

CONCERNING EDUCATION OF CHRISTIAN CHILDREN

Affirmations and Denials

(Topic No. 21)

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PREFACE: We refer the reader to two documents that are foundational to these affirmation and denial statements. Those documents are “Concerning Biblical Inerrancy” and “Concerning Christ’s Lordship” and are downloadable at our website, www.ChurchCouncil.org. The Statements set forth in this document assume what is set forth in them.

A. FOUNDATIONAL BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND THE MYTH OF NEUTRALITY

Article 1: The Bible is our absolute guide for all life and all education.

We affirm that the Bible-- being God’s own inerrant, written Word—is the ultimate standard by which all other truth-claims are to be judged,¹ and thus offers mankind the clearest, most complete picture of all reality and the only logically coherent worldview,² and is the only authoritative standard and guide for living and pleasing God.³

We further affirm that though knowledge sources other than the Christian Bible such as reason, research, tradition and experience are all valuable tools in gaining wisdom and knowledge of God, mankind and the universe, all such tools are always to be judged and informed by the Bible rather than them standing in judgment on the Bible’s truth. The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom but not the end of wisdom.

We further affirm that the Bible sufficiently sets forth God’s requirements for the education of Christian children.⁴

We deny that there is any source of truth higher than, or equal to, the Bible or that the Bible may be judged by any other standard.

We further deny that the Bible is either silent or neutral on the subject of the education of Christian children, or that it is insufficient in setting forth requirements for the training of Christian children.

1. Num. 23:19; Psalm 111:7; 119:89, 151, 160; Mat. 24:35; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21
2. Isaiah 8:20
3. Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:9; Eccles. 11:9-10
4. 2 Tim. 2:16-17

Article 2: All Education is Religious Education

We affirm that all education is foundationally religious – for the assumptions of every educator, educational system, and curriculum rests upon non-provable faith presuppositions (i.e. religious presuppositions) about reality, the nature of history, the being of man (metaphysics), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), and of morality (ethics).

We deny that educators, child development theorists, ethicists, curriculum writers etc. are religiously, metaphysically, epistemologically, or ethically neutral for they all live and work on the basis of either the Christian worldview, or some non-Christian worldview, and interpret all facts in light of their worldview and their presuppositions.

We deny that anyone is or can be religiously, metaphysically, epistemologically or ethically neutral—having no presuppositions, no view of truth, no view of right and wrong, or no worldview.

Article 3: Christians are required to live in obedience to their Lord Jesus and the Bible.

We affirm that Jesus is Lord of every area of life including education and that every human,¹ especially Christians, are required by God's Word to submit themselves and all persons and things under their care to the Lordship of Christ and the teachings and requirements of the Bible.²

We deny that education is outside the jurisdiction of Christ's Lordship or the Bible's teaching.

We further deny that a person may reject either the Lordship of Jesus Christ or the Bible's instruction for educating our children and be a mature and wise Christian.

1. Philip. 2:10-11; 2 Cor. 10:5; Col. 2:2-3
2. Deut. 6:25; Matthew 5:19;16:24-26; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 John 5:2-3

B. THE BIBLICALLY MANDATED JURISDICTIONS OF FAMILY, CHURCH AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT

Article 4: The Bible clarifies three God-ordained jurisdictions; the Family, the Church, the Civil Government.

We affirm that, in the Bible, God clearly designates three major areas of jurisdiction for the healthy, productive and just operation of human society and gives each of these jurisdictions specific authority and well defined duties for society which jurisdictions are: the Family, the Church and the civil government.¹

We further affirm that tyranny occurs and society's self-destruction begins whenever any of these three jurisdictions attempts to exercise authority or control within the boundaries of either of the other two jurisdictions. Both life and liberty may only be truly attained for individuals and society through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and glad submission to the principles of the Bible.

We further affirm that the family is the basic, building block of strong, healthy societies and that undermining families or interfering with the family's jurisdiction is a fast way to deteriorate and destroy any society.

We deny that the Family, the Church or the civil government in a society may take authority and control in either of the other two jurisdictions without that particular society moving in the direction of self-destruction and injustice.

We deny that these three distinct jurisdictions are rightly or fully maintained if either the civil government or the church controls the education of children.

1. Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:1-9, 20-25; 11:19-22; Psalm 78:3-6; Prov. 1:8; 2:1f; 3:1; 4:1-4, 7, 20; 6:20-22; 22:6; 31:1; Eph. 6:1-4

Article 5: Parental jurisdiction over their children and their children's training and education.

We affirm that God has given parents custody, jurisdiction and authority over their children, as stewards to raise them as servants of Christ, to seek to discern their calling, and to train, discipline and educate them in the biblical worldview. Parents may not rightfully yield their jurisdiction or authority to the civil government.¹

We deny that, biblically, the civil government has ownership, jurisdiction or authority over children, or that the civil government has authority to usurp the stewardship to raise or educate children given by God to the parents.

We further deny that the civil government or the church may interfere with a parent's education of their children except in some matters of abandonment or criminal justice, or may impose requirements, standards or methods for training, educating or disciplining their children.

We further deny that the civil government has a right before God to impose compulsory attendance laws, licensure of teachers of private schools or curriculum requirements for home and private schools.

1. Psalm 127:3-5; Genesis 18:19; Ephes. 6:4; Deut. 12:28; 1 Samuel 3:13

C. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF CHRISTIAN'S CHILDREN IS BIBLICALLY MANDATED

Article 6: The obligation of Christian parents to give their children a biblically based education.

We affirm that the Bible provides the only adequate and coherent worldview and foundation for all philosophy, ethics, law, government, science, the arts and education¹ and that Christian parents are obligated by God to guide and educate their children to think, decide, feel and act in all areas of life according to the worldview presented in the Bible² and may not righteously allow their children to be educated in worldviews which oppose the biblical worldview.³ “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”.⁴

We further affirm that Christians are required by God to train their children for their greatest possible impact for Christ's purposes on earth⁵ and to find their special destiny in God,⁶ to train further for that destiny if needed,⁷ and to fulfill that special calling with all their heart and with a passionate love and obedience to their Lord Christ⁸ and to extend God's Kingdom here on earth.⁹

We deny that education can be evaluated as good or successful if it does not purposefully train the child into the Christian worldview and assist the child in bringing all thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ, or is not cognizant of, and tailored to, the individual gifts and calling of each child.

1. Gen. 1:1
2. Romans 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:5; Isaiah 8:20
3. Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33; Deut. 12:30; Psalm 106:34-36
4. Psalm 111:10
5. Genesis 1:28; 18:19; Deut. 10:12-13
6. 1 Peter 4:10
7. 2 Tim. 2:15
8. Deut. 6:5; Col. 3:23-24; Heb. 9:14
9. Mat. 28:18-20; Hab. 2:13-14

Article 7: Anti-biblical educators are incompetent to teach the children of Christians.

We affirm that educators who stand opposed to God and the principles of the Bible and who believe any of the unfounded, foolish, modern myths that: a) there is no personal, Creator God, b) all morals are relative, c) the universe came into being out of impersonal matter-energy by chance, d) man is just an animal, e) mankind is not corrupted by the Fall, f) there is no afterlife or final judgment by God, g) Christ is not the incarnate God who died as a sacrifice to redeem the elect, h) the civil government is our highest authority and owns the children, i) the Bible is not God's inerrant, written Word to mankind.....do not have the philosophical, moral, or personal competence to properly educate Christian children.¹

We deny that there is a Kantian type dichotomy and disconnect between the visible world and the invisible world and that: a) there is no logical or linguistic connection possible between the invisible “upper story” and the visible “lower story”, b) that human language is inadequate to bridge the gap between these two realms, c) that there are some areas of life that are outside of God's control or plans or interest, d) this false, dichotomy thought-form may be pursued without tending toward government tyranny, the disintegration of society and attacks upon Christianity.

We further deny that there is any area of thought, life or culture outside the scope of the Bible's Creation Mandate (Gen. 1:28; 9:7), the Lord's Prayer (Mat. 6:10), or the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20).

We further deny that Christian parents may righteously choose educational options for their children that do not purposefully and faithfully affirm the Lord Jesus as present King of the universe and promote or encourage His righteous, biblical purposes for all mankind, or place their children under teachers and mentors,

with peers, or under the influence of a curriculum that would tend to lead them into a secular, anti-Christian, unbiblical worldview or into moral compromise.

We further deny that teachers, mentors and other students have a neutral effect on a child's educational, moral or spiritual development.

1. Psalm 14:1; Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 6:1-6; 15:33; Isaiah 2:6; 8:20; Deut. 12:30; Psalm 106:34-36

D. WHAT CONSTITUTES TRUE EDUCATION IN THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW?

Article 8: The ingredients of a Christian education

We affirm that a biblical education in the Christian worldview will have these ingredients:

a) parental controlled teaching,¹ b) a biblical curriculum,² c) biblical goals for the education,³ d) biblical standards,^{2&4} e) biblical methods,⁵ and f) biblical motivations for accomplishing the child's education.⁶

We deny that education is biblical or Christian if parental responsibility, parental presence, and parental participation are not involved and if the ultimate goal is not to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

We further deny that education is biblical or Christian if its ultimate standard in theory and practice is not the Bible itself, and if its priority is the impartation of facts to the neglect of the formation of Christ-like character and a Christian way of life or if the subservient motivations it uses are inconsistent with Scripture.

1. Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:1-9, 20-25; 11:19-22; Psalm 78:3-6; Pro. 1:8; 2:1f; 3:1; 4:1-4, 7, 20; 6:20-22; 22:6; 31:1; Eph. 6:1-4
2. Deut. 6:1-9; 30:10, 17-20; Joshua 1:8; Isa. 2:6; 8:20; Eph. 6:1-4; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:5
3. Gen. 1:28; 9:1; Hab. 2:13-14; Mat. 28:18-20; John 12:26; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Eph. 6:1-4; 1 John 2:15-17
4. Pro. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1
5. Deut. 6:1-9; Luke 6:40
6. Deut. 28:1-68; Hab. 2:13-14; Mat. 22:37-40; Rev. 20:11-21:11

Article 9: Generational thinking and our covenant with God

We affirm that Christians are required to think in terms of generational faithfulness regarding how their training of their children will be passed on to their children's children and how families are to develop solidarity, mutual commitment to Christian family goals, interdependence and a model for a biblical family functioning in all phases of life.¹

We further affirm that giving a comprehensive, Christian education to their children is a vital aspect of Christian parents keeping covenant with God, operating generationally, soundly training, productive citizens for their society's future and receiving the covenant blessings of God.

We deny that Christian parents or church staff and elders are properly fulfilling their leadership role if they fail to teach and model the biblical necessity of Christians to educate their children into the Christian worldview and the necessity of shielding their children from indoctrination by the civil government, or into any but the Christian worldview, or if they are not teaching and modeling generational thinking among those they influence.

1. Exo. 32:13; Deut. 6:1-9; Psalm 78:1-11; Eph. 5:22-6:9

Article 10: Only the Bible presents a true perspective of history and all reality.

We affirm that a correct view of history can be achieved only by accepting that there was a beginning when all things out of nothing were created by God,¹ that man is fallen and in need of a redeemer,² and that Redeemer has come—the Lord Jesus Christ,³ and that earth's history will end with the final judgment of all

who have ever lived in history.⁴ History is linear,⁵ heading in a definite direction that is sovereignly guided by God.⁶ History is not cyclical.⁷

We deny that history can be understood apart from a firm knowledge of its basics which are: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Judgment, or that one can understand the context of reality for any subject apart from seeing Christ as the centerpiece of all reality, and the lens of perspective through which all people are to view all things in life.

We further deny that man is basically good, or that avoiding or obfuscating the fact of sin and the Fall or its effects on the human race can lead to true education, or that true education can take place when the reality of God Who created all things out of nothing is denied.

1. Gen. 1:1-31
2. Gen. 3:1-24
3. Mat. 1:20-23; 1 Tim. 1:15
4. 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-15
5. Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:24
6. Amos 3:6; Mat. 10:29-31; Acts 2:23
7. Gen. 1:1; Rev. 21:1; 22:3-4

Article 11: Imparting worldview is impossible for the teacher to avoid.

We affirm that every fact taught to a student is necessarily couched in the worldview of the school, its curriculum and methodology, and the teacher, and therefore both facts and worldview are passed from the teacher to the student in the teaching and learning process.¹

We further affirm that the words of Jesus: “a disciple will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40), recognize that the process of education includes the passing of knowledge and character from the teacher to the student and that the usual outcome of education makes the student like the teacher in both knowledge and character to some degree.

We deny that facts may be taught to students from a neutral viewpoint or that the teacher’s worldview is ever removed from the teaching and learning process.

We further deny that education takes place without passing both knowledge and character from the teacher to the student.

1. Prov. 13:20; Luke 6:40; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-17

Article 12: How the Church can help parents educate their children

We affirm: that the Church may assist parents in the education of their children by establishing Christian schools, and that righteous options for educating Christian children include home schooling, and Church sponsored or privately run Christian schools.

We deny that by establishing Christian schools the Church is given jurisdiction over the education of children other than that which the parents delegate temporarily and partially to the school.

We further deny that any K through 12 civil government schools (aka public schools) which are not thoroughly committed to God’s inspiration of the Bible, to teaching biblical principles and to advancing the Kingdom of Christ on earth are a righteous choice for Christian parents to make for their children.