

Worldview • Philosophy of Christian Education

Biblical Foundation

The CLASS program is committed to an educational philosophy which is not after the traditions of men, or the principles of this world, but after Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:8). Christian education means that Christ is central to education. Consequently, our educational theory, methods, and practice must be built upon Christ as their cornerstone. But how can we know Christ apart from His Word which is the truth? The sacred Scriptures are the Word of Christ written. In them God has revealed Himself and His saving purpose in Christ.

Because there is only one God and one Christ, there is only one truth. This truth is the center and criterion of Christian education. While the Bible is not used as the textbook in every subject, it is the foundational handbook for every course and the standard for teaching. As the foundational book, Scripture is the only infallible rule for faith and practice, for grammar and literature, for mathematics and science, for health and physical education, for geography and history, and for social studies and the arts. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.

Biblical Principles

In order for education to be consistently Christian the teacher must self-consciously teach all subjects in the framework of biblical authority. To accomplish this we must have a methodology that guarantees its biblical character. The proper method is to use the Bible in each and every course both directly and indirectly. It is applied directly when we derive our understanding of each topic from the actual statements of the Bible, and use the text of Scripture appropriately in each subject. It is applied indirectly as we work out the implications of biblical truth as the proper framework for understanding each subject.

Biblical doctrines must regulate the way we teach and learn. One important goal of Christian education is to teach the student to reason biblically. Because of this, the educational process must show how the doctrinal truths of God's Word provide the Christian worldview. This worldview is a unified system of principles that guides the way we educate. It requires that every thought be made captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Committed to the Bible as the standard for education, CLASS desires to interpret it in line with the historic Christian faith and biblical principles. Among such biblical principles are the following:

The Sovereign Triune God

The most fundamental teaching of the Bible is the sovereignty of the Triune God. This truth is foundational for all Christian teaching. It alone separates Christian education from all forms of humanism and naturalism. Education which is truly and distinctly Christian must be dedicated to the glory of God

above all else. Because the Creator is the sovereign God, He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, and He speaks with absolute authority about all things. There is nothing in this universe which can truly be learned apart from Him. He speaks as the Triune God. Unity in education is possible only on the basis of one God who is absolutely self-existent and independent of His creation. As the Trinity, He is the source of both unity and diversity in the world and in human life, for He exists as one God in three Persons.

Creation in Six Days

When God created all things in the universe out of nothing in six days, He created everything with meaning and purpose. Because all studies deal in one way or another with God's creation, all studies should be subordinate to God's revelation. The way to properly understand any subject is to study it in relation to its Creator. Because God created all things, there is nothing unknown to Him. Consequently, God's understanding, not man's, is first. All facts take their significance from the place God has assigned to them in creation. There are no uninterpreted facts which man can ever discover. Without God's revealed truth, these facts cannot be properly selected, systematized, and given a meaningful interpretation. Without the framework of a biblical worldview all education in science is futile.

Man, the Image of God

Because God created man in His own image, the ultimate purpose, meaning, and standard for human life and society come from God. Christian education must therefore reject all speculations of the evolutionary theory of human origins and rights. Man is a unique creature of God formed distinct from the animals. Endowed by His Creator with the gifts of religion, language, reason, choice, creativity, and society, man is like God in every way a creature can be. Created to serve and glorify God in the earth, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden talked directly with God and received from Him their original education. God taught them the truth about their role in the universe and their relationships with other people. God taught them that their most fundamental relationship is with Him as their Creator. Culture, society, and education are thus bound to religion. The student must be continually confronted with this pivotal truth about himself and society.

Man's Fall into Sin

The biblical record of the fall of Adam has serious and far-reaching implications for all of education. Because of the fall, man's entire nature as well as all of human society has been corrupted by sin. Not only is his heart hostile to God and His law, but his will is enslaved to corruption, and his mind is darkened by error. His whole nature has been corrupted by the evil influence of sin. Because of this, Christian education cannot start in a supposedly neutral fashion as though the child was an innocent person who simply needs the spark of goodness to be ignited within him.

Likewise, the human teacher is also corrupted by sin and does not always properly present God's truth. Because of sin's power, the teacher must

acknowledge that he cannot change the heart of the student. Because sin has corrupted the whole of human thought and education throughout history, unbelieving scholarship can have a pervasive influence even upon those who seek to teach from a biblical worldview. The Christian teacher must grow in awareness of the influence of sin upon his thinking due to his own his educational background and the society around him. Apart from abiding in Christ and His truth, he is liable to be made captive to ideas promoted by various forms of the non-Christian worldview.

Christ the Redeemer

As a result of Adam's sin, God and man have become alienated. But God in His grace took the initiative to restore the relationship. After setting forth the requirements of redemption in the Old Testament, He fulfilled them in the New Testament in His Son, Jesus Christ. The Messiah came as the second Adam to undo the results of the sin of the first Adam. As the perfect Son of God, He became man, and was crucified as the only redeemer of mankind. By his redemptive work, Christ restores believers to a right relationship with their Creator. This restoration involves education. As part of His mediatorial work, Christ has an educational program which involves teaching all the things He has commanded. Christ teaches His people as the Bible is read, taught, and applied. All Christian education must therefore be subject to Christ as God's final Prophet, Priest, and King. Jesus Christ is the only way, truth, and life, also in education.

The Holy Spirit and Salvation

Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to teach the truth. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can make Christian education effective. For the teacher, to impart wisdom is a gift of God. For the student's heart to be opened to God's truth, a change of heart is required. In the new birth the Spirit opens the mind and frees the will to embrace Christ by faith. Without it the Bible will never be the ultimate authority over the student's reasoning. Faith is the proper response to biblical truth, the only means by which the heart submits to it. While Christian education can be used by the Holy Spirit to bring the student to saving faith, its full effect comes to those who already believe. Without faith, Christian education is ineffectual. Thus, both the teacher and the student are dependent upon the Holy Spirit and His work of grace.

The Holy Spirit uses believers as a means of leading students to Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Christian parents have the unique opportunity and privilege to train up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. By combining teaching with prayer, exhortation, and discipline, God can use the parent to disciple his children according to Christ. Thus Christian education, while not to be reduced to evangelism, will include the positive presentation of gospel truth as the answer to the ultimate questions in each subject. The gospel will be proclaimed as the answer to the student's deepest need for purpose, meaning, and goals in learning.

The Kingdom of Christ and the Antithesis

Because the Word of God is the only standard for education, Christian education is at odds with all pagan thought. Because it is part of Christ's program for building His kingdom, Christian education is engaged in spiritual and intellectual warfare with the kingdom of darkness. The fact of the new birth creates a distinction between two types of people: Christians and non-Christians. Christians are bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and earnestly contending for the faith. The non-Christian, however, looks to man as the standard of all things, reasons according to the flesh, and calls his education neutral.

Because all education is inescapably religious, it can never take place in an ideological vacuum. Neutrality is impossible; for the educational worldview will either be Christian or humanistic. Christ clearly taught, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me, scatters abroad" (Matthew 12:30). Therefore all non-Christian education is ultimately anti-Christian because it does not submit to the claims of Jesus Christ. Well-trained Christian students must be prepared to battle intellectually against the spirit of this age with an aggressive yet humble manner. CLASS desires to train Christian warriors and leaders who will go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to win decisive victories for the honor, glory, and kingdom of Christ.

The Return of Christ

Christian education is a part of God's purpose to put everything in creation under the feet of Christ. Christ is now reigning, but not everyone has bowed the knee to His authority. Not every area of life and thought has been made subject to Him. Christian education serves as part of His purpose to subdue people from all nations to the glory of God. He is calling out a people unto Himself who will learn His ways. Christian education is never an end in itself, but serves to magnify the glory of God. It should never lose sight of the fact that there is no final perfection in human life, society, or in education itself apart from the appearance of Jesus Christ. At his return Christ will bring a conclusion to history through judgment of both the living and the dead.

Teaching Method: Making Disciples of Christ

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A Christian education is part of Christ's Great Commission to disciple the nations. The Bible tells parents that they have a moral responsibility before God to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). The word discipline means to train, and the word instruct means to teach. Education includes both. As teachers labor to nurture, instruct, and discipline students, their central task is to make disciples of Christ.

For a biblical curriculum to be profitable, it is necessary for the teacher to practice a biblical method of teaching. Both the mind and the will of the student need to be trained and brought into subjection to God's authority. The teacher should pray and work to the end that the student's reasoning will

submit to God's authority. The mind needs to be trained to submit to Scripture and to resist the temptation of leaning on one's own understanding. False ways of thinking need to be rebuked and the mind brought to humility before God. The student must become a fool that he might become wise (1 Corinthians 3: 18).

Not only should the student be taught to reason in a consistent, biblical, organized manner, but to exercise proper biblical discipline to reach the goal. By warning against unbelief, rebellion, and the spirit of this age, the teacher seeks to train the student to become a disciple of Christ. Parents should train their children morning, noon, and night to help students stay on the right path and learn godly habits. Christian training should be the same at home, at school, at church, and at play. In this way, the student learns that God's Word is to be believed and obeyed consistently, everywhere, and at all times. Otherwise, he will learn to be inconsistent in his behavior before God and man. In short, he will grow to be a hypocrite.

The Goal of Christian Education

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To Glorify and Enjoy God

The purpose of Christian education is not primarily to meet human needs or develop human potential, but preeminently to labor to the greater glory of God, the honor of the name of Christ, and promote the development of His kingdom. In a word, the ultimate goal of Christian education is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. It means that we are to serve Him in every area of life and calling. This takes place when the student learns to fear God and trust Christ so that he will think and act biblically. For this reason, true Christian education must be God-centered. "Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam"—For The Greater Glory Of God.

God created man for the joy of communion with Himself. Therefore, the student's joy and fulfillment in life is not to be found in himself or in the world in which he lives, but in loving communion with his Creator. As students learn to glorify God and live for Christ, they will have true enjoyment in life. Without holiness there is no happiness. As the student grows in the knowledge of creation, and discovers the wonders that God has made, he should be taught to enjoy and praise the One who made it. Each new discovery should lead him to acknowledge that God has made us and all things. If education is to train the child for life, then the chief end of man must be constantly kept in view.

To Fear God and Trust in Christ

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To fear the Lord means to take what He says seriously. When education begins with the fear of God, it promotes respect for God's authority as expressed in His word and Law as the foundation for learning. With reverential awe, the student will approach schoolwork seriously, attempting to do his best. This is absolutely necessary for the student's proper attitude in education.

Since the fear of the Lord is necessary to glorify Him, and without faith it is impossible to please Him, the student needs to come to a saving faith in Christ before he can think and act biblically. The first American college, Harvard, established this standard: "Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the maine end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottome, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and Learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdome, Let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seeke it of him (Proverbs 2:3)." Christian teachers should, by their instruction, discipline, and godly example, pray that the Lord might be pleased to use their teaching as a means to effectually call students unto Christ.

To Reason According to a Biblical Worldview

In every area of study, CLASS wants to help parents train their children to understand God's perspective and think His thoughts after Him. To do this, they must grow in their knowledge of the Word of God and learn the mind of Christ. They must learn to reason in terms of biblical truth, and develop a truly consistent biblical worldview. By godly instruction and precept, through the inculcation of scriptural wisdom, students are to develop their God-created minds unto Christian maturity. They must be taught how to rightly discern and judge all things in the light of Scripture. Christian education fails if it does not instill the pattern of thinking after God's words and logic. If a student learns to think in terms of himself or the creature, his decisions regarding right and wrong, truth and error, reality and fantasy, will be humanistic or naturalistic. Without realizing it, he will be acting as his own god, determining for himself good and evil (Genesis 3:5).

To Love and Serve God and Our Neighbor

CLASS believes that knowledge for the sake of knowledge is useless and leads to intellectual arrogance and self-glorification. True knowledge must be used practically to advance the Kingdom of God for His glory. Christian education promotes using knowledge to glorify God and to minister to others. Students should learn to obey and serve God more fully so that they may minister to others more effectively. Students must learn to walk in the truth and through faith manifest the fruit of the Spirit in good works. Thus, after coming to faith in Christ and developing a biblical worldview, the development of strong godly character and a lifestyle of service is most necessary. In fact, godliness is necessary for a proper understanding of the truth.

To love and serve God is an empty lie if there is no heart to serve others. Christian education aims to train men and women who love God in both word and deed, and express this love in ministering to others. One's vocation must be seen as part of this moral responsibility. It is not merely the obtaining of a paycheck, but to serve God and our neighbor.

Biblical education is devoted also to the development of the student's

spiritual, academic, and physical welfare. Each student has received talents, opportunities, and blessings from his Maker. Christian education does not only develop one's potential, but assists the student to find his place, meaning, purpose, and responsibilities in the plan of God. Christian education can help determine God's call on his life, and equip him with skills and knowledge by which he can glorify God effectively. As the student better understands God's Word and how to apply it to God's world he will be able to take dominion in his calling under Jesus Christ. CLASS is dedicated to helping both parents train up their children in the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).

Read about the [parents' place in education](#).

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