

THE MEANING, IMPORTANCE AND PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH: A PEDAGOGICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Faith is always a gift from God. As Jesus said in the Gospel of John, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44 GNB). And Paul wrote to the Ephesians that we have salvation by faith in Christ, but “this is not your own doing, it is God’s gift” (Eph. 2:8 GNB). However, while faith is God’s gift, and it is the Spirit who gives the increase, it does not obviate or make superfluous the preaching and educational responsibility of the Christian community. On the contrary, if one’s faith response to God’s grace is to become and remain explicitly Christian, then the Christian community must share its lived faith, making accessible the tradition of faith embodied in the community. New members must be introduced to it and old ones supported in their journey toward mature faith and greater faithfulness. This paper examines the meaning, importance and practice of Christian education in the church of Christ.

Key Words: Christian community, teaching/learning, Christian Education.

INTRODUCTION

Often people ask for an answer to the question. “What is Christian Education?” Various answers are given such as, having a Christian faculty, having rules and dress codes, having the Bible in the curriculum or just having the name, Christian. Christian Education is far more than the above. Christian education is that education which is Bible based, Christ centered, Holy Spirit controlled, people related, socially applied with the Scriptures being the authority in all things².

The Meaning of Christian Education

Christian Education has been diversely defined over the past half century. In 1963 Randolph Crump Miller commended a simple definition by Adelaide Case: “Christian Education is the effort to make available for our generation; children, young people and adults the accumulated treasures of Christian life and thought, in such a way that God in Christ may carry on His redemptive work in each human soul and in the common life of humankind.”³

Mary C. Boys in her book *Educating for Faith* defined religious education as “the making accessible of the tradition of the community and making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation.” Her definition has four fundamental elements: tradition and transformation, and the activities of “making accessible” and “making manifest.”⁴

According to Thomas Groome, Christian Education is a political activity with pilgrims in time

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² William R. Yount, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church 2nd Edition* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2008), 1ff.

³ Randolph Crump Miller, *Education for Christian Living*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice Hall, 1963), 53-54.

⁴ Mary C. Boys, *Educating for Faith: Maps and Visions* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 1 ff.

that deliberately and intentionally attends to their present, to the past heritage it embodies, and to the future possibility it holds for the person and community.⁵

If indeed, all education is ultimately a reaching for transcendence and an expression of that human quest, then all good education can be called Christian.⁶ Given this understanding of Christianity, Christian Education activity is a deliberate attempt to attend to the transcendent dimension of life by which a conscious relationship to an ultimate ground of being is promoted and enabled to come to expression.

According to Moran, in Protestantism Christian Education is generally understood as the activity by which officials of a Church indoctrinate children to obey an official Church.⁷ This statement may not be totally true. The heart of a Christian spirituality must flow from the heart of the Christian vocation which is to lead a life of *agape*, loving God by loving our neighbor. Love of neighbor is essentially antithetical to a privatized spirituality. This life of *agape* is what Marthaler and Westerhoff describe as a whole process that might be better named Christian socialization or enculturation according to Groome.⁸ So it can therefore be deduced that Christian Education is Christian socialization and enculturation.

Education in Christian faith should shape the lives of people as agent-subjects in right relationship with God, self, other people, and all creation. As such, lived Christian faith is a holistic affair that engages the whole of people's being: their body, mental, and volitional capacities, their heads, and life-styles; cognition, desire, and action; understanding, relationship, service, conviction, prayer, etc.

The Importance of Christian Education

The importance of Christian Education may be explained in relation to the following: i. *Towards Christian faith*, ii. *for the Kingdom of God*, iii. *for the liberation of humankind* and iv. *for the socialization of humankind*⁹.

Towards Christian Faith

The English word faith comes from the Latin *fidere*, meaning "to trust."¹⁰ Thus, in its very root, being in faith implies an activity of trusting, as the believing activity of Christian faith points primarily to a cognitive act, the trusting activity is primarily affective. This affective dimension of Christian faith takes form of a relationship of trust and confidence in a personal God who saves in Jesus Christ, while trust finds expression in loyalty, love, and attachment. Because God is faithful, we can commit ourselves with confidence and trust. This notion of trust in God's promises is a prominent feature in the Old Testament understanding of faith.¹¹ Towards the inculcation of faith in God, the early Christians saw Christian Education as involving specific tasks or ministries which includes the following:

Koinonia (a welcoming community): to be an inclusive community of faith, hope, and love, a truly Christian community that welcomes all with a fundamental equality and mutuality; and invites each one's gifts into shared mission as members of the Body of Christ¹².

Kerygma (a word-of-God community): to preach and evangelize, and to teach (*didache*) God's word in Jesus and about Jesus recounted in the New Testament; the word of God encountered through the Hebrew Scriptures; and the word of God mediated through Christian tradition¹³.

⁵ Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row 1980), 21.

⁶ Phillip Henry Phenix, *Education and the Worship of God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 47.

⁷ Gabriel Moran, *Religious Body, Design for New Reformation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 150.

⁸ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 27.

⁹ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 27.

¹⁰ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 28.

¹¹ Norman Lamm, *Faith and Doubt* (New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House Inc, 2006), 8.

¹² Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An introduction to the idea of Christian* (New York: Seabury Press: 1978), 150.

¹³ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 150.

Leitourgia (a worshipping community): to publicly worship God as an assembly of Christian faith, celebrating God's covenant with humanity through Jesus Christ and the universal hope of salvation for all humankind¹⁴.

Diakonia (a community of welfare): to care for human needs, spiritual, psychological and physical, helping to build God's reign of peace and justice at every level of human existence, personal and social, with a special favor for the poor and the disadvantaged¹⁵.

Marturia (a witnessing community): to bear credible public witness to Christian faith through lifestyle and example, living as a sacrament, as an effective sign of its own preaching, even to the point of suffering and death if necessary.¹⁶

For the Kingdom of God

Norman Perrin indicates that as the "Reign of God" is the central symbol of the message of Jesus, so is the parable the most characteristic literary form of that message.¹⁷ The literary form of a parable was ideal for explaining the Kingdom in concrete terms.¹⁸ Jesus is consistent with the dominant Jewish tradition when he speaks of the "Reign" as both present and future, both the present effective sovereignty of God over creation and the final realization of that reign at the end of time.¹⁹

A comprehensive overview of Richard P. McBrien position on eschatology as the foundation of theology in recent debate, may be divided into five schools of thought on what the "Reign of God" may mean to Christians in our contemporary world:

- Consistent, consequent, futurist or through-going eschatology (Schweitzer, Weiss, Werner, Buri),
- Realized eschatology (C.H. Dodd),
- Existentialist eschatology (Rudolph Bultmann),
- Salvation history eschatology and
- Proleptic eschatology.²⁰

The Church's purpose is not to be what Gutierrez calls a "salvation club" that "guarantees heaven" in the sense of an individualistic and totally other worldly salvation.²¹ The Church's purpose is rather bringing into the world the "Reign of God". Christian education is the means through which this purpose is achieved.

For the Liberation of Humankind

In Paulo Freire's words, "there is a unity between practices and theory in which both are constructed, shaped and reshaped in constant movement from practice to theory, then back to a new practice."²²

The only future that the Church has as Christ's Church is to be a community of liberation under the aegis of a God who is sovereign, who through his son Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection has the power to free people.²³ In Miller's words, our engagement with other human beings becomes in some way unknown and yet known encounter with God.²⁴ The assertion and claim made here are that the Christian

¹⁴ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 150.

¹⁵ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Education*, 151

¹⁶ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*: 151.

¹⁷ Norman Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1976), 79.

¹⁸ John Dominic Crossan, *The Dark Interval* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1994), 121-122.

¹⁹ Gustaf Aulen, *Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research* (London: S.PCK, 1976), 101 ff.

²⁰ Richard P. McBrien, *Church: The Continuing Quest* (New Jersey: Newman Press, 1970), 14-21.

²¹ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1973), 255.

²² Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*. Trans. Donaldo Macedo (South Hadley: Bergin and Garvey, 1985), 36.

²³ David Hunter, *Christian Education as Engagement* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963), chap.2.

²⁴ Randolph C. Miller, *Some Issues in Christian Education* (London: Prentice Hall International Inc, 1963), 59.

faith lived in response to the “Reign of God” has the consequence of human liberation.²⁵ It is grounded in human liberation and the fruit of it is to live with, and be liberated, both here and hereafter. The interaction between the Christian faith and human liberation is symbiotic in that, if they exist at all, they exist together, and each one draws from and gives life to the other. For this reason, within the ultimate purpose of the “Reign of God”, Christian religious education has twin immediate purposes, namely, Christian faith and human liberation²⁶.

Nevertheless, B.F. Skinner claims that because of the conditioned nature of “humans” behavior they are beyond the possibility of either liberation or dignity.²⁷ Hence little can be done to change human situation. According to Mary Mahowald’s language, freedom from a Christian perspective can never be understood as “raw” freedom in the sense of an unbridled “individualistic” freedom. Rather, it is a limited freedom that is actualized and contained within a communalistic context.²⁸ Extracting from James Fowler’s language, liberation, like faith, is realized in a triadic relationship. The three people of liberation and the three poles of faith are the same: self, community, and God.²⁹

According to Walter Brueggemann, in biblical faith, the doing of justice is the primary expectation of God.³⁰ It is this biblical faith that leads to freedom within a communalistic context that Christian Education seeks to inculcate.

For Socialization of Humankind

What one is, what one does, what one remains, and what one becomes are a result, to a very large extent the interaction of the person with the social/cultural environment. Thomas Groome in relating this realization to the description of Christian faith made the assertion that, when the Christian faith is understood as believing, and doing in response to the “Reign of God” in Jesus Christ, then clearly such a way of being in faith, by the grace of God, emanates from, and is an expression of the total person, of his or her self-identity. But if self-identity is shaped by interaction with collectivity, then to become Christian people requires that we have socializing interaction with a Christian faith community which is capable of forming us in such faith.³¹

It is within a Christian social/cultural environment that people come to appropriate the symbols which forward the tradition. It is there that they encounter role models, a world view, and a value system that can be internalize as their own Christian self-identity³².

Horace Bushnell one of the proponents of this system of education, grounded his argument for Christian nurture in what he called the “organic unity” of society, by which he meant that all the members of a given society have a common source of life that relates them intimately³³.

George Albert Coe’s Social Theory of Religious Education clearly places him among the proponents of the socialization model.³⁴ However Coe goes beyond Bushnell’s emphasis on the family and sees the whole social network of reality as the primary educator. He believed that all education should be a process of social interaction. The central fact of the educative process is a growing Christian experience in and through the people’s social interactions.³⁵ Social interaction is at the heart of Christian

²⁵ Suhubert M. Ogden, *Faith and Freedom*, Revised and Edition (Abingdon: Wigf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 49.

²⁶ Ogden, *Faith and Freedom*, 50.

²⁷ Frederic Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Hackett Publishing company, 2002), 5.

²⁸ Mary Briody Mahowald, *Feminism, Socialism and Christianity* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003), 31-49.

²⁹ Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*, 36.

³⁰ Walter Brueggemann, Sharon Park & Thomas H. Groome. *Voices of the Night against Justice* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 5.

³¹ Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 109ff.

³² Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 109 ff.

³³ Horace Bushnell, *Selected Writings on language, Religion and American Culture* (Michigan: Scholars Press, 1984), 636.

³⁴ George Albert Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education* (New York: Amo Press & New York Times, 1969), 181.

³⁵ Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education*. 80.

education not only as the process, but also as the content. The primary content of the curriculum is to be found in present relations and interactions between persons.³⁶

For Westerhoff, the Church is still caught in a schooling-instructional paradigm for its ministry of education, and the schooling-instructional paradigm is bankrupt.³⁷ We must shift instead to a community of faith-enculturation paradigm. Westerhoff proposed a process of intentional Christian socialization as the most effective approach to Christian education. He prefers the language of enculturation because intentional Christian socialization implies that someone does something to impact someone else.³⁸

Westerhoff understands education as an aspect of socialization involving deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, behaviors, or sensibilities. He insists that the Church needs to train its people to think politically, socially, economically, theologically and ethically.³⁹ He emphasizes especially the formative influence of the Church at worship as it ritualizes and celebrates its faith together. By uniting learning and liturgy, Christian education could be enhanced; more important, our faith could be transmitted to our children.⁴⁰

Because one comes to self-identity through interaction with one's ethos, Christian self-identity requires that one be socialized by a community of the Christian faith. That is where faith begins and is enabled to grow to maturity. The more faithful our communities are the more likely its younger members will come to authentic Christian faith and older ones continue to grow in it. The dialectical relationship between the Christian community and its social context, and between the community and its individual members, must not be left to chance, but should be intentionally promoted. Promoting such dialectics is the activity of raising critical consciousness.

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH

It is one thing to read about learning theories, it is quite another to implement them in the teaching-learning process. As far back as 1884, there was John Milton Gregory's seven laws of teaching. This classic work remains contemporary, for in it Gregory details principles - or laws- which remain essential for effective teaching in today's church. The laws stated are:⁴¹

The Law of the Teacher.

Know the lesson you wish to teach; teach from a full mind with a clear understanding.

The Law of the Learner.

Gain and keep the attention and interest of the learner upon the lesson. Do not try to teach without attention.

The Law of the Language.

Use words understood in the same way by the learners and yourself.

The Law of the Lesson.

Begin with what is already well known to the learner upon the subject and proceed to the new material by single, easy, and natural steps, letting the known explain the unknown.

The Law of the Teaching Process.

Stimulate the learner's own mind to action.

The Law of the Learning Process.

Require the learner to reproduce in thought the lesson what he/she is learning⁴². In *Teaching to Change Lives*, Howard Hendricks builds on the work of Gregory to give further guidance to today's teacher. Hendricks stresses that first, God uses the people of God, or teachers, to impact

³⁶ Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, 102.

³⁷ John Westerhoff and Gwen Neville, *Generation to Generation, Conservation on Religious Education and Culture* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1979), 42.

³⁸ John Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 79.

³⁹ Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith*, 66, 67.

⁴⁰ Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith*, 66, 67.

⁴¹ John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, rev. Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 19 – 20

⁴² Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, rev. Ed. 19 – 20.

lives. Yet, there are fundamental principles, if practised, that will give a new dynamic to teaching and will open the door for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of students.⁴³

The Law of the Teacher

Teachers must permit the Word of God to transform their lives and allow their students to see God at work in them. In other words, a teacher must model the truth. Therefore, effective teachers provide a variety of developmentally sound methods that will keep interest high and eliminate boredom. Maximum learning is always the result of maximum involvement. Telling is not necessarily teaching. A wide variety of active methods must be used to involve students in discovering what God is saying to them through His Word. Bridges are built outside the classroom as well as inside. By spending time with students outside the formal teaching setting, teachers get to know their students and their needs. Inside the classroom, bridges **consist** of arousing curiosity, gaining attention, and motivating the student before imparting information.

The Law of the Heart

Teaching that impacts is not head to head, but heart to heart.” Relationship is essential to effective teaching and learning.

The Law of Encouragement

Teaching tends to be most effective when the learner is properly motivated.” Nothing is more motivating than the awareness of a need and seeing the hope of that need being met. Effective teachers encourage learning by focusing on the relevance of truth to the student’s life.

The Law of Readiness

The teaching–learning process will be most effective when both student and teacher are adequately prepared.” Student readiness involves factors such as: physical, cognitive, and spiritual development, background, experiences, and motivation. Teachers must use what they know about their students to prepare them for new truth. Every good teaching must be guided by rules and regulations to make sure that all excesses are eliminated.

THE TEACHING/ LEARNING PROCESS IN THE CHURCH

Learning theorists have discovered some truth about how God created humankind to think, learn, grow, and change⁴⁴. Yet the philosophical assumptions about humankind, reality, values, and God are in conflict with the Bible. Our task in developing a biblical perspective on teaching and learning is to integrate properly the truth that God has revealed in His Word with the discoveries of science. The principle of integration is vital to the development of a biblical approach to learning. The following factors are important to consider toward accomplishing this integration⁴⁵.

Nature of the learner

The behaviorist, cognitive, and humanistic approaches all have their roots in the Darwinian theory of evolution. Scripture is clear that humankind is created in the image of God but as a result of the fall has a sin nature. Redemption and transformation are possible for humankind through Christ’s work on the cross⁴⁶.

The physical growth process is obvious in individuals. Scriptures uses the concept of growth to describe physical maturation (Luke 2:24), knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:18), and faith (2 Cor. 10:15). The apostle Paul acknowledge a change in his cognitive ability from childhood to adulthood (1 Cor. 13:11). Christian educators cannot ignore the fact that children and adolescents are not miniature adults. Even adults represent different levels of maturity. Though questions remain to be answered in developmental research, the developmentlists have contributed much in the areas of physical, cognitive, moral, and faith development⁴⁷.

42. Haward Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Live*, (Portland: Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1987), 78ff.

44 Lois E. Lebar, *Education That Is Christian*, ed. James E. Plueddemann (Wheaton, Ill.; Victor, 1989), 38-39.

45 Lebar, *Education that Is Christian*, ed. James E. Plueddemann, 38-39.

46 Lebar, *Education that Is Christian*, ed. James E. Plueddemann, 38-39.

47 Lebar, *Education That Is Christian*, ed. James E. Plueddemann, 38-39.

Internal and External Factors

Historically, much of education has focused on external factors (teacher, content, class members, and environment) in the educational process because they are easier to manipulate than internal factors (past experience, interests, ambitions, values, personal psychological needs, attitudes, health and comfort, self-concept, temperament, learning style, sex differences, and birth order)⁴⁸.

Skinner's emphasis on external factors has led to content-oriented education. Lois LeBar, examining the role of internal and external factors in Education that is Christian concludes, "Most Bible teachers have labored under the impression that if they taught the outer facts of the Bible, the Holy Spirit would do the inner work of regenerating the pupil."⁴⁹ This is often observed in Bible classes where the focus is on the teacher and the learner is a passive observer. In reaction to this historical preoccupation with external factors, the church has at times overreacted and adopted a humanistic orientation by focusing entirely on internal factors at the expense of God's Word. A biblical approach attempts to balance "the dynamic interdependence between the Bible and Life."⁵⁰

The dichotomy between teaching the Bible and teaching students is dangerous. Teaching the Bible for its own sake is not good enough, we study the Bible so that we may know God. But we worship God, not the academic discipline of the study of God. On the other hand, teaching students for their own self-actualization could projects them, ignores the power of sin, and ignores the absolute standard of God's revealed truth.⁵¹

As seen previously, the goal of Christian education is the transformation of the person. This goal is not limited to either the cognitive, the affective, or the volitional but encompasses all three; that is knowing, feeling, and doing

Methodology

The goal of transformation will only take place in the arena of life. To agree with Dewey, the classroom is not life, just preparation for life. If learning is to be meaningful, it must relate to each learner's own areas of need. Therefore, learners must be actively involved in the discovery process. They must meet God through the Word. Again, there must be a balance between "the senses and the intellect, knowing and doing, the inner outer, deductive and inductive"⁵².

Role of the Teacher

The teacher must be more than a teller or a facilitator. Neither alone is enough. Perhaps a more appropriate description for the Christian teacher is guide. The teacher guides the students in the power of the Holy Spirit, through the process of relating God's Word to life. Modeling becomes essential to the teaching-learning process as students observe God's Word demonstrated in the life of the teacher.

Dynamics in the learning Environment

The phrase learning environment usually conjures up visions of brightly lit, nicely carpeted, appropriately furnished classrooms equipped with every resource a teacher would ever need to be creative. Most teachers have a vision of that picture perfect "learning environment". Although it is important for students to be comfortable and for appropriate resources to be available, this is not the aspect of the environment that seems to have the most impact on the teaching-learning process. More important is the psychological climate - the atmosphere - that either hinders or encourages learning. An awareness of the factors that contribute to the dynamics of the learning environment will help a teacher make improvements and prevent problems⁵³.

⁴⁸ LeBar, *Education That Is Christian*, ed. James E. Plueddemann, 38-39

⁴⁹ LeBar, *Education That Is Christian*, 38-39.

⁵⁰ LeBar, *Education that is Christian*, 58.

⁵¹ James E. Plueddemann, "Do We Teach the Bible or Do We Teach Students?" in *Christian Education Journal* 10 (Autumn 1989): 75.

⁵² John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 79-88.

⁵³ LeBar, *Education that is Christian*, 53.

Spiritual factors

Christian classroom has unique distinctive in its subject matter, goals, and spiritual dynamics. The inspired Word of God, the Bible, reveals to humankind the Living Word, Jesus Christ. Because the goal of Christian education is for the student and teacher to become more like Jesus Christ, He/she is the center of the curriculum.

Becoming more like Jesus Christ is not a natural process, but supernatural. God has provided the teacher with two supernatural helps to accomplish His goals. The first supernatural help is the Holy Spirit. In John 14:25-26 Jesus tells His disciples that the Holy Spirit “will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (NIV). The Holy Spirit fills, guides, and gifts the teacher, illuminates the World, convicts, and empowers the student to respond in obedience. Secondly, teachers have the spiritual dynamic of prayer available to them. Through prayer hearts are prepared to receive the Word of God and the power of God is unleashed. For lives to be changed, the spiritual dynamics must be foremost in the teacher’s heart and mind.

Negative Emotions

Fear, anxiety, and discouragement can be major road blocks for learners in the church. Sources of these negative emotions are numerous. They may stem from past or present experiences in the learning process, such as learning tasks, methods, or material that the learners finds difficult. In addition, the impact of the family situation is extremely powerful. Many learners may be in home situations where there is chaos or substance abuse. Emotional stress can be high as individuals adjust to divorce, single-parent homes, and blended families, learners may transfer fear, anxiety, and discouragement to the learning environment. A sensitive teacher will make feelings of security and love a priority.⁵⁴

Rejection

Unfortunately, not all learners feel comfortable in every Christian teaching situation. Individuals may feel rejected because of their appearance, socio-economic status, cultural background, intellectual ability, or a host of other reasons. This is especially crucial for children and adolescents who are highly affected by peer groups. Learners need to feel accepted. It is important for the teacher to observe social dynamics in the learning environment and encourage learners to accept one another.⁵⁵

The preceding factors should stimulate the teacher to consider other dynamics that might be present in the learning environment. Factors such as student readiness, learning styles, and use of curriculum materials can diminish or strengthen the process of learning environment ⁵⁶.

Classroom Management

The management style of the teacher (authoritarian laissez-faire, or democratic) influences the climate of the learning environment.

Teacher’s Attitude

The saying that more is caught than taught proves to be true because teachers’ attitudes about God, Christianity, themselves, and students impact learning. Most adults have forgotten the details taught to them by their favorite teacher, but they have not forgotten the teacher. It has been said, First the student loves the teacher, then the student loves the teacher’s God.

The following diagrams explains the churches entire life⁵⁷.

The Entire Church Life		
Formation (shaping)	Education(reshaping)	Instruction (building)
To participate in and practice the Christian life of faith	To critically reflect on one’s personal and communal life in	To acquire knowledge and skills useful to communal life.

⁵⁴ Daniel L. Barlow, *Educational Psychology: Learning Process* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 302 –306.

⁵⁵ Barlow, *Educational Psychology: Learning Process*, 303

⁵⁶ Barlow, *Educational Psychology Learning Process*, 306.

⁵⁷ Barlow, *Educational Psychology Learning Process*, 307-308.

	the light of the Christian life of faith.	
Ritual Participation Environment Ordering of Life Interactions Role Models Disciplines Language	<pre> graph TD Experience --> Reflection Reflection --> Learning Learning --> Action Action --> Experience </pre>	*Establish context *Establish aims or goals *Establish behavior and process objectives *Establish instructional activities and resources *Conduct this activities * Evaluate

1. Flaws in the Church Education Vessel	Five flaws of present church education (1) The loss of communal memory in congregational life (2) The irrelevance of our teaching from the Bible (3) The subversion of Christian education goals. (4) The cultural captivity of church education (5) The collapse of the Church’s educational strategy
2. Events that Form and Transform	Formative events of Christian community (1) Paradigmatic events (2) Seasonal events (3) Occasional events (4) Unexpected events
3. Building Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational purposes in building community (1) To bind the generations into community (2) To nurture partnership among the members to the community ● Educational tasks in building community: (1) Transmitting the vocabulary of Christian community (2) Sharing the stories of faith (3) Nurturing interdependent relationship (4) Practicing the life-style of Christian community
4. Making Meaning	The church as a disciple community engages in disciplined meaning making. (1) Congregational mutuality. (2) The partnership of clergy and laity (3) Local congregation become a primary context for theological reflection (4) Theological meanings emerged from the negotiations among a variety of perspective (5) Struggle against irrelevance (6) Disciplined reflection.
5. Nurturing Hope	The characteristics of teaching for hope (1) The discernment of possibility where most people only see the loss of possibility (2) The willingness to risk the status quo (3) Participation in the work of creating an alternative future Hope is nurtured in the course of a congregation’s engagement in God’s vocation of emancipating creation. Consequently, education for hope occurs as congregations order their lives to participate in this transformational activity.

CONCLUSION

Christian Education is for the transformation of society, for the reformation of the Church, and for the maturation in faith of individuals. If Christianity is to be a redemptive, humanizing, liberating force in the midst of history, a force that constantly points toward the Kingdom by living and promoting its values, then a constant dialectic must be maintained between Christian communities and their surrounding environments. We are members of many communities and segments of a pluralistic society. Ethnicity, geographical location, work site, political association, leisure ethos, and so on, as well as our Christian community affiliation, give us membership in a great variety of collectivities. As a result, there is a great variety of world views and value systems, some of which are very contrary to a Christian self-identity and self-worth. For that matter, Christian educators have the task of nurturing people's growth in Christian faith as agent-subjects-in-relationship. We are to educate people for a deep abiding bond of loving-kindness and justice toward the whole human family. Realized Christian faith is an ontic form which no dimension or dynamic of our being can be excluded.

Christian Education for a lived out Christian faith is an ontological enterprise that is to inform, and transform people in heads, hearts, and life-styles; it is to engage nothing less than the "marrow bone" of people together. Both the impetus for, and the consequence of people living in Christian faith is the wholeness of human freedom that is fullness of life for all, here on earth and the hereafter.

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