

Abstract

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This study examines the relationship between the world of faith and the world of education. The historical links between churches and schools are documented with the author asking questions about the role and purpose of the Church in the education. The involvement of Christians in education is considered in light of Hill's findings which identifies acquiescence, conservation, abdication and transformation as regular patterns of response. Nurture, service and prophecy are suggested as helpful theological perspectives on education before the author examines the validity of a faith-based school approach to education.

Examining the need for a more robust theology of Education whilst acknowledging the global complexities of education, the author presents two models for Church engagement. The Roman Catholic model, which seeks to serve denominational interests, is critiqued and analysed alongside the Church of England framework which adopts a broader aim of serving the common good. The basic elements outlined by the Church of England include wisdom, hope, community and dignity. Each of these aspects is outlined and accompanied by a biblical rationale.

The sense of vocation experienced by teachers is an important dimension of the discussion which the author focuses on in chapter three. In light of the changing missional climate in schools, the balancing act of managing a professional classroom atmosphere with the prophetic opportunity to engage students in spiritual and moral development is a concept which is explored. A biblical understanding of work and the inextricable link with worship follows and creates a valuable framework within which Christians can seek to live and work in a way that contributes to social transformation and the proclamation of kingdom values, even in secular environments.

The research for this study included interviews with leading professionals in this area who speak with experience and passion regarding the issues raised. It is these voices which give a current and local resonance to the questions regarding the relationship between education and faith.