

BEULAH HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY

Relevance of Christian Education for Clergy and Laity

A Research Proposal

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By

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## The Relevance of Christian Education for Clergy and Laity

The basis for a Christian education program is given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20: making disciples, baptizing them, and “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” R. B. Kuiper has observed, “A noteworthy feature of the great commission is that it bids the apostles and the church of all ages to *teach*. In fact, *teaching* is spoken of as their chief missionary task. They are to go in order to *teach*. *Going* is but a means to the end of *teaching*. And they are to *baptize* those who accept their *teaching*. But they must *teach*, whether or not men give heed. And, significantly, they are told not once, but twice, to *teach*”<sup>1</sup>

Richard Rawls in a conversation with some youth discovered that they did not know the Luke/Matthew comparative narrative of Jesus’s birth. This was very disturbing for him and caused him to seek inward and outward for an answer. Rawls assumption was that the church has become too busy with other activities in their lives. Rawls writes, “It is understandable that people expect the church to fulfill a role (Christian education) that they themselves do not have the time, energy, and sometimes the inclination to perform.”<sup>2</sup> This article was familiar to the status quo. Fellow students who serve as youth pastors in their churches often express the concern about the youth level of knowledge of the Bible. Some of the comments are that it’s not important or their home life does not reflect what is being taught at the church.

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1 Rienk Bouke Kuiper, *The doctrine of Biblical church: the glorious body of Christ* (Seoul: Sung Kwang Pub. Co., 1978), 45.

2 Richard S Rawls. "Teaching and Teachers in the Early and Contemporary Church." *Direction: Teaching and Teachers in the Early and Contemporary Church*. Spring 2007. Accessed September 14, 2017. <http://www.directionjournal.org/36/1/teaching-and-teachers-in-early-and.html>.

It is our responsibility to teach, know and understand our own faith. It is vital that our youth know who they are in the Kingdom of God. While watching the movie God's Not Dead; it was very easy for the professor to lure those to sign the paper that did not know their faith. This is the reason that Christian Education is vital for laity. These are future leaders/clergy of the world.

In these crucial times of 2017, we desperately need Christian education for our laity and clergy. Our headlines are screaming that we must do something different. The belief of the student writer is that we must get back to the basic. The African American church for so long was the safe haven and knowledge fountain of our communities. The Holy Bible provides scriptural support for one to believe; that our survival in this world is dependent on Christian education for clergy and laity. The author believes Hosea 4:6 states it best, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Therefore, she believes that Christian education will always be relevant for the entire Body of Christ.

As a previous member of a Word of Faith Church, there was a layperson (2 year program) and also a Bible School for Clergy. These programs were vital to the church. However, there was no established program for youth other than youth services. In retrospect, the student wonders if the establishment of a program for youth would have been beneficial. Some of our youth that are being destroyed are not all from unchurched families. The question is what must we do as a people to educate or better educate our clergy and laity? In careful research, reading, observing and evaluating sources, the student researchers hope to solidify and answer the question.

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