with humanity. Education as God's work is just as vitally human work.

Yet, education that is Christian is also the work of the community of faith with persons working, learning, and growing together. Westerhoff argues that there ought to be a mutuality amongst human beings in the educational process. As respondents to God, teachers and learners are in a collegial relationship with one another, walking and growing together in their on-going human spiritual development. Therefore, the relationship between teacher and learners is that of co-actors in the educational process.

Teachers, as those who are more mature in their growth and learning, are involved in the educational process more as facilitators, enablers, equippers. Like the Holy Spirit, they come alongside to help, guide and direct learners. Schipani describes "the relationship between teachers and students [as] one of equality. Teachers are to have a deep respect for all the persons involved and they are to be committed to dialogical learning" (Schipani 1984, 123). The model for such an approach to teaching is Jesus himself.

His educational approach was more informal or, non-formal, rather than formal. He readily entered into dialogue with persons drawing out from them responses to questions which directed their understanding and learning. As a master facilitator, he challenged learners to broaden their boundaries, to embrace new horizons, in order to view their lives from within a kingdom perspective. His discussions and teachings in parables created disequilibrium in learners in

order for them to become open to change, repentance, and to see the demands that God's reign placed upon their lives. Indeed, Jesus called a number to journey together with him and learn from him, and twelve to be especially close to him in the learning environment.

Learners or participants within Christian education place themselves in relationships in which they can grow. Mutual mentoring or discipling relationships require an openness to observe, to listen, to ask questions, to be authentic. The mentor is not one who lords it over another, but comes alongside to guide and direct the learner to grow over time.

Pazmiño relates that such an educational partnership results in at least two benefits. The first benefit is that learners and facilitators are not alone in the educational process; ". . . others can provide perspective, support, and encouragement. . . . With others, persons can see possibilities that they alone cannot see" (Pazmiño 1994, 134). Participants enable one another to exercise their lives as stewards of God's purposes on earth. In developing their covenantal relationship with God, they develop an openness to living out this covenantal relationship by supporting and encouraging each other. Second, Pazmiño relates that by being in partnership with God and others, learners are empowered ". . . to address the problems they are now confronting and

will confront in the future" (Pazmiño 1994, 134). Further, Pazmiño states

ministry in and through Christian education incarnates a partnership in suffering and hope in the recognition that one's competence and sufficiency comes from God. In wrestling with problems, people can work for God and with God as well as with others and for others in the Body of Christ. (Pazmiño 1994, 134-135)

Therefore, both teachers and learners share their visions for and experiences of transforming society so that it comes under the reign of God. With courage and conviction, they will work together to alleviate suffering, to witness to God's reign, to bring about change in conformity with God's will. Again this involves cooperation, a reliance upon the Holy Spirit, and a sensitivity to his leading so that God may be glorified.

Implications for the Context of Christian Education

Education that is Christian must also focus on the context in which education is carried out. Context asks "what is the proper environment or setting for Christian education [in order] to carry on its work with integrity" (Schipani 1984, 123)? Two implications are presented.

First, *education that is Christian takes place in and through the church*. Snyder comments that "kingdom Christians . . . are the community gathered around Jesus in faith, love, and service to him and to all people" (Snyder 1991, 155). Further, Westerhoff presents statements

concerning the church that are relevant to understanding the context of education that is Christian.

The church is . . . to be a radical community for others, a countercultural community biased toward and acting with God on behalf of the oppressed, the hurt, the poor, the have-nots, the marginal people of the world.

The church can never exist for itself; it is never an end, only a means. Its mission, its end, is to be community where Christian faith is proclaimed, experienced, understood, lived and acted upon in history. (Westerhoff 1976, 42)

Therefore, the church is the primary context of Christian education where discipleship involves the mutual discipling of one another.

In the context of the congregation, participants mutually submit themselves to being in community, to build up one another and to correct one another in a spirit of love. Participants encourage one another to think and respond creatively, to be active in the world through ministry opportunities which reveal the presence and will of God. Persons learn from each other, share insights, and are motivated by cooperation in order to be effective in life together.

Education that is Christian calls for a radically different kind of church community which gives prime focus to its educational ministry. The reign of God as paradigm challenges the church to be a community

. . . where the tradition is faithfully transmitted through ritual and life, where persons as actors--thinking, feeling, willing, corporate selves--are nurtured and converted to radical faith, and where they

are prepared and motivated for individual and corporate action in society on behalf of God's coming community. (Westerhoff 1976, 49-50)

In understanding the church as the context of effective Christian education, and education as a key element of the church's identity, the concept of conscientization also provides helpful understanding and direction for the church. To engage in conscientization, the church must engage in mutual, must include those outside of its community in discussion of issues of concern in their immediate societal context, and come to decision regarding action, that is in accordance with the will of God. In this way the church situates itself as God's active agent in society, seeking to live out the reality of God's reign in the midst of life.

Second, *education that is Christian takes place in the world*. In that the church is situated in society and seeks to exert a transformational influence, not only must the church appropriate the gospel cognitively, but the gospel must be acted out in the context of society. Learning as acting in obedience to the will of God places the context of Christian education in the world. Because God created the world, his intentions for the world place the educational context in the world as well. Westerhoff asserts that the vocation of

. . . Christians is in the world, and as children of God . . . are called to join God in his liberating historic actions. God is at work in the world on behalf of peace, justice, and love. To know God is to join in his history-making. . . . (Westerhoff 1976, 64)

The church seeking to act corporately in the world ". . . needs to train its people to *think* politically, socially, economically, theologically, and ethically" (Westerhoff 1976, 67). Through Christian education the theological emphasis can enable persons to understand God and his reign in relation to ethical, political, social and economic thought and action. Yet, also from an individualized focus, the church needs to enable its members to view their jobs as vocations, and to inform daily decision making by Christian faith (Westerhoff 1976, 67).

Education that is Christian, therefore, understands that the church, though not of the world, is active in the world. Westerhoff challenges the church and its educational ministry to regard itself differently in the context of the world.

The church is called by God, not to be a community of cultural continuity in support of the status quo but a countercultural community of social change. Only if we come to understand our life as a community of faith in terms of our actions in the world; only if we evaluate the nature and character of our personal, interpersonal, and social actions; only if we motivate and enable the church to be a community of cultural change acting on behalf of the Gospel; only then will we be a faith community worthy of Christ's name. (Westerhoff 1976, 66)

Implications for the Timing of Christian Education

Timing has to do *when* education that is Christian takes place. The question of timing gives attention to *when* Christian education is intentionally Christian and *when*

Christian education is completed. Three implications are presented.

First, *education that is Christian takes place when the purposes of God are integrated in the educational process.* All education takes place in human history, but education that is specifically Christian, whether the subject matter is concerned with God directly, or indirectly, regards God as foundational to the learning context. Education that is deliberately not Christian is education that has as one of its foundational components the predetermined conclusion of the non-existence of God or the denial of God.

In this light, it is possible that much of education has the potential of being education that is Christian, be it the teaching of biblical material, or the teaching of other disciplines, such as mathematics, sciences, or sociology, when it recognizes that the logic, the order, or the beauty inherent within the subject matter can be attributed to the presence of God. The person of faith is more apt to recognize the presence of God's creativity behind the subject matter and can be involved in uncovering the reality of God behind the curriculum.

In terms of purpose and process, education that is Christian is education that is not carried out in contradiction to the way God relates to people. Processes and purposes which dehumanize persons cannot be considered Christian. Therefore, even though biblical material may be

taught, using educational processes which regard persons as mere respondents to stimuli, does not engage the whole person. Such processes cannot be regarded as Christian. Though behavioral change is important in education that is Christian, the processes utilized must uphold the innate dignity of human beings who are made in the image of God.

Second, *education that is Christian finds its effective starting point in Christ.* When learners and teachers are in relationship with God through Christ, as intentional participants in God's reign, co-laboring with God in demonstrating and bringing about his reign, education takes on a Christian identity. By beginning in Christ, those involved in education can see humanity in the image of God, the God-directed telos of human history, the will of God as shalom, and the co-participation of humanity in Christ with God in effecting his reign of earth. Participants recognize that the purposes and practices of education are not carried out apart from God, but involve humanity in order to bring them to acknowledge the uniqueness of God's creation, God's presence, and thereby bring glory to God.

Third, *education that is Christian takes place over the life of the Christian disciple.* It is not uncommon in church settings for Christian education or Sunday School to be regarded as spiritual education for children alone. However, in the context of growth towards obedience, the process of learning continues as long as development in obedience to

Christ continues. Ward, commenting on the purpose of obedience in Christian education, relates that educators are to be involved not merely in teaching, but in the teaching of obedience. Since learning to obey involves a lifetime of growth, the process of learning obedience involves a commitment to lifelong learning (Ward 1994, 153-154). Lifelong learning engages the learner in continual discovery, in continual growth and development with the purpose of growing to fullness in Christ (Colossians 1:28). Therefore, education that is Christian is education that spans the lifetime of the learner.

Conclusion Regarding Implications

The implications presented in this chapter are meant to be mere starting points for further discussion, rather than providing a listing of steps for implementation. The processes of implementation will be better achieved following an analysis of the crisis in Christian education and evaluation of the present paradigm.

How different can education be that is guided by the reign of God? The reign of God focuses Christian education so that it can effectively lead people into the presence of God's reign in the midst of life. The paradigm of God's reign offers a consensual principle for enabling Christian education to fulfill its task effectively. This study now turns to the question of whether the reign of God is a useful paradigm for education that is Christian.

CHAPTER 7
THE RELEVANCE OF THE REIGN OF GOD
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

As stated in the first chapter, this study seeks to contribute to the continuing discussion regarding Christian education's purpose, nature and identity by attempting to understand more clearly the crisis in Christian education by focusing on the concept of *paradigm* and *paradigm change* as a methodology for analysis. By building on an understanding of the concept of *paradigm* and an analysis of the crisis in Christian education, this study concentrated on demonstrating how a theology of the reign of God can effectively guide Christian education in understanding its purpose, nature and identity so that it can effectively educate Christianly. To this end the research problem focused on examining what understandings for Christian education's purpose, scope, context, process, participants, and timing the biblical motif of the reign of God suggests when it serves as a paradigm for educating Christianly.

The Gospel of the reign of God provides more than the necessary content for effective Christian education. As this study sought to show, the gospel of God's reign has a much more comprehensive role in guiding Christian education

through its crisis and in its continued development. Though the implications presented in the previous chapter were not necessarily new nor revolutionary, they did begin to illustrate how the reign of God as a paradigm deals with the issues in the crisis under one rubric and provides criteria and direction for the integration of the social sciences. In this way the paradigm of the reign of God is able to guide Christian education to a fresh understanding of itself and its practice.

The paradigm of the reign of God is able to deal with the issues of Christian education's crisis as it embraces both a directive theological focus and the insights gained from a social scientific perspective. As Christian education is guided by the reign of God, it can be about offering educational solutions which are both effective and Christian.

In so doing, the concept of paradigm is able to alert Christian educators to a number of matters in the midst of the present state of crisis. First, it alerts them to the reality that the present situation is hopeful, because Christian education is in the midst of redefining itself. It is facing questions of identity, direction, and purpose in the exercising of its task. However, it is not a time for despair, rather a time for hope as the discipline is in flux, experiencing change, redefinition, and rediscovery. To ignore the character of paradigmatic crisis is to ignore the vitality of change that is embracing Christian education. The crisis

points out that Christian education is seeking to find fresh bearings, a fresh direction which will enable it effectively to fulfill its purpose.

Second, it helps Christian educators to understand the relationship between theology and the social sciences and how theology provides criteria and direction in guiding Christian education. Although, social science is important for Christian education, theology is better suited for providing the basis for consensus. Theology, therefore, provides the criteria for evaluating the contributions of other disciplines for Christian education, specifically the social sciences.

Third, it calls educators to move beyond the crisis towards consensus. This is a slow process, but as a growing number of educators come to understand the context of the crisis in terms of the concept of paradigm, intentional movement towards consensus can take place and engagement in problem solving.

Significance of the Implications of God's Reign for Christian Education

How then can Christian education function differently when it is guided by the paradigm of God's reign? Five examples derived from the implications from the previous chapter provide illustration. A number of questions are also raised to generate reflection and discussion. These examples

focus on theologizing, education for obedience, education for decision, content in context, and education for social responsibility.

Theologizing

Christian education guided by the reign of God engages learners in theological reflection in relation to life issues. The reign of God as a paradigm fosters theological exploration and expression in the lives of people. Jesus' teaching in parables challenged people, who had ears to hear, to reflect on the significance of living under God's rule. Theological reflection engages the whole people of God in viewing life from the perspective of God's active engagement with humanity.

Approaches to Christian education which readily provide theological answers in a transmissive manner circumvent the spiritual development of persons. In being provided answers, learners are more apt to be socialized into a "synthetic-conventional faith." Though it provides the person with a coherent expression of faith, it is, however, a faith which conforms ". . . to the expectations and judgments of significant others and as yet does not have a sure enough grasp on its own identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain an independent perspective" (Fowler, 1981, 172-173). This dissuades independent theologizing and promotes confessing the largely unexamined faith of the community. It is not that the faith of the community lacks theological

integrity, rather, a person's confession of their community's faith ought to be an expression with which they have come to identify through theological reflection.

Christian education under the reign of God, on the other hand, promotes independent and interdependent theological thinking. It is education which engages persons to examine all of life's issues in terms of God's rule and God's will. It is education which equips persons to question their faith in order to make it their own. It is education which challenges the community of faith to support the questioning of faith so that persons can continually deepen their understanding of life and to find meaning in it.

Such an education promotes critical thinking and dialogue with others who are also seeking, questioning, and growing. Such discussion is not a sharing of ignorance because it has as a prerequisite the immersing of oneself in God's word as the basis for theological exploration. It is dialogue which brings life questions to the Scriptural text in order for the Scriptural text to provide direction and understanding. It is dialogue which allows for diverse theological exploration in order to make sense of God's rule in all of life.

Such thinking and dialogue promotes growth in faith towards "individuated-reflective" and "conjunctive" faith (Fowler 1981, 182-183, 197-198). Such theologizing fosters the development of a comprehensive worldview that embraces all

of life and provides a multicultural and multicontextual perspective. It is theologizing which promotes obedience for living in justice and righteousness. It is theologizing which provides a growing perspective for interpreting life.

Certain questions help assess whether education is effective for the development of deepening theological perspective. Is there time and space given in the educational process for learners to question their faith? How supportive is the educational environment for faith questioning? How does the faith community welcome questioning of their collective faith and practice? What does this environment need to look like? In presenting the faith, how are learners encouraged to wrestle with the issues behind the faith? Are learners encouraged to struggle with their faith, to reason with their faith, to ask tough questions of their faith? What social scientific understandings concerning humanity and the human condition are raised for integration with theological reflection? What educational processes are available to educators to foster theological reflection within the educational environment?

These questions begin to help develop an approach to Christian education which does more than provide theological content, rather, it promotes the practice of theological reflection so that disciples can be better equipped to engage the issues of life as enactors of the will of God.

Education For Obedience

Christian education guided by the reign of God enables greater effectiveness in educating for obedience because the purpose of obedience is essential to Christian education's self-understanding. Because of the central focus upon obedience, the subject matter and educational processes intentionally focus upon equipping persons to live in obedience to the will of God. Education under the reign of God seeks to not only guide learners to make volitional choices to live in obedience to God's will, but also challenges them to enact their obedience through praxis.

Learners are challenged to discover and make personal a sense of calling--the arena in which they are to practice their obedience, rather than adhering to a number of general moralisms. In fostering this sense of calling the learner engages in critical assessment and judging of self in light of God's word and their life context. They are challenged to ask and discuss how they are to act in relation to the issues they face in their families, their places of work, and in their communities so that they demonstrate the will of God.

This is more than cognitive apprehension of the concept of obedience. The focus is upon learning obedience in accordance with Christ's command in Matthew 28. Learners are not passive spectators in learning about obedience, rather they are to be actively engaged in life for obedience for the

demonstrating of shalom. The evaluation of obedience is not primarily what the community of faith's expectations are, but the self-realization of what Christ demands of each person as participant in the community of faith. Such an obedience must come from within the person and within their relationship with Jesus Christ which results in deliberate action for justice towards neighbor and society. It is an obedience which emulates the obedience of Jesus Christ, who did what he heard and saw the Father doing (cf. John 12:49-50). Such a learning for obedience is fostered by Christian education guided by the reign of God.

A number of questions help educators evaluate present practice and make decisions for an effective education for obedience. What is the place of obedience in present curriculum? How focused is the concept of obedience being expressed in the learning context? Is it expressed in terms of praxis? What actions does Christ require of us in living in obedience to him? How are learners to be involved in developing a sense of calling? How are learners encouraged to assess their context in life in which they are to be obedient? How are learners engaged in the process of judging themselves in relation to the demands of Scripture? How does the community of faith nurture an intentional obedience in the lives of God's people? What understandings from the social sciences are helpful for promoting obedience? What

educational processes are helpful for guiding learners to take responsibility for enacting obedience to Christ?

Questions driven by a paradigm of the reign of God stimulate Christian education to focus on obedience as a way of living in the world. Further, it is in living in obedience to the will of the Father that disciples of Christ will demonstrate the reality of his reign.

Education for Decision

Christian education guided by the reign of God is effective in educating for decision. Decision-making is a vital part of learning to live in obedience because Christ continually calls his followers to repentance, and to follow after him. Just as Jesus' first declaration concerning the reign of God demanded a decision--"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15), and his immediate call to Simon and Andrew as well--"Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17), so too education guided by the paradigm of God's reign places the call to decision at the forefront of educational activity. Effective Christian education which equips persons for obedience, needs, therefore, to focus on decision as a vital part of the educational process.

Though decision is at the basis of Christian conversion, effective Christian education fosters the habit of making decisions consistent with the will of God in every arena of life. Decision is a daily practice essential for

enacting the will of God. Decision is an act that follows upon the integration of content and context in which the learner weighs what it will cost to act in obedience to God. Decision involves critical assessment and discernment; it involves dialogue and prayer; it involves the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of the learner's life.

Learners engage in learning not just to acquire knowledge, but come to realize that this knowledge will be used to make decisions regarding ways of thinking and acting. Effective education must integrate decision processes, not just as something that is done after teaching is done, but as something that drives the teaching and learning process.

Decision is essential for equipping persons to be agents of transformation in culture. The decisions persons make are not general but specific to their life situations. In discerning the will of God, their response in obedience requires decision-making so that their involvement embraces their complete being.

Questions which are helpful in addressing the decisional aspect in education are as follows. How is the call for decision an underlying motif in all that is taught? What decision-making processes are employed in the learning environment? In what ways do learners struggle with making decisions? How is decision acted upon? How are learners encouraged to express the decisions they have made? How do learning processes and contexts enable the making of

decisions? What understandings from the social sciences contribute to the decision-making process? What kind of learning environment is most conducive to fostering accountability among learners concerning their decisions for action?

Such questions will help educators reflect upon the importance of the decisional process for developing effective educational processes. As learners are equipped to make effective decisions, they will be further equipped to be action-oriented in relation to demonstrating God's reign.

Content in Context

Christian education guided by the reign of God focuses on content, however, it relates content to life context more directly. Since the purpose of Christian education under the reign of God seeks to equip persons to develop an eschatological worldview and an action-oriented focus, the content of Christian education needs to be presented in a way that upholds these purposes.

Content that is presented primarily for cognitive acquisition for application at some later point in time is not as effective for engaging persons in the needs they face in their life situations. The context in which learning is to be applied is given secondary focus. Christian education under the reign of God seeks to integrate content and life context, because the paradigm of God's reign regards the biblical record as dynamic, acknowledging that God is active in the

present to bring about wholeness. Since God acts to influence the present, so too must Christian disciples as co-laborers with God. Therefore, educational content must be regarded in a dynamic manner. It must take into account the life context of the learner, who is called to enact God's will in their life situation.

Such education calls for learners to bring their life contexts to the biblical and theological material. It leads learners to place themselves into the biblical text in order to "live out" and "experience" God's actions as if they were present. It calls for imaginative apprehension of the content, placing it into the life context of learners so that they can begin to act with intentionality in the midst of their life situation in order to foster shalom. Effective Christian education, therefore, calls for mutual consideration and integration of one's life context and the biblical and theological content.

Certain questions are helpful for guiding the educational process in evaluating whether it integrates content and the life context of the learner. Are learners encouraged to express their life situations? How are learners empowered to name what is going on in their life contexts? How can the biblical content be expressed in order to relate a worldview in which the activity of God is seen as present? What ways can be employed to enable learners to utilize their imagination in hearing/reading the Scriptures? What processes

enable the learner to visualize how God's activity is relevant to their present context? How can learners gain understanding for integrating content with their life context so as to enable their action as agents of wholeness in society?

Questions, such as these, help address the need for conveying content dynamically in relation to life context and for enlisting educational processes which will enable such an integration. Such an integration equips Christians to be active co-laborers with God in enacting his reign.

Education for Social Responsibility

Christian education guided by the reign of God demonstrates great effectiveness in educating for social responsibility. Education guided by the reign of God focuses on leading the community of faith to act in accordance with a countercultural ethic which has a transforming influence upon society, bringing justice, righteousness, liberation, wholeness, and peace.

First, learners are challenged to take responsibility for their own actions and for the corporate actions of their community of faith so that their activity in society displays the present actions of God. If they are to be "a community of character" (Hauerwas 1981) that demonstrates the way disciples of Christ ought to live under the rule of God, then, they need to make intentional effort to be guided by the demands of God's word. The community of faith is to judge itself so that its actions, among one

another and within society, demonstrate the reality of shalom. Second, education guided by God's reign fosters learners to become individually and corporately aware of the needs of their social contexts, to understand the issues which bring about oppression, violence, brokenness, and death. It is education that directs them to formulate statements which give witness to the possibility of shalom in the midst of them. It challenges them to design ministries which ameliorate human suffering, and it is education which equips learners to work towards the implementation of societal policies and processes which address and correct the causes of social problems within the human community.

This is faith that engages culture; this is faith that incarnates shalom in the midst of human relationships so that the Spirit of God is free to penetrate and transform the lives of people, of families, of communities. The community of faith regards itself not as an enclave separated from the world, but as a people who have been called out from the world to follow after Christ, in order to live in the midst of the world in accordance with a different agenda in obedience to Christ. Learners, individually and corporately, come to realize that their being educated under the reign of God invites them daily to respond to God's call to be co-laborers with God making choices and engaging in action which accomplishes the same work that Christ began to do--declaring the good news of God's reign, bringing liberation to those in

oppression, and to act in every relationship for the sake of shalom (cf. Luke 4:18-19).

Certain questions guide the development of the practice of educating for social responsibility. How effective are present actions on behalf of social responsibility, both individually and corporately? What social issues are prevalent in a church's societal context? What influence does the church effect upon these issues? What are God's demands for shalom within the community of faith and within society? How does the church measure up to these demands? What understandings from sociology and social psychology help in understanding these social issues? How can an understanding of shalom be integrated in addressing these social needs? What processes can be developed or adapted which guide focus towards social awareness, witness, ministry, and action?

Questions driven by the paradigm of God's reign guide Christian education to focus on education for social responsibility. The church, in being the community of Christ, is the community which is empowered by the Spirit of God to demonstrate God's shalom and to effect transformation in society in accordance with that shalom.

These five examples and related questions are meant to foster thinking and activity about how Christian education can be different and how it can mature as a discipline when it is guided by the paradigm of God's reign. These proposals are

not new, and perhaps they are already practiced to some extent.

So, then, what is different about Christian education that is guided by the reign of God? Certainly these practices have been embraced, to some extent, as educators have sought to develop education that is more effective. All this suggests is that Christian educators have already been adapting new approaches in the midst of the old paradigm-- though they may not have been actually enabled to name the full extent of the crisis, nor name the contours of a new paradigm. Since the gospel is implicit in all that Christian educators do, it is reasonable to understand that it has had an influence on the educational process. Yet, in naming the reign of God as a paradigm that is useful and comprehensive for Christian education, educators are more apt to have a sense of the criteria for choosing what is in harmony with the reign of God and what is not.

What is being suggested here is that Christian education begin to recognize that those practices which are effective and which demonstrate the reality of God's will, are those guided by the paradigm of God's reign. In making the paradigm of the reign of God explicit, Christian education is enabled to more readily embark on a course for understanding itself, its purpose, and its practice. The reign of God as a paradigm provides a constellation of beliefs for the Christian

education community for guiding its practice and further problem solving.

Next Steps

Where is Christian education to go from here? How can Christian educators move towards an examination of the reign of God in order to evaluate its acceptability as a paradigm for their own work in education? How can the various principles presented be implemented in order to foster a more effective Christian education?

Admittedly there is a reluctance to circumvent the process by suggesting a number of concrete "how-to" steps because the purpose of this study is to engage the Christian education community in a process by which together it can develop some concrete procedures. The intention is to foster intentional, directed dialogue, rather than to short-circuit the process by giving a number of steps which can be readily implemented devoid of context. Rather, it is hoped, that educators will interact with one another, considering the ideas presented here, to further add to the understanding of paradigm, paradigm change, the crisis in Christian education, and the proposal of the reign of God as a viable paradigm. It is through such a mutual discussion in seeking a shared paradigm that concrete steps can emerge that will give further direction to the curricular process. However, even then, it is hoped that the curricular process will not provide a number of ready-made "how-to" steps for easy implementation, but to

engage churches and theological schools in processes which will equip them to develop effective approaches for educating Christianly within their own unique contexts.

An effective Christian education must put away its dependence upon a transmissive paradigm with its content and method orientation, with its schooling-instructional approach, so that it can engage the questions that are unique to each particular context. The educator in embracing the dynamic paradigm of God's reign moves towards greater effectiveness. This involves an intentional struggling with understanding the paradigm of God's reign; it involves struggling with understanding the human condition, both theologically and social scientifically. The implementation of educational objectives must take into account the realities of the local context in order to discover what it means to be obedient to Christ and to be action-oriented agents of transformation within society. To do anything else is to undermine the dynamic nature of the paradigm of God's reign.

This necessitates that educators come together as a community in order to seek consensus. In seeking consensus a number of questions need to be raised. Is what has been presented in this study concerning the crisis in Christian education a fair representation of what we are experiencing as a community? Does the concept of paradigm and paradigm change benefit us in understanding what is presently going on in our midst? It might be helpful to convene a symposium in which

educators gather to discuss and analyze paradigm change in Christian education in order to address these questions as an academic and practitioner community.

Other questions also need to be asked. Is the reign of God a viable paradigm for guiding Christian education? Does it provide a comprehensive enough perspective to deal with the issues which are confronting Christian education's ineffectiveness? This requires further investigation of the biblical motif of the reign of God. What more is there to be understood concerning the reign of God? What can be learned from the larger theological community? What can be learned from the missiological community, the social scientific community? In raising these questions interdisciplinary connections need to be forged. The convening of forums can foster further understanding as well as demonstrate how the Christian educational process can benefit other disciplines. These dialogues will enable a more careful evaluation of the reign of God as a viable paradigm, and suggest further educational implications.

If the reign of God is accepted as a relevant paradigm for Christian education, then a number of questions related to implications follow. These questions would address applications in educational practice. Implications concerning purpose would lead to a reevaluation of current curriculum and practices to discover the centrality of the worldview of God's reign and God's telos, how integrated is the concept of

shalom, how central is an action-oriented focus which equips children and adults to be engaged as agents of transformation in family and society. This would then lead to further evaluation of content, process, participant, context, and timing concerns in light of the guiding principle of the reign of God. In all this, especially in the local church, the concept of teaching to obedience would be fostered in order to lead people to be engaged in lifelong learning, so that throughout their lives they can be challenged to integrate their faith with the issues of their lives in order to be co-laborers with God in demonstrating the presence of his reign.

Therefore, where Christian education goes from here is into a process. It is a process that seeks to unite the Christian educational community. Effective Christian education involves the community of faith struggling together to live out its obedience to Jesus Christ, in order to exercise the stewardship God has given to his people. As his people grow to fullness in Christ they, then, demonstrate the reality and power of his reign.

The Reign of God: A Different Kind of Paradigm

Kuhn argued that one of the characteristics of paradigms is that they change. New paradigms will replace present paradigms because no paradigm can ". . . explain all the facts with which it is confronted" (Kuhn 1970, 18). Yet, as Küng and Barbour have argued, paradigms in theology and Christianity are built upon a different foundation. Though

other paradigms change, the paradigm of God's reign does not. It is a continual paradigm because God's sovereign never ceases.

However, what changes over time is the understanding of the reign of God. As new insights regarding God's rule are realized, as tensions are reexamined, as the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is readdressed, deeper understandings and the development of new implications for educational practice are fostered. Though the paradigm of God's reign is constant, the human appropriation of it will always grow and develop.

Therefore, this constant character of the paradigm of God's reign provides a continual basis for consensus amongst educators. The biblical message of the reign of God provides a solid foundation which can be repeatedly analyzed in order to deepen consensus amongst educators. Yet, Christian education will go through crisis after crisis, for that is the nature of change. As educators gain new understandings of God's reign, new implications will develop to change the face of Christian education.

The reign of God will always stand as a radical paradigm that confronts other paradigms and understandings of itself. That is an essential aspect of its dynamic nature and the dynamic nature of God. Christian education can only prosper as it repeatedly permits itself to be reshaped by God and the implications of his reign so that educational

activity will lead to continued human growth and development towards shalom, towards the telos of God, and for God's glory.

A Final Word

There is much more to say regarding God's reign and its influence on Christian education. This study, however, has focused only on some of the tensions in its interpretation, primarily through the contributions of Ladd and Snyder, to provide an illustration of how the motif of the reign of God provides a paradigm for rethinking Christian education.

The implications presented here seek to challenge Christian educators to be more intentional and action oriented in equipping believers to be actors of God's will. As people in covenant with God, educators have a responsibility in exercising their stewardship in such a way that God's reign is manifested and advanced in their lives, in the lives of the learners they serve as facilitators, and within society. As educators grasp hold of this central motif in the life of Jesus Christ they will be rewarded with a renewed vision for Christian education's mission.

More study of the reign of God is required in order shed light on what enables the effective practice of education that is Christian. For one, the examination of other tensions in interpreting the reign of God, such as the church's relation to it, whether God's reign is primarily heavenly or earthly, whether it grows gradually or cataclysmically (Snyder

1991, 16-17). Second, a detailed examination of Jesus' ministry in the Gospels can help uncover aspects of the reign of God that can only be discovered as one "walks" with him. As Ward has often mentioned, the Scripture deals with people whose lives, emotions, experiences, and responses are every bit as real as any person today (Ward 1994, 22). Third, an examination of the parables promises to uncover a deeper understanding of this motif because they express pictures of the mystery of God's reign. Fourth, a deeper examination of the insights by Ladd and Snyder, as well as other interpreters of God's reign, can only lead to deepening an understanding of life in the kingdom, the righteousness of the kingdom, and the demands of the kingdom.

This dissertation represents a beginning point in addressing the viability of the reign of God serving as a paradigm for educating Christianly. The implications and ideas represent thinking in progress in discovering the richness that the paradigm of God's reign offers for guiding the task of Christian education. Hopefully, others will be challenged to add their voices to this dialogue as Christian education seeks consensus in guiding its identity and task, in order to foster an educational process that enables followers of Christ to be actors of the will of God and demonstrate the presence of his reign in the midst of all of life.

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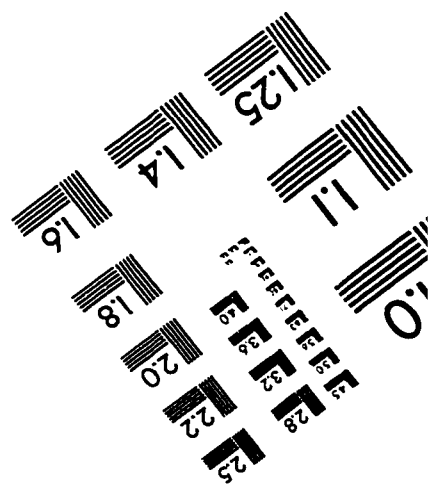
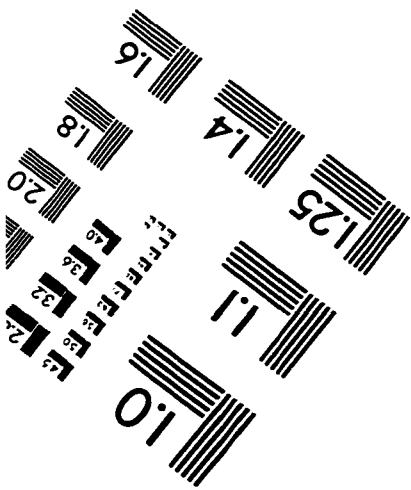
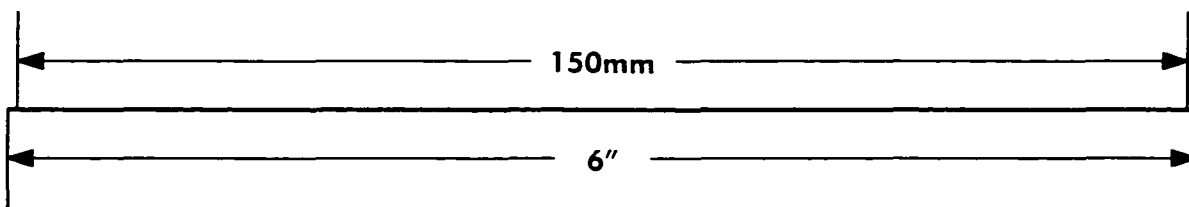
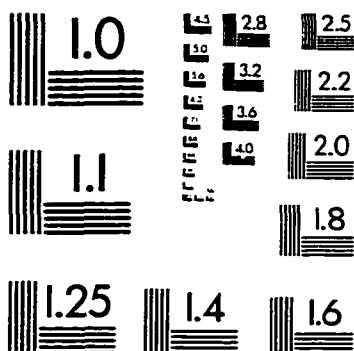
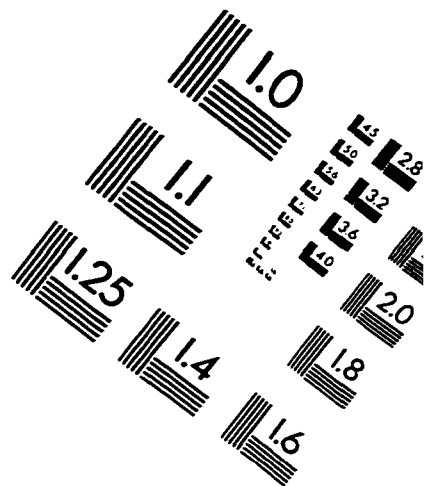
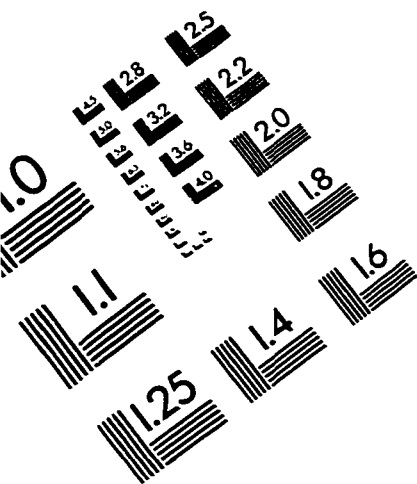
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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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