

Christian Schooling in the Postmodern Culture

by Dr. William Brown

I was enjoying lunch with an administrator from a public school and our conversation turned to the wonderful role we possess as educators. I mentioned that I felt honored to accompany students along the path to discovering truth. He looked at me with disdain. "Truth," he said. "We can't use that word on our campus. It's divisive."

Truth? Divisive? The search for truth is supposed to unite us. Yet, in today's postmodern society even the idea of truth is disruptive. Nowhere is this more evident than in our schools.

At one time, many considered a Christian education as a withdrawal from the prevailing culture. Now, however, it is becoming increasingly evident that Christian education is providing the most vigorous and complete instruction for our children. The results are evident: young men and women who know how to think deeply and broadly; and graduates who are energized about the future and who have a desire to make a positive difference in the world.

How does Christian education accomplish this? At least three characteristics of Christian education make it a vital investment for these postmodern times.

First, Christian education is not indoctrination but true education.

The truly educated person seeks a broad and deep understanding of the world. Christian education is free to investigate all topics from alternative world views because of its commitment to the discovery of truth. This approach explores the different ways people seek knowledge through science, religion, philosophy, and literature and then equips students to evaluate why people believe and act as they do.

Second, Christian education is not fragmented, but holistic.

Education at its best helps students make connections between subjects and important issues. Unfortunately, fragmentation is characteristic of today's postmodern future and much of our children's learning experience reflects this. Students can learn the facts of history, master the laws of science, and understand the rules of grammar, but such an approach may only help them learn "what" and "how" but never discover "why." Christian education actively explores questions of origins (where did everything come from?), morality (how do we decide what is right and wrong?), and destiny (what happens when we die?) -central questions to the human experience. Students are equipped to think deeply and serve knowledgeably.

Third, Christian education is not limiting, but empowering.

Christian education aggressively takes on the culture in a bold attempt to equip students for lifelong leadership and service. At the personal level, Christian education holds up the importance of virtue and the development of true character. Integrity, courage, sacrifice, and love are modeled by teachers who model a biblical worldview which is the foundation for becoming an effective spouse, parent, and citizen.

At the public level, Christian education provides the knowledge and skills students need to see beyond shallow notions of popular media and politics to the essential worldview and values at the root of issues. Students learn to engage the culture with the heart and mind of Christ.

Far from being divisive, the search for truth provides the path to freedom (John 8:32). God has revealed truth to us through creation and His Word (Psalm 19; Roman's 1-2). Christian education is broad, deep, and empowering. The results speak for themselves.



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