

Overview of christian religious education approaches



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Introduction

The aim of this essay is to examine the definition of Christian religious education with a view to uncover the various traditional, theological and biblical approaches and practices in local churches. It will also explore its application and impact on youth development and its failure in the light of youth violence and ungodliness.

Christian religious education is defined as the process where by Christian learning takes place. It often involves “ teaching which enables practicing Christians to adopt and deepen their Christian belief, values and dispositions to experience and act in a Christian way. It depends to a greater extent on how this process is adopted and practiced in different churches.

Different practices in Christian education in local churches

At some degree of certainty that all Christian churches have a similar aim's and practices. The liturgical aspect is of paramount importance in the Trinitarian belief and practices in that it serves as introduction to what Christianity is all about. This is where the process of Cognitive learning takes places it involves the worship service where hymns are sang, lessons extracted from the books of the bible are read, sermon often punctuated with exhortation, admonishment and instruction in righteous living is delivered and prayers are said. It also involves the celebration of the holy Eucharist which Jesus Christ himself, recognized as the head of the church, initiated based on experience acquired in the worship service, it can be seen as Christian religious education is a confessional churchly activity of evangelism, instruction and nurture.

I assure that “ Youth are the most critical of all critics when it comes to religion”. Today, common inhabitants do pray and accept the holiness in church for Christ which they are aware that Christ constitutes the sacred bread and wine, but do not entirely act upon worshipping and fail to confront the thoughts and feelings to masses which would spread dignity of godliness among selves. The moral lies in the fact that this creates lackness to reach spiritual beliefs through worship and liturgy resulting in declination the faith which affects the divine nature approaching positivity.

Christian education is a vital important part in youth development. For Christian education to be explored, generation of today should be brought into contact through various practices. In the early centuries, reformers emphasized and trusted true faith and doctrines, to change and reform behaviour as the only solution for salvation in Christian education. Christian school movements prove a challenge as a messenger to convey god’s given mission and honour god.

Traditional approach

This approach was practiced since many decades and is still continued to be practiced which helps in binding and governing the ethics and morality within the religion and belief. Since beginning described, in leaving our homeland to teach the gospels throughout the world through scriptures, god conveyed his message – by sending his son Jesus for us, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, and Baptism for building unity.

Christianity consists of three things – Religious faith, way of life and community of mankind towards salvation are most important. The most vital

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of all belief preached is that there is only one god. The term Christian does not imply on the fact that a Christian should grow up in a Christian community, but precisely accepts Christian faith and belief, follows and leads the path of life on which Jesus walked on and made mankind accept Christian community through involvement and participation physically and mentally, as a result, traditional approach is how the local churches and preachers go about conducting their services. The apostle's creed was apparently developed to summarize the Christian doctrine for man who baptised himself.

Theological and Biblical approach

This approach is regarded as an abstract discipline which teaches what bible is written. It is the study of god expressing god's thought. The movement of bible indicates the doctrines to the kerygma to didache, to theological ethics, to revealed truth, to the way of living in Christian community.

God's salvation to the world, worshipping the holy spirit, baptizing people in the name of god, preaching gospels as the word of god, share Christ's own body and blood as bread and wine in holy communion, repenting and confessing god's forgiveness etc are the concepts of theological and biblical foundation to Christian education. Even though mankind is aware but fail to involve due to the increasing evil and greed.

The service is organized to accept the call of god and to love him and others and which aims to gather people to worship him in return allowing him to take control over the world and through his presence spread peace,

righteousness, justice, joy and helps in the growth of the life in an individual through increased faith.

Activities organized and performed in different local churches through to these practices

Some churches develop the initiative of the worshippers by confessing their faith in the words of the apostle creed. Each activity is correlated and composes a range of varied elements. Their current activities reflect the lives of an individual and drive them for a purpose through various numbers of activities to attain a better quality of life.

Due to activities, all age group gain variety of skills through many spiritual centred activities. Church acts as an interpreter between god and the worshippers to support in training the composition of these activities which are far more complex to solve a disturbed youth. They have to thereby standardize their curriculum and activities in regards to implement it.

Different denominations organize activities to resolve the aim therefore to meet the need of the youth. Curriculum should be more focused than just on providing knowledge.

Activities are necessarily planned to build youth commitment. I believe it is necessary to reach them, i. e. train them to be strong future leaders. They should be kept one step ahead, for their life is very challenging. I believe that the best way to outreach youths mind is to be a youth like them to understand their psychology as it differs from every individual. The same activities do get affected as the youth is choosy and subtle.

Changing activities for tomorrow

Here the question is voiced that, what substantial change can be brought apart from the current activities to eradicate the above upcoming and dynamic problems in nature with respect to behavioural management or of what medication of healing would work out.

I would comment, the activities in the practices should be expanded and conduct likewise programmes workshops on educating purity before marriage, sex, child abuse, exploitation, rape, adultery, adolescence sex, teenage mothers, drugs addiction, aids, and divorce. Workshops, seminars for sex, abuse, peer mentoring, identifying preventive measures instead of curative measures targeting the social, political and the economical factors would be effective for incorporating the overall issues to bring the insight of the good and evil sides of every consequence, discussion on essential real life skills. Our goal is to create “ world changers”, inviting the sacrificers of evil and giving and sharing healthy priorities to save ourselves and the world, before it becomes a terrible fate and a debt for our own selves.

As the world is in unsafe fists of crime, terrorism, corruption, violence, youth have been diverted to a fast-paced and expects instant opportunities.

Perhaps, the approaches of these local activities tend to be helpful and may bring positive results but I still feel that there is something missing, to monitor the youth from within. In an article - Practical: The Role of the Full-Time Youth Pastor in the Local Church, by Graeme Codrington, Denomination: Baptist (All), submitted on, May 18, 1997, states that, “ In a world that is so busy, and demands so much of all of its inhabitants, young

people need a secure environment, where they can experiment and decide who they want to be. They need significant people to be there to help them through this process. They need role models to follow”.

Above statement eventually satisfies the fact that these folks are craving for friendly support socially and for stimulation. Overall factors which conglomerate are peers, parents, teachers, church members and Christian community. All factors rely on one common feature which constitutes leadership. Ironically, most youth do understand the surrounding factors but the factors themselves become tough unknowingly that they can't quite control the situation which then becomes too late to recover. The task is questioned commonly as what kind of leader a person should be to prove creditability and capability to influence the youth to pursue the direction towards god? In an article again stated by, Graeme Codrington, Denomination: Baptist (All), – Practical: The Role of the Full-Time Youth Pastor in the Local Church, submitted on, May 18, 1997, “ Young people are not just “ little adults” (cf. Elkind 1984: 18). They are complex individuals who are battling to deal with the awesome transformation of their bodies, minds, and emotions. They are in a time of transition and growth, developing from the birthed bundle of potential to a fully integrated, functional member of society. The church is in a unique position to assist in this process”.

Church as a role model fosters spiritual growth in every youth making them responsible to participate in Christian faith; she is a sign for an entrance of the god's kingdom to the world of salvation, repentance, justice and peace to bring equality. She struggles hard and performs her duties wholly and

solemnly reminds parents to structure their offspring's life in Christian formation.

Church members acting as supporters, preach to establish and to promote a platform and share to encourage several types of civic, cultural, religious educational associations. In an article by Arthur Paul Boer - What must a Pastor know? Reflection on Congregational studies defines on writer James Hopewell's statement saying beyond the embarrassment. " He has also observed that churches are sometimes chagrined by the change of hypocrisy and lament that they cannot measure upto ideals of Christian community".

Writer James Hopewell referred by Arthur Paul Boer notes that Christian leaders are incharge and build a church thereby rise in hypocrites. I observe practically that, though the world is changing, church strategy is also changing in complementing the growth. It still targets the set mission. Even though, somewhere in the corner hypocrites do exist but church leaders aim to find out what is the outcome in the people from the traditional, theological and biblical practices.

Perhaps according my research, I suggest they experiment bringing out good approaches to youth's growth. Instead of the current activities followed in churches I would want to suggest the approach can be focused to bring in the outcome irrespective to exploration and innovation of ideas and thoughts for internal and external behaviour of an individual related to the surroundings around him, deepening of commitments to the teaching, provide opportunities to analyse socially and theologically and viewing his life in a theological manner. To build a framework of an activity consist of - to have an experience " like us", to sense new boundaries by exploring new <https://assignbuster.com/overview-of-christian-religious-education-approaches/>

links to every Christian among themselves and to god across social and cultural boundaries.

In addition, exploration and inventive programmes can be executed to judge youth's spirituality. Daily opportunities resulting in disorientation gets support through mission of god. Integration conceptual activities also can help in building and to capture ' a born leader'. Church leader serves them as task leaders in the corrosion and freeing the task of a disconnected mind by planning tactics and dividing the burden of other's through consultation. As the purpose is commitment, to serve the lost, skill based leadership formation training programmes can be organized to develop an effective leader so as to sustain the capability and capacity of the leader to solve the complaints lies in the dimensions of the ability. Workshops on intersections to shape boundaries of an individual and communities through theological and biblical language, symbols, and rituals to attain certain centered objectives.

As growth of globalization is tremendous, these leaders come across and face new opportunities and challenges. I believe they help in building an integral performance in conducting entrepreneurial business-based activities, describing the activities because youth's mind is business-oriented, therefore the activities are to be structured keeping business in mind involving biblical and theological approaches with the existing resources for a business oriented youth. They tend to produce facilitate management sources to sustain and develop faith and love. When the youth develops a church from within, he will be able to observe and analyse the holistic environment.

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The activities require presence of not only church members but also worshippers for youth development in successful implementation of these practices. Some worshippers form in small groups, some large varied to race culture. Arthur Paul Boer also examines simultaneously that when a group of pastors were having service of congregation, one among them exclaimed in deep breath " It showed me I'm not alone". So often in our churches we berate ourselves for problems we face: not enough men, too few youth, preponderance of a certain race or culture. He is clear with the fact that a single person fails, unity increases strength. We ourselves give birth to a problem and then strive hard to face it because as there are few leaders left to catch a grip to support a large community. Due to less number of youth, less support is achieved to sustain the laws and policies of the church and unable to accomplish god's mission. It is not only one who contributes but many. Above mentioned statement " It showed me I'm not alone" expresses that each race and culture form their own group; build small churches for their own community within their own boundaries, where god expects togetherness, wholeness. It requires lot of efforts to help small churches grow whereas large church with mass contribution grows as their already exist efforts in large numbers which take over the chained actions for development. Whether single church group or many, big or small, the development is important.

On this contradiction, I would suggest that this also includes that in small group the development is paid more attention and given a close eye, problems are spotted quickly and easily to meet the challenges. No matter how large or small challenges occur, the way we approach it is unique and

comprehensive as this brings out effects of development in the youth.

Whereas in large it becomes difficult to assist as there are more than one individuals. Due to small groups according to races and culture, differentiation exists. But the important criterion is group commitment and work effort in all sets of practice for congregations in any race or culture for a healthy youth so that to accomplish god's mission. As a result both objectives are co-related to each other.

To understand the nature of Christian youth it is a very distinguished and a unique phenomenon. Due to the increasing issues of 'peer pressure', this has led to the obstruction in the development of youth. There are negative as well as positive aspects of it. Negative aspects influence a weaker mind. It is the most consistent findings revealed in observation. Due to the inquisitive innocence, an innocent becomes a prey of the negative aspect, thereby exploited and develops an evil companionship where he adopts negative qualities and habits. But there is positive aspects as in there are some groups who work towards peer relationship. Here innocent gets an opportunity to identify his fear, weakness and have control over his own power. The peer mentors play the part in organizing programmes to understand the behaviour. They interact with the teens and open lines of communication, build up action plans to change the behaviour by using the discipline skills wherever necessary. As church members play an integrate role, it is a challenge for them to develop the youth and make Christian education reachable to them.

Teachers are responsible preachers. Youth growth depends on a teacher infact they are the true facilitators of our learning, are Baptist figures and <https://assignbuster.com/overview-of-christian-religious-education-approaches/>

true authors of an individual's life book. They also act as the resource developer and planner setting the curriculum for the healthy growth of an individual, depending how the curriculum is designed with the kind and level of leadership skills to recognize the youth psychology. Parents play a significant role in Christian education. They are the promising leaders which shape up Christianity, infact are the real teachers of Christian education. Parents act as a moral standard and support, therefore can synchronize to their growing youth to be aware from their early hood to gain knowledge in Christian faith and this is done when they themselves too experience a fullness of church.

Misunderstandings and miscommunication between parents and their children are one of the issues which follow breakings in the development of the youth. Due to parent's own principles, for respect and love of family values often creates harmness to the children's growth which tempts them to behave against them. Thus youth becomes a totalitarian of his own life by going against the values and ethics and unknowingly gets stucked in the torturous situations. Most Christian youth, fail to act upon the 10 commandments of bible.

must say, I myself as a youth in my real life experience have observed that the originality of the commandments has changed excessively and replaced with the following:

1. Thou must worship money
2. Thou must " lyrically" murder
3. Thou must have evil possession

4. Thou must have sex
5. Thou must enjoy drug addiction
6. Thou must prosper, worship own self
7. Thou must not feel guilty
8. Thou must have no respect for ancestral values
9. Thou must not serve, sacrifice
10. Thou must differentiate

Due to the above, youth fails to feel guilty in which guiltiness is a part of our conscience creating a false belief system as an obstacle in his maturity and creating structure of his own. Under such circumstances he avoids promoting prayer, sacrifice, grace, redemption, worship and meditation, atonement. Considering money and sex are the only two things reliable to satisfy the needs, creating a limitation and a boundary for establishing personal spiritual growth and development.

In general terms, when the efforts of religious and educational institutions, society lack to perform the planned task for Christian education, a positive approach is expected and constructed to gain knowledge and teaching through parents and teachers. Youth must be aware of guiltiness which is a gift from god to help us in being and doing well.

Still the question is raised in a Journal: Volume 5 Number 4, October 2003 by Author Charlene Tan, " Can Christian teachers and parents teach Christian beliefs without indoctrinating their students and children?"

Yes, they can teach Christian beliefs without indoctrinating their students and children they need to be careful when a child is to be handled as their

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minds are immature. At times it is difficult to understand them because their way of thinking is varied. Firstly before going to the next process, the first process has to be resolved. As teachers and parents are the role models for the development. In order to develop and understand these three role models should be systematically developed first. Only by abiding this rule, they can achieve the development in child. But the point lies beneath that how teachers and parents can prove themselves as an effective source of development by keeping in mind the relative factor of Child's mind compatibility and psychology? As there are variations in psychological behavior teachers and parents should be mentally prepared, be changeable and adjustment oriented accordingly.

The political and current affair of the nation is affected by corruption and evilness rationally which gave birth to vivid factors like jealousy, modesty and so on, making human's built a tendency to mislead the positive factors. The situations have made the teachers adapt those inequalities within them, affecting the surrounding factors. Parents have too due to their increasing self priority created barriers of understanding among their families.

Many people are often drawn towards the attention of the church because of their felt needs and not for spiritual needs.

For instance, it does occur that why the youth is tuned out of his own way? Even in their interaction with their own members it tends to happen with them that they fail to hear a word said to them - stating " I didn't hear a word you said?", even though it is obvious that they have said something relating to us. This proves a kind of negligence in contacting the positive

mechanism which grows in the back of our minds. Such system blocks all the wanted and useful messages allowing us to hear and see only what our mind tells us to hear and believe. As this tendency is increased in the youth generation, it is creating gaps between a believer and faith of god.

The question is - How? How can we overcome this problem? Youth have themselves developed a capacity in mind to hear only what pleases them without taking a decision that whether it is false or truth. My query is - How we can bring these groups of youth closer to god? Unconsciously resulting in unexpected calamities and unknowingly they are unable to repent it wisely. Due to this increasing factor, youth can't get a grip of effective communication and develop themselves internally. Here the parents then enter the scene to play their role.

The main question lies whether the local churches fulfill and meet to mature disciples in Christian education?

As stated above, 'youth' are the most critical of all critics when it comes to religion. In this modern era, youth is distracted to church because they are building castles in air due to the unmaterialistic desire. Youth today have focused their vision to crave success and prosperity for their rising life graph; they exploit their own ones due to greed and selfishness. During the primary phase of struggle and hard work, youth craves to achieve prosperity, at the same time, do thank god and accept his involvement for success, but hand in hand, lack to follow the bible's ethics which says to respect others in and with unity. Due to the competition and growth politically, more often youth seem to push the fellow mates and strive to takeover their place. They

themselves are unaware that they give birth to exploitation and inequality.

And due to inequality, unity is declined, wherein bible does not specify inequality. In a book source, Pastor - " Rick Warren' - illustrates in his book - The Purpose-Driven Church -" The issue is church health, not church growth!" declares warren. " if your church is healthy, growth will occur naturally. Healthy consistent growth is the result of balancing the five biblical purposes of the church."

In addition to this he also declares that " If u concentrate on building people, God will build the church".

I agree at a certain point with the above statement. I herewith would want to magnify on " How would one build a healthy youth for a healthy church"? In this sense I believe that both are co-related with each other. Again the issue arises in my mind ' How will the church be healthy if the youth is unhealthy?' The issue can't be only concentrated on church. For a church to survive, the basic foundation is the youth and for the youth to be saved and attracted the church has to be healthy. In my knowledge it is a ' Vicious Circle'.

Local churches upto some extent do specifically fulfill the discipleship through the practices and play a great emphasis in fulfilling and conveying the message of god to us, but still lack to read the minds and bring the youth closer to her, for which she has to upgrade her atmospheric appearance with new packages to reach the youth in a new taste due to the competitive modernism which is hovering on the youth.

The latter part can play the best part coz when first falls in place, everything else falls in place, from the beginning to the end, from all angles in all walks
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of life. Towards a healthy faith, healthy church can turn and seed a growth of spirituality through which mankind will grow spiritually from within thereby causing church growth.

Author Perry G. Down states in his book - " Teaching for spiritual growth" that ' how can we best enable Christians to grow towards maturity?' For this question he suggests three key concepts- ministry, believer, and purpose. But my understanding says that these concepts are incomplete somewhere to create a bond in reaching the results because today's youth is attracted towards the unrealistic worldly matters, but has resulted in declination towards the god's spiritual growth. The major role connecting these three concepts is commitment and effort. As the church ministry is the foundation pillar, the main aim is how much measure of commitment is valued and given to achieve the target successfully. Mankind is able to commit only when he chooses the right direction in fear and is able but this is unfortunate as the alien world tend to let us unidentify the type of strategies of growth for maturity. By identifying the type of strategies of growth, we can understand the level of growth required towards maturity at which we can be spiritual. Another reason for in growth is fear. As the youth fears to face unexpected problems, the efforts are less and require the hierarchy's support.

Author Gary C. Newton stated in his book - " Going towards spiritual maturity" quotes the principle that " God is ultimately responsible for all spiritual growth". The question arises at this point that if god is responsible for everything, what will be the purpose and role of human? I comment that while god supplies the resources like bible, church, Holy Spirit, baptism, it is <https://assignbuster.com/overview-of-christian-religious-education-approaches/>

also our responsibility to supply effort and commitment to utilize those resources and give results to god. In bible, Paul highlights this principle of his personal lifestyle and in his teachings comparing with the example of a soldier or athlete to illustrate the amount of sincerity and efforts. (1 Corinthians 9: 24-27), Paul states that “ In a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize”. I herewith conclude in a Christian race all runners (ministry, believers, purpose) will fail to get a prize if there is no effort that is commitment from everyone.

Along with the concept of ministry, believer, purpose; effort is also the key concept and it has to be achieved from the youth as well. A healthy youth will gain efforts only when the growth will favour them from within, when the forces of the ministry believers and youth will collide with each other to form a healthy growth.

This will create a mutual relationship between god’s provisional resources and our active involvement in process which is more clearly in Philipians 2: 12-13: “ Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is god who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose”. This principle is intricate but the application is clear.

If one is to grow towards maturity in Christ then one must cultivate and demonstrate the efforts with passion, Philipians 2: 17-18: “ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you be glad and rejoice with me”.

Therefore the conclusion lies in the above concept, both; effort of the youth along with the work of ministry, believers proves in the healthiness of the church. In the book " Youth At Risk" by Peter Christian Olsen, 2003, he highlights four basic needs which he has clearly created an awareness of the effects that affects the development of youth:

- *Acceptance - belonging*
- *New beginnings and second chances - forgiveness*
- *Significance - generosity*
- *Freedom - independence*

I agree with his confirmation that he examines in deriving the above developmental needs from the provision of the Almighty's resources as the absence of these needs do intentionally contribute in how they shape the personality, maturity, responsibility and stability of emotions. He emphasizes Christian community in respond to the needs determining that, the resources will be polishing youth through support during the fear and avoid them from destruction. At times the concepts will be foreign, indigestive for youth because unable to realize its importance. Rather the community need not re-interpret or change the language but simplify their thoughts and improve their visionary and understanding by change in structure through a friendly communication by becoming an effective leader to bridge the gap between the church and the youth. Therefore forces and efforts are needed for decision making which is an effective key in respond to ministry believer and purpose for a possibility of a healthy youth to build a healthy church, which will make the church flourish.

Supporting surveys

According to a survey, some findings proved that church fails to answer every question of the youth.

Q. 1 In what way and sense is Christian religion, faith and church viewed by today's modern youth?

Youth of today's modern era is firm on the point stating that inspiration is lacked in religion; they feel that the world is divided through religion and is the major factor which is affecting the growth. A 17-year-old Jude from Kent says confidently that " He does not agree with the church who talks on subject morality" and is " Overfilled with traditionality".

Youth pick their ideas which suit their taste through various religious beliefs. There are few in bunch who strongly believe, there exist only single religion which has controlled the truth. Young generation refer to perform all activities as per their own desire which in return less importance to the religious belief are being given, which gives birth to the side effects of the conduct.

Q. 2 Why do young crowd feel that Christianity is not a ' happening' cultural activity?

An 18-year-old Marcus said that he left church when he was 15 because the teachings did not amuse him and it did not interest him of anything as a youth.

The major quest, a struggle for a religion is to impose an exertion of force of involvement in terms of attraction. I usually attend church service wherein I find young ones missing the services. I kept questioning myself that, where

the young crowd has disappeared? Surprisingly the young ones have taken charge for the attendance of the church. In this consequence the church should give priority to change its curriculum and its way of presenting the services with new attractive packages for enhancement.

Q. 3 Are the young preachers practicing different approaches in Christianity declining.

What are your suggestions?

As the attendance of the youth in church has declined, but on the other hand people practicing approaches are increasing in numbers. The following is revealed through one of the youths that more the deepening are the studies of the bible, more a person becomes a hypocrite of the Christian leadership and unintentionally accepts and performs the lifes