

CHRISTIAN *School* COMMENT

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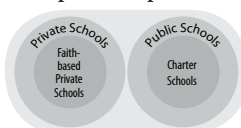
Worth It!

My wife, Bonnie, and I were driving to the Denver airport from our home in Colorado Springs recently. We were listening to the radio when an advertisement came on for a charter school in our area. Few things get under my skin, but this ad got my attention. At the conclusion of the ad, listeners were invited to learn more about ABC Charter School by going to their website, freeschools.org. I commented to Bonnie that charter schools may be different from their secular, government school peers, but they most certainly are not free! We fund them through the taxes we pay, even though not one of our four children spent ten minutes in a public school from kindergarten through 12th grade.

A similar advertising technique was used by charter schools in Michigan recently. Billboards were created that read, "Charter schools = Private schools - Tuition."

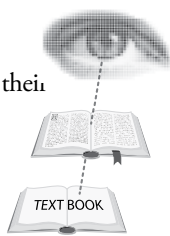
Let me be clear: *no* charter schools are faith-based private schools. Further, *all* Christian schools that are members of ACSI are faith-based private schools.

Do you remember studying Venn diagrams in your high school geometry class? If the universe in the following diagram is K–12 schools in the United States, the circle on the left represents private schools and the circle on the right represents public schools. Note that charter schools are a subset of government-funded public schools, and note further that the circles for charter schools and faith-based schools do not overlap.



In response to this information, some parents of K–12 school-age children may ask, "So what?" or "Why does this matter?" or "What difference does this make?" Allow me to suggest that the answer is of paramount importance for Christian parents who desire the best education possible for their children. In my book, *Worth It: The 15,000-Hour Decision* (available from PurposefulDesign.com), I make the point that each of our children will be educated by his/her teachers for a total of 15,000 hours from kindergarten through grade 12.

In all ACSI Christian schools, the foundation of the curriculum is the Word of God, the Holy Bible. When Christian teachers in Christian schools teach a subject in their discipline, they look at the discipline through the lens of Scripture. Their belief as educators is that if there is disagreement between the textbook and the Bible, then the textbook is wrong and the Bible is right!



There was a day in this country when the Bible provided the foundation for public school curriculum, but those days are over due to Supreme Court decisions resulting from misinterpretations of the first amendment to the Constitution. Today, all public schools, including all charter schools, are secular schools that have pushed

God out and have replaced the truth of the Word of God with the philosophies of men.

The best example of this is the teaching of naturalistic biological evolution as truth in all of the government schools in the United States. These schools believe that the biblical truth of creation has no place in academia. Because their starting place ignores God as Creator of all things, human reason has led to error taught as truth.

Just before Christmas, a first-grade teacher in a charter school had an experience that clearly illustrates the difference between charter school and Christian school education. This teacher was teaching her class about the gods of the Egyptians when a little boy rose to his feet, pounding his desk with his fist. He shouted, "Don't listen to her! She is not telling the truth. My mommy told me there is only one God, G-O-D!" This teacher responded by quickly saying, in essence, "... and moving right along ..."

Had this happened in a Christian school, this teachable moment would probably have been embraced with affirmation and an explanation of the true meaning of Christmas: God sent His Son into the world to be born of a virgin, live a perfect life, die on a cross, and rise from the dead to provide eternal life to all who place their faith in Him. What a difference! In Christian schools, the living curriculum (a Christian teacher) teaches every subject, using a written curriculum that represents the whole truth—the integration of faith and learning.

As Christian parents, Bonnie and I have embraced cradle-to-grave Christian education for our four children because we have both a 10-year view and a 10,000-year view for each one of them. Our 10-year view is that they will be thoroughly academically prepared for whatever future role of service God has intended for them. Our 10,000-year view is that we will all spend eternity together in heaven, where we will enjoy God forever. Christian schools are best in our view because only Christian schools help us achieve these two overarching goals!

Someone once said we should be more interested in getting our children into heaven than into Harvard. I would agree, but I would add that the graduates of our Christian schools should be so well-prepared academically that they could go to Harvard if this aligned with God's will for their lives.

Christian schools prepare students academically at the highest levels while inspiring their graduates to be devoted followers of Jesus Christ. So while Christian schools are not tuition-free like all government schools including charter schools, in my view they are most certainly worth every dollar!

Brian S. Simmons, President ACSI

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