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**Re-imagining Christian Education Through the Lens of Child Advocacy**

Abstract:

We believe that Christian education needs to be profoundly transformed. In this colloquium, we will consider what Christian education might look like if it were re-imagined through the lens of child advocacy.

The following chart will help us frame the conversation.

<b>RE-IMAGINING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THROUGH THE LENSE OF CHILD ADVOCACY</b>	
CONTEXT	Churches in the United States
PROBLEMATIC	Children in the United States face incredible obstacles: More than 16 million children live in poverty A majority of children cannot read at grade level A public high school student drops out of high school every 8 seconds <sup>1</sup>
AIM / PURPOSE	To help persons understand that the lives of all children are of worth and value to God, and To remove stumbling blocks that hinder a child from living the life that God created them to live <sup>2</sup>
FOUNDATIONS	Biblical: themes of love, justice and mercy, omnipotence of God, necessity of God’s agency. <sup>3</sup> Theological: Nine doctrines for a theology of child advocacy – such as the image of God, doctrine of justice, doctrine of mercy, the peaceable kingdom, the doctrine of incarnation, the preferential option for the poor,

<sup>1</sup> Children’s Defense Fund’s “CDF Freedom School: You Can Make A Difference” brochure. Additional statistics can be found in “The State of America’s Children 2014 Report” at <http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/state-of-americas-children/> accessed September 11, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Eileen W. Lindner, *Thus Far on the Way: Toward a Theology of Child Advocacy*. (Louisville Kentucky: Witherspoon Press, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2006), 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 42-43.

	<p>the primacy of children, the doctrine of love, the church as the body of Christ<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Theological anthropology: does God have a hierarchy?</p> <p>Ecclesiology: the church gathered and the church dispersed</p> <p>Sociological: the intersectionality of race and economics</p>
Practices: AGENCIES	<p>Can occur in the church “gathered” – Sunday School, bible study, preaching, Children’s Sabbath celebrations, etc.</p> <p>Can occur in the church “dispersed” – Freedom Schools, etc.</p>
Practices: APPROACHES (Process/Methods)	<p>Raising awareness with adults of the issues</p> <p>Asking adults what action God is calling them to take in response to this learning</p>
MISC.	<p>Literacy and Family Literacy programs</p> <p>Freedom Schools</p> <p>Connecting with schools in the community</p>

We will elaborate on the first four categories (context, problematic, aim/purpose, and foundations) in our presentation and suggest some possibilities for content and practices. We plan to focus the conversation and discussion on the category of practices (agencies and approaches).

Bibliography

*Ending Child Poverty Now*, Children’s Defense Fund,  
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/PovertyReport/EndingChildPovertyNow.html>

Kozol, Jonathan. *Fire in the Ashes: Twenty-Five Years Among the Poorest Children in America*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2012.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.13-31.