

**Why Christian Education**  
**by D. Merle Skinner, Center Executive Director**

Why Christian Education? There are many questions that come to people's minds when that question is asked. Why would I think about Christian School? Why would I think about sending my children to a place where I would have to pay tuition when other schools cost me very little from a financial standpoint?

As parents there are several reasons why Barb and I have chosen to invest in Christian Education. As workers in a ministry, as parents who have chosen Christian Education through the college level, and personally at the graduate school level, we feel strongly about our choices. Those decisions were made after processing through our own positive experiences in secular education, and yet choosing a different path for our children.

There are several key points that have been valuable for us and may help guide others in making their decisions:

1. A Scriptural understanding of childhood tells us that children develop their worldview from the environment in which they are taught. As much as we would like to accept a rationalization that children learn how to have a faith in a secular environment, it is not a biblical idea. The idea of being a missionary to another culture (a secular or other worldview) is an idea for a mature developed faith, not a learning faith. Actually, it is only recently that generations have believed that in America. Our first public educational institutions and institutions of higher learning were established to give people the ability to understand the Word of God and integrate that into their lives. Scripture is clear from the Old to the New Testaments that the environment in which we are taught will teach us the parameters of the world.

2. When fully played out in our lives, students will become like their teachers and their schools. (Luke 6:40) A scriptural understanding of teaching and modeling is about how we live, what we say, and what we are. There are many wonderful Christians working in secular settings. When examined fully however, it boils down to a simple fact: Christian teachers can BE a Christian in a secular setting, but they cannot TEACH from a Christian Worldview. Interestingly enough, one of the biggest supports of this fact is that longtime mature Christian teachers' faith often have trouble learning to teach from a Christian worldview when moved into a Christian setting. It is so much more than throwing a Bible verse in or just praying.

3. Teaching and learning from a Christian perspective sometimes is seen by Christians who have committed themselves to learning in a secular environment as just a matter of making sure you get rid of the anti-Christian stuff. Developing a Christian worldview is about how to be distinctly Christian in all areas of our lives. It is difficult enough to be effective in doing that whenever you are able to commit to that process 24-7! The passage from Deuteronomy 6:6-7 is about full integration of our faith with all of our lives.

4. It is not about figuring out how your children can make it through school without losing their faith. Shouldn't it be about helping students maximize their God given potential and being fruitful for His Kingdom? When we stand before the Lord and give an accounting of our lives is there any price too great to do everything possible to train them in the Lord's way? (I Corinthians 3:12-15) Ultimately it becomes a question of what our priorities are; a decision that we all must make every day of our lives as parents.

Deuteronomy Chapters 5 and 6 point clearly that the passing of the faith to the next generation is an active, every minute of the day kind of thing, not a neutral kind of thing that you plug some biblical thought into. For us, Christian education is not a choice, it is a biblical mandate.

Blessings,

Merle