

Learning for living or just for earning a living?

It was education that promised success in earning a living. Listen to the testimony of alumni from such a school— ‘we are men of reputation, rich, leaders, enjoying public praise and civic honours; moreover healthy, well nourished and fit; living luxuriously, strangers to low class jobs, living in the constant company of pleasure, and using all our capacity to bring delights to our senses, which gladly welcome them all.’ ‘The life [we live] is the witness’.¹ This was written around A.D. 40’s, indeed at the same time Paul was engaged in his missionary endeavours.

It was one of two outcomes of education philosophies in the Graeco-Roman world that were in competition and ideological conflict with one another. It was a case of learning for living *versus* learning for earning a living. One was a tried and tested way that had served generations stretching back to Classical Greece time.

But a new brand was on offer. Its fruits would be reflected not only in the rising generation but also the effects it would have on the lifestyle of some of the first Christian converts and their role in the kingdom of God. It would also impact on the churches to which they now belonged.

The Classical Greek educational ethos was intentional with its emphasis on core values that were meant to influence profoundly lifestyles. But the recent competitor was now subverting it. It was an enticing alternative.² Its contemporary outlook deliberately aimed at reshaping the future contours of the lives of a new generation in an age of affluence. It was ‘practical’ in that it held out the promise of a financially secure life. It also guaranteed a lifetime of happiness that money brings. It was about learning for

¹ Philo of Alexandria, ‘The Worse overcomes the Better’ 34.

² For a discussion of the nature of this phenomenon and its impact on the first Christians see my *Philo and Paul among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002 2nd ed.)

earning a living and the benefits that accrued would guarantee ‘the good life’ for those trained in its schools.

Fathers would attend the equivalent of a parents’ evening. Presentations were deliberately held in hired halls or the theatre of a city with their excellent acoustics, and impressive buildings designed for cultural events.

The opening segment of the evening saw the prospective teacher seated on a chair or reclining on a couch. From there he spoke about the lovely city in which they lived and then in a conspicuously humble way let drop how qualified he was as a teacher and public presenter and speaker, rehearsing his *c.v.* in a highly sophisticated way. This was called ‘*prolalia*’ (προλαλιό)

The protocol was then to invite the audience to nominate a topic on which the speaker/teacher would make a presentation. If he felt highly competent to speak on the nominated topic he rose immediately from the chair or couch and gave a polished presentation on the set subject. If he wanted twenty hours to prepare it, that was acceptable. He would return the next day with a scroll rolled up in his hand and still give an ‘extempore’ presentation.

Fathers looked for a learned and articulate teacher. He would have to prove to be a wordsmith who finely honed his sentences and produced entertaining, compelling and evocative illustrations. The gestures that accompanied his words were to be like those of an actor, carefully rehearsed and appropriate to what he was saying. The effect on the audience was sometimes described as ‘magic’. His aim was to hold the audience spellbound captivating them with his personality and his sophisticated presentation.

Not only was he expected to present a good case, but his appearance also mattered. It was called ‘bodily presence’. How he dressed and how he looked was as significant as his actions and presentation. There was no place for fallen chest muscles, for it was an age where physical fitness counted—major cities such as Ephesus had at

least three major gymnasias open to its inhabitants, pumping iron was major activity. Creating a body beautiful was essential. The ideal was a god-like image—the equivalent to the man in the ads for after-shave lotions in duty-free brochures on airlines.

Surviving statues of these teachers showed how presentable they were to be. You needed the body like that of a Greek athlete or a god. In Syrian Antioch there are two such statues, one seated for the preliminary stage of the evening, and the other standing, giving an oration. I discovered yet another stature to a teacher/orator in a museum in the major archaeological site of Aphrodisias in Turkey just last week. These were standard statue types of the first-century teachers who operated at the upper levels of education.

The term used for the two critical attributes of such educators, i.e., ‘the art of speech’ and ‘bodily presence’ together were called in the Greek *hupokrisis* from which the cognate *huperkrites*, i.e., an ‘actor’ was derived. Actors in the ancient world wore masks that epitomized the character they were representing. We have transliterated this term into English as ‘hypocrite’, someone who presents himself or herself as other than who they really are. The idea of ‘presence’ comes from the stage where plays were held.

The speech was governed not just by the text but also the resonance of the voice, hence the acoustic setting that did justice to it.

Fathers at these parents’ evenings would then weigh up, ‘Do I want my youth to learn at the feet of this person? Would he influence and develop his innate abilities and would he impart an education so that he would be able to present well, having become highly articulate? That would guarantee that there would be no Australian ‘ums’ or ‘ers’ interspersing or interrupting sentences sometimes as a convenient pause to gather thoughts. One has only to read *The Minor Declamations* of Quintilian to see how training in argumentation, the art of presentation and articulation was at the heart of such education.

School fees were astronomical but would not be collected by the teacher. His agent would be responsible for that, as he himself did not want the education of young pupils to look simply like some commercial transaction.

In promoting their school and the promised benefits that attracted students to this new approach, its teachers were highly derisory in their critique of the opposition, i.e., the old brigade's way of educating the next generation. While the opposition did not charge fees, for education by philosophers was in effect free, but there was on offer here of a far more sophisticated and prestigious product offered by this new approach to learning. 'After all you did get what you paid for.'

The pupils of the new school were known as μαθηταί for they were to become followers and imitators of their teachers. They literally walked behind their teachers and it is evident that parents expected their children to become clones or imitators of their teacher. To 'dress like', 'walk like', 'talk like' and 'look like their teacher was an educational paradigm. In Athens National Museum is the statue of Herodus Atticus around whom Philostratus wrote his Lives of the Sophists with a look alike bust of one of his famous pupils. It is an interesting coincidence that the early Christians were recruited to become 'disciples' (μαθηταί) of Jesus. The *imitatio Christi* was obligatory (1 Corinthians 11:1), and Jesus' teaching was to be normative for all who called upon His name 'teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' (Matthew 28:20).

There was an element of competition between teachers. Pupils were expected to give not only undivided loyalty to their own teacher but also to be zealous in pointing out that theirs was the best. 'I belong to...' in 1 Corinthians 1:12 reflects this. It is recorded that in one instance the pupils of one teacher heard another teacher make a grammatical slip and this became a major point of comparison and one of pride— 'my teacher is much better than your teacher'. 'Ours is the best, up with our school and down with the rest'.

Philo, a Hellenised Jew from the famous city of Alexandria, and a contemporary of Paul was deeply disturbed by the impact of this new form of education on his native

city that for good reasons was known as ‘the second Athens’. The recent film ‘Agora’ gives some insights into Alexandria, as filmmakers sometimes do in historical reconstructions.³ As an Old Testament scholar, Philo used the story of Cain and Abel from the book of Genesis as an allegory for the two educational systems. The title given to this is telling: ‘The worse overcomes the better’— for Cain killed Abel. Philo, in effect, was acknowledging that the new education system was a fierce competitor for the traditional one. It was clearly battling with and beating the centuries old tried and tested way of educating the rising generation.

He quotes six arguments used by the advocates of the new education system to justify ‘learning for earning a living’.

“Is not the body the soul’s house?” The body was no longer the prison house of the soul that had been traditional Platonism. “Why, then, should we not take care of a house, that it may not fall into ruins?” “Are not the eyes and the ears and the band of other senses body-guards and courtiers, as it were of the soul?” “Must we not then value allies and friends equally with ourselves?” Nature has given us bodily senses and appetites—these were given as friends and not enemies. “Did not nature create pleasures and enjoyments and the delights that meet us all the way through life for the dead, or for those who have never come into existence, and not for the living?” Those dead and aborted were not able to experience all the pleasures and enjoyments and delights that Nature has bestowed on the living. According to the first-century thinking, Nature determined customs and behaviour patterns and therefore they determined is the purpose of living. “And,” they argued, “what is to induce us to forego the acquisition of wealth and fame and honours and offices and everything else of that sort, things that secure for us a life not merely of safety but of happiness?”

This educational system had promised and proven outcomes according to its proponents. Wealth was one, as was making a name for one’s self. Receiving public recognition with awards from the city for benefactions was another. Election to public

³ Released in 2009 and set in Alexandria, Egypt, 391 AD, about the life and death of the Greek scholar, Hypatia of Alexandria.

office was guaranteed and therefore being highly articulate in the public domain was as essential for first-century citizens and politicians, as it is today. Taking part in debates in the classroom was one of the training methods used in this form of education. Doing so in a winsome and winning way was the aim. All this would establish a good reputation and secure a place in the public sphere. Also it would produce the satisfying life—one of personal happiness.

How did these proponents of the new system contrast it with the old school's arguments and their outcomes? Philo records their caricaturing of those in the old school and the inadequate outcomes of that form of education for their students. The new movement argued "The so-called lovers of virtue are almost without exception obscure people, looked down upon, of mean estate [low class], destitute of the necessities of life, not enjoying the privileges of subject peoples or even of slaves, filthy, sallow, reduced to skeletons, with a hungry look for want of food, the prey of disease, in training for dying".⁴

The old school's goal was education for life. The new school's was rather one that reflected the propaganda outcomes of the *pax romana*, Rome's "Messianic age" with its promise of the 'good life' i.e., 'your best life now'. It was into this age that Christianity grew.

The Greek classical virtues of 'prudence', 'self-control', 'courage' and 'righteousness' had been the expected outcomes for centuries—the fundamental aims of education. The antonym to each of these were 'folly', 'intemperance', 'cowardice' and 'injustice' and had to be avoided. The new education system still referred to the traditional classical Greek virtues but this was a matter of convention not conviction.

Just as in some of the UK's great public schools and chapels in all Cambridge University colleges, students, teachers and fellows doff their caps to classical Greek virtues and regular chapels that reflect culture Christianity, so too in this new system in

⁴ Philo, 'The Worse overcomes the better' 34a.

the ancient world there was a formal acknowledgement of such virtues. It has been described as ‘a kind of amoral “art of success”’ as J.C. Rose describes it.⁵ But the rising generation got the message that they were not essential to the good life. What was on offer for the elite, and the well-to-do and the socially mobile of the first century world of the Roman East was this attractive education alternative. Education for life had now become about learning to live sumptuously by earning a substantial living.

There were first Christians who had been programmed by the educational values of their society before they became disciples of Jesus, the Son of God. Paul does not say that there were ‘no any wise, powerful and well born’ but not ‘many’ (1 Corinthians 1:26).⁶ The metamorphosis from the programming of their educational system to that of the discipleship programme laid down by Jesus was not simply one of replacing one lot of ‘software’ with another at the moment of conversion. It could not be caught but it had to be taught in detail, as it affected all the sphere of life.

It involved deprogramming in order to reprogram. Paul describes this as having ‘to destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ’ (2 Corinthians 10:5). He precedes this comment with a reference to the ‘destroying of strongholds’ using the evocative image of Roman warfare. The retreat to the citadel by the inhabitants of cities in Greece was a common strategy in the face of enemy threats. The response of the enemy was to use the battering ram to demolish the stone strongholds and for the inhabitants of the defeated city to come and kneel before the conquering general, acknowledging their surrender to his future agenda. The demolition of a stronghold was no quick achievement—one has only to look at the fortifications on the Acrocorinth to see how seemingly impenetrable they were. The history of Corinthian sieges shows that, at least in one case, it was only the betrayal from within that finally gave the enemy its victory. Demolishing a citadel took time and a carefully thought out strategy.

⁵ J.C. Rowe, *Plato* (Brighton: Harvester, 1984), p. 158.

⁶ On the social status of early Christians see E.A. Judge, and my *Seek the Welfare of the City: Early Christians as Benefactors* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1994). Queen Elizabeth’s comment on this verse was that she was glad the letter ‘m’ had appeared.

Paul also recognized that he was engaged with an intellectual warfare, hence his focus on the demolition of entrenched 'B.C.' programming among the Corinthian Christians. This included value systems and views instilled in the educational process.

We also see examples in 1 Corinthians where young men were recorded arguing that 'everything is permitted for me' (6:12). This was their justification for their eating and drinking and afterwards doing what was politely called 'after dinners'. It was instilled in young men that once they took the *toga virilus* they were free to, and were expected to, do what young men did then with the casual sexual partner provided for the feast.⁷

It was Cicero who wrote strongly in support of this:-

'If there is anyone who thinks that youth should be forbidden liaisons with high class prostitutes, he is doubtless eminently austere, but his view is contrary not only to the licence of this age, but also to the custom and concession of our ancestors. For when was this not a common practice? When was it blamed? When was it forbidden? When, in fact, was it that what is allowed not allowed? (*quod licet, non liceret*)'.⁸

The Greek verb, 'it is permitted' with its Latin equivalent, *licitum est*, was the aphorism that Christian young men in Roman Corinth cited, as did their secular compatriots, in support of this sort behaviour.

Paul produces 8 reasons when demolishing the young Christian men's aphorism and arguments as to why fornication is harmless fun, repeating twice their 'everything is

⁷ See my *After Paul left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001).

⁸ Cicero, *pro Caelio*, 20.48.

permitted for me' and battering down their stronghold with emphatic 'buts', and 6 other compelling reasons, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.⁹

Just as there was no such thing as one night flings, 'casual' sex, such 'fun activity' was psychologically harmful to the person. Paul concludes his demolition job with the command to glorify God in their bodies, 1 Corinthians 6:20.

Such educational programming and rationalization was not automatically abandoned by an older generation of Christians who also argued 'everything is permitted', *i.e.*, 'it is my right' and rights are inalienable and this determines and justifies conduct Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 10:23 and 8:9. In Greek the aphorism 'everything is permitted' has as a cognate the noun 'right', a term we hear so much about today.

What such glorification is about emerges only as one reads on in the letter, for there is further clarified in the discussion with older men who are determined to exercise their 'right'. In 1 Corinthians 10:23 Paul cites and refutes the argument against the popular aphorism 'it is permitted' citing it twice as he did in 6:12 when answering the young men. He strongly rebuffs them by saying 'but not all is helpful' and 'not all builds up'. He immediately issues this command, 'no one must seek his own but the good of the other' 10:24.

There are two extraordinary things that must have astounded the Corinthian Christians. The first is that here was a movement that uses building construction imagery in setting out an agenda for its adherents. Life was not about 'everything is permitted for me' but it is about enhancing the other person that was to be the priority for every Christian. This certainly is entirely countercultural to the education and ethos of the day then and possibly now. Secondly, life is about 'the other' person and not about me. The Miss Piggy syndrome of *moi* was alive and well then. Again this was so countercultural.

⁹ For the arguments see my 'Paul's Pastoral Paradigm for Civil Partnerships (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)' *Whitefield Briefing* vol. 10. No. 5 (January, 2006).

Paul concludes one of his longest discussions in 1 Corinthians, i.e., 8:1-11:1 again with another and final call to be ‘other people centred’ as the top priority of every Christian. ‘You must give no offence to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God’ something that they did not do or simply gave no thought to in determining what they wanted to do (10:31). Paul goes on to indicate ‘just as I seek to please all in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage but that of many that they may be saved’ (10:32). His startling and concluding command to this lengthy reprogramming follows immediately with ‘You must imitate me as I myself do of Christ’ (11:1). Elsewhere he would write ‘Christ never pleased himself’ Romans 15:3, nor must Christians.

It was not that the Corinthian Christians were unique, however much their city prided itself on being the most prestigious Roman colony in the East. Paul in his re-education priorities for his fellow worker injects an important consequence for the Christians on the island of Crete whom Titus will continue to teach.

‘The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all, training us up to renounce all ungodliness and worldly passion, and to live self-controlled and upright and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good works’ Titus 1:11-14.

The last section in this extended sentence is explicated towards the end of this highly instructive letter. ‘I want you to insist on these things, so that those who believe in God may be careful to apply themselves to good works, these are excellent and beneficial to others’ (3:8) and again a little later ‘our people must learn to apply themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need and not to be unfruitful (3:14).

Here was the other people centred first-century cult where the good works of God’s people were to be their primary agenda. This is in stark contrast to the educational agenda that thrived among some of the first Christians’ contemporaries that we have just

discussed. Cretan Christians were not immune from learning for earning a living with all its attractive promises of the good and happy life. The Christians' lifestyle certainly resonated with that of others who lived on this island.

Paul in his ministry was engaged in a critical battle of re-learning for living that was to be binding on all Christians. He declared in light of the death of Christ that one of its intentions was 'that we must no longer live for ourselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised' 2 Corinthians 5:15. So here is the 'other people centred' cult that in giving new life demanded a new lifestyle. Cross-centred Christianity had as its priority self-denial so that followers would be focused on others as the way of living.

This resonates with the invitation of Jesus and his stipulations concerning discipleship, i.e., following him meant 'deny yourself, take up the cross and following me' (Luke 9:23). The first-century rabbi laid down the conditions on which recruits were accepted, as did Jesus.

I want to turn briefly to two significant incidents. In Jesus' day there was a man who was rich: he was young: he was powerful, for he was a ruler.¹⁰ His achievements reflected the intended outcome of the new form of education that had swept like wild fires across the Roman East in the first century. Palestine was no culturally sealed border, nor had it been since its conquest by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C. with its ready absorption of acceptable Greek customs and education.

In addition, this man was religious and essential values were reflected in many of his relationships. He honoured those who had given him life and respected the lives of others, he was not engaged in wife swapping that was not unknown among the fast set of the first century. He did not steal so that his wealth was not acquired dishonestly.

Would he not be the alumnus that a school would be proud of today? Perhaps he would be marked out as just the sort of person who would be advantageous to have on

¹⁰ See Matthew 19:16-29, Mark 10:17-31 and Luke 18:18-30.

the school's Board of Governors—on the right side with the right cash and the right contacts.

He did something that upwardly mobile young men did not and still do not automatically do, but as an entrepreneur it was still a very well thought out move on his part. He fell at the feet of Jesus with an urgent, important and existential question. It concerned his ultimate future. 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?' He had conquered everything but there remained one enemy to be destroyed and unless that happened it would destroy him, as he had noted.

Jesus check list covered five out of the six great words from God that covered human relationships, i.e., the ten commandments given to Moses that are still relevant for relationships today. He had been a good boy at home and at school and later in the community had continued to be so, Mark 10:20.

Jesus then instructed him — and this was the only case in the gospels where he gave such a command — 'sell up everything' and the deal was 'you will have treasure in heaven' and 'follow me' (Mark 10:21). We are told that this young educated executive went away full of sorrow because 'he had great possessions', or rather it emerges that he was possessed by his possessions, given his response. He refused to give up what he could not keep beyond the grave to gain that which he could never lose—not a wise decision, even from a business point of view.

It is significant that the one commandment Jesus did not cite was the last of the great words from God. 'You shall not covet your neighbour's residence, you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his servants nor his ox nor his ass, nor anything that is his', Exodus 20:17. That was his problem. For all the commendable qualities that would be endorsed by thoughtful educationalists, he had placed possessions ahead of people as his focus, dollars mattered more than destiny.

His relationships at one level were intact; he had combined his religion with a successful career path early in life. Yet there was a frontier he had not crossed. His education had been about earning a living but not about learning for living in a relationally productive and other people centred way. Greed for him was good but sadly he did not realize that greed had become a god—one ‘o’ deleted tells the whole story.

In the film *Wall Street* (1987), Michael Douglas, who at this present time lies ill with cancer in Hollywood, played the role of Mr Gekko. He uttered famous words that Wall Street is still affirming every day, even after October, 2008. Mr Gekko announces to the AGM:

“The point is, ladies and gentleman, that greed -- for lack of a better word -- is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms -- greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge -- has marked the upward surge of mankind. And greed -- you mark my words -- will not only save Teldar Paper, but that other malfunctioning corporation called the USA.”

I have yet to see the sequel, ‘Wall Street: Money never sleeps’ that is just been released in the cinemas. I speculate on the plot and when I see it I will tell you if I am right.

Christian schools today have students of Christian parents. Parents are the product of aspects of the contemporary culture. Just as changes in first-century values were subliminally absorbed, so too in our culture Christianity is not automatically immune from substantial educational and cultural paradigm shifts because its adherents profess faith in Christ.

Where are we on the history of education scale? In the 1999 Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st century, a joint declaration on national goals for school education declared

‘When students leave school they should have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community, and workforces members:

[and] have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions’.¹¹

There is also The National Framework for Values Education in Australian School that lists

- * **Care and Compassion** Care for self and others
- * **Doing Your Best** Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
- * **Fair Go** Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
- * **Freedom** Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
- * **Honesty and Trustworthiness** Be honest, sincere and seek the truth
- * **Integrity** Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
- * **Respect** Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person’s point of view
- * **Responsibility** Be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
- * **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion** Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and

¹¹ National Goals for Schooling to year 12 in the 21st century.

including others

The Australian Parents Council in 2007 produced a report in which the values parents wished to see inculcated in the school's agenda were 'respect for self and others', 'honesty, integrity, decency', 'compassion', 'love for one another', 'sense of justice, equality, 'acceptance of others, understanding', 'self-reliance', resilience, persistence', 'responsibility, independence', 'service to others, sense of duty'.

When values for education that the government endorsed were revealed to that Council, what stood out as missing was the last one that parents had endorsed, *viz.*, 'service to others, sense of duty'. The Parents Council noted 'in today's Australia there is too much emphasis on rights and not enough on responsibilities'. Rights' was an outlook endemic in the first-century world and one Paul readily identified as a Trojan horse that had slipped through the church doors and was quite at home among Christians in Corinth (1 Corinthians 8:9 and 10: 23).

Christian publishers have no problem turning out books like 'Your Best Life Now' as a best seller for Christian consumption. Its author and leader of a 90,000 strong congregation meeting in a stadium converted into a church in Houston, Texas, Joel Osteen. He and his wife were interviewed for the magazine called *Succuss* as a Christian example of a minister who has made it. Has this Trojan horse engulfed the psyche of many Christians with books like this that have invaded the Christian bookshops?

Has the concept of every Christian 'building up the body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:12 cf. 1 Corinthians 14:3) been replaced with Christian simply 'meeting' on Sundays. 'The sit up, stand up, sing up, look up and cough up' syndrome that have, in some cases, become an acceptable face of contemporary Christianity? We pay others to do all the things lay people once gladly did in terms of service to others, because we are 'all too busy these days'. Life is just so demanding.

Young Christian people are 'all too busy' with homework, sports and texting and engrossed computer games etc.—I recall spending a whole weekend with a Christian

family that had teenage boys who only emerged from their rooms playing computer games all the time for meals that were laid out for them. There were used to having things laid on for them and they were largely socially inept. Ours is a take-out society in more ways than one, a society where being a Christian is not all that different from the lifestyle of others in the rat race, where we observe at least some of the rat-race rules.

Christian schools have an enormous window of opportunity to bring about change in culturally pre-programmed pupils who arrive at their portals. Learning for living is about creating a context where young people can learn in practical and life-enhancing ways that joy comes through being other people centred, by serving their needs whether tangible or intangible. It comes through considering the ‘good of the other’, ‘seeking to please everyone in all things, not seeking one’s own advantage’ but the welfare of others so that they might experience the greatest of divine blessings (1 Corinthians 10:33). Paul educates Christians for this way of life that it is not an option.

Even if some contemporary forms of Christianity on Sundays have short-changed converts at the ecclesial level, you have the golden opportunity at the educational level to teach the rising generation about learning for living and not just for earning a living. They will be eternally thankful to you as school is the last train stop before students get on board for the journey of life. Even if others fail — parents, youth leaders, local churches — Christian schools, teachers and chaplains have a critical time slot and transformation opportunity.

In conclusion let me give a personal illustration that to my thinking best illustrates my theme. When my family and I lived in Singapore we were provided with a servant who attended to our family needs.

During the week our children, aged 4 and 6 at the time, would come down to breakfast that the servant laid out for us and when they finished they returned upstairs to discover their bedrooms were in total order—toys back in boxes, beds made and clothes

sorted out. In fact the servant kept our house immaculately with meals on the table and everything in order.

We had our holidays coming up and had decided to return to Australia to visit our families. Just before we were about to leave I remember on one Sunday when the servant did not work, I went to our two children's rooms that were in a total mess.

'Who will be picking up for you in Australia and tidying your rooms?' I asked.

'Grandmas' was the spontaneous reply from both of them. An education process was inaugurated immediately informing them that their Grandmothers were not servants.

A friend gave us the use of an apartment in Australia. I remember the first morning at around 7am the door of our bedroom flung open and two children with bright smiling faces announced 'Breakfast is ready'. They had decided to lay the table just as the servant had with food ready to eat. We were pleasantly surprised but it was the joy they expressed on their faces that I remember most. Every morning on our holidays, like it or not, the bedroom door swung open and the joyful announcement was made.

Our children were learning about living and that living was not about them and their wants but rather that joy comes through service. They had learnt by example. I recount this episode in our lives because I sense that one of the most critical things schools can do, is to structure contexts for students to experience joy, not happiness—that word 'happy' which from the Greek when transliterated is *hedone* from which we get 'hedonism' occurs only 5 times in the New Testament and is condemned¹²—but the word for joy which gets some 155 hits in the New Testament. Joy is the fruit of being other person focused and other need orientated and is not art of the 'I want' syndrome.

Am I being simplistic or overly optimistic in suggesting that laying the foundation for learning for living is the most important function in Christian schools and not results as they have become in school tables, even if others in the contemporary Christian scenes

¹² Luke 8:14, Titus 3:3, James 4:1, 3, 1 Peter 2:13.

of the home and the church fail to do so? At the same time there will be the necessity to consciously pull down the citadel of 'learning just for earning a living' psyche. The latter is easiest when we provide opportunities to do the former in practical ways. 1 Corinthians 13 does have something to say about achieving important goals but doing so at the expense of relationships.

There are important paradigms to be deconstructed as well as those needing to be reconstructed in the thinking of the rising generation. Just as first-century education realized the power of the present moment to determine the future life-style outcomes of their students, so too Christian schools have the same enormous power to do the same. This is the last significant train stop before they begin on what we hope will be the long journey for real Christian living and not just for earning a living.

First-century philosophical foundation for the new educational thrust

- * “Is not the body the soul’s house?”
- * “Why, then, should we not take care of a house, that it may not fall into ruins?”
- * “Are not the eyes and the ears and the band of other senses body-guards and courtiers, as it were of the soul?”
- * “Must we not then value man’s friends and allies equally with ourselves?”
- * “Did not nature create pleasures and enjoyments and the delights that meet us all the way through life for the dead, or for those who have never come into existence, and not for the living?”
- * “And what is to induce us to forego the acquisition of wealth and fame and honours and offices and everything else of that sort, things that secure for us a life not merely of safety but of happiness?”

The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools

- * **Care and Compassion** Care for self and others;
- * **Doing Your Best** Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence;
- * **Fair Go** Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society;
- * **Freedom** Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others;
- * **Honesty and Trustworthiness** Be honest, sincere and seek the truth;
- * **Integrity** Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds;
 - * **Respect** Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person’s point of view;
 - * **Responsibility** Be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic

life, take care of the environment;

* **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion** Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others