

Mainstreaming Values Issues in Education

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(This is the sixth in a series of articles featuring excerpts from past numbers of the Journal of Christian Education (JCE) and featuring fundamental teaching about Christian education).

This article reports on an initiative in Western Australia to develop a Values Framework and a critique of existing outcome statements, so that the status of values education may be enhanced.

The Values Framework that emerged...was the product of considerable discussion and negotiation albeit excitingly amicable (and) stands as a robust consensus document from which one may reasonably hope to derive outcomes.

It illustrates what can be done when Christians come out of their sectarian bunkers and bid for hearing in the open market-place.

Looking for common ground is not a sell-out of our distinctive beliefs; it is an attempt to capitalise on common grace to open the way for deeper dialogue at a larger stage in the relationship. The present exercise has been confined so far to negotiation between faith communities, but it has also already contributed to the wider debate about schooling in the public sector.... What has been Christian about the present exercise is not just the identification of ultimate values ..but the procedures adopted to seek dialogue on values issues. It is also inherently evangelistic: both implicitly, in the example it sets of a Christ-like respect for the people one is dealing with, and explicitly, in the possibility it creates of a deeper sharing of basic beliefs and values.

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