

Christian Schooling: A Resource for a Rapidly Changing World

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I often think of the Old Testament account in which Moses gathered the Israelites together to give them final instructions as they were about to enter the Promised Land. For them, life was about to change—big time! God had led them for 40 years in the wilderness in preparation for their entry into the land where they would begin a new life in a new home. Moses shared with them the message that God had given him, including this very important expression of God’s concern and care for them: “Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

The distinctive of Christian schooling is to produce students with the intellectual development and spiritual formation that God so greatly desired for the children of Israel—individuals whose hearts are inclined to fear God and keep His commandments.

The education of your children is not unlike that which Moses was giving to the Israelites, who were about to begin life in a very different world. Moses was not preparing them to live as they had done for the previous 40 years; he was preparing them for changes of unbelievable and magnificent proportions.

Reflect on some of the major global and cultural changes of the past 25 years—changes that have had varying but real impact on every person in the world: the fall of the Iron Curtain signaling the end of the cold war; the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in South Africa and the ultimate demise of apartheid in that nation; the high-tech boom and bust, and seeming boom again; the advent and prevalence of the Internet; 9/11 and the reality and fear of terrorism; devastating natural disasters. All of these events and many more illustrate the reality of change throughout the world. Never has the significance of Christian schooling been more evident. Life is no longer a matter of “business as usual.” A world of continuous, dramatic, and life-impacting changes is the world in which our children will mature.

Consider the array of global and cultural changes that have occurred during the lifetime of a ten-year-old child: a typical fourth or fifth grader. Because of 9/11, terrorism has taken a toll on life—physically, economically, and psychologically—in every corner of the world. The frontal attack of a secular culture against Judeo-Christian values has resulted in a growing approval of gay marriage and abortion, legalization of recreational marijuana, and the dismissal of Christ followers as intellectually deficient individuals. Nation after nation is struggling with economic recession, unemployment, and the horrific aftermath of massive natural disasters. Crime seems to have become aggressively brutal and savage, with mega shades of evil.

Positively, there have been unbelievable advances in science, technology, and medicine. We have instant and remote capability to observe, monitor, and control through wireless technologies, robotic devices and drones, voice recognition, and retinal imagery. Physical life, at least in most first-world countries, is the recipient of bold new medical discoveries and advances.

In a now-decade-old book titled *Inevitable Surprises: Thinking Ahead in a Time of Turbulence* (Gotham Books, 2003), Peter Schwartz wrote about a number of medical breakthroughs—advancements that could increase life expectancy to 150 years. Though such breakthroughs may have sounded a bit far-out in 2003, they are no longer the imaginative work of science fiction

writers. Lab-grown organs generated from an individual's own stem cells harvested from bone marrow or skin can now be incubated in special, degradable molds and transplanted to renew a failed organ's function. Though this technology is still in the early stages, lab-grown organs are today at work extending the lives of individuals.

Oftentimes we become so caught up in the wonder of technological, medical, and other scientific development that we fail to consider the potential moral and ethical issues that arise with each new advance. What will be the prevailing philosophy driving bioethical concerns and decisions?

Some things that were major scientific breakthroughs not too long ago, even at the level of Nobel Prize-winning research, are today the stuff of high school lab experiments. It is absolutely essential that tomorrow's scientists, engineers, political leaders, bioethicists, and educators be not only academically strong but simultaneously infused with a thoroughly Christian worldview.

Where else but in the Christian school are the scientists of tomorrow, as well as the participants in every profession and vocation—some of them your own children—going to develop crucial Christian worldview understandings and biblically based moral and ethical positions? Where else but in Christian school classrooms will young hearts and minds be transformed with intent as God would have them be? We argue strongly: Christian schooling is not a refuge from, but rather, a resource for, a rapidly changing world.



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