

these academic papers, which in places have a pompous tone, also rarely go beyond complaining, decrying, warning, and objecting. Most of the authors have almost nothing to say about what they consider might be worthwhile uses of computers in education, although one author does admit that his manuscript was prepared on a text-processing system that also checked his spelling. Several others imply that they do use computers in education in other defensible ways. Some of the statements made in the book indicate a lack of understanding of the capabilities of the technology and the future impact of current developments. The statements about the spell checker do not reflect current capabilities of spell checkers. The comments on computer assisted instruction do not reflect the impact of "expert systems" on this medium. Criticism of the type leveled in many of the articles should reflect the continuing development of technology. On the other hand, the book contains a few amazingly uncritical statements, such as the condescending comment of Davy, "I take it as obvious that proper education in computer science belongs in high schools" (p. 17). Why is this obvious? What is "proper" education in computer science? And why does the study of this particular technology belong in high schools which have traditionally offered courses in mathematics and the pure sciences like biology, chemistry, and physics rather than in applied sciences like engineering?

This book is long on good questions about the use of computers in education, but it will probably seem short on good answers, especially to a practicing teacher or to an educational researcher with a bent for action.

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Folz, Nancy, T. (Ed.), *Handbook of Adult Religious Education*. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1986, 272 pp, \$14.95.

This is an "intelligent" book. It utilizes an abundance of current research about education, and particularly the education of adults, to provide insight into a contemporary, popular topic. Adult education is currently a "hot item" in educational enterprise, and particularly religious education for adults. This book reports theoretical and practical research by diverse adult religious educators. The authors, showing themselves familiar with some of the best contemporary theory in religious education, make judicious application to adult education.

Perhaps one of the finest features of the book is its readability. Any church committee charged with implementation of adult education should read and discuss this *Handbook* to ground their deliberations for sound planning. Those seeking to improve insight into religious education for adults will find thoughtful, practical help. As well, those responsible for the in-service preparation of leaders (teachers, clergy, coordinators, etc.), for other levels of religious education will be aided by these reflections on effective adult workshops and training sessions.

The book is faithful to its perspective announced at the outset: "how adults learn, what transitions occur in adulthood, and how religious educators can assist people to find meaning in life . . . the challenge of adult education is in the life-style lived" (p. 2). The first chapter, though a brief fifteen pages, presents the overall purpose of adult religious education, i.e. evolving an individual's meaning-making as "an interpretative structure which defines a person's being-in-the-world and his or her existential stance toward reality" (p. 10). Education aims at development of personal faith through coherent religious thinking in dialogue at once with one's religious tradition and an individual's life-situation, i.e. personal "meaning-making." This differs from what many adults today often experience in a "simply transmission of tradition" ready-made for living ("meaning-receiving"). The function of the adult religious educator must rather be to help "learners explore and expand their meaning structures" (p. 13).

Two fundamental modes of learning for adults are indicated as "notional" (rational-discursive) and "relational" (lived experiences in a community of shared values) (pp. 12-15). All ten author-contributors share this educational anthropology and unfold the book within the dynamic of the indicated learning procedures. Underlying these

two approaches to learning is the authors' theological foundation grounded in a vital, contemporary ecclesiology and doctrine of salvation — the searching restlessness of individual autonomy brought into an on-going dialectic with the living heritage experienced within the Christian community. This educational dialectic becomes spiritually creative and redemptive of faith by and under the all-pervading grace of God.

In the second chapter, the editor, Nancy Folz, outlines ten basic, practical principles for adult religious education programming. Central is not curriculum, but the adult learners themselves who know they "need to use the information they learn quickly . . . for decision-making" (p. 31). Seven chapters follow describing the application of these principles to specific learning groups within the adult community.

Chapters three through six provide sound insights and practical applications concerning young, middle-aged and older adults, and adults in-servicing adult leaders. Chapters seven through nine will cause most readers to reflect attentively. Dealing with single parents, the separated and divorced, and death-related education, these chapters call adult educators to renewed personal reflection based both on sound, contemporary Christian theology and consequent educational practice. (Many of us may have biases in some of these areas.)

These excellent three chapters, in particular, constitute a practical example of how "content and the learning process" continually interact. Curriculum content and the life-experience of the learners are to be in constant dialogue probing and clarifying each other so as to occasion education which is in essence the work of God's Spirit. Only the educator who is also a learner truly educates. Otherwise "we" may get in the way of the learning! "Some major blocks to effective religious education ministry often lie in the unhealed areas of our own lives . . ." (p. 153).

The tenth chapter provides a concluding summary of the first nine under the theme of professionalism. If adult religious education is to be taken seriously, it must become more professional. Too often today's adult religious education tends to be "remedial," i.e., as if it intended to evolve a deficient creedal-understanding of adults. Far too quickly adult questioning about religion and its place is judged to be due to a cognitive lack of doctrinal understanding. Too often the response has been to mount "up-dating courses" of a rational and theological explanatory approach. The *Handbook* teaches us that this model needs revision. "Possibly the difficulty in the past has been that congregations have not been prepared or able to deal with that stage of faith development which questions and challenges rather than simply accepts the traditions" (p. 68). A questioning faith can be a maturing, life-integrating faith. Education is always more than "schooling." Education must be a life-long humanizing activity by which individuals "recover" meaning within communities bringing meaning to the world. "The task of adult religious education is that of integration, of bringing into harmony what we think, feel, act and live" (p. 233).

It is fascinating that a Faculty of Education journal is publishing this book review. First, in this *Handbook*, anyone concerned with education — and particularly with the pre-servicing and in-servicing of teachers — will find ample wisdom for theoretical and practical reflection on effective teaching of adult students. Secondly, some professional educators express reticence about religion in education. In this *Handbook* is articulated and applied a philosophy of teaching and learning consistent with a most humane concept of education as well as an understanding of religion which might indeed challenge some old biases.

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The Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Studies has published a history of the Committee written by S.C.T. Clarke.

The publication is entitled *The Development of the Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Studies, 1954-1984* and is available at a cost of \$20.00 (payable by cheque or money order only), from the secretariat of AACES, 200, 540 - 12 Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2R 0H4.