

PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING A PILOT PROJECT AND STUDY IN ADULT EDUCATION IN  
THE CHURCH: APPLICATION OF PAULO FREIRE'S APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION IN THE  
CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

Donald C. Thompson



## 1. NEED

Throughout its history, the church has been concerned for those in need. In our time, there is unprecedented stress that covers all races and economic backgrounds. In the United States we see a people in the grips of future shock (the term popularized by Alan Toffler in his book Future Shock). Future Shock means people experience constant change at an increasing rate of acceleration in almost all areas of life. This is also called rootlessness, powerlessness, and radical insecurity. It was described by one person in this way, "The sky is constantly falling in!" These are some of the areas that are constantly shifting for persons: jobs and vocations, marriage, family and single status, economic struggles, military to civilian life, welfare to non-welfare status, national traumas, and other individual life style shifts. This is a problem that pervades all persons in all areas of life.

In the reality of future shock, many persons act out of paradigms, unconscious images which have become life patterns, which are out of phase with current realities. Many of these paradigms were developed in the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries in completely different worlds. Two common patterns of response emerge in the reality of future shock; (1) rigid resistance to the newer realities - at all costs, and (2) giving up in hopeless frustration. Persons grasp various "solutions", many of which fail, and add to the sense of frustration. In the face of future shock, traditional educational styles within the church seem of little help. This is where the approach of Paulo Freire comes as a bridge over troubled waters.

## 1.2 PROBLEM

The problem is to assess in what ways and to what extent Paulo Freire's approach can offer help to the adult education in the church in the United States, facing future shock. Paul Tillich in Shaking the Foundations, pointed out that sin is separation from ourselves, others, including the world, and God. This state of separation is illustrated in forms of future shock. How, in the midst of separation, we operate out of past paradigms is shown by Edwin O. Reischauer in how we teach history (LA Times, 10/19/73, Part II, P.7, "Edwin O. Reischauer Says In Education We Need World View of Things.").



s accurate and (2) United States church educators can begin to employ Freire's approach of conscientization. The goal of the project is closely related to the purpose.

## 2.1 GOAL

The goal of the project is to carry out the purpose of the project through sampling a diverse variety of adults in the Los Angeles Area. If possible, the project will include Latin-Americans, Chicanos, Blacks, Native Americans and whites displaced from jobs. In the project, church, adult learning groups, community organizations and public school adult education programs will be sampled. All of these adults and organizations are facing future shock.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES

The project will: 1. Verify the need assessment of this proposal through a special sampling process developed by Dexter called elite interviewing;

2. Aided by the input of the interviewing, select an adult learning group and a structure of the study with which to assess the possibilities of applying Freire's approach;

3. Conduct field interviewing in the dimensional sampling approach of Arnold and dialogue in Freire's style in the learning group;

and, 4. Record and evaluate the results of the interviews and the learning group. The importance of the project becomes apparent.

## 3.1 IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Toffler, Reischauer, and Freire name future shock as a major problem of today. At the same time, these men and others point out that traditional educational styles in churches do little in relating to future shock. Minority persons and women name this problem. The church in its educational programs can gain a great deal if we begin to face this problem and make recommendations for ways to proceed in United States adult education programs in churches.



### 3.2 LIMITATIONS

This is an exploratory study in the two areas of purpose named previously. It is a pilot program in those areas. It is only designed to assess the possibilities of Freire's approach. It is a beginning to assess these possibilities, not a definitive answer on how Freire's approach will work in a variety of situations in the United States.

### 3.3 RATIONALE

Freire's approach has been valuable in other countries; the rationale of the study (Naturalistic Research) is to conduct field interviews of a diverse sample within the Los Angeles area in order to assess the possibilities of applying Freire's approach in the United States. The pilot program is an attempt to apply Freire's approach in one setting, also in Los Angeles.

### 4.1 DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

As described earlier, we will begin with (1) elite interviewing of the diverse sample, clarifying the need and gaining suggestions for proceeding. Then we proceed to (2) selecting an adult learning group and finalizing the structure of the study for assessing Freire's approach to church education structures. (3) The design includes field interviewing on a dimensional sampling basis and applying Freire's dialogue style in a learning group in the church. (4) From the interviewing and the learning group, we tabulate the results and make recommendations.

### 4.2 POPULATION

The universe of need includes adults from the Los Angeles area. If possible, it will include Latin-Americans, Chicanos, Blacks, Native Americans, and whites experiencing displacement. It includes persons from a variety of adult learning structures, church adult learning groups, colleges and/or public schools with adult education programs, and community organizations with training programs.



### 3 SAMPLE

With the dimensional sampling process, we will interview typical clergy persons, teachers, administrators, students and politicians in relation to the previously named organizations.

### 4.4 GENERALIZABILITY

Since this is an empirical study with a dimensional sampling technique of a diverse sample, we can secure a cross section of people in order to make valid generalizations concerning the need assessment and the program possibilities through the adult learning group.

### 5.0 HYPOTHESES

5.1. There is a high level of need, due to changes in life in the face of future shock, for new approaches to dealing with future shock.

5.2. Most adult learning programs in the church and in the other structures named, operate out of the "empty vessel" or "banking" models of education.

5.3. The population is open to the church and other adult learning structures facilitating the process of creating together models for facing future shock.

5.4. Some clergy persons, teachers, administrators, community leaders, and politicians are attempting to create new educational models for coping with change.

### 6.0 VARIABLES

#### 6.1 Intervening Variables

The three educational approaches are Variables:

a. The traditional educational approaches of the "empty vessel" and/or the "banking" models;

b. Educational approaches that incorporate variations on the traditional approaches, such as urban training centers, but basically maintain traditional educational models; and

c. Early forms of radical approaches, such as Ivan Illich's "Deschooling"



## 6.2 Force Field

### A. Pressures on Adults

1. Provide, procure, and protect
2. Previous education (of mine) is obsolete
3. Getting older
4. Caught in my own oppressive patterns and within oppressive structures
5. Paradigms operate within me to block moving to new ways
6. That which was important for me: vocation, marriage, religious understanding; is no longer for me

## 6.3 Dependent Variable

The outputs shown in cognitive (mind), affective (values), and motor (behavior) skills in relation to the adult education approaches named previously.

## 6.4 Independent Variable

The inputs and transactions in cognitive, affective and motor skills in relation to the different adult educational approaches named previously.

### B. Possibilities with Adults

1. New jobs and new ways of providing
2. New content and processes of education emerging constantly
3. More conscious about the meaning of past experience
4. Can decide on new patterns and new structures which are more human
5. New life emerges daily and can be appropriated
6. New vocation, relationships, and religious understandings are mine.





11 SEP. 1974

STUDENT COUNSELING CENTER  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

29 August 1974

Dr. Will Kennedy  
World Council of Churches Office  
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Will

I am sending this letter to introduce and recommend Rev. Don Thompson, a colleague and a friend.

I believe Don's proposal is worthy of consideration for funding. I have known and admired Paulo Freire and his work, and I believe that any serious attempt to implement his methodology should receive strong support.

Will, I know you are interested in this; I also realize these are very difficult days, budget-wise, but if there is any way you can help, it would be great. I know this is a worthwhile project and Don is a very committed man. Our Hispanic American people in the U.S. are a central focus, but this project--as you'll realize after reading the whole proposal--intends to work with several kinds of people.

Wish you were around for some tennis!!

As always

Ignacio Castuera  
Counseling Psychologist



# BUDGET

COORDINATOR	\$10,000
CONSULTANT, Contacting churches and colleges	2,500
CONSULTANTS (2), Contacting community persons	5,000
CLERK TYPIST	2,500
SUPPLIES	500
TRAVEL	1,000
OFFICE AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT will be needed; it is projected that this can be donated; if this does not happen, a budget item will need to be added for this	0
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	\$21,500.

## STRUCTURE OF PROJECT

