

Why Education must be Christian

1.

By Andrew McColl, 2016

The end of learning is to repair the ruin of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, and to be like him (John Milton).

Ask people why education is important, and you'll get lots of reasons. Some of them I would agree with, but many I won't. Why?

Because educational lies have been with us since the first one in the Garden: "...you will be like God..." (Gen.3:5). We know where lies originate.

Now I'm a firm believer that education is of great assistance to individuals, families, churches and society. But it has to be education in the truth, as defined by scripture. The Psalmist said,

I do not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with pretenders. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked (Ps.26:4).

Any society has to be careful what it accepts as true. We Christians especially, had better be very fussy about what we choose to believe and why, because deceit and pretension are works of the wicked.

But there's more. People without a thorough commitment to the truth are very susceptible to being manipulated. Money, sex and power are not evil of themselves, but history shows a great number of people have been very easily manipulated by them.

Some other issues that have been used to manipulate people are fear and guilt, and no doubt there are others. When Jesus spoke about the truth, and Pilate asked Him "What is truth?" (Jn.18:38), implying it was of little significance to him, he was very soon afterwards politically manipulated by the Jews. They warned him, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar" (Jn.19:12).

Pilate really did want to free Jesus, but he also wanted to preserve his reputation and career. Which was it to be? Four verses later, "...He handed Him over to them to be crucified."

Since Charles Darwin, the church has got very wobbly about the issue of 6 Day Creation, because it was deeply challenged over Biblical inerrancy. A significant proportion of Church leaders then and now have preferred to hide under the blankets, wishing the issue would go away. It won't. If Christian leaders have gone AWOL on inerrancy and a 6 Day Creation, is it any wonder that the church's moral authority has been shredded in the modern era?

I have a friend aged about 30, who attended a large, local "Christian" school for 12 years. In those 14,400 hours of education, was he ever told (either verbally or in print) that the Lord our God made the world in 6 days? He can't ever remember it. Yes, lots of other things like devotions, worship, prayer with and for the children, but a clear statement of Creationism?

Sorry, we don't do that kind of thing. As Jesus said in another context, "...these are the things you should have done, without neglecting the others" (Mat.23:23).

When we give up on such fundamental issues, no one can tell what will be the next piece of territory lost. Maurice Newman in "The Australian" recently explained,

When then prime minister Tony Abbott wanted to establish a taskforce to investigate the bureau's [of Meteorology's] temperature dataset and other related records, the cabinet, Environment Minister Greg Hunt and his department all came to the bureau's aid by watering down the proposal and setting up a panel approved by the BoM to "strengthen governance oversight".

Hunt said: "In doing this, it is important to note that public trust in the bureau's data and forecasts, particularly as they relate to bushfires and cyclones, is paramount."¹

Greg Hunt doesn't want unpleasant questions being asked about the accuracy of the Bureau of Meteorology's data. Why would that be, Greg?

Well, it might bring into public focus further questions about "Climate Change," and what government departments do with taxpayers' money. So, the Mega-dollar Bureau is asked to monitor itself. Won't that be a joy? The truth is sacrificed for a bag of bureaucratic sweet talk.

To change the future for the nation, we really have to begin with the children of the nation, beginning with the children of the church. This is why the consistent education of Christian children remains a controversial subject in the Christian community.

You thought that you'd be popular and everyone would like, understand and appreciate you when you decided to home school your children? Not at the moment because of the state of the church, and this may take a long time to change.

The Lord spoke much about education through Moses in books like Deuteronomy, and Moses gives us a wonderful example about how he handled the temptations to compromise. The New Testament says,

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing to rather endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ better than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen (Heb.11:24-27).

Conclusion:

Your radical decision to home school your children using a Christian curriculum will not be appreciated by all, in the same way that Moses' decisions weren't appreciated by all. But in exposing them daily to God's Word, without the corrupting influences of humanist curriculum, teachers and peer-group, you are preparing them for something: a faithful, uncompromising life, and eternity in the presence of the God of truth.

¹ Maurice Newman, "Bureau of Meteorology needs to Open Records to Audit," 'The Australian,' 1/2/2016.

2.

Watch yourselves that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will be a snare in your midst. But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim- for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a Jealous God- otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, and you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons to play the harlot with their gods (Ex.34:12-16).

All educators accept that values are at the center of education. The question is, whose values? If we are serious about a Christian education for our children, we have to take Biblical values very seriously.

This will be confronting for some parents and many children, especially those who have spent time in public education. It requires changes of attitude in many ways. Education begins with how we think.

Truly effective education means helping to form the values of children. This will include influencing the kind of person they will marry, because religion really does affect values. This all begins with taking this Biblical command very seriously: "...no covenant with the inhabitants of the land in which you are going."

A lady with 3 primary school aged children recently wrote to me, saying

We have a local (small) country school that is willing to allow homeschooling students to participate once a week (for either PE or Music, and be invited to Sports Days etc the school holds). They already have one homeschooled boy who comes once a week on Wednesdays, as his interest is in PE/Sports, and it works out quite well. Is this an option we could utilise?

As a Christian educator, I'm not unbiased in this. I have a vested interest in this family continuing to utilise Christian education, because I get paid through it, so I plan to acknowledge this with this lady. But setting this aside, as a fellow believer in Jesus Christ, I have a concern for her children's education and future too.

What's happening with this lady? I believe she's in the early stages of a religious and educational seduction. If this doesn't change soon, this could be disastrous for her family.

Why should I use such strong language? North makes this point:

The modern State seeks to steal the legacy of the faithful: the hearts and minds of children. The educational bureaucrats today have imposed a massive system of *ideological kidnapping* on the voters. This is the inherent nature of all compulsory education, regulated education, and tax-funded education. Education is not neutral. The bureaucrats have built a gigantic system of humanist indoctrination with funds extracted

from all local residents in the name of common-ground education... This agenda is deeply religious.²

This lady probably doesn't understand what she's getting into, but in my opinion she's jeopardising the future of her children, just so they can enjoy some free sports days. But what will be the outcome?

One of them could be this:

Mum, can we go to that school all the time? Those kids there are really nice...

Then there's this one:

Mum, all my friends think that a 6 Day Creation is really funny...

And:

Mum, what's really so wrong with two people living together? Hardly any of my friend's parents at school are married...

I was able to visit this family, and I discovered more. Mum's under pressure from children who won't always do as they're told, so she's been having real doubts about herself and her ability to educate them at home, leading to struggles with depression. I encouraged her husband (who was there for the interview) to take a lot more responsibility for what's taking place, to check himself on how the goals for each day were completed, and to take an interest in how they are progressing as individuals. That way, children become much more accountable to him. That should change things!

Unequal yokes with unbelievers (see II Cor.6:14-18) means just that. Twelve years of education (which equates to 14,400 hours) will either prepare a child for a godly Christian life of work, dominion and godly confidence, or it will hamper him. What will it be with your children?

Conclusion:

Give your children the best and only true education: one that is steeped in scripture, so they are equipped to handle the challenges of life, and can face life with legitimate confidence.

Mark Twain wasn't a believer, but he understood one thing well. He said

Don't let schooling interfere with your education.

² Gary North, "Inheritance and Dominion," 1999, ch.28.

3.

Adam thought, incorrectly, that it would be better to join Eve in her sin than to obey God and be separated from her. So, he ate the forbidden fruit. The external act followed upon the thought. “Out of the heart proceed evil acts.” Note that in the Bible the term heart usually designates the intellect, and only one in ten times the emotions: It is the heart that thinks. Sin thus interferes with our thinking. It does not, however, prevent us from thinking. Sin does not eradicate or annihilate the image. It causes a malfunction, but man still remains man (Gordon H. Clark).³

Perhaps the most important and fundamental role of education is to help children to think differently, that is Biblically. Paul made an indirect reference to this fact, when he said, “When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things” (I Cor.13:11).

Growing up as a Christian does mean putting away childish and immature thoughts. But what do we replace those childish thoughts with? And what are our children to replace those thoughts with? It had better be more than sophistication. Why is that?

Being Biblical and being sophisticated are not necessarily the same thing, for there are many sophisticated people who are far from God.

Noah Webster made this point in defining education:

The bringing up, as of a child; instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and for 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 (Noah Webster’s Dictionary, 1828).

A true education is a Biblical one. It commences with the facts of creation: God made the world from nothing in 6 days, exactly as Genesis teaches. If He made the world as the Bible says, than it follows logically that all He says about us in His Word, is true.

This means that each of us is a person designed by God, made in His image, with specific gifts and talents, and this applies to all people. Concerning believers, it means that they were chosen by Him from “...before the foundation of the world” (Eph.1:4), so they have an eternal purpose that God has ordained, giving them great security and confidence concerning everything that happens to them, good or bad.

There is a sharp contrast between Christian, and humanistic education. Rousas Rushdoony (1915-2001) was a ground-breaker in exposing the humanism of state education. He had some excellent insights. The following chart from his book, “The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum” (p.172-173) begins to lay it out:

Christianity

Humanism

³ “The Christian Philosophy of Education,” 1988, p.136.

1. The sovereignty of the triune God is the starting point, and this God speaks through His infallible Word.

2. We must accept God as God. He is alone Lord.

3. God's Word and Person is the Truth.

4. Education is into God's truth in every realm.

5. Education is discipline under a body of truth. This body of truth grows with research and study, but truth is objective and God-given. We begin by pre-supposing God and His Word.

6. Godly standards grade us. We must measure up to them. The teacher grades the pupil.

7. Man's will, and the child's will, must be broken to God's purpose. Man must be remade, reborn by God's grace.

8. Man's problem is sin. Man must be recreated by God.

9. The family is God's basic institution.

1. The sovereignty of man and the state is the starting point, and it is the word of scientific, elite man which we must heed.

2. Man is his own god, choosing or determining for himself what constitutes good and evil (Gen 3:5).

3. Truth is pragmatic and existential: it is what we find works and is helpful to us.

4. Education is the self-realization and self-development of the child.

5. Education is freedom from restraint and from any idea of truth outside of us. We are the standard, not something outside of man.

6. The school and the world must measure up to the pupil's needs. The pupil grades the teacher.

7. Society must be broken and remade to man's will, and the child's will is sacred.

8. Man's problem is society. Society must be recreated by man.

9. The family is obsolete. The individual or the state is basic.

The enormity of the contrast of these two systems of educational thought should not be lost on Christians today. To say that they are like chalk and cheese is putting it mildly, and any Christian who thinks that a working compromise can be made, is deceiving themselves.

Education therefore not only must be Christian, but anything other than a fully Christian, family based education, utterly devoid of State interference, should be seen as a compromise with paganism, unworthy of the king of kings, and utterly unsuitable for godly children.

Conclusion:

Elijah, as a typically uncompromising Biblical prophet, confronted the people of Israel with these words: “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord if God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him...” (I Kings 18:21).

And this is the message a modern, inept, vacillating church needs to hear today, too. Are you hearing and acting upon it?