

EXPLORING THE DIFFERENCES: CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The arguments against it are as prevalent as those for it. “I pay public school taxes; why should I send my child to a private school?”; “We are called to be salt and light in a fallen world, we can’t do that in a cocoon”; “I can’t afford a Christian education”; “Public schools have all the tools necessary for academic excellence—not so with private schools.”

And the list goes on and on. These arguments can be valid, and for many people they are. That is okay. Born-again believers can fall on both sides of the debate on Christian education, just as they fall on both sides of many debates about the Faith.

But let us explore some of the differences between Christian education and public education, and then leave you with some things to think about as you ponder the best avenue for your child during his or her academic career

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In public schools, subjects are taught from a humanist and naturalist perspective. It is generally taught that humans are the culmination of years of impersonal natural selection, and that everything that has happened is because time and chance—fate in other words—has made it so. The state determines what is taught and how it is taught, and often these values are in direct contradiction to the beliefs of Christians.

Then there is the matter of who is doing the teaching. The educators, many of whom are very skilled, can have any number of personal belief systems or lifestyles that you would never dream of exposing your child to at home—at least not in a venue in which they could be indoctrinated and begin questioning the values you hold so dear as a Christian. In a public school, even your child’s friends can have many different belief systems and lifestyle choices.

And this is not all necessarily a bad thing, because as Christians we should live in the world while not being of it, and we do need to be salt and light by witnessing to the power of Christ in our lives.

But let’s face it. Very few children can effectively articulate their faith in a world that is confrontational and unwilling to listen. The Bible admonishes us to train up a child in the Word, and to make sure that we have gone from drinking spiritual milk to eating spiritual meat before we can be effective witnesses in the world.

And this is the purpose of Christian schools. Your child will be shaped and molded by three influential constructs: the family, the church, and the school. Christian schools are an extension of your worldview and your values, and they reinforce what the child is taught at home and in your church.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

In Christian schools, your child is taught every subject as it is filtered through the Word of God. Here, we realize that man is the culmination of the creativity of a holy God, and that everything that has happened is because God has willed it or allowed it to be so. The school administrators themselves determine the curriculum, and it is taught by born-again Bible-believing Christians. The friends your child plays and learns with come from Christian families, so there is no conflict in values and worldviews. Your child grows in the Lord as he or she grows, and their faith is nurtured, strengthened, and solidified. They are

not sheltered in some country-club cocoon; they are trained up in the Word and better able to face the world on their own terms without compromise

THE PROBLEM

It's a troubling world. Disrespect for the Gospel is becoming mainstream. Just about every religion is accepted except Christianity. God is no longer welcome in the public education system, and has not been for years. At first He was just ignored. Today, He and his followers are persecuted. It has become a hard world for children to grow up in and still remain sure of what they hope for and certain of what they do not see.

Do you feel confident that your child will carry the faith as he or she grows? Are you absolutely certain that you and your church can overcome the power of the humanistic, naturalistic world in which we live? If so, great, but the volume of statistics shows otherwise.

Below, adopted from the website discoverchristianschools.com, are some things to think about as you determine the viability of a Christian education for your child. Please read through them, and then prayerfully consider your child's best possible future.

1. There are basically two kingdoms: a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness. It seems strange to have those who may be walking in darkness educate children of light.
2. If Jesus Christ is Lord, then He is Lord of all. We cannot divide things into secular and sacred.
3. All truth is God's truth, and God's Word sheds light on our path. Only in His light can we see light. Education is not focused on possibilities but on certainties found in God's Word.
4. Deuteronomy 6 tells parents that, in all they do, they should provide a godly education 24/7.
5. Three key institutions that shape a child are the home, the church and the school. Children are served best when all three institutions point them in the same direction.
6. Only an education that has the liberty to address the whole child -- social, intellectual, emotional, physical AND spiritual -- reaches the possibility of excellence.

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