

Educational Strategy For The Future

Martie du Plessis

The greatest power that we can give to a child is through education. The messages you feed an impressionable mind over the years determines a worldview, a future, a destiny, and positive attitude of the heart. Many hearts together - good or bad - form a nation, a movement, a culture, and a godly or ungodly soul. The labour force in any nation is hugely affected by its educational strategies.

This is the reason why so much effort and finance are allocated toward the education of people. That is why any leader in a nation, community, church or business will ask what can be done to address a dysfunctional educational scenario. The emphasis of this article is to say to leaders that there is a workable approach to be investigated that will add great value to the future of this country.

In the Sunday Times of 14 July 2013, even young leaders, who called themselves "change drivers" said: "A shift needs to happen in South Africa, and it needs our generation to lead it." With "our generation" it means the younger generation, those under 30, I presume. My questions are, What kind of direction will they bring? and, Will these ventures truly affect the heart of man?

To bring about true change in education, it principally needs to belong to the right domain of authority as instituted by God. Education and the disciplining of the heart (the forming of character) goes hand-in-hand, and this matter

belongs firstly to the parent of the child. Where parents play a major role in the education process, whether through established Christian schools or home education, there is evidence of success stories. True change in hearts comes where worldview is taught and caught, explained and modelled. Parents were foremost ordained by God for this task and then any other institution should only be an extension of the parent.

The home education movement has grown extensively over the last years to more than 100 000 home educators in South Africa and predications are that there will be about 360 000 home educators by next year (according to the statistical growth of 75% yearly where home education is done). The United States currently has over 2,3 million home educators. It is true that not all families can go for this possibility, yet all parents share a common concern about their children, particularly where education is concerned. No parent needs to fall prey to a dysfunctional educational process since it is the task of the parent to protect his or her child in such a system.

Headmasters of schools are continually asking me to come and speak at their conferences and explain why so many families would take their children out of school. Their main concern is what they can do to change it, or how they can prevent parents from taking their kids out of public schools. The answer is for sure not in erecting another large school structure with the best facilities like the one recently opened in the Eastern Cape by private institutions. For many this

model provide a solution but it is far from a definitive answer.

It is time that we realise that something different is needed in our current economic climate. According to recent research a different approach would include a "network of people and resources involved in providing educational resources" (www.21stcenturyskillbook.com). There is an African proverb that states: "It takes a village to raise a child."

"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).

It is clear that the best education, even in a high technological era with fast digital tools, require people with a clear perspective of where they are taking the ones they train. I believe the answer for education in this country lies in small learning centres where parents play a major role, and where they have the most influence in the mentoring and ethos of the children involved. This can also include suitable role models and educators other than the parent. These centres would be a place where character training plays a more important role than facilities and where young people are job creators and not job seekers by the age of 18.

The answer is to have a powerful tool that can shape the direction in education for the future and to be able to give leadership to people that want to make a difference. I believe that the following should be included in this plan:

- Learning centres with smaller numbers rather

than big schools. These centre can be at an office where the dad works, a church with concerned parents or community centre with like minded families.

- Parental involvement of all parents of the children involved, where parents with specific expertise will bring another dimension of real world education. It will provide numerous people and resources and gifting to provide a clearer learning path for their children.
- A strong emphasis on Biblical character development from very young with real-life application.
- Mentorship programmes in small groups focussed on a relationship with the child.
- Individual gifting in children will be acknowledged and a learning path will be worked out for each child.
- Resources and material more in line with 21st - Century realities; for example, not a great emphasis on exams so much but rather on feedback in various ways.
- Centre to have studios to allow learners to present work through digital tools relevant to their times.
- At the age of 17 the young adults should give back to

their own centres, investing into the lives of others. This is done by a year of in-house service.

- At the age of 18 they leave the centre to go for further studies or start their own business, being the 'salt of the earth.'
- These young people will have a portfolio of training completed that will be a reflection of their true character, academic performance, gifts and passions and how they have applied themselves over a period of many years. It will also give an indication of their character growth and how it affected their interdependent relationships.

Companies will snatch these children as they will be different because of their character, mentoring process, and their wide and multi-skilled abilities. Their hearts will for the most part be positively changed and their worldview established. They will be able to be leaders in the information economy rather than victims of it.

The biggest change that needs to come in the outcome of education in this country is the re-education of the adult, policy maker, or parent to create places for real change. Our assesment strategies also need to change from an assessment of people who qualify as opposed to people who are disqualified through the results of standardized testing.

Leaders in the country that concur "enough is enough" can start their own learning centres with teachers of their own choice, their own values and their own outcomes. Churches, businesses and individuals can make a difference by offering their followers places of real life training in a safe environment.

Contact the Dynamis Institute for adult training to start your own learning centre at your company, church or in community.