

## Important Areas, Proponents and Approaches of Human Development

### I. Definition of Human Development

“Human development is the science that seeks to understand how and why people change, and how and why they remain the same, as they grow older. In pursuing this goal, the researcher examines whatever kind of change is found, simple growth, radical transformation, improvement, and decline or whatever element stays the same, providing continuity from day to day, year to year, or generation to generation. This science not only includes all periods of life but also takes a life-span perspective on all phases of life, including childhood (Berger, 2001).

Development is defined as the expected growth of a person over time (Anthony, 2001). Development therefore, is multidimensional, with various pathways, which have both individual and social dimensions that are constantly changing.

### II. Some researchers see six domains of human development

- A. Physical
- B. Cognitive
- C. Social
- D. Affective
- E. Moral
- F. Spiritual

### Some other see three domains of human development

- A. Biosocial
- B. Cognitive
- C. Psychosocial

### III. Physical, biological Development

The physical development has been seen as stages of growth. These are as follows:

**Stage 1: *Infant and Toddler (Ages 0 -2)*.** During the first twelve to eighteen months of life, changes in physical growth and motor development are rapid. The infant's birth-weight doubles by the fourth or fifth month and length will increase ten to twelve inches by age one. By age 2 the toddler already half of the height he/she will be as an adult.

**Stage 2: *Preschool (Ages 3-6)*.** Growth remains fairly constant during this period. Neuromuscular development is becoming more coordinated and when not sleeping, preschoolers are constantly running, climbing, and jumping.

**Stage 3: *Primary/Middler (Ages 6-9)*.** Growth is slow and steady until the next spurt between the ages of 10 and 12. As the shape of the body changes to assume a more adult-like contour, girls tend to be almost two years ahead of boys in height and weight. Children are increasing in strength and in the coordination of fine motor skills.

**Stage 4: Junior/Preteen, Early Adolescence (Ages 10-12).** Depending on the onset of puberty, this stage of development could exhibit almost no growth or rapid growth in the extreme. Puberty brings growth spurts for girls sometimes between 10 and 12 years of age. (Anthony, p.123, 124).

**Stage 5: Adolescence (Ages 12 to mid-twenties).** Adolescence experience is marked by overwhelming transitions. The onset of puberty affects students physically, socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. There are a lot of hormonal changes that affect not only the physical development but also the entire developmental process (Anthony, 2001, p.24)

**Stage 6: Adult.** Experts dispute the point at which adulthood begins. Cyril Houle (1976) defines an adult in the learning enterprise as “a person (man or woman) who has achieved full physical development and who expects to have the right to participate as a responsible homemaker, worker, and member of society (Anthony, 2001)

#### **IV. Cognitive/ Perceptual Development**

**Jean Piaget** (1896–1980) is considered the authority of this theory. “A genius for empathy with children, together with true intellectual genius, has made him the outstanding child psychologist in the world today.” He made discoveries of children’s implicit philosophies, the construction of reality by the infant and the stages of mental development have altered our ways of thinking about human intelligence. It is by the 1950 s that his ideas are integrated into the American psychology.

*He proposes that intelligence – adaptive thinking and action – develops in a sequence of stages that is related to age. Each stage sees the elaboration of new mental abilities which set the limits and determine the character of what can be learned during that period (Kilbride, 1976).*

#### **Piaget’s Stages of Development of Intelligence**

##### **Stage 1: Sensory-motor period (0 – 2 years of age)**

It is concerned with the evolution of the abilities necessary to construct and reconstruct objects. The reasoning during this time is accomplished without the aid of language and by means of mental images.

##### **Stage 2: The preoperational stage (2 – 7 years of age)**

In this stage the child develops the ability to give meaning to symbols. The presence of new ability is shown by the gradual acquisition of language. During this time occurs the first indication of dreams and night terrors. By the end of this period the child can clearly distinguish between words and symbols and what they represent.

##### **Stage 3: Concrete operational (7 – 11 years of age)**

The child can now do “in his head” what before he would have had to accomplish through real actions. The child now can think about things. Abstract thinking is starting to develop in their minds.

*Thinking about thinking*

#### **Stage 4: (last) Formal operational (12 – 15 years of age)**

In this stage it permits adolescents to think about their thoughts, construct ideals and to reason realistically about the future. Formal operations also enable young people to reason about contrary-to-fact propositions. No new mental systems emerge after the formal operations, which are the common coin of adult thought. After adolescence, mental growth takes the form – it is hoped – of a gradual increase in wisdom.

#### **Piaget's goal of education:**

"The principal goal of education," he once said, "is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done—men who are creative, inventive and discoverers. The second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered. The great danger today is of slogans, collective opinions, ready-made trends of thought. We have to be able to resist individually, to criticize, to distinguish between what is proven and what is not. So we need pupils who are active, who learn early to find out by themselves, partly by their own spontaneous activity and partly through materials we set up for them; who learn early to tell what is verifiable and what is simply the first idea to come to them."

### **V. Social and Emotional Development**

#### **Stages of Psychological Development According to Erik Erikson (1902 – 1994)**

For Erikson babies are born with some basic capabilities and distinct temperaments. But they go through dramatic changes on the way to adulthood, and while growing old. According to psychologist Erik Erikson, each individual passes through eight developmental stages (Erikson calls them "psychosocial stages"). Each stage is characterized by a different psychological "crisis", which must be resolved by the individual before the individual can move on to the next stage. If the person copes with a particular crisis in a maladaptive manner, the outcome will be more struggles with that issue later in life. To Erikson, the sequence of the stages are set by nature. It is within the set limits that nurture works its ways.

#### **Stage 1: Infancy -- Age 0 to 1**

**Crisis:** Trust vs. Mistrust

**Description:** In the first year of life, infants depend on others for food, warmth, and affection, and therefore must be able to blindly trust the parents (or caregivers) for providing those.

**Positive outcome:** If their needs are met consistently and responsively by the parents, infants not only will develop a secure attachment with the parents, but will learn to trust their environment in general as well.

**Negative outcome:** If not, infant will develop mistrust towards people and things in their environment, even towards themselves.

## **Stage 2: Toddler -- Age 1 to 2**

**Crisis:** Autonomy (Independence) vs. Doubt (or Shame)

**Description:** Toddlers learn to walk, talk, use toilets, and do things for themselves. Their self-control and self-confidence begin to develop at this stage.

**Positive outcome:** If parents encourage their child's use of initiative and reassure her when she makes mistakes, the child will develop the confidence needed to cope with future situations that require choice, control, and independence.

**Negative outcome:** If parents are overprotective, or disapproving of the child's acts of independence, she may begin to feel ashamed of her behavior, or have too much doubt of her abilities.

## **Stage 3: Early Childhood -- Age 2 to 6**

**Crisis:** Initiative vs. Guilt

**Description:** Children have newfound power at this stage as they have developed motor skills and become more and more engaged in social interaction with people around them. They now must learn to achieve a balance between eagerness for more adventure and more responsibility, and learning to control impulses and childish fantasies.

**Positive outcome:** If parents are encouraging, but consistent in discipline, children will learn to accept without guilt, that certain things are not allowed, but at the same time will not feel shame when using their imagination and engaging in make-believe role plays.

**Negative outcome:** If not, children may develop a sense of guilt and may come to believe that it is wrong to be independent.

## **Stage 4: Elementary and Middle School Years -- Age 6 to 12**

**Crisis:** Competence ("Industry") vs. Inferiority

**Description:** School is the important event at this stage. Children learn to make things, use tools, and acquire the skills to be a worker and a potential provider. And they do all these while making the transition from the world of home into the world of peers.

**Positive outcome:** If children can discover pleasure in intellectual stimulation, being productive, seeking success, they will develop a sense of competence.

**Negative outcome:** If not, they will develop a sense of inferiority.

## **Stage 5: Adolescence -- Age 12 to 18**

**Crisis:** Identity vs. Role Confusion

**Description:** This is the time when we ask the question "Who am I?" To successfully answer this question, Erikson suggests, the adolescent must integrate the healthy resolution of all earlier conflicts. Did we develop the basic sense of trust? Do we have a strong sense of independence, competence, and feel in control of our lives? Adolescents who have successfully dealt with earlier conflicts are

ready for the "Identity Crisis", which is considered by Erikson as the single most significant conflict a person must face.

**Positive outcome:** If the adolescent solves this conflict successfully, he will come out of this stage with a strong identity, and ready to plan for the future.

**Negative outcome:** If not, the adolescent will sink into confusion, unable to make decisions and choices, especially about vocation, sexual orientation, and his role in life in general.

#### **Stage 6: Young Adulthood -- Age 19 to 40**

**Crisis:** Intimacy vs. Isolation

**Description:** In this stage, the most important events are love relationships. No matter how successful you are with your work, said Erikson, you are not developmentally complete until you are capable of intimacy. An individual who has not developed a sense of identity usually will fear a committed relationship and may retreat into isolation.

**Positive outcome:** Adult individuals can form close relationships and share with others if they have achieved a sense of identity.

**Negative outcome:** If not, they will fear commitment, feel isolated and unable to depend on anybody in the world.

#### **Stage 7: Middle Adulthood -- Age 40 to 65**

**Crisis:** Generativity vs. Stagnation

**Description:** By "generativity" Erikson refers to the adult's ability to look outside oneself and care for others, through parenting, for instance. Erikson suggested that adults need children as much as children need adults, and that this stage reflects the need to create a living legacy.

**Positive outcome:** People can solve this crisis by having and nurturing children, or helping the next generation in other ways.

**Negative outcome:** If this crisis is not successfully resolved, the person will remain self-centered and experience stagnation later in life.

#### **Stage 8: Late Adulthood -- Age 65 to death**

**Crisis:** Integrity vs. Despair Important

**Description:** Old age is a time for reflecting upon one's own life and its role in the big scheme of things, and seeing it filled with pleasure and satisfaction or disappointments and failures.

**Positive outcome:** If the adult has achieved a sense of fulfillment about life and a sense of unity within himself and with others, he will accept death with a sense of integrity. Just as the healthy child will not fear life, said Erikson, the healthy adult will not fear death.

**Negative outcome:** If not, the individual will despair and fear death.

(<http://psychology.about.com/library/weekly/aa091500b.htm>)

## VI. Moral Development

Kohlberg was the director of the Center for Moral Education, graduate School of Education at Harvard University.

### A. Moral Stages

“A moral choice involves choosing between two (or more) values as they *conflict* in concrete situations of choice.

“Moral judgment is defined as:

- 1) What he finds valuable in each of these moral issues (life, law)
- 2) Why he finds it valuable, the reasons he gives for valuing it.

“The aim of education is growth or *development*, both intellectual and moral. Ethical and psychological principles can aid the school in the *greatest of all constructions – the building of a free and powerful character*. Only knowledge of the *order and connection of the stages in psychological development can insure this*. Education is the work of *supplying the conditions* which will enable the psychological functions to mature in the freest and fullest manner. (Kilbride, 77, p.157)

Dewey’s thinking about moral stages was theoretical. He built upon his prior studies of cognitive stages of **Jean Piaget** who made the first effort to define stages of moral reasoning in children through actual interviews and through observation of children.

Dewey postulated three levels of moral development:

- 1) the *pre-moral or pre-conventional* level of behavior.
- 2) the *conventional* level of behavior.
- 3) the *autonomous* level of behavior.

### Kohlberg’s 6 Moral stages are based on Piaget’s and Dewey’s Moral Stages

#### A. Pre-conventional level

**Stage 1:** *The punishment-and-obedience orientation*. The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness, regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences.

**Stage 2:** *The instrumental-relativist orientation*. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one’s own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Reciprocity is a matter of “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours,” not of loyalty, gratitude, or justice.

#### B. Conventional level

**Stage 3:** *The interpersonal concordance or “good boy – nice girl” orientation*. Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them. Behavior is frequently judged by intention – “he means well” becomes important for the first time. One earns approval by being “nice.”

**Stage 4:** *The “law and order” orientation*. There is orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order. Right behavior consists of

doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.

### C. Post-conventional, autonomous, or principled level

**Stage 5:** *The social-contract, legalistic orientation.* Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society.

**Stage 6:** *The universal-ethical-principle orientation.* Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical (the Golden Rule, the categorical imperative); they are not concrete moral rules like the Ten Commandments. At heart, these are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of human rights, and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons ("From is to Ought," pp.164, 165).

The reasoning of moral values or issues of concern to persons in these moral dilemmas:

1. Punishment
2. Property
3. Roles and concerns of affection
4. Roles and concerns of authority
5. Law
6. Life
7. Liberty
8. Distributive justice
9. Truth
10. Sex

## VII. Spiritual Aspect of human development

Fowler's research on the "**stages of faith**" appeared in a little book published by Word in 1978 called *Life Maps: Conversations on the Journey of Faith*. To support his theory Fowler makes reference to the works of Daniel Levinson, and his seasons of life, Carol Gilligan and her dimensions of moral growth, Erickson and his developmental stages, and finally Kohlberg and his moral development. He concludes that none of the above deals with the role of faith and faith development in our life cycle.

For Fowler faith doesn't necessarily have the same meaning as for us Christians. For him faith is a human universal, which means that we have similar dimensions of struggles and awareness, such as: awareness of death, choices under conditions of uncertainty and risk, and finally awareness that our life longs for meaning. There are secular forms and objects of faith, as there are secular communities of faith.

These are the stages that he proposes:

**First Stage:** *Primal stage:* Faith is compared to the baby's relationship of maternal and paternal presence during his first year of life having dependence, bonding and

attachment. To put in Erick Erickson's words: "the basic trust versus basic mistrust". He also presents Paul Tillich's "Ontological Anxiety" of dependable realities, which go away but can be trusted to return.

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**Second stage:** is called *Intuitive Projective of Faith*: Language emerges to mediate the relationship with others. The child also learns to walk, explore and question everything in his daily encounter with novelties and newness. There is an awakening to a world of reality beyond, around and penetrating the every day of life.

**Third stage:** is the *Mythic-literal Faith*. In Piaget's terminology this is the "Concrete operational thinking" stage. Faith becomes a matter of reliance on the stories, rules, and implicit values of the family or community that give meaning. It involves valuing the stories, practices, and beliefs of that tradition. The person speaks out from the midst of the flowing stream of his/her life without stepping out onto the bank of reflection on his overall direction or meaning.

**Fourth stage:** is *Synthetic conventional faith*: this is related to early adolescence. Therefore, it implies significant alterations in the structures of one's knowing and valuing things. The spiritual adolescent becomes an "eleven years-old atheist", the person comes to terms with the feelings of anguish, struggle and possible guilt and grief. Now thinking begins to construct all sorts of ideas possibilities and hypothetical consideration. Now the person becomes a problem to him, herself, because there is an identity crisis that must be defined.

It is this very same Crisis that takes the person to the next stage:

**Fourth stage:** *Individually-reflective Faith*. There are two basic movements at the heart of this transition: 1. There must be a shift in the sense of grounding and orientation of the self. 2. There must be an objectification and critical choosing of ones beliefs, values, commitments, life style, social choices, etc. The author considers this the stage of 30 to 40 years old.

**Fifth stage;** *Conjunctive Faith*. This is the transition a regular person in midlife. Its name was first used by Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464). For him it meant "the coincidence of opposites." It is the attempt to reconcile the opposites, there is a new sense of reality and the power of death: Hallmarks of this conjunctive faith are: a. Awareness of tensions between polarities of being young and old. b. The perception of truth as multi-dimensional cherishes paradoxes of apparent contradictions. c. It creates conceptual meaning of things. d. A genuine openness to truths of traditions and communities other than one's own. e.

**Sixth stage:** *Universalizing Faith*, which involves a de-centralization from self, also de-centralization of values and valuation, which is certain attachment to appearances and promises of power. This is not worthy of being followed any longer. Now there is kenosis, an emptying out of self. The person does not worry weather the desire results follow from his/her actions or not, as long as your motive is pure and means correct.

Therefore: fowler tries to reconcile two critical concepts for him: nature and grace: Grace is the presence and power of a creative spirit working for human wholeness, which is given and operative in creation. Nature is expressed in the development toward wholeness. The presence and activity of Spirit as mediated through many channels.

The image of human completion presented here by faith development theory is not a state to be attained or a stage to be realized. Rather it is a way of being and moving, it is a pilgrimage. The faith development perspective, that Fowler presents, depends on the persons or community experiences. This universalizing faith which is the last stage is not for everyone and doesn't have to be reached by everyone either.

### **VIII. Contemporary View of Human Development (Three complex domains)**

(According to Kathleen Stassen Berger in *"The Developing Person through the Life Span"*)

#### **A. Biosocial Development**

Includes all the growth and change that occur in a person's body, and the genetic, nutritional, and health factors that affect that growth and change.

**Motor skills** - everything from grasping a rattle to driving a car - are also part of the biosocial domain.

**Social and cultural factors** that affect these areas, such as duration of breastfeeding, education of children with special needs, and attitudes about ideal body shape, are also part of biosocial development.

#### **B. Cognitive Development**

Includes all the mental processes that are used to obtain knowledge or to become aware of the environment.

**Cognition** - encompasses perception, imagination, judgment, memory, and language, which is the processes people use to think, decide, and learn.

**Education** - including the formal curriculum within schools, informal tutoring by family and friends, and the results of individual curiosity and creativity, is also part of this domain.

#### **C. Psychosocial**

Includes development of emotions, temperament, and social skills.

**Influences** - of family, friends, the community, the culture, and the larger society are particularly central to the psychosocial domain.

**Cultural differences** - in the value accorded children, or ideas about "appropriate" sex roles, or in what is regarded as the ideal family structure are considered part of this domain.

### **IX. Implications for the religious educator**

The Bible recognizes the human development when it describes Jesus at the age of 12 (Lc. 2:40, 52). "And the child was growing and strengthened, and was filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was over him." "And Jesus was growing in wisdom and stature, and in grace toward God and men." These passages let me know that God wants for me a harmonious growth process, because Jesus had a harmonious growth process or development as a human being. The place he was raised had an impact for the rest of his life, because he was called "Jesus of Nazareth." Therefore, God cares for the different aspects that affect our growing experience and the religious educator should too.

A true religious educator is a consistent learner, seeking for better ways to convey God's truth to the ever changing human beings. It is very important, or even critical we, religious educators, make God relevant to every stage that we may be going through. In the Abraham's experience in Genesis 15 shows me that it does not matter what stage in life you may be in, full of darkness or too much light, God can still walk into your life and help you see life from a different perspective. God's simple phrase was "look at the stars." The interesting aspect is that it was mid-day. This teaches me that God can be relevant in every stage of our lives.

As we have been able to see human conduct and development are very complex. To overlook this fact is to step into a stage of ignorance voluntarily, denying the reality and complexity of life that is before us. Knowing our own development will permit us to walk into people's lives with more understanding and capable of being more empathic about their development, sufferings or different struggles.

The knowledge of human development helps the religious educator to "scratch where it itches." We come to understand better the learning, emotional, social, physical process in the individuals. We also come to understand the importance of not only giving information, but also to be God's instruments in the development of character in people. This information helps me to know that certain stages have certain characteristics. Thus, we will not see adolescents as rebellious kids who normally do ridiculous actions, and who should be avoided at all cost, but as fragile kids, maybe going through the worst emotional struggle that they will ever have, and who are desperately hungry for love, direction and acceptance.

This information helps us to be much more efficient in the designing of our church life and school programs.

May God help us all to be competent religious educators.

**Other areas of interest in human development**

Sex differences

Intelligence and creativity

Language

Cross Cultural Perspectives

Genetic Influence

Social/environmental issues in raising a child

Congenital disorders

Identity issues in youth

Autism, etc.

Learning Disability

Attention disorder

Middle age crisis in man

Menopause in women

Maturity and old age

Teenage pregnancy

At-risk behavior

Others

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