

Training the Next Generation to Think Critically and Christianly

Thursday, October 2, 2008

1:00 pm – 1:50 pm

Hypothetical:

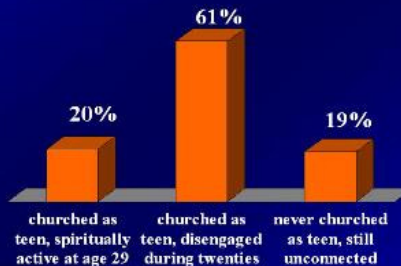
*Suppose, to illustrate, that the educators who guide our school systems seriously considered the possibility that the low attainments of American schoolchildren are not in spite of what is done with them in school, but largely because of what they are taught and how they are taught. Should we not at least consider the possibility that this poor result is not in spite of what we teach and how we teach, but precisely because of it? ~ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy**

How are we doing?

3 out of 4 Christian teens walk away from the church after they leave home.



Twentysomethings Struggle to Stay Active in Christian Faith



Despite their packed megachurches, their political clout and their increasing visibility on the national stage, evangelical Christian leaders are warning one another that their teenagers are abandoning the faith in droves.

Their alarm has been stoked by a highly suspect claim that if current trends continue, **only 4 percent of teenagers will be “Bible-believing Christians” as adults.** That would be a sharp decline compared with 35 percent of the current generation of baby boomers, and before that, 65 percent of the World War II generation.

The New York Times

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Training the next generation...

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. ~ Proverbs 22:6



Way...he should go...not turn from it...

- Picture of a journey...to somewhere
- Education – Latin meaning “to go out” or “to bring out” or “to lead”
- Conclusion – we should be training our students TO GO OUT!
 - Question – Out WHERE?
 - Answer – Out THERE!
 - Question – How much of your education deals with the world out THERE?
 - Answer – Not enough!
 - Question – How well are we preparing our students to succeed out THERE?
 - Answer – Not well enough!

Producing Daniels...in the midst of Babylon

- Bright, articulate, studious (Daniel 1:3, 4)
- High character and integrity (Daniel 1:8)
- Result (Daniel 1:20) – In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them TEN TIMES BETTER than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom!!!

Does your school have a **deliberate plan** to deepen the spiritual lives of your families?

- School in partnership with the home – parents are the key element!
- Kingdom Parent Institute (KPi)
 - Develop parents along the Five Areas of Spiritual Development
 - Biblical Literacy
 - Cultural Apologetics
 - Marriage and Family
 - Spiritual Disciplines
 - Passion and Devotion
 - Counter Culture – monthly parent emails from worldview perspective
 - PCA Family Conference
 - PCA Family Mission Trip



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...to think...

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ~ Matthew 22:37

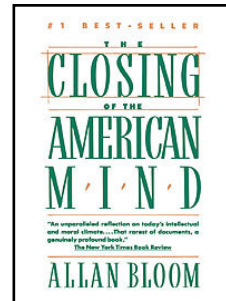
Thinking...is not as easy as you think!

- Goal of modern education – recite information, not critical analysis

The great end of education is to discipline rather than to furnish the mind; to train it to the use of its own powers, rather than fill it with the accumulation of others. ~ Tyrone Edwards

How can students pursue truth...if truth is relative?

*There is one thing a professor can be absolutely sure of; almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the student's reaction: they will be uncomprehending. ~ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind**



People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought, which they seldom use. ~ Søren Kierkegaard

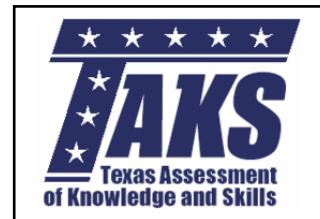
...critically...

...men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do. ~ 1 Chronicles 12:32

Not just a lack of thinking, but devoid of critical thinking

- Lost is the ability to be reflective, to have depth of understanding
 - Example: TAKS test, DMN article

Kids today are whizzes at text-messaging. But when they're asked to craft a well-thought-out answer based on a short piece they've read, many are all thumbs. Some educators and testing experts say the low scores reveal a troubling lack of critical thinking and communication skills.



“They can read, but they can't think critically about what they've read and apply it to the world around them,” a seventh-grade English teacher said.

**The Dallas
Morning News**

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Does your school have a **deliberate program** to produce critical thinkers?

Student Leadership Institute

<http://www.studentleadershipinstitute.org/>



3 Pillars of SLi:

- Serving Others
- Evangelism and Engaging the Culture
- Service in your local church

Other SLi components:

- Missions emphasis
- Reading component
- Marketplace Issues – speakers/connections with individuals and companies
- Critical analysis of hot-button issues
 - Same-sex marriage and homosexual adoption
 - Bioethics
 - Abortion
 - Immigration

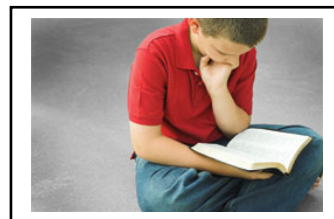
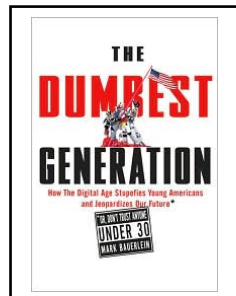
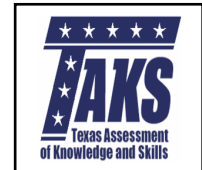
SPRING 2009 ORLANDO (Feb. 9-10, 2009, First Baptist Church of Orlando)
SPRING 2009 DALLAS (Mar. 2-3, 2009, Prestonwood Christian Academy)

Critical importance of READING...

...be transformed by the renewing of your mind. ~ Romans 12:2

- Do we take reflective reading seriously enough in our culture and educational system?
 - *Brave New World* – where are the books?
 - *Amusing Ourselves to Death* – altering our epistemology with TV
 - *Dumbest Generation* – tech savvy, intellectually starving

Teachers and testing experts say they see several reasons for the low short-response scores. They point to students' shorter attention spans, due in part to cell phones, video games and less reading for fun.



You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. ~ Matthew 13:14 (quoting from Isaiah 6:9)

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...and Christianly...

Developing a biblical worldview

- Biblical worldview woven in curriculum?
- Importance of Bible classes
- Faculty training
 - BWi
 - Faculty book discussion
- Family training (KPi)
- Student training (SLi)
- Worldview Director concept in Christian schools?

According to Barna's research:

- Only 4% of Americans have a biblical worldview.
- Only 9% of "born-again" believers have a biblical worldview.



Re-examining Christian education

- Effective?
- Comprehensive?
- Available?
- Producing worldly or Godly success?

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. ~ 2 Corinthians 10:5

Christianity is not a series of truths in the plural, but rather truth spelled with a capital "T." Truth about total reality, not just about religious things. Biblical Christianity is Truth concerning total reality – and the intellectual holding of that total Truth and then living in the light of that Truth. ~ Francis Schaeffer

Worldview Resources:

<i>Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity</i>	Nancy Pearcey
<i>Engaging God's Word: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living</i>	Cornelius Plantinga
<i>The Abolition of Man</i>	C.S. Lewis
<i>Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don't Think and What to Do About It</i>	Os Guinness
<i>Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day</i>	James Emery White
<i>Think Biblically: Recovering a Christian Worldview</i>	John MacArthur
<i>Understanding the Times</i>	David A. Noebel, Summit Ministries
<i>Worldproofing Your Kids</i>	Lael Arrington
<i>Do Hard Things: A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations</i>	Alex and Brett Harris
<i>Culture Matters: A Call for Consensus on Christian Cultural Engagement</i>	T.M. Moore
<i>The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog</i>	James W. Sire
<i>The Opening of the Christian Mind: Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ</i>	David W. Gill
<i>How Now Shall We Live?</i>	Chuck Colson/Nancy Pearcey
<i>A Christian Manifesto</i>	Francis A. Schaeffer
<i>How Should We Then Live?</i>	Francis A. Schaeffer
<i>Blah, Blah, Blah: Making Sense of the World's Spiritual Chatter</i>	Bayard Taylor
<i>World magazine</i>	

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