

# Why Parents Support Christian Schools

by Dr. Paul A. Kienel, Founder & President Emeritus, ACSI

This past year there were over a million students enrolled in Christian schools that are members of the Association of Christian Schools International. If a very rich and generous person were to step forward and write a check paying for the annual tuition of those students, my best estimate is that the total figure would exceed three billion dollars!

That's a lot of money! My point is that Christian school education is a costly enterprise. In terms of money, more is spent on Christian school education than on almost any other area of ministry in the evangelical community. Surprising, isn't it?

Why do parents and grandparents like me sacrifice substantial sums of money to make Christian school education possible for our children and grandchildren? Permit me to list a few reasons:

## **1. Parents are concerned about the overall condition of our society.**

Former US Secretary of Education Dr. William J. Bennett said, "Violent crime is six times more common in America today than it was in 1960. There are five times more illegitimate births. The divorce rate has quadrupled, the teenage suicide rate has tripled, and SAT scores have dropped 80 points."<sup>1</sup> As Professor Stephan Carter said, "We are paying the price of banishing religion from public life."

## **2. More and more parents want a positive, caring, and safe educational environment for their children.**

If our government were as concerned about mind pollution as it is about the pollution of our physical environment, what a difference it would make! Since it is unlikely that the government will form an Environmental Protection Agency of the Mind, parents are looking for educational environments for their children that are compatible with commonsense parenting and Christian values. Parents are looking for caring schools, run by caring educators -who love God so much that it shows in the classroom every day.

## **3. Parents, and all of us for that matter, are weary of education that often runs counter to traditional values, especially Christian values.**

It seems the overriding purpose of value-free or value-neutral education now so prevalent in the nation's non-Christian schools, including some non-Christian private schools, is to erase Christian values and biblical truths from the hearts and minds of the next generation. With biblical values totally debunked or ignored, it is an easy step to fill children's minds with "politically correct" ideas such as these:

a. Homosexuality is an acceptable "alternative lifestyle." This, of course, is contrary to the passages of Scripture that call it an "abomination" (Leviticus 18:22).

b. Abortion, or killing an unborn child, is a "choice" that a mother can make and a doctor can perform with no moral consequences. In the Bible God speaks of human beings as being human before they are born (Psalms 139: 13-16).

c. Multiculturalism and global education is presented as teaching students to be tolerant of all races, creeds, and cultures. On the surface that sounds innocent enough -- even noble. God is "no respecter of persons." May God help us if we ever discriminate against a person because of his or her race. He

made us all and loves us all. But some people see a secondary motivation for multiculturalism that is disturbing. Educator Dr. Bob Simonds writes:

*Under the guise of "multicultural pluralism" children are taught that different lifestyles (homosexual/lesbian) and moral relativism (values clarification-atheism) are acceptable and even desirable. Thus, atheism, social immorality, and anti-Americanism are all taught as legitimate curriculum in multiculturalism.*

*Children are inundated with a plethora of cultures, religions and immorality, while the traditional American values are totally excluded. No matter that our entire Constitution, our entire law system and political system, are built on the traditional Judeo-Christian ethics (the Ten Commandments).*

*Even Christians don't seem to understand clearly that to abdicate our American culture of Judeo-Christian values in our schools for a divisive multiculturalism, is ushering in atheism, socialism, witchcraft, and new persecution of all believers. We cannot afford to lose this battle!*<sup>2</sup>

Professor Alan Gribben said he is concerned about "the current mania for converting every academic subject into a politicized study of race, class, and gender."<sup>3</sup>

I agree with Russian author Dostoevsky, who wrote, "where there is no God everything is permissible."<sup>4</sup>

#### **4. Finally, in a very real sense, parents expect the Christian school to be an extension of themselves.**

Since the education and training of children is a parental responsibility, parents select schools that will educate and train their children in a manner that reflects their philosophy and views. At least that's the way it should be. Christian parents send their children to Christian schools because they want them to lead meaningful Christian lives. Christian school educators know the Christian school parents know that in order to offer true Christian education, a school must put Christ and His teachings at the center of its curriculum. As was noted by my long-time friend Dr. Roy Lowrie (now deceased), "A Christian school is not just where Christ is present, not just where Christ is prominent, but where Christ is preeminent." That is why parents support Christian schools!

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<sup>1</sup> William J. Bennett, *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, first edition.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bob Simonds, "President's Report." August 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Gribben quoted in *Telling the Truth: A Report on the State of the Humanities in Higher Education*, Lynne V. Cheney, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1992, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*.