

AF from Willis, 18 May 76:
Good stuff here--THESIS 7.4 UPDATE--for "June," yes?

EMPHASIS

Motivation for Continuing Education

It was springtime in the Smokies, and twenty-five continuing educators from across the nation and Canada let the perennial urges to new life lift them across the miles to Lambeth Inn, an accommodating hostel nestled along the shore of picturesque Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Their purpose in meeting was to examine an issue vital to all of us: motivation for continuing education. Fortunately for Thesis, Marlene Halpin, O.P., Coordinator of Continuing Education and Special Programs at Aquinas Institute of Theology in Dubuque, Iowa was on the scene, and she has recorded a summary of the proceedings.

Four Major Orientations

According to Marlene, a review of the relevant literature and some group process exercises enabled participants to define the following four major areas of motivation: (1) a goal or task orientation, which includes the desire to complete a task, receive a raise or promotion, or do the job better, (2) a learning orientation, which emphasizes learning for its own sake; (3) an activity orientation focusing on the acquaintances and fellowship available in learning activities; and (4) an orientation geared toward coping with external expectations, such as a mandate from a superior or employer.

Although the task orientation is most common, each of these attitudes is valid in its own right.

Furthermore, our motivations may change or shift, even during a single educational event. Programs of continuing education should recognize this and allow space for the different types of orientations to fulfill their expectations.

What's Ahead

These considerations led to the conclusion that continuing education today is moving in the direction of a strong client-centered approach. With this in mind participants in the seminar made the following predictions for the 1980's:

- seminaries will provide frameworks for life-long theological education, rather than terminal degrees.
- The development of professional skills will be integrated with spiritual growth.
- Laity will be more involved in continuing education.
- Pre-packaged programs will become less popular.
- Some of the critical issues which will be addressed with more intentionality and flexibility are career changes, retirement, bio-medical concerns, and social justice.

Recent studies indicate that participation in continuing education is steadily rising among clergy. So ask yourself, "Where's the 'itch' or 'rub' in my life? Where do I want to keep growing? In what areas am I anxious about my ability to cope? What new information do I want about myself and what skills should I refine?" Then begin a search for the events that will meet your needs or design your own program of learning. It's springtime, not only in the Smokies, but also in your back yard. The urge to new life is breaking forth again.