

REVIVING HOLISTICALLY THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Dr. Sandra L. Jones, N.E.D. Dean
Rev. Robert L. Smith, II, M.Div., N.E.D. President
Rev. Gregory Nichols, N. E. D. Moderator



JUNE 2, 2025
NEW ERA DISTRICT CONGRESS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ANNUAL SESSION
Dean Address

Contents

Acknowledgments.....2

Introduction3

The Current Landscape and Ongoing Challenges3

Hope and Renewal in Christian Education4

The Goals of the Dean.....4

Conclusion4

District Dean’s Stewardship Report for June, 2025.....6

Acknowledgments

Pastor Gregory Nichols, District Moderator
Rev. Robert L. Smith, II – Congress President
Sister Reagan Dixon, Executive Secretary
Sister Joan Brown, Assistant Dean

The Dean's Staff

Sister Shirley Plummer
Sister Ronicia Plummer
Sister Virgie Hickmon
Sister Minnie Guido

Special Acknowledgement
Sister Marva Harper

Theme: Reviving Holistically the Purpose of Christian Education

Introduction

Christian education has long been an integral part of nurturing faith, understanding Scripture, and guiding moral development within the church and broader society. Scriptures such as: Proverbs 1:7 teaches the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (KJV) and one of my favorite scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17) teaches about the power of the Scriptures is for teaching, reprove, correction and training in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Then we read the greatest commandment of all from the Master Teacher, Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 – And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and, lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen!

However, over time, the role and effectiveness of Christian education in teaching God’s Holy Word have faced challenges. Questions arise: Where did the disconnect come from? When did it begin? And, most importantly, is it still happening? To understand these issues, one must delve into some societal **influences** that have shaped Christian education over the centuries.

The Current Landscape and Ongoing Challenges

Today, Christian education faces a diverse array of challenges in faithfully teaching God’s Holy Word. Among these are:

- **Declining Biblical Literacy:** Studies have shown that many Christians, particularly younger generations, lack basic knowledge of Scripture. This decline in biblical literacy reflects broader cultural disengagement with the Bible.
- **Competing Priorities:** Modern Christian education often struggles to balance theological depth with engaging programs that appeal to contemporary audiences. Entertainment and “feel-good” messages sometimes overshadow doctrinal teaching.
- **Digital Distractions:** The rise of technology and social media has created new challenges for Christian educators. Capturing attention and conveying timeless biblical truths amidst the noise of digital culture requires innovative approaches.

Hope and Renewal in Christian Education

Despite these challenges, there is hope for renewal in Christian education. Many churches, schools, and organizations are rediscovering the importance of **Scripture-centered** teaching. Efforts to address the disconnect include:

- **Discipleship-Based Models:** Emphasizing relational and small-group approaches to Christian education fosters deeper engagement with Scripture and its application to daily life.
- **Accessible Resources:** The availability of Bible apps, podcasts, and online courses has made God's Word more accessible than ever before, encouraging personal study and growth.
- **Intergenerational Learning:** Programs that bring together different age groups to study Scripture enrich the learning experience and foster community.

The Goals of the Dean

- ✓ To strengthen the mission of Christian education within the district, it is vital to continue **offering classes that promote a comprehensive understanding of biblical teaching**. These efforts should emphasize that biblical instruction is not confined to any one segment of the church but is intended to serve the entire congregation collectively. By fostering unity and inclusivity in scriptural learning, the district can **cultivate a deeper appreciation of God's Word across all demographics**.
- ✓ Moreover, **expanding the teacher pool** within the district will ensure that these educational programs are delivered with passion, theological depth, and accessibility for all. Having a diverse group of educators will further enrich the experience, bringing various perspectives and teaching styles that resonate with different members of the church community. Through such intentional efforts, Christian education can become a more dynamic, inspiring, and cohesive part of church life.

Conclusion

The journey of Christian education in teaching God's Holy Word is a complex narrative shaped by historical, cultural, and societal forces. While the disconnect is real and still present in some contexts, it is not insurmountable. By returning to a Scripture-centered approach, embracing innovative methods, and **prioritizing discipleship**, the church can reclaim and stay on the path of its **mission to teach** and **inspire generations to live according to God's truth**. **The task is challenging, but the transformative power of God's Word remains as relevant and dynamic as ever.**

I am reminded over 3,000 years ago in Acts 1:1, 8 when Dr. Luke was telling O, Theophilus everything that Jesus did and taught until the day in which He was taken up (after death on the cross and his resurrection). He gave the commandments to his disciples whom He chose, that they were not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait on the Holy Spirit to receive power to be witnesses about Jesus in Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

Similarly in Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus came and said all authority has been give to Me in heaven and on earth (that's us) Go, therefore and make disciples everywhere, baptize them in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, then teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. AMEN.

Humbly submitted

Sandra L. Jones

New Era District Dean

District Dean’s Stewardship Report for June, 2025

The following schools for the New Era District are as follows:

Class Number 2097: Rethinking Christian Education

This pivotal course explores contemporary trends, methodologies, and practices in Christian education, analyzing their alignment with Scripture and their effectiveness in fostering faithful discipleship. As a Sunday School Publishing Board-required class for ‘certified’ teachers, it provides essential insights for educators seeking to deepen their theological understanding and instructional competence. Open to all participants, this class is particularly vital for those needing recertification. Its availability on an ‘as needed’ basis ensures flexibility and accessibility, allowing certified teachers to maintain their credentials while staying informed about evolving practices in Christian education.

Class Offering: Virtual

Class Date: Saturday, January 18, 2025 and Saturday, January 25, 2025

Class Times: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Total attendance: 10

Total completed: 9

Instructor: Dr. Serena Rowen

Class Number 2097: Rethinking Christian Education

This pivotal course explores contemporary trends, methodologies, and practices in Christian education, analyzing their alignment with Scripture and their effectiveness in fostering faithful discipleship. As a Sunday School Publishing Board-required class for ‘certified’ teachers, it provides essential insights for educators seeking to deepen their theological understanding and instructional competence. Open to all participants, this class is particularly vital for those needing recertification. Its availability on an ‘as needed’ basis ensures flexibility and accessibility, allowing certified teachers to maintain their credentials while staying informed about evolving practices in Christian education.

Class Offering: Virtual

Class Date: Saturday, April 18, 2025 and Saturday, May 10, 2025

Class Times: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Total attendance: 16

Total completed: Pending

Instructor: Dr. Serena Rowen

New Era District Spring School

Class Offering: In-person at Second Missionary Baptist Church, 5111 Harry S. Truman Dr. Grandview, MO.

Dates: March 24 through March 28, 2025

Total attendance 131

Total completed: 112

Classes offered and Instructors:

#4005 – Doctrine of Salvation – Rev. Dr. Alfred White

#8035 – The African American Church and Social Justice – Rev. Dr. William Hedge

#8066 – Christianity and Contemporary Issues – Rev. Tony Johnson

#1027 – Survey of Nehemiah – Rev. Ellen Jackson

#1096 – Survey of Colossians – Ms. Virgie Hickmon

Seminars/Workshops and Instructors:

Youth and Young Adults – Mark and Vanessa Anderson, LaTanya Patton and Theresa Byrd

Ministering to Married Couples Involved with Church Ministry – Dr. Willis Garner, Sr. & Sister Cynthia Garner – Facilitators

Pastors and Ministers Division – Rev. Gregory Nichols, District Moderator and Facilitator

New Era District Congress Annual Session

Class Offering: In-person at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, 2411 E. 27th, Kansas City, MO.

Dates: June 2 through June 6, 2025

Total attendance 131

Total completed: 112

Class offered and Instructors:

#1019 – Survey of Ruth – Rev. Ellen Jackson

#1050 – Survey of Daniel – Rev. Ricky Bragg

#3007 – History of Baptist – Rev. Michael Phillips *Phase 3 – CCE

#4001 – Christian Beliefs – Dr. Charles Oliver *Phase 2 – CCE

#4026 – The Anatomy of Cults – Dr. Alfred White

#1079 – Survey of John – Rev. James Perkins *Phase 3 – CCE

Seminars/Workshops

Church Growth Seminar – Rev. James Terrance

Administration of Church Finances – Ms. Cynthia Bradford, C. P. A.

Baptist Deacon’s Ministry – Deacon Thad Jones

Music Ministry – Leading with Purpose and Clarity by the Word of God – Rev. Elwanda Richardson and Mrs. Kami Woodard

The Anointed Office of Preaching ‘Pasturing’ – Rev. Dr. Donald McNeal

YYA Session – Mark and Vanessa Anderson