

## Does Worldview Matter?

Many people believe that Christian schooling is about the choice by families to remove their children from the real world and place them in an environment that is more like a fort built to keep the “bad guys” out—the bad guys of course being representative of everything bad, from real people to real ideas and all else imaginable in between. The fact is, Christian schooling, in regard to your children, is not about sheltering them from—rather, it is about preparing them for—real and effective living. Now, sheltering is not all bad. It is just that sheltering, at least in the sense of isolation from, is not a strategy that works over the course of a lifetime.

Christian schooling pursues that which does work for a lifetime—and that is the preparation of young men and women through an excellent education that is intellectually developing and spiritually forming. As your school integrates the academic realm with the spiritual and every other realm, including the social, the emotional, and the physical, the intent is to develop in your children the rudimentary elements of a Christian worldview—that perspective from which your children will view everything in life.

Consider, if you will, some of the most basic aspects of developing a Christian worldview and the fact that such an outlook is not something that just happens. Our first thoughts about education are often limited to subject content areas, or more simply expressed, the three Rs: reading, writing, and arithmetic. But when we limit consideration to those areas, we fail to note the impact of the overarching philosophical umbrella of a school and those who teach there. Rather than rehearse what might be happening in a philosophically secular, religiously neutral education setting, please consider instead what happens in your Christian school, which has a purposefully intentional philosophical position based on God’s Word and the truths of the Christian faith. The latter is a place where teachers are selected not only for their academic expertise but also for their faith and their pursuit of God, as well as their ability to integrate those spiritual dimensions into every learning experience. In this setting, the classroom is not merely a place where the right things are said and promoted but a place where the right things are also expressed in daily living by those who embrace and exude a Christian worldview.

For example, simply consider how much of schooling is about people. Then think about how that truth unfolds when consideration of those people is based on an articulate and strategic instructional format that continuously reinforces the fact—biblically based—that people, every single one of them, are created in the image of God. Now, seeing people as God’s image bearers offers a perspective about life different from a traditionally secular perspective. The Christian perspective encompasses teaching about healthful living: the appropriate care and nurture of people physically, mentally, and spiritually. We are not simply the result of chance. Rather, we are created ones, individually unique and by design created in the image of God. This perspective, nurtured and developed, builds godly attitudes about culture, race, age, physical and mental impairment, and economic deprivation. This perspective creates the right foundation for considering and developing strategies regarding community, care, and every aspect of relationships—all of which are so much a part of every realm of living.

When your school regularly puts before your children Jesus’ teachings such as “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Matthew 22:37–39, NIV), the school is nurturing an appropriate perspective. These teachings of Jesus come neither automatically nor naturally, and our secular culture does not generally support or encourage them. These particular teachings by no means make up the sum total of worldview development, but the development of sound biblical perspective on these and multiplied other teachings, reinforced through example and modeling, become crucial in developing your children’s perspective of the matters of life—every observation, every response, every conclusion.

Yes, worldview does matter. And Christian schooling provides key support in making the worldview of your children Christian.



Ken Smitherman, President  
Association of Christian Schools International