

This statement of
foundational concepts of
Christian education
was prepared by a joint committee
of the Board of Corporators and
Board of Trustees of Geneva College
and adopted by the Board
of Trustees on October 26, 1967
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania



PREFACE

Starting with the belief that God is the source of all truth, education becomes the exciting adventure of seeking to appropriate knowledge in all its various facets under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Education which is Christian takes for its perspective the Biblical view of God, man and the universe in their mutual relations.

While education in a Christian context does not guarantee truth, it does seek to establish the starting point apart from which ultimate truth can never be learned. It becomes essential, therefore, to establish the direction for education from this Christian perspective and the following Statement has been drawn up in an attempt to make this clear as related to Geneva College. In no sense should it be considered as the last word, but it purports to be the foundational concept upon which scholarship under God may thrive and expand.

This view of education rests upon the historic Christian faith contained in the Scriptures, symbolized by the open Bible on the seal of the College. Holding to the summary of this faith as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith of the mid-17th century, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America has endeavored for over a century to offer through her college an education which articulates the implications of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over all of His creation.

“For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light.”

Psalm 36:9

I. THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A. *The Christian View of God*

1. God is one being, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. God is a personal being, possessing in Himself all that personality means in man but without limitations.

3. God is the self-existent Creator, Preserver, and Controller of the universe in its totality.

B. *The Christian View of Man*

1. As a Created Being

a. Man is unique among all living creatures, being distinguished from the animals by his being created in the image of God as a rational, moral, and spiritual being.

b. The purpose of human life is to glorify and to enjoy God, and only when life is so viewed can the highest happiness, welfare, and honor be experienced.

c. Man was created an immortal being. Earthly life therefore is preparatory to the life after death, and should not be regarded as an end in itself, though as God's creation the present earthly life has a real value of its own.

2. As a Fallen Creature

a. Man by his relationship to Adam as representative of the human race is a fallen creature.

b. By moral revolt against God man lost both his position of communion with God and his ability consciously to reflect God's glory, and instead became devoted to the worship and aggrandizement of self.

c. Man's fall into sin affected not only his moral nature, but also his intellect, thus making him prone to error, and requiring divine revelation to determine ultimate standards and values in all fields.

d. The moral and intellectual effects of sin are such that man is incapable of removing them by human effort.

3. As Restored in Christ

a. Jesus Christ as the second Adam, died and rose again as the representative of fallen man, in order that those who are chosen of God, regenerated by the Spirit, and by faith identified with Christ in His death and resurrection might be restored to fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit and enabled to glorify God actively in their lives.

b. The believing Christian, having realized his union with Christ, and hence his own death to sin and rising to newness of life in the Spirit, renounces the life of self-centeredness for the life of Christ-centeredness, thereby seeking in every phase of human experience to understand and reflect God's glory.

C. The Christian View of the Universe

1. The universe, as the creation of God, serves to reveal God; and its revelation is true, valid, and useful in itself.

2. The created universe, being full of God's glory, is to be understood, appreciated, ruled, and used by man.

3. God in his goodness has bestowed upon mankind the ability to discover and use truths about the universe, which may be learned by men irrespective of their spiritual relationship with Him.

4. In seeking to understand the truth of the universe in all of its dimensions, man is responsible to use every faculty and effort, but the facts of the universe can be understood in the fullest sense only when viewed in relationship to God. Ultimate judgments must finally be made in the light of God's Word, the Holy Scripture, which is the only adequate and inerrant standard of truth.

II. THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A. Inasmuch as man's essential purpose is to glorify God, Christian education seeks to develop the student's ability to know God and to relate himself and the created universe to God, through the study of His Word and Works.

B. Christian education emphasizes the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ in order that the student may be yielded to Him as his Saviour from sin and that he may see in Christ the ultimate purpose and meaning of the whole universe.

C. Christian education seeks the realization of the potential of the individual as the image of God through the

development of God-given capacities. The fulfillment of those potentialities is reached insofar as the student devotes those capacities to God's glory in his vocation and life.

D. Christian education endeavors to develop the student's capacity for the enjoyment of the world as God's creation, in all its cultural richness, realizing that all of life as a coherent whole is related to God and His redemptive activity.

E. Christian education seeks the development of mature students with integrated personalities as individuals, and who are oriented members of society building the Kingdom of God in the family, the church, the nation, and the world.

III. THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A. The School

1. All persons responsible in any way for the functioning of an educational institution share in the pursuit of its goals. In Christian education this becomes particularly significant since no task, teaching or other, is unrelated to God; and also because the entire personnel should demonstrate in their lives the end-purpose of Christian education.

2. All men share in the transmission of knowledge, but only those consciously committed to Jesus Christ as revealed in the scriptures can envision and reach the goals of Christian education.

3. To realize the goals of Christian education each faculty member should be seeking to understand more perfectly and to teach his students more clearly his particular field of study in the light of Christian education.

B. The Student

1. While a student may attain a high degree of knowledge through the grace given to all men, in order for him to attain the goals of Christian education, he must be in submission to the person of Jesus Christ, that sin and its effects in his own personality may be overcome.

2. The student, as a creature of God, is under His mandate both to learn and to apply all knowledge for the purpose of knowing and glorifying God.

3. The student should not be sheltered from non-christian viewpoints, but must become able to evaluate all knowledge critically, to gain from that which is true, to discard error, and to transmit the cultural heritage he has enjoyed.

4. The student should be aware of God's call on his life, and thus see his education as an opportunity to prepare for his life work, whatever that field of endeavor may be.

C. The Curriculum

1. In Christian education the curriculum is built upon the thesis that the historic Christian Faith is permanently true, and that it is the integrating factor of a truly Christian educational program.

2. Since Christian education leads toward an understanding of God, man, and the universe in their inter-relatedness, the curriculum will have a strong emphasis on both the Humanities and the Sciences, theoretic and applied, as well as a basic core of Biblical studies.

3. The curriculum should lead a person to grasp the foundations of learning so that he can live a life glorifying to God, confronting honestly and confidently the problems and challenges of new knowledge, and contributing to the welfare of society under God.

D. Moral Discipline

1. Standards of moral discipline must be maintained according to the moral law of God which He has set forth in Scripture. Therefore discipline is to be exercised on the basis of God's Word.

2. Discipline exercised in Christian love and firmness not only deters licentiousness, but also teaches in principle how to live under Christ's Lordship and how to live with other people on the basis of righteousness.

3. Moral discipline must always be exercised in an attitude of helping the offender in the context of the doctrine of sin and its solution in Jesus Christ.

