

EDUCATION SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19th, 1969

A LETTER TO ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

Since 1943 a growing number of Christians of all denominations have marked a Sunday in October as Education Sunday, a time to think and pray about schools and colleges, about those who teach in them and those who learn. We invite all Christians in this country to join in the observance of October 19th, 1969, as Education Sunday.

We think here of all schools and colleges, not simply those of the Churches, and our prayer is that the boys and girls in them may gain help from their education to grow up in the service of God. We also hope that they may all have the benefits of a good education.

'Good education' is a large subject. Here we mention a few points relevant to 1969:-

1. In the last hundred and fifty years the idea that good education should be available for all children, and not just for a privileged minority, has made wonderful progress: it is now accepted almost universally. Let us thank God for this, and for the new understanding of the needs of children and the improved methods for helping them to learn and enjoy their learning.
2. Yet too many school buildings are old, out-of-date and cramped. Such conditions put terrible handicaps on children from the start of their life and on their teachers. The responsibility for these things rests on the whole community. Let us ask for God's forgiveness for our share in the blame, and not grudge the money needed to build something better.
3. It is constantly and rightly said that proper education involves a partnership of teachers and parents. This we welcome; and we add that for children from Christian homes the Church must be a third partner.
4. Instruction in the Christian faith and participation in Christian worship have traditionally been a part of this country's education system. Unreserved recognition must be given to teachers' and parents' rights of conscience, both those of other faiths and those of none. Yet we believe that children have the right to know what Christianity stands for and what religion is about; and the majority of parents want their children to have a Christian education.
5. In England and Wales both County and Church schools are maintained by Local Education Authorities. We thank God for the close co-operation between the partners in the Dual System, which we believe is of great value.
6. Buildings and equipment and playing fields are important, but much more important is the quality of the teachers. We thank God for the many thousands of devoted and skilful teachers who work in the schools, and we pray that He will call many of the young Christian men and women in our churches to become teachers, and that they will be ready to obey that call.

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