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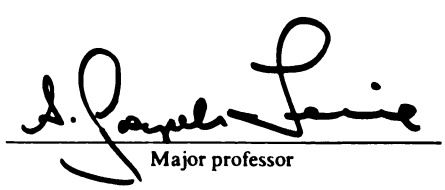

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THE LEARNING PROJECTS OF LAY MINISTERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By

John Walton Noren

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

THE LEARNING PROJECTS OF LAY MINISTERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by

John Walton Noren

The purpose of this study was to examine the implications which the learning projects of lay ministers have for the development of continuing education programs. The study was divided into two phases. In Phase 1, important characteristics of lay ministers' learning projects were identified. In Phase 2, the characteristics of the projects were reviewed and implications for the development of continuing education programs suggested.

The data of Phase 1 were gathered through the use of structured, personal interviews with lay ministers from the Michigan Region of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Twenty-four people were interviewed, four men and four women from three age groups; under 40, 40 to 60, over 60. The unit of measurement was the learning project, an intentional learning activity concentrating on a single subject and lasting at least seven hours.

The findings of Phase 1 indicate that lay ministers' learning projects are similar to those of other adults. In a twelve month period

each participant completed a mean of 11.2 learning projects and spent 1,034.5 hours on the projects, an average of 92.3 hours per project.

Lay ministers' employ the same number and type of resources in their projects and have similar reasons for learning as other adult learners. Lay ministers participate in less self-planned and more group-planned projects than other adults, and church-related projects account for 50% of the total number of projects.

The data of Phase 2 were collected by having participants in Phase 1 review the data of Phase 1 and respond to written questions concerning the data. The responses were analyzed by the researcher for the implications which they contained for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education.

Included among the findings of Phase 2 were: When presented with data on their learning projects, lay ministers can offer significant recommendations for improving educational programs for their continuing education. Lay ministers can identify and are a good source of information on their learning needs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the important contributions of several people to this achievement. First, I would like to express my sincere thanks to S. Joseph Levine, chairperson of my doctoral committee, for helping me to complete this dissertation. Joe's advice, persistence, and support were invaluable. Without his aid, I seriously doubt if I would have finished this three year long "learning project."

Next, I would like to mention my parents, Clyde and Margaret Noren, for the love of learning which was displayed in their lives and transmitted to me. I am very thankful for this most wonderful gift.

Finally but most importantly, I want to acknowledge the role which my wife, Jean Pauline Wenzel-Noren, played in this process. Jean's love, patience, and understanding made all the difference. She believed in me, encouraged me, and helped me to find the strength to keep going.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the implications of the learning projects of lay ministers for the development of continuing education programs. The study consisted of two phases. In Phase 1, important characteristics of lay ministers' learning projects were identified. Phase 1 sought to answer the question, Do lay ministers participate in learning projects in the same manner and to the same extent as other adults? In Phase 2, characteristics of the projects were reviewed by participants in Phase 1 and implications for the development of continuing education programs suggested.

The Need for the Study

Church-based continuing education for lay ministers does not adequately recognize the unique characteristics of adult learners. Too many religious education programs treat the teaching and learning of adults in the same manner as the teaching and learning of children. They stress the dependence of the student on the teacher and believe that learners lack the skills necessary to direct their own learning. The teacher is seen as possessing a reservoir of knowledge, and the task of educating requires the educator to dispense appropriate

amounts of knowledge to the student.

Freire (1970) uses the analogy of the "banking system" to describe the educational philosophy which holds the student as the passive recipient of the action of the teacher. In the analogy, the teacher deposits knowledge into the mind of the student as a customer makes a deposit into a bank. Freire disagrees with this philosophy and states that "real" learning, learning that empowers, can only take place in an atmosphere and framework of mutual respect. The teacher facilitates learning through dialogue with an "equally knowing other" (1970, p. 14).

Knowles (1980), in enumerating the characteristics of adult learners, makes a distinction between helping adults learn, andragogy, and the teaching of children, pedagogy. In contrast to the teacher-centered learning of children, adult learning, both in theory and practice, centers on the individual learner. The adult learner has the desire and the ability to determine and direct his or her own learning. The teacher, if present, functions best as a facilitator and a resource person. Adults have valuable resources of their own to draw upon in learning, their experiences. Life's experiences frequently influence decisions about what to learn and when to learn. The motivation to engage in learning is not supplied from external rewards or punishments but arises from internal forces. Readiness to learn often stems from the demands of social roles.

An additional characteristic of adult learning which sets it apart from the learning of children is the desire to immediately apply the product of learning. Children learn things in a cumulative fashion, and

the benefits from education are received sometime in the future. Adults are more present-centered in their learning and want to make immediate use of the knowledge and skills gained.

Tough (1970) developed the phrase "learning projects" to describe, in researchable terms, how adults pursue learning. A learning project is an intensive unit of purposeful learning that lasts at least seven hours and has as its objective the acquisition or retention of knowledge or a specific skill. The conclusions which Tough draws from the findings of his research are dramatic. He states that highly deliberate learning is a pervasive phenomenon of adult life. Adults conduct an average of eight learning projects a year and spend over 700 hours on the projects. Ninety-eight percent of all adults participate in at least one project annually. As significant as the statement on the extent of adult learning is the proclamation that most of the learning is self-planned. In attempting to determine who is responsible for the majority of the day-to-day planning of learning projects, Tough found that almost 75% of the projects were planned by the learners themselves.

The observations of Tough, Knowles, Freire, and other researchers contain information that could be used to enhance the development of continuing education programs for lay ministers. However, churches have failed to incorporate the knowledge gained from research on adult learning into their educational programming. Bertholf, writing in 1962, described preaching and the Bible class as the most commonly used methods of educating the laity. Over 20 years later, Trestor (1984)

observes that traditional methods are still relied upon too much. He advocates the employment of the principles of andragogy in forming learning experiences. Spiro (1984), another advocate of andragogy, argues for a curriculum that is learner-centered not teacher-centered. Teachers should not be "talking encyclopedias" (1984, p. 99) but fellow-inquirers who, with other learners, are seeking to increase their knowledge or improve their performance.

Lay members are held in high esteem by leaders of religious institutions, and their services are greatly valued. Bertholf (1962) states that the laity is essential because it is through them that the church carries out its mission. Trestor (1984) applauds the growing influence of the laity and maintains that informed adult leaders are indispensable in the struggle to translate religious values into societal practices. Even the popular press has discovered the trend toward using lay members to perform tasks once reserved for the clergy. In the September 7, 1987 issue of Time, Ostling details the decline in the number of priests in the Roman Catholic Church. The shortage of priests has lead to an increased use of sisters and lay persons in the ceremonies of the church. Lay volunteers conduct weddings, perform baptisms, teach classes, visit the sick, and plan liturgies. Of course, the Roman Catholic Church is not the only religious body which provides leadership opportunities for lay members. Elias (1982) remarks that the Protestant and Jewish faiths are facing similar issues where ordinary members have more influence and need more knowledge to function effectively as leaders.

Knowledge gained from research on adult learning and the social sciences in general has not been applied to religious education because, in Wilhoit's (1984) opinion, the results have been neither authoritative nor helpful. Wilhoit criticizes the procedures of scientific investigation where research findings must be validated by more research. As a consequence, much time passes before sound principles are established. Program developers must wait a considerable length of time to make application of new educational principles and procedures. Researchers, even in the same discipline, do not employ standard methods and definitions. The lack of standardization produces a diversity of findings which are confusing and of uncertain value to practitioners.

Smith (1983) maintains that research in the social sciences has deliberately ignored religion as a field of study. There is a gulf between the secular and the sacred which has been maintained by a strong disciplinary focus. Religion and religious institutions are not favored as settings for research. Smith does not totally absolve religion of all responsibility in the issue. Religious leaders must extrapolate useful information from research in the social science disciplines. Wilhoit (1984) concurs with this statement and adds that, when religion is a subject of study, valid findings must not be rejected out-of-hand due to prejudice against the use of scientific inquiry in what were previously areas of faith.

This study was a means of demonstrating that the characteristics which emerge from an examination of lay ministers' learning projects

are a form of information that has significant value in the development of continuing education programs. By utilizing the learning project as the unit of measurement, the investigation was able to compare its results with the results of other studies. The study sought to determine if lay ministers learn in the manner as other adults. The study also sought to provide religious educators with valid, research-derived information that could be used in planning continuing education programs. The information included suggestions for program development made by study participants.

Research Questions

The methodological framework upon which the first phase of the study was grounded was a series of research questions. Since the study sought to determine the nature of the learning projects of lay ministers, it was an effort in descriptive research. Descriptive research attempts to discover the nature and degree of existing conditions. It is concerned with exploring and describing a phenomenon, telling what is. Its aim is not to make predictions or causal statements but to provide information which can be formed into testable hypotheses (Mehrens and Lehmann, 1984). The guiding criteria of descriptive research are research questions. As they are operationalized, they become the controlling mechanisms of the study. They influence the data gathering and data analysis procedures (Ward, 1985).

The research questions which the study sought to answer are the following:

RQ1. How many learning projects do lay ministers engage in annually?

RQ2. How many hours do lay ministers spend on their learning projects?

RQ3. What resources are employed by lay ministers in their learning projects?

RQ4. Who is responsible for planning lay ministers' learning projects?

RQ5. What reasons do lay ministers give for engaging in learning projects?

Definition of Terms

adult - An individual who has achieved full physical development and fills adult social roles (Houle, 1972).

church-related learning project - A learning project which focuses on a topic related to religion or used in religious affiliation.

lay minister - A person who occupies a recognized leadership position in a religious denomination but is not a member of the full-time, professional clergy.

learning - "The acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, or skills and the mastery of behavior in which facts, ideas, or concepts are made available for individual use" (Verner, 1962, p. 32).

learning episode - A small amount of time during which an individual engages in thought or action on a specific topic and is not interrupted for more than two or three minutes by another activity or event (Tough, 1971).

learning planner - The person or thing responsible in a learning project for deciding what is learned and how the learning takes place. (Tough, 1971).

learning project - A major, highly deliberate effort of meaningful learning at least seven hours in length that has as its objective the gaining or retaining of a skill or certain knowledge (Tough, 1971).

learning resource - The learning aid or provider of subject matter used in the conduct of a learning project.

self-directed learning - A learning activity where the primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating the endeavor is assumed by the individual (Brockett, 1983).

The Scope of the Study

The purpose of the study was achieved by examining the learning projects of lay ministers from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The religious institution that was the contextual setting of the study has approximately 250,000 members and is headquartered in Independence, Missouri (Reorganized Church, 1988). Historically, the church has ties with Mormonism. Upon the assassination in 1844 of Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of the Mormon Church, a splintering of the original group occurred. The R.L.D.S. Church was formed in 1860 with the founder's eldest son, Joseph Smith, III, as President. As an organization, the church has distanced itself from its Mormon ancestry and has moved toward mainstream Protestantism. The creedal statements of the group follow the Christian tradition (Judd and Lindgren, 1976).

Unlike many other Christian denominations, leadership within the organization is exercised almost entirely by volunteers. Lay ministers pastor congregations, preside over an assemblage of congregations, and fill most of the leadership posts in local, district, and regional jurisdictions. The lay minister forms the backbone of the church's leadership structure.

Instrumentation

Answers to the research questions of Phase 1 were obtained through the use of structured, personal interviews. An interview guide, patterned after the one developed by Tough (1971) and adapted by others, was employed by the researcher. See Appendix B for the interview guide. Prior to its employment, the guide was pretested. In the pretest, subjects were asked to react to the content and process of the interview procedures, and changes were made as appropriate.

The population from which the subjects of the study were obtained was comprised of lay ministers from the Michigan Region of the R.L.D.S. Church. The Michigan Region is an administrative division whose geographical boundaries include Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada and all of the state of Michigan, except metropolitan Detroit. In 1987, the Michigan Region had a membership of 14,328 (Reorganized Church, 1988). Of this number, 567 were identified as lay ministers who served in positions of leadership and included in the 1989 Regional Directory (Reorganized Church, 1989). A sample of 24 was selected from the 567 and interviewed to obtain the data of Phase 1.

In Phase 2, interviewees were presented with the data of Phase 1 and asked to comment, in writing, on the insights which the data provided on the learning of lay ministers. They were also invited to offer recommendations based upon the data and their own experiences for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education.

Limitations of the Study

There were several factors which may have affected the results of the study that were not under the control of the researcher. One was the willingness of desired subjects to participate in the study. Four subjects were unwilling or unable to participate in the interviews. Another was the ability of participants to recall the details of their learning projects. It may have been difficult for respondents to think back twelve months and remember what they learned, how they learned, and the amount of time devoted to the learning. A third factor was the adequacy of one structured, probing interview in gathering the data necessary to achieve the purpose of the study. Despite careful construction, pretesting, and administration of the interview guide, the interview process may have been unsuccessful in elicting responses which truly described lay ministers' learning projects. An additional factor was that subjects, since they were reporting on their own learning, may have given replies which they thought were desirable. The responses may have been gratuitous and not representative of what actually transpired.

Two other factors which may have influenced the results of the study were the reliability and validity of the data gathering instrument. The reliability of an instrument refers to the degree to which the device yields a consistent measure each time it is administered. Validity is defined as the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Mehrens and Lehmann, 1984).

Concern for the reliability of the instrument was addressed by having one person conduct all interviews. Utilizing a single interviewer eliminated the need for training other interviewers and ensured that the interviewing was performed by a person familiar with the interview procedures. The interview guide itself was the result of an effort to standardize data gathering procedures and contributed to the reliability of the process. The reliability of the instrument was further addressed by pretesting the guide before it was employed.

Concern for the validity of the instrument was spoken to by modifying an interview guide which had been employed in a number of studies. The basic format was developed by Tough and associates in 1971 and was entitled "Interview Schedule for Studying Some Basic Characteristics of Learning Projects in Several Populations." The original format has been replicated and adapted many times and is a favored means among researchers for studying this type of adult learning. The results obtained from the employment of the guide are widely accepted as being descriptive of adults' learning projects.

The issue of validity was also handled by having subjects read and correct, if necessary, their recorded responses. This addressed any concerns about the accuracy of the data and communicated to participants that the researcher was interested in gaining an accurate understanding of the nature of their learning projects. Validity was further addressed in the application of the pretest. Pretesting the instrument and reviewing the responses permitted the researcher to determine that the interview procedures measured the desired

concepts.

Care must be exercised in generalizing the results of the study beyond those lay ministers who made up the sample. The size of the sample and the sampling procedures preclude extending the results to any other group with absolute confidence. Furthermore, the sample was composed of individuals who because of their membership in the R.L.D.S. Church have extensive opportunities for ministry as lay people. As a result, their learning projects may not be fully representative of the experiences of lay persons from other religious institutions.

The Significance of the Study

The study sought to increase the amount of knowledge on adult learning and, more pointedly, on adults' learning projects. It attempted to reach this goal by studying a group on which there has been little research. The research also contributed to the development of a comprehensive theory of adult learning by extending the body of knowledge to include information on the learning projects of lay ministers. Additionally, the exploratory nature of the study pointed the direction for further research on the subject.

Overview of the Study

In the chapters of the study which follow, the background, procedures, findings, and implications of the research are presented.

Chapter II contains a summary of the content and methodological precedents in the professional literature which relate to the purpose of the study. Chapter III outlines the methodological procedures utilized in the investigation. Chapter IV presents the findings, and Chapter V holds a discussion of the findings and implications and proposals for areas of further study.

CHAPTER II

SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter II contains a review of selected professional literature that is pertinent to the study of lay ministers' learning projects. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section holds a review of the literature that relates to the theory or content aspects of the subject. To facilitate the review, the content literature is grouped into four categories: adult learning, self-directed learning, religion-based adult learning, and volunteers and volunteering. The second section reports on the literature which deals with methodological issues. Outlined in the section are the research procedures commonly employed by scholars in studies of the learning projects of adults.

Selected Review of the Content Literature

Adult Learning

The field of adult learning has been a productive area for research in recent years. Researchers have studied a variety of topics which fall under the heading of adult learning. A major issue is the term itself. What does it mean? What is included under the phrase? Does

research on adult learning tend in a particular direction?

Defining the term "adult learning" is an important issue. Cross (1981) maintains that the definition selected determines an investigation's methodology and, to a large degree, its results. The word "learning" implies cognition, "the act or process of knowing" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, 1969, p. 161). The joining of the two words, "adult" and "learning", suggests an approach to learning which is unique to adults.

Knowles (1980) claims that there is a mode of learning which is characteristically adult. He uses the term "andragogy" to describe his method of helping adults learn and states that the conceptualization rests on four main assumptions about the adult learner:

1. Changes in self-concept - As a person matures their self-concept changes from the dependency of childhood to the independence of adulthood.

2. Role of experience - The adult's reservoir of experience is who he or she is and is a resource for learning.

3. Readiness for learning - Adults are ready to learn when they have a need to learn.

4. Orientation to learning - Adults desire immediate application of their learning and are more problem-centered than subject-centered in their learning efforts.

Other theorists on adult learning may approach the subject from a different perspective than Knowles, but they generally agree that the learning of adults is a singular phenomenon and should be distinguished

from the learning of children. Researchers who favor this approach explore the subject while holding the individual, adult learner as the unit of measurement.

Groundbreaking research on the learning of adults was conducted by Houle (1961) who sought to understand adults' motivations for learning. From Houle's work, three orientations toward learning emerge: goal-oriented, activity-oriented, and learning-oriented. Goal-oriented learners use learning to gain specific objectives and begin by identifying a need or interest. They do not restrict their learning activities to any single institution or method but utilize whatever best achieves their purposes. Activity-oriented learners participate mainly for the sake of the activity rather than to attain a specific purpose. Learning-oriented individuals pursue learning for its own sake. They seem to possess an innate desire to gain knowledge, and their learning is constant and lifelong.

In addition to the findings, Houle's labor was pioneering in its methodology and assumptions. The methodology involved in-depth, structured interviews. The assumptions included the beliefs that the learning of adults may be understood by asking individuals about their learning and by focusing on the activities of learning. People can recall, with assistance, those things which they have done that are connected with learning. It is the behavior of people, their actions, which reveal details of the learning process. Houle's methodology and assumptions have had a significant impact on subsequent research in adult learning.

Another study that is a landmark in adult learning research was conducted by Johnstone and Rivera (1965). Utilizing comprehensive, personal interviews with subjects selected from a national sample, the researchers found that, in the twelve months preceding the interview, approximately 1/5 of all American adults had received instruction of an educational nature. The instruction included self-instruction which was systematically organized and pursued for a period of not less than 30 days. Johnstone and Rivera are credited with documenting the existence of self-initiated or self-directed learning and with stimulating other scholars' interest in the subject. They are also noted for calling attention to the characteristics of adult learners. They state that the typical adult learner is younger and better educated than the average American adult. The researchers further observe that continuing education is a middle and upper-middle class phenomenon.

Equal in importance to Houle's and Johnstone and Rivera's work was Tough's (1971) examination of adults' learning projects. Tough followed Houle's lead in interviewing his subjects and in seeking an answer to the question, Why do adults learn? He also sought to determine what adults learn and how much time they spend learning. To achieve these ends, Tough developed a term which describes how adults pursue learning. "Learning projects" is the term which he gives to major, ". . . sustained, highly deliberate efforts to learn" (1971, p. 6). Projects may have as their goals an attempt to acquire a new skill, to change behavior or attitudes, or to increase the amount of knowledge on a subject. No restrictions are placed on content, methodology,

location, or reasons for learning. However, the learning has to be intentional and not something which happens as a result of socialization.

In order to satisfactorily measure the learning of adults in terms of learning projects, Tough had to operationalize the definition. To be considered a learning project, a sum of at least seven hours must be devoted to the learning. Additionally, the seven hours must occur within a 12 month period. Tough recognized that one seldom commits seven consecutive, uninterrupted hours to anything. Learning projects actually consist of a series of learning episodes, short chunks of time during which a learner engages in thought or action related to the central interest. Episodes have a clear beginning and a clear ending and are not interrupted for more than two or three minutes by another activity or event.

It is essential to understand Tough's conceptualization of a learning project because the results of his inquiry and the conclusions he draws are presented in terms of the concept. Paramount among the researcher's conclusions is that highly deliberate learning is a pervasive phenomenon of adult life. On average, over 700 hours per year are spent by each adult on learning projects. Each person typically conducts eight learning projects a year, and 98% of all adults participate in at least one project annually. Examples of learning projects include: learning to play golf, planning a trip, refinishing a coffee table, improving one's skill in teaching history, etc.

The view of adult learning which emerges is quite broad. It is

nonelitist, is engaged in by practically everyone, and is not oriented towards formal education - the type of education conducted in schools. Less than 1% of all learning projects are undertaken for credit. By credit, Tough means university credit or a requirement imposed through licensure, regulation, or job improvement demands.

Tough's research extended Johnstone and Rivera's ideas on adult self-directed learning by studying the planners of adults' learning. Tough asked the question, Who is responsible for planning adults' learning projects? The planner is specified as ". . . the person or thing responsible for more than half of the detailed, day-to-day planning and deciding in a learning project" (1971, p. 77). The planner decides what is to be learned and how it is to be learned. The decisions include the knowledge and skills to be gained and the strategies and resources to be employed.

For Tough, there are only two types of planners, human and nonhuman. Among human planners, there are three categories: self, professional or peer, and group. In self-planned learning projects, the learner decides for himself or herself what is to be learned and how the learning will take place. Information may be sought from others and a variety of resources consulted, but the control of the learning resides with the learner. The professional or peer as planner involves the direction of learning by a person other than the learner, generally in a one-to-one relationship. Interaction does not necessarily have to be face-to-face and may occur in an indirect manner, e.g., over the phone or by mail. The third human planner, the group, consists of a number

peers who come together and decide among themselves what and how they wish to learn. The group may also be lead by an instructor or facilitator and resemble a traditional class.

Nonhuman planners of adult learning include such things as programmed instruction texts, audio or video cassettes, television programs, etc. Direction of the learning lies with an object. The subject matter of the learning and its sequencing is controlled by the object. Tough acknowledges that direction of adult learning may involve a combination of planners. Even the nonhuman planner may have a human component as the learner may interact with another person in deciding what object to employ, in discussing the progress of the learning, or in practicing the skills or knowledge gained. Nevertheless, Tough maintains that his explanation is valid because the planner is defined as being responsible for more than half of the direction of the learning.

In assessing the frequency of usage of types of planners, Tough found that the chief-planner in 68% of learning projects is the individual learner. Other percentages are: group 12%, mixed planners 9%, professional or peer 8%, and nonhuman resource 3%. Looking at another set of data, the mean number of projects directed by each planner is: self 5.8, nonhuman resource 2.0, group 1.9, mixed 1.9, and professional or peer 1.4. Tough admits that no previous study uncovered as much self-planned learning. He attributes the difference to the in-depth interviewing of his research and the accompanying lists of examples. The amount of self-directed learning has not changed; it

has always been present. Researchers were simply not looking for it.

Closely associated with learning planners are learning resources. Tough again uses the labels human and nonhuman in classifying resources or providers of assistance. Human resources include: peers or colleagues - friends, acquaintances, neighbors, family members; professionals who assist as a facet of their jobs - doctors, pharmacists, ministers, extension agents; and people who provide a message through some type of medium - authors, advertisers, film makers, artists, actors. Nonhuman resources consist of books, magazines, newspapers, manuals, encyclopedias, and other printed material. They also include television, radio, video and audio tapes, exhibits, films, simulation games, training devices, etc.

With regard to the reasons adults give for engaging in learning projects, Tough favors the view that adults are goal-oriented learners. Participants in this section of his study were asked to rate the strength of each reason for initiating a project. The reason credited with having the greatest influence stems from a requirement to perform a task or carry out an assigned responsibility. In order to complete the assignment, the learner seeks additional knowledge or strives to acquire new skills. Tough notes that learners are motivated not solely by a wish to finish the task and have it done but express a desire to be able to do the job well. This desire motivates because the individual expects to derive or receive a positive outcome from his or her actions.

The amount of space devoted to Tough's research reflects the

esteem in which he is held in the adult education community. The methodology and findings of his research have influenced and continue to influence the efforts of other scholars. His concept of a learning project and interview methods have become the standards in scholarly studies of the learning projects of adults. His approach to examining learning projects has been replicated many times with a variety of populations.

Following Tough's procedures explicitly, McCatty (1973) sought to determine the characteristics and extent of learning projects among professional men. The researcher discovered that members of this set averaged over 11 learning projects a year. Of the projects, 76% were self-planned, and 55% were related to subjects' vocations. The reason given most often for planning the learning themselves was a desire to individualize subject matter.

A study by Rymell (1981) sought to assess the learning projects of engineers. A mean of 12.6 projects were undertaken annually with an average of 137.6 hours expended per project. Learning projects related to vocation were pursued most frequently followed by projects associated with home and family, personal development, and hobbies and recreation. On average, 4.3 learning resources were utilized in each project. Resources were employed in the following order of frequency: 1. books, 2. friends, 3. magazines, 4. experts, and 5. peers or co-workers. The learning took place most often in the home with the workplace the next most common location.

Coolican (1973), in an investigation of the learning patterns of

mothers with preschool-age children, found that an average of six learning projects were conducted per person per year with approximately 250 hours spent on each project. Sixty-six percent of the projects were self-directed, 16% were group-planned, 13% were planned by an individual who interacted with the learner on a one-to-one basis, and 5% employed a nonhuman planner.

Johnson, E. (1973) scrutinized the learning projects of adults who had recently graduated from high school or earned a high school equivalency (GED) certificate. An average of 14.4 projects were completed yearly, 60% of which were self-planned.

Richardson (1986) surveyed home economists from the Cooperative Extension Service to determine the nature of their job-related learning. The results indicate that extension home economists prefer "hands-on" learning experiences, are goal-oriented learners, and direct 75% of their own, vocation-based learning projects.

Among other adult groups surveyed to ascertain information about their learning projects were: physicians (Hummel, 1985); law enforcement officers (Johnson, D. 1986); older adults (East, 1986; McGraw, 1982); low income, urban adults (Booth, 1970); and professional ministers (Allerton, 1974; Serig, 1977; and Walker, 1986).

Among the settings in which investigators have searched for clues to understand the learning projects of adults are: graduate school and the inner-city (Zacharakis-Jutz, 1987); a correctional institution (Brown, 1986); urban and rural Tennessee (Peters and Gordon, 1974); and an Air Force Base (Kean, 1981).

Another perspective on the learning of adults is provided by researchers who approach the subject from a developmental point of view. Developmentalists maintain that people keep developing throughout their lives; development does not come to a conclusion at the end of adolescence. Most developmentalists subscribe to a stage theory of human development. This theory holds that humans proceed through a series of predictable and observable, age-related stages in their lives. The issues which people face at each stage are different, and, as a result, their learning needs are different.

Erikson (1964) was a developmentalist who conceptualized adulthood as consisting of three stages: young adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood. Within each of the stages, adults are faced with resolving major issues or developmental tasks. Success in resolving the tasks leads to personal growth and change and prepares the person to enter the next stage. The stages and their developmental tasks are: (a) young adulthood - acquiring a sense of intimacy and avoiding a sense of loneliness, (b) middle adulthood - acquiring a sense of generativity and avoiding self-absorbtion, and (c) late adulthood - acquirng a sense of integrity and avoiding a sense of despair.

Levinson (1978) was another developmentalist who favored a stage theory to explain human development. Levinson postulated that within the stages or seasons of adult life one is faced with building a satisfactory life structure. Building a life structure involves making choices, pursuing goals, and establishing values, and the result is satisfactory if it is viable for the person and for society. Levinson

also studied the movement or transition from one stage to another. A transition is a period of examination and readjustment. It is a period in which previous life structures are terminated and new, more appropriate ones raised. Education is often used by adults to facilitate a transition.

Self-Directed Learning

In reviewing the literature on self-directed learning, it is apparent that there is no consensus among researchers on the meaning of the phrase. Schuttenberg and Tracey (1987) concur with this observation and offer three definitions which they believe are currently operative. Some theorists regard self-directed learning as a set of skills to be mastered. Knowles falls in this category when he defines self-directed learning as:

> . . . a process in which individuals take the initiative without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975, p. 18).

Other adult learning theorists view self-directed learning as an instructional methodology or process that should be pursued both by the instructors of adults and by the students or learners themselves.

A third group sees self-directed learning as an active, motivating philosophy that stimulates the growth of internal consciousness and is a component of personal and social change. An advocate of this

viewpoint is Brookfield (1987) who argues that learners, if they are truly exercising self-directedness, are not merely concerned with the management of external activities. Instead, their behavior demonstrates a union of practice and reflection in a search for personal meaning. Echoing Freire's ideas, Brookfield sees in the praxis of thought and action a manifestation of the highest form of autonomous, self-directed learning.

In another source, Brookfield (1985) makes a similar argument by stating that adult education theorists and practitioners are in danger of making self-directed learning the new orthodoxy of the field. An uncritical acceptance of the tenets of self-directed learning theory may confine the facilitator and the learner to a narrow range of opportunities. He does not discount the importance of research on the subject but maintains that what has been advanced is a concern for the techniques of self-directedness. The ability to plan and conduct learning activities, to set realistic goals, to choose appropriate resources, to design effective strategies, and to select proper evaluative procedures are all mechanical attributes.

Brookfield advances his position by stating that no act of learning can be seen as being self-directed if it implies the absence of external assistance. There is no such thing. In fact, just the opposite occurs. Research has demonstrated that learning takes place through a multiplicity of social contacts. An example is the use of informal, interpersonal networks by adults to aid their learning. The networks serve as a means for exchanging information, accessing fellow learners

who possess varying levels of expertise, and evaluating learning outcomes through peer comparison.

Mezirow (1985) agrees with Brookfield and states that there is no such thing as a truly independent, self-directed learner. If an individual were fully functioning in terms of self-directedness, he or she would be able to diagnosis learning needs, formulate goals, identify human and nonhuman resources, and evaluate learning outcomes. The problem is that most adults are not aware of their own best interests. They do not possess an adequate knowledge of the range of educational alternatives available to them and are inexperienced in critically examining the meaning perspectives of their lives. Meaning perspective refers to the cultural and psychological assumptions which provide the basis for our thoughts and actions and into which new experiences are assimilated and given meaning.

Another view of the topic is provided by Brockett and Hiemstra (1985) who maintain that individuals vary in their ability to exercise self-direction. Not everyone possess the skills necessary to conduct their own learning. Furthermore, self-direction is not always the best learning method for adults to utilize. It is a useful mode for some learning experiences, but group or professional direction may be more appropriate for others.

Brockett and Hiemstra continue by observing that self-directed learning has been conceptualized as both dichotomous and continuous. The dichotomous notion holds that self-direction is an either-or proposition. It is a quality or an ability that is present in some people

yet absent in others. The researchers prefer an explanation which views the concept as something which varies along a continuum. At one end of the continuum is total learner control and at the other end is total institutional control. Figure 1 illustrates the concept.

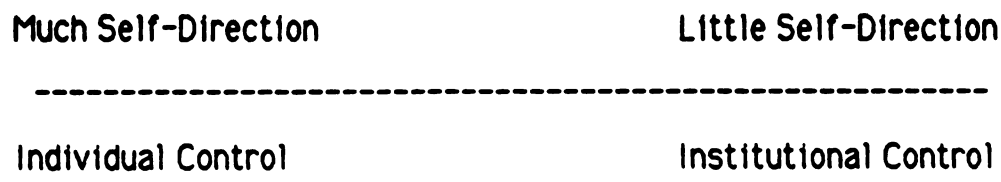

Figure 1. Amount of Self-Direction.

The possession of a personality trait or an internal orientation which favors self-direction is not the issue. Rather, it is the purposeful exercise of a certain amount of self-direction that is important. For some experiences, it is appropriate for the individual to exercise complete control. For other experiences, it is appropriate for an institution or its representative to retain complete control. For still other situations, the control of learning may be shared between the individual and the institution. The location on the continuum, the amount of self-direction exercised, may vary with each learning project.

Caffarella and O'Donnell (1987) reviewed the literature on self-directed learning and suggest that studies on the subject can be grouped into one of five categories. The categories consist of:

(a) verification studies - attempts to determine the existence of

self-directed learning,

(b) nature of the method studies - efforts to understand how self-direction is practiced,

(c) nature of the learner studies - research to ascertain the characteristics of self-directed learners and the what or content of their learning,

(d) nature of the philosophical question studies - attempts to build a theory or philosophy of self-directed learning,

(e) policy question studies - efforts to understand the roles of educators, institutions, and societies in facilitating adult self-direction.

According to Caffarella and O'Donnell, most research of the type classified as verification studies contains elements of methodological or nature of the method studies. In attempting to discover if adults are practicing self-direction in their learning, researchers find it logical to investigate the procedures of self-direction. Regarding verification, Caffarella and O'Donnell repeat criticisms that have been made by others. They maintain that only limited populations have been studied most of which have a middle class economic background. They also argue that the favored methodology of verification research, which utilizes Tough's instrumentation with its probing and prompting, may produce contaminated results. The researchers go on to assert that descriptions of subjects in these studies are often quite meager and, to overcome this deficiency, recommend always including the following demographic variables: age, gender, ethnic origin, and social class.

In reviewing studies which concentrate on the nature of the method or the how of self-directed learning, Caffarella and O'Donnell found that the focus most often is on two subjects, types of planners and types of learning resources. Under types of planners, they note that four planners are mentioned most frequently: self, nonhuman, another individual, and group. Under types of learning resources, several observations are offered. Learning cliques have significant potential as resources for learning. Acquaintances are favored as resources by blacks, whereas radio and university field days are popular with farmers. Libraries rank low as a resource, but informal discussion with peers ranks high. Books, pamphlets, and newspapers are utilized frequently by older adults, and fellow enthusiasts serve prominently as resources in hobby groups, clubs, and voluntary associations.

Religion-Based Adult Learning

There is not a large body of professional literature on the topic of religion-based adult learning. Quite often the literature that does exist is anecdotal in nature and represents someone's opinion rather than the findings of objective research. Smith (1983) claims that social science research has largely ignored the field of religion as an environment for research. Likewise, religious research has paid little attention to the tenets and theories of the social sciences. As a result, both have suffered, and what is needed is a new ecumenism between the two.

Wilhoit (1984) also decries the lack of integration between social science and religion and finds it mystifying since religion is considered a branch of the social sciences. Viewing the matter from the perspective of a religious educator, Wilhoit concludes that many of the empirical questions of religious education can only be answered by scientific inquiry.

The research that has been conducted on the learning of adults in a religious setting has tended to concentrate on the learning of professional ministers. An example is Allerton's (1974) investigation of the learning projects of parish ministers from the Louisville, Kentucky area. The purpose of the study was to determine the amount and some important characteristics of the vocational and personal learning projects of the professional clergy. A diary was kept by respondents for six months during which they recorded the extent and nature of their learning activities. Tough's definitions and procedures were adhered to throughout the study. Subjects conducted an average of 9.6 learning projects and devoted a mean of 52.6 hours to each project. Sixty-two percent of the projects were vocationally oriented, and the majority were self-planned. None were undertaken for college or university credit. The degree of satisfaction with the learning was seen as high with 85% of the projects earning a 7 or above on a 1 to 10 (low to high) satisfaction rating scale.

Other studies of the learning activities of the professional clergy include Walker's (1986) probe of the relationship between continuing education and pastoral tenure of ministers of the Southern Baptist

faith. Walker reported that 62% of his subjects spent five or more days engaged in continuing education during a 12 month period. Thirty percent reported spending no time on any form of continuing learning. Pastoral tenure, the length of time spent in the current pastoral assignment, was found not to be significantly related to participation in continuing education. Walker also found no significant relationships among participation and part-time employment, full-time employment, or years of formal education.

Serig (1977) analyzed the relationships between selected variables and the continuing education activities of professional ministers of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. In contrast to Walker, Serig found that significant relationships were present among participation in continuing education and age, length of time in the ministry, and years of schooling. The younger the individual, the less time spent as a minister, and the greater the number of years of formal education, the more likely a person is to engage in professional, continuing education.

A study which provided insight into the learning of lay ministers was conducted by Utendorf (1985). Utendorf sought to find reasons for the participation of lay ministers in education programs of the Roman Catholic Church. The researcher found that the primary reasons for engagement in education stemmed from desires "to enhance personal religious development," "to improve skills useful in church and community service," and "for cognitive stimulation."

Another study which sought to determine characteristics of

participation in church-sponsored educational activities was performed by Vogel (1981). Concentrating on older adults, the researcher compared features of participation in the educational programs of churches and schools. Decisions to participate are influenced, in both settings, by the priority which individuals grant to education in their lives and by the topics of study. The level of commitment to the learning is higher among adults participating in church-directed programs, and they feel the experience results in greater personal change. The research also suggests that, for both groups, attitudes toward education affect participation more than educational level attained.

Burgess (1971), in a test of Houle's motivational typology, determined that another category should be added to Houle's three orientations toward learning. Termed religion-oriented learners, the category identifies religion as a major source of motivation in adults' learning. Adding a fifth category to the typology was recommended by Lowe (1987). Institution-oriented learners is the title Lowe gives to a sense of commitment, loyalty, and obligation to an institution. In this idea, the degree of attachment to the institution and not some other factor stimulates engagement in learning experiences.

Aslanian and Brickell (1980), in a national survey of adults' reasons for learning, found that 83% report some experience or event provides the stimulus for participation. The experiences or events are called "triggers" and, in order of frequency of occurrence, are related to: career (56%), family (16%), leisure (13%), art (5%), health (5%),

religion (4%), and citizenship (1%). Triggers set the stage for a transition in life from one status to another, and education often facilitates the transition.

The involvement of individuals in religious activity was examined by Roberts and Davidson (1984). By involvement, the investigators mean attendance at scheduled meetings. Summarizing literature pertinent to the topic, the researchers determined that the stimulus for religious involvement lies in the following areas:

(a) sociodemographic factors - age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, occupation, education, denominational membership, etc.;

(b) personal meaning systems - how one sees, explains, and deals with the world;

(c) social relationships - the interaction one has with other group members;

(d) religious beliefs - attitudes toward a Supreme Being and the church.

Using survey research methods, Roberts and Davidson found that sociodemographic factors influence religious involvement in an indirect manner through their effect on personal meaning systems. The sociodemographic factor which affects religious involvement most directly is denominational membership. If you are a Methodist, you will most likely attend the Methodist Church. Personal meaning systems are significant in the sense that people who hold traditional beliefs tend to display greater church attendance than those with nontraditional beliefs. Overall, the most significant determinate of involvement is

the factor of social relationships. Social relationships involve friendship and kinship ties, acceptance, common experiences, etc. Social relationships have more impact on religious activity than any other factor including religious beliefs.

Volunteers and Volunteering

In considering the involvement of lay ministers in the affairs of religious organizations, it is important to note that their devotion is without remuneration. Except for the professional clergy and a few other paid staff persons, most people give their time and talents to their faith voluntarily. Therefore, the principles and practices of volunteering can supply insights into the learning activities of lay ministers and have application for this study.

A volunteer is someone who works but does not receive monetary reward for his or her labor (Pearce, 1982). Prawl, Medlin, and Gross (1984) agree with Pearce that a volunteer is someone who occupies a position in a recognized group, activity, or organization and who does so without financial compensation. Volunteers are not professionals in their volunteer field, but many are experts and highly skilled in other fields. It may be observed that they bring their talents, knowledge, and experiences to their volunteering.

Volunteers possess certain well studied characteristics. Maurer and Bokemeier (1984), in a study which examined the relationship of family characteristics to participation of young people in voluntary

organizations, found that the higher the family income and level of parents' education, the more likely that children would be members of voluntary youth organizations. This is true regardless of whether families live in an urban area, a small town, or a rural area. The researchers further observe that children are more likely to join voluntary organizations if their parents have been members of such organizations. Children's patterns of voluntary membership follow their parents' patterns; children model their parents' behavior.

Does this hold for other than parent-child relationships? Dixon and Stevik (1982), in research done on willingness to volunteer, determined that persons from an urban background followed a negative model, another person refusing to volunteer, significantly more often than people from a rural background. This finding was also confirmed when subjects were presented with a positive model. The results suggest that persons from a rural environment exhibit greater willingness to volunteer than people from an urban environment. However, when a measure of social interest, the Social Interest Index, was administered, no significant difference in social interest was found between the two groups.

In a study of volunteering among blacks, Florin, Jones, and Wandersman (1986) found that persons who participate frequently in voluntary associations are more firmly "rooted" than persons who participate infrequently. By "rooted", the researchers mean people who are older, married, home owners, and of a high social status. The investigators also found that blacks participate in voluntary

organizations when they think they possess the skills necessary for participation. They also volunteer when they value their residential environment, expect to be able to influence persons in positions of power, and feel a sense of obligation or civic duty. The study appears to support Confer's (1981) claim that volunteers are more sociocentric than egocentric. They are less concerned about themselves than they are about others or society at large.

Chambre (1984) studied volunteering among the elderly and discovered that the factors which affect volunteer behavior in old age are no different than those which influence it at other stages of life. Women volunteer more often than men, people with high income volunteer more often than those with low income, and the better educated volunteer more often than the poorly educated.

Chambre sought to determine if volunteering is a substitute for role loss. As people grow older, the roles which they performed earlier in life are lost or given-up. People retire and the role of worker is surrendered. Children mature and leave home, and the role of parent is exchanged for a less direct parenting role. A spouse dies and the role of husband or wife is lost. In gerontology, Activity Theory holds that maintaining the activity level of middle age will provide the elderly with a high level of well being. Role loss is overcome by substitution, substituting one role for another, primarily through volunteering.

The results of Chambre's research indicate that Activity Theory does not do a good job of explaining why the elderly volunteer. Rather than responding to role loss, a significant number of elderly people

volunteer because it is what they did earlier in life. It is the continuation of an established pattern. The factors which influence volunteer participation in old age are no different than those which influence it in young adulthood or middle age.

Prawl, Medlin, and Gross (1984) report the results of a national survey which ranked, in order of frequency, reasons for volunteering. The reasons include: (a) want to help others, (b) enjoy the volunteer work itself, (c) have a sense of duty, (d) have a child in the program, and (e) simply could not refuse when asked.

Henderson (1981) studied reasons for volunteering from the perspective of theories of motivation. McClelland and Atkinson's (1975) Expectancy Motivation Theory was employed as the guide. The theory holds that people act as they do because they believe their actions will lead to the achievement of a goal or the satisfaction of a need. In McClelland and Atkinson's estimation, there are three needs which motivate:

(a) achievement - the capacity for taking pride in one's accomplishments,

(b) affiliation - the concern for one's relationships with others,

(c) power - wanting to have influence or impact on others.

Henderson (1981) asked volunteer leaders of 4-H groups to state the reasons why they volunteered. The ten reasons mentioned most often were then matched with McClelland and Atkinson's (1975) needs categories. Both the reasons and their corresponding needs are outlined in Table 1. Henderson found that people are motivated by affiliation

needs (84%) far more often than by achievement (12%) or power needs (4%).

Table 1

Reasons for Volunteering and the Needs Which They Satisfy.

Reason	Need
1. want to be with my children	affiliation
2. like helping people	affiliation
3. like associating with youth	affiliation
4. want to have influence on youth and how they grow	power
5. way to improve my community	achievement
6. way to express concern and caring for others	affiliation
7. chance to meet other volunteers	affiliation
8. want to learn new things	achievement
9. prefer to work with groups of people rather than alone	affiliation
10. want to teach and lead others	power

Prawl, Medlin, and Gross (1984) describe volunteering as both a giving and a receiving proposition. Volunteers give of themselves, their time, and their skills, but they receive a sense of fulfillment, excitement, and personal meaning.

A more utilitarian approach was taken by Schram (1985) who assessed the transferability of job skills learned in volunteer work to paid employment. A survey of university graduates indicated that skills acquired through volunteer experience are, indeed, employed later in paying jobs. The specific skills developed in volunteer work that are utilized most frequently are: organizing, planning, and tutoring.

A large amount of research has been completed on the reasons for volunteering and on the characteristics of volunteers. Less has been done relative to other facets of volunteering. Williams and Ortega (1986) sought to determine if characteristics of affiliation are consistent across various types of volunteer organizations. Previous studies assumed a one-dimensionality to voluntary membership; the factors which influence membership in one organization were considered applicable to other organizations. The findings of Williams and Ortega reveal that only two characteristics, race and education, are significantly related to association with church, job-related, recreational, fraternal/service, and civic/political volunteer organizations. The implications of the findings are that blacks and the better educated tend to be more likely than others to join the listed organizations. Variables found not to be associated with voluntary membership are: gender, age, marital status, number of children, community size, and region of the country.

Richard and Verma (1982) maintain that volunteers are extremely important to American society, yet their importance is often underestimated and their work undervalued. After all, volunteers fight

fires, care for the ill and elderly, assist teachers and schools, provide leadership in community and government agencies, etc.

A reason for the indifferent attitude towards volunteers, Pearce (1982) suggests, is the variability of volunteers' on-the-job performance. In a study which compared the work performance of volunteers and paid staff, Pearce found much more variability, both for the better and the worse, in the quality of volunteers' work. The researcher believes the variability stems from volunteers ignoring their leaders and organizational directives. Employees are more likely to respond to organizational policy and leader directive since their jobs and wages are dependent upon doing so. Volunteers, on the other hand, are not paid and do not feel the same sense of obligation. They work in an organization because of personal preference and have little to fear if they do not adhere strictly to agency dictates.

A positive organizational regard for volunteers was uncovered by Richard and Verma (1984) when they compared how Cooperative Extension Service extension agents and volunteer 4-H leaders perceived the role of the volunteer. Twenty-six tasks were identified as being important to the development and maintenance of the 4-H program. On 20 of the tasks, there was agreement between extension agents and 4-H volunteers on who should be responsible for performing the tasks. Of the remaining tasks, extension agents wanted to share responsibility on all, whereas volunteers wanted agents to perform five with one being reserved for volunteers performance alone.

The significant aspect of Richard and Verma's study is the

apparent willingness of the professional to share responsibility with the volunteer. This was true of all tasks. It runs counter to the idea that professionals are reluctant to give up control of their programs to volunteers. Of course, it must be recognized that the 4-H program is designed to be a volunteer effort, and the services provided are chiefly educational and social in nature. Attitudes may be different when the services that are provided involve the health and welfare of clients. Another interesting element of the study was that agents' tenure was related to their willingness to share responsibility with volunteers. The greater the tenure, the more willing agents were to surrender responsibility.

Stringer (1985) maintains that conflict between volunteers and paid staff arises from differing perceptions of time, authority, and power. Looking first at perceptions of time, a paid employee works within a highly structured, externally set time frame. He or she usually thinks of matters relating to work time in terms of hours, days, and weeks. Volunteers work at time periods that may be highly structured, e.g., every Monday evening from 7 to 9 p.m., but the times are set by the volunteer's availability. When they think of time, it is usually in terms of weeks, months, and years.

Considering perceptions of authority, employees must answer to one person, the boss, whose orders determine what they do and how their job is defined. Volunteers, in most cases, answer not to one person but to the goals of the organization. They volunteer because they want to assist the institution serve its clients or meet its

objectives. Job security means nothing, whereas job satisfaction means everything. Regarding perceptions of power, a paid worker has the power associated with his position in contrast to the volunteer who has no institutional power at all. The power the volunteer does possess is the power of choice, the ability to choose another situation if he or she is unhappy with the existing one.

Selected Review of the Methodological Literature

Research in adult learning utilizes the same general principles and practices as research in any area of study. Shulman (1981) describes the salient features of research by stating that research consists of a collection of methods which may best be characterized as disciplined inquiry. Disciplined inquiry is a way of thinking as well as a way of doing. Disciplined inquiry is conducted and reported in such a manner that the argument being made can be painstakingly examined. Whatever the nature of the study, if it is disciplined the researcher has anticipated the pertinent questions and applied suitable controls in an attempt to eliminate possible sources of error. If the potential for error can not be eliminated, the possible existence of inaccuracies is admitted by declaring the margin for error in the results.

Shulman continues by commenting that education is not a discipline, it is a field of study. A discipline, according to Borg and Gall (1983), is a structured form of inquiry which seeks to explain a unique set of phenomena through the use of its own theories,

constructs, and methods. Anthropology, psychology, history, sociology, economics, and mathematics are examples of scientific disciplines. Education has developed largely by borrowing from the scientific disciplines.

Shulman (1981) goes on to state that certain problems are common to all research methods regardless of their disciplinary roots. These problems include the generalizability of findings, the degree to which findings derived from one context or under one set of conditions may be assumed to apply in other settings or under other conditions. The most frequently discussed form of generalization is from a small group to a larger group or population. Another problem is sampling. If one samples randomly from a population, inferences can be made about the entire population. However, it is rare that a truly random sample is drawn from an entire population. Instead, one samples as best as one can, documents procedures followed, and leaves it to the reader to determine if the claims made regarding the generalizability of the findings are warranted.

An enduring problem, Shulman maintains, is the tendency to treat selection of the research methodology as a technical enterprise not related to the purpose of the planned study. He recommends that the choice of the methodology be firmly grounded in the theoretical and substantive knowledge associated with the subject of investigation. The most frequently employed methodologies in educational research are the quantitative methods of experimental, correlational, quasi-experimental, and survey research. Shulman warns educational

researchers not to slavishly commit to a particular methodology. It is necessary to first understand the problem, decide which questions are to be asked, and then select the mode of disciplined inquiry that will most appropriately provide answers to the questions.

Brookfield (1985) discusses research methodology in a commentary on self-directed learning. The most common problem with the favored methodology is that the sampling procedures are often biased. Samples have been drawn, for the most part, from educationally and economically advantaged populations. There is an absence of studies among blacks, Hispanics, Asians, native Americans, working-class adults, adults outside of Europe and North America, etc. To base a theory of self-directed learning on a collection of class and culture-specific studies is highly suspect.

The instruments for data gathering also receive criticism from Brookfield. Researchers have relied almost exclusively on quasi-quantitative instruments in their work: structured interviews, questionnaires, prompt sheets, and measurement scales. Many of the instruments are modifications of those pioneered by Tough and his associates. For Brookfield, this heavy reliance on a relatively narrow methodology can lead to responses which are defined not by the subjects but by the methodology. Responses must fit the categories of the interview schedule or questionnaire with little flexibility allowed for unique replies. Another objection is that respondents may be intimidated by the favored instrumentation. The devices developed to measure learning projects may be appropriate for the populations

surveyed but are likely to be inappropriate for working-class adults, members of ethnic minorities, etc.

In another source, Brookfield (1983) takes exception to what he feels are additional shortcomings in the methodology of adult learning research. The starting point of many assessments of adult learning has been the individual learner and isolated aspects of the learner's educational activities. The learner is viewed as solitarily locating materials, resources, and assistance and producing highly personalized learning projects. This approach has meant that the social context of much individual learning has been ignored. Concentrating on individual control and ignoring the role of learning networks and informal learning exchanges disregards what Brookfield believes to be an important dimension of adult learning. Adult learning research has further concentrated on the amount rather than the effectiveness of adults' learning. The general lack of attention to the quality of the enterprise, in terms of some external measure and the learner's own perceptions, needs correction.

Studies which seek to determine the nature and degree of existing conditions are efforts in descriptive research. Descriptive research seeks to describe conditions as they are and strives to answer the question, What is the current state of a phenomenon or practice? It can not be used to make predictions or casual statements, but it can be utilized to suggest or formulate hypotheses (Mehrens and Lehmann, 1984).

Within descriptive research, Mehrens and Lehmann group several

methodological approaches including the survey approach. Borg and Gall (1983), in contrast to Mehrens and Lehmann, regard the survey approach as a distinct methodology. Regardless of the classification, survey research methods account for a substantial portion of the research completed in the field of education. The survey research design employed most often is the cross-sectional survey. According to Borg and Gall, in the cross-sectional survey standardized information is amassed from all subjects at one point-in-time. The simplest use of the data is to describe how the sample distributes itself on the response items of the data gathering instrument. The data is also used to compare relationships among variables.

The most common procedures for data collection in cross-sectional survey research involve the individual interview and the questionnaire. Biddle and Anderson (1986) agree with this comment and state that both procedures are intended to assess the thoughts of respondents. Individual interviews are structured surveys in which the researcher usually makes personal contact with subjects and asks a series of preplanned questions. Interviewing has a number of advantages over other methods including: higher response rates, easier detection of confusion and rewording of questions, and the ability to deal with embarrassing or controversial topics. Weaknesses include: the procedure is expensive in terms of time and money, interviews are rarely conducted with large or truly random samples, and samples may be based upon quotas that are designed to yield specific information.

The questionnaire is a survey research procedure that is employed more often than the interview because it is less costly. The procedure consists of a series of questions or preset stimuli for participants to answer or reply to on their own. They are most often mailed and can not be varied in light of incorrect assumptions or misunderstandings. Literacy is demanded by this method and there is, characteristically, a loss of numbers from the sample during the process. Questionnaires are a convenient way to obtain data on the beliefs, attitudes, practices, and concerns of people.

In addition to the individual interview and survey questionnaire, Cross (1981) states that another design, statistical analysis of motivational scales, has been gaining in popularity. This design consists of psychometric instruments which are administered and the results analyzed by a technique that produces meaningful clusters of subgroups. Typically, studies of this sort utilize: the Educational Participation Scale, the Reasons for Educational Participation instrument, or some variant.

A fourth design, hypothesis testing, attempts to offer explanations for adults' learning. The three previous designs yield descriptive information, but hypothesis testing seeks to identify causes. Commenting on hypothesis testing, Cross (1981) states that it is difficult to test hypotheses in educational research because of the inability to exercise complete control in field settings. Furthermore, researchers are likely to find what they are looking for especially when they are in a position to influence responses.

The statistical analysis of motivational scales is a cross-sectional survey research design that is heavily oriented toward quantitative methods. The scales were developed to measure, in an objective way, why adults engage in learning. Burgess (1971) constructed an instrument, Reasons for Educational Participation, for the purpose of collecting data on motives for learning. The instrument utilizes a self-reporting technique because the author assumes that learners participate in educational activities by reason of goals which they can identify with some accuracy. Another device for assessing learner motivation is Boshier's (1982) Educational Participation Scale. Sobel (1983) used the Educational Participation Scale to compare achievement, retention rates, and reasons for enrollment of traditional and non-traditional students in classes at a community college. Utendorf (1985) utilized an adaptation of the scale to study subjects' reasons for participating in lay ministry training programs.

Rockhill (1982) argues that most of the methods employed to study participation remain locked in the quantitative mode. Insisting on wearing the quantitative mantle, results in investigators losing the human perspective and settling, instead, for statistical accuracy. It also leads to the imposition of definitions from "above," from the viewpoint of the researcher rather than the participant. Total reliance on quantitative measures further presents a problem in construct validity. The problem arises as the inquirer utilizes his own values and judgment in designing the content and application of the data gathering instrument. Intended subjects are not consulted in the design process,

and their responses to the test items are forced to fit into the established response categories. Failure of an instrument or test to measure the idea or construct it intends to measure calls into question the device's validity.

Rockhill stresses that quantitative and qualitative research have different purposes. Quantitative research starts with a theory and attempts to prove the accuracy of hypothesized relationships. Concern is for objectivity, prediction, reliability, and generalizability. Qualitative research seeks to learn as much as possible about a phenomenon and emphasizes techniques such as field-observation, in-depth open-ended interviewing, etc. Theories are built inductively with concern for a clear and accurate understanding of the contextual experience of the respondent. Validity is the paramount concern. While acknowledging that each of the two approaches have their usefulness and are sometimes combined, Rockhill believes that the qualitative approach can help overcome some of the difficulties confronting adult learning research. The method can point the way to a humanistic understanding of meanings behind and correlations among variables.

Cervero, Rottet, and Dimmock (1986) demonstrated a method of evaluating the effectiveness of professional continuing education which made use of qualitative research methods. The researchers maintain that the most common means of evaluation in continuing education, the inspection of the program, is unsatisfactory. Instead of looking at one variable to determine whether or not participant on-the-job performance has improved, they suggest that four variables

should be studied: the individual, the program, the nature of the proposed change, and the participant's social system. In demonstrating the preferred method, the researchers held meetings with small groups of participants who were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions. From the responses, a complex web of interactions was observed. The educational program, the organization's formal administrative structure, the informal leadership network of the workplace, and the evaluation process itself combine to influence program effectiveness.

Houle (1961) was one of the first researchers to utilize qualitative methods in research on adult learning. Penland (1979) employed the technique in probing the self-initiated learning of a national sample of American adults. The seminal research in adult learning that continues to have broad influence was conducted by Tough (1971) who made exclusive use of the in-depth interviewing methodology.

The research which Tough conducted sought to answer the following questions: Why and what do adults learn? How much time do adults spend at their learning? Is the learning self-planned or are other planners involved? The interviews of the study were thorough and highly structured. Probing inquiries and handouts with examples were employed to assist interviewees recall their learning projects from the previous twelve months. Only the learner and not someone else in the household was questioned. To aid in determining the amount of time spent on learning projects, a detailed instruction sheet was

employed.

Research in the field of religion has made use of Tough's methodology in assessing church members' learning and other aspects of religion-related human behavior. Allerton (1974) sought to determine the amount and some important characteristics of the professional and personal learning projects of the full-time clergy. A dairy was kept by subjects for six months during which they recorded the extent and nature of their learning projects. The diary was supplemented as a data collection instrument by individual interviews. Vogel (1981) employed holistic, focused interviews to determine how older adults legitimize their participation in community and church-based adult education programs. Roberts and Davidson (1984) used personal interviews to examine individuals' reasons for participating in the activities of religious institutions.

Summary

Each section of this chapter contains information of significant value to the study. In the selected review of content literature, the major concepts of adult learning are addressed, self-directed learning as a prominent form of adult learning is discussed, the treatment of adult learning in the field of religion is outlined, and the relationship of the literature on volunteers and volunteering to the study is considered. The selected review of the methodological literature contains a synopsis of the research procedures commonly employed in

studying the learning of adults.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, the research procedures that were followed in the study are spelled out in detail. The procedures are delineated in order of their employment beginning with an outline of the overall organization of the study. Next comes the operationalization of the research questions. This is followed by a description of the population, the sample and the sampling procedures, the consent procedures, and the methods of instrumentation. Included in the instrumentation section are the procedures used in gathering and analyzing the data of Phases 1 and 2.

Organization of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the implications which the learning projects of lay ministers have for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education. To achieve this purpose, the study was divided into two phases. In Phase 1, information about significant aspects of lay ministers' learning projects was obtained and organized into manageable and comprehensible units of data. In Phase 2, the data was reviewed by participants in Phase 1 and the implications of the data for the development of continuing education programs suggested.

Operationalization of the Research Questions

The study was an effort in descriptive research. Descriptive research attempts to describe things as they are; it is concerned with discovering the nature and degree of existing conditions (Borg and Gall, 1983). The study sought to determine the nature and degree of lay ministers' learning projects. In attempting to achieve this objective, the study asked and answered several research questions. Research questions are the mechanisms which guide the conduct of descriptive research. They provide structure to the research by influencing the selection of data gathering and data analysis procedures (Ward, 1983).

The research questions are outlined in the following pages. The questions are stated, the information sought in the questions described, and the methods used to obtain the information presented.

RQ1. How many learning projects do lay ministers engage in annually?
RQ2. How many hours do lay ministers spend on their learning projects?

In research questions one and two, the interest was in determining the amount of lay ministers' learning. The terminology was derived from Tough's (1971) work, and his interpretation of a learning project was followed. A learning project is a substantial, intentional activity directed toward the acquisition of knowledge or a specific skill. A total of at least seven hours must be devoted to the project, and the

hours must be accumulated within six months of the project's initiation. The hours need not be consecutive but may be composed of short blocks of time termed learning episodes. This study assessed the number of general and church-related projects completed and the hours spent on them.

Assessing the amount of lay ministers' learning is important for several reasons. One is that such assessment follows accepted research practice and permits legitimate comparison to results obtained from comparable studies of other adults. Tough's definitions have been employed in investigations of the learning of a variety of adult populations. The employment of the definitions in this study facilitated comparison to information obtained in other research. Do lay ministers complete more, less, or about the same number of learning projects as other American adults? How do the number of completed projects compare with the same results for professional ministers? Do lay ministers spend the same number of hours on learning projects as the professional clergy?

The information sought in research questions one and two was gathered through the use of structured, individual interviews. Respondents were questioned about their learning projects and asked to estimate the number of hours spent on each one. To aid their recall, a list of sample learning projects was shown to them. The list was contained in a probe sheet which was administered as part of the interview. See Appendix B for the interview guide and probe sheet.

RQ3. What resources are employed by lay ministers in their learning projects?

Interest in this topic arose from a desire to know the resources or learning aids utilized by lay ministers in their learning projects. Tough (1971) groups resources for learning into two clusters, human and nonhuman. Human resources consist of people and the assistance which they provide: advice, referral, modeling, teaching, etc. Nonhuman resources are the objects or devices used in adults' learning. Examples include: books, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, television, radio, video and audio tapes, exhibits, simulation games, etc.

Rymell (1981) applied Tough's explanation of learning resources to a study of the learning projects of professional engineers. The number of learning projects completed per engineer per year was ascertained along with the number of resources employed per project. Additionally, a rank ordering of resources by frequency of use was produced.

This study melded Tough's conceptualization and Rymell's technique. It combined these approaches through application of the structured interview. The interview sought to determine the resources used by lay ministers in carrying out learning projects, and a probe sheet which contained examples of learning resources supplemented the procedures. After learning resources had been identified, the mean number of resources utilized per project was determined. The resources were then sorted into one of the two categories, human or nonhuman, and the percentage of each group reported.

RQ4. Who is responsible for planning lay ministers' learning projects?

The objective of this question was to ascertain the planners of lay ministers' learning projects. A planner is the person or thing responsible for deciding what is to be learned and how the learning is to take place. The planner controls the decisions that are made with regard to the content and resources of learning. Once again, Tough's (1971) work influenced the definitions and procedures utilized.

For Tough, there are two categories of planners, human and nonhuman. Human planners come from one of three groups: self or the learner as planner, professional/peer or some person other than the learner as planner, and a group or an assemblage of learners who teach themselves or are headed by a facilitator. Nonhuman planners include: printed material, video and audio material, and all direction of learning not performed by a human being. Tough acknowledges the existence of another planner when he states that learning projects may not be absolutely discreet in their utilization of planners. There are projects that employ a mix of both human and nonhuman planners.

In this study, subjects were questioned to determine the planners of their learning projects. The number of projects directed by each of the planners was determined, and the frequency of learners' use of the planners calculated.

RQ5. What reasons do lay ministers give for engaging in learning projects?

Research question five examined a matter of great interest among scholars of adult learning. Reasons for participation in educational activities has been the subject of frequent study. The general adult population of the United States was surveyed by Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs (1974) to determine the motivations which stimulate pursuit of learning objectives. Specific occupational and social groups have also been studied. Hiemstra (1975) worked with older adults who had not completed high school, Kean (1981) studied U. S. Air Force enlisted personnel, Brookfield (1981) looked at adults in England who had become acknowledged experts in some field, and Brockett (1983) concentrated on "hard-to-reach" adults; i.e., adults of low socioeconomic status, with physical handicaps, or living in remote geographical locations.

One of the few studies on the reasons for lay ministers' participation in learning activities was conducted by Utendorf (1985). Utendorf employed an adaptation of Boshier's (1982) Educational Participation Scale as the methodological guide for his work. The scale contains standard response items organized in a check-list format. More flexible procedures were favored by other researchers. Tough (1971) reported motivations for learning based upon respondents' comments. Hummel (1985) utilized similar procedures in a study of physicians' self-directed learning projects.

This study followed the lead of Tough and Hummel. Respondents were asked to offer reasons for engaging in learning projects. After gathering the responses, they were compared, grouped into like categories, ordered by the number of resources per reason, and the relative frequency of each reason determined.

Population

The population upon which the study focused was religions' lay ministers. Borg and Gall (1983) term such a group the "target population." They further comment that it is seldom possible for a representative sample to be obtained from the target population. The population is simply too large and working with the entire population, even in sampling, is prohibitively complex and costly. Instead, the researcher generally works with a smaller group, the readily accessible population.

Lehman (1984) describes the readily accessible population as that part of the target population which the investigator can reach. The readily accessible population of the study consisted of lay ministers from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints who resided within the Michigan Region, one of the church's administrative jurisdictions. The geographical boundaries of the Michigan Region includes all of the state of Michigan and the Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada area. Excluded from the jurisdiction is the city of Detroit and its suburbs.

An important issue which affected the members of the readily accessible population was the ordination of women. In 1985, women were ordained for the first time as lay ministers in the R.L.D.S. Church; all lay ministers of the church are ordained. As of January 1, 1988, there were approximately 1,800 ordained women out of a lay priesthood of around 20,500 (Reorganized Church, 1988). Women have held many informal leadership positions in the church in the past, but now they may also officiate in the ordinances of the church and pastor congregations. No longer are they restricted to secondary, support roles. Because of this development and in order to study the learning projects of all lay ministers, women were purposefully included in the sample.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

The sample was composed of lay ministers from the readily accessible population. The sampling frame, that part of the readily accessible population to which the sampling procedures are applied (Lehmann, 1983), consisted of individuals who were listed in the 1989 Michigan Region Directory. The directory, published annually by the Michigan Region, contains names, addresses, and phone numbers of lay ministers who occupy positions of leadership within the region. In the 1989 directory, 567 individuals were listed out of a membership of approximately 14,300 (Reorganized Church, 1988). The researcher met with the President of the Michigan Region, the church's senior

administrative officer in the jurisdiction, explained the purpose of the study, outlined the procedures to be followed, and obtained permission to use the directory as the sampling frame.

Individuals were selected from the directory for inclusion in the sample based upon the characteristics of age and gender. A total of 24 people, four men and four women from three different age groups, comprised the sample. The age groups were: under 40, between 40 and 60, and over 60. The President of the Michigan Region assisted the researcher by supplying birthdates of sample members. See Figure 2 for an illustration of the sampling plan.

	Male	Female
Under 40	4	4
40 - 60	4	4
Over 60	4	4

Figure 2. Sampling Plan.

As Figure 2 illustrates, the sampling plan formed a matrix with an equal number of men and women in each age and gender category. The structure of the sampling plan enabled the researcher to determine

where people in the subgroups or cells of the matrix focused their learning efforts. Did one cell engage in more learning projects than another? How did the cells compare on church-related versus general learning projects? Did the focus change with age? Did it vary with gender? The sampling plan matrix was useful in answering these and other questions and in observing tendencies among the data.

Sample size is a significant issue in the conduct of educational research. While recommending the use of large samples, Borg and Gall (1983) acknowledge that small samples may be more appropriate in certain circumstances. A study which employs in-depth interview techniques provides more knowledge about important characteristics of the sample than a less comprehensive survey of a larger sample. This study gathered data through in-depth interviews, and, even though the sample was relatively small, the information obtained provided a detailed description of the learning projects of lay ministers. Twenty-four also proved to be an adequate sample size because patterns began to emerge after about eight interviews and participants' responses began to resemble one another.

In selecting individuals for the sample, the researcher began with the first entry in the directory and recorded every fifteenth name. After grouping the people selected according to age and gender, it was determined that not enough females from the under 40 and over 60 categories had been identified. The minimum desired in each category was six. The researcher went back to the directory and, this time, selected every twentieth name. The procedure filled the female, under

40 category, but the female, over 60 category was still short. The researcher then asked the Regional President for help and was provided with the names of four female lay ministers over 60 years old who were listed in the directory.

In contacting individuals regarding participation in the study, the researcher wrote to the first four people identified in each age and gender category. Sample members were sent a letter which described the purpose of the research, solicted members' participation, and stated that they would be receiving a follow-up telephone call. See Appendix A for a copy of the letter. The telephone call was made by the researcher approximately one week after the letter was mailed. In the call, the sample member was asked if he or she would participate in the study, and, if the answer was positive, an appointment was made for the interview. Interviews were scheduled at a time, place, and location of the member's choosing. Most were held in participants' homes.

Not all sample members participated in the study. One person, when contacted, said he was too busy and did not have time to be interviewed. Another person canceled her scheduled appointment and suggested the researcher find someone to replace her. A third interview was canceled because of bad weather and was not rescheduled because a common date could not be agreed upon. A fourth interview did not occur because the interviewee was not at home when the researcher called on the appointed date and time. Replacements for the four nonparticipants were selected from the next name listed in the

appropriate age and gender category.

Participants in the study were not all from the same geographic location. A list of sample members by city is contained in Table 2. As the table indicates, the largest number of sample members, four, came from Lansing. Flint, Muskegon, Owosso, and Saginaw were represented by two members each, whereas the remainder of the sample came from cities scattered throughout the Michigan Region.

Table 2

Number of Sample Members by City

City	Number
Lansing	4
Flint	2
Muskegon	2
Owosso	2
Saginaw	2
Corunna	1
Durand	1
East Lansing	1
Gaylord	1
Grand Rapids	1
Greenville	1
Hemlock	1
Holland	1
Kalamazoo	1
Midland	1
Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.	1
Vestaburg	1

Consent Procedures

Participation in the study was voluntary. This message was communicated to sample members at the time of the data gathering interview. Prior to the start of the interview, participants were informed that they could choose to answer all, some, or none of the questions without penalty. They were also told that all results would be treated with confidence and were instructed to contact the researcher if they had any questions about the study or their participation. By agreeing to proceed with the interview, participants gave their consent to the use of their responses as the data of the study.

Instrumentation of the Study

The instruments and procedures employed in collecting and analyzing the data of Phases 1 and 2 are described in this section.

Phase 1: Data Gathering Procedures

The interview guide was the primary data gathering instrument of Phase 1. It was also the means for answering the research questions of the study. The content of the guide was arranged to correspond to the topics of the research questions. The guide consisted of a series of statements and questions which directed the interviewer in the work

of collecting data.

The interview guide was modeled after the instrument developed by Tough (1971) and adapted by Hummel (1985). While Hummel's general format was followed, the content of the guide was original and was developed to meet the specific needs of the study. The guide carried the title "Interview Guide for Studying Selected Characteristics of the Learning Projects of Lay Ministers" and may be seen in Appendix B.

The interview guide was designed to be read by the interviewer and contained instructions for its application. As the interviewer proceeded through the step-by-step administration of the instrument, responses were elicited from participants. Probe sheets accompanied the text and served as examples and memory aids. Directions for introducing the probe sheets into the interview were contained in the body of the guide.

The wording of the interview guide was not formal or academic but resembled the language used in everyday conversation. There were two reasons for using conversational language. First, it more closely reflected the verbal patterns of participants and reduced feelings of anxiety that may have been produced by the interview. Second, by not using words and phrases which were artificial to the life experiences of interviewees, more genuine responses were encouraged.

Formal data collection interviews were proceeded by a pretest of the interview guide. In the pretest, the researcher interviewed two lay ministers and applied the interview guide in the same manner as it was

to be applied in the actual interviews. The purpose of the pretest was to discover any ambiguities of wording or meaning in the guide or interview process. Participants were asked to react to the questions and procedures of the interview, and their observations were used to make the guide shorter and simpler.

A considerable amount of time was spent on the 24 interviews. The shortest interview lasted two hours and the longest took five and one-half hours. Two of the interviews were of such length that additional appointments were necessary to complete them. The average length of an interview was three hours and 20 minutes.

Despite the length of time involved, participants were cooperative and responsive throughout the interview process. They seemed genuinely interested in sharing information about their learning projects and patiently answered the researcher's questions. They appeared surprised and pleased that someone was interested in hearing their comments and opinions. Several said they were flattered to be asked to participate in the study. Many stated that they would like to receive a copy of the abstract of the research.

The researcher was interested in obtaining more than respondents' replies to prescribed questioning on their learning projects. The tone of what they had to say was also important. A section of the interview guide contained open-ended questions that were used to encourage subjects to talk about their feelings toward learning. They were asked such things as: Is learning important for you? Has your concern for learning changed over the last five years? Have certain events

triggered your learning? Do you feel that you have learning needs that have not been met? What are your feelings about the learning programs of the R.L.D.S. Church?

In addition to recording participants' comments, the interview guide also contained instructions for collecting demographic data. The demographic data provided information about the characteristics of lay ministers and included: years of formal education, ethnic affiliation, marital status, ministerial status (both personal and parental), place of residence, and years of membership in the R.L.D.S. Church.

Phase 1: Data Analysis Procedures

The data of Phase 1 were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics that were calculated for the data included: mean, median, range, frequency, and relative frequency.

The statistical analyses that were performed on the study's demographic data are listed in Table 3. The table lists the demographic variables and their corresponding statistical techniques.

Table 3

Demographic Variables and Their Corresponding Statistical Techniques

Variables	Statistical Techniques
V1. education	mean (number of years), median, range
V2. ethnic affiliation	
V3. marital status	frequency, relative frequency
V4. ministerial status	
a. age initially ordained	mean, range
b. ordained parent	frequency, relative frequency
V5. place of residence	frequency, relative frequency
V6. years of membership	mean, median, range

The statistical techniques that were employed with the rest of the data of the study are discussed in relation to the research questions of the study.

RQ1. How many learning projects do lay ministers engage in annually?

RQ2. How many hours do lay ministers spend on their learning projects?

The product of the first research question was the number of general and church-related learning projects participants engaged in during a twelve month period. The second question supplied the number of hours respondents spent on the projects. For the data of both

questions, the mean and range were determined.

RQ3. What resources are employed by lay ministers in their learning projects?

Research question number three resulted in a listing of learning resources. Weiss and Hassett (1982) use the term qualitative data to describe data that refer to nonnumerical qualities or attributes. They state that qualitative data are often converted into count data. Count data denote the number of individuals or items falling into certain categories or classes.

After the learning resources were determined, they were converted into count data by sorting them into one of the two major categories of resources, human or nonhuman. The frequency and relative frequency of the two classifications were then assessed, and the mean number of resources per project calculated.

RQ4. Who is responsible for planning lay ministers' learning projects?

Question four asked for a determination of the planners of respondents' learning projects. The method of categorizing the data relied upon Tough's (1971) conceptualization and included: (a) human planners: (1) self, (2) professional/peer, (3) group; (b) nonhuman planners; and (c) mixed planners (a combination of human and nonhuman planners). Once ascertained, the frequency and relative frequency of

each category were calculated.

RQ5. What reasons do lay ministers give for engaging in learning projects?

A list of participants' reasons for engaging in learning projects was produced in answering this research question. The classification scheme that was adopted for the data consisted of assembling reasons for initiating projects into like groupings. The grouped reasons were then rank ordered by number of learning projects associated with each reason and the relative frequency of the groupings determined.

Phase 2: Data Gathering and Data Analysis Procedures

In Phase 2, the implications which the data of Phase 1 had for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education were determined. Phase 2 sought to answer the question: When presented with data on the characteristics of their learning projects, what recommendations would lay ministers make for the development of programs for their continuing education?

The data of Phase 2 were gathered by sending sample members a summary of the data of Phase 1. In the summary, the data were organized into tables and accompanied by a cover sheet which explained how the data were presented. The summary also contained questions which sought participants' written responses. A letter introduced the

summary, gave directions for completing the questions, and instructed participants on how to return their replies to the researcher. A stamped envelope with the researchers' address on it was included with the summary to facilitate return mailing. See Appendix C for a copy of the summary.

At the close of Phase 1 interviews, interviewees were reminded about Phase 2 and invited to continue their participation in the study. Each person responded affirmatively and stated that they would reply to the data summary. Nine responses were received within two weeks of the mailing of the summary. At the two week mark, follow-up post cards were sent to individuals who had not replied. This mailing prompted the return of eleven more responses. Twenty or 83.3% of the sample members participated in Phase 2 of the study.

In analyzing the data of Phase 2, participants' responses were reviewed and discussed in relation to the questions of the data summary. The questions were stated, participants' comments were summarized and quoted, and the meanings of the comments suggested. Of particular interest were respondents' opinions on the insights which the data provided on lay ministers' learning projects, and the recommendations offered for improving the church's programs for lay ministers' continuing education.

Summary

This chapter reported on the methodological procedures which were employed in the study. The delineation of the procedures began with a presentation of the organizational structure of the study. The remainder of the chapter included: a summary of the methods used in operationalizing the research questions, a description of the research population, a description of the sample and sampling techniques, an outline of the consent procedures, and a discussion of the instrumentation of the study including the procedures utilized in gathering and analyzing the data of Phases 1 and 2.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. The findings of Phase 1 are presented first, followed by the findings of Phase 2.

Phase 1: Findings

The findings of Phase 1 consisted of participants' responses to the research questions of the study. The findings are organized and presented in tables of data which correspond to the research questions. The findings of the research questions follow a description of the demographic data of the study.

Demographic Data

In the interviews of Phase 1, lay ministers were asked to supply certain demographic data. Responses are outlined in Table 4.

Participants' mean number of years of education was 14.9. Since a high school diploma takes 12 years to earn and a bachelors degree 16 years, participants averaged almost three years of college. The median number of years of education was 12.5 and the range extended from

Table 4

Demographic Variables and Their Corresponding Statistical Data

Variable	Statistical Data
V1. education	mean: 14.9 years
	median: 14.5 years
	range: 11.5 to 18 years
V2. ethnic affiliation	all white
V3. marital status	21 married, 87.5%
	1 single, 1 divorced, 1 widowed
V4. ministerial status	age initally ordained:
	males - mean: 25, range: 14 to 46
	females - mean: 46, range: 24 to 68
	ordained parent:
	males - yes: 7/58%
	females - yes: 4/33%
V5. place of residence	city: 13/54.2%
	small town: 8/33.3%
	rural area: 3/12.5%
V6. years of membership	mean: 33 years
	median: 27 years
	range: 13 to 63

Note. Under V1. education, 18 years = masters degree.

11.5 to 18 years. Seven people had bachelors degrees and four had masters degrees.

All participants were white, and 21 or 87.5% were married. The mean age at which males were initially ordained was 25. Females were ordained for the first time at 46. In the priesthood of the R.L.D.S Church there are several positions or offices and each time a lay minister is "called" to one of the offices, they are ordained. The data were not surprising because the ordination of women was still a fairly recent phenomenon. The range of the data on initial ordination was greater for women than men and indicated that women of all ages were being ordained.

Another element of the data, ordained parent, pointed out that men had an ordained parent when they were living at home in the majority of cases, 7 out of 12 or 58%. Women did not have the same experience. Only 3 or 33% came from a family where a parent was ordained.

The majority of respondents, 54.2%, came from cities, and 33.3% came from small towns. The remainder, 12.5%, came from rural areas.

Looking at years of membership in the R.L.D.S. Church, the average was 33 years and the range was 13 to 63 years. Since the range was so large, the median was also calculated and was 27 years.

Learning Projects

RQ1. How many learning projects do lay ministers engage in annually?
RQ2. How many hours do lay ministers spend on their learning projects?

Participants' responses to research questions one and two are presented in Table 5. The table contains the number of learning projects completed by each male and female lay minister and the hours spent on the projects.

In a 12 month period, lay ministers engaged in an average of 11.2 learning projects and spent a total of 1,034.5 hours on the projects, an average of 92.3 hours per project. Female lay ministers averaged more learning projects, 12.2, than males, 10.3. They also averaged more hours per project, 93.6 to 90.8.

The number of projects completed ranged from 4 to 34. For males, the fewest number of projects was 4 and the most was 17. For females, the fewest was 5 and the most was 34. The range for the number of hours spent on learning projects for all participants was 266 to 2,023. The range was 338 to 1,715 for males and 266 to 2,023 for females.

One person was responsible for the large range in number of projects completed by females. This person, subject #19, completed 34 projects, twice as many as any other lay minister. If the figure were discarded, the range in number of learning projects completed by

Table 5

Learning Projects of Adult Lay Ministers by Age, Gender, and Time Spent

(N=24)

	Male			Female			Totals	
	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Projects	Hours
Under 40	1	4	624	13	5	266		
	2	11	672	14	12	823		
	3	8	338	15	11	417		
	4	9	922	16	7	418		
		32	2556		35	1924	67	4480
	Mean	8	639		8.8	481	8.4	560
			79.9			55.0		66.9
40 - 60	5	9	538	17	10	1922		
	6	17	1287	18	17	2023		
	7	15	1715	19	34	1864		
	8	16	711	20	16	1466		
		57	4251		77	7275	134	11526
	Mean	14.3	1062.8		20	1818.8	16.8	1440.8
			74.6			94.5		86.0
Over 60	9	8	646	21	8	1268		
	10	5	1095	22	6	934		
	11	12	1139	23	12	826		
	12	9	1481	24	8	1432		
		34	4361		34	4460	68	8821
	Mean	8.5	1090.3		8.5	1115	8.5	1102.6
			128.3			131.2		129.7
Totals		123	11168		146	13659	269	24827
	Mean	10.3	930.7		12.2	1138.3	11.2	1034.5
			90.8			93.6		92.3

males and females would be nearly identical, males: 4 to 17 and females: 5 to 17. Furthermore, the 34 projects were not accompanied by the greatest number of hours. The number of hours spent by subject #19 on learning projects was greater than the mean but about 160 hours less than the greatest number of hours.

Looking at the three age groups, lay ministers between the ages of 40 and 60 conducted a mean of 16.8 projects, almost twice as many as the other two groups. However, the over 60 group spent the most time on the projects. Lay ministers over 60 performed the same number of learning projects as those under 40, but they spent twice as many hours at the projects than their younger counterparts.

Comparing the data on learning projects for males and females, there is similarity on the number of projects completed in the under 40 and over 60 groups. Males under 40 completed 8 projects, and females under 40 completed 8.8 projects. Males and females over 60 both completed 8.5 projects. In the 40 to 60 age group, females completed more projects than males.

The data on the number of hours spent on learning projects by men and women in the different age groups reveal similarity only in the over 60 category. Men over 60 spent 128.3 hours on their projects, whereas women spent 131.2 hours. In the 40 to 60 group, men reported spending 74.6 hours and women 94.5. The figures for the under 40 group were: men, 79.9 and women, 55. There was a steady increase in the number of hours women spent on learning projects through the age categories. Men exhibited a small decrease from the under 40 group to

the 40 to 60 group but rebounded in the over 60 category.

Church-Related Learning Projects

The number of church-related learning projects and the time spent on them are reported in Table 6. The data are presented in the same manner and in the same positions as the data of Table 5. For example, the learning projects of subject #1 in Table 5 correspond to the church-related learning projects of subject #1 in Table 6. The data of Table 6 were obtained from the answers to research questions one and two and provided useful information about lay ministers' learning projects when compared to the data of Table 5.

The lay ministers interviewed conducted a mean of 5.6 church-related learning projects and spent an average of 464.9 hours on the projects. The average number of hours devoted to each project was 82.7. Comparing this to similar data in Table 5, one-half of the total number of learning projects performed by interviewees were church-related. The mean number of hours spent on church-related projects was a little less than one-half of the mean number of hours spent on all projects, and the average number of hours per project was smaller for church-related projects than overall projects.

Females conducted more church-related learning projects than males, 6.4 to 4.8. Females also averaged a greater number of hours per project than males, 88.3 to 75.1. Comparing these numbers to the same numbers in Table 5, slightly more than one-half of females learning

Table 6

Church-Related Learning Projects of Adult Lay Ministers by Age, Gender, and Time Spent (N=24)

	Male			Female			Totals	
	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Projects	Hours
Under 40	1	2	274	13	5	266		
	2	3	65	14	7	754		
	3	2	55	15	8	316		
	4	3	142	16	1	150		
		10	536		21	1486	31	2022
	Mean	2.5	134		5.3	371.5	3.9	252.8
			53.6			70.8		65.2
40 - 60	5	5	425	17	5	392		
	6	3	370	18	9	320		
	7	10	1278	19	14	1058		
	8	7	102	20	7	841		
		25	2175		35	2611	60	4786
	Mean	6.3	543.8		8.8	652.8	7.5	598.3
			87			74.6		79.8
Over 60	9	5	236	21	6	920		
	10	2	438	22	5	834		
	11	9	704	23	8	418		
	12	7	266	24	2	534		
		23	1644		21	2706		
	Mean	5.8	411		5.3	676.5	44	4350
			71.4			128.9	5.5	98.9
Totals		58	4355		77	6803	135	11158
	Mean	4.8	362.9		6.4	566.9	5.6	464.9
			75.1			88.3		82.7

projects were church-related, whereas slightly less than one-half of males learning projects were church-related. The average number of hours spent by females on each church-related project was five hours less than the average number of hours spent on all projects. For males, the difference was 15 hours.

In the three age groups, the largest number of church-related learning projects was completed by the 40 to 60 category, 7.5. Lay ministers under 40 completed 3.9 projects and those over 60, 5.5. Comparing this data to the corresponding data of Table 5, the church-related projects of the 40 to 60 category were 45% of their total number of projects. The number of church-related projects of the under 40 group was 46% of their total number of projects and the number was 66% for the over 60 group. Additionally, the mean number of hours per church-related project increased with age.

Considering the data on age and gender, males under 40 averaged the fewest number of church-related learning projects and females between 40 and 60 the greatest number. Females under 40 averaged twice as many church-related projects as males of the same age group. Females aged 40 to 60 also completed more church-related projects on average than their male counterparts. Only in the over 60 category were the number of church-related projects similar for both genders; females, 5.3 and males, 5.8.

With regard to the number of hours devoted to church-related projects, females over 60 spent the largest amount of time on each project and males under 40 the smallest. Males generally spent fewer

hours on each project than females, except in the 40 to 60 age group. In this group, men averaged more hours than women and more hours than men under 40 or over 60. The average number of hours females spent on each project increased slightly from the under 40 group to the 40 to 60 group and jumped by over 50 hours in the over 60 category.

Learning Resources

RQ3. What resources are employed by lay ministers in their learning projects?

The responses of participants to research question number three are outlined in Table 7. The table documents the number and type of resources employed by lay ministers in their learning projects. The data of Table 7 is presented in the same general format as the data of Tables 5 and 6.

Prior to discussing the data, it is helpful to look at the specific types of human and nonhuman resources participants reported using in their learning projects. Among the human resources employed by participants were: mentors or respected individuals, spouse, parents, friends, boss, other hobbyists, and a variety of professionals including: physicians, financial advisors, counselors, teachers, choir directors, symphony conductor, docents, extension agents, coaches, building contractors, lawyers, ministers, and nutritionists.

The most frequent type of nonhuman resource used was printed

Table 7

Learning Resources of Adult Lay Ministers by Age and Gender (N=24)

	Male			Female			Totals	
	Subject #	Resources	H/NH	Subject #	Resources	H/NH	Resources	H/NH
Under 40	1	12	3/9	13	13	5/8		
	2	44	15/29	14	38	17/21		
	3	29	15/14	15	32	19/13		
	4	21	12/9	16	26	11/15		
		106	45/61		109	52/57	215	97/118
	Mean	26	11/15		27	13/14	27	12/15
		3.3	43%/57%		3.1	48%/52%	3.2	45%/55%
40 - 60	5	27	9/18	17	37	14/23		
	6	60	25/35	18	58	24/34		
	7	39	18/21	19	120	50/70		
	8	40	12/28	20	47	17/30		
		166	64/102		262	105/157	428	169/259
	Mean	42	16/26		65	26/39	53	21/32
		2.9	39%/61%		3.4	40%/60%	3.2	40%/60%
Over 60	9	14	6/8	21	22	12/10		
	10	26	10/16	22	17	7/10		
	11	37	17/20	23	39	14/25		
	12	21	2/19	24	46	17/29		
		98	35/63		124	50/74	222	85/137
	Mean	25	9/16		31	13/18	28	11/17
		2.9	36%/64%		3.6	40%/60%	3.3	38%/62%
Totals		370	144/226		495	207/288	865	351/514
	Mean	31	12/19		41	17/24	36	15/21
		3.0	39%/61%		3.4	42%/58%	3.2	41%/59%

Note. H = human resources, NH = nonhuman resources.

material. Included among the printed material were: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, biblical reference books, inspirational and motivational writings, poetry, novels, histories, biographies, religious and secular magazines, newspapers, manuals, professional journals and papers, and sheet music. Other nonhuman resources included: television, films, audio and video tapes, libraries, museums, art exhibits, educational and trade fairs, historical sites, computer-based tutorials, correspondence courses, national and international travel.

The lay ministers interviewed in the study utilized an average of 3.2 resources per learning project. Human resources were employed in 41% of the projects and nonhuman resources in 59%. There was little difference between the number of resources utilized by males and females. There was also little difference between the percentage of resources which were human and nonhuman, males: human 39% and nonhuman 61%; females: human 42% and nonhuman 58%.

Comparing the data for the three age groups, lay ministers under 40 employed the same number of resources as those 40 to 60 and over 60. However, the under 40 group utilized a higher percentage of human resources and a correspondingly lower percentage of nonhuman resources than the other two groups.

Comparing the data on gender and age, the smallest number of resources employed per learning project was by males 40 to 60 and over 60, 2.9. Females over 60 used the largest number of resources per project, 3.6. Males utilized an increasing percentage of nonhuman

resources as they progressed through the age groups. Females exhibited a similar trend between the first two age groups, but the over 60 category employed the same percentage of human and nonhuman resources as the 40 to 60 category.

Learning Planners

RQ4. Who is responsible for planning lay ministers learning projects?

The data which provided the answer to this research question is contained in Table 8. In the table, the number of projects directed by each planner and the planners' percentage of the total number of projects are listed.

Table 8 indicates that self was the planner utilized most often in lay ministers' learning projects. Self-planned projects accounted for 39.8% of the total number of projects. The next most frequently used planner was the group or class at 31.2%. The remaining planners and their percentages were: professional/peer, 20.8%; mixed, 7.8%; and object, .4%.

Self was the most frequently used learning planner in all three age groups. Lay ministers over 60 self-planned 51% of their learning projects, whereas those 40 to 60 and under 40 self-planned 35.8% of their projects. Group-planned projects were second in terms of frequency of use and accounted for 26.5% of the projects for lay ministers over 60, 34.4% for those 40 to 60, and 29.9% for those under

Table 8

Learning Planners of Adult Lay Ministers by Number and Percentage of Learning Projects

		Male		Female		Totals	
	Planners	Projects	(%)	Projects	(%)	Projects	(%)
Under 40	group	7	(21.9)	13	(37.2)	20	(29.9)
	prof/peers	8	(25.0)	9	(25.7)	17	(25.4)
	self	13	(40.6)	11	(31.4)	24	(35.8)
	mixed	3	(9.4)	2	(5.7)	5	(7.5)
	object	1	(3.1)	0	(0.0)	1	(1.4)
		32	(100.0)	35	(100.0)	67	(100.0)
40 - 60	group	17	(29.8)	29	(37.7)	46	(34.3)
	prof/peers	12	(21.1)	16	(20.8)	28	(20.9)
	self	24	(42.1)	24	(31.1)	48	(35.8)
	mixed	4	(7.0)	8	(10.3)	12	(9.0)
	object	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
		57	(100.0)	77	(100.0)	134	(100.0)
Over 60	group	6	(17.6)	12	(35.3)	18	(26.5)
	prof/peers	7	(20.6)	4	(11.8)	11	(16.2)
	self	18	(52.9)	17	(50.0)	35	(51.5)
	mixed	3	(8.9)	1	(2.9)	4	(5.8)
	object	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
		34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	68	(100.0)
Totals	group	30	(24.4)	54	(37.0)	84	(31.2)
	prof/peers	27	(22.0)	29	(19.9)	56	(20.8)
	self	55	(44.8)	52	(35.6)	107	(39.8)
	mixed	10	(8.0)	11	(7.5)	21	(7.8)
	object	1	(.8)	0	(0.0)	1	(.4)
		123	(100.0)	146	(100.0)	269	(100.0)

40.

The data points out that study participants in the 40 to 60 and under 40 categories rely on planners other than self to a greater extent than participants over 60. In the 40 to 60 group, the percentage of projects that were group and self-planned were nearly identical. In the under 40 group, there was less variability among the percentages for the top three planners than there were in the other two age groups.

Analyzing the data on learning planners and gender, males self-planned a larger percentage of their projects than females. Males also relied on professionals and peers slighlty more often than females and the group less often than females.

Looking at age and gender, lay ministers over 60 were responsible for planning half or more of their learning projects themselves; males, 52.9% and females, 50%. Women aged 40 to 60 and under 40 preferred group-planned projects over the other planners. The mixed planner category was most frequently used by women 40 to 60 and least used by women over 60. Males and females under 40 employed professionals or peers as planners for a quarter of their projects, the most of any of the age and gender groups.

Reasons for Learning

RQ5. What reasons do lay ministers give for engaging in learning projects?

The data which provided the answer to research question number five is contained in Table 9. Table 9 presents a list of the reasons given by participants for engaging in learning projects. The reasons are ranked in order of the number of projects associated with each reason. The reasons are also reported by gender and percentage of the total.

The reason given most often by lay ministers for engaging in learning projects was to "learn to be more effective in my ministry." A total of 47 projects were initiated for this reason. The reason was clearly associated with participants' church-related positions. The next most frequently expressed reason was not church-related. "Enjoyment, stimulation, self-expression" was the motivation for conducting 29 projects. The percentages of the total number of projects for the two reasons were: "learn to be more effective in my ministry," 17.8% and "enjoyment, stimulation, self-expression," 11%. None of the other reasons listed in Table 9 accounted for more than 10% of lay ministers' learning projects.

The first job-related reason for pursuing learning projects, "required by my employer (involuntary participation)" was tied for fourth place on the list with 17 projects, 6.4% of the total. "Increase my effectiveness on the job (voluntary participation)" was also a

Table 9

Reasons for Learning of Adult Lay Ministers by Number and Percentage of Learning Projects and Gender

Reasons	Total	(%)	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
"Learn how to be more effective in my ministry"	47	(17.8)	30	(20.5)	17	(14.4)
Enjoyment, stimulation, self-expression	29	(11.0)	15	(10.3)	14	(11.9)
Family concerns (spouse, children, marriage, school, etc.)	26	(9.9)	14	(9.6)	12	(10.2)
Opportunity to minister to people, "Share the Good News of the Gospel"	17	(6.4)	7	(4.8)	10	(8.5)
"Required by my employer" (involuntary participation)	17	(6.4)	8	(5.5)	9	(7.6)
"Increase my effectivenss on the job" (voluntary participation)	17	(6.4)	11	(7.5)	6	(5.1)
Was asked, sense of duty	16	(6.1)	10	(6.9)	6	(5.1)
Want to help people	12	(4.6)	3	(2.1)	9	(7.6)
Keep abreast of the teachings and programs of the church	10	(3.8)	7	(4.8)	3	(2.5)
Health concerns (nutrition, weight, illness, etc.)	10	(3.8)	8	(5.5)	2	(1.8)
Curiosity, sounded interesting	10	(3.8)	5	(3.4)	5	(4.2)
Wanted to support a worthwhile cause, community service	8	(3.0)	4	(2.7)	4	(3.4)
Learn skills which have wide application (home, church, work)	7	(2.7)	4	(2.7)	3	(2.5)
"Help me grow spiritually"	5	(1.9)	4	(2.7)	1	(0.9)
Sense of accomplishment, challenge	5	(1.9)	2	(1.4)	3	(2.5)
Home concerns (repair, remodeling, cars, etc.)	5	(1.9)	1	(0.7)	4	(3.4)
Keep informed about world events	5	(1.9)	1	(0.7)	4	(3.4)
Financial concerns (retirement, investing, etc.)	4	(1.5)	1	(0.7)	3	(2.5)
Required in order to be ordained	4	(1.5)	4	(2.7)	0	(0.0)
Earn college credit	4	(1.5)	4	(2.7)	0	(0.0)
Improve the practices of the church	3	(1.1)	3	(2.1)	0	(0.0)
Social interaction	3	(1.1)	0	(0.0)	3	(2.5)
Total	264	(100.0)	146	(100.0)	118	(100.0)

Note. The 24 lay ministers conducted 269 learning projects, but the total in Table 8 is 264. The table is short five projects because one of the participants refused to allow his reasons for learning to be described in "traditional terms." The individual stated that his learning was "cross-disciplined and ecumenical" and he was seeking a "broader perspective of truth which was independent of institutional teachings."

job-related reason, and, if the two job-related reasons were combined, they would be responsible for 34 projects, the second highest number.

At the bottom of the list in Table 9 were "social interaction" and "improve the practices of the church." These reasons were the driving forces behind 3 projects each, only 1.1% of the total.

The data on reasons and gender showed similarity at the top of list. The order of the first three reasons for engaging in learning projects was the same for both females and males. However, females did report "learn how to be more effective in my ministry" in more projects, 30, than males, 17. There was also a difference between the genders on the fourth most frequently expressed reason for initiating projects. For females, the fourth position was held by "increase my effectiveness on the job (voluntary participation)" with 11 projects. For males, it was "opportunity to minister to people, share the Good News of the Gospel" with 10 projects.

Open-Ended Questions

During the interviews, participants made frequent, unsolicited comments about their learning. The interviewer recorded many of these comments because they provided insights into lay ministers' learning projects that were not obtained through the formal questioning. There was, however, a section of the interview guide which asked participants for general observations on their learning activities. These observations were also recorded. Both the solicited

and unsolicited responses are presented in this section.

A major, recurring theme in all the interviews was the positive attitude participants had toward learning. Illustrative of participants' responses was the comment, "There aren't enough years in my life for all the education I'd like to get." A person in the over 60 age group said, "Even though I'm in my 60's, my desire to learn is as great as ever." Another person stated, "I love learning and I love school." A statement which summarized the regard which participants had for learning was, "My learning has rejuvenated me. It has allowed me to see the Christ in others."

The lay ministers who took part in the study had definite opinions about the techniques of learning, about what worked for them and what did not. Experience was viewed by many as a significant way to acquire meaningful knowledge. A comment which affirmed this opinion was, "Experience may be painful at times, but it is a good teacher." Another individual who agreed said, "Books can not teach you everything. Experience has been a valuable teacher for me." Comments on other learning techniques included: "We can learn a lot from observing others." "I learn best through reading and reflection." "Prayer and patience are important learning tools." "Travel is a wonderful way to learn." The statement, "If you want to learn how to build a cabinet, you go to the cabinet maker," emphasized the feeling of many that the best way to learn something was to consult a knowledgeable source.

Participants saw their learning as having a strong utilitarian component; they wanted to use the results of their learning. This was

demonstrated by the comment, "I have always felt that everything in my life should be a learning experience. Practical application has been the stimulus for my learning." One interviewee commented, "Most of my learning as an adult has occurred in a spontaneous way. It has not been the result of a plan but has been in response to some type of demand." Another individual said, "Learning results from a need."

The comments of study participants indicated that they thought of themselves as goal-oriented learners. They wanted to use the knowledge or skills which they had gained to achieve a goal or an objective. Among the statements which supported this attribute was, "I learn in order to better myself and enrich my life. I also have a strong desire to help others and find learning is a way to prepare myself to do this." Other remarks of a similar nature were: "I participate in a wide variety of learning events because I want to be on the leading edge in the church." "In every phase of my life from work to church to home, computers are playing a significant role and many of my educational activities have been directed toward learning how to use computers more effectively." "I want use my knowledge to better humankind and to create worth in persons." "I recognize my lack of academic credentials and much of my learning results from a desire to make up for this lack."

The observations of female participants were particularly interesting since the R.L.D.S. Church has only been ordaining women as lay ministers for five years. One female observed, "My interest in learning has changed dramatically as a result of my ordination. Before

ordination, I never gave much thought about how to act or speak in worship services because I was a girl and didn't need to know about being a minister. Now, I am very concerned about being seen as competent in my ministry and learning can help me achieve this objective." Another female commented, "I have always been a feminist. My ordination has legitimized my interest in feminist theology, and I want to use the knowledge which I have gained to help other women realize that they too have a contribution to make to the church." A more traditional statement by a female was, "I need to improve my public speaking skills and increase my knowledge of the scriptures."

In the interviews, the lay ministers were asked for their opinions and recommendations concerning the existing educational programs of the R.L.D.S. Church. One opinion was, "The church could do a better job of pointing learners to resources." "The church needs to be a place of vision, and education can be a means of fostering the vision," were the words of another interviewee. A more lengthy comment was, "I question why the church wants to provide and direct all of the learning experiences of its lay ministers. Other religious denominations and educational institutions have educational programs which are very good. It seems like we should be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. The result would be beneficial for the individual and the church as both would be introduced to new ways of looking at things."

Phase 2: Findings

The findings of Phase 2 consisted of the responses of the participants in Phase 1 to a summary of the data of Phase 1. In the summary, the data tables of Phase 1 were presented, and participants were asked to respond, in writing, to questions concerning the data. The data summary is contained in Appendix C.

In discussing participants' responses, the format of the data summary is followed; the questions that were asked are stated and the replies obtained summarized.

Learning Projects

1. What is your reaction to the number of learning projects completed by lay ministers? number of hours spent on the learning?

In responding to this question, participants generally expressed surprise with the large number of learning projects completed and the large amount of time spent on the projects. A typical response was, "I was surprised at how many hours were spent on learning projects. We spend more time than I ever thought, but seeing it on paper helped me understand where all my time goes." Another person stated, "The number was impressive because 'lay minister' implies time must be spent on occupation as well as ministry." Following in the same vein was the comment, "The data confirms my feelings that we spend

more time learning than we are given credit for." A statement which reflected the view of most respondents was, "Lay ministers are active learners."

There were a few responses which did not view the data on learning projects in a positive light. One person observed, "Neither the number of projects nor hours seem high; 10 to 20% of our waking hours spent on learning seems small." Another individual wondered, "What effect does the extensive learning activities of lay ministers have on their families?"

An entirely different perspective was provided by a female interviewee who offered interpretations on what she thought the data on the learning projects of women meant. She wrote, "Females under 40 completed more projects than men but spent less time on them; women have to be better organized because of all the demands on their time (domestic chores, motherhood, etc.). In the 40 to 60 age group, more projects were again completed by women than men; women may be experiencing the 'Hallelujah, the children don't need me' syndrome. In the over 60 group, women equaled men in the number of projects completed."

2. What do these figures tell you about the learning activities of male and female lay ministers? the three different age groups?

Replies to these questions indicated that participants considered female lay ministers to be more active learners than male lay

ministers. An example of this opinion was, "Female lay ministers spend more time on more projects than males, but most of this occurs in the 40 to 60 age range." A similar comment consisted of, "It looks like females can do more in less time than males." Other statements which supported this belief included: "The greater number of projects and hours completed by women reflects the relatively recent opportunities available to them." "In the under 40 age group, males spend more time on their projects. From 40 on, females overtake males."

In commenting on the age-related data, respondents viewed the 40 to 60 group as being more involved in learning than the other two age groups. Typical of this attitude were the comments: "Lay ministers in the 40 to 60 group were more active learners than those of other groups." "The 40 to 60 group put learning as a higher priority."

One individual made a rather lengthy commentary on the age-related learning of lay ministers. "Middle-aged female lay ministers seem to be learning the most. They have finished their time consuming family demands and appear to be 'making up for lost time.' The over 60 group seem to be willing to take a long term approach to their learning. The under 40 group may have been limited by family rearing demands leading to fewer and shorter projects. This group may also be reflecting an avoidance of long term commitments and the fast rate of change in their lives." The person continued by asking, "Are men under 40 making a sincere effort to learn or are they just doing what is expected?" The individual concluded by wondering, "Are women under

60 spending more time per project because they are more cautious or less confident than men."

3. Other comments and observations?

This question elicited responses of an evaluative or summative nature. Included among the responses were, "Both males and females are very interested in learning and are willing to put their time and energy into bettering themselves." Another reply was, "How nice that everyone interviewed was involved in at least one learning project. Maybe there is hope." An additional remark pointed out, "It was interesting that the age group which completed the most projects and spent the most time on them were those who probably have teenage children at home and stabilized careers. They are probably more mature, have less home responsibilities, and are still young and healthy enough to be able to pursue educational activities. It is somewhat disappointing that the older group was not more productive."

Church-Related Learning Projects

1. What is your reaction to the number of church-related learning projects completed by lay ministers? number of hours spent on the projects?

Participants' reactions to this question were mixed. Some felt that the data demonstrated a significant commitment to church-related learning. "Lay ministers complete a lot of church-related learning projects," was a comment which illustrated this point of view. Another one was, "I am glad to see the large number of church-related projects being completed by our lay ministers." The question, "How do we do so much work?" expressed agreement with the previous comments.

Other respondents felt that more church-related learning could have been performed. Examples of this perspective were the statements, "I am surprised that more church-related projects were not completed." "I thought the amount of church-related learning would be higher." A person who preferred this point of view thought, "The figures were low in light of the recommendation made by church administrators that all lay ministers should engage in at least two church-sponsored classes per year."

Still others did not make judgments about the amount of church-related learning but concentrated on gender or age-specific issues. One interviewee observed, "Lay ministers do more learning

outside the church until the later years. This is unfortunate because the under 60 years are most important for the instruction of our families. People should be learning about moral and religious topics so they can teach their children." On a different subject, the person stated, "Women may conduct more church-related projects because they feel the need to prove themselves."

Differences between the genders were compared in the following comments: "Men under 40 engage in significantly less projects than women. Is this because they are emphasizing their careers?" "Should we be trying to attract more men to church-related learning experiences? Or, since women are more active learners, should we focus on designing learning activities to satisfy them?" "Adults in the 40 to 60 range do more church-related learning then the other age groups. Is this age group 'running' the church?"

Less speculative observations included: "One-half of all learning projects conducted by lay ministers are church-related." "Females under 60 completed more projects than males; over 60, the numbers were about equal." "For both genders, the under 40 learners are the least active."

2. Comparing the figures on church-related and total projects, what observations would you make? What influence does gender have on church-related learning? age?

In replying to these questions, participants focused heavily on

women's church-related learning. Many of the comments offered explanations for women's involvement in this type of learning. Among the explanations, the relative newness of women to the ministirial role was emphasized. "Women spend more time and engage in more projects than men. An explanation for this could be that the role of minister is something they are not comfortable with, and, as a result, they feel the need to learn all they can." "Women may be engaging in more projects than men because they are playing 'catch-up' and want to ensure that their ministry is as skilled as men's."

Women were also seen as having many competing demands for their time, and, to ensure that the role of lay minister was adequately filled, they placed church-related learning as a priority in their lives. "Women are used to juggling children, husband, house, job, and community and church-work. It is not surprising that they are involved in more projects than men." "Women's lives are very full, and the amount of church-related learning that they do indicates that they are taking advantage of the educational opportunities which the church makes available to them." "Women generally place greater priority on learning than men so it is no wonder that they perform more church-related learning."

A few respondents felt that the membership's lack of confidence in the ministry of women or women's lack of confidence in themselves accounted for women's participation in church-related learning. "There is an over-emphasis on the need of women for ministry-related education." "There is more pressure within the church for females to

be engaged in learning than men." "Women's lack of confidence in their abilities may keep them from obtaining education outside the church."

The relationship of age and church-related learning received less extensive treatment. The comments that were made were brief and included: "The 40 to 60 age group seems to be the most productive." "The 40 to 60 age group seems more interested in church-related learning than the other age groups and are probably carrying the greatest burden of church-work." "I was impressed with the number of hours older women spent on church-associated projects."

3. Other comments and reactions?

Participants offered a wide range of opinions in their answers to this question. One person wrote, "I was surprised that the learning was so broad-based. I expected lay ministers to concentrate more of their efforts on church-related subjects." Surprise was also expressed in the comment, "I did not expect women under 40 to spend more time in church-related learning than men. This may reflect the lack of a mentor." Disappointment was expressed by the respondent who stated, "I was disappointed that the over 60 group did not perform more church-related learning. They have a lot to offer - wisdom, experience, etc. - and could make a greater contribution to the church." Uncertainty was communicated in the statement, "The under 40 age group represents the future of the church, and it appears that it is going to be female dominated."

Learning Resources

1. What does the data tell you about the resources lay ministers employ in their learning?

The responses to this question were directed toward reporting the information which participants felt the data of Table 7 contained on the resources utilized by lay ministers in their learning projects. Participants observed the following: "Women used more resources than men." "Nonhuman resources were used more often than human resources." "Females used human resources more frequently than males." "The largest percentage of human resources were employed by people under 40."

There were several responses which attempted to interpret and not simply report the data on learning resources. One response characterized the use of nonhuman resources as "consistent with the dominance of self-planned learning projects." Another response described the difference between human and nonhuman resources as "not very great and reflects the need for a balance of both resources to aid our understanding. The tendency toward the nonhuman affirms that thinking people want to formulate their own conclusions." Concern was expressed with the statement, "Lay ministers depend on nonhuman resources too much; they should be interfacing and using each other as resources." Surprise was reported with the remark, "I expected women to rely more on human resources because of their socialization."

2. Are you surprised by the data? Why or why not?

Respondents were not surprised by the data on learning resources. "I was not surprised and thought even more nonhuman resources would be used." "No, I was not surprised. Lay ministers tend to be self-motivated, so it is understandable that they would employ more nonhuman resources." "I was not surprised at all. Nonhuman resources are more easily attainable and more flexible than classes or other human resources."

In addition to not being surprised by the data, respondents were free with their observations on the significance of the data. "As one ages, one becomes aware that you have to find your own truths, others can not provide them for you. This leads to the use of more specialized and individualized resources." "People may go to human resources after they have acquired some knowledge from nonhuman sources, so they can appear to know what they are talking about." "The heavy reliance on nonhuman resources and ignoring the help of trained professionals may lead to errors in the learning." "Three resources per project seems on the short side."

3. Other remarks?

Only one participant chose to respond to this question. The person said, "The greatest variety and broadness, in terms of use of resources, comes in the middle years. Younger people learn more from human

resources. Overall, nonhuman resources control much but not a dominate amount of the learning. The results demonstrate that the learning of lay ministers has a strong personal component."

Learning Planners

1. What does this information tell you about the planners of lay ministers' learning activities?

In reacting to the data of Table 8, study participants concluded that lay ministers preferred self-directed learning methods over other forms of learning. Examples of this point of view were the statements: "Lay ministers like to choose their own learning methods." "Lay ministers are self-motivated." "Since self-teaching is the method used most frequently, the church should make more of an effort to facilitate the method."

Respondents did note that women utilized group planners in their learning projects more frequently than the other types of planners. "Women learn more often in groups." "Women may prefer learning in groups because they feel more comfortable working with other people." "Women respond more to group learning situations." The exception to this preference was seen in the over 60 age group. "In all but the over 60 group, women prefer to learn in group settings." "For both men and women over 60, self-learning is the major learning process."

The predominance of self-directed learning was not considered a

positive development by everyone. Self-reliance in planning learning activities was seen by a minority of respondents as substituting personal direction for the direction of the rightful church leaders. A comment which followed this line of thinking was, "The large amount of self-instruction may be the reason for so much confusion and lack of growth in the church."

2. Do educational programs of the R.L.D.S. Church acknowledge that these planners are responsible for directing the learning of their lay ministers?

The answers to this question were evenly divided on whether or not the church acknowledged in its educational programs the planners that were utilized by its lay ministers in their learning projects. Some felt that opportunities were provided which allowed learners to choose from a variety of learning enviornments and experiences. Indicative of this attitude were the comments: "Yes, current programs emphasize group instruction but also encourage self-study." "Yes, existing courses, retreats, and conferences satisfy the need for group instruction. The mentor system encourages peer-based learning, and self-study is fostered through correspondence courses, the availability of resources through the audio-visual catalogue, etc." "Yes, in the correspondence courses you receive written feedback from the same reader each time you submit completed assignments."

Others held the opinion that the church did not do a good job of

recognizing the preferred learning planners and, instead, tried to teach all lay ministers in the same way, through group or classroom instruction. Comments which favored this viewpoint included: "No, educational requirements for ordination neither consider nor encourage other then group planners." "I do not feel the church is aware of what is directing the learning of their lay ministers." "No, they could do better." "No, it would appear that the individual is primarily responsible for directing his or her own learning, and the church wants to direct the learning rather than facilitate it."

It was evident in some of the responses that a small middle ground was present between the two opinions. A participant who took the middle course stated, "A good start has been made, but more advanced courses could be developed and better instruction could be promoted." Other participants who recognized some validity on both sides of the argument made the following points: "Group learning is provided but the quality depends on the expertise of the instructor." "The quality of the correspondence courses are generally very good and could be more strongly encouraged since lay ministers like to direct their own learning." "The church could further facilitate lay ministers' learning by drawing their attention to the excellent resources available both within the church and outside it."

3. Other reactions?

Replies to this question were limited. One respondent chose to

describe the personal characteristics of lay ministers which he thought were revealed in the data, "Lay ministers are self motivated, individualistic, disciplined, and employ a healthy mix of planners in their learning." The only other reply focused on the group which a respondent believed was most influential in planning and directing the learning of lay ministers, "People between 40 and 60 years of age do most of the planning and teaching of local educational programs."

Reasons for Learning

1. What does this information reveal about the motivation lay ministers have for initiating learning projects?

This question stimulated a variety of responses from participants. There was disagreement on whether the motivation for learning arose from internal or external forces. One participant believed, "The reasons for learning were directed by outside forces, most commonly a concern for the welfare of others." Lay ministers were seen by participants as possessing a "compassion for humanity" and a strong "concern for social issues." "Lay ministers want to be good followers of Christ and desire to be better equipped to assist fellow humans," was the observation of a third respondent.

Other participants held to the idea that lay ministers "seem to be concerned with competence and effectivness, ehancing self, and family life. These are self-centered reasons which allow us to look good and

feel good, but we should be as concerned with helping others as we are with helping ourselves." This perspective saw lay ministers as motivated by an "inward orientation rather than an outward orientation." In this view, "personal priorities were high on the list of reasons for learning," along with "a desire to be effective in their ministry."

There were responses which did not see a dichotomy in the reasons for learning but considered the inward orientation a preparation for outward service. Indicative of this attitude was the comment, "Lay ministers want to improve their ministry by learning new skills and by keeping abreast of the programs of the church in order to reach out into new areas of ministry."

Some respondents took no apparent notice of the controversy and confined their responses to other subjects. An example is the remark, "Women seem to be concerned about proving themselves worthy." A cynical respondent asked the question, "Are we really all that dedicated or were the reasons tainted by a desire to please the interviewer?" From a different tack came the comment, "People learn when there is a definite need, when they want to achieve a goal."

2. Do women seem to have different reasons for learning than men?

Replies to this question indicated that women were viewed as having reasons for learning that were different from men. Examples of this viewpoint were the comments: "Women seem to have a stronger

desire to serve people than men." "Women appear to be more concerned about proving their worth." "Women seem concerned with effectiveness and health more than men." "Women are newer to the ministry and have a lot of pressure to perform and learn." "Women seem to be playing 'catch up' with men in terms of preparing themselves to fill ministerial roles." "Women seem to be focusing on personal improvement and other personal aspects of their lives." "Women seem more anxious about ministerial effectivness, health, and spirituality than men."

Remarks concerning the reasons men have for engaging in learning projects included: "For men, physical home concerns, world events, social interaction, and helping youth were significant reasons for learning." "Men did not list 'required to be ordained' as a reason at all." "Men are more interested in reaching out and sharing the gospel with others than women."

3. Would you describe lay ministers' motivations for learning as arising from external forces, internal feelings, or some combination?

Participants dealt with this question in their answers to question number one. However, the answers to the two questions were not the same. Whereas, respondents to question one chose sides on the internal or external motivation issue, in this question, a combination of the forces was definitely favored. Responses that support this observation include the following: "A combination, lay ministers have a strong desire to serve God, people, and their church, but they also want to be

seen as competent by the people they serve and their ministerial peers." "A combination of forces is present with internal motivation centering on the need to improve one's skills to minister more effectively and external motivation arising from the pressure of assigned tasks and responsibilities."

Similar attitudes were expressed in the responses: "A combination, there is pressure to stay informed, to keep abreast of what is happening in the church, and not to be left behind, but there is also the desire to want to do your best for yourself, others, and your Lord." "Internal forces give rise to desires to improve the effectiveness of one's ministry, but the skills developed and knowledge gained are then used externally to assist others others to come to a wholeness of life." "The desire to provide quality ministry dominates, but there is also a strong enjoyment-stimulation component."

4. Other comments?

The individuals who replied to this question used it to pronounce a type of benediction on this part of the study. One person stated, "The strong desire to improve their abilities reflects a seriousness and professionalism among lay ministers that is encouraging." Another person commented, "It is encouraging that the greatest reason for learning was to be more effective in one's ministry." The final statement consisted of, "Any person who has a strong desire to learn and pursues learning is to be commended. They are people with vision

who make things happen and move the church forward."

General Questions

1. Based on the information in the tables which summarize the data of Phase 1, what recommendations would you make to officials of the R.L.D.S. Church who are responsible for developing educational programs for lay ministers?

Participants' reactions to this question were varied. One person responded, "The church provides group-oriented learning experiences through the classes which it offers. The quality of the instruction varies greatly and depends almost entirely on the expertise of the instructor. It would be nice if there were more consistency in the instruction." The person continued, "The content of the courses could be improved as well; some are too elementary." The individual's concluding comment was, "Since many people learn through using nonhuman objects or devices, the church could publicize what resources are available. Perhaps an annual compilation could be produced."

In responding to the question, a male participant made several observations, "There needs to be more emphasis on learning-by-doing for men and group learning for women." "If you want to reach lay ministers under 40, send people not books." "The number of hours spent in church-sponsored classes, 10, are not enough. The hours should be increased so that classroom and study time are closer to the average

number of hours spent on learning projects."

Two respondents thought that formal education should be more strongly encouraged, "Formal schooling should be seen as a desirable way to prepare lay ministers for their responsibilities. Attendance at local, nondenominational educational institutions should be encouraged, e.g., religion courses at community colleges." "More encouragement for lay ministers to attend college-level classes on subjects such as public speaking, personnel management, and counseling skills should be forthcoming from church leaders." In contradiction to the previous comments, one individual thought the data suggested that "more self-study courses should be developed."

2. What recommendations would you offer based on your personal experiences?

Responses to this question were more numerous and more varied than the responses to question number one. There were several responses which were concerned with broadening lay ministers' attitudes and experiences. "Lay ministers should be encouraged to participate in educational experiences outside the church to gain a broader perspective on religion and reduce or eliminate bias. A more serious focus on ecumenicalism and cross-church contacts would improve the ability of lay ministers to relate to diverse groups and peoples." "Lay ministers' education should concentrate more on 'life issues', e.g., abortion, family abuse, homosexuality, etc. The purpose

would not be to dictate to lay ministers what they should believe but to acquaint them with major issues facing people in their lives so more effective ministry may be brought to individuals."

Other responses to the question focused on ways to strengthen preparation for ordination. One person suggested, "The mentor-ordinand relationship is an excellent way to learn about the responsibilities associated with being a minister and should be expanded to last longer and encompass all aspects of ministry including: funerals, weddings, sermons, etc." Another person recognized, "There is a need for more study and practical training before ordination." Still another person recommended, "When a 'call' to be ordained is presented to a congregation, both the ordinand and the educational requirements that he or she is expected to complete should be introduced."

Many responses could not be categorized and included among them were: "I wish there were a way to motivate more of our lay ministers to engage in learning." "There should be more emphasis on the practical aspects of ministry and less on theory." "The vocabulary used in church-sponsored classes and correspondence courses should be simpler and not aimed only for theologians." "Lay ministers should be asked what they would like or need to learn."

One response seemed to express what for many is a dilemma that they feel the church faces when lay people are used to fill practically all of the organization's leadership positions and perform most of its ministry, "The professionalism of our lay ministers should be improved." On first reading, the statement appeared to be

contradictory. Lay people in any occupation or setting are not professionals. Yet, after further reflection and reading, the comment appeared to represent the feelings of many that the membership wants and expects professional quality ministry. The concern was with how to provide this level of ministry through lay people.

3. Are there specific learning needs that are not being addressed by current programs? How would you suggest these needs be met?

In responding to these questions, participants listed subjects which they believed should be added or more heavily stressed in the R.L.D.S. Church's educational programs. The subjects included: time management, stress reduction, meditation skills, principles behind prayer, effective methods of presiding at meetings, and effective witnessing or "How to be a good salesman for Christ." Nonchurch topics received attention also: budgeting, weight reduction, stopping smoking, nutrition, and using computers. One person thought more emphasis should be placed on "relating to our communities, on becoming aware of community needs and how to meet them." Another individual suggested that a "pastor-in-training program be established to prepare designated lay ministers to become pastors."

4. Do you have additional comments that you would like to make?

This question elicited a number of responses from participants.

One said, "We need to quit 'serving the Lord in my weak way' and thinking that if it's for Jesus it should be free." Another stated, "I feel the church has a good educational program. It is the dedication of the members that needs to be strengthened." In general agreement with this observation was the comment, "Grass-roots or local control of educational programs, as it currently exists, is a good model and should be preserved."

Two individuals expressed concerns about the opportunities lay ministers have to practice what they have learned. The first commented, "People need to have the opportunity to exercise the skills that they have gained." The second, in more detail, added, "Major church leaders should not be afraid to trust lay ministers and delegate responsibility to them because, as the information on their learning projects indicates, they are committed workers and responsive to the need to improve their performance."

Summary

In this chapter, the findings of the study were presented. The findings of Phase 1 were presented first, followed by the findings of Phase 2. The findings of Phase 1 were discussed in relation to the data obtained from participants' answers to the research questions of the study. The data were organized into tables which corresponded to the topics of the research questions and included: learning projects, church-related learning projects, learning resources, learning planners,

and reasons for learning. The discussion of the findings of Phase 1 included an outline of the demographic data and a report of participants' reactions to open-ended questions on their learning projects and learning in general.

The findings of Phase 2 consisted of the reactions of participants in Phase 1 to a summary of the data of Phase 1. The information obtained from participants included observations on the data and recommendations for changes to current educational programs of the R.L.D.S. Church.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

In Chapter 5, the findings of the study are discussed, and the implications which the findings have for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education outlined. The findings and implications of Phase 1 are discussed first, followed by the findings and implications of Phase 2.

Phase 1: Discussion of Findings

The findings of Phase 1 consist of participants responses to the questions of the interview guide. Phase 1 findings are discussed in the same order as the findings were presented in Chapter 4.

Demographic Data

From the findings of the demographic data, several observations may be made. Participants in the study were better educated than the average American adult. The median number of years of education for participants was 14.5 compared to 12.7 for all American adults (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1989). The data agree with Johnstone and Rivera's (1965) statement that the typical adult learner is better

educated than the average American adult.

Males experienced initial ordination at an earlier age, 25, than females, 46. The data are not extraordinary when it is noted that women have only been eligible for ordination since 1985. A type of "catch-up" appears to be occurring as qualified women are being extended what they were previously denied. The age range of initial ordination supports this view and was greater for women than men. The range was 24 to 68 years of age for women and 14 to 46 years of age for men.

Men came from families where a parent, father, was ordained more often than women, 58% to 33%. The data indicate that women lay ministers are living a unique experience as most did not have an ordained role model at home when they were growing up. The data also provide mixed support for Maurer and Bokemeier's (1984) assertion that children are more likely to be members of volunteer organizations if their parents were members of such organizations.

Learning Projects

RQ1. How many learning projects do lay ministers engage in annually?
RQ2. How many hours do lay ministers spend on their learning projects?

The findings of research questions one and two are in line with the findings of other studies of adults' learning projects. Lay ministers

engage in the same number of learning projects and spend the same amount of time on them as other adults.

The adults interviewed in this study completed a mean of 11.2 learning projects in a 12 month period and spent an average of 92.3 hours on each project. Tough (1971) found that the adults in his sample completed eight learning projects in 12 months and spent 87.5 hours on each project. McCatty's (1973) subjects performed 11 learning projects in the same amount of time, whereas participants in a study by Rymell (1981) completed 12.6 projects each of which averaged 137.6 hours in length. Coolican's (1973) respondents accomplished 6 projects, and Johnson's (1973) adults finished 14.4 projects.

A unique aspect of the study was that the data on learning projects was broken down by gender and age. From the data on gender, female lay ministers are more active learners than their male counterparts. They completed more learning projects and spent more time on them than males. Females completed 146 projects consisting of 13,659 hours compared to males' 123 projects and 11,168 hours. Females averaged almost two more projects than males, 12.2 to 10.3, and spent nearly three more hours on each project, 93.6 to 90.8.

The data on age indicate that lay ministers between 40 and 60 conduct more learning projects than lay ministers of any other age. This group averaged twice as many projects, 16.8, as lay ministers under 40, 8.4, or over 60, 8.5. The data are not unexpected. Middle-aged adults are generally considered to be in their most productive years. What is unexpected is that the number of learning

projects was not matched by the number of hours. Lay ministers in the over 60 group accumulated the most hours per project, 129.7.

The findings indicate that lay ministers continue to be active learners beyond age 60. Individuals in this category conducted the same number of projects as those under 40, 8.5 to 8.4, but spent more than twice as many hours on each project, 129.7 to 66.9.

An explanation for this finding may be present in Chambre's (1984) research on volunteering in old age. Chambre discovered that the factors which influence volunteer behavior in old age are no different than those which influence it at other ages. The volunteer behavior is the continuation of an established pattern. Lay ministers over 60 are continuing a pattern of volunteer involvement which was established earlier in their lives.

Another explanation may be found in the literature of the developmentalists. Erikson (1964) was a developmental theorist who conceptualized human development in terms of age-related stages. For persons in Erikson's last stage of adulthood, the task which needs to be resolved is to acquire a sense of integrity and avoid a sense of despair. Individuals need to see their lives as having been or continuing to be worthwhile and avoid a serious feeling of disappointment or regret for what might have been. The energy with which the over 60 group pursues learning projects suggests that they are successfully dealing with the developmental task of their stage of development. They do consider their lives to be worthwhile, and they want to learn in order to continue making a contribution to their church and society.

Church-Related Learning Projects

Church-related learning projects account for 50% of lay ministers' learning projects. The lay ministers interviewed conducted a mean of 5.6 church-related learning projects and spent 464.9 hours on the projects. The totals for all learning projects were: 11.2 projects and 1,034.5 hours. The data are not unexpected because lay ministers are devoted individuals who take their church-related positions seriously.

Females engage in more church-related learning projects than males. Females conducted 6.4 church-related projects compared to males 4.8 and averaged 88.3 hours per project compared to males 75.1. The statement is consistent with the one made in the previous section that women are more active learners than men. Women may also be responding to the opportunity to be lay ministers and are acquiring knowledge to enhance their performance.

People over 60 engage in more church-related learning, in terms of percent of total learning, than people of other ages. Sixty-six percent of the learning projects performed by lay ministers over 60 were church-related. The percentages for lay ministers in the other age groups were: 40 to 60, 45% and under 40, 46%. A reason for this finding may be that lay ministers over 60 are free to concentrate on church-related learning because they have fewer external demands on their time than younger people. Many are retired and do not have to keep abreast of current practices and knowledge in their professions. Their children are grown, and information on child rearing is not

necessary.

The study is interested in comparing the learning projects of lay ministers to the learning projects of professional ministers. A research effort which investigated the learning projects of the professional clergy was conducted by Allerton (1974). With regard to Allerton's data, the lay ministers of this study compare favorably to professional ministers in terms of learning projects completed and time spent on them. Lay ministers completed more general learning projects than the professional ministers, 11.2 to 9.6, and spent more time on them, 92.3 hours to 52.6 hours. The number of church-related projects completed was nearly the same; lay ministers, 5.6 and professional ministers, 5.95.

The findings suggest that lay ministers are dedicated and conscientious about their ministry even though they are not full-time professionals. They spend the same amount of time in church-related learning as professional ministers. The findings further suggest that lay ministers are more active in pursuing learning of a general nature than the professional clergy. This is not an unexpected findings. Most lay ministers are employed and must devote a significant number of hours to job-related learning.

Learning Resources

RQ3. What resources are employed by lay ministers in their learning projects?

Participants in the study utilized nonhuman resources more often than human resources. Fifty-nine percent of the resources used in the learning projects were nonhuman. A mean of 3.2 resources were employed per project. Rymell (1981), in a study of the learning projects of engineers, found that 4.3 resources were utilized per project. In this study, printed material, a nonhuman source, had the highest frequency of use.

The findings support the observation that lay ministers employ the same number and type of resources in their learning projects as other adult learners.

Learning Planners

RQ4. Who is responsible for planning lay ministers learning projects?

The planner which had the highest percentage of use in lay ministers' learning projects was self. Nearly 40% of lay ministers' learning projects were self-planned.

The findings of other research on the learning projects of adults found a greater incidence of self-planning among respondents. Tough

(1971) found a self-planning rate of 68% among the learning projects of adults in his research. McCatty (1973) obtained a self-planning rate of 76% and Coolican (1973) 66%. In Johnson's (1973) research, the percentage of self-directed projects was 60%, and Richardson's (1986) subjects self-directed 75% of their vocation-based learning projects. The findings of this study indicate that lay ministers do not direct the same percentage of learning projects as do other adults.

While the number of self-directed projects was low in comparison to the results of other studies, the data on group-planning were high. Group-planners accounted for 31.2% of lay ministers' learning projects. The data were especially high for women, 37%. In Tough's (1971) research, the percentage of group-planned projects was 12% and, for Coolican (1973), it was 16%.

The differences between the data of this study and the data of other studies suggest that lay ministers have a strong sense of institutional loyalty and, as a result, feel compelled to participate in group-planned, church-sponsored classes. Another explanation could be that lay ministers are responding to the encouragement which they receive from church leaders to attend at least two continuing education activities per year, and the educational programs that are available to them are church-sponsored classes.

Lay ministers may also be a self-selecting group who are more externally-directed than other adults. This would be in agreement with Confer's (1981) argument that volunteers are more sociocentric than egocentric. They are more concerned about helping society and others

than they are about promoting their own advancement.

In this study, the largest percentage of self-planned projects was found in the over 60 group. Men of this age category self-directed 52.9% of their learning projects, and women self-directed 50% of their projects. The relationship between self-directed learning and life satisfaction among the elderly was studied by East (1986). While determining that the issue was complex, East stated that it appeared people over 60 who are generally satisfied with their lives exhibit a propensity for self-directed learning. Integrating the findings of East's work with the findings of this study, it appears that lay ministers over 60 are satisfied with their lives.

Reasons for Learning

RQ5. What reasons do lay ministers give for engaging in learning projects?

The findings that are associated with this research question support the observation that lay ministers are goal-oriented learners. Goal-oriented learners have a specific purpose or objective in mind when they initiate a learning project. Many of the reasons respondents gave for participating in learning projects were directed toward the achievement of a goal or an objective. The reason given most often for initiating a learning project was: "learn to be more effective in my ministry." The goal in this reason is clearly evident, improve one's

performance as a lay minister. The third most frequently expressed reason, "family concerns," has as its objective the maintenance or improvement of some aspect of family life. The fourth reason, "opportunity to minister to people, share the Good News of the Gospel," states its own goal. Job-related reasons of a voluntary and involuntary nature occupied fifth and sixth places on the list.

Tough (1971) embraces the view that adults are goal-oriented learners. In his research, the reason expressed most often for conducting learning projects was the requirement to perform a task or carry out an assignment. McCatty (1973) found that 55% of the learning projects completed by professional men were directed toward the achievement of vocation-related goals. Goal-related learning was also prominent in Rymell's (1981) study of engineers where vocation-based learning projects were pursued most frequently. Next in frequency were projects associated with home and family. Allerton's (1974) research determined the presence of goal-directedness in the high percentage of learning projects of professional ministers that were vocation-oriented. The findings of this study agree with the results of the studies mentioned and lend credence to the observation that lay ministers, like other adults, are goal-oriented learners.

Peters and Gordon (1974) studied the learning projects of adults from urban and rural locations in Tennessee. Their research found five major reasons for conducting learning projects: (a) increase knowledge and understanding, (b) improve job performance, (c) enrichment, hobby, or recreation, (d) goal not clear, and (e) gain new skill or employment.

The similarity which exists between the results of Peters and Gordon's research and the findings of this study support the statement that lay ministers' reasons for engaging in learning projects are similar to those of other adults. Peters and Gordon's first reason, "increase knowledge and understanding," does not have a reason in this study which is its direct equivalent. However, it underlies several reasons including: "learn how to be more effective in my ministry," "family concerns," "keep abreast of the teachings of the church," "health concerns," etc. The next reason, "improve job performance," more directly corresponds to "required by my employer" and "increase my effectiveness on the job." "Enrichment, hobby, or recreation" has a direct counterpart in "enjoyment, stimulation, self-expression."

Another perspective on the reasons lay ministers have for engaging in learning projects is provided by comparing the findings of this study to the findings of Utendorf (1985). Utendorf studied the reasons for lay ministers' participation in educational programs of the Roman Catholic Church. From the research, three reasons emerged as paramount: "to enhance personal religious development," "to improve skills useful in church and community service," and "for cognitive stimulation."

Comparing Utendorf's reasons to the reasons of this study, some difference is noted. "Enhancement of personal religious development" does not enjoy as high a ranking in this study as it does in Utendorf's. Two responses of this study which are similar are: "keep abreast of the teachings of the church" and "help me grow spiritually." However,

neither of these responses command a large number of learning projects. It is somewhat unexpected that personal spiritual development was not a greater concern among the lay ministers of this research.

With regard to Utendorf's other two reasons, there is more agreement. In this study, the reason expressed most often for engaging in learning projects was: "learn how to be more effective in my ministry." This compares favorably to Utendorf's: "to improve skills useful in church and community service." The number two reason in this study, "enjoyment, stimulation, self-expression," resembles Utendorf's "for cognitive stimulation."

In accounting for the differences between the findings of the two studies, Utendorf looked solely at church-related learning. The learning was church-sponsored and intended specifically for the lay minister. This study was interested in all of the learning projects performed by lay ministers not just those that were church-related.

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions of Phase 1 were a means of obtaining unique insights into the attitudes and feelings of lay ministers toward their learning projects and learning in general. The picture which emerges from the responses is one of a dedicated, thoughtful group of people who care very much about learning. They see learning as a valid and important way to achieve the goals which they have for their lives.

They also approach learning with enthusiasm and spend a considerable amount of time in the pursuit of knowledge and new skills. A strong utilitarian element is present in lay ministers' learning as they seek to apply the product of their learning in a variety of enviornments.

Phase 1: Implications

The data of Phase 1 contain important implications for educational programming for lay ministers. The implications are drawn from the findings of Phase 1 and include:

1. The results of other studies of adults' learning projects may be applied to lay ministers.

2. Analyzing data on the learning projects of lay ministers provides significant information which can be used in developing programs for lay ministers' continuing education.

3. Church-sponsored programs for lay ministers should seek to increase the participation of men of all ages and women under 40.

4. The church should emphasize self-directed learning activities for men of all ages and women over 60 and group-planned activities for women under 60.

5. In designing educational programs for lay ministers, church officials should focus on subjects which enhance ministerial effectiveness.

Phase 2: Discussion of Findings

The findings of Phase 2 consist of the reactions of participants in Phase 1 to the data of Phase 1. Phase 2 findings are discussed in the same order as the findings were presented in Chapter 4.

Learning Projects

In reacting to Phase 1 data on learning projects, participants observed that lay ministers were active learners. However, participants were not confident that church officials realize how active lay ministers are in pursuing learning. Lay ministers might be spurred to even greater action if their efforts were recognized and rewarded.

Looking at learning projects in terms of gender, women were seen as being more active in learning than men. Participants interpreted this to be a result of the recent "calling" of women to the ministry. Church officials should pay greater attention to the particular learning needs of women when formulating educational programs.

Looking at learning projects in terms of age, participants commented that the most active learners were between the ages of 40 and 60. Many of the current educational programs of the church are probably targeted for this audience. Participants continued by stating that lay ministers over 60 prefered in-depth learning. Educational programs which are intended to meet the learning needs of this group

should concentrate on fewer topics but spend more time on them.

Church-Related Learning Projects

In reviewing the data of Phase 1 on lay ministers' church-related learning projects, respondents observed that a significant portion of lay ministers' learning was church-related. Again, there was concern that church officials do not recognize the extent to which lay ministers are involved in church-related learning. In addition to becoming more knowledgeable about the learning practices of their lay leaders, respondents felt that church officials should direct more attention to determining lay ministers' church-related learning needs. For women, the focus should be on the development of ministerial skills.

The data also prompted respondents to state that church-sponsored educational programs should make more of an attempt to attract learners who are under 40.

Learning Resources

In considering the data on learning resources, participants commented that the heavy use of nonhuman resources was consistent with the dominance of self-planned learning projects. Church officials should acknowledge this preference and could enhance lay ministers' learning by providing them with information on the availability and use of quality nonhuman resources.

Learning Planners

Participants responded to the data on learning planners with the observation that lay ministers prefer to direct their own learning projects. They felt the church should encourage this practice and provide learners with appropriate resources. An available resource that should be more strongly emphasized is the church-prepared correspondence course. More courses of a more advanced nature should be developed and promoted.

Participants understood that not all of lay ministers' learning was self-planned. Since group-planned learning was present in a large percentage of lay ministers' learning projects, it was recommended that classes, conferences, workshops, and retreats continue to be offered. Participants also maintained that the church should be more facilitative and less directive in encouraging the learning of its lay ministers, and learning resources from outside the church should be more heavily stressed.

Reasons for Learning

Phase 1 data on reasons for learning lead respondents to remark that women have different reasons for learning than men. Women are concerned about issues of ministrial effectiveness, spirituality, and personal and family health. Men are concerned with home-related physical matters, world events, helping youth, and attending learning

activities for social interaction. The church should recognize that there are differences between the genders in reasons for learning and plan educational programs with these in differences in mind.

Respondents also observed that lay ministers are motivated by a combination of internal and external forces. A strong desire to serve is present in these individuals but they want to do so competently. The church should help learners identify what their learning needs are and assist learners to select and attend learning experiences which will meet the identified needs. Respondents felt stongly that lay ministers' learning experiences should be positive and enjoyable.

General Questions

In Phase 2, participants were asked to respond to general questions concerning the data of Phase 1. The responses of participants to the general questions contain important recommendations for improving church-sponsored educational programs for lay ministers and are detailed in this section.

1. Based on the information in the tables which summarize the data of Phase 1, what recommendations would you make to officials of the R.LD.S. Church who are responsible for developing educational programs for lay ministers?

A concern in the replies to this question was the preparation of instructors for church-sponsored classes. Respondents felt that the quality of instruction was often poor. Formal education on teaching methods was seen as a way to improve instructors' performance and was recommended as an alternative form of education for lay ministers as well.

A comment which recognized the use of nonhuman resources in lay ministers learning projects suggested the church publish a catalog of resources that could be employed in church-related learning activities. Another suggestion focused on the time spent in church-sponsored classes and educational programs. The current number of classroom hours and study time was seen as inadequate, and a closer adherence to the average number of hours spent on each learning project was recommended.

2. What recommendations would you offer based on your personal experiences?

In answering this question, participants suggested that the learning experiences of lay ministers should be broadened. It was suggested that lay ministers go outside the church for some of their education as a means of fostering a greater spirit of understanding and acceptance of other peoples and religions.

The question also stimulated comments on the preordination training of lay ministers. Participants felt that a longer period of time

and more defined educational expectations prior to ordination would improve lay ministers' role performance.

3. Are there specific learning needs that are not being addressed by current programs? How would you suggest these needs be met?

In responding to this question, participants took a practical approach and presented specific subjects which they thought should be covered in church-sponsored learning activities. Time management, stress reduction, meditation skills, weight loss, family finances, and budgeting were examples of the topics suggested. An innovative proposal was put forth for the establishment of a pastor-in-training program to work with promising and motivated lay ministers to prepare them to assume the job of congregational pastor.

4. Do you have additional comments that you would like to make?

In response to this question, participants expressed the feeling that lay ministers needed the opportunity to put into practice the product of their learning. Church officials were admonished to demonstrate more trust in lay ministers because these individuals are highly competent and deserving of greater recognition for their skill and devotion. Lay ministers did not escape criticism. They were chided for functioning in an apologetic manner when forthright behavior was needed for successful performance of their duties.

Phase 2: Implications

The findings of Phase 2 contain important implications for the development of programs for lay ministers continuing education. The implications were formulated by the researcher based upon participants' responses and include:

1. When presented with data on their learning projects, lay ministers can offer significant recommendations for improving educational programs for their continuing education.

2. Lay ministers can accurately identify and are a good source of information on their learning needs.

3. Educational programs for lay ministers over 60 should concentrate on fewer topics but pursue the topics in-depth.

4. More church-prepared correspondence courses of a more advanced nature should be developed and promoted.

5. Church-sponsored classes, workshops, conferences, and retreats should continue to be offered.

6. The church should take a more facilitative and less directive approach in fostering the continuing education of its lay ministers.

7. Church officials should provide lay ministers with information on the availability and use of quality nonhuman resources. To achieve this objective, the church should publish and distribute, on a regular basis, a catalog of learning resources.

8. Prior to teaching in church-sponsored classes, individuals should attend formal classes that prepare them to be instructors.

9. In church-sponsored classes, the amount of time spent in the classroom and studying should be significantly increased.

10. Lay ministers should be encouraged to participate in educational activities outside the church.

11. A "pastor-in-training" program should be established to prepare lay ministers to function as pastors.

12. The time period between "calling" and ordination should be lengthened with specific educational needs identified and satisfied during the interim period.

Limitations of the Study

The cross-sectional survey research procedure of the individual, in-depth interview was employed in gathering the data of the study. The methodological procedure was appropriate since the study was an effort in descriptive research. However, there are several limitations of the study which are procedural in nature. The limitations are outlined in the paragraphs of this section.

One of the limitations relates to the nature of the population. The population consisted of lay ministers from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The organization relies heavily on lay ministers and gives them extensive opportunities for exercising leadership. The opportunities include: preaching, administering the ordinances and sacraments of the church, and pastoring congregations. Lay ministers from other religious denominations may not have the

same opportunities, therefore, the experiences of the population may not be typical of the experiences of all lay ministers.

Another limitation is the size of the sample. A sample that consists of 24 members is relatively small. Even though in-depth interviews were used, the data obtained from the sample may not be representative of the entire population. Care must be exercised in extending the results of the study to the larger population and to other populations of lay ministers.

An additional limitation is the self-selected nature of the sample. People chose to become members of the sample and participants in the study. They were not required to do so and several exercised their right not to participate. Those who did decide to participate may have had reasons for their participation which colored their responses. Furthermore, a truly random sample was not employed in the study. Random sampling techniques were utilized to a point but, to fill the sampling matrix, some individuals were selected by other than random means. The self-selected nature of the sample and lack of randomization prevents generalizing the findings with confidence.

There were other limitations that were related to the sampling procedures of the study. One was the over-representation of women in the sample. Women made up 50% of the sample yet account for only about 9% of the total number of lay ministers in the church. The over-representation was intentional. The ordination of women has been a significant issue for the church. Knowledge concerning their learning projects was determined to be important in order to discover how their

learning compared to that of male lay ministers and what their special learning needs might be. To obtain the desired information, a decision was made to have the genders represented equally in the sample.

Another limitation associated with the sampling procedures was that individuals who made up the sample were from a limited geographical area. All participants were from the Michigan Region of the R.L.D.S. Church. The geographical boundaries of the Michigan Region does not contain the city of Detroit and its suburbs. As a result, lay ministers who live within the region display an ethnic and cultural homogeneity that is not entirely characteristic of the larger church population.

There were also limitations that were related to the interview procedures of the study. In the interviews, participants had to rely upon their memories in supplying information about their learning projects. No calendars, diaries, or other forms of documentation were utilized. It is probable that the information supplied is not exact but is an approximation of the learning that transpired. The interviews also made extensive use of examples and prompt sheets. The purpose of these memory aids was to stimulate participants' thinking. However, their employment may have lead respondents to provide information which conformed to the examples and discouraged original responses.

Areas for Further Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the implications of the learning projects of lay ministers for the development of continuing education education programs. The study achieved its intended purpose. However, the study is not the "final word" on the subject of lay ministers' learning projects. Areas which deserve further study emerged during the course of the research and are listed in this section.

In documenting areas for further investigation, it is necessary to begin with the recommendation that this study be repeated. Studies which investigate the accuracy of the results of this study should be performed. The learning projects of lay ministers is an important topic, and a thorough understanding of the subject would greatly aid educators in their efforts to facilitate the continuing education of this group. An even greater understanding of the subject could be attained by expanding the focus of the study. The study should be repeated among lay ministers from other religious denominations and outside of North America.

Another area of research that would be complimentary to this study would focus on the learning projects of professional ministers. A more comprehensive look at the learning projects of the full-time, professional clergy would permit a better comparison to be made with the learning projects of the lay ministry. Such information would also be helpful in the design of common educational programs.

Still other areas where significant knowledge could be gained through additional study include: a closer inspection of the types of learning resources employed and preferred by lay ministers in their learning projects, more research on the reasons for lay ministers low percentage of use of self-planning and high percentage of use of group-planning relative to other adults, and a more thorough investigation of the age and gender associated reasons for engaging in learning projects.

Further topics for study could consist of the following: An investigation of the social nature of lay ministers' learning projects (e.g., the interpersonal networks that are employed in learning projects) would enable researchers to gain a different perspective on the phenomenon. An evaluation by lay ministers of the effectiveness of existing programs for their continuing education and their ability to plan and conduct their own learning projects.

Summary

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed and the implications which the findings have for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education presented. The findings and implications of Phase 1 are discussed first, followed by the findings and implications of Phase 2. The chapter also includes a delineation of the limitations of the study and suggestions for areas for further study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Phase 1: Letter to Sample Members

647 N. Washington St.
Owosso, MI 48867
(517) 723-5944
December 27, 1989

Mrs. _____ _____
street address
Saginaw, MI 48603

Dear Mrs. _____:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research project that is studying the learning activities of lay ministers from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

I am the director of the research and it is being conducted as a part of my doctoral program in adult education at Michigan State University.

The objectives of the study are to gain a better understanding of the learning activities of lay ministers and to determine the implications this knowledge has for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education. For the purposes of my study, a lay minister is

defined as someone who occupies a recognized leadership position in a religious denomination but is not considered to be a member of the full-time, professional clergy.

The data of the study will be gathered through personal interviews with individuals like yourself, selected lay ministers from the R.L.D.S. Church's Michigan Region. I will conduct the interviews and anticipate that they will last about 3 to 3 1/2 hours.

Your participation in the study is important and will significantly aid the accomplishment of the purpose of the study. In about a week, I will be calling to ask for your decision regarding participation and to schedule an appointment for the interview at a time and location of your choosing.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter, please contact me at the address or phone number listed.

Sincerely Yours,

John W. Noren

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for Studying Selected Characteristics of the Learning Projects of Lay Ministers

My research seeks to determine how adults learn. I am interested in finding out how adults acquire knowledge, develop new skills, and improve the performance of old skills. My interest includes, but is not limited to, the learning that is related to adults' performance as lay ministers.

The study is organized into two phases. The part that we are now engaged in, the personal interview, is Phase 1. In Phase 2, people who participated in the first phase, such as yourself, are asked to respond to several questions. The questions are related to the data obtained in Phase 1 and seek reactions to the data and recommendations for the development of programs for lay ministers' continuing education.

Let me remind you that your participation in the research is strictly voluntary. I hope that you will choose to participate in both phases. However, there is no requirement for you to do so. In Phase 1 and Phase 2, you are free to answer none or some of the questions without penalty. I do not believe that the information I am seeking is controversial. Nevertheless, you may be assured that your responses will be treated with confidence.

Learning Projects

I want to start by discussing the things that you spent time learning about during the past year. I will use the term "learning projects" to describe the subjects or topics of your learning activities.

When I say learning, I do not mean just those things that are learned in classrooms, schools, colleges, conferences, seminars or church- sponsored workshops. I mean any type of deliberate effort to acquire knowledge, wherever it takes place. Learning occurs in many settings, at home, at work, in libraries, in museums, on trips or vacations, etc., not just in educational institutions.

Most likely, you have recently tried to get information, gain new skills, improve old skills, increase your sensitivity, understanding, or appreciation of something. I would like to record the deliberate learning efforts that you have made in the past 12 months. Any subject may be included.It may have been easy or difficult, church or non-church related, large or small, significant or trivial, serious or fun. It does not matter when your effort started, as long as you spent at least a few hours at it during the last 12 months.

I want to get as complete a listing of your learning projects as possible, because I think lay ministers, like other adult learners, make many more attempts to learn than is generally recognized. To help you remember, I would like for you to look at the following sheet which lists things people often focus on in their learning.

(Introduce Probe Sheet 1).

Thank you. That gives us a fairly complete list. If in the course of our conversation you think of something else that you have learned, let me know.

Learning Resources

Now, I want to find out more about the things you named as your learning projects. I am specifically interested in the things that were used as sources of subject matter in your learning.

Many different types of resources are employed in adults' learning projects. Printed material such as books, magazines, and newspapers; audio recordings such as records or tapes; or video sources such as television, video tapes, films, static displays, and exhibits are examples of commonly utilized resources. People may also be sources of subject matter. Doctors, lawyers, counselors, teachers, ministers, librarians, and others may share knowledge, skills, or contacts. It is further not unusual for more than one type of resource to be incorporated into a single project.

It may be helpful to refer to a list of sample resources. Please look at the following sheet and consider the possible learning resources which are listed. Were any of these present in your learning projects?

(Introduce Probe Sheet 2).

Let us begin with the first project that was listed. It was your effort to learn (read the project). What resource or resources were used to stimulate and assist your learning?

(Repeat for each project and record the learning resources as they are stated).

Learning Planners

The next item that I would like to investigate has to do with the planners of your learning. I want to determine who or what was responsible for the majority of the planning of your learning projects. By planning, I mean decisions regarding what was to be learned, how it was to be learned, and how much time was to be spent on the learning. I have another reference sheet that will aid your recall of this information.

(Introduce Probe Sheet 3).

Using the descriptions of learning planners on the sheet, tell me who or what controlled the planning decisions for the listed projects. It is not uncommon for there to be multiple planners of the learning efforts of adults. If this is the case with your learning, please so

indicate.

(Record the learning planners as they are stated).

Learning Motivation

In researching the learning of adults, it is important to know why adults learn. I want to consider the topic of reasons for learning in this section and would ask you to ponder the motivations which prompted the initiation of your learning projects. Looking at the projects, what caused you to want to learn about (state the project)? Do you remember if there was a single reason or several reasons that lead you to initiate this learning effort? Was there a specific incident that triggered a desire to learn about (the project)?

(Record the reasons for learning as they are stated).

Time Spent Learning

The last component of your learning that I would like to explore is the time that you spent on the projects. I realize that this is not an easy task, but the information is necessary for an accurate understanding of the extent of lay ministers' learning.

In your estimate, please include all the time you spent reading, listening, talking, observing, and performing that was devoted to the

acquisition of knowledge, the development of a new skill, or the refinement of an existing skill. Do not limit your calculations to the activities of learning only but include the hours expended in preparing for the learning, arranging the details, deciding where to go for assistance, traveling to the site, obtaining the required material, etc.

Of course, you probably will not be able to recall the exact amount of time you spent on every project. Please do, however, give the attempt an honest effort. Adults are seldom free to spend consecutive, uninterupted hours on their learning projects. Instead, they are usually faced with fitting their learning into and around the many events and demands of life. Your estimate will obviously be tempered by this reality. However, please think in terms of whole hours in arriving at the desired figures.

(Record the hours spent on the learning projects as they are stated).

Open-Ended Questions

At this point, I would like to give you the opportunity to talk about your learning. Are there any statements or comments that you would like to make?

Do you think of yourself as a learner? Is learning important in your life?

Has your concern for learning changed over the last five years? Have certain events triggered your learning?

Do you feel that you have learning needs that have not been met? Do you have any long range learning goals?

Thank you for your cooperation. Your responses will contribute significantly to a better understanding of the nature and extent of lay ministers' learning. The final thing I wish to do is gather some demographic data that will further enhance my study and its purposes.

Demographic Data

V1. Education (number of years of formal schooling)

V2. Ethnic affiliation

V3. Marital status

V4. Ministerial status

age ordained

ordained parent

V5. Place of residence

city

rural area

small town

V7. Years of membership

Probe Sheet 1

Things People Learn

... a sport or game, jogging, swimming, tennis, golf, team sports, coaching, card playing

... current events, public affairs, peace, world political developments, biographies of famous people

... educational practices, educational organizations, unions, special education, retarded citizens

... a hobby or craft, collecting something, coins, stamps, photography, sewing, kniting

... home repairs, woodworking, home improvement projects, decorating, furniture restoration

... civic activities, service clubs and organizations, fund raising

... reading, libraries, writing, Great Books, authors, story telling

... raising children, discipline, infant care, childrens' education

... automobiles, automotive maintenance, restoring cars

... nature, bird watching, agriculture, animal husbandry, beekeeping, showing dogs, horses

... water sports, power boating, sailing, canoeing, water skiing

... history, historical and genealogical societies, living history, reenactments

... speed reading, effective writing, public speaking, vocabulary, literature

... model building, trains, planes, cars, rockets, remote controlled devices

... science, astronomy, people-in-space, planetariums, biology, museums

... teaching and learning, preparing to teach, curriculum development, adult learning

... health, physical fitness, nutrition, personal appearance, losing weight, food co-ops

... retirement, A.A.R.P., retirement planning, senior centers

... geography, travel, neighborhood groups, Crime Watch

... leadership development, how to be a more effective leader, working with people, volunteers

... government, local, state, national, lobbies, city council, school board, county commissioners, political parties

... hunting, fishing, enviornmental affairs, conservation clubs

... personal finances, savings, insurance, investing, stock market

... personal improvement, positive relationships, time management, stress management, stopping smoking

... psychology, counseling, developing interpersonal skills, group dynamics, group leadership

... community development, economic development, race relations

... mental health, solving personal or emotional problems

... careers, changing jobs

... outdoor activities, camping, hiking, snow skiing, backpacking, skating, bicycling

... gardening, landscaping, canning vegetables, 4-H Clubs, county and state fairs

... computers, office and personal computers, programming

... music, instrumental, vocal, opera, musical societies, music appreciation, song writing

... religious thought, theology, ethics, moral behavior, philosophy, religious history

... drama, community players, theater, play writing

... futurism, changes in society, families, cities, technology

... labor issues, negotiating strategies, job creation, job training

... relations with the opposite sex, dating, manners, marriage enrichment

... military societies, war gaming, military history, strategy, active duty and reserve affairs

... the arts, painting, architecture, pottery, poetry, arts organizations

... supervising people, running an office, hiring, firing, managing fiscal affairs, material management, quality control

... medical issues, hospice, health fairs, arthritis, cancer

... languages, French, Spanish, German, English

Probe Sheet 2

Additional Things People Learn

Can you recall any efforts to learn that were related to your home or family life, hobbies or recreation, job, membership in organizations, clubs, or committees? Can you remember attempting any learning that involved teaching, writing, or research related to your church affiliation.

Do you remember any instances when you tried to learn something by reading a journal, book, newspaper, or magazine article? Have you tried to gain knowledge by referring to booklets, pamphlets, or brochures? Have memos, letters, written instructions, or blueprints been important in furthering your learning? Have you sought material from libraries, referred to workbooks, consulted encyclopedias, or utilized some form of programmed instruction.

In your learning, have you sought assistance from a private teacher or tutor, a counselor or therapist, a financial advisor, a coach, another lay minister, a professional minister? Have your efforts to learn been aided by documentaries, courses or special programs on public, cable, or instructional television? Finally, have you intentionally sought to learn by attending a lecture series, fostering a relationship with a mentor, or associating with stimulating individuals?

Probe Sheet 3

Learning Planners

Research has determined that there are five primary types of planners of adult learning. Learning planners make the day-to-day decisions regarding the topics, methods, and time expended on learning projects. The five types of planners are outlined below. Which ones were used in your learning projects?

1. Group - You may have decided to attend a class, conference, seminar, self-help group, or some other type of learning activity of a collective nature. In such a learning experience, the group or its teacher, facilitator, or leader makes the decisions on the details of the learning.

2. Professional/peer - Some of your learning efforts may have been directed by a person who interacted with you in a one-to-one relationship. In this type of situation, there would have been one learner - you - and one instructor - a friend, an advisor, or an expert. The interaction would have been between you and the instructor directly, face-to-face, or indirectly by phone, correspondence, or through an audio/video source.

3. Self - Other learning projects may have been self-planned by you. If you were the one who had primary responsibility for the day-to-day planning and decision making, your were self-planning your learning. You may have gotten adivce from other people and have used a

variety of materials, but you actually decided what to learn, when to learn, what activities to do, and what resources to use.

4. Object - An object as planner means that the director of one's learning was something other than person. A nonhuman resource or an object controlled the environment, content, and methodology of the learning. Examples of nonhuman resources include: sets of recordings, a series of television programs, programmed instruction materials, workbooks, language labs, computer tutorials, etc.

5. Mixed - The last planner involves a combination of the previous four. In your learning, you may have had experiences with not just one but several different types of planners. Remember the definition of a learning planner mentioned earlier, someone or something which daily makes the majority of the decisions regarding the learning. Did any of your projects involve a mixture of planners?

APPENDIX C

Phase 2: Data Summary and Questionnaire

Cover Letter

March 8, 1990

Mr. _____ _____
street address
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Dear Mr. _____,

During our interview, I said I would send you a summary of the data from all 24 interviews and ask you to react to it. Here it is!

As you can see, the data is arranged in tables. Attached to each table is a cover sheet which explains how the data is presented and contains questions for you to respond to. You may write your observations on the cover sheets, detach them, and return them to me in the envelope provided. Feel free to use your own paper, just be sure to identify what you are responding to.

I want to thank you again for your kind assistance. If you could get your comments to me within a week, I would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

John W. Noren

Learning Projects

In this table, the number of learning projects conducted and the time spent on them during the last 12 months are reported. Four men and four women were interviewed from three age groups - under 40, 40 - 60, over 60. Projects and related hours are listed for each individual, as are the mean or average number of projects and hours. Age group, gender, and overall totals are also provided.

lay minister - A person who occupies a recognized leadership position in a religious denomination but is not a member of the full-time, professional clergy.

learning project - A major, highly deliberate effort of meaningful learning at least seven hours in length that has as its objective the gaining or retaining of a skill or certain knowledge.

Questions -

1. What is your reaction to the number of learning projects completed by lay ministers? number of hours spent on the learning?

2. What do these figures tell you about the learning activities of male and female lay ministers? the three different age groups?

3. Other comments and observations?

Learning Projects of Adult Lay Ministers by Age, Gender, and Time Spent

(N=24)

	Male			Female			Totals	
	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Projects	Hours
Under 40	1	4	624	13	5	266		
	2	11	672	14	12	823		
	3	8	338	15	11	417		
	4	9	922	16	7	418		
		32	2556		35	1924	67	4480
	Mean	8	639		8.8	481	8.4	560
			79.9			55.0		66.9
40 - 60	5	9	538	17	10	1922		
	6	17	1287	18	17	2023		
	7	15	1715	19	34	1864		
	8	16	711	20	16	1466		
		57	4251		77	7275	134	11526
	Mean	14.3	1062.8		20	1818.8	16.8	1440.8
			74.6			94.5		86.0
Over 60	9	8	646	21	8	1268		
	10	5	1095	22	6	934		
	11	12	1139	23	12	826		
	12	9	1481	24	8	1432		
		34	4361		34	4460	68	8821
	Mean	8.5	1090.3		8.5	1115	8.5	1102.6
			128.3			131.2		129.7
Totals		123	11168		146	13659	269	24827
	Mean	10.3	930.7		12.2	1138.3	11.2	1034.5
			90.8			93.6		92.3

Church-Related Learning Projects

This table is similar to the one on learning projects except that only church-related projects are considered. The number of church-related learning projects and accompanying hours are presented for each male and female interviewee. Mean numbers of projects and hours are displayed along with totals for the gender and age categories.

Questions -

1. What is your reaction to the number of church-related learning projects completed by lay ministers? number of hours spent on the projects?

2. Comparing the figures on church-related and total projects (previous table), what observations would you make? What influence does gender have on church-related learning? age?

3. Other comments and reactions?

Church-Related Learning Projects of Adult Lay Ministers by Age, Gender, and Time Spent (N=24)

		Male			Female		Totals	
	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Subject #	Projects	Hours	Projects	Hours
Under 40	1	2	274	13	5	266		
	2	3	65	14	7	754		
	3	2	55	15	8	316		
	4	3	142	16	1	150		
		10	536		21	1486	31	2022
	Mean	2.5	134		5.3	371.5	3.9	252.8
			53.6			70.8		65.2
40 - 60	5	5	425	17	5	392		
	6	3	370	18	9	320		
	7	10	1278	19	14	1058		
	8	7	102	20	7	841		
		25	2175		35	2611	60	4786
	Mean	6.3	543.8		8.8	652.8	7.5	598.3
			87			74.6		79.8
Over 60	9	5	236	21	6	920		
	10	2	438	22	5	834		
	11	9	704	23	8	418		
	12	7	266	24	2	534		
		23	1644		21	2706		
	Mean	5.8	411		5.3	676.5	44	4350
			71.4			128.9	5.5	98.9
Totals		58	4355		77	6803	135	11158
	Mean	4.8	362.9		6.4	566.9	5.6	464.9
			75.1			88.3		82.7

Learning Resources

This table contains data on the learning resources employed by lay ministers. A learning resource is the aid or provider of subject matter used in the conduct of a learning project. Resources are typically classified as human or nonhuman. Human resources include: peers or colleagues (friends, co-workers, neighbors, family members, etc.); professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers, ministers, financial consultants, etc.); and people who provide a message through some type of medium (artists, musicians, actors, film makers, etc.). Nonhuman resources consist of books, magazines, newspapers, manuals, and other printed material. The category also includes television, radio, video and audio cassettes, exhibits, films, computers, etc. It is common for adults to utilize a combination of human and nonhuman resources in their learning.

The number of resources employed by each interviewee is displayed in the table. Resources are further classified as human or nonhuman and the mean number of resources per gender, age group, and overall is determined.

Questions -

1. What does the data tell you about the resources lay ministers employ in their learning?

2. Are you surprised by the data? Why or why not?

3. Other remarks?

Learning Resources of Adult Lay Ministers by Age and Gender (N=24)

	Male			Female			Totals	
	Subject #	Resources	H/NH	Subject #	Resources	H/NH	Resources	H/NH
Under 40	1	12	3/9	13	13	5/8		
	2	44	15/29	14	38	17/21		
	3	29	15/14	15	32	19/13		
	4	21	12/9	16	26	11/15		
		106	45/61		109	52/57	215	97/118
	Mean	26	11/15		27	13/14	27	12/15
		3.3	43%/57%		3.1	48%/52%	3.2	45%/55%
40 - 60	5	27	9/18	17	37	14/23		
	6	60	25/35	18	58	24/34		
	7	39	18/21	19	120	50/70		
	8	40	12/28	20	47	17/30		
		166	64/102		262	105/157	428	169/259
	Mean	42	16/26		65	26/39	53	21/32
		2.9	39%/61%		3.4	40%/60%	3.2	40%/60%
Over 60	9	14	6/8	21	22	12/10		
	10	26	10/16	22	17	7/10		
	11	37	17/20	23	39	14/25		
	12	21	2/19	24	46	17/29		
		98	35/63		124	50/74	222	85/137
	Mean	25	9/16		31	13/18	28	11/17
		2.9	36%/64%		3.6	40%/60%	3.3	38%/62%
Totals		370	144/226		495	207/288	865	351/514
	Mean	31	12/19		41	17/24	36	15/21
		3.0	39%/61%		3.4	42%/58%	3.2	41%/59%

Note. H = human resources, NH = nonhuman resources.

Learning Planners

Data on the planners of interviewees' learning projects are presented in this table. A learning planner is the person or thing responsible for deciding what is learned and how the learning takes place. It is generally accepted that there are two types of learning planners, human and nonhuman. Human planners are people, while nonhuman planners are objects or devices (audio or video cassettes, programmed instruction booklets, self-teaching computer programs, etc.).

Within the human planners classification are three categories:

1. group - a traditional class lead by an instructor or facilitator, or a number of peers who come together and make decisions among themselves on the content and methodology of their learning,
2. professional/peer - learning directed by a person other than the learner generally in a one-to-one or close personal relationship,
3. self - the learner decides himself or herself what is to be learned and how the learning is to occur.

The number of projects planned by each of the five planners is reported in the table. The unique aspect of the data is that percentages for the planners are also presented.

Questions -

1. What does this information tell you about the planners of lay ministers' learning activities?

2. Do educational programs of the R.L.D.S. Church acknowledge that these planners are responsible for directing the learning of their lay ministers? Explain your answer.

3. Other reactions?

Learning Planners of Adult Lay Ministers by Number and Percentage of Learning Projects

		Male		Female		Totals	
	Planners	Projects	(%)	Projects	(%)	Projects	(%)
Under 40	group	7	(21.9)	13	(37.2)	20	(29.9)
	prof/peers	8	(25.0)	9	(25.7)	17	(25.4)
	self	13	(40.6)	11	(31.4)	24	(35.8)
	mixed	3	(9.4)	2	(5.7)	5	(7.5)
	object	1	(3.1)	0	(0.0)	1	(1.4)
		32	(100.0)	35	(100.0)	67	(100.0)
40 - 60	group	17	(29.8)	29	(37.7)	46	(34.3)
	prof/peers	12	(21.1)	16	(20.8)	28	(20.9)
	self	24	(42.1)	24	(31.1)	48	(35.8)
	mixed	4	(7.0)	8	(10.3)	12	(9.0)
	object	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
		57	(100.0)	77	(100.0)	134	(100.0)
Over 60	group	6	(17.6)	12	(35.3)	18	(26.5)
	prof/peers	7	(20.6)	4	(11.8)	11	(16.2)
	self	18	(52.9)	17	(50.0)	35	(51.5)
	mixed	3	(8.9)	1	(2.9)	4	(5.8)
	object	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
		34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	68	(100.0)
Totals	group	30	(24.4)	54	(37.0)	84	(31.2)
	prof/peers	27	(22.0)	29	(19.9)	56	(20.8)
	self	55	(44.8)	52	(35.6)	107	(39.8)
	mixed	10	(8.0)	11	(7.5)	21	(7.8)
	object	1	(.8)	0	(0.0)	1	(.4)
		123	(100.0)	146	(100.0)	269	(100.0)

Reasons for Learning

Displayed on this page are reasons given by interviewees for engaging in learning projects. Reasons are listed in order by numbers of learning projects. For example, "Learn how to be more effective in my ministry" was stated as the motivation for learning in 47 projects.

Questions -

1. What does this information reveal about the motivations lay ministers have for initiating learning projects?

2. Do women seem to have different reasons for learning than men? Why or why not?

3. Would you describe lay ministers' motivations as arising from external forces, internal feelings, or some combination? Please explain.

4. Other comments?

Reasons for Learning of Adult Lay Ministers by Number and Percentage of Learning Projects and Gender

Reasons	Total	(%)	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
"Learn how to be more effective in my ministry"	47	(17.8)	30	(20.5)	17	(14.4)
Enjoyment, stimulation, self-expression	29	(11.0)	15	(10.3)	14	(11.9)
Family concerns (spouse, children, marriage, school, etc.)	26	(9.9)	14	(9.6)	12	(10.2)
Opportunity to minister to people, "Share the Good News of the Gospel"	17	(6.4)	7	(4.8)	10	(8.5)
"Required by my employer" (involuntary participation)	17	(6.4)	8	(5.5)	9	(7.6)
"Increase my effectivenss on the job" (voluntary participation)	17	(6.4)	11	(7.5)	6	(5.1)
Was asked, sense of duty	16	(6.1)	10	(6.9)	6	(5.1)
Want to help people	12	(4.6)	3	(2.1)	9	(7.6)
Keep abreast of the teachings and programs of the church	10	(3.8)	7	(4.8)	3	(2.5)
Health concerns (nutrition, weight, illness, etc.)	10	(3.8)	8	(5.5)	2	(1.8)
Curiosity, sounded interesting	10	(3.8)	5	(3.4)	5	(4.2)
Wanted to support a worthwhile cause, community service	8	(3.0)	4	(2.7)	4	(3.4)
Learn skills which have wide application (home, church, work)	7	(2.7)	4	(2.7)	3	(2.5)
"Help me grow spiritually"	5	(1.9)	4	(2.7)	1	(0.9)
Sense of accomplishment, challenge	5	(1.9)	2	(1.4)	3	(2.5)
Home concerns (repair, remodeling, cars, etc.)	5	(1.9)	1	(0.7)	4	(3.4)
Keep informed about world events	5	(1.9)	1	(0.7)	4	(3.4)
Financial concerns (retirement, investing, etc.)	4	(1.5)	1	(0.7)	3	(2.5)
Required in order to be ordained	4	(1.5)	4	(2.7)	0	(0.0)
Earn college credit	4	(1.5)	4	(2.7)	0	(0.0)
Improve the practices of the church	3	(1.1)	3	(2.1)	0	(0.0)
Social interaction	3	(1.1)	0	(0.0)	3	(2.5)
Total	264	(100.0)	146	(100.0)	118	(100.0)

Note. The 24 lay ministers conducted 269 learning projects, but the total in Table 8 is 264. The table is short five projects because one of the participants refused to allow his reasons for learning to be described in "traditional terms." The individual stated that his learning was "cross-disciplined and ecumenical" and he was seeking a "broader perspective of truth which was independent of institutional teachings."

General Questions

1. Based on the information in the tables, what recommendations would you make to officials of the R.L.D.S. Church who are responsible for developing educational programs for lay ministers?

2. What recommendations would you offer based on your personal experiences?

3. Are there specific learning needs that are not being addressed by current programs? How would you suggest these needs by met?

4. Do you have additional comments that you would like to make?

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