

Three Foes of Christian Education

By Tom Stiles

New York Association of Christian Schools

My wife and I have been involved in Christian Education since 1980. That is the year that we began the Otsego Baptist Academy in Otsego, MI. I remember clearly some of the challenges we faced in order to get the school off the ground. As I look back, I am struck by the fact that some of these challenges are the same today. Three of these stand out as particular foes of Christian Education

IGNORANCE

The first of these foes is ignorance – people simply do not understand the purpose, philosophy, or product of Christian Education. Many people assume that it is a five-day Sunday School meeting in the basement of a church, led by people that are not qualified. The truth is a Christian School gives a far superior education than can be obtained through public schools. Students are taught the truth instead of error. They are taught Creation instead of evolution, for example. This concept impacts every area of knowledge taught. God is the Creator, so He is the author of Life. God is a God of order, so 2 plus 2 always equals 4 (and H₂O is always water) There are absolutes – right and wrong are not relative. History is the story of God’s directing the affairs of men (His-Story). Government exists to secure the God given rights of the people – rights come from God not government. The ability to read brings responsibility to read and obey the Word of God. Increased knowledge brings increased responsibility. Students are taught not just to how to “make a living” but “how to live.”

The people who teach in our Christians Schools are the finest people in the world. They are well-trained, dedicated to Jesus Christ, and dedicated to our children! Many have served unappreciated for years, with low pay, no retirement benefits. **They are faithful!**

Talk to one of our graduates to learn about the product of Christian Education. You will find them in every walk of life – pastors, missionaries, doctors, engineers, etc. A number of our NYACS schools have graduates serving as teachers and/or administrators.

INTOLERANCE

Since the beginning of the Christian School movement in the 1970’s, there has been resistance. Government interference is not common today – but it was back then. On the first day of school for the Otsego Baptist Academy, I received a telephone call from the Superintendent of Education in Michigan. He was furious that we had begun a Christian School without his approval. He wanted control of our curriculum, teachers, building, food service, and playground. He told me that he would “shut us down,” and he did try. He sent the Fire Marshall (building), Health Department (food service, building and playground), and fought in court to control curriculum and teachers. He lost on all counts, and the school continues to serve the Lord today with over 200 students.

Things are much better now –but intolerance continues to raise its ugly head. College administrators sometimes refuse to admit one of our graduates because he/she “did not graduate from a registered school” (registration is optional!). Sometimes it is a military recruiter who rejects an applicant because his/her school is not “accredited” (public schools are not accredited either). These difficulties can be resolved with a telephone call, or letter (sometimes many calls and letters).

You know, we live in a strange time. Everything under the sun is tolerated today –except Biblical Christianity.

INDIFFERENCE

Perhaps the subtlest, and therefore the most dangerous foe of Christian education is indifference. “Our churches are sound – sound asleep!” Vance Havner said that many years ago, and it is truer today that when he said it back then.

The public schools of New York are not getting better, and yet each year some students do not return to our Christian schools in the fall. Instead, their parents send them back into the public schools. Some of these children survive – but most become casualties in the culture war.

The key is commitment! We must keep our parents informed about the benefits of a Christian education – a young adult that has been fully trained to serve the Lord. We have a great product!