

Education Does not Deal with The 3 R's so much as with The 4 W's Christian and Secular Schools Compared

INTRODUCTION

A preaching Church

Very little elaboration is necessary when the statement is made that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a PREACHING church.

We have but to think of PUBLIC WORSHIP as it is conducted within the confines of this body. The sermon most often plays a prominent part in it, and consumes a significant portion of the time allotted to such worship—sometimes excessively so.

The establishment of MISSIONS throughout the world constitutes a major activity of this Synod, fostered to a large degree for no other reason than this, that people may be gathered into groups to hear the preaching of The Word of God.

And when attention is directed to “THE INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN HOUR”, a radio program heard in just about every major civilized country in just about every major civilized language, we are made exceedingly conscious of the fact that Missouri Synod Lutheranism is synonymous with preaching—as indeed it should be.

A teaching Church

No less obvious is the fact that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is just as much a TEACHING church.

She does not only foster Sunday schools and Saturday schools and released time instruction and Bible classes and confirmation classes, as do many of the sects, but she goes in for WEEK-DAY SCHOOLS, and that to an impressive degree, as 1953 statistics readily indicate.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS in North America with the name “Missouri Synod Lutheran” over their portals number more than 1000, attended by over 100,000 children, instructed by no less a number than 3500 teachers.

In recent years the members of this Synod have turned their attention especially to the establishment of HIGH SCHOOLS, and they can now point to eleven of them, with 224 instructors guiding almost 5000 pupils.

Not to forget the UNIVERSITY in Indiana, not far from Chicago, supported by Missouri Synod Lutherans, with 1500 in the student body, well over 100 on the faculty, and an annual budget approximating no less than \$1,500,000.

Questions

These facts give the individual the right to ask some questions—some more or less NEGATIVE QUESTIONS.

Is not the passion for Christian week-day schools UNNECESSARY, and hence, in the final analysis, an indefensible extravagance? What about the nation's public schools? They can be seen in every community, fed by busses from outlying districts, supported by the taxpayer's money. Does not their existence brand The Missouri Synod's schools an expensive superfluity?

And are not these church-schools UNFAIR: unfair to the boys and girls and young men and women who attend them? How many of them are able to feature the modern facilities and conveniences that are almost commonplace in schools supported by the government? In most Missouri Synod schools we look in vain for an attractive swimming pool and a well equipped gymnasium and a cheerful cafeteria and a sound-proof music room.

And are not Lutheran elementary schools and high schools and universities even somewhat UNAMERICAN? Does not their very existence stand for prejudice? DO they not, unconsciously and sometimes even deliberately, encourage discrimination and other attitudes at odds with American ideals? Are they not, therefore, open to a suspicion engendered by loyal patriotism?

Answer

Such questions, of course, cannot be satisfactorily answered in A SINGLE WORD.

They cannot even be adequately answered in TWO WORDS.

They require AN ENTIRE TREATISE for a proper answer. And this pamphlet is devoted to that very thing.

If Christian education IS unnecessary and unfair and un-American, then let us disabuse ourselves of it, by all means at all costs as quickly as possible.

But if it IS NOT—this pamphlet is dedicated to the proposition that it is not. Christian education is none of these things.

Christian education fosters no other PRINCIPLE than this one, found in The Sacred Scriptures (I Pet 4:11): "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever!"

Should that principle ever become unnecessary and unfair and un-American, then Christian education will be compelled to capitulate. But UNTIL THEN it must show itself heroically steady and strong in the face of whatever hostility and opposition the

world accords it, and loyal Christians are in conscience bound to support it, with both their prayers and their gifts, to the very best of their ability

The essence of education

All this will become more apparent when it is clearly realized that EDUCATION DOES NOT PRIMARILY CONSIST IN TEACHING THE 3 R'S: reading, writing, and 'rithmetic. The three R's are school subjects, but they are not education.

Education, real education, is concerned with far weightier issues. Education, real education, is concerned—not with the fundamentals of the three R's—but WITH THE ANSWERS TO THE 4 W'S. To know those answers makes a person truly educated.

And now it will be EXPLAINED what those 4 W's are.

I. THE FIRST W

Man's origin

The first W introduces the question: WHENCE DID I COME?

This, of course, does not mean: when did I come IMMEDIATELY? In that case the answer is obvious: I came from my mother.

This question means to ask: whence did I come ULTIMATELY? Where did my mother come from, and her mother, and the mother before that, way back to the very first mother?

Undeniably man is here; the universe is here; life is here. Hence WHENCE?

The problem must be faced

Secular education cannot possibly dodge this question because this query deals with BEGINNINGS, and every school subject properly begins at the beginning. Logically this question arises every day in every classroom in every school in the world.

HISTORY deals with the record of the human race; whence did the human race come? GEOGRAPHY deals with a study of the earth; whence did the earth come? PHYSIOLOGY deals with the functions of the body; whence did the body come? PHYSICS deals with the laws of nature; whence did nature come? PSYCHOLOGY deals with the processes of the brain; whence did the brain come?

So it is with EVERY OTHER SUBJECT on the curriculum.

And the HIGHER education goes, the more insistent this question becomes: whence?

Secular education's theory

So what does secular education ANSWER?

It really has no right to respond: from A SUPREME BEING, because The Constitution of The United States, which prohibits the teaching of religious views in institutions controlled by The State, makes such an answer formally illegal.

The only answer left is one antagonistic to religion, and that is the teaching of EVOLUTION.

You can read about it in numberless elementary text books, and hear it expounded on countless university platforms: in the beginning only the sun, much hotter than it is today, gradually cooling and breaking up into fragments, one of them becoming our world; a living cell. Floating aimlessly about on the surface of its waters, gradually developing from it, and so on down the line, until we finally come to the bleary-eyed, coconut-munching, trapeze-swinging baboon; and finally, as the highest form of all—and yet not so high, for he is only an animal once removed from his cousin, the ape—MAN.

Only theory

What makes this presentation of man's origin doubly destructive is its diabolical DISHONESTY.

Secular education frequently presents the THEORIES upon which this explanation is based as demonstrated FACTS. Often deliberately hushed up is the crux in this entire matter: that this whole evolution business is GUESSWORK, and that there is a host of brilliant scientists which vigorously denies and opposes it!

Christian education's view

Christian education soberly and sanely answers the question, "Whence did I come?", with the statement: FROM GOD.

ORIGINALLY (Gen 1:1, 26, 27):

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth * And God said: Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him. Male and female created He them."

And NOW, as Luther declares in his Small Catechism: "I believe that God has made ME."

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED."

II. THE SECOND W

Life's purpose

The second W: WHY AM I HERE?

Another vitally important question, dealing as it does with the purpose of life. We are born; we grow; we go to school; we learn; we mature: WHY?

Secular education's counsel

In the very nature of things, secular education must give an answer completely SELFISH.

Compelled as it is to ignore SPIRITUAL values, it concerns itself with things that are crassly MATERIAL, and counsels: "You were born to ENJOY yourself! As you grow and mature, your senses correspondingly develop in order that you may ENJOY yourself still more! Also your going to school and your learning should be done with this end in view: the ENJOYMENT of life; for the more educated you become, the more you will find ENJOYMENT in art and poetry and music and nature and travel; and the more you learn to get along with other people, and the more cultured and well mannered you become, the more people will be attracted to you, and so, once again, the more ENJOY-ABLE your life will be!"

SELFISHNESS from beginning to end, rotating in endless repetition around the personal pronoun "I".

Christian education's attitude

From which the inference is not to be drawn that Christian education DISCOUR-AGES and disparages the enjoyment of life. That, indeed, it does not.

But the enjoyment IT encourages is an enjoyment of an altogether different KIND: not the enjoyment of the SENSES, so ably fostered by the unbelieving world, but the happiness of the SOUL, as it is experienced by him who lives his life FOR GOD.

Christian education declares: "If you want to be happy, then BE LIKE HIS SON, who taught mankind that life is nobly lived, not by getting, but by giving; not by being ministered unto, but by ministering; not by being served, but by serving!"

Christian education further declares: "If you want to be happy, then DO GOD'S WILL: giving your highest loyalty to Him, and loving your neighbor as yourself. First seek The Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt 6:33); and thereafter, "whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor 10:31).

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III. THE THIRD W

Man's destiny

Just as important is the third W which confronts man: WHITHER AM I GOING?

To use the words of Moses (Ps 90:10): “The days of our years are”—not forever, but—“threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years”—yet then shall the END come. To this fact cemeteries all over the world give silent but eloquent testimony.

The stream of life bears us irrepressibly onward—TOWARD WHAT?

Secular education's ignorance

Secular education, if it says anything in regard to this matter, answers: “WHO KNOWS!”

In saying that, it is EMBARRASSED, because it realizes full well that ignorance is so vital a matter as man's eventual destiny is ignorance of a most appalling kind.

But it cannot HELP itself. It does not accept the one textbook in all the world which makes authoritative statements about existence after the grave. And so it shrugs its shoulders, and turns away.

Secular education's hostility

Or else it tries to save its face by stamping its foot and screaming: “Whither are we going? NOWHERE! There is nothing so dead as death! There is another word for the end of human existence, and that is the word ‘grave’!”

Which, from the standpoint of secular education, is perfectly LOGICAL: man is born an animal, and he dies like an animal.

Christian education's message

But Christian education cannot stomach a view so tragic and so hopeless. In answer to the question, “Whither?”, it points its finger unhesitatingly TO GOD.

To God's JUDGMENT SEAT, “that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Cor 5:10).

And to God's HEAVEN, where the righteous shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; where the sun shall not light on them, nor any heat; where The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev 7:16, 17).

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IV. THE FOURTH W

Man’s salvation

Which brings up the last W, perhaps the most important of all, because an entire eternity of boundless bliss and jubilant joy hangs upon the correct answer: WHAT MUST I DO TO GET THERE?

A question old yet ever new

Here is a question yellow with age, because it has ALWAYS plagued men’s hearts.

When a certain young man once asked Our Blessed Lord (Lk 18:18): “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”, he made a query as OLD as the hills.

And when another man asked Paul on another occasion (Acts 16:30): “What must I do to be saved?”, he brought up a topic as TIMELY as the H-bomb.

Why? Because humanity will never encounter A MORE MOMENTOUS QUESTION than this one (Mt 16:26): “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Secular education’s vagaries

Secular education reluctantly takes up the subject of salvation and mumbles something about MORALITY.

“TRY YOUR BEST,” it says vaguely; “then you will please God (if there is a God), and save your soul (if you have a soul), and avoid Hell (if there is a Hell), and go to Heaven (if there is a Heaven).”

Christian education’s Gospel

There is no need to add that such advice only makes the blackness BLACKER STILL. As if man’s imperfect morality can ever begin to satisfy a perfectly perfect God!

Only Christianity can dispel the darkness by pointing to Him who is The Light of the world! Only the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross can reconcile sinful man to Holy God, and make him eligible for everlasting life! Only THROUGH GOD Himself can man hope to face the portals of Paradise, and hear the death-destroying, life-giving sentence (Mt 9:2, 5; Mk 2:5, 9; Lk 5:23): “Thy sins be forgiven thee!”

And therefore Christian education declares in never-ending repetition that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, alone cleanses us from all sin (I Jn 1:7); and answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?", by pleading (Jn 1:29): "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

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CONCLUSION

Think this over

Christian education UNAMERICAN, when it can be demonstrated throughout the length and breadth of our nation, from the past as well as the present, that conscientious Christians make the best citizens, and that our Country under God can prosper only insofar as His laws are obeyed?

Christian education UNFAIR, when public schools, with all their modern facilities and equipment, must of necessity do without the greatest pedagogical and educational agency of all, which is The Word of God?

Christian education UNNECESSARY, when it alone is thorough enough to tackle and solve the basic problems and fundamental questions of human existence?

And this

When all is said and done, a person does not really need to know READING, WRITING, AND 'RITHMETIC. He can get along without any and all of these school subjects, if need be. There have been outstandingly splendid men and women in the near and distant past who were totally ignorant of all these things.

But he MUST know the answers to the questions which only Christian education can supply:

Whence did I come?

FROM GOD!

Why am I here?

FOR GOD!

Whither am I going?

TO GOD!

How do I get there?

THROUGH GOD—who “so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16).

“THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE PRASIE AND DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER!”