

Towards the Development and Relevance of a Christian Schools Typology

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The Diverse and Proliferating Nature of Christian Schooling across the World

Christian schools are springing up across the world like fresh grass in a parched land after the arrival of life-giving rains. Experience of the author across a twenty-five year time-span, plus reflections from other similarly world-aware educators (Renicks, 2008) in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America all confirm this trend. The majority of these schools are not of the 19th century missionary model where they have been established by philanthropic outsiders. Rather, they often are the result of grass roots, popularist movements of local Christians. Dr Janet Nason (personal communication, April 29, 2007) from the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in the Philippines estimates, for example, that in that country alone there are over 600 Christian schools, with a similar number in Indonesia – the largest Muslim country in the world. In the continent of Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo alone has thousands of fledgling Christian schools. China too, under various guises, is seeing the development of a new generation of nation-building schools that reflect a Christian worldview.

Springing from missionary roots, India has long been a latent powerhouse of Christian scholarship. Today, India is emerging as one of the fastest growing regions for Christian schooling – assisted by input from existing Christian tertiary institutions in

the subcontinent (though some have still yet to develop a strong Christian teacher education arm to their programmes), by newly established teacher training centres across India, and by train-the-trainer assistance from established Christian education institutions in countries such as Singapore, Korea, and Australia.

Whether government sanctioned or not; whether the term “Christian” is included in their name or not; often in the face of significant opposition; usually with minimal resources (with some exceptions); and in many cases without parallel Christian teacher training support; believers in record numbers are finding ways to establish nurturing environments for their children that are related to their own faith commitments. But the variety of Christian schools across the globe is enormous and extends well beyond the grass roots schools already described:

- In western and eastern parts of the globe, there are many well established schools with some Christian or church affiliation, which saw their origins in the active missionary epoch of the 19th century. Today, many of these schools are the most highly regarded high-fee schools in their cities and towns.
- Particularly in countries like Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand and Korea, there are hundreds of middle-class lower fee Christian schools, often impacted by significant input from the Dutch post-WWII diaspora which has combined with local Christian churches and/or interest groups to form neighbourhood Christian schools.
- Many mainly western countries, but also South Africa, can point to hundreds of Christian schools established in recent decades by evangelical churches or eclectic groups of Christians, sometimes driven by a gospel focus, though occasionally even driven by questionable, racial separatism motives.

- There are also Christian schools in parts of the world primarily for the children of missionaries. Sometimes known as MK schools, at times they function somewhat separately from the local culture, existing to replicate home-country education and college-entry patterns for expatriate communities.

Some Christian schools have closed enrolment policies (that is, they are only open to children from Christian families); others have open enrolments. Some, as in Korea, have very little control over which students attend their Christian schools. Some have complete government financial underwriting (which brings both benefits and constraints), and some have partial government funding whilst others have no government funding at all. Most are able to choose their own teachers, though in some cases such as Singapore, teachers are appointed and paid by the state.

Teacher salaries vary greatly in Christian schools. A few remunerate teachers at levels above that of nearby government schools; a few pay close to state award levels; most are only able to remunerate their teachers at levels far below the salaries their colleagues are earning in the public sector. Some do not remunerate their teachers at all and depend upon outside donations external to fees in order to provide their teachers with an income. Whilst many Christian schools would qualify as not-for-profit charitable institutions, there are some in both eastern and western regions of the world which are organised as commercial, for-profit enterprises.

A few Christian schools have extensive control over their curricula but most conform to government-sanctioned scope and sequences to a greater or a lesser degree. Education is always philosophically or religiously committed, and some Christian

schools have teachers whose teacher training reflects a Christian worldview position. However, the vast majority of teachers in Christian schools outside of North America have received their training from teacher training institutes that either adhere to a secular humanist position on education, or which explore education from the perspective of some other state-sanctioned religious position. Therefore, with all the goodwill and desire in the world, the Christian character of many “Christian” schools is limited to that of a dualistic moral example and dedicated work ethic where biblical foundations have little to do with the formal education - shaping the “who, what, how, and why” of children’s learning about the world and their places and tasks in it. This less than ideal pattern has been called “icing on the cake” Christian education. These Christian ethos schools usually have not reached the culture-transforming and shalom-building possibilities of holistic Christian schooling that embraces the all-of-life implications of the gospel message.

It is a key contention of this paper that it is the body-of-Christ responsibility of those regions and schools which have experienced the privilege of teacher training and Christian schooling that is shaped by this broader perspective, to share it fraternally with their Christian school colleagues elsewhere in world.

Introductory Assumptions

Three core assumptions underlie the approach of this paper.

- **Key Foundational Stakeholders are Christians**

First, it is assumed that most Christian schools, either presently or at some time in their history, have been shaped overtly by stakeholders who are servants of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

- **Nonneutrality of Education**

Secondly, it is presupposed that all scholarship, including education is never neutral. It is always philosophically committed. Though once a reviled concept, in our postmodern age such a claim is neither novel nor contentious. Today, the recognition that education is not neutral, and is shaped by the beliefs and heart commitments of its proponents is near universal. Referring to a papal invocation of a contemporary reading of the Heisenberg principleⁱ in the area of hermeneutics, Hahn (2007, p.85) notes Pope Benedict XVI's contention about the subjectivity of all research:

...Even experiments in the natural sciences have been found to be influenced by researchers' own involvement and presuppositions. It should be no surprise then, that...researcher's subjectivity shapes the object of their study, including the questions they pose, the methods they develop to seek answers, and the eventual outcome of their study”.

Secular scholars also commonly assert this position (and its implications). In the realm of education for example, Jerome Brunner (1996) has noted that

Any choice of pedagogical practice implies a conception of the learner and may, in time, be adopted by him or her as the appropriate way of thinking about the learning process. For a choice of pedagogy inevitably communicates a conception of the learning process and the

learner. Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message. (p.63)

When he delves deeper into the subjects of the curriculum, Brunner (1996) further makes our case by reminding readers that

“True history,” without regard to the perspective from which it was written, is at best a mischievous joke and at worst a bid for political hegemony. Claims about “truth” must always be justified. (p.59)

For her part, Dinan-Thompson (2005) refocuses the lens when she reiterates the religiously committed nature of curriculum by affirming that

Curriculum and agents (including stakeholders and actants) involved in curriculum, can never be neutral... [curriculum] is intensely historical, political, racial, gendered, phenomenological, autobiographical, aesthetic, theological and international. (p.145)

- **Official versus Operational Character of Schools**

This paper suggests a typology for Christian schools involving two categories and three stages within each category. A school must not be understood as being in one category or another because of its origins or mission statement. Rather, a school should be categorised by what it really values and what it actually does. This can be deduced, for example, from operational artefacts such as a school’s promotional material or the aspects of learning that it gives most priority to in its student report cards.

Educators should be familiar with this distinction between official and operational, and the recognition that it is the operational that best describes the character of institutional activities. For example, although a school may have an official curriculum recorded in scope and sequence documents that are shown to inspectorial teams every five years or so, the reality in many cases is that the operational curriculum (what actually occurs in the classroom) may be quite different from the official version. It is the operational which is a much more accurate reflection of the true life and vision of the place.

Al Wolters (2005) echoes this same perspective when writing about worldview, differentiating between people's espoused worldviews (that which they claim to believe), and their operational or lived-out worldviews (that which they demonstrate in their life choices, decisions and actions). Thus it is possible, for example, for genuine Christians to verbalise a commitment to the supremacy of God's Word, but demonstrate operationally in their lives and actions that they are still captured by dualistic, economic rationalism.

In the same way, if we are to suggest strategies for faithful development in education, we need to perceive what schools actually believe and stand for rather than be satisfied with that which is indicated in their official documentation. After all, Plantinga (2002) reminds readers that Harvard University still claimed to be dedicated to the Christian church and the glory of God long after it had been unwittingly conscripted into the service of a pagan religious alternative.

Christian School Typology

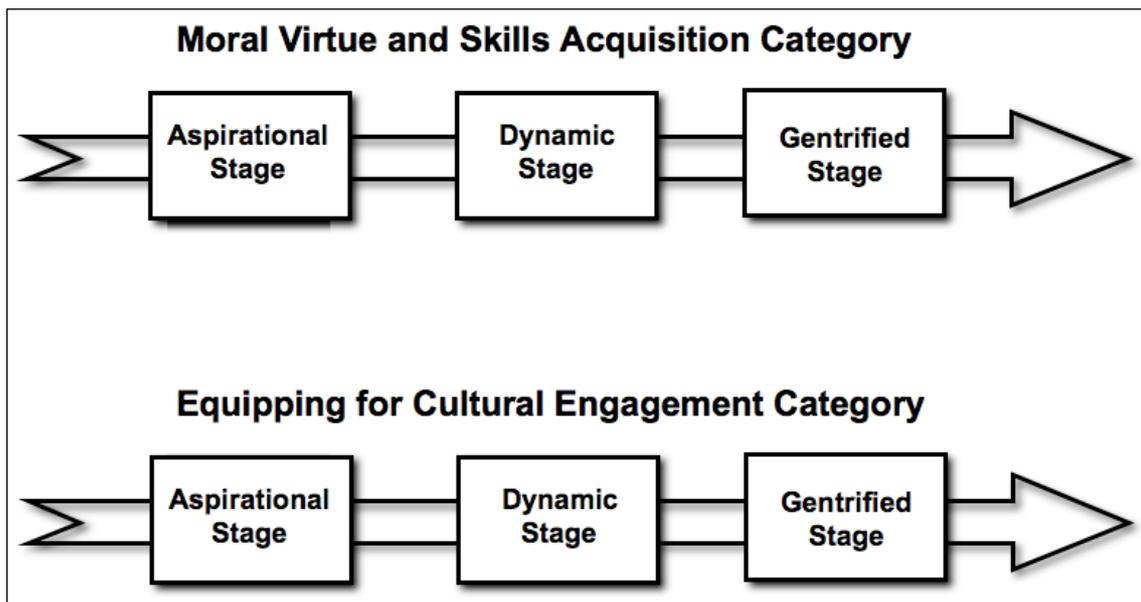
The plethora of shapes and sizes of Christian schools throughout the world may appear confusing. However, it is suggested in this paper that, using broad brush strokes, Christian schools can be divided into two categories:

Category One: Moral Virtue and Skills Acquisition

Category Two: Equipping for Cultural Engagement

Inside each category, it is suggested that schools can be identified with one of three stages: aspirational; dynamic; gentrified.

Diagram 1. Categories and Stages in the Christian Schools Typology



Therefore, any individual school could be one of six types, ranging from Aspirational stage in the Moral Virtue and Skills Acquisition category, to Gentrified stage in the

Equipping for Cultural Engagement category. Schools can also be blends – those in the process of migrating from one stage to another.¹

Many institutions may feel that they really are a blend not only of different stages, but maybe also of different categories as well. Despite that, and the contention that this typology may be overly simplistic, it seems to be of sufficient value to classify dozens of the schools one encounters, so as to be better equipped to identify and recommend appropriate developmental strategies.

At this point, each category and the stages within each category, are considered in more detail.

Category One: Moral Virtue and Skills Acquisition

Schools in this category often have responded to a perceived inadequate provision by the prevailing authorities of existing schools that teach programmes deemed to be basic to good social order. They involve instruction in core skills such as reading and writing, and politically correct concepts such as democracy, the value of personal property, and the apparently life-fulfilling opportunities of upward social mobility accessed through educational qualifications. During the period of European expansionism and colonialism, mission boards and church organisations established such schools in the “new world” for indigenous peoples whose cultures had revolved around of oral traditions or whose language catchment was geographically too limited to allow for inter-tribal intercourse.

¹ Some of these ideas have germinated after interaction with the writings of Dr David Smith of the Kuyers Institute.

Schools of this category were established for other reasons as well - such as to equip people to avoid exploitation by settlers, or to train up a local bureaucracy, or to provide literacy so that people could read the scriptures and explore the good news of the Bible and of God's great substitutionary gift of Jesus for themselves. Such schools could provide a foundation for social advantage and upward social mobility as well as transferring the moral and legal code of the imperial power.

The establishment of Christian schools for moral purpose and/or skills acquisition that provide social advantage is not just a feature of 19th century colonialism. Many of the Christian schools being started in nonwestern countries today have been opened by concerned individuals and/or churches to provide measurably improved academic instruction for their children. Even in countries such as the United Kingdom, Christian involvement in alternative schooling such as the Emmanuel Schools Foundation has responded to a similar motivation – though with a significantly expanded gospel outcome in mind. In other contexts where parents realise that education is never neutral and where overtly anti-Christian theological perspectives influence the public school system, Christian parents accept serious financial hardship and even persecution to ensure that their children receive basic numeracy and literacy instruction without, for example, the alternative of Islam or Hinduism.

In many of these schools, compulsory or optional chapel services and Bible instruction sessions play an important role in the nurture that is provided. Teachers who make a personal Christian faith commitment are preferred instructors. The Bible has a distinctly devotional place in Bible sessions, though its application to the rest of the curriculum normally is unclear or unexplored. Nevertheless, David Smith (2008)

reminds us that teachers in this category often are encouraged to “incarnate” in their lifestyles the virtues and character qualities embodied in scripture.

Category One Moral Virtue and Skills Acquisition - Aspirational Stage

Within this category, and in the second category was well, the three stages of aspirational, directional and gentrified have a sequential character. This first stage is aspirational in that it is identified with schools when they are young. Whilst they do not yet have a cohort of graduates who can demonstrate that the moral or skills acquisition goals of the school have been achieved, they nevertheless aspire to these social advancement characteristics, and most stakeholders in the school community could articulate the school’s purpose. Official and operational goals will be closely aligned and evident in school artefacts.

Category One Moral Virtue and Skills Acquisition - Dynamic Stage

At this stage and in this category, schools have become well established. They are characterised by controlling bodies, administrators and teachers who understand and adhere to the Christian ethos of the school. Consequently, they nurture moral and academic training within a broadly Judeo-Christian framework. The curriculum may resemble that of surrounding public and other private schools which aim for high academic achievement, but chapel life and incarnational lifestyles are still fully understood as being an integral part of the schools’ goals and outworking of those goals. Where it is legally possible (and this is not the case in some jurisdictions) schools normally will insist that a personal faith in Jesus be a condition of employment for their teachers.

As long as stakeholders remain committed to the parallel universes inside the school of both academic excellence and moral virtue, schools can remain at this category/stage indefinitely. This does not mean that they stagnate but that they continually wrestle with the tension of equipping children with a Christian moral character often in contexts where the surrounding culture may be dominated by different spirits of the age such as economic rationalism, individualistic materialism, or other pagan religious commitments.

Category One Moral Virtue and Skills Acquisition - Gentrified Stage

Schools reach this stage when the gospel nature of the chapel and character formation aspects of the school has diminished and has become largely peripheral to the primary, academic purpose of the school. It is now contended by school authorities that one does not need Christian teachers to model good character or a disciplined lifestyle to children. Competent, clean-living humanists with a good university degree can do just as good a job. They are just as good at teaching standard school subjects as well – and Christian teachers are so hard to find anyway, particularly for subjects such as math, ICT and science. Accordingly, employment requisites are changed so that well-qualified non-Christian teachers become desired applicants for vacancies. The Christian aspect of the school, if it remains at all, is consigned to a small optional corner of the school's activities. The prime purpose of the school has become clearly focused upon academic achievement and social advancement. In this context, Bruner (1996, p.84) is correct when he claims that, "The teacher is the vicar of the culture at large".

A degree of cultural elitism may begin to become apparent where visible objects of “the good life” such as fine buildings, expensive uniforms, and a high position on academic league tables become the priorities of the day. Fees may be increased substantially to resource these new features or qualities, and entrance examinations could be introduced to ensure that only the most intellectually able are offered places in the school. In short, as with Harvard university already mentioned, reference to God may still be found in the school’s mission statement or even in its name, but operationally the God of the Bible has been replaced by other idols of elitism and self-fulfilment that are widely endorsed by school stakeholders and accepted in the wider community.

Attention is now focussed on the second category.

Category Two: Equipping for Cultural Engagement

We now turn to the second major category of Christian schools, namely those equipping children for biblically faithful cultural engagement. They retain a concern for moral virtue and skills acquisition, but these concepts are by-products to this category’s activities rather than being the focus of the activities themselves. Cultural engagement schools recognise the Reformation claim of the Lordship of Christ over all of creation. They are motivated by principles such as those mentioned by the apostle Peter “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, *that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light*” (1 Peter 2:8).

Rather than seeking to equip children with values and skills to successfully meld into the culture, these schools seek to equip children with a biblically informed worldview in every subject in the school curriculum and, in so doing, offering an alternative lifestyle to the culture. Edlin (1999) notes that Biblical perspectives function in these schools not just in a devotional sense, but in a foundational and permeative sense as well. Issues of school leadership, staff employment, staff development, curriculum scope and sequence, classroom practice, role of parents, the place of ICT, and even building design and classroom layout are all seen as being non-neutral parameters that are directed by beliefs. Therefore, in so far as the laws allow in particular jurisdictions, cultural engagement schools will seek to subject everything in the life of the school to the critique of a biblically informed worldview. The goal is to ensure the outcomes that are desired in the students – that they be equipped to engage with the culture in a biblically authentic manner that provides transformational hope and shalom to a lost and needy world. In words similar to those of Nick Wolterstorff (2002), the nation-building goal of these Christian schools is to equip children to discern what is best (Philippians 1: 9-11), including a peaceful and robust cultural critique and transformation in the name of Christ.

Although this type of schooling may be countercultural to the prevailing secular culture, it also could be countercultural to many assumptions in the prevailing Christian culture as well. One enduring but disturbing legacy of the Enlightenment is the fact that many Christians have accepted the dualistic privatisation of faith, accepting the assumption that faith only relates to private convictions and that somehow the bulk of one's life is lived in a scientific, rationalistic realm of truth that is not presuppositionally shaped by beliefs and worldviews. Unfortunately, though

this erroneous point of view is contrary to Scripture, it continues to plague the perceptions of many Christians – so that the secular world is content to allow the church to remain in its little corner and perpetually explore its own, self-defined irrelevancy.

Cultural engagement Christians schools, in an attitude of epistemic humility and reformed critical realism (Edlin, 2006) in which they joyfully celebrate the surety of the gospel but acknowledge the tentativeness of their own capacity to fully explore the depths of that gospel, understand that education is a process which challenges students with the Lordship of Christ over all of creation.

Category Two Equipping for Cultural Engagement: Aspirational Stage

Often, stakeholders in this category invest huge amounts of time and effort exploring biblical foundations for any proposed school, its staff, activities and structures prior to the opening of the school. Some develop sophisticated educational creeds or confessions to identify and celebrate within their communities the type of Christian education to which they aspire. Often, churches and groups starting this type of school desire to move beyond a fee-for-service perspective by creating structures that involve parents in active decision making in areas such as policy and curriculum.

Category Two Equipping for Cultural Engagement: Dynamic Stage

When cultural engagement schools commence operation, due to the fact that their aims have the potential for being counter-cultural, the first cohort of stakeholders has a well-developed degree of enthusiasm for and understanding of, the school and its

aims. This is because even the very act of enrolling children in a school like this often is viewed by peers as being abnormal, and even the subject of criticism.

Another key factor evident in the life of cultural engagement schools at this stage is a significant – often sacrificial – commitment to retraining teachers. It is recognised that education is not neutral and that in many cases teacher training will have occurred in public universities that conform to a non-Christian worldview that reflects the politically correct religious persuasions of the educational establishment. Therefore, it is not unknown for cultural engagement schools to band together and attempt to develop strategic inservice programmes for their teachers to re-equip them with perspectives and methodologies that enable them to celebrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ over every aspect of the curriculum and life of the school.

Like Christian schools in the first category, these schools are committed to nation building – but of a different sort. They do not want to produce children who merely conform to the culture but who, by their influence and persuasive voice, seek to transform it. Their view of the good life is not limited to accessing top universities or to a successful career in business or the arts (though these might happen as deliberate by-products to cultural engagement graduates). Instead, they seek to transform culture for Christ at every scholastic-socio-economic-political level in which they participate when they graduate from these schools.

Category Two Equipping for Cultural Engagement: Gentrified Stage

Cultural engagement schools can be exhausting because presuppositional, foundational assumptions are always under review. However, if active attention is not

given to maintaining this vigour through teacher retraining and the nurture of subsequent generations of stakeholders in the schools' unique vision, then these schools can succumb to the much less exhausting cultural status quo. Though they may retain the language of cultural engagement in their foundational documents, the way the gentrified schools portray themselves to the public in their promotional documentation or in their report cards indicates that their operational activities have moved significantly from their original intentions.

Research conducted by NICE senior lecturer Ken Dickens (personal communication, March 18, 2008) confirms the observation that when cultural engagement schools become gentrified, they become more and more like the gentrified schools of the moral virtue and skills acquisition category – schools which may retain a Christian linkage in their name but which may operationally demonstrate few of the biblically authentic goals that motivated their founders. In other words, convergence is likely at the right hand end of each category in diagram 1. At that point, schools in both lines may become elitist (often high fee) private schools that aim at enabling graduates to aspire to the good life as understood in the surrounding pagan culture. Moral education may still occur, but it will often be in a deluded context that contends that values education can occur in some nationalistic manner that can be divorced from the religious foundations that generated those moral positions in the first place. Focus on dynamic teacher re-training will have declined, and there will be limited opposition to the new policy of employing “clean-living” but non-Christian teachers in most subjects in the curriculum. Cultural idolatry, where uncritiqued cultural norms determine beliefs and actions, becomes the order of the day.

Variables Within the Typology

It should be possible to recognise in the typology most types of Christian schools. Some may be a blend of both categories, and many may be in transition between one stage or another within a category. It may also be possible to reverse direction. In fact, the hope of Christian education is that, by the grace of God and with much prayer, re-envisioning and hard work, the dynamic stage can be rediscovered by schools in both categories. Arguably it is much more difficult (except at the gentrified stage) to transition between categories.

The huge variety of cultural, economic, and political systems around the world means that there are several variables that will impact a school's location in the typology, and its capacity to continue in or rediscover a vibrant, faithful, Christian dynamic.

These realities include such factors as:

- Government control
- Resources. Though some new schools have significant governmental, institutional or philanthropic support, many are neighbourhood initiatives with very limited financial resources to commit to equipment, buildings, salaries or staff professional development.
- Constraints resulting from cultural idolatry as represented for example by an uncritiqued adherence to:
 - Hellenistic western humanism with its stultifying dualism
 - Confucianism and its authoritarian suspicion of innovation and change to the existing social order
- Globalisation where 21st century aspirations of the young may become disconnected from traditional cultural roots

- The rise of the middle class, which often, nurtured on the consumptionist myth of an economic rationalist utopia, seeks its fulfilment in individualistic materialism. This is antithetical to the biblically faithful and interdependent stewardship paradigm that many Christian schools seek to nurture
- Availability of written materials addressing the issue of Christian teacher (re)education is limited to a handful of languages such as English, Korean and Bahasa Indonesian
- Other localised idiosyncrasies such as limited educational backgrounds and levels of literacy of the cadre of teachers in some regions

Implications of the Typology

Preferred Position in the Typology

It is the position of this paper that the preferred category/stage for a vibrant, faithful Christian school is dynamic cultural engagement. In order to be able to assist a Christian school community enter this place, a diagnosis of its existing location on the continuum should first be accomplished. Therapies, ranging from a reinvestigation of vision for moral virtue and skills acquisition schools at the aspirational stage, to a renewed discovery of the countercultural and all-embracing character of the gospel for cultural engagement gentrified schools, can then be recommended.

Teacher Training

At all levels and within each category, one of the most strategic needs is for the compulsory, robust, sustained, retraining of Christian teachers. If teachers do not know how to think and teach in a way that is faithful to a biblically informed

worldview, then whatever visions or policies a school board may introduce, their Christian schools will always remain much less than what they could and should be.

In jurisdictions such as Australia where Christian schools have ready access to biblically faithful, add-on teacher training programs, there needs to be an increased commitment to such training. Furthermore, as members of the body of Christ which transcends national boundaries, these very blessed school communities need to be willing to partner with less-endowed school communities and provide this teacher training to other nations that would like access to such training but which currently are unable to provide it themselves.

Some organisations, such as the International Association for Promotion of Christian Higher Education (IAPCHE - through its CASC program), New Hope International, and Worldwide Community Schools are proactive in responding to this need in strategic ways ranging from direct teacher postgraduate training, to effective train-the-trainer programs where potential partnerships are nurtured between groups such as the NICE teacher training body in Sydney and Peniel Rural College of Education in Madurai province in India. Christian groups in Singapore and elsewhere also have a vision to serve Christian teachers in other countries. In fact, Singapore with its strategic location, well-developed infrastructure, and significant local Christian presence, could emerge as a locus of activity, as evidenced by several conferences and consultations that occurred there in March 2008 to explore Christian teacher education within the island nation and other countries in the region. Hong Kong, where institutes such as Dr Paul Pang's Schools for Christ Foundation has recently

graduated five students with doctorates in Christian education, is also strategically placed to provide teacher training for politically sensitive jurisdictions.

South Korea possesses a number of Christian educational visionaries. They, and many others including Korean graduates of institutes such as the National Institute for Christian Education in Australia and North West University in South Africa, are having an increasing influence in the provision of Christian teacher training in South Korea. That nation is just beginning to emerge into an age where Christian education has the legal capacity to flourish inside the country, and the vision exists to increase its involvement in international teacher training as well. This is an urgent issue. Many of the thousands of Christian schools emerging across Asia and Eastern Europe are desperately lacking postgraduate retraining of teachers to give them the mindset and skills needed to move their schools into the dynamic cultural engagement category.

In March 2007, an Africa-wide Roundtable Conference took place bringing together 140 Christian leaders from across the continent and elsewhere, to consider strategic, concerted action concerning the promotion and support of Christian schooling in the region. It was very successful in promoting collegiality and in shaping and enhancing the meaning and provision of genuinely Christian schooling in challenging circumstances, and has spawned regional offshoots in several locations. In August 2008, a parallel conference, organised by IAPCHE, CPCHEA (Centre for Promotion of Christian Higher Education in Africa), and North West University, will take place in South Africa. One of its goals is to increase collaboration between African Christian elementary and secondary schools on the one hand, and Christian tertiary

institutions on the other, in the development and provision of pre-service and in-service training for Christian teachers.

Perhaps the time is ripe for individuals and agencies in Asia/Oceania to replicate the vision and activities of African brethren with two similar conferences of their own.

On a more localised level, strategic bilateral efforts are being made, facilitated by conferences such as the Global Christian Schools Conference in Hong Kong in 2006 and in Guangzhou May 2008, to establish school-to-school partnerships that could enable a symbiotic support relationship to develop between well established and newly developed Christian schools, even across national boundaries. These activities are often termed “short-term missions” – a label with paternalistic implications which may be less than helpful and which could be replaced by something that more clearly embodies the mutual benefit of such activities. In addition, it is vital that the warnings, insights and strategies detailed by Dr David Livermore (2006) in his book about short term missions and cultural intelligence are studied and their implications used to devise faithful strategies in this area of ministry.

Conclusion

Here is the heart of the matter. Christian schooling across the world is diverse philosophically, structurally, politically, economically, and in almost any other way one could imagine. But it is not random. It is growing rapidly in many locations. It is becoming gentrified in others. It can be categorised, which enables developmental assistance to be contextualised to specific situations and needs. Across the board however, and because education is never neutral, a central need for the viability and

faithfulness of Christian schools in our region is the provision of teacher (re)training programmes and institutions. Only then can teachers adequately be equipped to practise their craft in a God-honouring way, and in a way that enables children to experience true education – the challenge of the celebration of the lordship of Christ over all of creation – in every aspect of the life of the Christian school.

Christians should not underestimate the extent of the challenge. It is magnified by the often dualistic nature of preaching that emanates from many Christian churches. This less than ideal pietism misunderstands the efforts of busy teachers to invest time and energy in becoming more faithful in their classrooms. Sadly, rather than being affirmed in their profession, Christian teachers at times are made to feel guilty for investing their time in their teaching instead of in more traditional, church-related activities such as teaching Sunday School or leading youth groups.

However, though the task may be large and challenging, it is not overwhelming. Christians are not called to be successful in changing the world overnight. Faithfulness, not success, defines the Christian calling. Christians are called to be faithful right now, right where they are. And the Lord who made, redeemed, and sustains his world moment by moment by his word of power has promised that when his people seek to transform their [educational] minds and institutions by subjecting their treasured educational paradigms to the transforming critique of scripture, then he will direct them and equip them for the task (Romans 12).

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ⁱ Though developed in the context of quantum mechanics, a broader vernacular but contentious expression of this principle is that the investigation of an activity of necessity disturbs that activity's very nature. It shares some features of the Hawthorne effect in statistics.