

Philosophy of Christian Education

“When the written Word of God is at the heart of every subject in the curriculum, when its principles are applied to all of life and learning, when the transcending power of the Word enlivens lessons, inspires hearts, consecrates kids to Christ, it also prepares them for life and commissions them for excellent service. The Bible unleashed in education is a powerful force.” Dr. Carole Adams

Education Defined

Noah Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language defines Education as follows:

Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to

- *enlighten the understanding*
- *correct the temper*
- *form the manners and habits of youth, and*
- *fit them for usefulness in their future stations.*

To give children a good education in manners, arts, and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties.

The conveyance of knowledge is an important element of education but not the singular goal. Education is also the process of “instruction and discipline” by which character and moral behavior are formed in an individual as they are being equipped for the useful and productive role that God has prepared for them.

The Foundation of Christian Education...a Biblical Worldview

Secular education rooted in a postmodern worldview places man at the center of his universe and confines his perception of truth to the boundaries of Naturalism. There is no intelligent design or designer to guide mankind on his course through history. Truth is subject to redefinition according to popular consensus or personal convenience, thus knowledge lacks a consistent context to give it meaning or purpose. Secular education is limited merely to the communication of seemingly random facts, observations, and conclusions within nonrelated fields of study. The aim of secular education is to stimulate and advance the intellect of man that he might attain to greater levels of self-actualization.

Christian education rooted in a Biblical Christian worldview places God at the center of His universe. God has a special plan for His creation which He has been faithful to execute throughout history. He is the singular source and absolute standard for all truth, and has given us knowledge and understanding of this truth through natural revelation and His special revelation, the Bible. The Bible is the integrating hub around which all knowledge and all academic disciplines are connected, and provides the criterion by which all other subject matter is judged. Christian education is unlimited in its discovery of God’s truth to be found in every sphere of life. The aim of Christian education is to assist mankind to know and understand God and His purposes that he might worship and glorify God through every part of his being.

The Role of the Parent

God has appointed parents to be the stewards of their children’s education (Psalm 78:1-8, Deut. 6:4-9.) As an extension of the home, the Christian homeschool must support and encourage parents in this responsibility and privilege. It is Biblical for the parent to delegate the task of educating their child as long as they remain an active part of the educational process and in regular contact and cooperation with the teacher. It is not Biblical for the parent to dissociate himself or herself from their child’s education so that they have relegated their God-given responsibility to another.

The Role of the Teacher

In the Bible the words “teach” and “learn” come from the same Greek root, implying that teaching and learning are synonymous. If a student has not learned, the teacher cannot rightfully say that he has taught. In addition the teacher must continue to be a learner, increasing in knowledge and honing his skills, or his effectiveness will begin to wane.

The teacher must be passionate in his calling, striving for excellence, ensuring that his preparation and presentation offer the best possible learning environment. The teacher should not merely be a conveyor of content but rather a mentor and facilitator of a learning process in which the student actively discovers truth, and acquires understanding and wisdom, through critical analysis, reasoning, problem solving, debate, and discussion. A student’s mastery of the subject matter should be established prior to proceeding to the next topic, ensuring a 100% success rate. This experience, will hopefully, be transformational and will create in the student a lifelong love of learning.

The teacher is a “living textbook” whose life-witness will have an impact on students long after his lectures are forgotten. Thus the teacher must be openly and boldly a Christian with a solid commitment to Christ, possessing a mastery and proper application of God’s word, and displaying a reliance on the Holy Spirit in every aspect of his life and instruction.

A teacher should value the worth and dignity of each student and seek to sincerely love them unconditionally and unselfishly. This love must be communicated in both word and deed, with grace, understanding, respect, affirmation, and encouragement within the context of clear boundaries and high expectations. Relationships of mutual trust between the teacher and his students are essential for learning. As it has been said, “The student will not care what you know until they know that you care.” Building these relationships will likely require an extra investment of time outside of the classroom.

Education should not be offered as a “one size fits all” program. Within the obvious limitations and time constraints of the classroom setting, the teacher’s instruction should be personal and individualized, addressing the specific needs, learning styles, and aptitudes of each student. The teacher should seek to enrich and nurture the student’s entire being...body, mind, soul, and spirit.

The Role of the Student

The student is ultimately responsible for his academic success. The ability to think, to reason, and to learn are divine qualities and precious gifts from God with which the student is to be a good steward. Though the parent can support and the teacher can encourage, only the student in his personal liberty can choose to cooperate in his own learning process and must be held accountable for this responsibility.

The Bible does not recognize a “teenage” period of life in which young people are focused on themselves and consumed with the pursuit of pleasure. Children of this age group must be mentored to become self-governing, responsible, respectful, unselfish adults. They should be challenged to pursue excellence in all they do and be given multiple opportunities to live out their faith by serving others in sacrificial ways.

The Role of the Christian School

The Christian school has a tremendous opportunity to not only develop the intellect of its students but also to provide an atmosphere where students can grow physically, emotionally, and spiritually, can discover their God-given gifts and talents, and become all that God has created them to be. It must not only provide opportunities to succeed but also the freedom to fail and to learn from mistakes. These opportunities should be intentional with specific outcomes in mind. If we desire for students to be servant leaders we must offer discipleship and leadership training with multiple opportunities for students to lead and serve among their peers. If students are to acquire a passion for missions and outreach we must offer meaningful hands-on opportunities for them to reach into their community and reach out to their world. The ultimate aim is to inspire students to love the Lord their God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength.