



# Teaching from a Christian worldview

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One of my favourite moments as a Christian school teacher, was listening to year 11 students unpack how their understanding of the biblical story influenced their group “business” projects. Throughout the preceding term, our teaching team had tried to model to students how the biblical story can impact the ideas before us and the life we live. We had repeatedly discussed the cultural mandate of Genesis 1, the good gift of work, the impacts of sin, Jesus’ atoning sacrifice, and how he invites followers to seek God’s Kingdom. As part of their project work, students were asked to present their business project ideas from a Christian worldview. Now it is fair to say that not all presentations were polished, but certainly it was evident these young people were able to think about God’s good intentions for their projects, reflect on the impact of sin, and express their ideas in terms of Christian discipleship.

The story of Christian Education National (CEN) schooling is one in which Christian parents and Christian communities have sought to foster an education grounded in the biblical story. As referenced in the vision statement, CEN promotes an educational approach in which Christ’s lordship over all of life is celebrated and the gospel, rather than culture, shapes practice. A key feature of this approach is teaching and learning shaped by a Christian worldview. A hope being that this infusion of the biblical narrative within their learning will assist students, like the year 11s mentioned above, in their own understanding of the biblical story, and followership of Christ.

While teaching from a Christian worldview has been a long-held and valued aspect of Christian schooling, it has never been a simple task. Personally, the idea was foreign to me when I first applied for a position in a CEN school. I, like many teachers, was educated within a government school. Further, my teacher training was not one where curriculum and teaching strategies were considered from a Christian perspective. My experiences are not unusual. When a teaching candidate is interviewed

for a teaching role within a Christian school, typically questions are asked about the candidate’s knowledge of Christian schooling and teaching from a Christian worldview. Candidates that I have interviewed often express the joy of potentially working in an environment where their beliefs are welcomed, and they can share their faith with students. Most, though, have either never heard of, or express little understanding of, teaching from a Christian worldview.

### **How might we promote teaching from a Christian worldview?**

To begin, leaders lead by design, not accident. School leaders need to be crystal clear in explaining the counter-cultural nature of the gospel and what this means for education. Across the Scriptures, the people of God are called not to conform to the patterns of this world, but to be transformed (Romans 12:2); to live lives of discipleship shaped by the cross. CEN schools are to be Christ-centred, transformative places where the gospel is evident in every element of policy and practice. This includes teachers working together to write a biblical perspective on a curriculum topic, the slice of life before them, and to weave this throughout the lessons they teach. Yet this is only possible if leaders are faithful to the CEN schooling approach and ensure this core element of practice is a focus of professional learning, in newsletters, at information nights, and so on.

Additionally, the parental community plays a key role in fostering teaching from a Christian worldview. Among the counter-cultural concepts of CEN schooling is the idea of parent partnership. Why counter-cultural? We resist any notions of being purely buyers of an educational product. Instead, we understand it takes a community to raise children. One way parent partnership is exhibited in CEN schools is through parental governance. Through their governance, boards set both direction and invite the executive leaders to report against key performance indicators. Ultimately, we value what we measure. A valuing of teaching from a Christian worldview begins with having this as one of their

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strategic goals. Additionally, there are a multitude of ways to promote this within schools, including inviting learning and teaching leaders to present on this topic at association events, ensuring this practice is a prerequisite of leadership roles, and ensuring this element of practice is included within the board reporting cycle.

Finally, if there is one thing that has surprised me during my time in Christian schooling, it is how few parents have asked about, spoken in to, or held staff to account in terms of teaching from a Christian worldview. Conversations abound around almost everything but this core element of our schools. Late last year, though, I was very much encouraged in hearing that a Christian parent within our community wrote to a teacher, encouraging a deeper and more gospel-focused understanding of the topic being taught. Pleasingly, the teacher was thankful for the willingness of the parent to reach out.

CEN schooling has been built on biblical foundations. A core distinctive being teachers teach from a Christian worldview. May all of us strive together towards this as we look to foster learning that is transformational and assists Christian discipleship.

Chris has worked in Christian education for over twenty-five years. He loves the opportunity we have in wrestling with how our faith shapes schooling. Chris is the secondary principal at Plenty Valley Christian School and serves as an adjunct lecturer for CEN’s training arm: the National Institute for Christian Education.

