



OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Meaning of Life

We believe that mankind is the crowning jewel of a creation spoken into existence by an infinite, transcendent, immanent, omniscient, sovereign God of love. Created by God in his image, we were created to share in common with him some of his holy attributes, but we have all violated his nature and find ourselves in need of redemption, which God has made possible by revealing truth to us over time through both general and specific revelation—most specifically through Jesus Christ. As his image-bearers, we were created able to know and understand truth. Believing this is so, we are to love what God loves and hate what he hates, embracing his will, which he has made known to us, and glorifying him by the way we conduct our lives.

The Aim of Education

It naturally follows, then, that the aim of education should be to facilitate the restoration of our students to the image of God and to lead them to reconciliation with him, providing them with the knowledge necessary to equip them to be disciples of Christ in all facets of the human experience. True education, then, cannot be assessed completely by tests and formal evaluations. Evidence of such an education can only be seen in the life and deeds of the student. Education begins with foundational truths and principles that can easily be tested in the traditional classroom but is eventually measured by the pupil's ability to actually act productively by putting his knowledge into practice.

For such an education to be realized, parents, first and foremost, must invest in and take responsibility for the education of their children, partnering with the church and school to provide by virtue of example and direct instruction a model of authentic faith in and out of the classroom, demonstrating to them the integration of faith and learning, ultimately expressed in personal discipleship.

The Student

The pupil that the parents, teachers, and church must strive so deliberately to educate has inherent value because he is created by God in the very image of God himself. Made in his image, all students have the ability to know. All students possess by their nature unique personality, intelligence, the compulsion and the potential to not only hold moral convictions but to live to a high standard of morality as defined by God himself, a need for relationship and a gregarious responsibility to one another, a unique creative impulse and drive, and the capacity to be self-transcendent. Although students possess these inherent qualities, they are in constant need of discipline and intervention in their pursuit of fully realizing their potential. Additionally, students possess an interactive actional nature, acting internally upon information presented or experienced externally but needing an outside force (the educator) to provide engaging instruction and to help facilitate accurate assimilation and accommodation of new information. Students engage in this process to the extent that they are motivated by planned motivational methodology. Each will also process new information when content and its delivery are developmentally appropriate and when both are designed taking into consideration individual differences in preferences and capacities in learning including cognitive and experiential variations and the full range of learning styles and multiple intelligences, and finally both social and cultural forces that affect individuals and groups of individuals.

The Teacher

Just as all young people are not designed to learn the same way, all adults are not designed to teach. Not many should presume to be teachers. The role of the teacher should be accepted with great sobriety as it is by nature the commitment to honor a sacred trust, and because in the teacher is placed both moral and legal authority to educate young minds and to promote and facilitate unity of purpose and spirit in the classroom. The successful teacher will first and foremost be committed to meeting the educational needs of his students. The teacher must be selfless in the carrying out of his duties. He must not seek to be known, appreciated, or served by his students but rather to know, appreciate, and serve them fully. The primary function of the role of the teacher is just that: to be the teacher. The teacher should be highly knowledgeable about his subject and should be competent at connecting it with an integrating core of Jesus Christ in a manner consistent with the learning needs of his students in lessons that promote learning. Finally, the teacher must embody by example, in both private and public arenas, the lessons he teaches his students because students will often judge the credibility of the lesson by the personal practices of the teacher.

A Classical Christian Curriculum

Integrity of the curriculum must complement the integrity of the teacher. Jesus Christ should be the unifying core of a cohesive, integrated curriculum. "Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Col. 1:17) Without Christ as the core, knowledge is not coherent, and students become frustrated, confused, or even worse, fragmented in their knowledge and schizophrenic in their living. The curriculum must reflect the cognitive development stages of young people. For students in preschool through sixth grade, a grammar school model emphasizing reading, writing, and mathematics must be utilized. For students in grades seven through nine, a logic school emphasizing systematic study and application of logic must supplant the grammar school content and methodology as each discipline comes to life in deeper and more expansive ways. In grades ten through twelve, rhetorical skills must be developed to equip students to become integral and influential members of the greater learning community and society. Teaching methodology, processing activities, learning objectives, and assessment instruments must be chosen and designed with these distinct stages and skill sets as guideposts.