

The Necessity and Urgency of Christian Education: Part 1

Every Christian parent and every godly Pastor in America should be deeply concerned about the present condition of our nation. America is in deep, spiritual trouble and at the root of our problems is the conspicuous absence of Christianity in the lives of most of our children. Sadly, even the children growing up in our professing Christian homes are suffering from a lack of solid, Christian training.

Our day sharply contrasts with the America that once existed. You may not know it, but America was once dominated by Christian education. The Bible was once the main focus of education across our nation. Consider the following information provided by Dr. James Kennedy in his book, "What if the Bible Had Never Been Written?" On page 88 Dr. Kennedy writes:

"Virtually all of the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights—all the major founding documents of this nation—had received a strong, well integrated Christian education. In the lower grades, the Bible was the chief textbook, and the church or home the classroom. Many educational elites of our day would no doubt mock such a scenario, but the result was a highly literate society.

Christianity made the United States the leader in universal "public" education around the world. Schools and universities blanketed the land, since our forefathers believed that all men needed to read the Bible to understand the doctrines of the Christian faith. Education was necessary for all so that all could study the precious Word of God and be faithful servants of Christ.

As far as higher education is concerned, America was committed to Christian education. The Christian origins of Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Columbia, Princeton, and many other of our great universities is well documented. Of America's first 126 colleges, 123 were Christian. Faith wasn't separate from learning. Taking their cue from the Bible educators applied faith to all aspects of life, including politics. The Scriptures were the bedrock of all higher learning at that time..."

Of course today all that has changed. Gradually, the "public" school system, once the vision of Christians to educate the populous with a thorough knowledge of the Word of God, has steadily declined to its' deplorable condition today. The Christian community all across our nation has witnessed the systematic removal of Christianity from the educational experience of the nation's youth. Our current system has been so secularized that for all practical purposes the influence of Christianity is non-existent! As a matter of fact, the current public system is quite hostile to anything "Christian." It is beyond the scope of this short letter to document that fact, however, it should be painfully clear to the Christian

community that the current condition of public education is not acceptable. We desperately need a return to Christian education.

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To begin with, the Christian community must re-evaluate its lukewarm attitude toward education in general. Without realizing it, to many of us have grown contented with godless education! How did it ever become acceptable to Christian leaders and Christian parents to go along with a system that leaves out Christianity? It should be unthinkable for Christians to raise their children in a system that communicates no knowledge of the true God, has no room for the Bible (which is the basis for all true education), and which does not confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

While you may have grown contented with godless education, I assure you that the Lord has not! On the contrary, the call of scripture is that we saturate our children with a knowledge of God's Word! The Lord will not excuse us of the responsibility to *diligently* teach His Word to our children. From a truly Christian perspective, the goal of education is to instill a fear of the Lord into the hearts and minds of our children. Anything less is totally inadequate!

Remember, this letter is to the Christian community. Obviously, those who have no loyalty to Jesus Christ will not share the convictions expressed herein. However, we Christians are followers of Jesus Christ and we are compelled by loyalty to Jesus Christ to make Him Lord of education! At the heart of our conviction as Christians is our Lord's emphatic statement "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.*" Jesus Christ is "*the truth.*" That reality establishes the necessity of placing Jesus Christ at the center of our children's education. It is a gross contradiction for Christians to leave Jesus Christ out of the daily education of their children. After all, our goal is to disciple our children, that is, win them to Christ and train them to follow Jesus Christ. How we intend to do that while our children grow-up in a godless system is a matter of grave concern.

Quite frankly, we need a "fresh" vision for our children. Our children are at risk. Like tender plants that must be given time and attention to come to maturity, our children need careful discipleship. Therein lies the secret for past generations. Our Christian forefathers saw the necessity of education built on Jesus Christ and His Word. By providing a daily education centered upon a growing knowledge of the Lord and His Word, they effectively captured and shaped American culture. Again, Dr. Kennedy writes,

“One great Christian who taught many of the Founding Fathers was Reverend John Witherspoon, the Presbyterian minister who served as the president of the College of New Jersey (later known as Princeton). Witherspoon was the only minister to sign the Declaration of Independence. Witherspoon said, “Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ.” Witherspoon’s best-known pupil was the chief architect of the Constitution, James Madison. A Virginian, Madison was expected to attend college at William & Mary. Instead, he chose the more Presbyterian-oriented education at the college of New Jersey, where he translated the Bible from Hebrew to Greek to English. Madison’s views on government were thoroughly shaped by Witherspoon and other Presbyterians. Thus, Madison’s political worldview was one shaped by the Bible more than any other source. Gary DeMar, author of *America’s Christian History: The Untold Story*, writes about the leaders Reverend Witherspoon trained: “Witherspoon taught a vice president, 21 senators, 29 representatives, 56 state legislators, and 33 judges, three of whom became members of the Supreme Court.”

This story illustrates the profound effect that Christian education can have on the nation when firmly in place. In the days when American education was controlled by the Christian community a nation rose to freedom, the rule of law became the norm, and representative government was born! Furthermore, our country enjoyed a much greater degree of civility. The nation’s children were the benefactors! They developed moral character and a strong faith in Jesus Christ. That is not to say that every child was won to Christ. However, it is quite clear that when the Christian community was providing a God-centered education for their children it had a profound effect upon our nation.

Why have we lost this vision for “daily” Christian education? Why are we contented to leave our children at risk? The deliberate, purposeful teaching of God’s Word, aimed at the heart of our children, is the only hope we have of delivering our children from a world system alienated from God. Have we decided that the world is not really that bad? Are we blind to the spiritual consequences of a godless educational system? Can we not see that recapturing education ought to be one of the top priorities of the Christian community?

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Let’s reflect upon some things. Suppose you lived in a free nation. Suppose you lived in a prosperous nation with the opportunity to provide the best for your children and grandchildren. Suppose you could build a community school where Jesus Christ was honored as Lord. Suppose you could establish a daily experience for your children where they were corrected by the godly influences of

the Word of God. Suppose you could create an academic atmosphere where godly teachers and administrators were free to instruct students to seek the Lord in all they do. Suppose you could send your children to a school that reinforced in the classroom what you teach in the living room at home. Suppose you had an ally that provided a daily challenge to your youth to follow and honor Jesus Christ. Suppose your child could graduate from a high school that had a passion for Jesus Christ.

Isn't it true that we do live in a land of freedom and prosperity. Isn't it true that we do, in fact, have the opportunity to develop private, Christian schools that can have a profound effect upon our children and ultimately upon our nation? Isn't it true that we do not have to settle for godless education? Isn't it true that it is well within our ability to create schools that have a passion for Jesus Christ? What excuse do we really have for our neglect?

I would submit to you that it should be the priority of every Christian family to place their children in a godly educational atmosphere. Homeschooling and private, Christian schools must be viewed as necessities. This priority can be established in your thinking as a Christian when you once see the dangers of a godless system and the necessity of a truly Christ-centered education. Remember this: *you only have a short window of opportunity to lead your children to Christ and to prepare them to follow Christ.* This must be our top priority! We must not neglect the spiritual well-being of our children! We must make it our priority! We must make it our priority to actually train our children in the Christian faith!

Personally, I remain committed to the vision of a Christian school that will serve well the families in our community that are concerned about a Christ-centered education for their children. I will always be grateful that my son and daughter had the opportunity to graduate from a Christian school. I would not trade the Biblical instruction they received for anything this world has to offer! What my children enjoyed is what I believe is a necessity for all Christian families. The benefits of a godly, Christ-centered education cannot be over-estimated! May the Spirit of the Lord stir our hearts to make Christian education our priority is my prayer.

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