

EurECA - European Educators' Christian Association

EurECA was formed in the early 1990s to provide a 'meeting place 'for Christians serving in education across Europe. We hold annual conferences, publish papers and books, and bring together hundreds of Christian educators throughout Europe. We are coordinated by a board of volunteers and network informally with national groups in Europe, the US, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Our desire is to see every child in Europe have a Christian teacher for at least a year of their lives.

A vision to influence a generation

Who was your favorite teacher? What do you remember about them? How did they influence your life? Why is it you remember them so well after so many years?

Hold those thoughts, we'll return to them later.

Education is a fundamental factor in every life, every community and every nation. When education is good, rounded, wholesome, well-resourced and readily available, children prosper, nations prosper. When education lacks some or all of these things, children suffer, nations suffer.

The question before the church is this, how do we release more Christians to be effective ambassadors for Jesus in the education system? It's not just a matter of developing more Christian teachers, assistants, leaders etc., though that is vital. It's also helping them to be more fruitful in all they do.

Education is filled with challenges, the nature of the job itself is demanding, ask any teacher. Added to that there are the additional pressures of working with increased numbers of children with educational, emotional and mental challenges, all in a constantly changing social, political, economic and moral environment.

Most teachers are idealists and visionaries, they aim to stimulate aspirations in their pupils, and then help them to reach for them. However, the level of stress and disillusionment among teachers is worrying, and the percentage drop-out of young, aspiring, idealistic teachers and future leaders is alarming.

How do Christian educators operate well in such environments, especially when many settings are very sensitized, and can harbor a lot of antipathy towards a Christian perspective? How do we help Christian teachers, filled with the Holy Spirit of God to represent Jesus well and bring His love and wisdom into their educational settings?



The answer has two main components, firstly, how do we encourage more Christians to be involved in education, and secondly, how do we equip them to bring real change?

Let's start with the first of these and go back to our opening questions. We all had teachers who showed interest in us, gave us value, inspired us and provided positive role models. I know such teachers influenced my life and the choices I have made. So, what if we had a bigger vision across the church to influence a whole generation with the Hope that is Jesus? What if we worked to inspire Christian believers to enter teaching knowing that they were carriers of that hope, as well as faith and love to all they taught and worked with?

That's the easier bit, now to the real challenge.

How do we train and equip each precious individual to not just be a survivor, but to be an overcomer in the environment God sends them into? Here are some things I have seen working consistently over the years I have served as a Christian in education.

- Helping educators to keep their focus on Jesus. If what we are doing isn't centered on Him, it is centered on something else, something which cannot bring truth and life.
- Encouraging networking among Christian teachers to combat isolation. When teachers share together, pray together and encourage together it builds strength and fosters creative strategies.
- Training teachers to walk with the Holy Spirit as their guide in their classrooms, staffrooms and schools. He provides the wisdom to handle whatever comes their way, along with the loving authority to bring peace and order into the lives around them.
- Telling and retelling stories of what God has done in individuals and groups. It glorifies Him and encourages others. If God does it once, He can do it again.
- Developing the skills and confidence of Christian educators and leaders to navigate their way through challenging and hostile situations. This is the area where I have seen too many overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty, but God has already established the final victory. We do not fight for victory; we fight from it.

Jesus instructed us to pray 'Your will be done, Your Kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven'. Christian educators are uniquely placed to pray this over every child under their care. God's promises, written in His word and brought alive in each believer by His Spirit, mean the authority of God's Kingdom can be alive and active in every school in Europe. If this is not a demonstration of Hope for Europe, I don't know what is.



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