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The Bell Tower

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From the Pastor...

Back to School with Jesus

September means school is back into full swing.

A few years ago, I was listening to a woman lament the state of public education. Specifically, she told me how frustrated she was that "they" have taken God out of the schools." Her litany of frustration included how "they" have taken our schools away from "us"; how kids and teachers are completely banned from mentioning anything about religion; how Christians need to take over the schools again and control things since "we" are in the majority.

As a pastor, I have heard these kinds of comments for years. While I sympathized with this woman's sense of loss of certain childhood rituals and assumptions about our culture, I gently challenged her to rethink some things when it comes to how faith can be lived out in the public arena.

I reminded her that in the gospels, Jesus clearly told the disciples to expect hardship and persecution. (Whether or not banning faculty-led prayers from school is tantamount to "persecution" is quite debatable...but that's another matter.)

I also pointed out that Jesus never told the disciples (past or present) to take over or control anything. In fact, Jesus explicitly rejected political power.

When it comes to practicing their faith in schools, Christian children

and youth can set great examples by their compassion towards others and by befriending "the least of these" in their schools. These kinds of things will do greater things for the Kingdom than any forced take-over of school boards or imposed agendas.

Certainly, Christians can serve and lead their communities in many ways, but we must first reflect Kingdom values of love, joy, patience, kindness, etc.

It is the Church—not the school system or government— that is called to make disciples. As members of the Body of Christ, let us take upon ourselves the awesome task of training our children to be "salt" and "light" in the world. As long as there are disciples in schools (be they faculty, staff, or students), prayer and Jesus will be there too!

Learning with you to walk in His way,

Pastor Duane

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