

EDITORIAL

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Change is a factor in every aspect of our lives and the world of education is no exception. In many cases, we can choose whether or to what extent we will adopt or adapt new ways of thinking and doing. Teachers are urged to utilise best practice in planning lessons that enable students to learn desired skills and competencies. Considerable effort is also directed at effecting change in the attitudes, behaviour, values and beliefs of students.

As professionals, teachers must remain up-to-date with developments in their field. However, it is easy to be consumed by changes such the release of a national curriculum, developments in technology, innovations in pedagogy, or advances in assessment methods, and lose the central focus of Christian education—revealing Christ in order to evoke change in people's lives.

A significant number of those who enter the teaching profession do so because they want to influence the lives of young people. Teachers become proficient at identifying the need for change in students and are skilled at planning for such change; however, they tend to resist making changes to their own attitudes, behaviour, values or beliefs. Many will say, "I'm happy for things to change so long as you don't ask me to change who I am. Don't ask me to be someone I'm not."

Many fear change, yet God has clearly told us that spiritual growth is about change. "We... are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18). God has already planned many changes for you and I, and not just changes around us but, more significantly, inside us. An intimate relationship with God cannot leave us unchanged; He wants to transform us. God's ways of thinking and doing are so far removed from human ways that you cannot simply adapt to suit your preferences. A total transformation is needed.

By establishing an intimate, trusting relationship with the creator of the universe as our father, guide and friend, we will experience a transformation of our attitudes, behaviour, values and beliefs. Philippians 1:6 says, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This total life change is for all Christians, for every one of us.

Unfortunately, many Christians have failed to pursue a transformed life. "We live in a day when millions of people have made a commitment to Christ and yet few lives are really transformed by

his power...in the end most believers end up as much a part of the world's way as their nonbelieving neighbours" (Jacobson, p. 18).

Christian teaching that reflects today's postmodern philosophy offers a gospel without demands, a down-playing of our sinful nature. In this case, there is no need for a total life change, no need to live the radical discipleship of Jesus. As Jesus' followers, we must represent the alternative way of life He taught and lived. We need to have a Kingdom lifestyle both corporately and individually. We must give up the comfort of remaining who and where we are right now. We will only be credible Christians in the eyes of the world if we practice what we preach, if we present an alternative lifestyle, if we allow God to change us.

The distinctiveness of Christian education relies on the calibre, dedication and spiritual maturity of its staff. Christian teachers play a significant role in the lives of students and occupy a unique position of influence on individuals and families. As your life changes in the hands of God, you will be in an optimal position to act as a facilitator of change in the lives of others—students, colleagues, neighbours and strangers. Your interactions with students (and others) should reveal to them the character of Christ, arousing in them a desire for inner change.

Make change a part of your life and open yourself to the transforming power of God. **TEACH**

Reference

Jacobsen, W. (2007). He loves me. Newbury Park, CA.: Windblown Media.

"We must give up the comfort of remaining who and where we are right now"



[Photography: Ann Stafford]