

The Purpose of Christian Education

PHILOSOPHY OF A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Presented to Parents and Friends of Albemarle Baptist Church School

The word philosophy comes from the Greek words meaning “love of wisdom.” As far back as the Garden of Eden when the serpent said to the woman “...that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,” (Genesis 3:5) man has wanted to be wise and has striven to know all truth. The Christian must develop his/her philosophy by studying God’s Truth – John writes, “...thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The Apostle Paul warns us not to be spoiled by the philosophies of this world – philosophies such as situation ethics, humanism, and “...vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Colossians 2:8). He defends a Christian philosophy as one that follows after Christ because in Christ “...are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:3). The Christian’s Philosophy must be based on the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures.

Paul writes in the 2nd letter to Timothy that God makes it plain that His will for all Christians is that they “...be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:17). In order to accomplish this, God gave men and women gifts “for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13). These verses describe the goal of the Christian education to be offered by ABCS: to help create in every young person the likeness of Christ. Christian education should develop Christians whose activities in this life anticipate their eventual conformity to the image of Christ (Romans 8:20).

In Deuteronomy 6:7, parents are commanded to “...teach [God’s Word] diligently unto [their] children.” Paul writes in Ephesians 6:4 that parents are commanded to “...bring [their children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Thus, Christian education should first and foremost take place in the Christian homes of the members of Albemarle Baptist Church. These commands are directed to Christian parents who bear the ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of their children’s education. The following passages support this concept: Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Psalm 125:3-5; Proverbs 19:27; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6: 1-4.

In the Great Commission, Jesus tells His church – all Christians – to disciple, to “...teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded of you.” (Matthew 28:19-20) Thus, Albemarle Baptist Church and her members are another institution with the God-given responsibility of Christian education.

Take notice of the order in which the Great Commission is given. First, we are to make disciples. A prerequisite to discipling is evangelism – a person must be won to Christ before he/she can be disciple. Second, we are to baptize these converts. Third, we are charged with teaching them everything that Jesus commanded the apostles. Christians are to win the lost to Christ, then teach them, regardless of their age.

Therefore, ABCS was established as an arm of the home and the church. The School has accepted the responsibility for reinforcing the biblical teachings of the home and church. Our School operates *in loco parenti*: in place of the parents. Our School will not relieve the parents of their ultimate responsibility for the education of their children. However, the goal of ABCS is the same goal of Christian parents: making the student Christlike.

ABCS will meet the requirements of the Virginia Board of Education with respect to school attendance laws, elementary, middle, and high school curriculum, and graduation requirements while allowing parents to guide their children toward being conformed to the image of Christ. This is the reason for ABCS: not to get students away from drug abuse, poor attendance, poor discipline, poor teachers, or state testing requirements. ABCS is being established to allow parents to obey God's commands to give their children a Christian education and at the same time obey the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

It is said that, in general, Christian education begins with salvation and continues until death. However, this is not altogether true in the broadest sense of Christian education. For the Christian family, preparation for Christian education actually should begin before the child is born as plans are made for his or her conformity to Christ. In the years before a child is born again, Christian education is used to prepare the child for the moment when he or she recognizes his or her personal need of salvation and that this need can only be met in Christ. Many children from Christian homes, especially those in the lower grades, may not yet have come to salvation. In addition, some junior and senior high students who profess to be saved really are not. For these reasons, it is very important that Albemarle Baptist Church School give clear biblical teaching on salvation so that our young people can become "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 3:15).

Adapted from: Deunik, James W. and Brian A. Carruthers. Management Principles for Christian Schools. Greenville, SC: Journey Forth, BJU Press. 2008, p. 13, 17-19, 21, 23-24.