

Is There A Philosophy of Christian Education?

There is no doubt that God has raised up the Christian Home School Movement and the Christian Day School movement. Thousands of Christian schools have been started over the past twenty-five years. And the largest growth has taken place among those who are home schooling. Many factors have influenced the growth of these movements: such as, poor academics, drugs, immorality, lack of discipline, busing, taking prayer out of public schools, etc.

But the underlying basis for the Christian Education movement is not found in these weaknesses of the public school system. ***It is found in the need of a philosophy of education based on the Bible. What is that philosophy?***

I. Does education need a philosophy? Yes, definitely, in fact education does have a philosophy. The basis for all the educational systems of the ages is formed in a foundational philosophy. The philosophies of the Greeks, the Romans, the British, and Americans still speak throughout the centuries. It is the power of philosophical teachings that has shaped nations, governments, and movements.

If philosophy is so powerful, then Christians must recognize and evaluate it!

In contrast, the philosophy of the Christian Education movement is grounded in the Word of God.

In Jeremiah 10:2 we read, “*Learn not the way of the heathen (or the unsaved).*” The apostle Paul also tells us, “*Beware lest any any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.*” (Col. 2:8) Sad to say, many Christian young people are learning and copying the ways of the unsaved. They have become rebellious. Parents are not honored. Interest in Church and spiritual things declines.

Psalm 119:11 states, “*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*” And Proverbs 19:27 gives this command: “***Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.***” **Do our youth receive teaching that turns them from God’s truth?**

II. The Christian philosophy of education calls for an educational process that puts the Bible at the center and asks the student and the teacher (or parent) to evaluate all they see in the world through the eyes of God -- because God and His Word is truth.

1. Abraham Lincoln said, “*The philosophy of the classroom is the philosophy of the government in the next generation.*”

2. Nearly 100 years before Lincoln, George Washington said: “*True religion affords government its surest support. The future of this nation depends on the Christian training of the youth. It is impossible to govern without the Bible.*” For this reason, schools and textbooks of the postcolonial period were Bible oriented.

3. Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson, Pastor some years ago of Bethany Baptist Church, West Covina, California said: “*We make a mistake when we say that the Pilgrims came to America to seek religious freedom. To a certain extent they had this in Holland. It would be*

more accurate to say that they came to America seeking an opportunity to give to their children the kind of religious education that was impossible in either England or Holland.”

Consider: In view of the Bible command: “*Train up a child in the way he should go,*” every Christian school and home school parent needs to develop the right philosophy of education. Sad to say, some Christian schools and other Christian organizations are permeated with the philosophy, curriculum, methodology, and productivity of the world’s secular, humanistic, progressive education.

The true Christian day school must define Christian education as a Bible-based, Christ-centered, and teaching-learning process in every area of the curriculum and school activity. Such should also be the case of the home school family.

III. The contrast between the secular (*public education*) position of education or the Biblical, God-honoring viewpoint can be seen in the following:

1. The issue is to be man-centered (humanistic); to love and to exalt self **or to be God-centered, to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and body.** (Matthew 22:37-39; 6:33)
2. To be earthly-minded (secularism); to reject religious faith and convictions **or to be heavenly minded, to learn all truth in the light of Scriptural truth and to apply those principles to every facet of life.** (Col. 3:14)
3. To work for earthly gain, material possessions, and mere human achievements (materialism) **or to labor for eternal riches as taught by Christ** in Matthew 6:24-34, Luke 12:15, and John 6:27.
4. To live for the here and now (temporalism) **or to look ahead to eternity and to look upon eternal values as the most important in view of ones ultimate accountability to God.** (Romans 14:11-12)
5. To be free of restraints; to do your own thing; to accept the philosophy of situation ethics (or permissivism) **or to develop self-control; to live a disciplined life according to Bible rules under the control of the Holy Spirit.** (II Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8; Titus 2:11-14; Eph. 6:18; Gal. 5:15-17, 22-24)
6. To reject absolutes and to believe that there is no fixed truth, that truth must be discovered through man’s reason and experience (relativism) **or to embrace the absolutes and the unchanging truth of the Word of God and to relate all knowledge and life to this revelation.** (Jh 17:17; II Tim. 3:14-17)

Here is the Central Problem of Government Schools!

Protestant Biblical influence on public education lost much of its grip during the 1920’s and early 30’s. During this period Columbia University had a famous teachers’ college with a famous head:

- 1) The man who headed this University was philosopher and educator, *John Dewey*,

the father of our nation's progressive education.

2) He was a member of the board of the American Humanist Association in 1933 -- the year it hammered out the first Humanist Manifesto which said that "*faith in the prayer-hearing God. . .is an unproved and outmoded faith.*"

John Dewey, a strong evolutionist and atheist, said, "*There is no God and there is no soul. Hence, there are no needs for the props of traditional religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable truth is also dead and buried. There is no room for fixed, natural law or moral absolutes.*"

Dewey's philosophy of education and the teachers college at Columbia university in New York ***became the flame from which the torches of other teachers colleges around the country were lit.*** *Dewey's anti faith, pragmatic, progressive educational philosophy swept through the nation's public school system. Dewey's thoughts and teachers continued to be revered in teacher-training institutions throughout America.*

Christian school teachers in the Christian School or in the Christian Home School must be born again, uncompromising, historic Christian educators whose chief goal is to develop students of character and conduct who will live for the glory of God and for the good of society. We want to produce Christian young people with the kind of character and conduct that will be a godly influence wherever they go. We want to build young people whose lives evidence their devotion to serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

- - **Dr. Ed. Watke**