



The Connection Between Education and Training in Christian Evangelism

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ABSTRACT

Education and training are vital to the success of Christians who are wanting to fulfill the Great Commission. While it can be difficult to understand the ones Christians are trying to reach with the life-changing Gospel, how the Christian learns and shares with others can make a big impact in people's lives. This study aims to determine the effect of good Christian education and training has on Christian evangelism. This study was conducted through sources and surveys with ten local pastors. The result of this study shows that good biblical teaching does impact the way Christians share with the lost in our communities.

Keywords: Christian, Discipleship, Education, Evangelism, Knowledge, Obedience, Performance, Results, Training

Introduction

In the area of organizations, there is a process that each person must go through, whether it is the manager or the employee. It is a process where they will individually learn the process of the ways the organization works to obtain the common goal of the organization being successful. Widayati, Arijanto, Widjaja, Magito, and Anggraini (2021) write, "Education and training is a teaching and learning process using certain techniques and methods, to improve the skills and work abilities of a person (employee or group of people)" (p. 26). Each organization has its own particular set of educational and training procedures that each person must go through.

The church is no exception in the area of education and training. The church's primary responsibility is to fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus tells His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 says, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (NJKV) With this command, Jesus ushered in the church, an organization that set apart this entity for being a light in the darkness of the world. This article will examine the connection between education and training in Christian evangelism, to revitalize the church's focus on fulfilling the Great Commission, through a theoretical review and a survey, asking ten local pastors their thoughts and beliefs on this subject.

Theoretical Review

Through the examination of resources on this topic, it can be easily seen how an organizational process of education and training can be related to the church organization. For this theoretical review portion, four topics will be addressed: education and training, motivation, knowledge sharing, and performance.

Education and Training

Education and training are vital to the success of any organization. Maitanmi (2019) writes, "Christian education is the process by which persons are confronted with and controlled by the Christian gospel" (p. 91). Gardner (2014) writes, "While there is much debate about how to define spirituality, most include a sense of meaning combined with transcendence, a connection to what feels greater than the self" (2014). Reaching those who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ allows us a greater sense of relational experiences with other people. It helps the Christian to see the other person as Jesus sees them. Gardner (2020) writes, "Some would argue that focusing too much on specific knowledge related to religious beliefs can lead to dangerous assumptions such as that everyone in a religious tradition will experience it in the same way" (p. 133). Each person we come in contact with has a personal story that is significant in making them who they are. Some have been persecuted for their religious beliefs, while others have never experienced persecution. Gardner (2020) writes, "One person's history of persecution for their religious beliefs will mean their experience of religion will feel significantly different from another who has worshipped safely, without challenge, all their lives" (p. 137).

There is value in researching different types of education and training practices for the church. Gardner (2020) writes, "The value of researching this field has been increasingly recognized, partly with a view of identifying the value of spiritual care and ensuring training fits what is needed" (p. 130). Campolo and Darling (2010) write, "It is an attitude of seeking to understand, to hear what is said, to identify and clarify the will of others, to reflect on issues, to listen without being judgmental, to comprehend what causes a person to think and behave in a certain way, to view issues from the way another person sees, to clearly understand what is being communicated, and to get in touch with the inner voice that communicates matters of the body, mind, and spirit" (p. 70). As the church begins the process of evaluating their needs of education and training, one important aspect is to look at the context of the people they are trying to reach.



Since a good, strong theological education will benefit the church and the individual member, the church must recognize that theological education can be a life-changing process that strengthens the church's goal of fulfilling the Great Commission. This is done, according to Du Plessis and Nkambule (2020) writes, "By broadening and deepening the student's spiritual formation, their education could have a life-long effect once they minister and live meaningfully in communities" (p. 2). Since the church has the responsibility to conduct this education and training with its members, the context is very important for the church to take into account.

According to Moreau (2012), "Contextualization is defined as "the process whereby Christians adopt the whole of the Christian faith in diverse cultural settings" (p. 46). If the Christian believes, as Ritchey (2016) describes, "Christian education plays a vital role in missions" then the church must examine the context of the situation surrounding the individual (p.361). Ritchey also writes, "The challenge is to communicate the truth of God's Word in ways that different people groups will understand" (p.393). The process of education and training these Christians to go out and fulfill the Great Commission will differentiate in the different contexts. A process may be successful in Atlanta, Georgia but it may not work in Romania. The context needs to be looked at when forming an educational and training program for the church. Kavanagh (2007) writes, "Related to the changing context is the greater variety in ways in which people perceive their spiritual selves with many forming their own combination of spiritual expression which may include aspects of more than one religious edition" (p. 117).

C.R. Malcor, in 1991, wrote a wonderful piece on Christian Education in the Local Church. He wrote, "In one sense, "Christian education" is a redundancy, for no education is apart from the truth of biblical Christianity" (New Horizons). This is a truth that each Christian believes in. He writes, "In Christian education, the truth of God is brought to bear upon every aspect of daily living...The goal of a Christian education program is the growth of the whole church into the image of Christ" (Malcor). Malcor then gives eight ways that the church can strengthen its educational process in the local church:

1. Have a Christian education board or committee.
2. Enlarge your educational vision.
3. Formulate clear objectives and goals.
4. Emphasize your positives.
5. Work closely with the home.
6. Take advantage of all available resources.
7. Cooperate with other churches.
8. Evaluate what you have been doing.

Motivation

In today's world, finding people who are motivated to work is difficult. Organizations are experiencing shortages of laborers who want to make a living performing a particular trade or work. Nasreen, Hussain, and Hashmi (2020) write,

"Motivation is generally defined as an internal condition that activates the behavior towards a specific direction" (p. 572). In their writing *Motivation in Organizations*, Daft and Marcic (1997) state that "motivation refers to the internal and external forces that arouse enthusiasm, desire, purpose, and persistence to pursue a certain course of action" (p. 410).

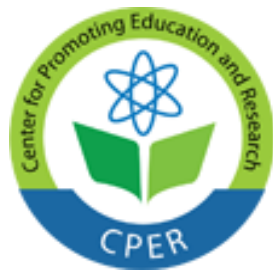
In the church today, the Christian may not be motivated enough to reach those who are lost. This is one reason for the decline of the church in America. Is there a difference in motivation between the world and the church? Motivation outside the church sees organizations attempting to reach a common goal, to be successful in whatever type of business it conducts. The organization has a clear goal and vision to reach that outcome. Lovaas, Jungert, Broek, and Haug (2020) write, "Inspirational motivation signifies that the leader provides the employees with a clear purpose, vision, or mission" (p.574). When there is a clear vision, motivation is present in the life of the Christian. Jesus gives us a clear purpose and vision in the Great Commission.

The Christian needs to be motivated to reach its community and the world. Lenz (1981) writes, "Motivation is a significant problem not the lack of it, but its direction" (p. 23). Motivation begins with the Christian leader, teaching and encouraging his or her church members to "find greater satisfaction in a given task when he experiences success in action" (Worthington, 2020, p.633). As the Christian leader formulates an educational training program, the motivation must continue to seek those willing to put forth an effort. Worthington also states, "Remember, it is not so much about helping your students be more motivated but better motivated" (p. 637).

Outside the church can be difficult in today's society. With so many different beliefs, the Bible continues to change people's lives, to give them a new life. The problem is the world is changing what the Scriptures say, changing for their well-being. Risner, Eames, and Betts (2015) write, "Christians should seek ways to engage with a secular world while remaining faithful to biblical principles" (p.100). Any education and training program implemented by the church must begin with the Word of God. The church cannot change or amend biblical principles just to reach certain people. Lenz writes, "Inspiring and maintaining a high standard of work presents a problem of motivation faced by every Christian leader" (p. 25).

Knowledge Sharing

Ipe (2003) defines knowledge sharing as "the act of making knowledge available to others within the organization" (p. 341). As the Christian gains knowledge, the Christian should not hold that knowledge within. Communication is vital to the success of the church organization. When people communicate, they share that purpose and vision, in hopes to motivate and encourage the work of the Lord. Anand, Walsh, and Moffett (2019) write, "People willing to share their knowledge will expect others to reciprocate for mutual benefit



and to achieve both individual and organizational goals” (p. 1222).

Being able to gain knowledge is a wonderful aspect to have in a believer’s life. Sharing that knowledge is just as important. Calian (2020) writes, “Sharing knowledge and the means of finding instruction into a particular form of knowledge differ from culture to culture and from an epoch to another” (p.158). He continues, “Knowledge itself has different meanings and purposes and may be culturally and historically bound” (p.158). Knowing the historical background of the people can be beneficial when sharing knowledge with them. Many times, that knowledge can come from the people living within the context of the people.

Sharing knowledge is beneficial in many different ways. One way is it humbles the person, but it takes a heart of wanting to do good and good communication skills. Anand, et. al. write, “If a seeker’s communication or inquiring approach is humble, the provider will be more inclined to share knowledge” (p. 1225). The humility it takes to share anything is seldom seen at any great lengths in the world today. People tend to have selfish ambitions and a self-approach to life.

But knowledge sharing also takes several key components. Bartol and Srivastava (2002) write, “A consensus among most knowledge management scholars suggest that employees’ willingness to share knowledge depends on three kinds of factors: individual factors, such as an employee’s commitment to the organization; group factors, such as trust among coworkers; and organizational factors, such as a general atmosphere of ethics that prevails in an organization” (p. 67). This is seen also in the church setting. When a church member has a great relationship, communicates well that gained knowledge, and agrees with the organizational goals, then knowledge sharing will be more beneficial and impactful. Green (1980) writes, “As knowledge becomes concentrated among an elite, there is a corresponding decline in the capacity of ordinary citizens to act effectively and to influence large organizations and therefore to control their own lives. In short, the managers grow stronger while the managed to grow weaker” (p. 181). Knowledge sharing among the leaders must take place for the success of the organization.

Performance

With education and training occurring, each step leads to the performance of the individual performing the task. Van Rooy (1971) writes, “A good creative thinker, because of his superior stockpile of facts, can assemble more combinations of thought than a man who has limited factual information” (p. 264). Creatively, evangelism can be a simple process: sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. But creatively sharing the good news, can impact the person in a more, impactful way.

Through the different methods of sharing, one’s faith, “a lack of planning is, even more, a serious handicap to personal evangelism” (Dobbins, 1941, p. 66). Van Rooy writes, “Having defined your objectives, narrowed your responsibilities, and plotted off measurable goals, you can

allow your mind to think creatively” (p.268). This creative thinking takes the unachievable and turns it into an obtainable goal. The performance level of the person will be successful. “How one aims will make the difference between success and failure in creative world evangelism methods” (Van Rooy, p. 267).

Before one seeks the lost, good preparation needs to be taken seriously. Dobbins writes, “Thoughtful preparation must be made to the end – that the right sort of atmosphere may be created and maintained in every department of the church and its activities favorable to personal witnessing and response to this witness in the public expression” (p. 66). There are many methods of evangelism that is known through studies and putting them in practice that works. The method “recognizes both the divine and the human factors in salvation” (p. 67).

There is one aspect of performance that must not be overlooked: Biblical integrity. Van Rooy writes, “While one must encourage creative uses of every massive device that is effectively evangelizing the world, he must not overlook the simple tool” (p. 269). Scriptural integrity and creative methods of evangelism will impact people’s lives in a greater way than lying to the person and not being creative, in hopes of winning them for Christ.

In the secular organizational world, Osman-Gani, Hashim, and Ismail (2003) write, “Many authors believed that employees could help to improve business performance through their ability to generate ideas and use these as building blocks for new and better products, services, and work process” (p.326). Apply this thinking to the church organization and the evangelism process. New and creative ways of sharing one’s faith will win them to Christ. Being Scripturally sound in integrity and doctrine will win them to Christ. Being obedient and motivated to fulfill the Great Commission will win them to Christ. One of the greatest tools the church has at its disposal is a person, surrendering to Christ, creating new ways of sharing their faith, being willing to share their knowledge with others, and being motivated in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Hypothesis

Based on the subject of this article and the above theoretical framework, this researcher formulated the following hypothesis:

H1: Education and training have an impact on the performance of Christian evangelism.

H2: Education and training do not have an impact on the performance of Christian evangelism.

Method of Research

Using the correct method of research is vital in this study. The researcher could have used only the qualitative research method and used the sources to prove the hypothesis. The research could have used only the quantitative research method and used surveys and statistics that can be easily found on the internet to prove the hypothesis. After careful deliberation, the mixed-method research will be used, using



the theoretical research and a survey that was sent to ten local pastors in the Baptist Association. These ten pastors have been in their roles as Senior Pastors for more than ten years. Through this survey, five questions were asked. Through the careful examination of the returned surveys, the results will be tabulated, and a hypothesis will be seen to be correct. The survey is posted under Appendix C. The questions that were asked:

1. How influential is Christian education on evangelism?
2. What is the pastor's role in Christian education?
3. How important is training when it deals with evangelism?
4. In your opinion, which is more valuable in evangelism, training, or education?
5. Please put the following in order in the importance of evangelism. (5 choices were given)

Results and Discussion

The results of this survey were not particularly surprising. The knowledge of these pastors who received this survey is remarkable. These pastors understand the importance of evangelism, although they are pastors of different sizes churches. Through conversation, each pastor understands that the church is failing to reach the world for Christ.

Hypothesis Testing Results

While looking over the results of this survey, it can be seen that the majority of the pastors that were surveyed believe the same thing about evangelism. Through this survey, it has been found that an education and training program that helps teach Christians creative ways of reaching people has been very successful in the churches that were surveyed. The pastors were truthful, both with the strengths and the weaknesses of their church members.

Discussion of Results

The results of the surveys were pretty simple to comprehend. Several pastors gave more in-depth answers in the comment box. With the first question, all ten pastors found a good Christian education was very influential in dealing with evangelism. Of the ten pastors, two shared stories of how some of their members created a way of sharing that they called *Sharing for Christ*. Within this program, they have already reached eight people with this creative way of sharing. One pastor believes the most important part of evangelism is obtaining a good, strong Christian education.

With question two, nine of the pastors believe in Scripture, that they are to teach and to equip the saints in doing the work of the Lord. This was not a surprising answer, but what was surprising was the one pastor who did not choose this option to believe they are the primary discipleship maker in their church. Does this pastor take into consideration a

family discipleship program? The church only has a few hours each week with its members, so a discipleship program outside of the church is just as important as having one inside the church.

With question three, seven out of the ten pastors believed that training is very important when it comes to evangelism. They believe that practice on how to share will greatly impact the person who is sharing. This is where the creative process in an individual's life can take over. The three pastors believe that training was important but being surrendered to the Holy Spirit was more important. While this is true, obtaining good training on how to share can impact people's lives.

With question four, six of the ten pastors believed that education was more important in evangelism than training was. These six believe the integrity of the Scriptures will reach more people than some creative way of training a Christian has received. The other four pastors believe the Holy Spirit is the key agent in evangelism, and although they do see these two options as important, they understand that the Holy Spirit is the one who changes people's lives, not the actual church member who is sharing with them.

The fifth question was to put in order five things that deal with evangelism. Here are the results of this poll:

Seven out of ten pastors chose to be obedient as the most important.

Six out of ten pastors chose to rely on the Holy Spirit as the second important.

Eight out of ten pastors chose Christian education as the third important.

Seven out of ten pastors chose evangelism training as the fourth important.

All ten pastors chose the correct interpretation of Scripture as fifth important.

Out of these being surveyed, none of the pastors get a sense that the church is doing all they can do. With many lost people in the community, the church is failing at reaching the lost. New methods and techniques need to be created in an attempt to reach people.

Conclusion

While it is important to understand what has been researched, our primary function that the church must do is to get busy. Jesus, the pastors' feel, did not give us the Great Commission for the church to fail. Unfortunately, this seems to be what is happening in the world today. Christians must refocus their thoughts and goals on reaching the world for Christ. Without obedient Christians, the Church will continue to fail. The Church has become irrelevant in today's culture.

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Appendix A

Education and Training in Christian Evangelism

1. How influential is Christian education on evangelism?

- Highly Influential
- Somewhat Influential
- No influence at all

Any Comments:



2. What is the pastor's role in Christian education?

- My role is to equip the saints
- My role is very limited
- My role is not important

Any Comments:

3. How important is training when it deals with evangelism?

- Training is crucial in the process of evangelism
- Training is important, but not crucial, in the process of evangelism
- Training is not important in the process of evangelism

Any Comments:

4. In your opinion, which is more valuable in evangelism, training or education?

- Training is more valuable
- Education is more valuable
- Both are equally valuable
- Neither is valuable

Any Comments:

5. Please put the following in order in importance of evangelism

Christian Education

Evangelism Training

Correct Interpretation of Scripture

Relying on the Holy Spirit

Being Obedient