

**Christian Education: A Contemporary Approach and Practices to Christian Education**

ATH 613 Theological Research & Writing

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## **Abstract**

Education is a fundamental aspect of life that all individuals seek to attain more knowledge and advance themselves in life. Christian education is the foundation for which believers achieve a closer connection to God. Through Christian education learners are able to learn the Word, and understand their place in society in observance to the Word of God. Seeking to understand the contemporary approaches to Christian education in western and eastern societies will allow for learners to better assist their community, and gain a religious foundation that is within the doctrine and teaching of the Word of God. By reviewing the modern day approach to Christian Education there will be a better understanding of the goals of the educational system, advancement in technology to determine the vitality of Christian Education, and the ability to adapt and thrive through this changing era in time.

## Introduction

Christian Education in this contemporary age needs to evolve and change in order to stay relevant and effective to learners. In addition with the advancement of technologies it is important for Christian Educators to stay up to date with new technologies to assist their students in advancing their careers and opportunities in today's society. However in order to truly understand the relevance of Christian education in society today, there needs to be an understanding of the history of Christian education. After a discussion of the history of Christian education there will be a discussion of the contemporary approach to Christian education. Without first understand the approaches utilized in western nations such as England we will not be able to understand the practices employed to make the programs successful. Not only will this paper examine the approaches utilized by England, but that of our eastern counterparts in China. After all Christianity is not just centralized in one location, but all over the world. To truly gain an understanding of the contemporary approaches to Christian education one must include various nations within the study of the topic of contemporary Christian education. Christian education is of vital importance in the current political and societal era. Christian education is part of the foundational stature of a believer's life.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge obtained through sharing your belief with other believers through a common educational institution is one that is needed in the modern era. In this research proposal readers will begin with a literature review of the articles utilized within the paper.

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<sup>1</sup> Dockery, David S. 2016. "Toward a Future for Christian Higher Education: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no 1/2: 115. *Advanced Placement Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017).

## Literature Review

**Clarke, Jim. 2011. "Immersion Experiences as a Learning Tool for Seminary Formation." *Seminary Journal* 17, no. 1: 32-34. *Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost* (accessed October 30, 2017).**

A review of contemporary Christian education would not be complete without discussing the wide variety of adult pedagogies that have been found to be beneficial. In this particular article the use of structured immersion in adult learning has seen success for seminary students on all levels. The author believes the success of structured immersion in Christian education stems from the five core process the students follow: the whole person is involved in the process, feedback is immediate, the individual is goal focused, there is community involvement, and the process utilizes a variety of learning tools. This technique allows for an overall understanding of Christ word, and an individual's faith. Through this technique they are able to understand themselves as a Christian and be able to share the word of God in whichever venue they are located.

**Dockery, David S. 2016. "Toward a Future for Christian Higher Education: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no 1/2: 115. *Advanced Placement Source, EBSCOhost* (accessed October 5, 2017).**

The Dockery article does not seek to discuss the many changes occurring in Christian higher education, but it seeks to provide a framework for thinking about the future that is grounded in the church's heritage and tradition. The article sought to establish that at the heart of Christian higher education is a calling to prepare a new generation of Christians to think Christianly, to engage the culture and the academy, to serve society, and to renew connections with the church and its mission. Christian tradition combined with learning is proposed as a pathway forward for understanding the essence of Christian higher education in the modern world. The information provided in this article offers a pathway that focuses on the central and foundational commitments needed to sustain a faithful future for Christian higher education.

**Hulme, E. Eileen, David E. Groom, and Joseph M. Heltzel. "Reimaging Christian Higher Education." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no.1/2 (January 2016): 95-105. *Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost* (accessed October 5, 2017).**

Hulme, Groom and Heltzel brought to light the difficulties facing higher Christian education in the United States due to the advancement of technologies, the shift of ethnic and racial demographics, and the transition from traditional degrees to continuous learning environments. Christian education must either adapt to the changes in society, so they may thrive. In order to thrive in this new technological age, Christian higher education institutions need to go beyond the status quo, change the mindset of its leadership and have leaders willing to take the next step to lead their institutions into a new era. Without these new innovations Christian higher education runs the risk of falling behind compared to other higher education institutions.

**Lawson, Kevin E. "A Proposal for "Right-Handed" Christian Education." *Theological Review* 31, no. 1 (April 2010): 92. *Advanced Placement Source, EBSCOhost* (accessed November 24, 2017).**

The Lawson article proposes a method for Christian education that encompasses belief, practice and passion. All three elements are needed to promote transformation of the person toward maturity in faith, and toward Christ-likeness. The article further went on to discuss the mindset behind Christian education and how each element would apply in the contemporary age. In today's society it is important that Christian education utilizes a model of learning that will benefit the individual as a whole, and does not just recite the Word of God. With that in mind, the "Right-Handed" method discussed in the above mentioned article emphasizes the importance and practice of Christian education for Orthodoxy, Orthopraxy and Orthopathy. These three elements are the three foundational principles needed in the contemporary approach to Christian education. This approach to Christian education lays a foundation that teaches the individual more than just recitation, but leads to a deeper working knowledge of God's Word. This article also touches on the history of Christian education that has been practiced in the past, but is not as effective. Many Christian education leaders recognize these things, and various educational

approaches have been developed to address the "head," "heart," and "hands" of those we teach. This understanding has become fairly commonplace, and it is almost an expected truth that good Christian education addresses all three aspects. It is common practice for how we create educational ministries that encourage growth in all areas in an integrated fashion. Much of what is done in the "Know, Feel, Do" model is still disjointed, lacking the necessary transitions to move naturally from one type of learning objective to the next. We seem to expect that if people know Biblical truths they will then value them and want to put them into practice.

**OTERO, LUCILLE M., and MICHAEL J. COTTRELL. 2013. "Pioneering New Paths for Adult Religious Education in the Roman Catholic Community: The Promise of Communities of Practice." *Journal Of Adult Theological Education* 10, no. 1: 50-63. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 30, 2017).**

This specific article focuses on the significant challenges faced by the Roman Catholic Church in fostering effective adult religious education in contemporary social and cultural contexts. In modern day society there are advancement in technology that advances teaching methods that need to be explored within the Church. This article presents contemporary teaching theories that are applicable to the Church. It has become ever important for the church to learn new theories and practices employed in the modern age, so that they do not get left behind. By involving the communities of practice theory researchers believe it will enhance adult religious education teaching and learning. Researchers into the Roman Catholic Church, have found that in order for adult Christian education to be effective community involvement is a must have. According to the article, Communities of Practice (CoP) is not a new phenomenon, but this form of sharing and learning in practice based communities have existed throughout history in different forms and contexts. However, it is this approach to adult Christian education that has seen great success within the Roman Catholic Church.

**Peter Tze Ming, Ng. 2002. "CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA." *Christian Higher Education* 1, no. 1: 55. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).**

As we know the United States and European nations are not the only nations practicing Christianity. In Peter Tze Ming Ng's article the discussion focuses on the significance of contemporary Christian higher education in China, and Asia. By examining Chung Chi College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong researchers were able to see what Christian colleges have to offer to higher education in Asia as a whole. The University is rich in cultural and religious heritages, thus making it an excellent venue for the study of the intercultural exchanges and interreligious dialogues. It should be noted that Christian schools in China were predominately missionary schools. Due to the missionaries being the leading force behind the Christian schools there was a massive distrust. Thus Christian schools were criticized as being more evangelical, and impeding on the culture of the nation with Western ideals. However through history and a distinction between the educational role and religious roles of the Christian colleges there has been numerous growth in the region. There were shifts in the thought process of leaders over the past decade that allowed for the growth of Christian education in the region. Through this paper readers are able to see the change in thought that led to the change in the process of Christian higher education in contemporary China.

**Pillay, Gerald J. 2015. "“Higher” Education: A Perspective from a Christian University Foundation in Contemporary England." *Christian Higher Education* 14, no. 1/2: 4-16. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).**

Gerald Pillay articulated the long history of Europe's connection with Christian education and the secularized nation. The essay investigates the Liverpool Hope University in the only ecumenical university in the England. The amazing aspect of this University is that though it is a

non-denominational institution it is also apart of the British University system. The author of this article reiterated the long history of religious missions and educational institutions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century England. In addition the author sought to examine the lack of funding due to government changes, the secularization of higher education, and the notion that religion is losing ground and its influence in the public square. The article further went on to discuss the approach of John Henry Newman during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The thought process of Newman's vision was that higher education should be based on learning and teaching, where there is no bias, but illumination. Simply put a higher education institution should be committed to educating in the round, including mind, body and spirit. Fortunately Liverpool Hope University was committed to this sentiment and though based in the theological sense of a well rounded individual there are still challenges being faced by the institutions leaders and stakeholders to uphold this proud tradition.

**Setran, David. 2014. "Guest Editorial "History Matters". Reflections on Studying the History of Christian Education." *Christian Education Journal*, Fall2014. 294. *Supplemental Index*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017)**

David Setran in his essay advises the importance of history and the many purposes the importance on reflecting on history. Setran would first argue that the study of the history of Christian education has a foundational purpose, an instructional purpose, an identity formation purpose, a character formation purpose, a self-critical purpose, a prophetic purpose, a corrective purpose, and an inspirational purpose. Each purpose will only lead to a better understanding of the need for Christian education and a deeper understanding of the current trends and fads. Setran would argue that by looking at the past one is able to adapt to the contemporary approaches and educational achievements, there first needs to be an understanding of one's history in the matter. After all through history we can map and look forward to future events. This sentiment holds true for Christian educators who seek not to conform to the world. There is

power with understanding the history of Christian education, and without that basic understanding one is left to wonder.

**Smith, David I., Joonyong Um, and Claudia D. Beversluis. 2014. "The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in A Christian Context." *Christian Higher Education* 13, no.1:74-87. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017).**

Smith and associates evaluated over nine thousand articles across 14 disciplines to examine the degree to which Christian scholarship has responded to the rise of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). SOTL is a growing movement in higher education that takes into consideration how the faculty develops as a professional and how they can better teach students. Utilizing the SOTL model many scholarly journals came into existence that focused on Christian scholarship. Unfortunately unlike other disciplines of study, education including Christian education there is no requirement for publication therefore making peer reviewed articles difficult to find. This article further went on to describe opportunities for future practices that will improve on Christian higher education. By incorporating a holistic approach to the lives and development of faculty the entire university would benefit in a positive way.

**Whittle, Sean. 2014. "Some Theological Reservations Surrounding One Contemporary Christian Approach to Teaching and Learning." *Journal Of Education & Christian Belief* 18, no. 2: 191-205. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).**

Sean Whittle's article raised a number of theological reservations about one contemporary Christian approach to teaching and learning. The approach of David Smith and Trevor Cooling were the leading approach to theological and Christian beliefs that were integrated in the classroom. Unfortunately, despite the good works of this contemporary approach there are deficits with this method. History has shown there is a positive relationship between Christianity and the provisions of education. However the motivation for wanting to educate an individual is

different between Christian belief (theology) and educational theory and practice. The positive relationship existed so long that some may believe that theology and education is synonymous, however that is not the case. This article illustrates different ways in which the theological concept of vocation can be blended into various parts of the curriculum, from physical education to mathematics. The constant battle between Christian theology and education has been whether Christian belief is appropriate for curriculum development or opportunistic attempts to bolt on Christian beliefs. By approaching a systematic incorporation of Christian belief into various subjects yielded positive results. This approach did not seem overbearing, but it did provoke concerns about the way in which theology was being blended into the educational curriculum. However due to the definition of theology the blending of theology and education is seen more positive.

### **Research Objective**

During this course learners are tasked with selecting a topic that they will conduct research and delve deeper to gain a better understanding of research techniques and approaches. The topic of this proposal for this learner to research is contemporary approaches and practices of Christian Education. Christian education is the foundation for which we are Christian's base all that we know about God. Without educating oneself and others in the practices, teaching and Word of God there would not be a furtherance of one's knowledge, and the kingdom of God. By examining the contemporary approaches to religious education learners will be able to understand the importance of Christian education in the community.<sup>2</sup> Christian education not only impacts western civilization, but eastern nations such as China also have standards and

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<sup>2</sup> Whittle, Sean. 2014. "Some Theological Reservations Surrounding One Contemporary Christian Approach to Teaching and Learning." *Journal Of Education & Christian Belief* 18, no. 2: 191-205. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

practices when it comes to Christian education. According to researchers, Christian education in China has predominantly been missionary however Christian education impacts the individual and society as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Education is one of the fundamental aspects of any society. Now to include your beliefs and religious training to educational development there is an appreciation and further development of the individual and community as a whole.<sup>4</sup> By examining the contemporary approaches to religious education learners will be able to appreciate educational endeavors in a biblical sense. This proposal seeks to understand the contemporary approaches and practices of Christian education. Further research can only enhance learners understanding and awareness of the importance of Christian education not only in their own backyard, but also throughout the world.

### **History of Christian Education**

In order to understand the various approaches to Christian education there first needs to be an understanding of the history behind Christian education. In this section of the research proposal there will be a discussion of where Christian education began, and how it impacted the nations where Christian education was implemented. Setran reflected on the history of Christian education and the importance of understand history and how it impacts the future in regards to this field.<sup>5</sup> History allows us to know and appreciate where one has come from. Christian education has a rich history in missionary work in many nations across the globe. Understanding the history of Christian education on global scale will allow for a better understanding of the

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Tze Ming, Ng. 2002. "CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA." *Christian Higher Education* 1, no. 1: 55. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

<sup>4</sup>Pillay, Gerald J. 2015. "'Higher' Education: A Perspective from a Christian University Foundation in Contemporary England." *Christian Higher Education* 14, no. 1/2: 4-16. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

<sup>5</sup>Setran, David. 2014. "Guest Editorial "History Matters". Reflections on Studying the History of Christian Education." *Christian Education Journal*, Fall2014. 294. *Supplemental Index*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017)

modern day approach to Christian education in the same nations. The history of China and Christian education was one filled with conflict and misunderstanding.<sup>6</sup> However that history that plagued China did not interfere with Christian higher education standards and the ability to connect culture and faith. This section of the assignment will delve deeper into the history of eastern and western society in terms of Christian higher education. England has a rich history lathered with religious upheavals and movements of the Church. However that did not stop the educational endeavors of the Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> History leads to the future and the contemporary approaches to Christian education.

One would say a Christian is a Christian, no matter what country the person originated from. Throughout the history of Christianity, there has always been an emphasis on learning, and knowing and doing.<sup>8</sup> Christian education in China though linked to missionary work was built on recitation, followed by action. This approach to Christian education does not lead to the life changing, heart felt change that is need for learners to change the way that they live their lives.<sup>9</sup> To value for oneself the Word of God is the goal of Christian education, no matter the location it is being taught. In past teaching the focus of Christian education was more emphasis on knowledge objectives, and in too many cases the assumption that the affective objectives will take place on their own building a bridge to the desire to act.<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that just because you know the

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Tze Ming, Ng. 2002. "CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA." *Christian Higher Education* 1, no. 1: 55. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

<sup>7</sup>Pillay, Gerald J. 2015. "'Higher' Education: A Perspective from a Christian University Foundation in Contemporary England." *Christian Higher Education* 14, no. 1/2: 4-16. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>9</sup> Lawson, Kevin E. "A Proposal for "Right-Handed" Christian Education." *Theological Review* 31, no. 1 (April 2010): 92. *Advanced Placement Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2017). 21

<sup>10</sup> Lawson, Kevin E. "A Proposal for "Right-Handed" Christian Education." *Theological Review* 31, no. 1 (April 2010): 92. *Advanced Placement Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2017). 21

words, that does not mean you will act accordingly. Most believers were taught to know the Words, but the true spiritual formation comes from bridging the gap between knowing the Words and living the Words. This disconnect is what is missing in contemporary Christian education, and throughout its history has been an issue that needed to be addressed.<sup>11</sup> Now that there is a history of education it is time to discuss the contemporary approaches to Christian education.

### **Contemporary Approach to Christian Education**

Within this research proposal the examination of contemporary approaches to Christian education will be evaluated. In this particular section of the paper contemporary approaches, such as advancement in technology, the method in which faculty is evaluated and supported, working within the community to build the educational endeavors, working with students to become well rounded individuals, and the “right-handed” three prong approach to Christian education are evaluated.<sup>1213</sup> By studying the contemporary approaches to Christian education readers will be able to utilize this knowledge to their own educational endeavors while building upon the next generation to take the lead. The contemporary approaches in this research proposal will not only be examined within the United States, but also overseas in nations like China and England. Each approach to Christian education within each nation is similar in the advancement of technology, the connection of faculty and student population, and community involvement. China and England both have a rich history in Christian education, so to examine their modern

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11 Pillay, Gerald J. 2015. ““Higher” Education: A Perspective from a Christian University Foundation in Contemporary England.” *Christian Higher Education* 14, no. 1/2: 4-16. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

12 Hulme, E. Eileen, David E. Groom, and Joseph M. Heltzel. “Reimagining Christian Higher Education.” *Christian Higher Education* 15, no.1/2 (January 2016): 95-105. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017).

13 Lawson, Kevin E. "A Proposal for "Right-Handed" Christian Education." *Theological Review* 31, no. 1 (April 2010): 92. *Advanced Placement Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2017). 21

approach to Christian education will be beneficial to educators and students alike. Now we look at practices employed in contemporary Christian education.

Current approaches to contemporary Christian education include working with the community with Communities of Practice (CoP), teaching the faculty how to integrate new technologies to advance their students understanding of the Word and its relevance to the modern world, and utilizing the belief, practice and passion to engage learners during their faith training. The CoP are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.<sup>14</sup> Simply put CoP share a common desire to learn and expand their knowledge base to further their group's agenda. The Roman Catholic Church utilized this approach to contemporary Christian education to connect with the community while expanding the knowledge of the Church. Research has found that adult Christian education has seen great success through the CoP approach, and growth within the community as a whole.<sup>15</sup> The reason for the success of the CoP approach is due to the structural elements that exist within its development. The CoP approach has three structural elements: a domain of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a community of people who care about this domain; and the shared practice that they are developing to be effective in their domain.<sup>16</sup> The combination of these three structural elements allow for a cohesive approach to contemporary Christian adult education. The CoP approach is one method that is beneficial to the modern day Christian education. Another approach to Christian education is allowing the faculty to learn new technologies to share the Word with students in this current era. Research has found that educating the faculty on new

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14OTERO, LUCILLE M., and MICHAEL J. COTTRELL. 2013. "Pioneering New Paths for Adult Religious Education in the Roman Catholic Community: The Promise of Communities of Practice." *Journal Of Adult Theological Education* 10, no. 1: 50-63. *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 30, 2017).

15 Ibid., 55

16 Ibid., 56

technologies and methods to reach their students in the new generation of learners.<sup>17</sup> Faculty through this approach is trained and educated on technologies utilized by students at the university level to engage them on a personal level on the Word of God. It is clear that only seeking to know the Word of God, but not having a connection is a real problem. It was found that University student who were raised in the church and had a working knowledge of the Word of God, did not have a heart changing experience that connected them to knowing the words in the bible.<sup>18</sup> This disconnect is what faculty members seek to change and develop by connecting the past with the current generation of learners through technology. The final approach to contemporary Christian education that will be discussed is right belief, right practice and right passions. Belief refers to confession with one's mouth that Jesus is Lord, and the belief in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, then you shall be saved.<sup>19</sup> In this approach the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to correctly describe and define the Christian faith and/or the biblical story is of great importance. This particular phase is called orthodoxy, and it refers to students learning the content of the Bible and the doctrines of the faith community.<sup>20</sup> Simply put the student is putting the word in their heart by learning a foundation of who Christ is and the belief in His death and resurrection. The second aspect of this approach is practice, also known as orthopraxy. Orthopraxy in terms of Christian education emphasizes the development of right behaviors, actions that demonstrate obedience to God and a faithful lifestyle.<sup>21</sup> In layman's terms Students learn from Scripture what they are to do and how they are to do it to make sure that their lives

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17Hulme, E. Eileen, David E. Groom, and Joseph M. Heltzel. "Reimaging Christian Higher Education." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no.1/2 (January 2016): 95-105. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017).

18Pillay, Gerald J. 2015. "'Higher' Education: A Perspective from a Christian University Foundation in Contemporary England." *Christian Higher Education* 14, no. 1/2: 4-16. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

19 Lawson, Kevin E. "A Proposal for "Right-Handed" Christian Education." *Theological Review* 31, no. 1 (April 2010): 92. *Advanced Placement Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2017). 21

20 Lawson, Kevin E. "A Proposal for "Right-Handed" Christian Education." *Theological Review* 31, no. 1 (April 2010): 92. *Advanced Placement Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2017). 21

21 *Ibid.*, 95.

conform to the pattern shown in the Scripture. The final element in this three prong approach is right passions, also known as orthopathy. Orthopathy fosters a heart response of love and worship toward God and an intimate relationship with Him.<sup>22</sup> Within this element learners would cling to what is good, and break through traditions to have a deeper connection in their relationship with God. All three elements combined are needed to promote transformation of the person toward a maturity in faith, and being more Christ-like.<sup>23</sup> Separately there are shortcomings to each element, however, combined this approach to contemporary Christian education is one built with spiritual formation and deeper connectivity with God. Now that there is a thorough understanding of the contemporary approaches to Christian education, it is time to examine the practices employed within Christian education.

### **Practices in Christian Education**

Practices employed within the United States, China and England in the realm of Christian higher education are modern and innovative. Practices include improving faculty knowledge base and how they interact with students, focusing on the whole development of the individual, and applying new technologies to the advancement of the college.<sup>24</sup> This section of the proposal will examine in detail the practices implemented in Christian education, that is leading to the advancement of Christ and education of the masses. This part of the paper will also focus on the practices utilized to make the faculty up to date as well as the students in the modern age. Allowing the focus not to only be on past dealing with culture, but focusing on God will allow the institutions to share the Word in new venues across the world. Let us begin by discussing the new technologies utilized in Christian education.

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22 Ibid., 96.

23 Ibid., 97.

24 Hulme, E. Eileen, David E. Groom, and Joseph M. Heltzel. "Reimagining Christian Higher Education." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no.1/2 (January 2016): 95-105. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017).

Christian education in the eastern and western societies such as China and England are rich with history in Christian education, and the practices employed by these nations are influential in this modern era. Current practices in China for contemporary Christian education includes allowing faculty to participate in religious research that impacts the Chinese culture, tradition, and society.<sup>25</sup> Allowing faculty to develop their research and expand their knowledge will allow them to connect with new methodologies that impact their students in their educational pursuit. In addition faculty is encouraged to actively participate in international academic communities to improve quality of study and research by adopting rigorous scientific and interdisciplinary approach in the investigation of religion and its interaction with Chinese tradition and modern society.<sup>26</sup> By reaching out of the comfort zone of their institution faculty will be able to get a better understanding of religious practice that impact their country as a whole. On the other side of the pond, the focus is on educating in the round: body, mind, and spirit.<sup>27</sup> By combining a full body approach to Christian education, the University in England has practiced a wellbeing approach to educating the new generation on the Word of God. In addition they have taken into account the diverse background of the learners, and welded it into their theological training. Another practice that has come into play for contemporary Christian education is the “Right Hand” illustration. Within the Right Hand illustration learners can imagine they have five fingers growing out of one palm, each connected by a common nervous

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25Peter Tze Ming, Ng. 2002. "CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA." *Christian Higher Education* 1, no. 1: 55. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

26 *Ibid.*, 63.

27 Pillay, Gerald J. 2015. "'Higher' Education: A Perspective from a Christian University Foundation in Contemporary England." *Christian Higher Education* 14, no. 1/2: 4-16. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2017).

system, common cardiovascular system, and interconnected bone and muscle tissue.<sup>28</sup> Each finger contributes its own actions to the collective whole, but most of the time they are working together to achieve a goal. Each finger fits into the five elements of right teaching, which include right relationship, right knowledge, right emotion, right will, and right practice.<sup>29</sup> Each element can work separately to encourage an individual on their faith walk, but within the realm of education each element combined allows for a transformational relationship with God. The final practice employed within contemporary Christian education is an immersion experience that allows the student and faculty to delve deeper into the Word and become more Christ like. Through a structured immersion experience adult learner are involving the whole person in the process, feedback is immediate, the individual is goal-focused, there is community involvement and the process utilizes a variety of learning tools.<sup>30</sup> Though these techniques are utilized in a seminary setting, adult Christian education is still the primary focus. Throughout an individual's time at seminary they would partake in various immersion experiences that were designed for the entire span of the formational years where integration of past experiences build upon new knowledge. This practice has proved to be especially valuable to contemporary Christian education as most learners may know the Word, but to put into practice what they have read is invaluable.

## **Conclusion**

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28 Lawson, Kevin E. "A Proposal for "Right-Handed" Christian Education." *Theological Review* 31, no. 1 (April 2010): 92. *Advanced Placement Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2017). 21

29 *Ibid.*, 99.

30 Clarke, Jim. 2011. "Immersion Experiences as a Learning Tool for Seminary Formation." *Seminary Journal* 17, no. 1: 32-34. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 30, 2017).

Contemporary approaches and practices in Christian education is one that is vital to those working in field of education, and those who are believers in Christ. As a student attending a Christian University the scholarship and teachings applied by the contemporary approaches and practices employed by Christian higher education institutions is very important. In order to not fall behind the secular universities Christian institutions need to have updated curriculums, advance technology, and faculty willing to adapt to the changing time.<sup>31</sup> After all for the contemporary approaches and practices to be implemented and benefit the student body, faculty and university as a whole. Advancement in technology will allow the Christian educators to step into the modern age and reach a new generation beyond the brick and mortar building. Technology is innovative and coupled with faculty innovations Christian education has taken a new turn in the modern world.<sup>32</sup> In addition to utilizing technology for spiritual formation, Christian education would not be complete without community involvement. CoP is a mechanism through which knowledge is created, shared, applied and learning occurs through participation.<sup>33</sup> Community on any level of education is a vital aspect that allows learners to practice what they read. It is the essence of growth that connects the learner to the world they are trying to save. This learner observed that when first attending Beulah Heights University as an undergraduate, and now as a Graduate student things have changed within the Christian University. Some things have changed for the better in terms of technology and online course,

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31 Smith, David I., Joonyong Um, and Claudia D. Beversluis. 2014. "The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in A Christian Context." *Christian Higher Education* 13, no.1:74-87. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017).

32 Hulme, E. Eileen, David E. Groom, and Joseph M. Heltzel. "Reimagining Christian Higher Education." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no.1/2 (January 2016): 95-105. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2017).

33OTERO, LUCILLE M., and MICHAEL J. COTTRELL. 2013. "Pioneering New Paths for Adult Religious Education in the Roman Catholic Community: The Promise of Communities of Practice." *Journal Of Adult Theological Education* 10, no. 1: 50-63. *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 30, 2017).

and yet some course have remained as the traditional brick and Mortar University. Christian education must adapt to the contemporary age or it runs the risk of missing out on educating the next generation.

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