

Academic Excellence

The Association of Christian Schools International serves more than 5,400 Christian schools around the world. We continually screen our services and programs for our member schools through a set of core beliefs regarding Christian schooling. These core beliefs focus on effectiveness and the best for every student.

We believe that Christian schools should be committed to academic excellence, maximizing each student's potential. In regard to this core belief, our emphasis is that every student should be well prepared in all academic disciplines—skilled in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking. Every student should be proficient in mathematics and science, commensurate with his or her individual capabilities and potential.

The unique distinctive of a Christian school is the pursuit of the spiritual formation of each student along with intellectual development. Sadly, some Christians have come to the conclusion that scholarly pursuit beyond very basic schooling—often defined as the three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic—is really not important. And they have further concluded that it actually has a negative impact on spiritual development.

We, however, would strongly counter such a viewpoint and emphasize a biblical rationale for the development of the mind. Jesus clearly pointed out that the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37, NIV). The mind takes on a very high stature when one considers its role in loving God. Such a mind, then, should not be neglected but rather be taught and nurtured to its highest potential.

J. P. Moreland, in *Love Your God with All Your Mind* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1997), offers some intriguing questions and thoughts to ponder regarding the mind: “Is it any wonder that we Christians started the first universities and have planted schools and colleges everywhere our missionaries have gone? Is it any wonder that science began in Christian Europe because of the belief that the same rational God who made the human mind also created the world so the mind would be suited to discern the world's rational structure placed there by God? God is certainly not a cultural elitist, and He does not love intellectuals more than anyone else. But it needs to be said in the same breath that ignorance is not a Christian virtue if those virtues mirror the perfection of God's own character.”

Christian schooling, then, offers that opportunity to inculcate the academic disciplines into the students' minds while integrating the biblical precepts that will develop in them the mind of Christ. Such a mind is so desperately needed to make an impact on the world.

We recognize that abilities and giftedness vary greatly from child to child. Not every student will become a Nobel Prize-winning scientist or writer laureate. Not all students will become authorities in bioethics—nor should they. But in these and in every vocation, there is a place for those scholars with the mind of Christ—who have attained the highest accomplishments in the academic disciplines and at the same time love God with all their heart and soul and mind.

Your children need your support and encouragement to achieve their highest potential. Your Christian school is there to provide that support and encouragement as well. As you work together, such a disciplined pursuit will make a difference not only in each individual student's life but also in the culture in which each of those students has the opportunity to make an impact for Christ.



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