

## Education and Its Impact on a State, Nation and World

Two things I believe are:

- 1) Train up a child in the way he (she) should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
- 2) Education impacts our economy.

The first statement comes from my Christian background and is, I believe, essential for parents to consider when raising a child. The same premise, however, carries over to other segments of society such as state and national education. One interpretation of this is that if you do all that you can to teach a child what is best, no matter if he strays from that teaching at some point, he will eventually come back to it. Another interpretation is that of putting the emphasis on the pronoun “he” (or she) and tailoring the education to the learning style and bent of the child. Either way, there is benefit to the child when educated with these principles in mind.

When children grow up, they may choose to work in the state in which they were raised. There may be emotional ties to family that factor into this decision of where they will settle and make their contribution to society. If they come from a state that values and carries out quality education, their contribution may be greater because they have been the beneficiary of these things. This may manifest itself by creating small businesses or jobs within their state. The ripple effect of even one innovative, educated person is impressive....from CEO to new businesses and jobs to business revenue to tax base to keeping individual and business taxes in check.

There are several reports that rank states against each other and those that rank the U.S. among other nations. It is easy to assume that poorer nations became that way because of a lack of education. While there may be many contributing factors, illiteracy can usually be found as a high ranking issue. In typical chicken vs. egg first fashion, one could also ask, “Is the nation poor because it is uneducated or is it uneducated because it is poor?” The most important question for us is, “Where is our state and nation headed?” Our nation has attempted outcome based education that doesn't particularly take into account the individual. Educators report that they are so busy “teaching to the test” in order to prove themselves worthy of receiving needed funding, that children ARE being left behind. Often this type of teaching is not *learning*, but *recitation*. True learning is that in which students can extrapolate what they have been taught into other applications, providing the solutions they need. In order to accomplish this, we must not lose sight of the goal - providing our children an education. Learning shouldn't stop at graduation from high school, so we must also instill a love of learning.

Cultural differences play a huge role in the ability to educate our children. Just as there are many cultural differences between the United States and Mexico; Africa and Japan; Germany and Canada, there are cultural differences between small rural towns in Illinois and Cook County. Therefore, these differences must be taken into account just as any good teacher takes into account the different learning styles of her students. We must value the student that will become a service provider as much as one who will attend graduate school. We must teach to give each individual the tools he/she needs to succeed after leaving high school. A case in point is the education students receive from 4-H and FFA which provides real life application with expert evaluation of their efforts. This is why I am unable to understand the reasoning behind our state's decision to cut the county fair budget (where these two worthy organizations have the opportunity to be evaluated) by \$969,000 while funding a grant of 1.25 million dollars for flower gardens!

Another area of cultural consideration is that of the heavily populated Hispanic district in Northern Illinois. A locally held belief is that Republicans and Democrats are too busy arguing over illegal immigrants to realize the real issue at hand. Some believe the options are: 1) give amnesty to every illegal immigrant; 2) deport the illegal immigrant. They feel, however, that the real issue is to fix the poor education of our children. Many Hispanics have expressed that when it comes to voting for a candidate and their stand on issues, they would sell out the cousin who is here illegally and vote for the person that fixes education every time. They want to look toward the future of their children and recognize that their children are their future! This is a good thing for all of us to remember and I hope that these comments which are a result of traveling the state and listening to the people that I hope to serve are beneficial and food for thought.

I am Pastor Randy White and I would appreciate your support.