

If Not in the Christian School, Then Where?

Although reenrollment for the next school year varies from school to school, this is the month that many of you are asked to make that very significant commitment to your student(s) and the Christian school for the coming school year.

I would like to challenge you to consider an extremely important question in regard to five critical issues: If not in the Christian school, then where?

1. Christian schooling is all about that fine-tuned intersection where both intellectual development and spiritual formation come together with a single-minded purpose of developing young men and women who pursue wisdom, knowledge, and a biblical worldview as evidenced by a lifestyle of character, leadership, service, stewardship, and worship.

What school other than an effective Christian school even considers the linking of spiritual formation with a student's intellectual development?

2. Bible as a formal course of instruction is a given in the effective Christian school. It is not merely a subject for teaching about people, dates, and events but rather one for focusing on strategies that help students know, understand, and apply God's Word in daily life. Information about the people, dates, and events is taught not as an end in itself but rather as movement toward bringing to life God's Word through appropriate teaching that provides a solid foundation upon which to build and develop healthy spiritually formed young men and women.

3. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27, NIV). This Old Testament passage articulates the concept of *Imagio Dei*: humanity, created in the image of God. This truth left untaught and ignored, whether in the Christian community or the secular world,

tells us why our world experiences so much hatred, racism, and the many facets of abuse. It is the development of an understanding of *Imagio Dei* within the Christian school—a concept flowing out of God's Word and firmly grounded in a student's heart and mind—that is the beginning of Christlike love, care, and concern for others.

4. Social skills are developed in the life of our children either by design or by default—the latter is most often regretted. The effective Christian school offers a wide variety of social interactions that are created to achieve predetermined outcomes—outcomes that speak to issues above and beyond the given event itself. These activities are continually teaching young people about appropriate person-to-person relationships. The activities are designed to promote moral, spiritual, mental, and physical health.

Whether developing appropriate classroom behavior, engaging in the giftedness expressed in an array of the fine arts, or merely having fun and enjoying one another's company, young people learn the essence of appropriate Christian conduct in community—socialization by design.



5. Athletics, that realm of developed physical competition, is really more than playing the game. Whether intramural or interscholastic, one of the unique opportunities afforded the Christian school student is the focus on developing aspects of Christian character that truly define the "champion."

How well I remember an event following the loss of a crucial football game that kept our team from going to state. Nothing says it better than the testimony of a high school senior as he shared regarding his participation in this disappointing game that seemed to prematurely end the season: "You know," he declared, "I learned that God really doesn't care whether we won or lost that game. What he really cared about is how we handled winning or losing."

Now, I return to that initial question: If not in the Christian school, then where? Where else can I go to find these issues addressed from a perspective that is God led and carried out by Christian educators who are committed to "train a child in the way he should go ..." (Proverbs 22:6, NIV).

So, what really is most important?

Ken Smitherman
Ken Smitherman, President
Association of Christian Schools International

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