

## Encouraging Educators

### **The need for Christian Education is as great as it has ever been!**

A 2009, year-end report from the Barna Research Group, reported the following:

- Less than one out of every five born again adults (19%) has a biblical worldview, this percentage is **unchanged** in the past 15 years;
- Just half of all self-identified Christians firmly believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles (**not** the facts, just the principles) that it teaches;
- Barely one-quarter of adults (27%) are confident that Satan exists;
- Less than four out of every ten self-identified Christians firmly accept the teaching that a person can be influenced by spiritual forces, such as angels or demons; and,
- An overwhelming majority of self-identified Christians (81%) contend that spiritual maturity is achieved by following **the rules** in the Bible.

Obviously Barna is talking about Christian Education proper, but that brings up a very powerful question, “What does the title ‘Christian Educator’ mean?”

- Are you a Christian who provides secular (***not concerned with religion***) education?
- Are you a Christian who provides religious education?
- Are you a secular educator who happens to be a Christian?
- Are you a secular educator who provides religious education?
- Are you a Christian who provides instruction in God’s Word, through secular or conventional education?

Of course, I pray that you are the latter, i.e. a Christian who provides instruction in God’s Word, through conventional education. Emmanuel Christian Academy’s Purpose statement is:

We purpose to provide instruction in God’s word and conventional instruction that meets or exceeds state standards for those who require a biblical foundation. To serve students who are defined as at risk and to those underserved in traditional systems of education.

- You may **not** know that Christian Education and democracy are inexorably tied together. In addition,

- You may **not** know that early missionaries taught Africans to read, not just so they might have a better way of living, but that they might be able to read the Bible and be saved!

Since you are Christian Educators, I'm going to assume that you have been called by God and have accepted His commissioning to this service, in the Kingdom of God! **I just upped the ante substantially!**

Well, I'd like to encourage you today! To do so, I need to begin by helping you understand the battle and the cost.

**Whether you understand it or not or remain aware of it or not, this is about souls!** A secular educator may simply be concerned about a child's mind, but we must ultimately be concerned about a child's soul.

You may have noticed that I said "we"? That's because, as a pastor, a major part of my job is Christian Education, teaching, or discipleship. In the Great Commission, Jesus said

Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB), "<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

There is one command in these verses: "Make disciples of all nations." This one command, "Make disciples of all nations," is surrounded by three participles. **The three participles surrounding the command of making disciples are "going," "baptizing," and "teaching".** These three participles function in this sentence as both verbs and adjectives. They command action that we should take, but they also describe specific qualities with respect to making disciples.

**So, like you, I'm called to make disciples for Jesus, and one of the main components of discipleship is teaching!**

From a biblical worldview, Christian Education is **not** primarily *the learning of information*, but *the process of transformation*. We trust that our students are learning biblical information, but beyond that we pray that they are being discipled and are receiving a divine impartation that facilitates their transformation from self-directed Saints to Spirit-filled citizens of the Kingdom of God who will impact the culture for Jesus Christ wherever they go.

Therefore, our standards for Christian Education and even the goals and destiny of our lives must be Kingdom Class and proceed from a biblical worldview.

**This being the case, we are going to face spiritual warfare!**

Secondly, teaching/discipleship involves working with troubled, difficult, needy, sometimes demanding, children, parents, teachers, administrators, etc. Helping others will take money, time, energy, and emotion. **So, there is a cost to pay!** We must count up the cost!

Thirdly, “Thousands suffer from overcare-driven exhaustion and burnout. They feel that they’ve cared too much and can’t care any more.”<sup>1</sup>  
**In Grief □ Recovery, we call this compassion fatigue!**

“Overcare that’s left unchecked eventually produces a low-grade angst that hangs like a cloud over your entire life.”<sup>2</sup> You end up walking around like Badluck Schelprock on the Pebbles and Bamm-Bamm Cartoon. You are constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop!

**Fourthly, we must realize that we can’t help every student!** In our offering of help to people, we must become more aware of the fact that **not** every person wants to be saved and not every student wants to learn or become a disciple of Jesus, the Christ! Awareness of this reality can help to protect our hearts!

Ruby Payne writes “...the role of the educator, social worker, employer, or church worker is **not** necessarily to save the individual but rather to offer a support system, role models, and opportunities to learn, which will increase the likelihood of the person’s success. **Ultimately, the choice always belongs to the individual.**”<sup>3</sup>

**Unrealistic expectations about teaching/discipleship can lead to burnout!** As in the cases of salvation or any thing else, God uses us to offer opportunities to people. This never takes away people’s choices! This leads to the myth that if people had a choice, they would choose to live differently (*probably according to what we believe should be different*).

We must realize that some of our students have substantial issues, parental issues, personal issues, socio-economic issues, etc. **These issues are strongholds that trap people and can enslave their choices.** What is a stronghold?

Edgardo Silvoso of Harvest Evangelism gives this definition of a stronghold:

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<sup>1</sup> Doc Childre and Howard Martin with Donna Beech, *The HeartMath Solution*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, New York, 1999, pp. 181-182.

<sup>2</sup> Doc Childre and Howard Martin with Donna Beech, *The HeartMath Solution*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, New York, 1999, pp. 181-182.

<sup>3</sup> Bill Ehlig & Ruby K. Payne, *What Every Church Member Should Know about Poverty*, aha! Process, Inc., Highlands, Texas, 1999, p. 124.

“a stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes the believer to accept as unchangeable something that he/she knows is contrary to the will of God.”<sup>4</sup>

*(Before I make some suggestions on how to carry out your calling, let me encourage you.)*

First, I want to thank you for your faithful and tireless service in exercising your gift of teaching for the transformation of children and the glory of God.

Hebrews 6:10 (NASB-U), “For God is **not** unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints” (*bold formatting added*).

You are some of the most faithful people in God’s Kingdom!

*(In closing, let’s talk about a very important context of your service.)*

***In God’s Kingdom, relationships are everything, and it is through relationships that people are really disciplined.***

“When individuals who have been in poverty (and have successfully made it into middle class) are asked how they made the journey, the answer nine times out of ten has to do with a relationship—a person who made a suggestion or took an interest in them as individuals.”<sup>5</sup>

It’s interesting that we usually don’t remember much that a particular teacher taught us, but we do remember special teachers, because of their relationship with us!

Along with this encouragement, please accept my exhortation. **When it comes to education or discipleship that brings about divine transformation, we must return to the Kingdom mandate of generational transfer.** This principle is referenced in

2 Timothy 2:2 (NASB-U), “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

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<sup>4</sup> Edgardo Silvano, taken from a memorandum to supporters and friends on “Plan Resistencia,” September 15, 1990: p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Bill Ehlig & Ruby K. Payne, *What Every Church Member Should Know about Poverty*, aha! Process, Inc., Highlands, Texas, 1999, p. 95.

Now, some of you who are sharp, are thinking, “The verse you just quoted doesn’t have anything to do with relationships and generational transfer; it has to do with Paul instructing Timothy to teach others what Paul had taught him!”

Well, you are partially correct, but you are shortsighted, because you do **not** understand Kingdom, covenant relationships, generational transfer, etc., etc., etc.

Notice first of all that Paul did **not** use the word “teach,” but “entrust.” **What Paul had transferred to Timothy was not simple knowledge, but a trust.** Also notice that this “trust” was **not** to be kept by Timothy, but taught, passed on, or entrusted to others also.

A “trust” involves teaching, but it is so much more than teaching. **A trust is a supernatural impartation between people who are related by a covenant relationship.** You will probably understand this better, if I give you two quotes from the pen of the Apostle Paul. He states in

1 Corinthians 4:15 (NASB-U), “For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.”

1 Thessalonians 2:11 (NASB-U), “Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children.”

***Christian education is discipleship through the miraculous vehicle of divine impartation to those who are in a covenant relationship with a father. Teaching is certainly one level of Christian Education, but true Christian Education—although it includes teaching—is an entrusting of the Father’s heart to his children!***

Children are going to be transformed more by who you are than what you teach!

Consequently, I want you, educators—as we appreciate you and celebrate your faithfulness—to consider how we are going to facilitate divine transformation to our covenant students, so that our effectiveness will continue to grow.

- We trust that you are **imparting** to your students a desire to cultivate a vital, daily, intimate, personal fellowship with Jesus, the Christ, which is expressed through prayer, worship, and Scripture memorization.
- We trust that your students will have the opportunity to participate in experiences that will build their character.

- We trust that “through a thorough curriculum of study and heart application, our disciples/students will be challenged to submit more fully to the Holy Spirit, those in authority over them, and to their fellow students.”<sup>6</sup>
- Understanding that those who serve also lead, we trust that you will model leadership and give students the opportunity to develop leadership through practical avenues of service to the body of Christ.<sup>7</sup>
- We trust that our students, through practical and personal application of teaching will develop a biblical worldview, by becoming sound in doctrine and in the understanding of God’s Word.<sup>8</sup>
- We trust that they will grow in their understanding of the importance of relationships in the body of Christ. Furthermore,
- We trust that they will develop an understanding of how to relate to others according to the covenantal principles of the Word of God. This will lead to relationships that will last a lifetime and continue on in eternity.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Norman Willis, *The Ancient Path: A Return To The Kingdom Mandate Of Generational Transfer*, Christ Church Publishing, Korea, 1998, p. 123.

<sup>7</sup> Norman Willis, *The Ancient Path: A Return To The Kingdom Mandate Of Generational Transfer*, Christ Church Publishing, Korea, 1998, p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> Norman Willis, *The Ancient Path: A Return To The Kingdom Mandate Of Generational Transfer*, Christ Church Publishing, Korea, 1998, p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> Norman Willis, *The Ancient Path: A Return To The Kingdom Mandate Of Generational Transfer*, Christ Church Publishing, Korea, 1998, p. 123.

- Finally, we trust that they will gain a perspective of the importance of their spiritual genes or DNA, i.e. they have been trained to recognize the distinctives of the spiritual family they were born into and honor the spiritual father God has given to them.<sup>10</sup>

1 Timothy 1:5 (NASB), “<sup>5</sup> But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

So,

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NRSV), “<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

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<sup>10</sup> Norman Willis, *The Ancient Path: A Return To The Kingdom Mandate Of Generational Transfer*, Christ Church Publishing, Korea, 1998, p. 123.