The stated goals and purposes of Christian schools and the reasons parents give for choosing them

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The Stated Goals and Purposes
of Christian Schools and the Reasons
Parents Give for Choosing Them

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Cecelia R. Short
May, 2001
THE STATED GOALS AND PURPOSES
OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND THE
REASONS PARENTS GIVE
FOR CHOOSING THEM

By Cecelia R. Short

Approved May, 2001

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the current stated purposes of Christian schools and the reasons parents give for choosing to send their children to these schools. The methodology was essentially a comparative analysis of multiple sources. Documents from the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the professional literature, and the sample schools were analyzed. Administrators and parents from selected Christian schools were interviewed and their statements were also analyzed.

Comparative analysis was used to reduce the coded statements to emergent themes and then to common categories. Categories that emerged were: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) home/family, 4) school academic environment, and 5) school non-academic environment. Comparisons were made across the categories to determine agreement or non-agreement.

The results of this study were consistent with earlier findings in the professional literature. New to this study were questions referencing possible legislation to return school sponsored prayer and Bible reading to public schools.

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Chapter 1: The Problem

Introduction

A major function of an educational institution is to preserve and perpetuate the value systems of the culture in which it exists (Butts & Cremin, 1953). From its inception, the American public school has been molded and altered to respond to the expectations and needs of a rapidly changing society that is characterized by increased cultural diversity, a knowledge explosion enhanced by technological advances, and a political arena that is saturated with special interest groups (Spring, 1991).

In the past, some diverse and special interest groups have responded to these forces with the establishment of private alternatives to public schools. Pierce v. Society of Sisters (1925), which upheld the right of parents to send children to private schools (Palmer, 1974), began a series of challenges to public education. The emergence of schools to preserve the religious values that have permeated American society has continued as political actions continue to redefine the boundaries of separation of church and state regarding public education. In the last three decades, beginning with Civil Rights legislation in 1964, and court decisions including Engel v. Vitale (1962), Abington v. Schempp (1963), and Murray v. Curlett (1963), involving separation of church and state, there has been renewed interest in private education (Carper, 1979). Many parents have chosen private education for their children. Public school enrollment decreased 12% in the 1970s (Turner,
Enrollment in Protestant fundamental Christian schools increased during the same time period, with reported claims of two (Rose, 1988) to four (Turner, 1981a) new schools being established daily.

The Problem

Now, in the 21st century, some 30 years after the "Christian School Movement", Protestant fundamental Christian schools are considered a viable alternative to public education in America (Rose, 1988). Why do Christian schools continue to operate today? Are the reasons given by parents for choosing to enroll their children in Christian schools in agreement with the stated purposes of the Christian schools they have chosen? Are these reasons similar to those cited in studies done in the late 1960s and early 1970s? Are the Christian schools providing the educational instructional programs and environment that parents want for their children? The above questions held by this researcher led to this study.

Need for the Study

In the early years of our country's existence, educational needs were defined by class with specific goals that would preserve the lifestyle of that class (Good, 1947). The elite were educated in Europe or by private tutors to be prepared to function as elite in society. Apprenticeship, the early form of vocational education, prepared the "working class" to function with specific job skills.

As the country developed, the idea of the common school or education of the masses took hold (Kraushaar, 1972). With
increased immigration and the expansion of the western territories, the concept of education for everyone grew. This concept was implemented in a variety of ways depending upon the demographic, geographic, and economic conditions of the community.

Diversity of cultural and religious values caused individual groups to form their own schools in order to maintain their cultural identity and to insure that their cultural and religious values would be preserved (Kraushaar, 1972). This was evident in the growth of religious denominational schools.

Other issues have also contributed to the establishment of private educational institutions. Sometimes the issues of quality and governance have been factors, as certain citizens within a community have desired an emphasis on educational objectives other than those held by the masses.

In the 1960s, there were two events which may have effected the nature of education in America (Swomley, 1968). One of these events was the passing of major Civil Rights legislation that placed new mandates on the public school system. This legislation required the accommodation of students with different racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as students with special educational needs and physical limitations. The other event was the court cases, cited in the introduction, which placed a renewed emphasis on separation of church and state and which prompted law suits resulting in court decisions that changed policy toward religious practices and celebrations in public schools.
As Parsons (1987) indicates, these policy changes coincided with a new phenomenon known as the Christian School Movement. This Movement led to the establishment of new schools that broadened the arena of private education in America. These schools, sponsored by a variety of evangelical Protestant churches, doubled in enrollment from 1970 to 1980 (Parsons, 1987). New schools were reportedly being established at the rate of two (Rose, 1988), three (Flight From Public Schools, 1980), or four per day (Turner, 1981b). This growth spurt prompted studies to determine the rationale and purpose for the establishment of these schools. These afore-mentioned studies also included the reasons for the perceived success of the Christian School Movement in various communities throughout the country.

Holmes & Hiatt (1984) and Turner (1981b) indicated among perceived reasons for the establishment of these schools was the removal of school sponsored prayer and Bible reading from public schools. It was also perceived that, with this removal, a philosophical change had taken place within public schools that is no longer compatible with the fundamentalist Christian worldview. It was also determined, contrary to hypothesis, that while segregation was a variable in a few instances, it was not significant to the overall picture. While some parents cited small class size, selective admissions, safety, and a nurturing environment among the reasons for choosing the Christian school for their children, these were viewed by parents as by-products or unexpected benefits in some cases. The primary reason cited
The Christian Coalition, an organization founded by Pat Robertson in 1989 for the purpose of working to elect Christian candidates to political office and to train potential candidates, became a recognized force in the current American political arena (Arocha, 1993). Members have also lobbied for legislation that endorses the values of the Christian community. Among its concerns is the issue of school sponsored prayer and Bible reading in public schools. Political office holders and candidates have been credited with talk of proposing legislation and possibly even a Constitutional Amendment to reinstate such practices.

Talk of such a proposal raises questions for this researcher about the future of the fundamentalist Christian schools. If the establishment of these schools was a response to the removal of school sponsored and Bible reading in public schools, what impact would the reinstatement of these practices have on the future of these schools? If such reinstatement would not impact their future survival, is this an indication that the reasons for their establishment and/or operation have changed over the last 30 years? Do parents choose to send their children to Christian schools because they agree with the value system of the Christian school and desire the educational environment that is perpetuated in the Christian school, or do they send them because of disagreement with the value system and dislike of the environment that is perpetuated in the local public school system? There is
also the question of whether the agenda of the Christian School Movement has changed over the past 30 years, and if so, how?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the current stated purposes of Christian schools and the reasons parents currently give for choosing to send their children to these schools. This study synthesized and interpreted data from presently existing professional literature, information gathered from governing documents of selected schools, and interviews with administrators and parents of selected schools. The results of this study provides insight that will aid in the identification and interpretation of current trends and issues that are important to administrators and parents in the selection of the appropriate educational environment for their children. This information may also be valuable in the interpretation of possible future trends in the Christian School Movement.

Research Questions

1. What are the stated purposes of Christian schools?
   a. What are the purposes of Christian education as defined by ACSI?
   b. What are the purposes of Christian education as stated in the professional literature base?
   c. What are the stated purposes of the sample schools in this study?
   d. Is there agreement of purpose across the various sources?
2. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in the study give for their schools?
   a. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in the study give for their schools?
   b. Are these purposes in agreement with the published documents?

3. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?
   a. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?
   b. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes stated in the published documents?
   c. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes given by administrators?

Definition of Terms

Agreement - Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1996) defines agreement as “the act of agreeing or of coming to a mutual arrangement; the state of being in accord; an arrangement that is accepted by all parties to a transaction; unanimity of opinion; harmony in feeling.” For the purpose of this study, agreement will be determined if the same categories are mentioned in each data source that is being compared. Although themes may not be equivalent, for the purpose of this study, agreement of categories may help the reader understand the bigger picture that is being examined.

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) - an international organization designed to provide service and
leadership to independent Christian Schools (ACSI Directory, 1995). ACSI also provides an accreditation process, teacher certification, and professional and technical information for school organization. Member schools must be Biblically based, evangelical, and provide evidence that they do not support or endorse the World or National Council of Churches.

Christian schools - schools established by individual churches to be governed by the individual church rather than the denominational structure (Potvin & Parsons, 1986; Rose, 1988; Turner, 1981b). These schools operate independently and are primarily evangelical. They may view their purpose as an evangelical outreach to the community or as an exclusive ministry to their own church congregation. Their governance is self-contained within the individual school or congregation. In this study, Christian schools refers to those schools who are members of the Association of Christian Schools International (ASCI).

Private education - education funded by monies other than public funds (Kraushaar, 1972). Private education includes all those schools not funded with public monies regardless of philosophy, purpose, governance, or curriculum.

Religious/Parochial Schools - schools established and governed by a specific denomination (Kraushaar, 1972). The governance of these schools is not independent to the individual school, but is under some form of central control and/or support. These schools would include the Catholic, Episcopal, and Hebrew schools founded early in America to preserve or perpetuate a threatened culture or value system. Lutheran, Amish, and
Mennonite schools that were founded to preserve ethnic values would also be included.

Limitations

The generalizability of this study is limited to Christian schools that are independent of denominational governance as previously defined. The sample included only schools that are members of the Association of Christian Schools International (ASCI) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Diversity of sponsorship of these schools contributes to the difficulty of identifying a truly representative sample. Those schools that are member schools of ACSI demonstrate a desire and willingness to network with other educational institutions that share their philosophy. They are more likely to attract a more diverse population of the Christian community than those sponsored by churches with a more isolationist philosophy. However, since these schools do network, there is likely to be a bias in that the published documents may state institutional purposes in language that is designed to be accepted by ACSI and may not be the consensus of the governing body or the patrons of the individual schools.

The parents were contacted and invited to participate by the administration of the school. Since this selection was not completely under the control of the researcher, bias must be considered. Also, parents may have been concerned as to how their responses might affect their future relationship with the school and how the researcher perceived them. The researcher tried to remedy this by informing the parents of withdrawal privileges, the volunteer nature of their participation, and that
no negative consequences would result from their participation or non-participation.

Since parents were interviewed on a volunteer basis, bias may also have been a factor. Parents who agreed to be interviewed were more likely to have strong opinions and may not have been truly representative of all parents of new enrollees. However, since the interview protocol allowed for responses that were specific and open-ended, analysis and interpretation by the researcher should account for such possible bias.

Religious/parochial schools were not included in the sample since they were in existence prior to the political activities that gave birth to the Christian School Movement. The questions in this study arose as a response to the Christian School Movement that emerged in the late 1960s. The literature indicates that this Movement was a response to specific political actions (Swomley, 1968).
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The review of the literature presents sources that lay the foundation for the establishment of the Christian School Movement in America. Included are references that cite the basis for the following: Parents and the Control of the Education of their Children, Why Private Education?, Why Religious Schools?, Religion and Religious Instruction in Public Schools, The Christian School, Basis for Christian Schools, and Why Parents Choose Christian Schools. Specific reference is given to the establishment of Catholic and Hebrew Schools. As individual Protestant sects perceived their value systems to be threatened, these sects either established individual schools or raised concerns relating to religion and religious instruction in public schools. These issues relating to religion and religious instruction in public schools gave rise to the Christian School Movement addressed in this study. These same issues also resulted in the research questions concerning the goals and purposes of Christian schools and the reasons parents are choosing to send their children to these schools.

This review of the literature included searches in ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts, and the LION terminal at Swem Library at the College of William and Mary. Sources were also obtained from the Regent University library, the administration of Hampton Christian Schools (ACSI member), and the Internet. The reader will note the absence of recent research specifically relating to Christian schools. Research specific to the questions in this study related to Christian schools is limited. This absence of
recent sources is a further indication that current research is needed on the purposes of and reasons for continued operation of Christian schools. Haidle (1995), after researching reasons students choose Christian high schools, recommended further study to determine reasons parents choose Christian schools for their children.

Parents and the Control of the Education of Their Children

The direct role of American parents in the education of their children has varied according to demographic and cultural structures (Hauser & Mackey, 1993). Such control included private tutors in the early Southern colonies, ethnic and religious schools in the early mid-Atlantic colonies, and the common schools of the early New England colonies.

Compulsory school attendance laws in 1918 were an effort to keep children out of the factories (Hauser & Mackey, 1993). Since these laws have been enacted, parents have accepted various levels of direct participation in their children’s education. Parents have changed their expectations of the school to include the providing of interventions in social issues as well as providing academic instruction (Carrasquillo & Clement, 1993).

Why Private Education?

Historically, American schools have been characterized by a single-track system open freely to all, but controlled by democratic methods, leaving freedom for private and religious education (Butts & Cremin, 1953). Butts and Cremin, (1953) state:
In contrast to other nations, private education in the United States has been given wide latitude to experiment and to develop distinctive programs of education so long as the minimum requirements of the states are met with regard to the common values of citizenship and social unity. Diversity has been considered to be a value to be prized in a free and open society. (p. 565)

Why Religious Schools?

Why Catholic schools in America? According to Kraushaar (1972), the establishment of parochial Catholic schools in the 19th century was a response to the anti-Catholic feeling prevalent in certain parts of the country. Catholic immigrants had difficulty assimilating into American society due to ethnic diversity and language barriers. The decision was made early to maintain the church organization among geographic rather than ethnic lines. However, many early Catholic schools reflected the needs of ethnic subcultures within the church.

In 1884, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore addressed the relationship of Catholicism to American Society (Hunt & Kunkel, 1984). As a result of this meeting, one goal was for every Catholic child to be in a Catholic School.

The parochial school was seen as a necessary institution to preserve the Catholic way of life in a society where members of the Catholic church were regarded as a suspicious minority (Kraushaar, 1972). By 1925, the Catholic population had secured a more prestigious place in the nation having survived the overt
hostility of Protestant America (Hunt & Kunkel, 1984). By 1960, the Second Vatican Council openly promoted Catholic schools and other forms of education. However, from 1965 to 1975, enrollment in Catholic schools in America declined 40% while enrollment in fundamentalist Protestant schools exceeded one million in 1979 (Turner, 1981a).

Why Hebrew schools in America? The need to counter feelings of anti-Semitism in public schools gave rise to some Hebrew schools in America (Kraushaar, 1972). While some small Jewish schools had existed since Colonial days, they were at a minimum with private tutors being more prevalent (Rauch, 1984). From 1881 to 1920, approximately two million Jews emigrated from Eastern Europe. The immigrants were usually given religious instruction after public school hours (Gartner, 1969).

However, schools acquired a place of greater importance as a result of the Nazi genocidal war, the influx of Jewish immigrants to the United States, the establishment of the nation of Israel, and the improved socio-economic status of Jews in America (Kraushaar, 1972). Whereas, early immigrants wanted to accelerate assimilation into American culture by sending their children to American public schools, the international threat to the Jewish culture sparked a renewed interest in and reform of the Hebrew all-day schools (Gartner, 1969; Kraushaar, 1972).

Why Protestant schools in America? Protestant denominations initially established schools in America in response to a variety of conditions and to assist with acclimatization to American society (Kraushaar, 1972). American Episcopal schools had a
unique origin in that they maintained polity with the parent Church of England and continued the English tradition of parish schools in small settlements in Virginia and Maryland. The early Lutheran schools, primarily established by German and Scandinavian immigrants, sought to preserve the mother tongue as well as religious traditions and cultural customs (Jahsmann, 1960; Kraushaar, 1972).

The Seventh Day Adventists' philosophy embraces concerns of lifestyle that include diet and health concerns, work ethic, and an eternal search for truth (Knight, 1984). Formal Seventh Day Adventist academies first appeared in the late nineteenth century purporting a program of character development which included steady work habits, service to man, and noncombatant service in war (Kraushaar, 1972). These academies were generally racially integrated, small in enrollment, and maintained a curriculum based on Biblical revelation and creationism.

The Amish, in response to the rise of an industrial society, established their own schools in the late 1920s. The primary purpose of these schools was to preserve the religious traditions of the people while maintaining a lifestyle characteristic of the rural farming culture (Kraushaar, 1972; Spindler, Hostetler, & Huntington, 1992). The Amish successfully challenged local compulsory attendance laws restricting their schooling to only eight years. They also established their own publishing company in the 1950s in response to new progressive teaching materials and techniques in the public school systems (Newcomb, 1988).
However, many mainline denominational Protestant churches supported public schools, where the values held by their church prevailed in the governance and instruction of the schools (Kraushaar, 1972). Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, who did establish academies in some parts of the country, were fragmented throughout society to the degree that public school systems that embraced Protestant values or moral values were not trusted. It was generally felt that the church-run Sunday school provided sufficient religious training.

**Why Religion and Religious Instruction in the Public Schools?**

Up until the mid 19th century, most Protestants supported public education since public education was perceived as promoting Protestant values (Carper, 1979). There was a history of cooperation with Christian churches dating back to Colonial times (Michel, Smith, Vickers, & Brown, 1994). In the 1640s, the first public schools in the Massachusetts colony held as their main purpose to teach children to read the Bible and thus escape the “Old Deluder Satan” (Stoker & Splawn, 1980). In 1787, the Northwest Ordinance supported Christian morality by granting 1/16 sections of land in each township to the church. In 1889, the Illinois State Supreme Court ruled in McCormick v. Burt that the school was not liable for expelling a student for being unruly during religious exercises (Michel, et al., 1994). Evidence of cooperation continued in the 20th century when the teaching of evolution was ruled illegal in 1927 in Scopes v. State, and rights for religion classes were upheld in 1948 in McCollum v. Board of Education (Michel, et al., 1994).
In 1962 and 1963 the outlawing of mandatory prayer and devotional Bible reading based on decisions in Engel v. Vitale (1962), Abington v. Schempp (1963), and Murray v. Curlett (1963), completed a half century of deprotestantation of public education (Carper, 1979). The removal of prayer in the early 1960s was seen by the fundamentalists as a major step in secularization of public space (Neuhaus, 1985).

In the 1960s, several major political events changed the face of public education in America (Swomley, 1968). The passing of major Civil Rights legislation changed the mandate of public education to include groups who had formerly been excluded entirely or isolated within the system. This led to the establishment of “segregation academies” in the South and even the temporary closing of some local public schools. It also led the way to the regulation of Federal funding which impacted the quality of public education in some localities. For some groups, federal and state mandates imposed requirements and restrictions which created confusion and questions concerning the ability of the public school system to educate adequately and appropriately.

The political arena gave rise to a decade of confusion as the country experienced the aftermath of political assassinations, racial tensions, and economic uncertainties (Rose, 1988). America was seeking to re-define its position as a global power. Participation in the war in Vietnam created controversy both at home and abroad, contributing to the confusion over American values and responsibilities. These tensions were reflected in the educational institutions as
established governance, curriculum, and goals were challenged. Such challenges forced re-evaluation and restructuring of "the establishment" in public education.

The Christian School

The Christian Day School was viewed as an emerging alternative to public education by the end of the 1970s (Carper, 1979). Christian schools represented widespread secession from public schools. According to VanBrummelen (1988), the rapid growth of evangelical Protestant Christian schools may be considered the most important development in American education in the last three decades. Baldwin, executive director of the Fundamentalist Citizens for Educational Freedom in Washington, D.C., cited the growth of Christian schools as three per day over a three year period bringing the total in 1980 to 8,000 schools with an average of 175 pupils per school (Flight from Public Schools, 1980). This created a public to non-public ratio of 8:1. Baldwin predicted that this rate of growth would cause private schools to outnumber public schools by 1990.

Supreme Court rulings upheld the removal of school sponsored prayer and Bible reading from the public schools (Rose, 1988). These rulings are credited with the sudden growth of "Christian Day Schools" established by fundamental Protestant churches. This ensured that certain religious liberties were preserved and that Christian values would be passed on to children.
Basis for Christian Schools

Educators in the contemporary Christian School Movement justify their existence from a philosophical basis rooted in the Puritan ethic at the center of education in Colonial America (Maffet & Dye, 1985). There is further evidence of the Christian ethic at the center of public education in the early common schools on the American frontier. There is concern today that acceptance of federal or state financial aid will bring with it public employment, control, and supervision of services resulting in a compromise in philosophy.

The decision of the Supreme Court in May 1980 to not review Kentucky v. Rudasill further established the legal stability of fundamentalist Protestant Christian schools (Turner, 1981a). This case denied the state of Kentucky the right to require state accreditation of Christian schools. The issue of free exercise of religion versus competing state interest has fostered additional litigation (Wiley & Dunquette, 1984). Courts generally have held that the state can impose:

1) student reporting
2) health and safety regulations
3) core curriculum
4) instructional time requirements.

However, controversy remained where states attempted to intervene in the areas of:

1) prescribing textbook selection
2) teacher certification
3) zoning
4) licensing

5) expansive curriculum requirements.

It is the “Christian School Movement” that began to gain momentum in the mid 1960s that gave rise to certain questions concerning the future of education in America (Rose, 1988). As stated earlier, these schools were growing at one time at a reported rate of two to four new schools per day. This movement was cited as a response to the removal of religious exercises from the public schools.

Fundamentalist Protestant schools are characterized by curriculum and teachers that emphasize a specific type of moral and spiritual instruction (Turner, 1981b). According to Potvin & Parsons (1986), the philosophy of Christian education that drives these schools is based on belief that:

1) the school is an extension of the home
2) the school is the crossroads of the battle between a Christian and a secular world
3) discipline should include behavior, accountability for actions, and academic work.

According to Carper (1979), the centrality of Christ and the Bible are predominant. However, individual schools differ in the actual implementation of their mission. Christian schools are found to:

1) have diverse facilities from the most modern to the most makeshift
2) range in enrollment from 50 to 2,000
3) vary in discipline and dress codes from the most exacting to moderate

4) offer curricula that ranges from the most rudimentary to the most comprehensive

5) vary in demographics from whites only to integrated

6) range from total rejection of state regulation to varying degrees of cooperation.

A group of approximately 40 Christian school leaders from 15 different states were polled to identify the most critical issues facing Christian schools (Burris & McKinley, 1990). Burris & McKinley identified the following seven major issues:

1) financing Christian schools

2) promoting and marketing Christian schools

3) spiritual and moral decline in the Christian community

4) maintaining the distinctives of Christian education

5) disintegration of the Christian family

6) recruiting, developing, and retaining quality teachers

7) governmental intrusion.

Why Parents Choose Christian Schools

Turner (1981b), in a study similar to the present study, examined reasons for growth of Christian schools. Reasons cited by parents for choosing the Christian school included:

1) membership in the sponsoring church

2) personal conviction

3) a religious environment free of alcohol, tobacco, and profanity
4) the likelihood that students would date and marry within their own religion

5) dissatisfaction with public schools in the community which included poor academic quality.

Factors that contributed to dissatisfaction with community public schools included low reading level, students who failed to perform satisfactorily given social promotions, lack of discipline, and a high level of violence (Turner, 1981b). These students remained in the Christian school because parents:

1) were satisfied with the quality of education

2) were economically able

3) experienced strong rapport between teachers, students, and parents

4) perceived commitment of teachers

5) liked the small size of classes

6) liked the "family feeling."

Johnston & Wiles (1982) looked at still another Christian school constituency. Christian schools in rural communities in Vermont and upstate New York were a response to the 1970s era of school transformation and uncertainties about the future of conventional parochial and public school options in the 1980s. These schools fostered an anti-bureaucratic sentiment. However, there was no evidence of any overall coordination as a political movement and the state level boards offered little regulatory oversight, trusting the local schools to do the right thing.

Johnston & Wiles (1982) also stated that parents cited lack of academic standards in public schools and lack of public school
student discipline among the reasons for choosing these schools. Less often cited was the need for a Christ-centered or Bible-centered education. The curriculum stressed basics, student obedience, respect for teachers and the school, Bible reading and prayer, and other religious activities (Johnston & Wiles, 1982). Smaller class size, safety, and select admissions have been cited as reasons that parents preferred these schools (Turner, 1981b). Holmes (1984) cited higher academic standards, a disciplined environment, and a caring staff as additional reasons given by parents for choosing the Christian school.

In more recent studies, Haidle (1995) studied reasons students chose Christian schools, and Perkins (1995) studied why parents chose Christian schools. Haidle's study included high schools in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Ohio. Findings indicate that students' primary reason for choosing the Christian high school was their parents' conviction about Christian education. Other factors included:

1) a desire to have friends with their same value system
2) potential to participate in extracurricular activities
3) a better all around education
4) school their friends attended
5) teachers were caring (Haidle, 1995).

The Perkins study was conducted in Canadian schools. The major reasons cited by parents for choosing Christian schools dealt with Christian and Biblical teaching. They also cited the following qualities:

1) positive, safe, nurturing atmosphere
2) superior academic requirements
3) firm and fair discipline
4) a concentration on the basics of education (Perkins, 1995).

This review of the literature has presented a discussion of: Parents and the Control of the Education of their Children, Why Private Education?, Why Religious Schools?, Religion and Religious Instruction in Public Schools, The Christian School, Basis for Christian Schools, and Why Parents Choose Christian Schools, with cited sources. Specific reference was given to the establishment of Catholic and Hebrew Schools.

However, the body of knowledge relating to the research questions concerning the purposes of Christian schools and the reasons parents choose them is limited. After an extensive search in available databases for current literature relating to this topic, this researcher found few recent studies, all of which were of a survey nature. It appears to this researcher that the efforts of the Christian School Movement have been consumed with operational issues and the issues of establishing and maintaining functional educational institutions. Little time and effort seems to have been devoted to research and publishing in the professional arena. This lack of research may possibly be due to limited resources. The lack of a professional literature base is further evidence that more research needs to be done in this area.
Chapter 3: Procedures

Design

This study employed a descriptive and exploratory design to answer the research questions. The methodology was essentially a comparative analysis of multiple sources where ACSI and school documents were analyzed in order to determine organizational and school philosophy and purpose. Administrators were interviewed to verify and allow for elaboration on these statements, and parents of children were interviewed to determine their reasons for choosing a private school experience for their children.

Statement of Researcher Bias

During the course of this study, this researcher was employed by two different Christian schools. She was a teacher at one K-12 school for a total of 23 years, teaching at various grade levels on the elementary and high school faculties. This school did not have a specific sponsoring church. At the conclusion of this study, she was employed as part-time resource faculty in a K-7 school that was an outreach of a specific denominational church. The researcher was a member of a different Christian denomination, and had no affiliation with the schools in question except as professional staff. It was because of her employment in the Christian school that the research questions emerged and the need for this study was explored. Although her personal faith statements had to be compatible with each school as a condition for employment, she had no personal stake in the
operation of either school, and was able to interpret data in that light.

Research Questions

1. What are the stated purposes of Christian schools?
   a. What are the purposes of Christian education as defined by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)?
   b. What are the purposes of Christian education as stated in the professional literature base?
   c. What are the stated purposes of the sample schools in this study?
   d. Is there agreement of purpose across the various sources?

2. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in the study give for their schools?
   a. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in the study give for their schools?
   b. Are these purposes in agreement with the published documents?

3. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?
   a. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?
   b. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes stated in the published documents?
c. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes given by administrators?

The first research question concerned the stated purposes of Christian schools. This research question was examined through a review of relevant literature and an analysis of documents and publications Christian schools use to describe their schools and promote their cause. Data resulting from document analysis were classified by sorting statements in the following categories that served as the framework for the interview protocol:

1) Statements of purpose
2) Spiritual foundation
3) Academic goals
4) Affective goals
5) Social growth goals
6) Other categories that may emerge

The second question asked for stated purposes of Christian schools given by administrators. The interview protocol (Appendix A) resulting from the pilot study was used to interview administrators from selected schools.

The third question asked for reasons parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools. The interview protocol (Appendix B) resulting from the pilot study was used to interview parents from selected schools.

A pilot study was conducted to test the interview protocols (Appendices A & B) and questionnaires (Appendices C & D) to be used in this study. This pilot study consisted of an interview
with the administrator of a selected school and interviews with
four parents. Data collected from the literature review, analysis
of school publications, and the pilot study were reformulated.

Population/Sample

The population was Christian schools in the Commonwealth of
Virginia that have at least a K-5 instructional program listed in
the 1997 ACSI Directory. These schools were members of the
Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in the
Commonwealth of Virginia.

All 58 ACSI member schools that had at least a K-5
instructional program in the Commonwealth of Virginia were
contacted by mail (Appendices E & F) and invited to participate.
Such participation involved submitting copies of school
publications that describe the school’s mission and goals to
include mission statements and/or statements of purpose. Twenty-
nine schools responded by submitting school publications for
analysis.

Nine ACSI member schools from the 58 throughout the entire
Commonwealth of Virginia that had at least a K-5 instructional
program, with at least one class in each grade level, were
purposefully selected for participation in the administrator and
parent interview process. Criteria for selection included
geographical location and number of years in operation. Each of
the nine schools was located in a different public school
district. Schools selected had been in operation for at least
three years. The administrator of each selected school was
contacted by mail (Appendix F) and by phone and invited to participate. Each administrator was requested to participate in an interview and to contact five parents of new enrollees who might be interested in being interviewed. Each administrator was informed of the purpose, volunteerism, and withdrawal privileges prior to the request. Seven administrators agreed to participate. One administrator withdrew from participation after the initial interview was conducted, citing increased commitments that would prohibit his further participation. Another administrator was unable to find parents who were willing to participate, leaving complete data from five of the original schools contacted. Parents were interviewed on a volunteer basis. They were informed that they might withdraw from participation at any time without any negative consequences, present or future. They were also informed that all of their responses would remain confidential and would be reported as part of group responses for this research project only.

**Data Collection**

After obtaining all necessary permissions, data collection consisted of five steps:

1) acquiring of the ACSI mission statement
2) reviewing the professional literature related to the purposes of Christian schools
3) collecting publications from the schools
4) collecting demographic information from parents
5) conducting in-person interviews with administrators and parents
   6) corroborating by telephone with administrators and parents following the personal interview.

A review of available professional literature was conducted to determine stated purposes of Christian schools. This literature appears in Chapter 2 of this study.

The administrator of each selected ACSI member school was requested to submit a copy of school publications to include the statement of purpose/mission statement. They were also asked to submit literature explaining their instructional program that would be included in the information they send to parents of prospective new enrollees.

Administrators from seven selected schools were interviewed with an interview protocol (Appendix A). This protocol was constructed to reflect the research questions. Interviews were audio taped with the permission of the administrator. A typed transcript was mailed to the administrator after the interview. A follow-up phone call was used for clarification of data.

A demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) was distributed to each parent on site and completed prior to the interview that was conducted in person. Interviews were audio taped with the consent of the interviewees.

Based on the reasons that had emerged from the professional literature as to why children were enrolled in Christian schools, an interview protocol was developed and used with the parents who
volunteered to be interviewed in the selected schools. All interviews were conducted in person on the school site, except for one that was conducted in the parent’s home. A transcript was mailed to each interviewee. A follow-up phone call was made to give each interviewee an opportunity to expand or clarify data in the transcript.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study is based on a data reduction process suggested by Miles and Huberman (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The research questions call for making a judgment about agreement on the purposes of Christian schools by five entities. These entities are ACSI, professional literature, documents from Christian schools, Christian school administrators, and Christian school parents.

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest a process where the researcher reduces a large amount of data into manageable categories. Carney (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994) refers to three levels of analysis. First, the researcher collects data and summarizes that data by coding relevant or related phrases. Second, the researcher identifies themes that reflect a commonality of meaning within a cluster of phrases. Third, the researcher goes through a second reduction process where themes are clustered in mutually exclusive categories.

In this study, this process was accomplished at the first level by the analysis of the ASCI missions statement and the extraction and coding of statements of purpose. This process was
repeated with the professional literature and the documents from participating schools. In like manner, the resulting comments from administrators and parents were analyzed and coded.

The next step, the second level of analysis, involved the identification of common themes for each of the data sources. This was followed by the third level of analysis where the themes for data sources were analyzed and reduced further into mutually exclusive categories. Themes were developed based on the size of each data source and a proportion determined by the researcher.

These categories were then put into tables/matrices that allowed the researcher to compare the data sources for agreement. Quite simply, each data source was compared with the others to see if common categories emerged. For the purposes of this study, while there was not absolute agreement between themes developed from all five sources, it was the judgment of the researcher that there was agreement at the final level of analysis where a greater generalization was made.

Data will be displayed in Tables 1 - 11 in Chapter 4 to answer each research question. A narrative will be provided to explain the results of each table.
Chapter 4: Results

The two primary objectives of this study were to:

(1) determine the goals and purposes of Christian schools and
(2) determine reasons why parents choose to send their children
to these schools. Data collection included: (1) examination of
professional literature, (2) examination of school documents, and
(3) examination of responses from interview questions directed to
administrators and parents.

Research Questions

1. What are the stated purposes of Christian schools?
   a. What are the purposes of Christian education as
defined by (ACSI)?
   b. What are the purposes of Christian education as stated
      in the professional literature base?
   c. What are the stated purposes of the sample schools in
      this study?
   d. Is there agreement of purpose across the various
      sources?

2. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in
   the study give for their schools?
   a. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in
      the study give for their schools?
   b. Are these purposes in agreement with the published
      documents?

3. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to
   send their children to Christian schools?
a. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to
send their children to Christian schools?

b. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes
stated in the published documents?

c. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes given
by administrators?

Presentation of Data

Research Question #1. What are the stated purposes of Christian
schools?

1a. What are the purposes of Christian education as defined
by ACSI?

Table 1 displays the themes that emerged from the analysis
of coded statements that are included in the Association of
Christian Schools International (ACSI) Mission Statement (ACSI,
1995), found in Appendix G.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent Themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblically-based</td>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ-centered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Child/student development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical principles in curriculum</td>
<td>School academic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mission statement from the Association of Christian
Schools International (ACSI, 1995, p. viii) states that "...ACSI
is an association of Biblically-based evangelical Christian
schools....” ACSI’s “...ministry is to provide a ministry of service and leadership...”, and its programs are designed to spread the “...‘good news of God’.” ACSI stands for “...edifying, exhorting and encouraging God’s people through Christian education....” ACSI’s role with member schools is to “...improve the quality of their educational programs...” and “...kindle(s) and expand(s) the vision of Christian schools...to fulfill the Great Commission.” ACSI “…promotes the spiritual and academic excellence of member schools....” From these coded statements, themes evolved and were reduced to the categories of (1) faith/spiritual development, (2) child/student development, and (3) school academic environment.

lb. What are the purposes of Christian education as stated in the professional literature base?

Table 2 displays the themes that emerged from the coded statements across the sources in the professional literature.
Table 2

Citations of Emerging Themes in the Professional Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member of sponsoring church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ-centered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible-centered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible reading and prayer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal conviction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality faculty</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small class size</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High standards</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of home</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of like values</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Decision rule: Cited in one or more of the seven studies from the professional literature.

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Table 3 displays the themes that emerged from the coded statements that are included in the professional literature found in Appendix H.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member sponsored church</td>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ-centered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible-centered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible reading and prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal conviction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>School academic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small class size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>School non-academic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote family</td>
<td>Family/home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of like values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes can be found in the work of Potvin & Parsons (1986). Potvin & Parsons (1986) state that the school is an extension of the home, and the school is the crossroads of the battle between a Christian and a secular world. Burris & McKinley (1990) cite the spiritual and moral decline in the Christian community as a contributing factor to the need for Christian schools. Turner (1981b) cites personal conviction, the need for discipline, and small class size as factors that have contributed to the demand for Christian schools. Johnston & Wiles (1982) cite lack of academic standards in public schools and the need for a Christ-centered or Bible-centered education as contributing factors. Haidle (1995) cites the need to get a better all around education, and Perkins (1995) cites a positive, safe, nurturing...
environment as factors. Based on these statements, and others, the themes listed in Table 3 were reduced to the following categories: (1) faith/spiritual development, (2) school academic environment, (3) school non-academic environment, and (4) family/home. Dissatisfaction with public schools was cited by Turner (1981b). Since this statement occurs later in other data sources, the researcher considers it important to mention this citing here.

1c. What are the stated purposes of the sample schools in this study?

Twenty-nine of the 58 ACSI member schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia are represented in the coded statements found in Appendix I. The first five are the schools from which the administrators and parents in this study were drawn and are represented in future tables reporting administrator and parent responses.

The first of the five schools, School I, has an ACSI accredited academic program. School I is sponsored by a Baptist church. Founded in 1985, the school has an enrollment in grades K-6 of over 400 students. The school presents itself as "family-friendly" with an academic program designed to meet the needs of the child. This school offers a full range of academic, resource, and extra-curricular programs.

School II has an ACSI accredited K-12 academic program. Founded in 1969, it is sponsored by a Baptist church primarily as a ministry to families of the church. Enrollment in P-12 exceeds
500 students. This school stresses traditional curriculum and high academic standards.

School III has an ACSI accredited K-12 academic program. Founded in 1983, it has no denominational affiliation. Enrollment in K-12 is over 650 students. This school offers a college preparatory curriculum, fine arts activities to include band, choir, and drama, and a full athletic program. The campus is extensive to include science labs, two gymnasiums, a football stadium, and baseball and track facilities. It also has a fine arts building complete with an art studio, music facilities, and drama and band rooms.

School IV has an ACSI accredited K-12 academic program. Founded in 1937, it has no current denominational affiliation. This school has a history of several owners. It began as a small private school in the founder’s home, later moved to a church building, was bought by the church, and later became incorporated independent of the church. Enrollment in the K-6 program is over 300 students. This school presents itself as a college preparatory school with some accommodation for students who learn differently. It offers a traditional core curriculum with resource classes available as well as extra-curricular activities.

School V has been an ACSI member school since 1979. Founded in 1978, it offers a P-12 academic program. The school began as an outreach ministry of a non-denominational church and later became independent. Enrollment in the P-12 program exceeds 300 students. This school offers a complete core curriculum, resource
classes, and an athletic program. It presents itself as "...a community-based, interdenominational Christian school working in partnership with Christian families to provide students with a Christ-centered, college preparatory education so that God’s purposes can be fulfilled in them, both personally and vocationally.”

Table 4 displays the themes that emerged from the analysis of coded statements that are included in the published documents from the sample schools.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblically-based (24)</td>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ-centered (15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach mission (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal salvation (19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplined behavior (13)</td>
<td>Child/student development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character training (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop individual (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-worth (27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral training (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-rounded individual (27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing environment (15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home school values (22)</td>
<td>Family/home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic excellence (7)</td>
<td>School academic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum content (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum skills (16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic accommodation (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School organization (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future education/work (18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes listed in Table 4 emerged from the published documents of 29 of the sample schools. If a theme occurred 7 out of 29 times, the researcher deemed it important to report.
Categories that emerged were: (1) faith/spiritual development, (2) child/student development, (3) home/family, and (4) school academic environment. Although family/home does not have additional themes related to the category, the high frequency of its occurrence indicated to the researcher that it must be considered for examination.

Statements from the sample schools that were reduced to the themes leading to faith/spiritual development included: 1) daily Bible class, 2) Biblical view, 3) Christ-centered, and 4) commitment to Christ. Statements that were reduced to child/student development included: 1) strong moral character, 2) each child special, 3) caring, nurturing atmosphere, and 4) develop God-given potential. Statements that were reduced to family/home included: 1) complements the home, 2) consistent with parent training, 3) extension of the home, and 4) high parental involvement. Statements that were reduced to the themes leading to school academic environment included: 1) excellence in academics, 2) high quality curriculum, 3) gifted/learning disabled, and 4) job preparation.

Id. Is there agreement of purpose across the various sources?

Table 5 displays the agreement or non-agreement of emergent themes in the various printed sources.
Table 5
Agreement and Non-agreement of Emergent Categories in the Printed Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>ACSI</th>
<th>Professional Literature</th>
<th>School Publications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/student development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/home</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School academic environment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School non-academic environment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The categories of faith/spiritual development and school academic environment occurred in all three printed sources. The category of child/student development occurred in the ACSI mission statement and school documents, but not in the professional literature. The category family/home only occurred in the professional literature and school documents, but not in the ACSI mission statement. The category of school non-academic environment occurred in the professional literature, but did not occur in either the school documents or the ACSI mission statement.

Research question #2. What are the purposes the administrators of the Christian schools in the study give for their schools?

2a. What are the purposes the administrators of the Christian schools in the study give for their schools?

Table 6 displays the themes that emerged from the reduction of coded statements given by administrators.
Table 6
Categories Developed Through Thematic Reduction of Coded Statements (Frequency of Occurrence) from the Administrators (N = 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bible-based (4)</td>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church outreach (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scriptural mandate (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare leaders (2)</td>
<td>Child/student development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole child (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-sensitive (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral compass (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with home (5)</td>
<td>Family/home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family friendly (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic excellence (2)</td>
<td>School academic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring teachers (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the small number of administrators, if statements from at least one administrator were reduced to an emerging theme, the researcher deemed it important to be considered. The categories that emerged from the coded statements from administrators were: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, and 4) school academic environment. Also mentioned was dissatisfaction with public schools. This statement did not fit any of the mutually exclusive categories, but was considered important by the researcher.

An example of a statement that was reduced to the category of faith/spiritual development comes from one of the administrators. He stated, "...Christian schools are not an option, they are a requirement, and I go back to the Scripture where it talks about the parent's responsible for bringing up..."
their children, training them, and not only the Biblical context, but in training them...."

One statement that was reduced to the category child/student development was given by another administrator. He stated that Christian schools served as a “moral compass” for students. Another administrator stated that one of the purposes of Christian schools was to “prepare stellar leaders.” The category of family/home was reduced from a statement from the same administrator. She described her school as “family friendly.”

2b. Are these purposes in agreement with the published documents from the sample?

Table 7 displays the agreement or non-agreement of the emergent categories from administrator statements and published documents.

Table 7
Agreement and Non-agreement of Administrator Statements and Published Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Document</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/student development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home/family</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School academic environment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School non-academic environment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categories that emerged from administrators’ statements and school documents were: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, and 4) school academic environment. The category of school non-academic environment did
not appear in the data provided by either school administrators or published documents.

Research Question #3. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?

3a. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?

Table 8 displays the themes that emerged from the analysis of coded statements from parents in the study.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual/moral training (6)</td>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-church values (12)</td>
<td>Family/home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics fit child (10)</td>
<td>School academic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving, caring teachers (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality academics (11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing/safe environment (10)</td>
<td>School non-academic environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statements from parent interviews were reduced to themes that led to the following categories: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) family/home, 3) school academic environment, and 4) school non-academic environment. If a theme occurred six out of 25 times, it was reported here. Dissatisfaction with public schools did not match the other categories. However, due to the frequency of occurrence, the researcher thought it important to mention here. Examples of statements from parents that were reduced to faith/spiritual development were, “I wanted them to have more of a spiritual education,” and “They seemed to still have their focus on Christ and Jesus rather than on getting a
bigger enrollment, getting a better school's team, making more money. The main focus here is to be trained [sic] up Godly children.”

The theme of family/home was reduced from statements such as, “We feel like the values of the teachers and administration go along with the values that we want to teach at home.” Another parent stated that they chose the Christian school “so they can have the values at home also being taught throughout most of the day.”

One parent described the school academic environment by saying, “I felt more confident sending them here because their teachers immediately took them under their wing....” Another parent said, “I think the child’s curriculum here is wonderful!” Still another parent said, “It’s a great school, academically.”

A statement that led to the category school non-academic environment was, “We were concerned about the nurturing of our child.” Another parent said, “We are just so enthusiastic about the school, that it’s a loving place.”

Dissatisfaction with public schools was evident from statements given by parents. One parent stated, “I got out of college...and got a feel in my student teaching...how public schools have gone down...quite a bit.” Another parent described a visit to the public school in her community by saying, “...and there were children who were struggling and...instead of being given positive reinforcement and encouragement...they were being treated in what I considered less than an acceptable way.”
3b. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes stated in the published documents?

Table 9 displays the agreement or non-agreement of the emergent categories from parent statements and published documents.

Table 9
Agreement and Non-agreement of Parent Statements and Published Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>School Publications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/student development</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home/family</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School academic environment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School non-academic environment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categories occurring based on the reduction of statements in parent interviews and statements in school publications were: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) family/home, and 3) school academic environment. School non-academic environment occurred in parent interview data, but not in data from published documents. Child/student development occurred in published documents, but not in data from parent interviews.

3c. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes given by their administrators?

Table 10 displays the agreement or non-agreement of the emergent categories from parent statements and administrator statements.
Table 10
Agreement and Non-agreement of Parent Statements and Administrator Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/student development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/home</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School academic environment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School non-academic environment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categories occurring based on the reduction of statements in parent and administrator interviews were: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) family/home, and 3) school academic environment. School non-academic environment occurred in parent interview data, but not in data from the administrators. Child/student development occurred in data from the administrators, but not in parent interview data.

Data Summary

Table 11 displays the agreement and non-agreement of emergent categories from all data sources.
Table 11
Agreement and Non-agreement of Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>ACSI</th>
<th>Professional Literature</th>
<th>School Documents</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith/spiritual development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/student development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/home</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School academic environment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School non-academic environment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The categories of faith/spiritual development and school academic environment emerged from all data sources. Child/student development emerged from ACSI literature, school documents, and administrators, but not from the professional literature or parent data. Family/home emerged from the professional literature, school publications, school documents, administrators, and parent data, but not from ACSI literature. Non-academic school environment emerged from the professional literature and parent data, but not from ACSI literature, school documents, or administrators.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter will present conclusions, discussion, and recommendations for future research. The conclusions and discussion that follow should be interpreted in light of the following limitations:

Limitations

The generalizability of this study is limited to Christian schools that are independent of denominational governance as previously defined. The sample included only schools who are members of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Those schools who are member schools of ACSI demonstrate a desire and willingness to network with other educational institutions which share their philosophy. They are more likely to attract a more diverse population of the Christian community than those sponsored by churches with a more isolationist philosophy. However, since these schools do network, there is likely to be a bias in that the published documents may state their purposes in language that is designed to be accepted by ACSI, and may not be the consensus of the governing body or the patrons of the individual schools.

Administrators and parents were selected from five of the sample schools. These five schools may or may not have been representative of the 29 sample schools that responded in the study. The parents in each school were contacted and invited to participate by the administration of the school. Since this selection was not entirely under the control of the researcher,
bias must be considered. Also, parents may have been concerned as to how their responses might affect their future relationship with the school, and how they were perceived by the researcher. The researcher tried to remedy this concern by informing the parents of withdrawal privileges, the volunteer nature of their participation, and that no negative consequences would result from their participation or non-participation.

Since parents were interviewed on a volunteer basis, bias may also have been a factor. Parents who agreed to be interviewed were more likely to have strong opinions, and may not have been truly representative of all parents of new enrollees.

Religious/parochial schools were not included in the sample since they were in existence prior to the political activities that gave birth to the Christian School movement. The questions in this study arose as a response to the Christian School Movement that emerged in the late 1960s. The literature indicates that this Movement was a response to specific political actions.

Summary of Findings

Research question #1. What are the stated purposes of Christian schools?

la. What are the purposes of Christian education as defined by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)?

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) is an organization designed to provide services to Christian schools in this study. The organization does not state specific purposes for Christian schools, but requires compliance with its
statement of faith by member schools. Member schools must have a philosophy that reflects a desire to establish schools that promote fundamental Christian education. ACSI encourages diversity of ethnic backgrounds. However, examination of the mission statement in Appendix G revealed emerging themes that were reduced to three major categories. These categories were:

1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, and 3) school academic environment.

lb. What are the purposes for Christian education as stated in the professional literature base?

Based on the reduction of statements from the professional literature reported in Appendix H, themes emerged into five categories. These categories were: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) school academic environment, 3) school non-academic environment, and 4) family/home.

lc. What are the stated purposes of the sample schools in this study?

A complete listing of the purposes of the sample schools is reported in Appendix I. Based on the reduction of these statements, the following categories emerged: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, and 4) school academic environment.

ld. Is there agreement of purpose across the various sources?

The categories of faith/spiritual development and school academic environment occurred in all three printed sources. The
category of child/student development only occurred in the ACSI mission statement and school publications, but not in the professional literature. The category of family/home occurred in the professional literature and school publications, but not in the ACSI mission statement. The category of school non-academic environment occurred in the professional literature, but did not occur in either the school publications or the ACSI mission statement.

Research question #2. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in the study give for their schools?

2a. What are the purposes the administrators of schools in the study give for their schools?

The statements given by administrators during interviews were clustered and reduced to emergent themes. These themes were reduced to the following five categories: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, and 4) school academic environment.

2b. Are these purposes in agreement with the published documents?

Categories that occurred in administrators' statements and school documents were: 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, and 4) school academic environment. The category of school non-academic environment did not appear in the data provided by school administrators or published documents.
Research Question #3. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?

3a. What are the reasons that parents give for choosing to send their children to Christian schools?

Based on the reduction of statements from parent interviews, five categories emerged. These categories were:
1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, 4) school academic environment, and 5) school non-academic environment.

3b. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes stated in the published documents?

The categories that occurred based on the reduction of statements in parent interviews and school publications were:
1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, and 4) school academic environment. School non-academic environment occurred in parent interview data, but not in data from published documents.

3c. Are these reasons in agreement with the purposes given by the administrators?

The categories that occurred based on the reduction of statements in parent and administrator interviews were:
1) faith/spiritual development, 2) child/student development, 3) family/home, and 4) school academic environment. School non-academic environment occurred in parent data, but did not occur in data from administrators.
Implications of Findings

In chapter one, several questions were posed concerning Christian education. These questions concern the present and future operation of Christian schools in light of historical events that have affected the operation of private schools in the past.

Why do Christian schools continue to operate today?

Are the reasons given by parents for choosing to enroll their children in Christian schools in agreement with the stated purposes of Christian schools?

As Table 11 in Chapter 4 indicated, parents agreed with other sources on 1) faith/spiritual development, 2) family/home, 3) school academic environment, and 4) school non-academic environment. The parents interviewed in this study had researched the schools they had chosen before deciding to enroll their children. One parent interviewed commented, “We were living in another city, so I checked out the phone book pages on the Internet and found a lot of schools, and I should say that I checked with ACSI first and asked them for accredited schools.”

Parents were asked under what conditions they would consider withdrawing their children from the school in which they were enrolled. Cited most frequently financial reasons. “The only thing I could think of was money. But so far God has provided for us....”

Responses from administrators and parents in this study indicate that there is a strong desire among some Christians to
have their children enrolled in a school where they can be assured that the people teaching their children will teach and uphold the values that the parents teach in the home. To quote a parent, "We didn’t want to go the public route because it’s so filtered with very liberal thinking." Parents also want their children to be surrounded by other children who come from homes that share their religious values. These parents want every part of their children’s education to be presented from a Christian perspective. Many parents feel that the legal mandates and restrictions of public school either threaten or make it difficult for their children to carry out the lifestyle they want their children to experience. As another parent said, "...a lot of their friends from church are here. And then so they are having it reinforced at home and at school and at church. And we just feel like children they’re in contact with, the other families they’re in contact with, they’re all being taught the same Biblical principles to guide their lives." These parents are concerned that their children may be exposed to ideas or activities that are not compatible with the values that are taught in the home.

Are the reasons parents give for choosing to enroll their children in Christian schools similar to those cited in studies conducted in the late 1960s and 1970s?

Reasons parents gave for choosing to enroll their children in Christian schools are cited earlier in this chapter. Reasons cited in the studies in the late 1960s and 1970s are displayed in
Appendix H. Examination of these lists show similarities, even though terminology may vary; parents still choose Christian schools because they want their children to be taught within the context of their value system. An interviewed parent stated, “You know you can pray a generic prayer, but that is not really teaching; that’s not teaching them anything....I don’t perceive that the public schools would ever be able to teach Scripture in the way that a Christian school can, because this is their mission, and it’s not the mission of the public schools.”

Parents want a solid academic foundation in a nurturing and safe environment, as is evidenced by the following parent’s comment. “There just seems to be a really positive atmosphere here. Everybody seems to enjoy what they do. There’s lots of loving going on. You see the teachers being physical with the kids—hugging them and getting down on their level. To me that’s the most important thing...creating that love in a school; a real nurturing environment so that the children feel safe. And I think they are going to learn a lot better in that atmosphere.”

These parents want their children to fulfill their full academic potential, and to be prepared to assume appropriate roles in society. “They (the school staff) look for the personality in the child and try to complement it.” Parents want their value system and traditions to be preserved and perpetuated. “We felt like that [sic] they understood where we were coming from and were willing to work with some of the expectations that we had with our children.”
Are the Christian schools providing the instructional programs and environment that parents want for their children?

The Christian schools in this study expressed the importance of academic excellence in their mission statements. Information in school publications varied from a general statement concerning academic excellence in a traditional setting to detailed listings of complete program offerings. Some schools expressed in their documents that they matched curriculum to the needs and abilities of individual students. There were also statements indicating the importance of fine arts and physical education, in addition to core curriculum subjects. Parents interviewed in this study did not discuss the particulars of curriculum and program offerings as much as they discussed their desire that the environment and personnel in the school reflect Christian values.

In chapter 1, the researcher also made reference to legislation in the 1960s that affected public education. It was assumed that the enactment of the Civil Rights legislation in 1964 and the litigation of *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), *Abington v. Schempp* (1963), and *Murray v. Curlett* (1963), which involved separation of church and state, enabled a sudden growth in the establishment of Christian schools in America.

The afore-mentioned lawsuits resulted in rulings that determined school sponsored prayer and Bible reading in public schools to be unconstitutional. Some believe that these rulings sparked renewed interest in private education in America, leading
to the establishment of a larger number of Christian schools. In the 1990s, with the establishment of the Christian Coalition, there was talk of legislation and/or a Constitutional Amendment that would again legalize school sponsored prayer and Bible reading in public schools. Parents did not cite this issue as an important factor.

If the establishment of these schools was a response to the removal of school sponsored prayer and Bible reading in public schools, what impact would the reinstatement of these practices have on the future of these schools?

Parents interviewed in this study stated that they would still continue to enroll their children in the Christian school, even if school sponsored prayer and Bible reading were again legal practices in public schools. "I would still keep them here. Because even though that would be offered - prayer and Bible reading - I still feel like I would not know where the teachers really stand." Not all parents interviewed were against public schools as a possibility for their children's education. "I don't have a real bias one way or the other on the product of a public school." However, they stated unanimously that new legislation would have no impact on their decision-making process. While parents stated that they felt that such legislation would be a positive move for public education and good for the country, they said, "...just putting prayer and Bible reading in the schools is not going to change the attitude and the mind of the people"
already there, especially if it’s a teacher that doesn’t particularly appreciate having to do it.”

Parents cited concerns as to the value systems held by those individuals who would be teaching their children, and how the school sponsored prayer and Bible reading would be structured. They also said that they wanted more than just prayer and Bible reading for their children. “...I think that prayer takes many shapes and form, and it doesn’t necessarily guarantee that it would be handled in a manner that would be consistent with what we feel good about our children being involved with and exposed to.”

Parents wanted everything in their children’s educational process to be taught from a Biblical/Christian perspective. They stated that they felt there were too many undesirable elements in the public school system, and that the reintroduction of school sponsored prayer and Bible reading would not “fix” things soon enough for the public school to be beneficial to their children. “...It would be nice to have those things in public school, but I really don’t think it would be a cure-all for the problems of public school, at least not right away.”

If such reinstatement would not impact Christian schools’ future survival, is this an indication that the reasons for their establishment and/or operation have changed over the last 30 years?

It is the opinion of this researcher that the reasons for the establishment and/or operation of Christian schools have
changed over the last 30 years. While the original reasons still exist, it seems that changes in society have expanded the role of the Christian school in America. It is no longer just a place where the practices of prayer and Bible reading are included in the educational process. It has also become an institution to preserve a value system. Parents who seek this avenue to educate their children perceive these values to be threatened. "I think it's a continuity consistency within how we want to raise a child."

Do parents choose to send their children to Christian schools because they agree with the value system of the school and desire the educational environment that is perpetuated in it, or because of disagreement with the value system and dislike of the environment that is perpetuated in the local public school system?

Among perceived reasons in previous studies for the establishment of Christian schools was the removal of school sponsored prayer and Bible reading from public schools (Holmes & Hiatt, 1984). It was also perceived that, with this removal, a philosophical change had taken place within public schools that was no longer compatible with the fundamentalist Christian worldview. It was also determined, contrary to hypotheses, that while segregation was a variable in a few instances, it was not significant to the overall picture.

While some parents cited small class size, selective admissions, safety, and a nurturing environment among the reasons
for choosing the Christian school for their children, these were viewed by parents as by-products or unexpected benefits in some cases (Holmes & Hiatt, 1984; Turner, 1981b). The primary reason cited was to maintain consistency between the values of the home and the values taught at school. These findings were in agreement with the findings in this study.

The parents who were interviewed in this study indicated by their answers to questions in the interview protocol that they were enrolling their children in the Christian school because they wanted a school that reinforced the values that their children were taught at home. "...So that they can have the values at home also being taught throughout most of the day."

Eight of the 43 children represented by the parents in the study had attended public school. Answers given by parents did not indicate that they were seeking escape from public schools, but felt that the Christian school offered what they were seeking for their children. "I feel that for us at this time, this was the right place that God wanted us to be."

There is also the question of whether the agenda of the Christian School Movement has changed over the past 30 years. The findings in this study imply growth in the agenda of the Christian School Movement. What began as a grassroots movement to address a specific concern has grown as the establishment of these schools has gained legitimacy in the educational arena and has proven to be beneficial to Christian parents in the education of their children. The schools in this study are recognized in
the Commonwealth of Virginia as legitimate educational institutions. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) has set standards for membership that guarantee a standard of instruction and operation.

Implications for Practice

In Chapter 1, the researcher stated that the answers to some of these questions would provide insights into future trends in the Christian School Movement as a segment of private education in America. The findings would imply that Christian schools need to continue to maintain a consistent standard of philosophy and practice. Partnership with parents consistently appears as a theme that is important to parents seeking admission. Therefore, communication with parents is a significant issue to be considered. Schools that encourage and nurture parent involvement are more likely to attract enrollment.

Parents also expressed concern that their values and philosophy not be compromised. This would imply, that while Christian schools need to be informed of and implement the latest instructional techniques, their value system should remain consistent with the original philosophy of the Christian School Movement.

Educational decision-makers in public, private, and other educational institutions need to be aware of the issues that are important to this segment of the population. Such information could be of value in determining future goals and expectations for public and private educational institutions. Since
reinforcement of values taught at home, and a nurturing, safe environment emerged as the most important issues to parents seeking enrollment in Christian schools, other institutions may want to look at the demographics of the community they serve to determine the values that are important to their communities. The diversity, or lack thereof, of the community may play a significant role in the emergence and prosperity of Christian education within that community.

Concern for safety is another factor that all educational institutions need to address. The Christian school is perceived to be a safe place because of location and size of operation. It is thought that personal involvement with families makes it easier to be aware of those frequenting the campus and enrolling in the student body.

The quality of academic instruction that is expected and perceived in the Christian school also has implications for other educational institutions. It is perceived that accountability due to the financial commitment of parents affects the standard of academic instruction as well as the range of program offerings.

Political decision-makers in the community need to be aware of the values of their constituents. Parents seeking admission to Christian schools have indicated that the reinstatement of prayer and Bible reading in public schools would not significantly influence their decisions concerning their children's enrollment in these schools. This fact may have implications for politicians who have made this an issue. Perhaps it is not as important to
seek legislation to reinstate prayer and Bible reading in public schools as it is to foster legislation that would protect the rights of Christian schools to operate and would address the needs of safety and protection for children. This may also have some implications for legislation concerning vouchers and parental choice.

Recommendations for Further Study

Questions that arose but were not within the scope of this study remain:

1) How do the mission statements of Christian schools compare to the mission statements of public schools and other private schools within the school district?

2) How do the administrators of public schools and other private schools within the school district perceive their partnership with the Christian schools? Are there mutual or shared goals?

3) Why do parents of high school students choose Christian schools? Are their reasons in agreement with those given by elementary parents?

4) How does the diversity of the demographics of a school district correlate with the existence of private schools? Are private schools present in districts that are less diverse?

5) How does the presence of home-schooling in a school district impact the operation of Christian schools in that district?
Educators who have been participants in the Christian School Movement have put their resources in the area of practice. They have not had resources or, perhaps, have not yet recognized the benefits of research. This may have been because of the need to establish legitimacy as educational institutions. Over 30 years of existence would seem to establish legitimacy. Therefore, it is important now to conduct research in this field to maintain legitimacy in the educational arena, and to continue to improve in order to provide constituents with the education they are seeking for their children.
References


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Appendix A

Interview Protocol (Administrator)

1. Tell me about yourself and how and when you became involved in education and then how you became involved with the Christian school movement? (Prompts: How long have you been employed at this school? In what capacities have you served? If other than administrator, how long in each? Describe your educational background and professional experience. Why did you seek employment at this school? Have your expectations been met?)

2. Can you tell me why you believe Christian schools are needed and what role they play in today’s world?

3. Tell me about this school, how old is it, why was it established? Has its role changed over the years?

4. How would you describe this school to a prospective parent?

5. Why do parents choose to send their children to this school? (Prompts suggested on recording sheet)

6. People claim that issues related to constitutional restrictions influence decision making when choosing a school, do you think this is a factor?

7. If the courts removed these restrictions and allowed schools to include spiritual matters, would your parents put their children back in public schools?
Appendix B

Interview Protocol (Parents)

1. Talk to me about why you chose to enroll your child in this school.

2. Now did you first learn about this school? (PROMPT: other parents, church bulletins, newspaper advertisement, etc.)

3. Describe your child’s educational experience(s) last year. (PROBES: What were his/her relationships like with teachers, students, play mates if at home, preschools, Bible schools?)

4. On this card, I have listed some reasons others have given as considerations when choosing a particular school.
   a. As I read them to you, rank each one according to the scale as (1) not important, (2) somewhat important, or (3) extremely important as they apply to your situation.
   b. Tell me the three that are most important to you.

5. Talk to me about the role the following specific religious issues played for you in making decisions about your child’s education.
   a. Bible reading (in class, in assemblies, at activities)
   b. Prayer (groups, individual)
   c. Religious celebrations/holidays (in classroom, school-wide)
   d. Religious clubs (school sponsored/initiated, student initiated)
   e. Religious music (performed in the classroom, in assemblies, as part of the curriculum)

6. If you were talking to someone who was new in your community or in your church, how would you describe the school? Would you recommend this school to them? Why/Why not?

7. Under what circumstances or conditions would you consider withdrawing your child from this school and enrolling him/her in the local public school system?

8. If a Constitutional Amendment or other legislation were passed that would again legalize prayer and Bible reading in public schools, how would that influence your decisions(s) concerning your child’s enrollment in private Christian schools?
Appendix C

(Parent Interview: Question #4)

1. Academic excellence
2. Attend sponsoring church
3. Biblical training
4. Before and after school care
5. Children are like my children
6. Class size
7. Convenience (location)
8. Cost
9. Discipline
10. Dissatisfaction with local public school system
11. Family tradition
12. Nurturing environment
13. Number of years in operation
14. Program offerings
15. Qualifications of faculty
16. Quality of facility
17. Reputation
18. Safety
19. Social opportunities
20. Spiritual foundation
Appendix D

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete a copy of the following questionnaire for each child you have enrolled in the school this year and bring it with you when you come to be interviewed. All responses will be kept confidential and will be reported as part of group responses only.

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

1. NAME _______________________________ CHILD'S NAME _____________________
   ADDRESS ----------------------------------------------------------------
   PHONE ___________________________________________________________________
   SCHOOL _______________________________________________________________

2. Please indicate the grade level in which your child is currently enrolled.
   ____ Kindergarten (5K)  ____ 2nd Grade  ____ 4th Grade
   ____ 1st Grade  ____ 3rd Grade  ____ 5th Grade

3. Is this the first year your child has attended a Christian school?
   _______YES  _______NO
   If no, please indicate how many different schools your child has attended and for how long.

4. Do you attend the sponsoring church?
   _______YES  _______NO

5. Has your child ever attended public schools?
   _______YES  _______NO
   If yes, for how long?
Dear [Name],

I am currently on the faculty of Hampton Christian High School. I am completing my Doctor of Education degree at the College of William and Mary. As a part of my final research requirement, I am writing a dissertation: "Why Christian Schools Operate in the 1990s: Their Stated Goals and Purposes and the Reasons Parents Give for Choosing Them". My study will be enhanced by participation from schools such as yours and I need and invite your participation. As you may know, very little research has been done on the Christian School Movement. The results of this research project should be helpful to Christian Schools as they plan to move into the next century.

I am seeking your assistance by your participation in the following ways:

1) Please send me a copy of your foundational documents (philosophy/mission/goals statement, etc.).
2) Please send me any other information that you normally supply to parents of students seeking admission to your school.

All data obtained will be used for this research project only. Anonymity will be protected and confidentiality will be honored.

This project is being done under the supervision of Dr. Robert J. Hanny, Professor of Education at the College of William and Mary. If you have any concerns, you may communicate with him.

Thank you for considering participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Cecelia R. Short
835 Thames Drive
Hampton, VA 23666-2020
(757) 826-3009

Robert J. Hanny, PhD
The College of William and Mary
School of Education
P.O. Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795
(757) 221-2334

March 19, 1998
Dear [Name],

I am currently on the faculty of Hampton Christian High School. I am completing my Doctor of Education degree at the College of William and Mary. As a part of my final research requirement, I am writing a dissertation "Why Christian Schools Operate in the 1990s: Their Stated Goals and Purposes and the Reasons Parents Give for Choosing Them". My study will be enhanced by participation from schools such as yours and I need and invite your participation. As you may know, very little research has been done on the Christian School Movement. The results of this research project should be helpful to Christian Schools as they plan to move into the next century.

I am seeking your assistance by your participation in the following ways:

1) Please send me a copy of your foundational documents (philosophy/mission/goals statement, etc.).
2) Please send me any other information that you normally supply to parents of students seeking admission to your school.
3) Please allow me to schedule an interview with you to solicit your ideas and perspective on the Christian School Movement and information about your school.
4) Please select and ask 5 parents from among your most recently admitted students in Grades K-5 to participate in an interview with me to gain their insights and perspective concerning the educational needs of their child/children.

All data obtained will be used for this research project only. Anonymity will be protected and confidentiality will be honored. This project is being done under the supervision of Dr. Robert J. Hanny, Professor of Education at the College of William and Mary. If you have any concerns, you may communicate with him.

I will be phoning you in a few days concerning this request and will be glad to discuss any questions or concerns you may have at that time. Thank you for considering participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Cecelia R. Short
835 Thames Drive
Hampton, VA 23666-2020

Robert J. Hanny, PhD
The College of William and Mary
School of Education
P.O. Box 8795
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(757) 826-3009

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Appendix G

Statement of Mission

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) is an association of Biblically-based, evangelical Christian schools from preschool through college. Its mission is to provide a ministry of service and leadership. Its programs and services are designed to extend the "good news of God" (Mark 1:14) and to promote excellence in its member schools to the glory of God.

ACSI is dedicated to fostering unity and cooperation among all Christian schools and educators; edifying, exhorting and encouraging God's people through Christian education; assisting in the establishing of Christian schools and helping schools define and implement a Christ-centered philosophy of education; developing services and materials to aid in the integration of Christian principles in school programs; promoting excellent education in schools; stimulating continuous spiritual and professional growth in personnel; defending and providing support for schools in the area of legal legislative concerns.

The Accreditation and Certification Commission enables member Christian schools to maintain and improve the quality of their educational programs and to expand their understanding of the philosophy of Christian education through programs of accreditation and certification.

The Finance Committee reviews and recommends fiscal policy and provides godly stewardship of all association financial resources.

The International Ministries Committee kindles and expands the vision of Christian schools and enables the Association to fulfill the Great Commission through Christian education in the global context.

The Spiritual and Academic Affairs Committee promotes the spiritual and academic excellence of member schools through provision of professional services and publications.

The School Services Committee identifies major issues confronting the Christian school movement and recommends appropriate responses for the Association.

The Legal/Legislative Committee encourages and strategizes Christian school advocacy at governmental levels by identifying and analyzing legal/legislative issues and by informing and mobilizing the Christian school community and its allies.

The Long Range Planning Committee oversees the development and articulation of the vision of the Association's ministries and monitors the particular details of the long range plan on an annual basis (ACSI, 1995, p. viii).
Appendix H

Statements from the Professional Literature

Potvin & Parsons (1986):
1) the school is an extension of the home
2) the school is the crossroads of the battle between a Christian and a secular world
3) discipline should include accountability for actions and academic work

Carper (1979):
1) have diverse facilities from the most modern to the most makeshift
2) range in enrollment from 50 to 2,000
3) vary in discipline and dress codes from the most exacting to moderate
4) offer curricula that ranges from the most rudimentary to the most comprehensive
5) vary in demographics from whites only to integrated
6) range from total rejection of state regulation to varying degrees of cooperation

Burris & McKinley (1990):
1) financing Christian schools
2) promoting and marketing Christian schools
3) spiritual and moral decline in the Christian community
4) maintaining the distinctives of Christian education
5) disintegration of the Christian family
6) recruiting, developing, and retaining quality teachers
7) governmental intrusion
Turner (1981b):

1) membership in the sponsoring church
2) personal conviction
3) a religious environment free of alcohol, tobacco, and profanity
4) the likelihood that students would date and marry within their own religion
5) dissatisfaction with public schools in the community which included poor academic quality

Turner (1981b):

1) low reading level
2) students who failed to perform satisfactorily given social promotions
3) lack of discipline
4) high level of violence

Turner (1981b):

1) satisfied with the quality of education
2) were economically able
3) experienced strong rapport between teachers, students, and parents
4) perceived commitment of teachers
5) liked the small size of classes
6) liked the “family feeling”

Johnston & Wiles (1982):

1) lack of academic standards in public schools
2) lack of public school student discipline
3) need for a Christ-centered or Bible-centered education
4) curriculum stressed basics
5) student obedience
6) respect for teachers and the school
7) Bible reading and prayer
8) other religious activities

Turner (1981b) and Holmes (1984):
   1) smaller class size
   2) safety
   3) select admissions
   4) higher academic standards
   5) a disciplined environment
   6) a caring staff

Haidle (1995):
   1) parents’ convictions
   2) a desire to have friends with their same value system
   3) potential to participate in extracurricular activities
   4) to get a better all around education
   5) this is the school their friends attended
   6) the teachers were caring

Perkins (1995):
   1) Christian/Biblical teaching
   2) Positive, safe, nurturing atmosphere
   3) superior academic requirements
   4) firm and fair discipline
   5) concentration on the basics of education
Appendix I

Relevant Statements from School Documents

School I
- Excellence in education
- Moral standards
- Spiritual, mental, physical, social development
- Develop self-discipline
- Successfully interact with other people
- Highest educational standards
- Personal relationship with the Lord
- Special education
- Bible, reading, phonics, language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, physical education, computer
- Motor skill development, perceptual training, reading/writing readiness
- Music, physical education, computer science
- Athletic programs
- Extended care
- Partnership with home and church
- Develop self-worth
- Goal oriented curriculum/multi-sensory approach

School II
- Academic, physical, spiritual, social development
- High academic standards
- Active physical education and athletic program
- Daily instruction in Scriptures
- Educate entire person
- Extension and reinforcement of home
- Orderly, disciplined environment
- Respect and courtesy

School III
- Christ-centered, Biblically based
- Training in harmony with personal faith in Jesus Christ
- Biblically integrated program
- Gifted/learning disabled
- Develop all aspects of student life
- Sports development
- Fine arts
- Develop spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and aesthetically
- Reading, writing, English, math, social studies, science, art activities, computers, music, foreign language
- Quality academics
- Christian environment
- Personal relationship with Christ
- Whole person, spiritually, mentally, socially, physically
- Reaching young people with the message of Christ
- Pastoral reference required

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School IV
- Quality Christ-centered education
- Nurturing environment
- Phonetic reading
- Music, library, physical education
- Academic competition
- Special learning department
- Chapel, daily prayers and Bible reading
- Before/after school care
- Christ-centered
- Quality academic
- Biblically directed learning environment
- Spiritual, mental, social, physical
- Integrate God’s Word
- Parent responsibility - extension of home
- Development of character
- Citizenship and health
- Preparation for vocation
- Command of fundamental processes of communication
- Worthy use of leisure time
- Worthy home membership
- Teach Bible/essential doctrines of Christian faith
- Engender desire to know God
- Saving relationship
- Equip to witness
- Foster self-discipline
- Help develop God-consciousness/Christian philosophy
- Balance personality
- Full development of student capabilities
- Social/personal relationships
- Skills for college/occupation
- Proper attitudes
- Scientific method
- Critical thinking

School V
- Ministry to Christian parents in the education of their children
- Successful young adult
- Challenges of the world
- Fundamental principles of the Word of God
- College prep school
- God centered view of truth
- Develop Christian mind
- Trained for Godly living
- God’s purpose personally and vocationally
- Bible - God’s nature
- Whole person - spiritual, mental, physical, social
- Integrate God’s Word
- Own unique abilities
- Work with others at home, church, changing secular society
- Relationships
- Love God
- Confessing Christ as Savior

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- Equip to carry out the will of God daily
- Self-discipline and responsibility
- Treat with love and respect
- Contributing member of society
- Effective use of time
- Proper attitudes - marriage/family
- Physical fitness/good health habits
- Biblical attitude toward material things
- High academic standards
- Realize full academic potential
- Fundamental processes: read, write, speak, listen, math
- Good study habits
- Research, reason logically
- Pursue independent research areas of personal interest
- Critical thinking
- Good citizenship
- Appreciate Christian American heritage
- Current affairs
- Fine arts

School VI
- Compliments the home
- Excellence in academics
- Christian character
- Service to others
- Each child special
- Nurturing environment
- Develop God-given potential
- Moral framework
- Productive role in society
- Caring discipline
- Daily bible class
- Phonetic reading
- Critical thinking skills
- Writing skills
- Science/math, problem solving/reasoning
- Computer - job preparation
- Sports - teamwork
- Build self-esteem
- Well rounded individual
- Complement ministry of sponsoring church
- Commitment to Christ

School VII
- Biblical view
- Biblical integration
- Spiritual development
- Physical development
- Intellectual development
- Model biblical Christian life through faculty, staff, board
- Relationship with Christ
- Fulfill academic potential
- Parent/home environment
- High academic quality
- Biblical discipline principles
- Discovery vs. memorization

School VIII
- Strong academic program
- Caring nurturing atmosphere
- Help child discover gifts
- Parent owned
- Respond to Biblical perspective
- Traditional classroom setting
- Computer
- Physical education
- Character building
- Positive relationships - courtesy, self-control, integrity, love
- Christian service

School IX
- Small student/teacher ratio
- Diagnose learning difficulties
- Bible instruction
- Traditional curriculum
- Enrichment activities
- Warm, personal environment
- Consistent with parent training
- Classroom instruction, outdoor play, guidance in healthy relationships
- Environment to nurture spiritual, academic, social growth
- Faith and practice - role modeling
- Environment - child accepted, wanted, loved
- Develop attitude of self as unique, competent person loved by God
- Relationships
- Respect
- Expression - art, music
- Motor skills
- Good habits - hygiene, nutrition, safety, courtesy
- Starts at home - work with parents
- Personal relationship with Christ

School X
- Principal approach/Classical learning
- Nurtured in God’s Word
- Know Jesus Christ
- Christian leadership/scholarship
- Strong moral character
- Biblical world view
- Academic - notebook approach (spelling/composition, Special days)
- Small classes/resource teachers/staff tutors - Math manipulatives
- Goal - individuality
- Academic nurtures growth - history, geography, literature, art, music, drama, foreign languages, solid arithmetic, reading, composition and spelling skills
- Individual sports
- Partnership with parents
- Forming character and spiritual stature
- Individual learning styles
- Notebook - work habits, study skills, organization, neatness, thoroughness, accuracy, reflective learning, essay skills
- Bible - primary reader
- ACSI activities
- Nurture love, acceptance
- God's Word
- Individuality, self-government, American heritage, Christian character, conscience, Christian government
- Godly leadership
- Christian character and republic
- Value in Christ
- Parental authority
- Discipline
- Research, reason, relate, record

School XI
- Nurture and admonition of the Lord
- Bible basis for moral/ethical conduct
- Alternative for Christian parents
- Present Gospel of Jesus Christ to each student
- Approach each subject from Christian perspective
- Excellent academic program
- Form world view consistent with historic Christian faith
- Make ambassadors for Jesus Christ
- Address spiritual, academic, physical, social needs
- For member of own church
- Personal need for a Savior
- Academic preparation for successful life goals
- Academic excellence
- Physical - proper diet, respect for human body
- Athletics
- Responsible citizenship, respect for others, courtesy, forgiveness, compassion
- Family relationships
- Seek God, pursue truth
- Discipline

School XII
- High academic standards
- Instruction/not evangelism
- Intellectual, physical, spiritual development
- Values - honest, compassion
- Discipline - respect
- Each child discover unique abilities
- Supplement the home
- Biblically based spiritual training
- God centered

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- Authoritative
- Uphold Scriptural discipline
- Character training
- Career development

School XIII
- Extension of home
- Moral/spiritual training
- Academic skills/concepts
- Mature Christian person
- Productive member of society
- Total being - spiritual, intellectual, physical, social
- Unique individual potential traits/needs
- Development of Christian beliefs, attitudes, skills toward
zealous application
- Biblical integration
- Christ-centered education
- Personal trust in Jesus Christ
- Communicate clearly, logically, effectively through reading,
writing, speaking, listening
- Encourage creativity/curiosity
- Encourage appreciation of the arts
- Fundamentals of physical fitness, nutrition, hygiene
- Bible, language arts, math, social studies, science

School XIV
- Teacher more important than textbooks
- Parent replacement at school
- Christ-centered
- Student special creation of God
- Bible inspired Word of God
- Saving knowledge of Jesus Christ
- Respect God’s authority
- Spirit of obedience
- Realistic academic level of each student - progress to fullest
potential
- Wide spectrum of students
- Develop ability to communicate
- Love people and cultures of the world
- Critical thinking - evaluate, discern problem solve, wise
Biblical judgment
- Creative abilities - fine arts
- Disciplined study habits - learning all through life
- Appreciate God’s Word as basic “life textbook”
- Each student unique with special gifts
- Responsibility to others
- Attitude - polite, courteous - Physical fitness/good health
habits
- Responsibility in democratic society
- Student responsibility and accountability
- Partnership with parents
- Christian character development
School XV
- Equip students academically, spiritually, socially, physically
- Support parents
- High quality curriculum
- Biblical truth integrated
- Academic excellence
- Care about children - shape will without crushing the spirit
- Student achieve fullest potential
- Discover whole child, character and intellect

School XVI
- Lifetime foundation
- Harmony with home
- PACE-LifePac

School XVII
- Nurturing, safe, loving, secure environment
- High expectations of each child
- High academic standards
- Biblical principles
- Each student do their best
- Reinforce home
- Not reform school
- Christian leadership
- Self-discipline
- Individual responsibility
- Personal integrity
- Good citizenship
- High standard - moral behavior
- Spiritual, intellectual, physical, social
- Unique individual potential
- Develop Christian beliefs, attitudes, skills toward zealous application
- Respect for teachers, staff, fellow students
- Christian Americanism - self-discipline, respect for authority, obedience to law, love for God, flag, country

School XVIII
- Education based on God's principles
- Christ-centered atmosphere
- Personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- Develop respect for authority
- Be spiritually, mentally, socially prepared to meet life challenges
- Win uncommitted to Christ
- Student develop Christian philosophy
- Academic climate conducive to learning
- Skills for meaningful participation in society as adult
- Competent communication/research skills
- Realistic academic progress as far as potential will carry
- Good study habits
- Social skills
- Privileges and responsibilities of living in a democracy
- Respect for God, parents, government, school, work, complete self-discipline
- Good citizenship
- Appreciation of Christian/American heritage
- Knowledge of world and current affairs
- Appreciate arts
- Understand and appreciate other cultural patterns
- Creative and critical thinking skills
- Physical skills - sports

School XIX
- Academic excellence
- Spiritual - practical Christian living
- Students - sense of security and worth
- Emotional stability
- Christian ethics/relationships
- Personal spiritual growth
- Wholesome social growth
- Healthy, strong
- Character/personality development
- Safer, disciplined, orderly environment
- Encourage interest in higher education
- Smaller class size

School XX
- Classical education
- Christ-centered
- Discipleship of all students
- Develop relationship with God
- Emphasize grammar, rhetoric, and logic in all subjects
- Develop love of learning/live up to academic potential
- Atmosphere - strict, loving discipline
- High parental involvement
- Christ-centered world view
- Worship and praise
- Biblical principles
- Growth in personal faith
- Service
- Knowledge and information with Godly wisdom
- Communication, reasoning, analysis
- Study skills
- Bible inspired Work of God
- Personal confession
- Biblical character
- Respect for authority
- Develop self-image as unique individual
- Contributing member of society

School XXI
- Development of character
- Citizenship and health
- Preparation for vocation
- Command of fundamental processes - communication
- Worthy use of leisure time
- Worthy home membership
- Integrated with God/Scriptures
- Partnership with parents
- Biblical truth integrated into academic instruction, extra
curricular activities, and social interaction
- Total student development
- Personal commitment to Jesus Christ
- Discovery center/learning problems
- Develop whole child - intellectual, physical, social,
emotional, spiritual
- Developmental activities
- Unique and special creation
- Language and cognitive development
- High academic standards
- Student realize full potential
- Educate according to developmental needs
- Teach and encourage good study habits
- Research skills Motivate independent study
- Creative and critical thinking
- Good citizenship
- Basic Bible doctrines
- Decision confessing Christ
- Creative expression
- Physical development
- Extension of home
- Self-discipline
- Personal spiritual growth
- Respect for others
- Attitude toward marriage and family

School XXII
- High quality academics
- Biblical principles
- Christian philosophy of life
- Reinforce home
- Proper respect
- Christ-centered
- Biblical
- Whole child - spiritually and physically
- Academic responsibility

School XXIII
- Christ-centered
- Bible based
- Parent oriented
- Student sensitive
- Academically excellent
- Balanced curriculum
- Traditional approach
- Sound academics - basics, arts, Bible
- Individual attention
- Spiritual depth
- Moral integrity
- Whole student
- Christ-centered curriculum
- Biblical integration
- Every student receive Christ as Savior
- Spiritual, emotional, social, physical, mental

School XXIV
- Partner with parents
- Christian world view
- Christ-centered
- Bible based
- Student sensitive
- Academically excellent balanced curriculum
- Caring atmosphere
- Quality education for real world
- Discipleship oriented
- Patriotism
- Spiritual/moral growth
- Personal saving relationship with Christ
- Sense of right and wrong
- Self discipline
- God consciousness
- Self acceptance/full development of potential capabilities
- Wholesome personal relationships
- Wholesome use of leisure time
- Physical fitness
- Biblical attitude
- Fundamental processes - communication
- Good study habits

School XXV
- Missionary kids
- Christian values
- Intellectual vitality
- Cross-cultural living
- Invitational learning environment
- Expand capacity to understand world and themselves and their world with curiosity, trust, tolerance, and mutual affirmation
- Student untapped potential
- Process equally important as product
- Active student involvement/experiences
- Spiritually, intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally, morally - Parent partnership
- Safe, clean, functional physical environment
- Positive self concept - mutual respect
- Enhance understanding of parent’s mission call
- Self-esteem
- Problem solving/thinking
- Verbal communication
- Strengthen personal relationship with God
- Academic and physical education at appropriate level
- Critical thinking
- Competency in traditional subjects
- Research/investigate
- Study habits/work ethic

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- Appreciate arts/nature
- Know own strengths and weaknesses/learning styles
- National heritage/other cultures and values - respect and tolerance
- Personal relationships
- Service to others
- Emotional skills for transitioning/support network

School XXVI
- Traditional
- Phonetic reading, writing, arithmetic grammar, vocabulary, history, science
- ACSI competitions
- Complement home/parental involvement
- Physical, mental, social, spiritual
- Christian philosophy in every subject
- Academic excellence
- Christian teachers, administrators, board members
- Daily devotions
- Structured discipline
- Strong morals/character training
- Patriotism
- Christian environment conducive to learning

School XXVII
- Integration of faith and learning
- Biblical view
- Evangelize
- Cultivate relationships
- Extension of home
- Rigorous academic instruction
- Environment for growth and development
- Challenging extra curricular activities
- Athletics
- Fine arts
- Individual achieve potential
- Diverse and traditional curriculum
- Language arts, phonics, comprehension skills
- Scientific thinking - Physical education
- Bible/chapel
- Requires parent service hours (30 hrs. grades 1-8, 15 hrs, P-K or donation to = $10.00 per hr.)
- Sound academic foundation
- Integrated Christian view
- Assist parents
- Community involvement
- Communication home/school
- Character development
- Receive Christ as Savior
- Christ-centered challenging academics
- Developmental kindergarten
- Bible, reading, math, language arts, social studies, science, art, music theory/appreciation, computers, physical education
- Science labs
- Art, drama, creative writing, instrumental music
- Field trips to D.C.

School XXVIII
- Train in distinct values of Biblical Christianity
- Assisting parents
- Fundamental academics/skills
- Christ honoring environment
- Success in college and job force
- Sound academic program
- Christian character
- Honor and respect authority
- Honor parents
- Manners
- Responsibility of Christian parents

School XXIX
- Complete academic program/excellence
- Word of God
- Whole child
- Godly principles grounded in truth
- God centered curriculum
- Think and evaluate from a Christian perspective
- Learning environment - each child recognize self-worth
- Extracurricular activities
- Spiritual, academic, social and physical needs of students
- Well-adjusted, morally sound individuals
- Exceptional citizens in society
- Christ-centered learning - cooperation with home
- Bible infallible
- Know Chris personally
- Christian principles for daily lives
- Christian character and morality
- Study habits
- Self-discipline
- Utilize individual talents
- Discipline/respect for authority
- Responsible citizen
- Work with others and independently
- Communication skills: read, write, speak
- Develop own critical and creative thinking skills
- Work force and society
- Good manners
- Leadership
- Appreciation of beauty and order
- Recreation/physical and mental
- Develop student’s unlimited learning potential
- Love of God/country - American and Christian heritage
- Good citizenship
- Well balanced body, mind, spirit
Vita

Cecelia Ruth Short

Birthdate: April 1, 1950

Birthplace: Nassawadox, Virginia

Education:

1992-1994 The College of William and Mary
   Williamsburg, Virginia
   Educational Specialist Degree

1982-1985 Regent University
   Virginia Beach, Virginia
   Master of Arts in Education

1968-1972 Christopher Newport College
   Newport News, Virginia
   Bachelor of Arts