

American Christian Schools: The Forgotten Mission Field

Bryan Sanders

Head of School, First Assembly Christian School

When you think of missions, what comes to mind? Water wells in Africa? Planting a church in a foreign country? Your local Christian School? Wait, what? Yes, the local Christian school!

As a Christian School educator for over 30 years, I propose that churches are missing out on a missions opportunity by not supporting their local Christian school, and here's why.

1. **Help Fulfil the Great Commission.** Supporting Christian education aligns with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) by helping disciple young believers and preparing them to live out their faith in every area of life.
2. **Reach students with the Gospel.** Missions are not just about overseas work; they start in local communities. Funding a Christian school through local churches emphasizes that education is a mission field where students are reached with the gospel. This also aligns with Acts 1:8, which encourages believers to witness both locally and globally, recognizing that Christian education is a key part of the local mission field.
3. **Prepare church leaders.** Christian education plays a key role in raising future leaders for the church and society. Students educated in these environments often develop leadership skills rooted in biblical principles. Financial support allows the school to maintain high standards and ensure that a Christian education remains accessible, especially for families with financial difficulties.
4. **Promote Unity.** By contributing financially, the church deepens its partnership with the school, creating opportunities for collaborative ministry such as youth outreach, service projects, and shared missions. This partnership strengthens both churches and school, demonstrating to students and the community the unity of Christ's body (John 17:21).
5. **An eternal Impact.** Supporting Christian education is an investment in the next generation's faith and character, laying a foundation for lifelong discipleship. The church becomes a part of shaping students who will influence culture, professions, and churches in the future.

In summary, by financially supporting a local Christian school, the church engages in both spiritual formation and outreach, aligning with its mission to make disciples and serve the community. It also reinforces the idea that missions involve both local and global work, making education a vital part of God's redemptive plan.