

## **A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO EDUCATION**

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The relationship between our beliefs and their effects on educational practice needs to be understood. In a sense, there is no more room for simple nurturing in Christian education. This points to the vital importance of understanding the critical factors which impact Christian educational practice and the role each plays in influencing that practice. If Christian education is going to play its indispensable role in our nation and among the nations of the world, the goals, nature, and purpose of Christian education needs to be carefully explored.

The goals of Christian education are to develop students spiritually, academically, socially and personally - 1) To develop students to become socially, physically, spiritually and emotionally healthy. The spiritual growth of the children is important to foster and develop moral discernment, discretion and practical life skills in students. To teach students about the power of the spirit of truth so that they can develop good character. This can be done by fostering spiritual disciplines and a love for the joy of worship, prayer, giving, bible meditations, study and obedience for the practice of Christian living.

According to Kienel (1995), the goals of Christian education are to teach children to love the Lord with all their hearts, enable them to become an effective believer, disciple students to develop Christian lifestyle characteristics, help the Christian to articulate the hope that lies within

him/ her, formulate a distinctively Christian mind that is able to think biblical principles, provide a knowledge of individual value and worth in the kingdom and devote to a life-long commitment, comprehend doctrine/ teachings with practical implications to life and provide a clear perception of truth; 2) To develop a Christian mindset; 3) Reconciliation, restoration and redemption of man to God.

A key goal of Christian education must be to teach students who they are and what they are intended to become in the plan of God and to develop biblical character in the lives of the students (Virtue, 1998). Students must learn that the value of their lives is borne in their relationship with Christ not in what they may acquire; 4) Developing a Christian character in students. Thus the primary goal of Christian education is to better acquaint the students with the persona of Jesus Christ, to secure for students the appropriate wealth of knowledge of Christ, to show individuals how to face God and then with the vision of God in their hearts to face the present world and the world to come." (Kienel, 1995); 5) Knowledge acquisition.

Education that is Christian encourages students to learn both the individual and social implications of moral or ethical behavior and helps students learn about the Bible and Christianity, guiding them to adopt the beliefs of their church or denomination (Burge, 2014).

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Also, education that is Christian will recognize the ultimate goal in growing true disciples; 6) Teaching ministry. That is, the entire process of Christian education is seen as a means used by the Holy Spirit to bring the individual into fellowship with God, to develop a Christian mind in him and to train him in godly living so that he can fulfill God's total purpose for his or her life personally and vocationally (Kienel, 1995). Another goal of the Christian educator is service to 7) God and humanity. The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians explained the value of people to humanity and God this way:

There are many critical factors which impact Christian educational practice. A critical challenge facing religious institutions is whether they can critically embrace the post-modernist perspective and its attending culture of post-modernity; whether they can embrace unity-in-diversity, allowing all viewpoints to be accorded value, while at the same time preserving the essential parameters of belief, structure and practice.

Globalization in its several forms - economic, political, and cultural - has had major impacts on education, and more so since the start of the new millennium. It has required a rethinking of education's philosophy, purpose, structure, content and pedagogy, methods of delivery and assessment of outcomes (Carnoy, 1999; McGinn, 1996).

The global knowledge economy requires, and rewards, those who are better educated and more skilled. Thus, there is pressure to increase the average level of education in the labor force which, in developing countries, means expanding both secondary and tertiary educational opportunities. "The need for different societies to compete in a world where knowledge is a principal currency has turned the impacts of globalization on developing countries even more".

Globalization has had significant impacts on educational policies, structures and practices in countries around the world, though these have been differentially experienced, small countries have felt it more. The driving forces of these changes in education have been economic, political, technological, and cultural. The transmitters of change are many, including supranational institutions and international conventions that have exercised influence both directly and indirectly from afar. Education--decentralization, privatization, standardization and assessment, and curriculum and pedagogy have witnessed the strongest impact.

Finally, sectarian affiliation and biblical fundamentalism have a negative impact on Christian education.

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