

28.11.2020 THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

“Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us” 1 Thessalonians 2:6-8

‘To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life. Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education.’ *EG White: Education. P 15-16*

Throughout the Bible, God’s people have been called to educate and teach their families, their congregation and community the truth about God. That He is a God of love and light- His love is demonstrated to mankind as grace; His light is given to mankind as truth.

Ancient Israel was specifically called to educate their children about God. In Deuteronomy 6:4-7 we find that:

1. There must be a revelation of God... *‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.’6:4.*
2. There must be a response to God... *‘And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might’.* 6:5
3. There is a responsibility: God’s Word must be in our heart (6:6); God’s Word must be taught to our children (6:7) and God’s Word must govern our conduct (6:8, 9)

Of Christ the Master Educator, John the Beloved had this to say:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:14

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. John 1:18

Christ came to reveal the Father and to demonstrate to us the correct response to the Father. God’s Word was in His heart and governed His conduct. He spent His public ministry teaching men, women and children of the love of God and the truth of God. He Himself was the Light of the world; He Himself was the Truth of God. At the end of His ministry He said to His Father, *“I have glorified you on earth; I have finished the work You sent me to do.”* John 17:4

To spiritual Israel, the Church, Christ gave His great Commission. Teaching was an integral part of it:

“Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19, 20

The Church therefore is called to educate and teach as Christ Jesus taught.

Live as Light:

We are to be the light of the world; dispelling the lies about God that Satan has planted in the minds of men and women.

“You are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”. Matthew 5:14, 16

Be 'blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.' Philippians 2:15

"From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God that he might secure them to himself, hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God to lead men to cherish a false conception of him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as close with the attributes of the prince of evil himself as arbitrary severe and unforgiving that he might be feared shunned and even hated by men.

Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue man with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will." Testimonies Vol. 5 Page 738

For Reflection: Do I represent God as harsh and unforgiving? Or do I represent Him as a God of self-giving, unconditional love?

Leading People to the Truth:

The truth about Man is that he has a sin problem. He is a slave of sin and as a sinner has a destiny of eternal death. The truth about God is that He so loved the world that He sent His well-beloved Son to save the world from death and give mankind eternal life. This free gift is given to all who believe.

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." John 14:6

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:32, 34-36

Though Jesus is no longer with us on earth, His spirit is sent to us to guide us into all truth; the truth about Jesus and His gift of salvation offered to all mankind.

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." John 16:12-14

Sharing our Lives:

Jesus condescended to leave heaven, His position as the second person of the Godhead, to become like one of us. He came to share the pains of life in a sinful world, so that He might restore us to being sons and daughters of God again. Because of His sacrificial life and death, we are no longer sons of Adam but sons of God.

He who was the Only-begotten of the Father before Calvary, is now the First-begotten of many brethren (Romans 8:29). He is leading many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:14, 15

We who call ourselves by His name can do no less... *'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus'* Philippians 2:5

We are called to accept one another, serve one another, wash one another's feet, pray for one another, forgive one another, confess our sins to one another, teach and admonish one another, comfort one another, bear one another's burdens and above all, to love one another.

If we allowed the Spirit to rule our lives, we would have a community of believers to whom people would come, as they came to Jesus, for no-one would be made to feel unworthy, rejected or unloved.

'The lesson study this week brings out a very simple idea that is worth its proverbial weight in gold if carried out. The idea basically is this: *Of what value or effect is all the doctrinal light we possess as a church if we haven't learned how to be kind to one another?* This is a prerequisite for church really to function as church.'

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
1 Peter 4:7-11

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.
1 John 4:12

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ is Prophet, Priest and King. As Prophet, He is the Educator who delivers mankind from the ignorance and bondage of sin (Isaiah 9:2, Ephesians 4:17, 18). After His ascension, He continues His prophetic (teaching) ministry through the Holy Spirit and through Spirit-filled members of His Body, the Church.

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.

Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." Isaiah 2:2, 3 (Micah 4:1, 2)
