

Academic Preparation

Click, click, click ... rrring. I sat in the back of a typing classroom as a senior in high school. Some of you remember the sounds of an old-fashioned typewriter too! Now here is *the rest of the story* ...

The summer before my junior year of high school, my pastor, Dan Gelatt, visited my parents. He told them, "Your son, Brian, is headed in the wrong direction, and he needs to be in our Christian school." He was right! I *was* headed in the wrong direction, and I enrolled in the Christian school just a few weeks later. God used my final two years of high school at Elkhart Christian Academy to change my life, and by the time I graduated, by God's grace, I was headed in the right direction.

However, my mom, Loretta Simmons, had one more question for Pastor Gelatt. As a lifelong educator committed to excellence, she asked, "If Brian comes to the Christian school, will he be taught calculus?" You see, she recognized my God-given giftedness in math and science, and she wanted me to be academically prepared for college and for life. He answered, "Yes, Loretta. I promise Brian will be taught calculus." And that promise was fulfilled in the back of the typing classroom.

In my last *Christian School Comment*, I wrote about Bonnie's and my commitment to "cradle-to-grave" Christian school education for our four children. We believe Christian school education is one of the best means available to ensure that our children will grow to become thoroughly prepared, sold-out, full-throttle disciples of Jesus Christ.

In this issue, I want to address what I mean by **thoroughly prepared**. Parents and educators who are committed to Kingdom education believe that, because all truth is God's truth, every academic discipline must be taught through the lens of Scripture. For example, God's Word teaches us that God created the heavens, the earth, the plants, the animals, and the people. When a teacher using a secular science textbook teaches otherwise and totally excludes God from a theory of origins, the Bible is right and the teacher and the textbook are wrong. One account is true and the other is a lie. Note, I am not saying that we should not teach our children about naturalistic, biological evolution; I am saying that we should not teach a lie as truth. That would be *miseducation*, which is the opposite of excellent academic preparation.

With this in mind, Christian teachers should be committed to the integration of faith and learning. Our goal should be that every student in our schools

will graduate and achieve his or her full potential, having a firm grasp of the truth of every academic discipline and the framework provided by a Christian worldview.

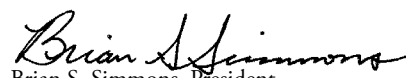
Continuous improvement should be our goal. As good as our schools are, we should ask ourselves every day how we can get better. We need to individualize instruction for every student, and we need to individualize professional development opportunities for teachers. Christian schools should be the best schools anywhere, and our graduates should be fully prepared to leave school, find a good job, and make a positive contribution to society.

Our son Drew attended Elkhart Christian Academy, graduated from Heritage Christian School in Indianapolis, and attended Indiana Wesleyan University, where he studied mathematics, computer science, and statistics. Drew's senior project was on cryptology. After he had finished his presentation, one of his professors, Dr. Green, came up to us and said, "Drew, God has blessed you with a bright mind. Always use your talent to serve Him!"

Dr. Green understood Kingdom education, and she served as an extension of Bonnie and me to thoroughly prepare our son for a career in mathematics in the context of discipleship. Today, Drew applies what he has learned in his new job in cryptology. Without excellent academic preparation, he would never have been hired for this very competitive job.

Like all parents, Bonnie and I want our children to be thoroughly prepared to accomplish the purposes God created them for, purposes that most definitely include graduating from high school and college and finding a good job. But we do not really care how much money our children earn, as long as they can provide for their families. Ultimately, we want them to live in a way that glorifies God. We want them to make a difference in the lives of others, as Jesus did. And one day we want to be together in heaven and hear His words: "Well done!"

Like my son Drew, I went on to study math in college. I graduated with highest honors and received the department award for science, social science, and education—and I returned to Elkhart Christian Academy to teach math!



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