

Is There A Difference Between Public and Christian Education?

You already know the short answer to this question. You wouldn't be here if you didn't. But what are the differences? How far-reaching are they, and how might they affect your children? These are the real questions, and we'll attempt to answer them here.

The Myth of Neutral Education

Most educators, and far too many parents, have bought into the myth that education can be "religion-neutral." They're convinced that teachers can train the mind without shaping attitudes, behavior or spiritual beliefs.

The company line goes something like this: government schools will supply the raw data -- the "neutral" facts -- and parents can add the value system at home.

Here's the problem. Even in schools that try their level best to achieve academic objectivity -- and there are precious few of them -- the goal is never reached, *because neutral education is impossible.*

In Romans 12:2, Paul observes the vital link between what we learn and what we become. All of us, your children

***"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- His good, pleasing and perfect will."
Romans 12:2***

included, are transformed by the renewing of our minds, a task made impossible when the primary impetus for that renewal -- the Bible -- is either not taught at all, or else reduced to a history book.

"The school system that ignores God teaches its pupils to ignore God," writes Gordon Clark. "This is not neutrality. It is the worst form of antagonism, for it judges God to be unimportant and irrelevant in human affairs. This is atheism."

The Agony of Apathy

For argument's sake, let's say that educational neutrality is possible; that teachers can create a sterile environment -- an educational vacuum, if you will -- in which

the mind is stimulated while the spirit remains unaffected. Even if a school could achieve that end, the Bible clearly urges you not to send your children there. In fact, the strongest indictment against neutrality comes from Jesus Himself.

"He who is not with me is against me," He said (Matthew 12:30). Schools that strive for neutrality are nothing more than apathetic or lukewarm. And when you place your children in that kind of environment, you're sending them to an institution that, in the Lord's own words, should be considered an enemy.

It's worth noting that the founders of America's public school system, John Dewey and Horace Mann, openly

Only 9% of born-again teens believe in moral absolutes. Where are they being fed the truth-is-relative propaganda? Public schools.

The Barna Research Group reduce the negative impact. But you'll never eliminate it. Because when fable replaces fact in the classroom, when relativism replaces absolutism, it not only dishonors and displeases the Creator. It deceives those who follow Him, all the more when the recipients of such propaganda are young, impressionable students.

expressed their hatred of Christianity. They freely admitted to being "against" Jesus. But even when public schools try to straddle the religious fence, they always fall down. And they always land on the side opposite God.

This can't help but have an adverse affect on your children. If you administer healthy amounts of damage control, you may be able to

Two Kinds of Builders

Jesus placed all builders into one of two groups; those who build on a solid foundation and those who don't. Herein lies the primary difference between Christian and public

"An education that trains the mind without training the moral sense is a menace to civilization rather than a help."

J. Gresham Machen

education. One builds its academic house on the unwavering truths of God's Word; the other on the shifting sand of moral relativism.

The results are predictable enough. Christian schools teach students to understand and live all of life with an eternal perspective, while maintaining a daily, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Government schools, on the other hand, teach children

"In just one generation, most Christian students will graduate from (public) high school and begin their lives operating from a pagan worldview."

The Nehemiah Institute

that God is either irrelevant or non-existent. Jesus Christ, if mentioned at all, is said to be nothing more than a good, moral teacher.

From these philosophical differences spring forth many practical ones. For example, public schools teach young people that man landed on the moon. But Christian students learn that space travel would have been impossible unless both man and space had been created.

These disparities are significant, but at the end of the day they all stem from a foundational difference of opinion. By sending your children to a Christian school, you'll be moving them into a house built on a foundation of absolute truth instead of absolute relativism. And years from now, when the strong winds of life blow in, that strong foundation, together with your own positive influence, will combine to help keep your children from falling, and in the end, to stand.

***"For over one hundred years, Americans have been running a gigantic experiment in government schools, trying to find out what a society looks like without God. Now we know."
Douglas Wilson, author of Excused Absence***