

Merry Christmas!

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what was commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

We easily forget the profound simplicity of this story. How quickly we dismiss the obedience of a teenage girl, Mary, and of a teenage boy, Joseph. Through their obedience Jesus, fully man and fully God, was born. Through the incarnation of Jesus, truth was revealed and the Kingdom of God was ushered into humanity – disturbing and liberating – this truth was demonstrated to all who had ears to hear and eyes to see. Some could not hear. Others could not see. Yet, for those who followed, their lives were radically changed.

This Christmas season, I pray that you will see, hear, and be radically changed by understanding anew the wonder and truth contained within the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

What is the importance of believing that human beings are created in the image of God? What difference does that belief make to a teacher or an administrator at BCS?

The other day, I viewed a beautiful sculpture of an ocean wave. Formed from acrylic, the piece stood approximately three feet high. As the voluminous weight of the water descended into the shape of a tube, four detailed dolphins could be seen playfully riding and careening through the middle of the wave with amusement. The magnificence and beauty of this wave demanded my attention. I stood mesmerized by the simplistic wonder of one wave captured by this artist.

As I observed this sculpture, the words of Ephesians 2:10 came to mind: *for we are His workmanship created for good works in Christ.*

Just as the acrylic ocean wave was formed with great thought, deliberation and precision, so you and I were formed by God. The art piece cannot be separated from the artist. Forever captured within a piece of art – whether it be an acrylic sculpture of a wave, or more importantly a human being – are the ruminations, ponderings and thoughts of the artist.

Every child, every human being, every work of creation is God's *workmanship*. We are the artwork of God, carrying the mind, thoughts and deep considerations of God in our design. When one looks at another human, one is gazing upon God's artwork – handcrafted, and deeply considered and loved by God. All of created order has been richly considered and established through the mind of God. We all, therefore, are image-bearers of our Creator because God's thinking and mind are contained within each individual – including every child. That is what gives each of us great value and intrinsic worth.

We interact with one another, as our Educational Confession states, believing that *Human Beings Are Created In the Image of God*. This understanding changes how we view one another. It changes how we interact with students at BCS, and it forms the basis for Christian education.

How does seeing every student as a being created in the image of God affect the manner in which students are viewed and educated at BCS? This question was asked of a number of our faculty and staff, and here are some of their responses:

Amanda Hitchcock

One of the wonderful things about teaching at Mack Elementary School is that we can recognize each child as being made in the image of God. Knowing this frees teachers and parents to focus on the whole child, not just the academics.

I love being able to celebrate each student's progress with parents who understand that there is so much more to a child than a singular grade.

One of the ways I try to help my students understand that they are image bearers of God is by talking frequently about how God has gifted each of them differently. I ask my students to think about what our classroom would be like if we all were good at math, but no one was compassionate.

Tim Foley

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Bellevue Christian School is the value and emphasis placed on the uniqueness of each student. God created each of us with such incredible love that He relishes the fact that we are on a lifelong journey to understand the depth of this love. I am privileged to be a part of the adventure of coming alongside students, parents and families in unwrapping, understanding, developing and growing their special skills, talents and attitudes.

As Director of Admissions, I meet with prospective parents who yearn to have their children in an environment where they are free to experience what it means to think and behave as Christ would have them – they are image bearers. They want their children to be loved and shown how to love in a safe, caring and nurturing atmosphere.

It is such a joy to share the BCS mission and purpose with families and see the excitement and connections begin to unfold.

**Bellevue
CHRISTIAN
School**

Learning to think through life.

Joel Ulrich

Human beings are created in the image of God. Bringing that reality to BCS creates a paradox when we *use* the paradigms of the American culture—educational culture as well as societal culture—to shape our own educational practice. If we are indeed created in the image of God, then our curricular practice ought to reflect that confession rather than the cultural confessions that profess Man as the center of the universe.

If we are not careful, we can spend more time looking at secular practices and arguing the strengths and weaknesses of those practices based on our own particular viewpoints and perspectives rather than looking at how God has made us and letting our practice follow the biblical paradigms based on God’s design for us. It is only from this biblical paradigm that one can truly and freely live.

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Learning to think through life...

Joel Ulrich (cont’d)

When our concerns as teachers are focused on keeping parents happy, giving the proper grade, or in my case, having my students performing well, rather than being faithful to how God has called us to live in the world, we are giving lip service to this Educational Confession. In other words, talking eloquently about our Confession, but in fact following cultural practices to dominate what we actually do.

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Why do we strive to provide many options for students to explore their areas of giftedness? Why do we place value on the uniqueness of each child? Why do we seek to be faithful to how God has called us to live in a culture? We do these things because every human is an image-bearer of God.

This reference point changes how we admit students to BCS – all students are gifted by the Divine

Creator and come to us with various gifts that are to be found and recognized. Therefore, we do not enroll students solely based upon academic testing. It changes how we interact with one another – every student brings insight and a unique, God-breathed perspective to life and learning. We are to be in relationship with one another, learning from each other; all are learners, including the teacher. It changes how we instruct students, approach curricula, and assess learning – our primary goal is to be faithful to God and what God is speaking through creation. We are to listen and respond to what He is asking.

The art – creation – cannot be separated from the artist – God. Contained within God’s artful creation is the rich, deliberate, and loving thinking of God. We are His *workmanship* – we are the artwork of God, carrying the mind of the Creator in our very being. We all are image-bearers of God, and that changes everything. Ron

