

Zion Christian School: Philosophy Statement

Introduction

The philosophical foundation of Zion Christian School is the historic Christian faith which is revealed in the Bible, and summarized in the confessions of the Reformed tradition. Those Reformed Creeds which the school recognizes as accurate and reliable summaries of the Christian faith are the Westminster Confession of Faith with its Larger Catechism and Shorter Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordt.

This Christian faith is the foundation of the school's entire existence, including its doctrinal and ethical instruction, its academic program, epistemological framework, its pedagogical methodology, and its community life. It is the intention of the school to integrate this faith with all aspects of its mission and specifically to teach all subjects from a distinctively Reformed Christian perspective. The school aspires to exalt Christ, the Creator, Redeemer, and Ruler of all creation in all aspects of knowledge and learning. The following statement outlines the key foundational components which comprise this school's philosophy of education. These key components are: Revelation, Epistemology, Creation, Man, Dominion, Covenant, Christ, Redemption, and Kingdom.

Revelation

The one true God is the Triune God who reveals Himself in Creation and in the Person of his Son, through the Scriptures. God has revealed Himself generally through His creation, i.e. the World. Also, at the appointed time, God the Son took on human flesh and lived among us in the person of Jesus Christ. God demonstrated His nature and power in many ways before the incarnation, but in revealing Himself through the God-man, He has revealed Himself in human nature. To know the Father, one must know the Son. To know the Son is to know the Father. Just as the Father is the Creator, Ruler, Sustainer, and Judge of all creation, so also is the Son. Such knowledge of the Father and the Son is possible only through the work of the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures and opens the minds and hearts of men to understand and believe.

In the Scriptures, God the Holy Spirit taught the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament, and caused them to write God's very own words. The Scriptures are the inerrant, infallible, and clear Word of God to us. The Bible focuses its attention on God's redemptive work by which He overcomes sin and the effects of the fall of Adam. The central figure of the Scriptures is Christ, who shows us the Father. The Scriptures provide a foundation which touches all aspects of reality. Since God's redemptive acts take place in His world (space) and in the context of history (time), the Bible speaks authoritatively about both the world and the facts of history. No human system of reasoning or knowing can preempt the authority of the Word of God. These sources of revelation provide the school with a consistent, coherent basis from which to carry out its mission.

Epistemology

The Bible, the written Word of God, reveals God as a personal Being who is self-existent, transcendent, eternal, and self-sufficient. He is the Creator of all that exists and is the sovereign ruler over His creation. He is Triune God, existing eternally in three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are two realms of being, the Creator and the creation (all there is). Because God alone possesses

existence of Himself and possesses immediate, comprehensive knowledge of Himself and the creation, all the creation and all knowledge of creation are dependent upon Him.

Knowing involves an interpretive perspective that proceeds from a given set of assumptions. The Christian school is founded upon an epistemological framework that is rooted in the teachings of the Bible. The Bible defines truth, reality, purpose, and origins giving a coherent integration of these into an intellectual and epistemological framework.

To know truly, one must acknowledge and know God personally in a relationship of faith because He made all things and illumines all things by His Word and Spirit. The basis of our epistemological framework is not only to think God's thoughts after Him, but also to rediscover, reason, and interpret the world of people and ideas using the redemptive, propositional, principal, and ethical truths of the Bible. Therefore, no fact can be identified or understood as it really is unless it is viewed in a correct relationship to God. To us, all facts are theistic facts - nothing exists outside of God's creation and providence.

Creation

The Scriptures teach that God created all things, and that His creation is good. Six non-negotiables apply to the account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2: (1) God created everything in six consecutive days with morning and evening enclosing the beginning and ending of each day; (2) God created everything out of nothing; (3) God created everything by divine command; (4) God created all vegetation and creatures according to their own kinds, not by evolution from one species to another; (5) God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and not from any preexistent creature; (6) God made Eve from the body of Adam.

Man

God created man as the crown of His creation, made in God's image and for God's glory. The "image" of God in man consisted of true knowledge, true righteousness, and holiness. The entry of sin into this world corrupted this image, but through Christ and Him alone, man can be redeemed and restored to a righteousness not his own, and holiness worked out by the Holy Spirit.

Dominion

The entry of sin into the world, although it impacted man's intellectual power, natural affections and moral nature, did not destroy them. Through man's restoration in Christ and spiritual growth by the power of the Holy Spirit, man is able to carry out the command God gave him to study, manage, use, develop and rule the creation over which he was placed as God's vice-regent. This dominion of man over God's creation is not exploitative, but is good for creation and glorifying to God. Study, work, and play and aesthetic pursuits are natural functions of man's dominion. Even though the curse of sin also rests on creation and is the source of decay, frustration and conflict in the world, nonetheless, creation is to be accepted, affirmed and enjoyed. The study of the arts and sciences have their basis in the unique mandate God has granted unto man over His creation.

Covenant

Not only did God give man dominion over His creation, but God from before the foundation of the world entered into a covenant on behalf of His people to redeem them and to be their God. His covenant blessings extend to all whom God has chosen to save. The redeemed in Christ, heirs of this covenant, are commanded and enabled to live lives of obedience to their God. Part of this obedience is to raise their

children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The Christian School exists to assist parents in this endeavor, holding before the student a consistent proclamation of the Gospel and the truth of God's Word as it relates to all areas of life and learning and calling them to lives of obedience to God.

Christ

Central to the function, purpose, and accomplishments of the school is the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is the eternal Son who in time became Man; He is both fully God and fully Man, one Person with two natures. Christ entered the world to redeem sinners and creation. He accomplished His work of redemption through His obedient life, His sacrificial, substitutionary atonement, His victorious resurrection, and His glorious ascension to heaven. His life, death and resurrection were the means by which Christ became our High Priest, giving us access to God. He is now in heaven and is both God and glorified Man. His work of redemption conquered sin, death, and Satan. He is now and forever the King of the Universe, and His rule will bring all into submission.

Redemption

Christ's redemption of mankind also has implications for the rest of creation. The creation will some day be released from its bondage and conflict. The call of God's people, and of the school as an educational institution, is to act as salt and light in God's world and among the peoples of the world. We study the creation with hope because we know that God's full purpose for it will be realized. That which Adam lost has been regained by Christ.

Man's rebellion renders him a sinful being. Man rejects God's statutes and position over him. The fall of Adam affected man's mind, soul, and body. The Holy Spirit alone can regenerate man. He breaks the dominating power of sin, enlightens the mind, renews the will and redirects the affections. Of particular interest in the school is the enlightening of the mind by which the Holy Spirit brings man out of ignorance and enables him to understand all things in the light of God's self-revelation. The school also works alongside parents to help students to accept God as their authority and also the authority of others God has placed over them. Parents, teachers, and the Board are called upon to rightly use the authority which God has established.

Like the home, the school is a place where Christ's forgiveness, reconciliation, renewal and wisdom abound. The role of the Christian school is to instruct students to believe, reason, act, and understand the issues of life with the mind of Christ. The Christian School acknowledges no secular realm; instead, all of life is God-created and all of man's endeavors should glorify Him. We endeavor to bring all thought and action into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

At the end of the age Christ will completely redeem His creation and His people. Then all of Christ's people will realize the blessings of true freedom over sin and death, and the glorification of their bodies in a renewed creation. Until the consummation, however, Christ's Lordship compels His people to faithfully continue the renewal of mind and action. The Christian school exists to implement the Holy Spirit's renewal of covenant children to the end that their every thought and action points to Christ their Savior and Lord.

Kingdom

The Kingdom is the extension of the Kingly and Prophetic rule of Christ into all areas of life by those who have been gathered, taught, and trained in the Church and the home. In the Kingdom, Christians work both individually and corporately. Those whom God calls are gathered into His Church. The Church was established by God in order to proclaim the gospel, to nurture believers and their children in the faith, to declare God's mind and will as revealed in Scripture, and to prepare God's people for further works of service. While not a church, Zion Christian School is part of the greater Kingdom of God and its ongoing activities. Zion Christian School is a corporate Kingdom institution in which the Lordship of Christ is brought to bear on the education of our children. The institution further prepares children for Kingdom service in all realms of life and action.