

Real Christian education, in other words, will have a Christian philosophy of education. It will, necessarily, define the need for education and the goals to be sought by education differently from the way secular society defines these. For Christianity has a deeper view of what human personality is, and a more realistic view of what it needs, as well as a much truer appreciation of the meaning of the world and of life.

Most American church-affiliated colleges are simply ordinary colleges with the added religious features mentioned above. A very few are consciously seeking to implement a truly Christian philosophy of education all along the line — and this means in science, history, sociology, psychology, literature, as well as in religion. Perhaps none would dare to claim that this lofty aim has been truly achieved. These colleges that are seeking to be truly Christian in all parts of their inner life are facing a difficult task and cannot boast but only humbly claim to be seriously pursuing their aim — to take the knowledge of God seriously in every relationship of life and knowledge.

Geneva, our Church college, is a very good college as colleges go. It is fully accredited and offers the Church's youth a wide variety of educational opportunity. And the writer humbly asserts that Geneva is trying to become better as a truly Christian college, and that some real progress is being made in this effort. What Geneva seeks is not merely to become a better college plus Christianity, but to become a better, more radically, more consistently Christian college.

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Christian Education

for

Christian Youth

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There is a great emphasis on education today. Some of this is motivated merely by fear of Russia — we must push education, it is said, to get ahead of the Soviets in developing missiles and satellites. We might, conceivably, beat the Soviets in this race and still not be really educated as a people. It is questionable whether the Russian mathematicians, physicists and technologists, brilliant as they may be in their own fields, are really educated. For, being atheists, they are blind to the real meaning of life; and their knowledge even of history, literature, philosophy and other fields is severely limited by the distorted ideology of a dictatorial government.

There are, surely, better reasons for promoting education. The word "educate" comes from the Latin *educo*, which means "to lead out." Education is intended to lead a person out — to bring out his possibilities and enable him to become a better, more effective person — more helpful to society and more satisfying to himself. It is meant to help a person fully to realize his potential as a human being. The educated person has a grasp of things, a sense of values, an appreciation of life, an ability to judge and appraise ideas and things, a competence to ask relevant questions and to penetrate popular prejudices and fallacies — in other words, a balanced, all-around effectiveness as a person — which the uneducated person simply does not have. This is true of education as such, and it is much more true of Christian education, as will be shown presently.

Many people today confuse **training** with education. Training enables one to perform a job and earn money; education makes one a more effective personality. The areas may overlap, of course, but many people have no other idea of education than that it is training to enable one to get a better job and earn more money. A truly educated person may also have the specialized training needed to hold a particular job, and if so he will have a richer, more rewarding and useful life than the one who has only the technical training. On the other hand, in our American life it has often been possible to attain a position involving specialized technical skills while still being an uneducated person — actually an ignorant person — in the whole field of human and cultural values, the things that give meaning to life.

Why seek education? A successful American business man is quoted as having said "History is bunk." After all, one can neither eat it, wear it nor put it in the fuel tank of his car. Yet the person who is unaware of history looks at the modern world with eyes that are at least half blind. Socrates said, "The unconsidered life is not worth living." He was in favor of education. For human beings are not mere machines; far less are they mere vegetables like cabbages or turnips. They have minds and hearts and immortal souls — in short, they are **persons** and will exist forever. Because we are persons, we need education. The Communist world, especially Red China and to a somewhat lesser extent Soviet Russia, is reducing people to the sub-personal, sub-human level, it is turning people into mere machines to grind out work for the all-powerful State. No wonder this system denatures education. The free world has something better; with all its faults and all its idolatries, it still respects human personality

and maintains conditions in which that personality can be developed, and also expressed.

What is **Christian** education? Here again we often meet distorted views. The ordinary idea among Christian people is that Christian education is simply secular education with some Christian features added. The common idea of a Christian college, for example, is that it is just like any other college in most respects, but that in addition to the ordinary courses and features, a Christian college will have courses in Bible study, chapel services, seasons of evangelism, a religious emphasis week, prayer groups, Christian service organizations, and the like. These religious features are certainly important, but they do not make education Christian, any more than carrying a Bible in his pocket makes a man a Christian. Real Christian education is not secular education plus some Christian features; it is education that is Christian through and through, in all its features, departments and aspects. Its basic guiding principle is faith in God, especially the great basic truths of **creation, providence and redemption**. The world, life, nature, history, society, — these do not exist of themselves. They were created by God and they function by the providence of God. Therefore they can really be grasped and appreciated only when viewed in the light of God. In His light shall we see light (Ps. 36:9). Secular education is lacking in the things that matter most; a true standpoint from which to approach knowledge, and a realization of man's deep need of redemption if he is to be an effective personality. Something is terribly wrong when a volume on world history will devote pages to Julius Caesar and Napoleon and the French Revolution, and not even mention (or perhaps barely mention) Jesus Christ.