



# **Pneumagogy: A Proposed Theory for Effective Teaching and Learning in Christian Kingdom Education**

**Author:** Dele Alaba ILESANMI  
**Affiliation:** Department of Christian Education; Testament Theological Seminary, Makurdi  
**Email:** pstdeleilesanmi3@gmail.com  
**DOI:** 10.5281/zenodo.8310903

---

## **Abstract**

Following the series of developed theories underlying teaching and learning and their untamed infiltration into the Christian education ministry, there is a need to develop a theoretical approach to the teaching-learning process in Christian education if Christian Kingdom Education is to occupy its rightful place and fulfil its divine goals. Thus, the main objective of this research paper is to propose a learning theory that will engender a paradigm shift in our Christian educational system. This new theory, *pneumagogy* or *hagiospneumagogy*<sup>1</sup> is a sharp departure from the universal theories of learning. No doubt, the most reliable way of imparting positive knowledge in Christian Education is to choose the divinely inspired learning theory. Hence, the main thrust of this paper is to propose *pneumagogy* as an innovative learning theory for effective and efficient teaching and learning in Christian Education. The study revealed that theories that are biblically based, Christ-centred, and Holy Spirit-driven, like *pneumagogy*, are better than secular, non-biblically based theories.

**Keywords:** theory, *pneumagogy*, Christian kingdom education, teaching-learning process, the Holy Spirit.

## **Introduction**

Dele Ilesanmi (2021) theorises that "the church is a school, a highly organized spiritual educational institution..." He also explains that Christian education is a corpus of biblical truth, oxygen, and a vehicle of Christianity, without which Christianity is endangered, petrified, and atrophied. He opines that teaching is integral to the existence of Christianity and that Christianity is a teaching religion. This explains the importance and relevance of Christian education in the church. To buttress this, Walter Norvell (2003) says that Christian education is everything the church does since she teaches in everything she does. Ilesanmi (2021) defines Christian education as a process of initiating or introducing the heathen into the culture of the Christian faith, transforming and equipping him through the power of the Holy Spirit, with the sole aim

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hagiospneumagogy* and *pneumagogy* are terms that convey the same meaning as they are used by the author here. But the author prefers to use the latter term to convey his message in this paper.

of bringing him into the right relationship with God and his neighbours through Jesus Christ to impact his society/world with the instrumentality of the Bible (p. 6).

From the above definition of Christian education, if the church is prepared to fulfil the purpose of God on earth, the role of the Holy Spirit must not be downplayed. In his view, Williams brilliantly (2006) posits that:

*Christian education is Christian when teachers and learners are dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit in the learning environment. It is Christian when the purpose and goals are honouring to the Lord and to his kingdom. It is Christian when the curriculum is developed from the teachings of the Word and from an understanding of biblical theology. It is Christian when there is an overall understanding and perspective that God is in control and that teachers and learners are sincerely seeking to fulfil his will and purpose in all things. (Pp.639-643 in Horton, David [Ed.]).*

Authentic Christian Education should be *theocentric*<sup>2</sup>, *Christocentric*<sup>3</sup>, and *pneumatocentric*<sup>4</sup>. What is more, teaching and learning should be put under the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit, which Ilesanmi calls “*pneumagogy*” in his PhD work<sup>5</sup>. We must understand that the Christian education discussed here covers all the Christian activities and plans in the church, ministry, schools, Christian theological institutions, and all other associated Christian works and ministries, with no exception.

With the benefit of highlights, therefore, it would be better if, the church, the theological learning institutions, and all Christian ministries could rediscover the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching if they were to fulfil the purpose of God in this present world. Norvell Walter (2003) writes:

*For the Christian, learning is not merely academic or rational. While academic skills can be useful and while God redeems us totally, body, soul and mind, the Holy Spirit work is the transformational agent in the teaching-learning process. The Holy Spirit works through teacher, learner, environment, methods, and content (the Bible). He brings both conversion and maturation (a process) to the disciples of Jesus (pp. 94-106).*

Given the above quotations, without the Holy Spirit, the word is powerless. One can speak and quote the word of God, but without being ignited by the power of the Holy Spirit, the word becomes useless and ineffective in the mouth of the speaker. Thus, “Christian education” becomes “ordinary or secular education” without the Spirit of God. This is the exact springboard this writer is trying to provide through a theological educational teaching-learning approach, which he calls *Pneumagogy* or *bagiospneumagogy*, with a framework to think about the teaching-learning process beyond *pedagogy* and *andragogy* but as *pneumagogy*, without which education cannot be said to be Godly and Christian. This is because the content of Christian education (the Bible) is birthed by the Holy Spirit, God’s breath, to adequately prepare a man and make him useful for the divine assignments he has come to do on earth:

*<sup>16</sup> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim 3:16, 17, King James Version)<sup>6</sup>*

What is more, this teaching-learning theory, *Pneumagogy*, is theological. And, since Christian education is learning the content of theology<sup>7</sup> to transform lives and the society in which we live, it implies that Christian education and theology are inseparable companions. This means that education cannot be Christian without Christian theology. Therefore, we cannot separate the two. Christian education is the vehicle of theology, while *pneumagogy*, as a tool, is needed to drive the vehicle. In Christian education, teaching and learning are theological issues, and *Pneumagogy* is the major theory that underlies teaching and learning in Christian education. Therefore, *pneumagogy* in Christian education is theological.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Theocentric* means God-centeredness

<sup>3</sup> *Christocentric* means Christ-centeredness

<sup>4</sup> *Pneumatocentric* means the centrality of the Holy Spirit

<sup>5</sup> Dele Ilesanmi mentions the concept “pneumagogy” first in his PhD work in 2021

<sup>6</sup> All Scriptural quotations are from King James Version, except otherwise stated.

<sup>7</sup> “Theology” means Christian Theology, not just any theology.

The main objective of this research paper is to propose *pneumagogy* as a theory and the possibility of having distinctive Biblical learning theories, like pneumagogy. The *theory of pneumagogy* is an important concept in Christian education that helps to provide divine understanding to both the learners and the teachers and helps them to be well aware and augment their knowledge in terms of vital elements. These elements are educational goals and objectives, teaching-learning methods, teaching-learning materials, the needs and requirements of the students, and aspects related to the overall system of Christian education. Additionally, this paper sets out to develop a learning theory that will culminate in a paradigm shift in Christian (theological, ministry, and church) education. Though this paper focuses on this new learning approach, the major theories that underlie teaching and learning processes, predominately practised in the secular world, such as *pedagogy*, *andragogy*, *heutagogy*, and other theories, are succinctly discussed in this paper. No doubt, the most reliable and constant way of imparting positive knowledge in Christian education is to choose a divinely inspired learning theory, teaching method, and curriculum content.

The theory of *pneumagogy* is important for Christian teachers or educators. In understanding the *theory of pneumagogy*, the important areas that are taken into consideration are the meaning and significance of the *theory*. Having an understanding of this concept, *pneumagogy*, will promote student learning and teacher effectiveness and enrich the overall system of Christian education. It should be noted that Christian education here refers to all activities within the Christian ministries, the church, theological institutions, Christian schools, Christian community services, and so on. Thus, *Pneumagogical theory* is the theory that postulates how Christian activities, instructions, teaching, or preaching should be put into practice under the leadership of the Holy Spirit for effectiveness and efficiency.

### Why the Theory: The Meaning and Significance of the Theory of Pneumagogy

Research has shown that studies with strong theoretical perspectives are frequently regarded as adding value to any field of learning<sup>8</sup>, including that of Christian Kingdom Education. It is therefore essential for scholars and researchers in Christian Kingdom Education and other Christian academic fields to develop strong skills in theory development. Indeed, a well-crafted theory supports logical thoughts and helps, in no small measure, to make sense of the reality that researchers struggle to present<sup>9</sup>. Particularly, Christian Kingdom Educators have a lot to do in this regard by developing new theories that support logical thoughts that are Bible-based, Christ-centred, Holy Spirit-controlled, learner-related, and not secular-driven. This is the focus of this work. Scholars of secular education have developed various theories of learning, such as pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy, peergogy, social learning theory, and so on. All these theories, no doubt, have influenced the Christian world and indeed infiltrated Christian learning. This is a paradoxical influence. If truly we are the children of the Kingdom of God who have access to the secret place of God, living theologically, biblically, and Christly are a prerequisite for every Christian, and Christian kingdom educators and theorists should not do less. This implies that Christian kingdom educational theories must be theological, biblical, Christlike, and Holy Spirit-driven. R. Paul Steven (1995) states that “Biblical theological education is not inert theology and unreflective action but 'praxis-laden theory' and 'theory-laden praxis’”<sup>10</sup>. In his view, Immanuel Kant said something similar when he offered the maxim that experience without theory is blind but theory without experience is mere intellectual play. This means that what we can learn by doing is much more than a simple technique. Every action has an implicit theory, just as every theory has an implicit action.<sup>11</sup> This illustrates the vital role theory plays in our practical life experience.

Secular educators formulate their teaching methods for dealing with students and imparting them adequate information in terms of academic concepts and lesson plans<sup>12</sup>. Similarly, in the Christian kingdom, educators should not do less. Thus, to achieve the desired goals and objectives of Christian education and for effective teaching and learning, the Christian kingdom’s teachers, instructors, and learners need to acquire an efficient understanding in terms of theories of learning in Christian education, especially the

---

<sup>8</sup> Jacob Dankasa. *Developing a Theory in Academic Research: A Review of Expert’s Advice* in Journal of Information Science Theory and Practice · September 2015. DOI: 10.1633/JISTaP.2015.3.3.4, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> R. Paul Steven. *Living Theologically: Toward a Theology of Christian Practice*, [https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/article\\_living\\_stevens.html](https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/article_living_stevens.html) Retrieved 25/02/2023, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Radhika Kapur. *Theories of Pedagogy* (University of Delhi, November 2020), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345224426...>, 2020.

theories of *pneumagogy*, *christogogy*<sup>13</sup>, *bibliogogy*<sup>14</sup> and *theogogy*<sup>15</sup>. The two latter theories are also being developed by this author, but are not covered in this paper. However, they are also vital to the effective teaching and learning of Christian education. In imparting knowledge to the students and/or members of the congregation in terms of lesson plans, sermon preparation, and academic concepts, the teachers/instructors, and pastors or preachers, need to make use of meaningful teaching-learning methods, teaching-learning materials, and instructional strategies. Moreover, they need to be well aware in terms of assessment strategies. The primary benefit of assessment strategies is to find out how much the students or members have learned and whether their learning is facilitating the achievement of Christian goals or if there are obstacles<sup>16</sup>. Though some theories are termed knowledge while others are contrasted with knowledge, some can be tested while others cannot; some theories are idea-based while others are application-based; some theories help to further understanding while others can be barriers to understanding<sup>17</sup>. However, the theory of pneumagogy is Bible-based and Holy Spirit-controlled. It does not stand as an obstacle to understanding; rather, it aids understanding because it is divinely controlled. Thus, the meaning and significance of the theory of *pneumagogy* will be understood and appreciated in a satisfactory manner, when the teaching-learning methods contribute significantly to promoting student learning and teacher effectiveness.

### Methodology

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research with a descriptive research design. Quantitative research was used to numerically analyze and quantify data into hard facts, while qualitative research was adopted to describe the quality, opinions, or feelings of some people concerning Biblical Christian Educational Learning Theories, particularly pneumagogy. The population for the study comprised only Christians who were workers, ministers, Sunday school teachers, and pastors in their various churches, theological lecturers and students, and owners of Christian ministries across the 36 states in Nigeria. A questionnaire was the instrument used for the collection of data. All questions were constructed based on content as needed. The instrument used a 5-type Likert scale response questionnaire that determines: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. A random sampling technique was adopted for selecting the respondents. Oral interviews and personal observations were also used to collect information from the respondents. Data were collected using Google Online Form Questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to find out the possibility of having distinctive Biblical Christian Educational Learning Theories, especially the pneumagogical theory. The questionnaire was divided into sections A and B. Section A consists of the bio-data of the respondent, while Section B consists of the items to elicit a response from the respondent. The data analysis was subjected to a simple statistical analysis of percentages.

### Concept and Components of the Theory of Pneumagogy

There are different definitions of a theory as there are different researchers (Odi, 1982; Silverman, 2006; Vogt, 1993; Babbie, 1992; Schwandt, 1997; Merton, 1957<sup>18</sup>). In his work, Jacob Dankasa (2015) cites Corley and Gioia (2011) and defines a theory as a relationship of concepts that shows how and why a phenomenon occurs. It is made up of “constructs linked together by propositions that have an underlying, coherent logic and related assumptions” (see also Davis, Eisenhardt, & Bingham, 2007, p. 481). Jacob also cites Garver (2008) and suggests that theories vary in their specifications. He says that some theories are termed as knowledge while others are contrasted with knowledge; some can be tested, others cannot; some theories are idea-based while others are application-based. He further states that while some theories help to further understanding, others can be barriers to understanding. For Buckland (1991), Jacob explains that a strong theory is based on perception; whatever theory matches one’s perception becomes a good theory. Davis et al. (2007, p. 481) brought together the views of some scholars of theory development and enumerated four elements of a theory thus:

---

<sup>13</sup> *Christogogy* is another new theory yet to be fully developed by this author. The theory places Christ at the centre of the teaching-learning process in the classroom environment.

<sup>14</sup> *Bibliogogy* is another new theory yet to be fully developed by this author. The theory places the Bible at the centre of the teaching-learning process in the classroom environment

<sup>15</sup> *Theogogy* is another new theory yet to be fully developed by this author. The theory places God at the centre of the teaching-learning process in the classroom environment

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., The author of this work adapted the idea of Radhika Kapur (2020) to support his views.

<sup>17</sup> Jacob Dankasa. *Developing a Theory in Academic Research: A Review of Expert’s Advice* in Journal of Information Science Theory and Practice · September 2015. DOI: 10.1633/JISTaP.2015.3.3.4, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> See Jacob Dankasa, 2015.

1. Constructs;
2. Propositions that link those constructs together;
3. Logical arguments that explain the underlying theoretical rationale for the propositions; and
4. Assumptions that define the scope of the theory.

Similarly, Wacker (2004)<sup>19</sup> identifies four properties that should characterize a good theory, namely “formal conceptual definitions, theory domain, explained relationships, and predictions” (p. 631). Wacker defines a theory as a link that creates relationships between concepts. Researchers do not agree on a universal definition of a theory. Hence, different researchers define a theory based on their perceptions of what it does. In their view, Sutton and Staw (1995), the lack of a unified definition among scholars of what a theory is has often made it difficult to develop a strong theory. This is evident in many researchers’ use of some terms such as “model”, “paradigm”, “framework”, and “theory” interchangeably to denote the same thing. The distinction between the terms “a model”, “a framework”, and “a theory” should be made so that readers can clearly understand the differences<sup>20</sup>.

*Pneumagogy* is a learning theory that serves as the conceptual framework for teaching and learning in Christian kingdom education. The theory of pneumagogy postulates that pneumagogical praxis promotes effective teaching and learning in Christian education, and it is a method of teaching that sparks up the light bulb of understanding when applied appropriately. Pneumagogical learning theory is different from other learning theories in many ways. However, other learning theories like pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy, social learning theory, constructivist learning theory, etc. can adopt pneumagogical processes to fit into pneumagogical standards for effective teaching and learning in both Christian and secular education and induce positive behavioural change. Why is this adoption of the pneumagogical process important? It is important because pneumagogical theory is not humanistic, secularistic, or naturalistic; it is biblical and supernatural. It is a divine process of learning because God is the inspired Being, the Generator of ideas, and the Dispenser of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (Prov 2:6; 2 Tim 3:15–17; 2 Pet 1:20–21). Therefore, as Christians, we must seek wisdom, knowledge, and understanding where they can be found—not in the books of philosophers, nor the writings of men about their gods, nor in some other books tagged “holy books,” but in the Lord, the God of the Bible, the only living and true God through His written Word (the Bible) and living Word (Jesus Christ), who is the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24). Thus, the adoption of pneumagogy and other theories of Christian education like *theogogy*, *bibliogogy*, and *christogogy* is a requirement for the users of other secular theories before Christian education can be regarded as Christian.

The word *Pneumagogy* was first used by Ilesanmi (2021). He writes that “...teaching and learning should be put under the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit, which he calls “*pneumagogy*”<sup>21</sup>. The word is derived from two Greek words: “pneuma” and “gogy”. The word “pneuma” means “spirit”, though not just any “spirit,” we mean “the Holy Spirit” while “gogy” means “leading”. Thus, combining the two words, we have “pneumagogy”, that is, the art of leading people through teaching (preaching, training, discipleship, coaching, mentoring, discipleship, etc.) under the direction or control of the Holy Spirit. We can also use “hagiospneumagogy” to mean the same. The Greek word “hagios” means “the Holy Spirit” but the author prefers to use the word “pneumagogy”. It is the method of teaching and practice in Christian (theological) education. It also applies to all other aspects of learning if God is seen as the Source of all things. It is *The Holy Spirit-Centred Learning Theory*. In this theory, the Holy Spirit dictates the direction of learning. He (the Holy Spirit) is the power source of all information. Unlike other learning theories that promote humanism and secularism, *Pneumagogy* sees the human teacher as a “placeholder” and the Holy Spirit as the real Teacher who does the work. Even though other learning theories should not be jettisoned, the *pneumagogues* (Christian educators/teachers) are to subject them to the *pneumagogical process* before they are used. Similarly, *pneumagogues* or Christian educators are not limited to using one methodology of teaching to foster learning. The environment and the subject matter will determine the method and theory to use. However, all methods and theories could pass through a *pneumagogical test or process*. We can do this by contextualising them pneumagogically. This, in no small measure, will help fulfil the divine purpose.

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Op.cit., Dele A. Ilesanmi (2021) P.18

Every environment is the laboratory of Christian educators. The purpose of Christian education is to bring people closer to their Creator, teaching them to know the truth and do the will of God, transforming their lives to fit for the Master's use, and ultimately reigning with Him in His Kingdom. Therefore, whatever idea comes from this environment (or any culture) can be contextualised to fulfil the divine mandate. After all, no good idea comes on its own without divine involvement. This idea may only be abused to serve other purposes besides the one for which it is meant to serve. Hence, Christian education is to illuminate the dark abyss of functional ignorance in every environment: be it in education, school, industry, commerce, art and culture, government, ministry, office, marketplace, and so on. All of these are Christian educators' laboratories. This is why the theories that underlie teaching and learning and with which the world is familiar should not be jettisoned but should be contextualised to suit the divine purpose. Though these theories are not discussed in great detail here, they are mentioned and succinctly discussed to bring our attention to the fact that they are limited and not dependable tools in Christian education. The oldest and best known of these theories is *Pedagogy* which is a teacher-centred theory. Next to Pedagogy is *Andragogy* which is an adult learner-centred theory. Next to this is *Heutagogy* which focuses on self-determined learning. We have others like *Academagogy* and *Peergogy*. This paper focuses attention on the first three theories here, even though all are useful to Christian education if they are divinely, spiritually, or pneumagogically adapted.

For many years, the term "*pedagogy*" has been used to describe the mode of the educational process where the teacher dictates the direction of learning. It provides structured and paced learning that transmits information and skills from a teacher to a student.<sup>22</sup> We can trace its practice back to the formative era of Greek Education. Though our point of reference may be about three thousand (3000) years ago, we can trace the roots of *pedagogy* to a period preceding Greek civilization<sup>23</sup>. *Pedagogy* is the art of leading children and/or youth through the preceding Greek civilization.<sup>24</sup> *Pedagogy* is the art of leading children and/or youth through teaching. It is a teacher-centred learning theory. This theory was the backbone of education during the industrial era.<sup>25</sup> *Pedagogy* puts the teacher at the centre of learning; it gives the teacher authority to have full control over the learning environment; the teacher detains all the knowledge that is to be dispensed at school; and so on. But the term *Andragogy*, which concerns the teaching of adults or adult education, had come into usage well before the 20th century. For instance, it was in use in Germany as far back as 1883, and about a decade later, it came into use in Yugoslavia, France, and Holland.<sup>26</sup> The theory was developed to meet the needs of adult learners. As Erna Oliver (2016) observes, this learning theory is based on a transaction that addresses the immediate and practical needs of context-dependent learners or students.<sup>27</sup> This concept, *Andragogy*, is predicated on five theories as developed by Malcolm Knowles. Although this is not the focus of this paper, the five theories can be summarised thus: self-directedness, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn.<sup>28</sup> The next theory is *Heutagogy* which focuses on Self-Determined Learning. The theory was developed in 2001 by Hase and Kenyon of Australia to account for changing circumstances and provide effective education in the twenty-first century.<sup>29</sup> We have other educational concepts that have come into use recently in the teaching-learning environment but are not well-known by the majority of educationalists. Such concepts as *Paragogy* (also *peeragogy* or *peetagogy*, the theory of peer or peer learning), and *Academagogy* (a student-centred approach to teaching that encourages students to become life-long, self-directed learners. It is a mesh of *pedagogy*, *andragogy*, and *heutagogy* that allows for flexibility and interaction with students).<sup>30</sup> All of these learning concepts can be used in Christian education if they are pneumagogically embedded. This means that the pneumagogical process must be infused, or rather embedded into them when in use in a teaching-learning environment.

---

<sup>22</sup> Oliver, Erna. *A Move Towards Heutagogy to Empower Theology Students*. in ResearchGate, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Op.cit. Idowu Biao. *Pedagogical and Andragogical Warfare and the Psycho-Sociology of Andragogizing in Nigeria*, 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Oliver, Erna, op.cit., 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.,P.11

<sup>27</sup> Olive, Erna, op.cit., 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13, See Idowu Biao for a better explanation since the focus of this paper is not to explain these theories in detail.

<sup>29</sup> See also Olive, Erna, op.cit., 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Oliver, Erna, Ibid. 2016.

### Seven Components of the Pneumagogical Process

**Readiness/Availability**—The teacher (pastor/instructor/discipler) must be ready to teach, and the students (members) must be ready to learn. Where the two are not in agreement, the teaching-learning environment may be void or devoid of the illuminating power of God. The Spirit of God cannot move where there is a *conflict of readiness in learning*<sup>31</sup>, prayer, worship, etc.

**Preparation**—includes Bible study/searching the Scripture, and prayer)

**Meditation**—helps us to be alone with God in thought, separates us from distraction, give deep thought to the word, and open our heart to the Holy Spirit.

**Faith**—is a requirement before an effective and successful teaching-learning process can take place (Heb11:3; 11:6).

**Presentation**—must follow a pneumagogical processes 1-4 above. The content and the method must be divinely inspired. The Holy Spirit created an effect on human writers. He did not merely move their pens. Rather, He moved *them* to speak and write the Scriptures (2 Pet 1:20-21) cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17. The Holy Spirit illumines our minds, aids our memory, and speaks through our mouths.

**Application**—is putting into practice what is learned. Any kind of knowledge acquired that cannot be put into practice is useless. Thus, the application of the knowledge imparted is an important factor that brings about attitudinal change.

**Acknowledgement**—is a process of allowing and recognising the Holy Spirit in the teaching-learning process. This can be done in the form of prayer, praise and worship. The Holy Spirit is the real Teacher, the human teacher is a placeholder. Hence, we need to recognise Him and allow Him to have His way before the teaching-learning process, preaching-learning process, impartation service, or discussion begins (Prov 3:5-6).

The teaching-learning process in Christian education is empowered or enabled by the Holy Spirit. Hence Pneumagogy is the Holy Spirit-centred theory or the Holy Spirit-Directed Approach that provides divine or spiritual empowerment learning that transmits true or divine information from God through His Word and a spiritual teacher to a student (and/or a spiritual student) under the control of the Holy Spirit. We can simply define *Pneumagogy* as the art of leading people through teaching (preaching, training, coaching, mentoring, etc.) under the direction or control of the Holy Spirit. It is the method of teaching and practice in Christian (theological) education. It concerns how the teacher teaches and how the student learns in theory and practice without relying on his/her knowledge but solely on the Holy Spirit. It is an approach to teaching, the theory and practice of learning, or the act of teaching. The theory of pneumagogy identifies the teacher as an intermediary, the student as a recipient, and the Holy Spirit as the knowledge Holder and Dispenser. Here, the theory views the teacher as a “placeholder”. The real teacher is the Holy Spirit.<sup>32</sup>

### Five Biblical Theories or Facts

**God or Christ-centeredness or Centricity/Centrality of God/Christ:** All instructions must be God/Christ-centred for a person to fulfil the purpose of God for his/her life. All thoughts, knowledge, teachings, or instructions must be subject to the obedience of Christ our God.<sup>33</sup> All our children must be taught by God<sup>34</sup> because the earth must be filled with the knowledge of Him.<sup>35</sup> Only God can give true wisdom, knowledge, and understanding<sup>36</sup>, and the Holy Spirit remains the Teacher<sup>37</sup>. The major function of the teacher is to relate to the Master Teacher, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Word of God or Biblicality/ Biblio-centricity:** Learning must be rooted in the Word of God. Any instruction or teaching that is not rooted in the Word of God cannot be considered true or genuine learning. This is because the written Word or the Scripture is given to man by God through His inspiration for teaching, training, mentoring, coaching, instruction, reproof, and correction, in righteousness so that the children of God will be perfect, well-informed, skilful, intelligent, holy, and thoroughly prepared, furnished

---

<sup>31</sup> This term, “Conflict of Readiness in Learning”, is coined and used by this writer to explain a situation where teacher-student interaction in teaching-learning environment is diametrically opposed.

<sup>32</sup> John 14: 26

<sup>33</sup> 2Corinthians 10:5

<sup>34</sup> Isaiah 54:13

<sup>35</sup> Hebrew 2:14; Isaiah 11:9

<sup>36</sup> Proverbs 2:6, 7

<sup>37</sup> John 14: 26

or equipped unto all good works<sup>38</sup>. Jesus confirmed that the Word belongs to the Father<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, the word must be appropriated by the teachers to facilitate the teaching-learning process to engender a better life for themselves and their students. This will, in turn, positively improve a lot of society. Therefore, learning and teaching must be Bible-based.

**Holy Spirit-enabling/Centeredness/Centrality of the Holy Spirit:** As a person grows up, he/she must learn how to depend on the Holy Spirit, who teaches all things and brings all things to our remembrance<sup>40</sup>. The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. He is God living in us. He is the Teacher of this dispensation. Thus, He must not be ignored in the teaching-learning environment. No Christian educator can successfully impart knowledge and impact lives without the help of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of the truth; He lives in us, and He is with us<sup>41</sup>. The role of the Holy Spirit cannot be underrated in the teaching-learning environment. He does many things: He teaches, empowers, helps, brings things to our remembrance, guides, and leads, just to mention a few. With this in mind, no spiritual man or teacher can ignore Him. Any education that is not under the control of the Holy Spirit will cause the receiver confusion, calamity, unrest, and sorrow. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher. The maxim that “experience is the best teacher” is not true. No doubt, experience has its place; it cannot teach you all things, but the Holy Spirit can. Therefore, He, the Holy Spirit, is the best Teacher. The teaching-learning process is Holy Spirit-driven.

**Prayer:** Prayer is vital to the success of the teaching-learning process in Christian education. Prayer is communication with God, which includes praising and worshipping God in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24) and asking God for your desires in the name of Jesus (John 14:13-14). Asking God for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding will help us receive the correct interpretations of God’s word. This will help both the teachers and students to enjoy the same wisdom and understanding God gave to Solomon (1Kings 4: 29-34; 5: 12) and the excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding He gave to Daniel (Dan 1:20; 5:12,14; 6:3). Only God can give true wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, and this sound, true wisdom is for the righteous (Prov 2:6, 7). Therefore, we need to ask God for this in prayer (Matt 7:7). Prayer is essential to the teaching-learning process.

**Faith-drivenness:** This is the vehicle that we need every day of our lives for our desires to be accomplished and to please our Maker, God (Heb 11:6). It is through faith that the worlds were framed by the word of God (Heb 11:3). It is a vehicle that conveys the word of God to its destination when it is well appropriated. It retains the word of God in the hearts of the students/congregation. It helps us apply our knowledge rightly through the power of the Holy Spirit. No success can take place in the teaching-learning environment without faith-filled words and the Holy Spirit’s empowerment. The Christian learning environment must be faith-filled before a successful teaching-learning process can take place.

### Assumptions Underlying the Theory of Pneumagogy

The *Theory of Pneumagogy* is based on the following presuppositions:

1. The learner must self-empty himself/herself to permit the Spirit of God to lead. Self-emptiness gives the Holy Spirit the role of leadership in a teaching-learning environment. That is, the learner should see himself/herself as someone who knows nothing before God or in a Christian learning environment (Prov 3:5-6)
2. The Holy Spirit guides the teaching-learning process (John 14:26; 16:13).
3. The teaching-learning process is Holy Spirit-driven. Learners’ and teachers’ orientation shifts from human-centeredness to Bible-centeredness, Christ-centeredness, and Holy Spirit-centeredness. That is, a shift from pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy, or any secular-human learning theories to Christian learning theories of theogogy/christogogy, bibliogogy, and pneumagogy.
4. A shift from a self-dependent and human-dependent learning approach to a Holy Spirit-dependent learning approach.
5. The learning process is faith-driven for the accomplishment of educational goals.
6. Learning shifts from secularism, and humanism, to spiritualism.

---

<sup>38</sup> 2Timothy 3: 16-17

<sup>39</sup> John 14: 24

<sup>40</sup> John 14:26

<sup>41</sup> John 14: 17



7. Godliness is entrenched in the teaching-learning environment.
8. The Teaching-learning process is impactful when God is involved (1 Cor 3:6-7).
9. Relevant and useful wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are generated (Isa 11:2) because God is the fountain (Isa 11:2; Prov 2:6)
10. Teachers are placeholders in Christian education. The Holy Spirit does the major work (John 14:26).
11. The learning process is spiritually discerned. Thus, natural learners cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. It takes the learners who have the mind of Christ to understand the spiritual learning process (1Cor 2:10-16)
12. The illuminating power of God creates positive attitudinal change in learners.

### **Principles of Pneumagogy**

The principles here are in tandem with the above basic assumptions, which can be subsumed into five categories: Self-emptiness, Biblicality/Biblio-centricity, Christo-centricity, The Holy Spirit-enabling, and Faith-*driveness*. These are elucidated thus:

1. Learners must come to the learning environment by *emptying* themselves to permit the Holy Spirit to lead, fill, and empower them. *Self-emptiness* means, Holy Spirit, I don't know anything, come and teach me, fill me, and empower me. It is total surrender to the will and leadership of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Bible must be the major instructional material for learning. The curriculum must be Bible-based. All other instructional materials must find expression in the Bible and be consecrated to the Lord. That is, if a teacher is using any storybook, the content must be in line with the word of God. If a theory or a method is to be adopted, say pedagogy or andragogy, it must pass *the test of pneumagogy*.
3. Learning must be Christ-centred. The teaching-learning process must be centred on Christ. There is no other foundation than the one laid by our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>42</sup> He is the Foundation. The doctrine of Jesus Christ is the foundation or cornerstone of all theology. Any other foundation, apart from Jesus Christ or the one He laid, is another foundation – another theology not based on the doctrine of Christ. Therefore, the teaching-learning process in Christian education is Christocentric.
4. Both the teacher and the student must allow the Holy Spirit to lead them in a teaching-learning environment. The Holy Spirit is the best Teacher in this dispensation.
5. Both the teacher and the student must believe the Word of God which is truth (John 17:17; Psalms 119:160). For teaching and learning to be impactful and effective, faith must be applied.

---

<sup>42</sup> 1Cor 3:11; cf., Isa 28:16; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1Pet 1:20;

### Presentation of Data and Discussion of the Findings

#### Section 2: Biblical Educational Learning Theories (BELTA)

The instrument used a 5-type Likert scale response questionnaire that determines: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

Item	SD	%	D	%	N	%	A	%	SA	%
I think that using biblically based learning theories is better than non-biblically based learning theories in a Christian teaching-learning environment	5	4.3	2	1.7	3	2.6	31	27	74	64.3
Using biblically based learning theories will enhance a better understanding of the Word of God than non-biblically based learning theories.	5	4.3	0	0	3	2.6	30	26.1	77	67
I think that using biblically based learning theories will help in spiritual formation better than non-biblically based learning theories.	5	4.3	1	0.9	3	2.6	35	30.4	71	61.7
I think that using biblically based learning theories will help in good moral/value/character formation better than non-biblically based learning theories.	3	2.6	0	0	8	7	38	33	66	57.4
I think Christians are better off when they base their actions and thoughts on biblically based theories than on non-biblically based theories.	4	3.5	0	0	3	2.6	39	33.9	69	60
Using biblically based learning theories is better than using non-biblically based learning theories in teaching, preaching, discipleship/mentoring/counselling.	3	2.6	2	1.7	4	3.5	34	29.6	72	62.6
Using biblically based learning theories will help promote biblical educational concepts.	3	2.6	0	0	1	0.9	37	32.2	74	64.3
Christians should have their educational learning theories that are biblically based, Christ-centred, Holy Spirit-controlled, teacher-learner-related, and socially inclusive rather than relying on worldly theories.	4	3.5	7	6.1	1	0.9	23	20	80	69.6
I think the teaching-learning process will be effective when biblically based learning theories are adopted in a Christian teaching-learning environment	6	5.2	0	0	3	2.6	43	37.4	63	54.8
I think Holy Spirit-driven learning theories are better than worldly or secular learning theories.	4	3.5	1	0.9	2	1.7	23	20	85	73.9

Pneumagogy is a learning theory that is built on Biblical theology and offers twenty-first-century learning and teaching congruent with the demands of Christians. From the Table, it is revealed that more than 73% of the 85 respondents strongly supported that Pneumagogy – the Holy Spirit-driven learning theory, is better than worldly or secular learning theories. The total number of respondents who agreed that pneumagogy and other Holy Spirit-driven theories are better than secular theories is 108 out of 115, representing 96.9%. Additionally, the total number of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed that biblically based learning theories like pneumagogy are better than non-biblically based learning theories is 105, representing 91.3%. The study also reveals that 107 respondents, representing 93.1%, agreed and strongly agreed that using biblically based learning theories will enhance a better understanding of the Word of God than non-biblically based learning theories. The majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, with the highest percentage, that using biblically based learning theories will help in spiritual, character, moral, and value formation better than non-biblically based learning theories, as indicated in the Table. Using biblically based learning theories is better than using non-biblically based learning theories in teaching, preaching, discipleship, mentoring/counselling; and they also promote Biblical educational learning concepts. What is more, 69.6% and 20% (89.6%), representing 80 and 23 respondents (103) respectively, strongly agreed and agreed that Christians should have their educational learning theories that are biblically based, Christ-centred, Holy Spirit-controlled, teacher-learner-related, and socially inclusive than relying on worldly theories. This study also reveals that the teaching-learning process will be effective when biblically based learning theories, like pneumagogy, are adopted in a Christian teaching-learning environment, as shown in the table.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it is clear that a biblically based, Christ-centred and Holy Spirit-directed learning theory is better adopted in a Christian teaching-learning environment for effective teaching and learning delivery in Christian Kingdom Education. Pneumagogical theory is the theory that helps explain how teaching should be put into practice and how it will be valuable to the students in sharpening their skills and proficiencies. *The pneumagogical theory* emerges from a biblical perspective. It is an aspect of the science of Christian education. It is the fulcrum upon which Christian education or theological education revolves. Though this concept is a new theory propounded by this author, it is the pillar that holds Christian education buildings together. Without the application of this theory, and its associated theories of *theogogy*, *christogogy*, and *bibliogogy*, the teaching-learning environment may give way to secularism and humanism. And that may be catastrophic for Christianity. Additionally, it can be stated unequivocally that understanding the theory of *pneumagogy* and its associated theories is useful and worthwhile to instructors, pastors, preachers, teachers, and students in achieving academic goals and enriching the overall system of Christian education. It is hoped that this paper will be of benefit to established researchers, pastors, theological educators, Sunday school teachers, etc., who may be struggling with how to impact relevant and inspired knowledge on their members or learners for effective and efficient delivery of God's word, and especially younger Christian academics, researchers, pastors, and teachers who are the future leaders in the field of Christian Kingdom Education and other Christian disciplines. This new theory, if followed religiously, will expand the frontiers of *pneumagogical* knowledge and Christian Kingdom education. This is the first step to revitalizing Kingdom education.

### Bibliography

- Babbie, E. *The practice of social research*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992
- Buckland, M. *Information and information systems*. Westport, CN: Greenwood, 1991.
- Corley, K. G., & Gioia, D. A. *Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution?* Academy of Management Review, 36(1), 12-32, 2011.
- Davis, J. P., Eisenhardt, K. M., & Bingham, C. B. *Developing theory through simulation methods*. Academy of Management Review, 32(2), (2007): 480-499. doi: 10.5465/AMR.2007.24351453.
- Garver, N. What theory is? *Journal of Folklore Research*, 45(1), (2008): 63-70.

- Idowu Biao. *Pedagogical and Andragogical Warfare and the Psycho-Sociology of Andragogizing in Nigeria*. A Paper presented at the occasion of the Maiden Lecture Series of the Department of Adult Education, University of Lagos, 21 July 2005.
- Ilesanmi, Dele A. *Christian education for practical Christian living: John 14:6 Principle for Christian youths*. A paper presented at the Youth Programme of RCCG, New Things Parish on 27th October 2013, Basiri, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, 2014.
- Ilesanmi, Dele A. *An evaluation of accountability in Christian education in the redeemed christian church of God, Nigeria*. An unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Northwestern Christian University, USA, 2021.
- Ilesanmi, Dele A. *Pneumagogy in Christian education: Beyond the theory of pedagogy, andragogy or heutagogy*, 2022a.
- Ilesanmi, Dele A. *Pneumagogy in Christian education: An Introduction*, <https://christopress.org.ng/2022/10/07/pneumagogy-in-christian-education-an-introduction/>, 2022b
- Ilesanmi, Dele A. *Pneumagogy as a theory of teaching and learning in Christian education* <https://christopress.org.ng/2022/10/07/pneumagogy-as-a-theory-of-teaching-and-learning-in-christian-education/>, 2022c
- Jacob Dankasa. *Developing a Theory in Academic Research: A Review of Expert's Advice* in Journal of Information Science Theory and Practice · September 2015. DOI: 10.1633/JISTaP.2015.3.3.4
- Merton, R. K. *Social theory and social structure*. New York: Free Press, 1957.
- Norvell, Walter H. *The great commission imperative of teaching: Why Christian education should be on the cutting edge of the church's mission today*. In *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* Vol. 1 No.2 (Fall 2003): 94-106.
- Odi, A. *Creative research and theory building in library and information sciences*. College and Research Libraries, 43(4), 312-19, 1982.
- Oliver, Erna. *A Move Towards Heutagogy to Empower Theology Students*. ResearchGate, 2016.
- Radhika Kapur. *Theories of pedagogy*. University of Delhi, November 2020, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345224426...>, 2020.
- R. Paul Steven. *Living theologically: Toward a theology of Christian practice*. [https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/article\\_living\\_stevens.html](https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/article_living_stevens.html), 1995.
- Schwandt, T.A. *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 1997.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication.
- Sutton, R. I., & Staw, B. M. *What theory is not*. Administrative Science Quarterly, 40(3), (1995): 371-384.
- Vogt, W. P. (1993). *Dictionary of statistics and methodology: A non-technical guide for the social sciences*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Wacker, J. G. *A theory of formal conceptual definitions: Developing theory-building measurement instruments*. *Journal of Operations Management*, 22(6), (2004): 629-650. doi: 10.1016/j.jom.2004.08.002.
- Williams, Dennis. *Christian Education*. In Horton, David (ed.), *The Portable Seminary*, (2006): 639-642.

---

Pastor Dele Alaba Ilesanmi, PhD has been a lecturer at Redeemed Christian Bible College (satellite campuses) for over 15 years now and an Assistant Research Professor at Testament Theological Seminary (online) with expertise in Biblical Research and Christian Education with a special interest in Biblical Educational Learning Theory and Practice (a field he is currently pioneering), Biblical Theory and Theology. He has written eight books and not less than 40 articles. His bestseller is "Globalizing True Education: A Divine Mandate."