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What Do People Believe to Be the Essential Elements in a Christ-Centered Curriculum?

Abstract

In present times, Christian schools struggle to maintain a distinctive alternative to public education. Recently, many veterans of Christian education have been pointing the way to a more Christ-centered education- one that calls for explicitly Christian ways of teaching and learning. As a result, there has been great deal of rhetoric as to how people should/would define a truly Christ-Centered curriculum (CCC). Yet, many reputable Christian educators would argue that they already have a CCC while others would say that the curriculum is merely a public school curriculum with a Christian "coating". In order to bring some resolve to the issue, I thought it would be wise to survey people from around the world to find out what elements they hold to be essential in a CCC. After reviewing current literature, I developed a set of open-ended interview questions- a pilot study. I interviewed a group of people that have been involved in a CCC to flesh out what they deemed essential. From those responses, I then created a more comprehensive and quantifiable survey. This survey was both mailed and posted on the Internet. More than 500 respondents from around the world took 20-30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. By means of a quantitative data analysis, four major "isms" emerge- individualism, conformism, authoritarianism, and intellectualism. These "isms" continue to permeate the curricula and thus hinder them from being truly Christcentered. If we are to truly develop and maintain a CCC, we should adopt a dynamic philosophical model that realizes there is an appropriate time for everything. Furthermore, we should consider adopting the highest ranked perspective statements.

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What Do People Believe to Be the
Essential Elements in a Christ-Centered Curriculum?

by

Adam James Sterenberg

B.S. Western Michigan University, 1994

Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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Department of Education
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa
March 2005

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Title page.....	i
Approval.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables and Graphs.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	2
Pilot Study.....	13
Findings from Pilot Study.....	14
Methods-Quantitative.....	16
Results.....	18
Analysis.....	32
Discussion.....	37
Conclusion.....	40
References.....	44
Appendix.....	46
Vita.....	53

Table	Page
1. Pilot Study Demographics.....	14

Figure	Page
1. Quantitative Survey Demographics.....	19
2. Purpose and Perspective “Strongly Agree” Ranking.....	21
3. Purpose and Perspective Average Ranking.....	22
4. Samples of Highest Ranking Purpose and Perspective Statements....	23
5. Survey Results Related to Individualism.....	24
6. Survey Results Related to Conformism.....	26
7. Survey Results Related to Authoritarianism.....	28
8. Survey Results Related to Intellectualism.....	30

Abstract

In present times, Christian schools struggle to maintain a distinctive alternative to public education. Recently, many veterans of Christian education have been pointing the way to a more Christ-centered education- one that calls for explicitly Christian ways of teaching and learning. As a result, there has been great deal of rhetoric as to how people should/would define a truly Christ-Centered curriculum (CCC). Yet, many reputable Christian educators would argue that they already have a CCC while others would say that the curriculum is merely a public school curriculum with a Christian “coating”. In order to bring some resolve to the issue, I thought it would be wise to survey people from around the world to find out what elements they hold to be essential in a CCC. After reviewing current literature, I developed a set of open-ended interview questions- a pilot study. I interviewed a group of people that have been involved in a CCC to flesh out what they deemed essential. From those responses, I then created a more comprehensive and quantifiable survey. This survey was both mailed and posted on the Internet. More than 500 respondents from around the world took 20-30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. By means of a quantitative data analysis, four major “isms” emerge- individualism, conformism, authoritarianism, and intellectualism. These “isms” continue to permeate the curricula and thus hinder them from being truly Christ-centered. If we are to truly develop and maintain a CCC, we should adopt a dynamic philosophical model that realizes there is an appropriate time for everything. Furthermore, we should consider adopting the highest ranked perspective statements.

Introduction

Called by God. That is the best way I can describe the impetus for this thesis. As I pursued my Masters at Dordt College over the past few years, I began to realize that the question that has nagged me from the start of my teaching career has been, "What makes a Christian school different anyway?" As the time drew near for me to decide what to do my thesis on, I began to pray fervently to the Lord, "What do you want me to do my thesis on, God?" After all, I loathed the fact of spending hundreds of hours on a capstone project "just to get my Masters". The project had to be something inspired by the Holy Spirit if it were to be worthwhile and glorify Christ's name above all else.

The Lord answered my prayer within a week. The inspired question materialized - "What Do People Believe to Be the Essential Elements in a Christ-Centered Curriculum?" I hope to analyze people's beliefs regarding the following Christ-centered curriculum (CCC) elements: philosophies, purpose and perspective statements, content/skills, and teaching methods.

It became clear as well that He wanted me to use my gifts in mathematics and computers to explore the question through a survey. In Phase 1, I would do a pilot study in which I would interview a few people with open-ended questions. Then, based on those responses and the literature review I would create the second phase. Phase 2 would be primarily multiple-choice questions creating a more quantifiable database. By mailing the survey and posting it on the Internet, I would hope to get a large and varied sample population making the analysis more generalizable.

Because research in the field of Christian curriculum is scant at best, my intention is to gather tangible data with respect to the complex issue of CCC. I hope that educators and parents at all levels will be able to benefit from this research by engaging in meaningful dialogue about the topic. From the data collected, I also hope to articulate

ways in which we can advance the Kingdom of God through Christian education more effectively by identifying the essential elements in a CCC.

Definitions

Before we delve further into the matter, it is important to clarify and define a few terms in the thesis statement. By people, I mean those who are or have been substantially involved in a CCC. The word “curriculum” is more enigmatic. Carpenter (1994) suggests that, “curriculum is everything that affects the accomplishments of the established goals of learning” (p. 3).

I agree that “curriculum” should be more broadly defined than textbooks, but I think that Carpenter’s definition may be too broad. Harro Van Brummelen in *Stepping Stones to Curriculum* (1994) offers at least four different viewpoints on what curriculum is. I doubt that humankind will ever be able to reach a consensus, but for this thesis, I will define curriculum as “anything that is directly related to teaching and learning.”

Literature Review

Expectedly, anyone involved in a Christian school or home-school would desire a CCC, but there appears to be a great deal of variety and inconsistencies regarding the indispensable components. Some educators are offering perspectives and methods quite dissimilar to current educational practices. Other educators remain entrenched in traditional educational patterns. Still others are debunking the validity of traditional thought.

History in Christian Education

I thought it important to first begin with a brief historical note regarding “Christian” education. Since our roots in Christianity begin with the Hebrews, it is imperative to note that in Ancient Israel there was no such thing as faith separate from education. “It [is] always to be remembered that Jewish education was entirely religious education. There was no textbook except the Scriptures; all primary education was preparation for reading

the Law; and all higher education was the reading and the study of it..." (Eds. Clark & Johnson & Sloat, Barclay, 1974, p. 15). This was the case up until the time of Christ.

After Christ's death and the emergence of the new church, Christians viewed education as one of the primary functions of the church. Yet, Greek, Roman, and other secular philosophies continued to "mingle" with Christian education. This has continued throughout history until recently. I would say that majorities of people now hold to the belief that the knowledge taught in school curricula is value-free or neutral. This is in stark contrast to the Hebraic view where "the law was integrated into every area of Jewish life," such as relationships, politics, divorce, sexuality, etc. (Eds. Clark & Johnson & Sloat, 1991, p. 44). These Hebraic roots are the foundations upon which people built Christian schools. Stuart Fowler states, "Christian education must be a distinctive education, a genuine alternative to all education founded on other religious principles. What we must aim for is not secular education with addition of Christian values but education that is Christian through and through" (1987, p. 86).

We can achieve this sort of education only if the Word of God directs every thought and deed. Everything concerning the curriculum must be filtered through the themes and messages in Holy Scripture. We must carefully analyze each decision in light of the Word of God. With this in mind, I propose that a truly CCC would use the first and second greatest commandment as a filter for the entire curriculum. We need to love God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Robert Pazmiño (2001) suggests to model curriculum after themes found in the letters to the seven churches in Asia found in the book of Revelation. A CCC should, "be relational versus institutional; be relevant; have strong leadership; have story at its center; be done in partnership; be innovative; and have clarity of mission and vision" (p. 151). Educators, such as Wolterstorff and VanDyk, suggest that a CCC will not just teach knowledge or skills but service of God through responsible action.

Philosophy

People may want to avoid conversations about philosophy, but whether they like it or not, “there is a definite connection between philosophic positions and educational practices,” (Knight, 1998, preface). Whether or not you can articulate the philosophies that govern your life, you still have them. Philosophies influence all decision-making in our lives. The same is true for education. Numerous philosophies govern every curriculum decision that we make- many are Christ-centered and many are not.

I want to find out what positions people hold regarding their philosophies in education. I figure, as on any one of these topics, there will be some major differences, but I also hope to find some commonalities. Although each philosophy may have a name with an “ism” ending, in the survey I hope to ask people questions that are more concrete. From that, I will discern what philosophies they seem to hold. Is knowledge value-free? Is the primary aim of Christian education to lead students to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? What is truth and can we know it? What are different ways of knowing? These questions are critical because they shape everything about our schools’ curriculum. “The task of educational philosophy is to bring [people]... into face-to-face contact with the large questions underlying the meaning and purpose of life and education” (Knight, 1998, p. 5).

Vision and Purpose

A CCC must have a clear vision and purpose such that its graduates will live purpose-driven lives. Too many people today, Christians and non-Christians alike, drift through life without purpose. “A recent study of college freshman indicates that 39% [of students] believe it is important to ‘develop a meaningful philosophy of life.’ According to researchers at UCLA, in 1967 [that number of students] was 86%” (*Christian Home and School*, 2004, p. 6). Would the statistic change if students surveyed were sorted by whether or not they graduated from a Christian school? Whether or not it does, we who

educate under the guise of a CCC must make sure that every element helps educate a student for a life of “responsible, worshipful, and appreciative gratitude” (Wolterstorff, 2002, p. 13). The desire of the heart of a CCC is that every student becomes a disciple of Christ and an agent of renewal. We must be so firm in our beliefs in the foundations of a CCC because the school has become such a permanent and large part of the fabric of our lives. “By the time children are twelve years of age, they have spent more hours in school than they have spent with their families and religious community combined” (Vryhof, 2003, p. 48). We must be clear on our purpose and the philosophies that ‘course through the veins’ of the curriculum.

Content and Skills

Since teaching and learning are central to the purpose of school, one must consider what to teach and how to teach it Christianly in order to obtain a CCC. “The goal of a Christian school is also the exploration of the creation, but it approaches the creation in a different way. While it presents the so-called ‘facts’ that science has uncovered, it sees them as revelatory of God and channels for service and communion with him” (Eds. Lambert & Mitchell, 1997, p. 70). What can be taught in a CCC is almost as expansive as the universe itself because everything in a school curriculum has been created, maintained, and redeemed by the blood of Christ. Every topic studied exists because of the Architect. This can include anything- mathematics, science, poetry, gymnastics, social studies, art, music, and so much more! Every one of these aspects is part of God’s marvelous creation, and when we learn about them, we learn more about the Creator.

Albert Greene (1998) raises great questions about what we should teach. “What is special about teaching school subjects Christianly? Aren’t the studies the same in any school, Christian or secular? Is there a special Christian arithmetic or science or geography?” (p.165). He further states that the Christian curriculum is all of creation and

atheists and Christians alike are part of the same world. There are many other questions I would like answered. Is it better to teach subjects by discipline or in an integrated fashion? Should curriculum focus on relationships or academics?

Regardless, all that we investigate is meant to deepen our love for God Almighty as well as our fellow man.

Teaching Methods

Pedagogy, or how things are taught, is just as important in a CCC as content. There are several challenging questions about how we should teach: Should a classroom environment be more collaborative or competitive? Should we focus more on academic rigor or discipleship skills? Should we teach more directly or indirectly? Is it better to give everyone the same evaluation or tailor to the needs of the individual?

Jesus, Others, and You

Based on the passages of 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Philippians 2, a CCC must recognize each individual student in light of the community. Every student is created in the image of God and is given unique gifts and a purpose in life. That person will only find fulfillment and gratitude if they recognize Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and begin their journey of renewal.

“To be *Christian*, Christian education must have God’s esteem for the human being, sense the task to be a whole-life experience of growth and maturity, and give opportunity for service through experiential action” (Eds. Clark & Johnson & Sloat, 1991, p. 13). Furthermore, a CCC must teach more than knowledge or skills- the curriculum must provide opportunities to serve God and humankind. If not every component of the school’s curriculum in some way reflects the love and compassion of Jesus Christ then we have to ask if it is truly Christ-centered.

The life we are called to live is a life of service. Christ was our ultimate example. Life should not be about self-service, but about serving others and God. Therefore, a

CCC should provide many opportunities to serve at many different levels. Students should not only serve their classmates, but their community as well. Henri Nouwen said, “We will never believe that we have anything to give unless there is someone who is able to receive.” (Greene, 1998, p. 245)

If we fail to recognize the importance of community, the individual becomes all-important. This has occurred in American society, as the individual and competition have become gods. Many individualistic and competitive educational practices, such as grading, have permeated even Christian curricula. Even educators in the public schools are realizing the detriments of grading. “We teach children not to be the best they can but to beat who they’re competing against,” according to Belle S. Wheelan, Virginia’s secretary of education. She believes that students view cheating in a school as a survival tool in the competition for grades (*Christian Home and School*, 2004, p. 6). This should come as no surprise since public schools emphasize the scientific model as the source for truth. However, I have seen many examples of cutthroat competition in Christian schools as well. It could be anything from grades in math to sporting events to who’s going to get the best part in the musical.

Although the community is important, it is not all-important either. There is a proper time to emphasize the community, and a proper time to emphasize the individual in the curriculum. Every person has the innate desire to be an individual, but also a need to be part of a group. Christ created us this way as described in 1 Corinthians 12. CCC should model this. Fowler (1987) says,

To fulfill this educational function the school must be a genuine educational *community*. In a community each individual functions with his individual gifts and [he does not act] as an isolated individual but as a member of a body. As such a community the school is a unity, with an individuality of its own, without destroying the individuality of its members (p. 169).

In order to combat the spirit of excessive competition in a CCC, there should be an emphasis on helping students realize their unique calling in life. The benefits in doing so are numerous. Competition and anxiety are reduced, as their peers no longer pose a threat. God's grace releases them from the guilt that they have to be all things to all people. There is comfort knowing that they do not need to prove their worth (Pazmiño, 2001, p. 51).

For almost my entire K-12 educational experience, I have been in Christian schools. In some cases, I have experienced genuine community and at other times not. I have also had many friends who evaluate their experience in the Christian schools as negative. One reason mentioned was feeling as if students and teachers did not care for them. Nicholas Wolterstorff has had similar experiences "When students come to me and complain bitterly about their Christian education, what they complain about is seldom its inferiority but rather its hypocrisy and the lack of love that they sensed. In so doing, they are pointing at a decisive defect. If the Christian school is not a community of love, it cannot succeed" (Eds. Stronks & Joldersma, 2002, p. 180). Negative attitudes towards Christian schools can manifest in a variety of ways- especially in the curriculum. If skills, content, assessments, and other components were based on competition then it would seem to validate the claim of a non-caring and non-loving classroom environment.

Other graduates believe that the school did more discouraging of their talents than encouraging them. This is contrary to a CCC because it must emphasize a variety of gifts. By valuing diversity in the gifts given to each person by the Holy Spirit, each student is more likely to be appreciated and recognized for who they are. Additionally, humility is encouraged and mutual support becomes more of a necessity.

Trash or Treasure?

There is a fine line between being 'well-rounded' and 'egg-headed'. Yes, we should be exposed to many experiences so that we can better know our Creator and

learn to worship Him in a variety of manners and settings. Caution must be exercised such that our curriculum choices do not hinder or strip students of their diverse talents and gifts. There must be an appropriate balance for each student.

Although the focus of this paper is not the hidden curriculum, I will discuss it briefly since it often deals with which gifts and talents are rewarded. For instance, do honors at graduation go to those who are academically successful? Are students who are actively serving the less fortunate recognized? Are the artistically gifted the highlight of the ceremony? Whatever the case may be we must be cognizant of becoming a clone of the secular school program.

All people were NOT created equal. Created with equal worth in the eyes of the Lord, yes, but not with same gifts and talents. Often, a school curriculum does not recognize or honor this. Too often, Christian schools try to conform students rather than celebrate the freedom they have in Christ. By emphasizing diversity of gifts, we can reduce the excessive competitive nature and breed humility in its place. Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory recognizes the Truth in the diversity of gifts that the Holy Spirit distributes. If a curriculum is to be distinctive and Christ-centered, then we must actively explore the multiple intelligences theory. Moreover, we should not just make a point to discern and develop each student's gifts, but also his/her needs. "Jesus made explicit that what God expects of each person may differ. Jesus had a unique ability to discern the particular needs and struggles of each person he encountered, and he tailored his teaching approach accordingly" (Pazmiño, 2001, p. 80,).

The effects of sin are ever ravaging all attempts educators make at a CCC. Power and privilege can become corrupt and their effects can be long lasting and very subtle. Educators must be sensitive to the voices that are represented and/or silent in their curriculum. For instance, if a social studies teacher chooses all books written by white males then that is the perspective that portrays the 'correct' perspective.

Ethnocentrism can and has crippled many Christ-centered curricula. A CCC must instill students with a vision of being a brother and sister to every person in every culture. We must instill in the young the importance of being the hands, feet, and mouthpiece of Christ. Moreover, the curriculum must honor and embrace the beauty and grace in every culture and not just the status quo.

Children are to be seen and not heard

There was a time in our not-so-distant past that this was more of a societal reality. This is hardly the case today. However, this phrase is still in force in many classrooms. Teachers make the rules, choose the content, and tell the students what is important. How often do we actually address the students and ask them what they think is relevant, meaningful, and important? “I mean to say that Christian education must deal with the questions that students do and ought to have—not merely questions the teacher or someone else has...” (Eds. Stronks & Joldersma, 2002, p. 162).

Does this mean teachers should throw out all their lesson plans to address the students’ concerns? Of course not! As Christ was always striving to be meaningful and relevant to his audiences and as the Spirit is still today, a CCC should also do the same. Thus, a CCC must be dynamic enough to address the concerns and questions of the students. “Too often, the experience and wisdom of participants are not accessed, and mutual edification is thereby limited. Learning is not limited to times when the teacher is active and the participants are receptive. The receptivity of the teacher can model an openness to others, vulnerability, and a teachable spirit” (Pazmiño, 2001, p. 150,).

Addressing the questions and concerns of students may force some major restructuring of the school curriculum. Most Christian schools today still have a curriculum structured around 4-6 core subjects. This format has been around for hundreds of years. If we are really trying to teach young people about life and how to be agents of redemption and disciples of Christ, then why do we teach them math, science,

social studies, and language arts as disjointed subjects? Is that real-life? Is that what people talk about when they talk about life? Greene (1998) states, “Christian worldview stresses the wholeness of human life and knowledge [and] underlines the importance of our relationship to God and neighbor in a way that raises serious questions about a fragmented approach to school studies” (p. 257).

An integrated curriculum just seems to make more sense when educating the whole child. James Beane is a guru in curriculum integration and succinctly states the philosophy behind it.

Curriculum integration centers the curriculum on life itself rather than on the mastery of fragmented information within the boundaries of subject areas. It is rooted in a view of learning as the continuous integration of new knowledge and experience so as to deepen and broaden our understanding of ourselves and our world. Its focus is on life as it is lived now rather than on preparation for some later life or later level of schooling. It serves the young people for whom the curriculum is intended rather than the specialized interests of adults. It concerns the active construction of meanings rather than the passive assimilation of others’ meanings” (Greene, 1998, p. 256).

Do what I say, and not what I do.

The goal of a CCC is that students will walk out of the school and begin to renew and redeem the world in which we live. They will live a Christian lifestyle and not simply possess a Christian mindset. “If the schooling of our children focuses just on mind formation, then we must expect that when they emerge from school and take up their adult lives, they will *talk* the Christian mind and *live* the mind of the world” (Eds. Stronks & Joldersma, 2002, p. 82). Christ commands us to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The four dimensions of a human being are not listed to articulate specific areas of our lives, but to represent the wholeness and completeness of a person. A

CCC must thoroughly address the whole person, not just the mind because “education that exclusively stresses the mind while neglecting the body and relationships with God and all creation is incomplete. A holistic understanding of learning requires attention to emotion, intention, physical activity, and character and spiritual formation” (Pazmiño, 2001, p. 142 & 135).

A CCC should not just teach students that Christ helped and befriended the poor, but the students themselves should be given the same opportunities. Students should not just learn how to play sports, but should learn about healthy diet and exercise. Students should not just learn about passionate people, but should be given opportunities to be passionate. Students should not just learn about spirituality, but they should also be given opportunity to be spiritual. “Kids need to be nurtured in an environment sensitive to spirituality. Where the wonders and horrors of the universe are considered at least as often as are the names of the state capitals. Where the adults lead lives of grace and truth, and where justice is as important as grades. Where the study of poetry does not focus on meter but on finding ways to express depth unknown to scientific formulas” (Vryhof, 2003, p. 69,).

If we are not careful to balance the focus of actions and theory in a CCC, students will have great theory with little or no supporting actions. All of us can think of people, ourselves included, who talk a better talk than they do walk in their Christianity. Will focusing on abstract theory, sciences, and learned disciplines create both a Christian mindset and an active lifestyle?

Conclusion

The information regarding the essential elements of a CCC is limitless. For this thesis, I will limit the investigation to questions concerning perspectives, content/skills, and teaching methods in a CCC. Having gathered a great deal of information by people who are passionate, informed and well-versed on the subject, I wanted to see what the

“lay people” have to say. I would now go and gather data from the “average Joe” involved in a CCC.

Pilot Study

Interview Questions

Through the literature review and intense prayer, I penned the following questions. I felt these were the most important to ask people such that I could discern their beliefs and understandings regarding a CCC.

1. What does it mean if something is Christ-centered?
2. If curriculum is defined as “anything that is directly related to the teaching and learning of students,” what are some essential elements to a Christ-centered curriculum?
3. Is there a Christian way to teach in a classroom? Explain.
4. Is there a Christian way to go about learning? Explain.
5. At a Christian school, do we have to depend on the spiritual depth of the teachers, or are there some distinctively Christian instructional strategies that all Christian classroom teachers should be using?
6. Is there a Christian way to organize the curriculum in school? For example, what subjects are taught, for how long, etc.?
7. What makes a Christian School “Christian”?
8. Does it matter WHAT is taught, or HOW things are taught in a Christian School?

Participants

Each participant was selected based on a few commonalities. First, the person had to have been or is currently involved in Christian education. Second, the person had to be a devoted follower of Christ. Each person that I asked to interview I knew to some degree. Each willingly agreed to be interviewed. A conscious effort was made to

choose participants of different gender, age, ethnicity, and denomination. The following is a table of the 8 people who were interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes each:

Table 1 Pilot Study Demographics

Gender	Ethnicity	Religious Affiliation	Age
Male	European-American	Reformed	40's
Male	European-American	Reformed	80's
Female	African-American	Catholic	Teens
Male	European-American	Reformed	70's
Female	European-American	Reformed	40's
Male	European-American	Reformed	60's
Female	African-American	Baptist	40's
Female	European-American	Reformed	30's

Findings from Pilot Study

As one might imagine, the findings were quite varied yet exhibited several commonalities. The interviews prompted me to think of more questions than answers. A colleague of mine said that the Eastern mind searches for the right questions while the Western mind searches for the right answer.

Several commonalities came up during the interview process. Nothing in the teacher's teaching style or course curriculum should contradict the Bible was one commonality. Another CCC element should also be that of striving for academic excellence as well as building a strong character. People agreed that the content of classes, what is taught, how it is taught, and when it is taught really can vary from school to school and still be Christ-centered. In addition, everything should center on Jesus in a CCC and a CCC teaches content in a Christian manner. Furthermore, in a CCC there should be a positive, safe, and loving environment.

Most people involved in a CCC would not disagree with any of these statements and truly believe they are an essential element to a CCC. Most Christian schools and homeschools today already have many elements in place. Is that the depth to which a

CCC is defined? Have we become glib? The thrust of the following paragraphs is to help illuminate areas of concern, opportunities for growth, and areas for further questioning.

One of the people interviewed emphasized that a CCC is based upon a Christian perspective or attitude towards that which is being studied. If a student has this Christian perspective and the teacher emphasizes it, then that is the thrust of a CCC. Is a curriculum being Christ-centered primarily dependent upon the response of each student?

Another participant replied he had never thought about distinctively Christian teaching methods. Keep in mind that this viewpoint on CCC came from a person whose heart and soul belong to the cause of Christian education.

“We are too often academic and do not focus enough on personal relationships” was the paraphrased response of one of the participants when asked about question six. It is imperative to note the degree of truth in this statement. Most Christian schools’ and homeschools’ curricula are founded upon the roots of Greek Hellenism—a pagan philosophy of life. Hellenism did not recognize God or the Body of Christ, but merely the all-powerful mind of the individual.

The same participant also mentioned that Christian teachers make a curriculum Christ-centered. The interviewee felt that the teachers are the ones who really make an education Christ-centered. Is this a complete perspective? Can then any Christian teach any topic in any way and the curriculum will automatically be Christ-centered?

While interviewing my grandfather, he brought up how some students will receive poor grades in school, but once they go out into the ‘real world’, they do very well for themselves. *If a student repeatedly hears in school that he is a failure and then is successful in life, are grades relevant and meaningful? Do grades really reflect the truth and are they an essential element in a CCC? What do grades really tell us?*

“Then we’ve failed haven’t we?” This was the response given by one of the participants when asked what happens if we graduate academically excellent students that are oblivious to the social injustices in the world and their community. Can a CCC graduate students who are oblivious to social injustice?

Another interviewee emphasized the importance of peer-tutoring in a CCC. The strong helping the weak is paramount in the Body of Christ because community is essential. Nevertheless, how much emphasis is placed on building community in our curricula? Is building community just as important as learning math, science, or paragraph structure?

Many other issues surfaced during the interview process. The aforementioned points are in no way exhaustive. They have served to engage further contemplation. They have also spurred the development of more possible survey questions.

Methods-Quantitative

Survey Questions

The CCC Survey, found in the Appendix, is comprised of the findings from the literature review and the interviews. There are 77 questions asking people what they believe to be the essential elements in a CCC. The questions are divided into multiple sections. The survey begins with one question where the participant is asked to define a CCC in two or three sentences. Section one has the only open-ended question in the survey because my focus is to create a more “mathematically friendly” database concerning CCC.

Section two, purpose and perspectives, is comprised of five questions. Each question asks participants to rank certain CCC purposes by degree of importance. The degrees of importance are on a scale from one to four with one being least important and four being most important.

Sections three and four of the questionnaire are alike in that they both consist of tension questions. These tension questions pit two items against each other. It is important to note that the two items pitted against each other are not always mutually exclusive or completely divergent. This is no accident. Each day an educator makes thousands of decisions about his/her classroom, students, and curriculum. Rarely are they mutually exclusive or disparate. The intent is to get people to think that these types of decision are constantly made about curriculum whether or not people are aware of them. Furthermore, section three has 17 questions geared more toward the content and skills of a CCC and section four has 23 questions directed at pedagogy and classroom environment.

Section five of the questionnaire deals with important demographic information about the participants. People were asked to give their approximate age, their current involvement in a CCC, capacity to which they are/were involved in a CCC, duration of direct involvement in a CCC, ethnicity, personal religious affiliation, and the school's religious affiliation. This information was gathered so that a demographic analysis might reveal any poignant characteristics in certain groups of people. I must point out, much to my chagrin, that I unintentionally omitted a question for gender.

The survey (Appendix) is the most current version of the online survey. There were slight differences between the mailed and online surveys. The demographic information question was changed on the online section after about 100 people had participated and the paper version had already been mailed out. This did not affect the overall data as people were contacted to find out the missing information.

Participants

The participants in this survey voluntarily completed the questionnaire. Approximately 50 printed surveys were mailed to people that I know. I mailed surveys

to these people because they neither had access to a computer nor would they fill out a survey online.

Additionally, thousands of people were emailed about the posting of this online survey. The email contained a picture of me, an introduction letter, a direct link to the survey website, and a plea for prayer. The survey was emailed to everyone on my email list (over 100), CSI schools, ACSI schools, Lutheran schools, Baptist schools, and Christian schools around the world. Like a chain letter, people were asked to pray for the development and usage of the survey to advance His Kingdom as well as pass it on to anyone interested. Additionally, CSI put an announcement regarding the survey in a bulletin that goes to all CSI administrators.

Furthermore, the co-owner of *SonLight Curriculum*, a Christian homeschool curriculum provider, agreed to post a CCC Survey link on their website. He informed me that the *SonLight Curriculum* website received over 16,000 hits per year and that he would encourage people to fill out the survey.

Results

The following figures are only a portion of all the survey questions. I have selectively organized the graphs into areas related to demographics, perspectives, individualism, conformism, authoritarianism, and intellectualism. The sample size for all graphs is $n=466$. Because of the overwhelming amount of data, I will only analyze the percentage of responses in each question. Each survey question will have a graph that displays the percent response of each possible answer.

Figure 1 Quantitative Survey Demographics

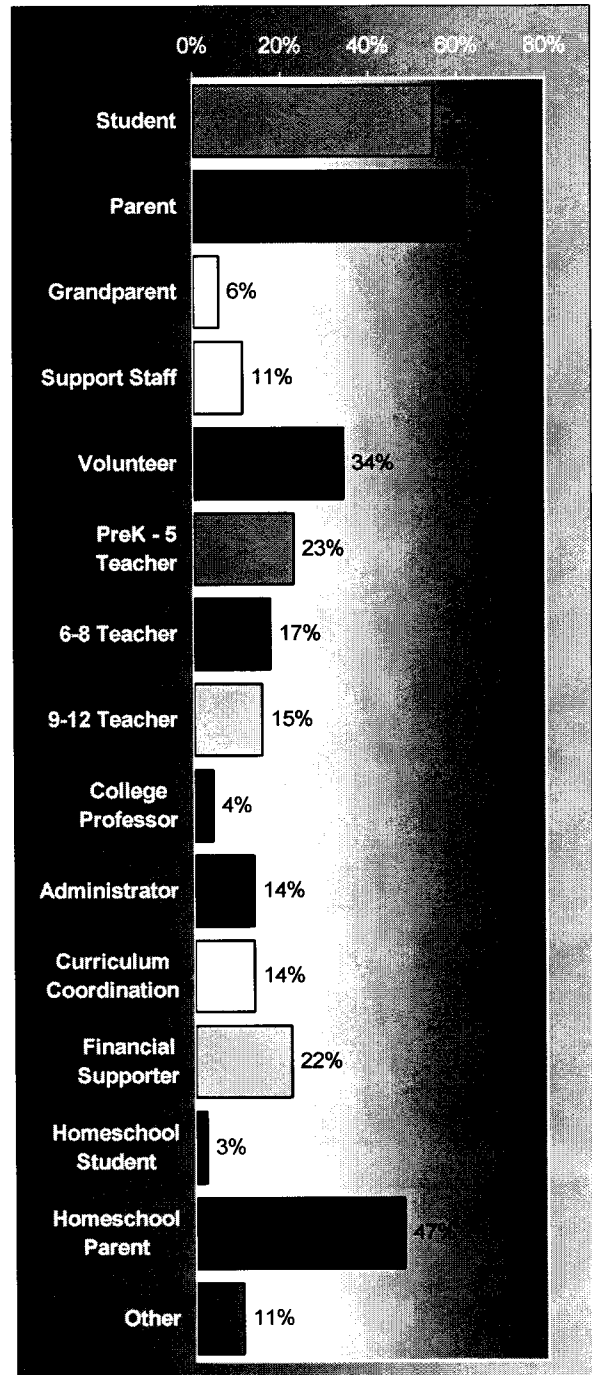
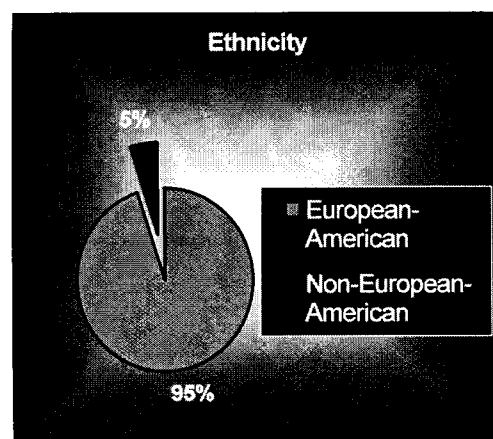
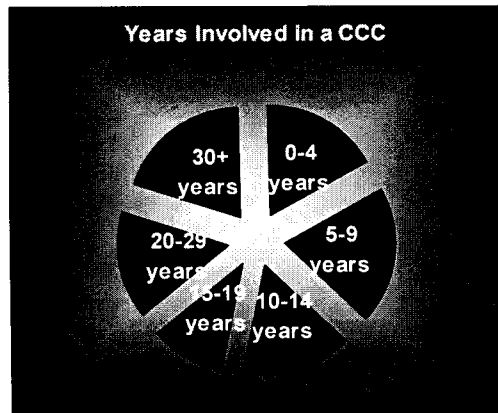
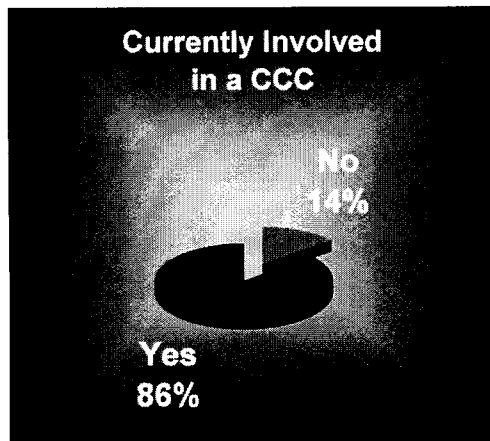


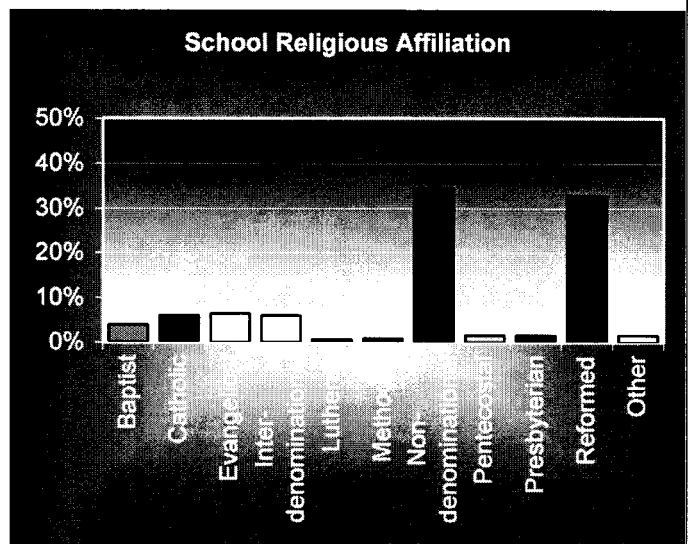
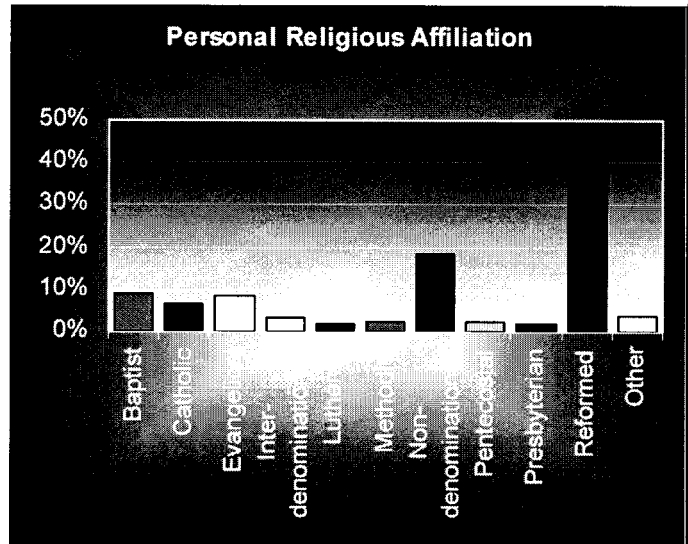
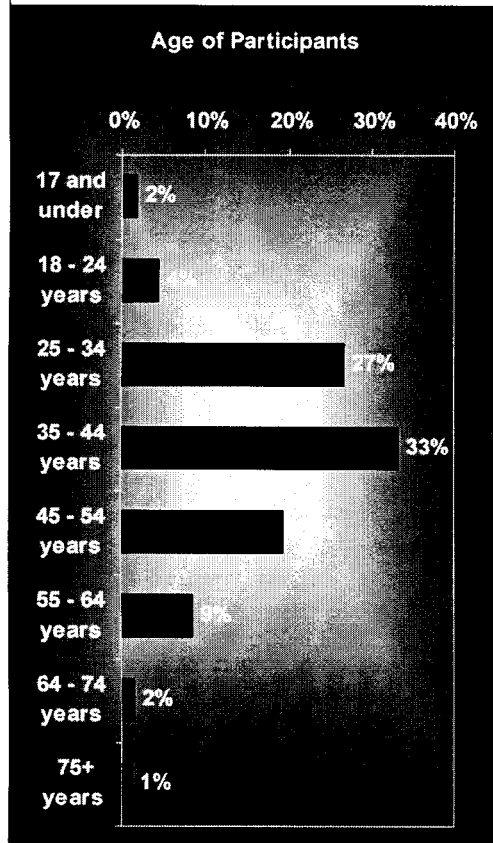
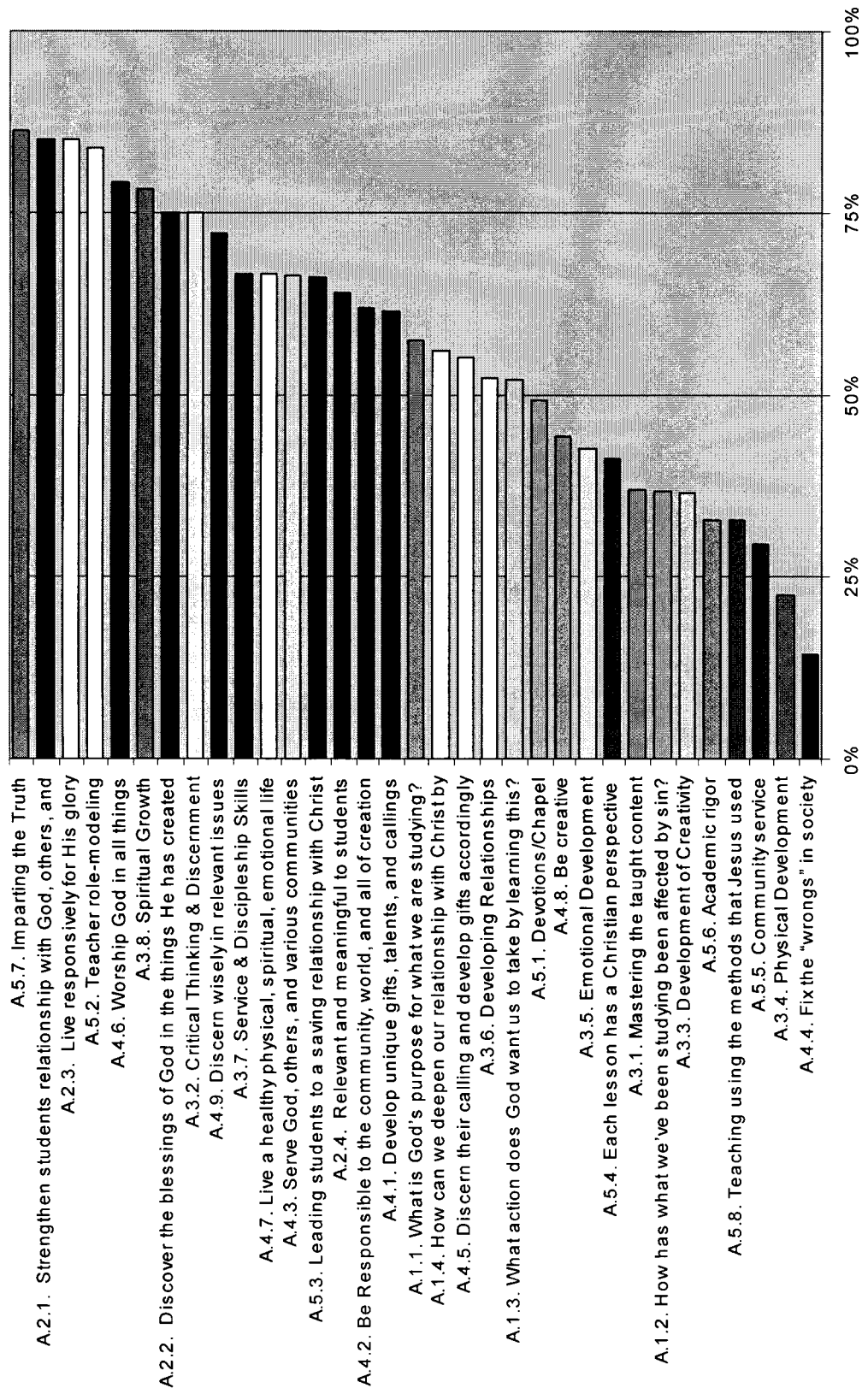
Figure 1 Quantitative Survey Demographics (*continued*)

Figure 2 Purpose and Perspective "Strongly Agree" Ranking



Note. A.5.7 refers to the survey questions in the Appendix. A.5.7 means section A, question 5, sub-question 7.

Figure 3 Purpose and Perspective Average Ranking

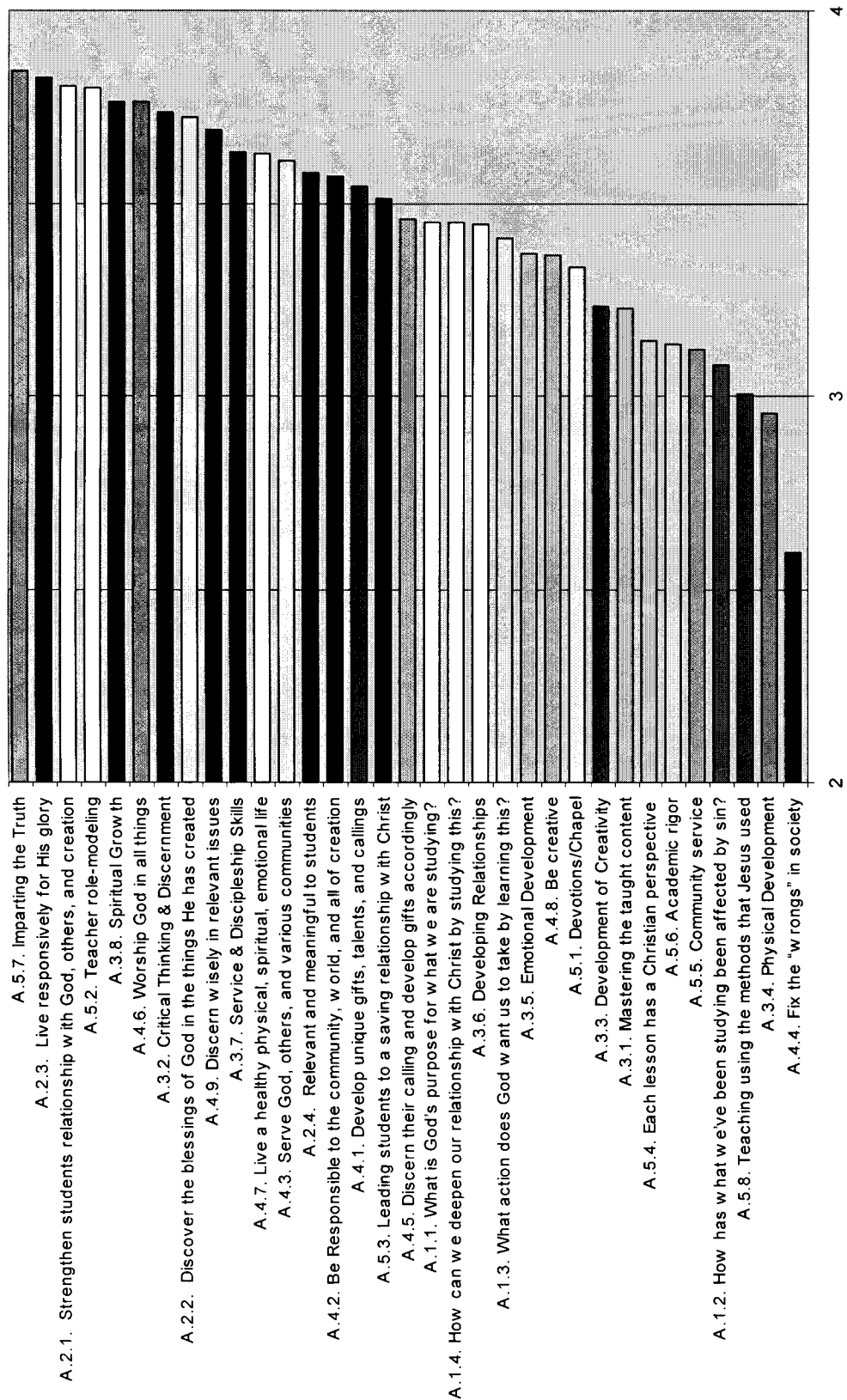
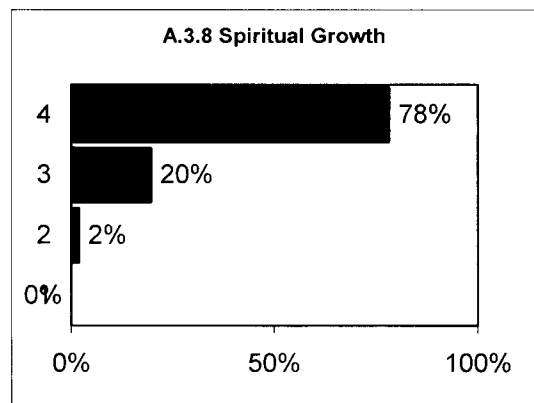
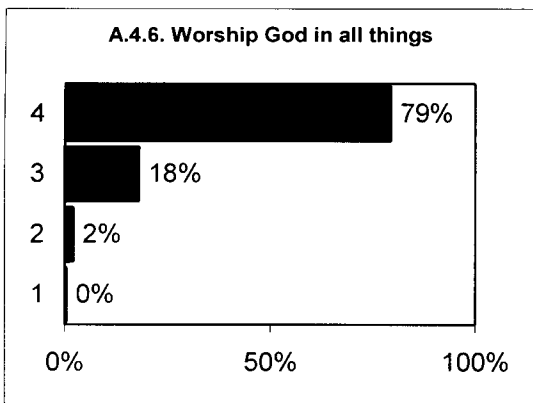
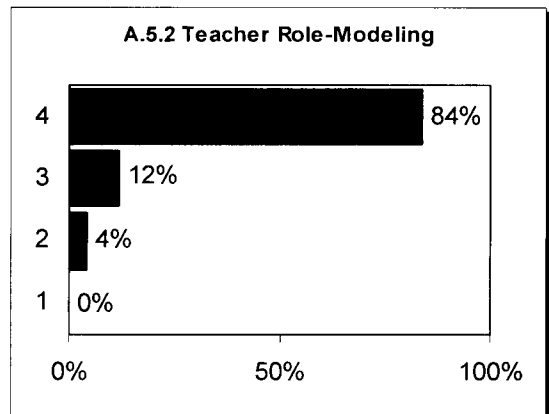
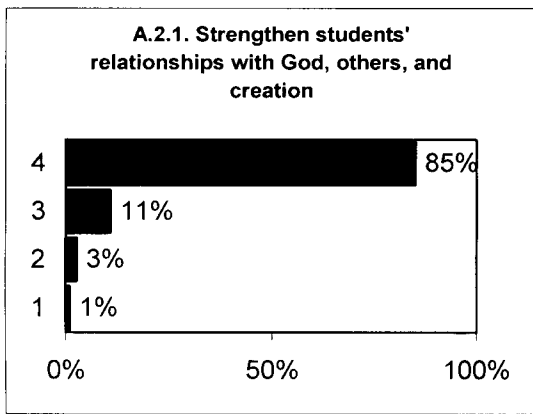
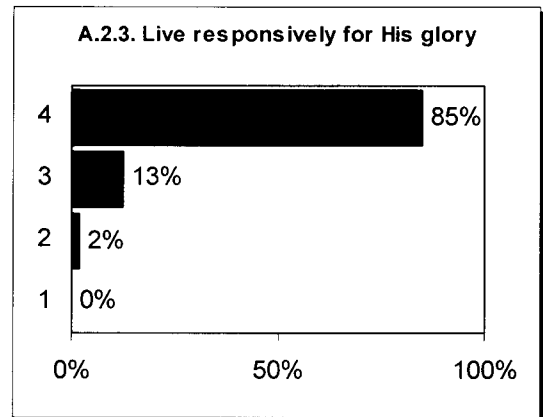
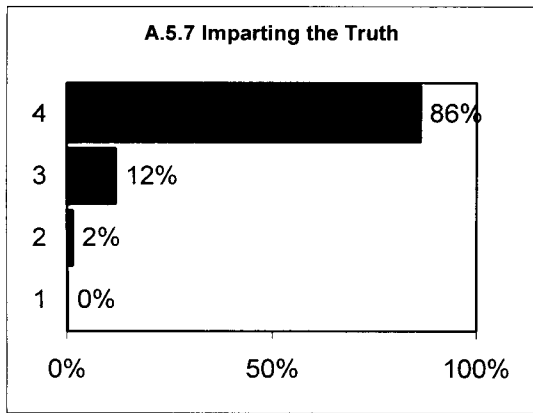


Figure 4 Samples of Highest Ranking Purpose and Perspective Statements



Note. A.5.7 refers to the survey questions in the Appendix. A.5.7 means section A, question 5, sub-question 7.

Figure 5 Survey Results Related to Individualism

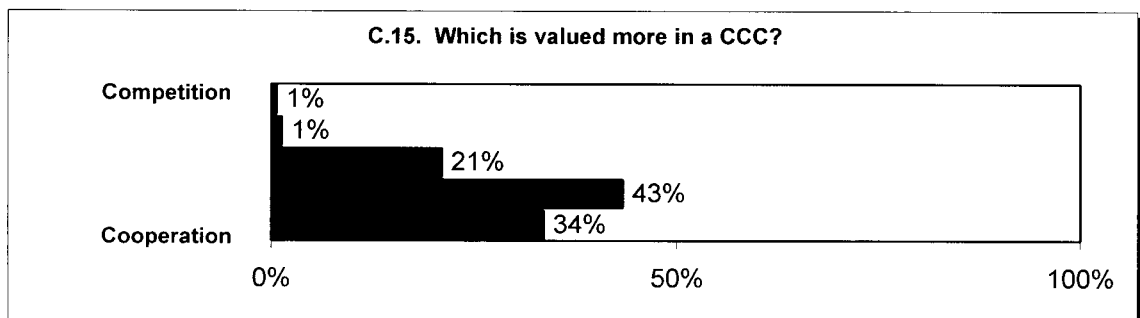
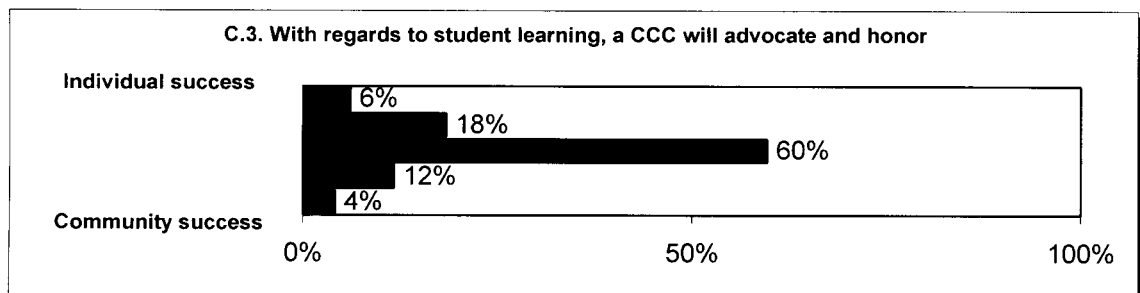
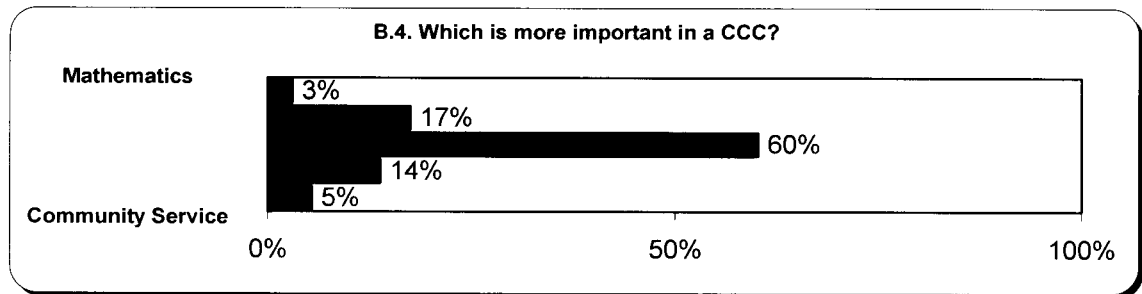
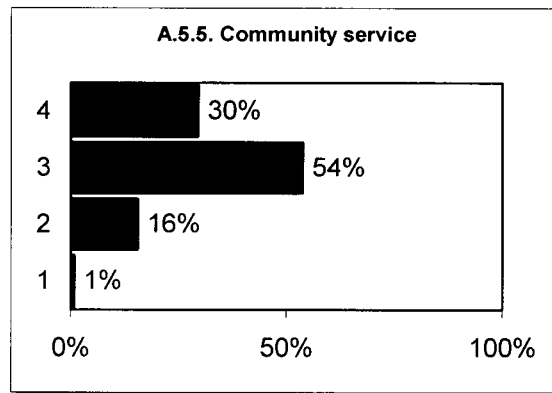


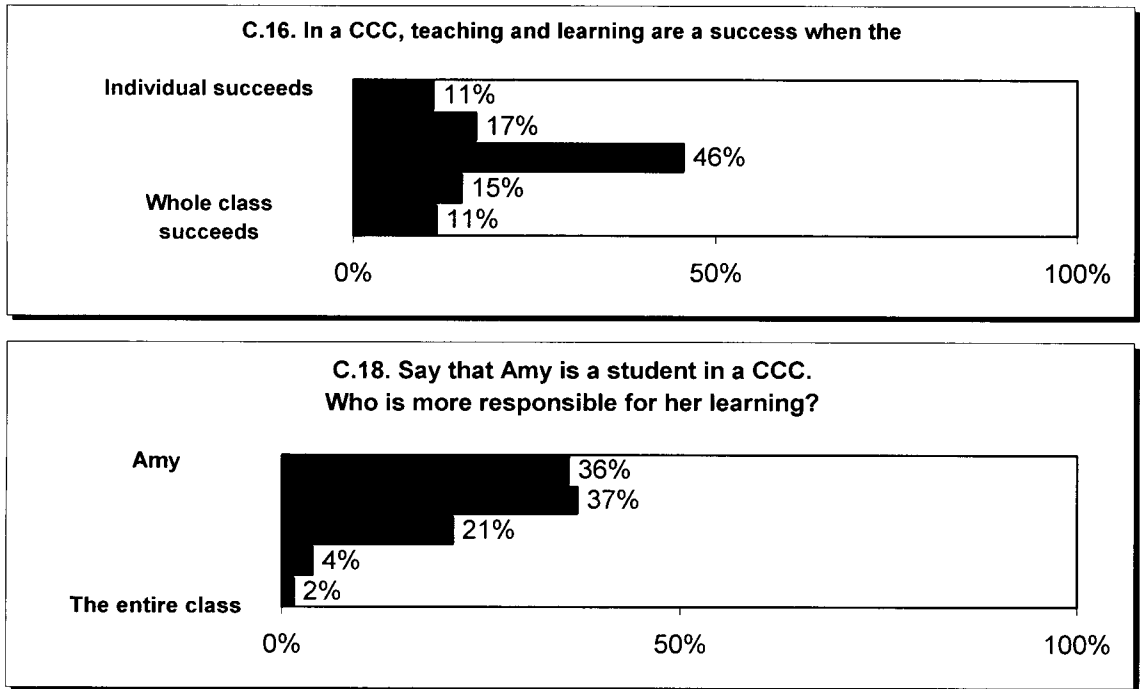
Figure 5 Survey Results Related to Individualism (*continued*)

Figure 6 Survey Results Related to Conformism

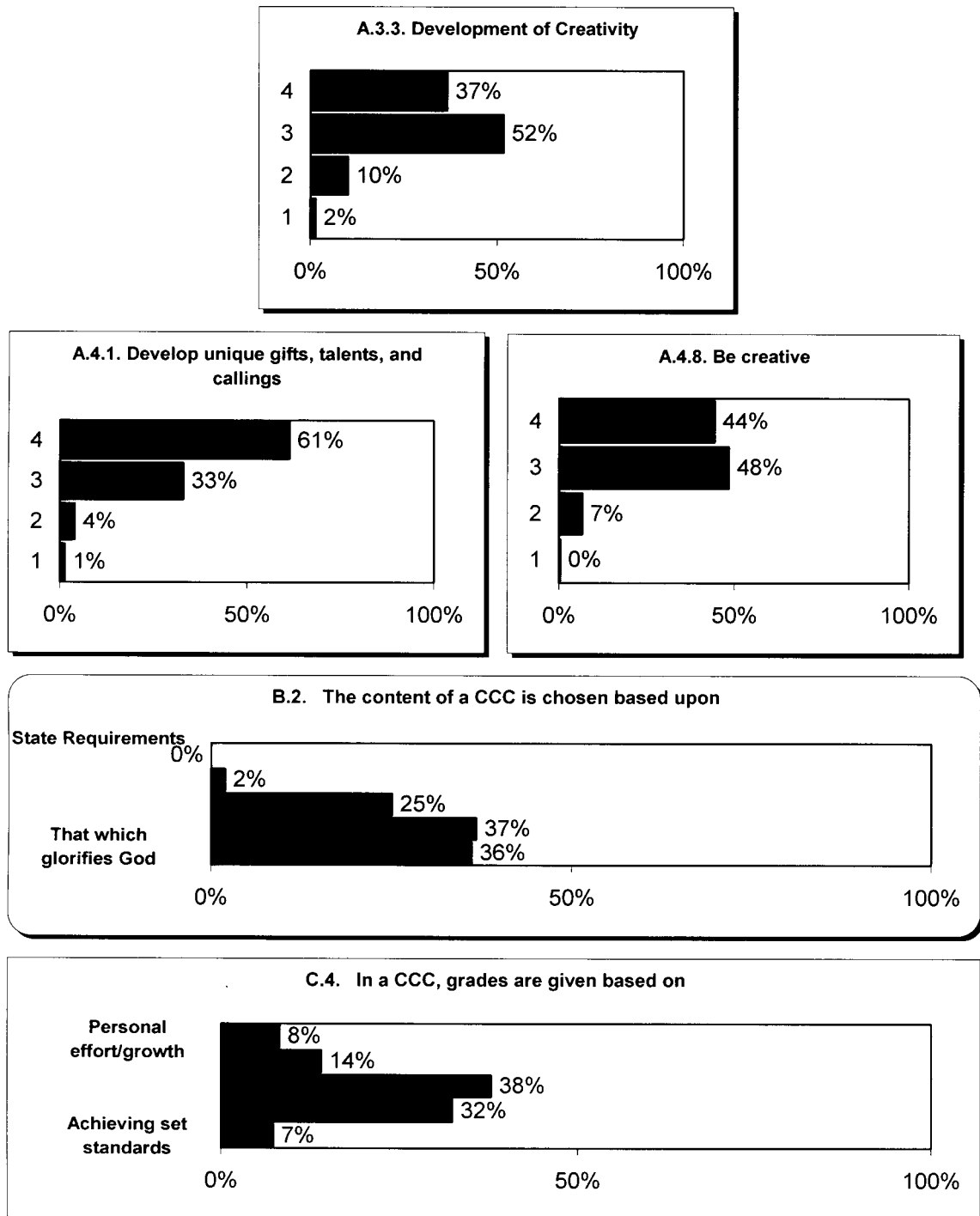


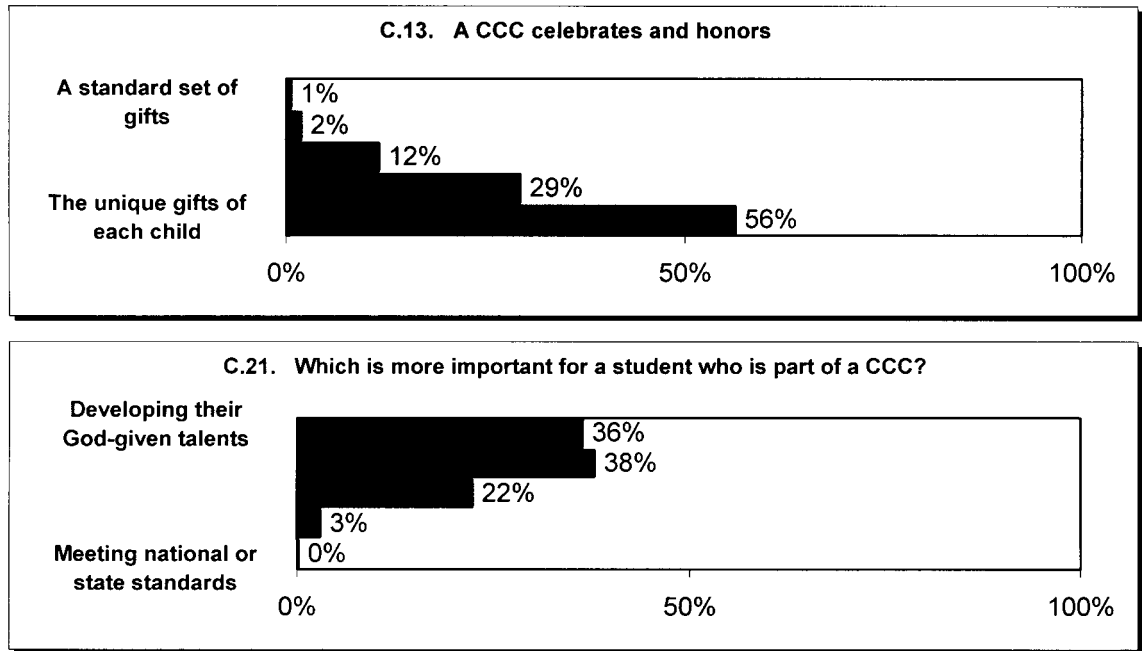
Figure 6 Survey Results Related to Conformism (*continued*)

Figure 7 Survey Results Related to Authoritarianism

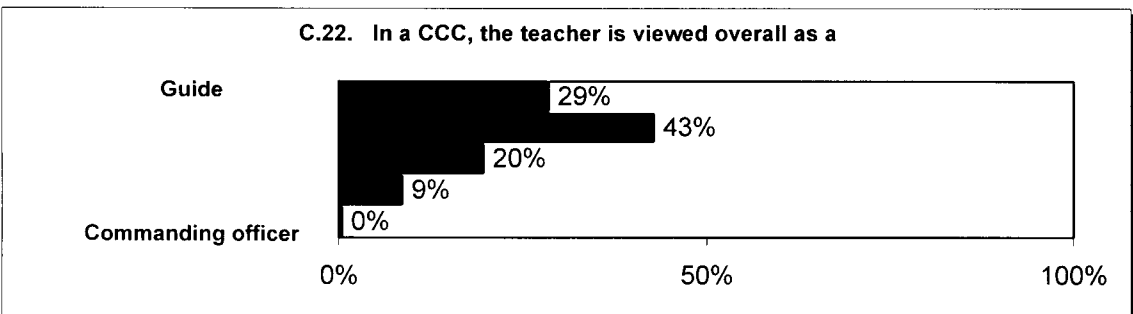
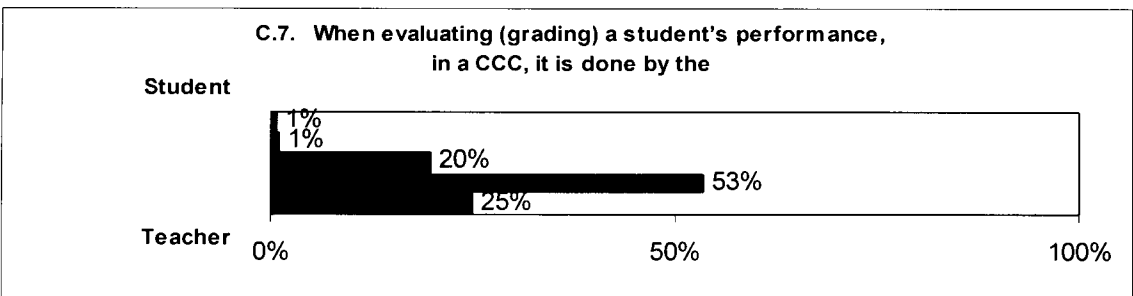
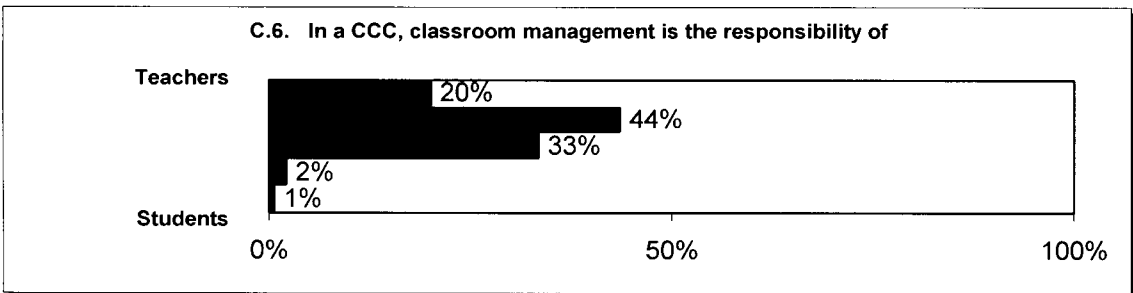
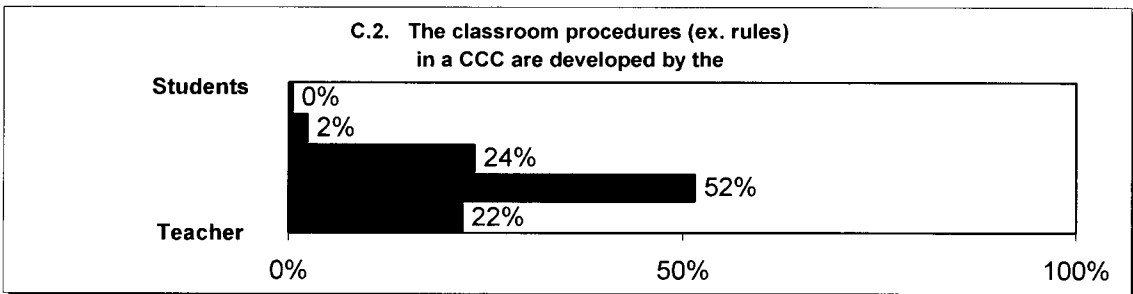
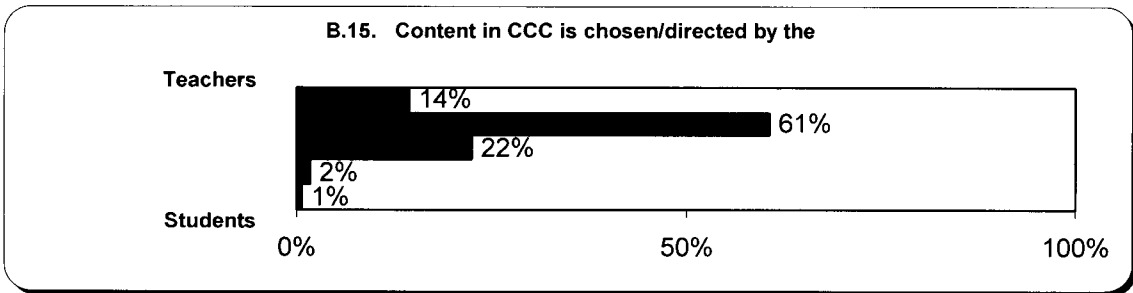


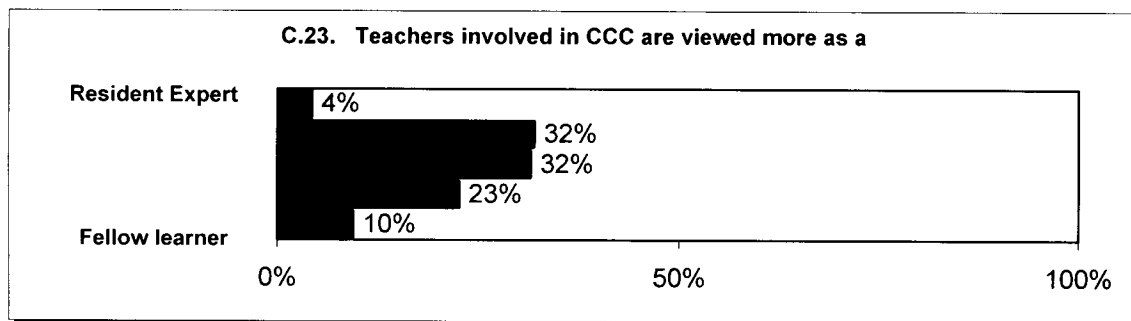
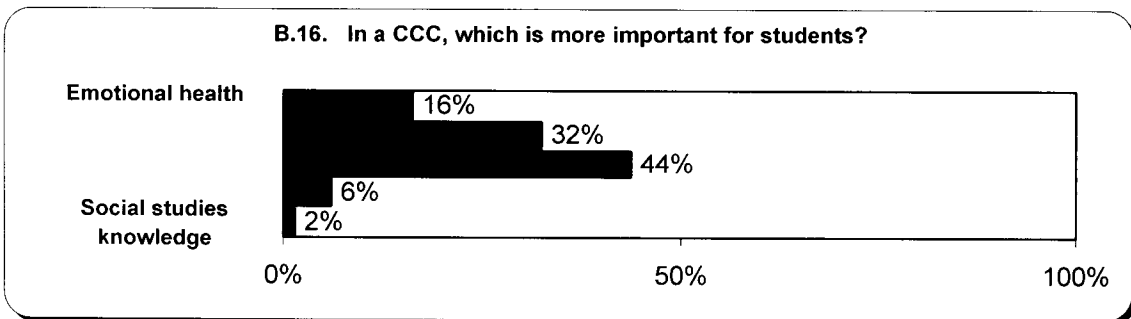
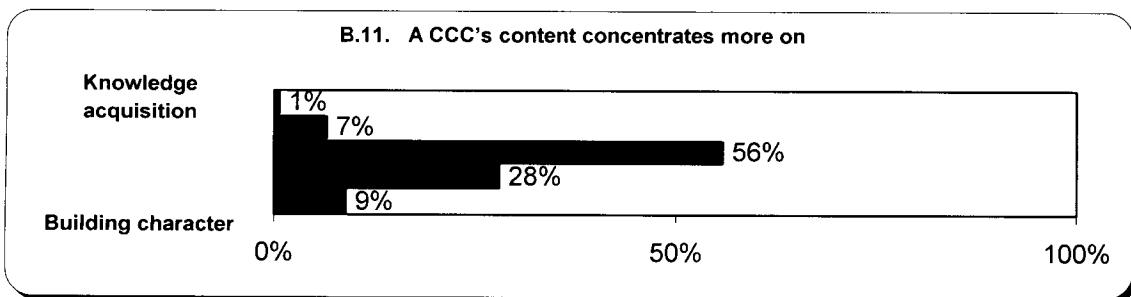
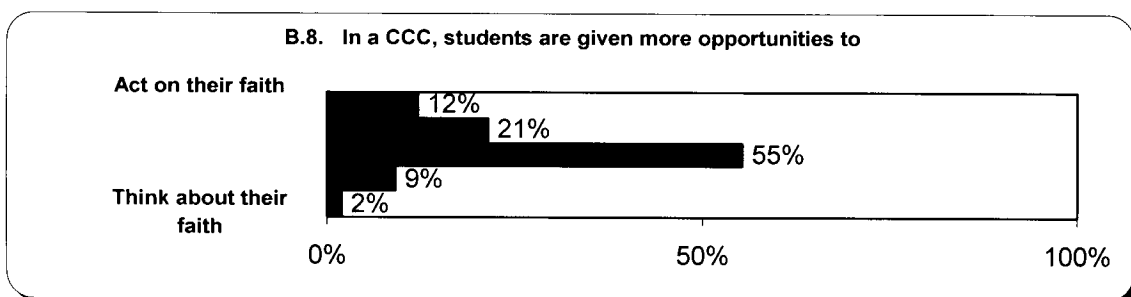
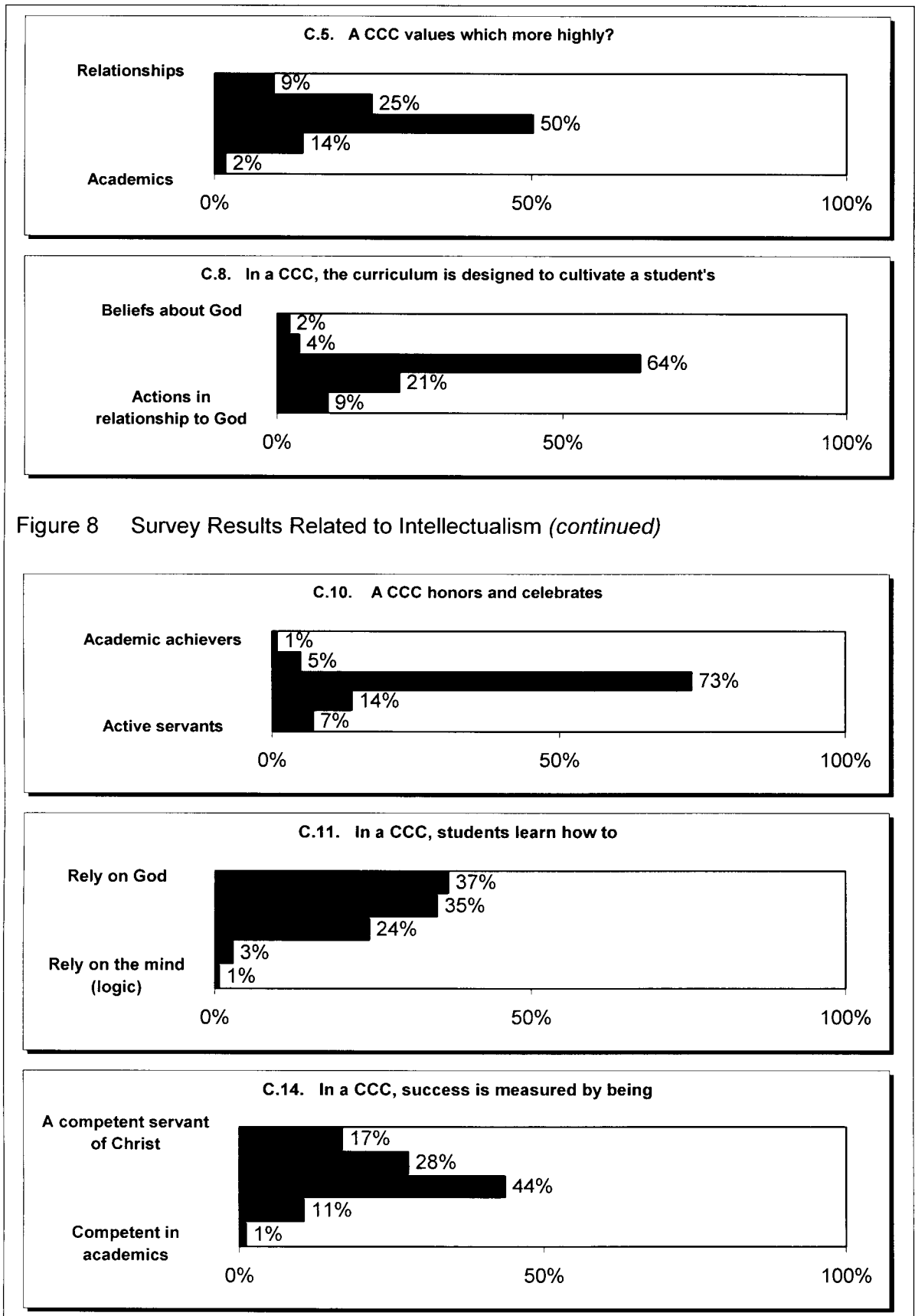
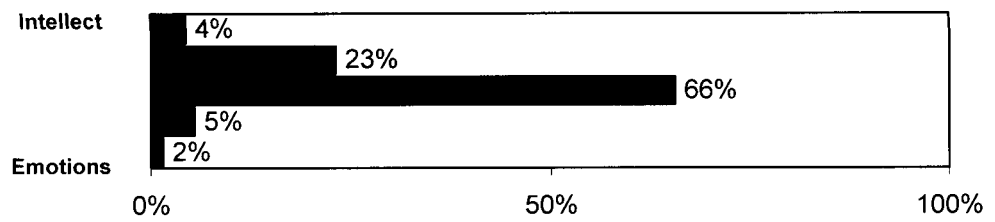
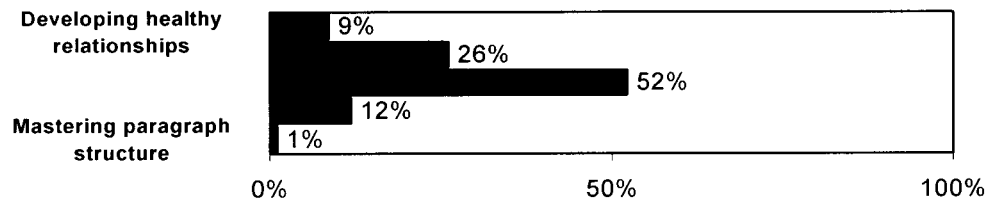
Figure 7 Survey Results Related to Authoritarianism (*continued*)

Figure 8 Survey Results Related to Intellectualism





C.19. Which is more important in a CCC?**C.20. In a CCC, which is more valuable?**

Analysis

Demographics (Figure 1)

Praise God for the incredible response to the CCC survey! Over 500 people (to date) voluntarily participated. Although I have no idea as to how many survey notifications were e-mailed, I am very pleased with all of the people that took approximately 20-30 minutes of their time to complete the survey.

46 states, 5 Canadian provinces, and 15 countries are represented in the data. Of the 466 usable entries of participants, 86% said that they were currently involved in a CCC. The other portion may not have been involved for various reasons, yet they felt strongly enough to take part. It would be interesting at some point to see how the people these two groups compare.

Of the people taking the survey, there appears to be fairly normal distribution of data around the median age of 35-44 years of age. It seems that 79% of the participants range in age of 25-54 years. This is good since these are most likely the people most intimately involved in Christian education.

The “offices” that everyone reported that they have held is also evenly distributed across the categories available. Keep in mind that people could check all the categories that apply to them or have applied to them. Upon analysis, it is noteworthy to mention that the average person checked at least three categories.

96% of the 466 respondents were of European descent. According to 2000 census data, the United States has an approximately 25% minority population. The thesis survey data is not an ethnically representative sample of the United States. Do most Christian schools' minority populations reflect the U.S. census data?

The next two graphs reveal the proportions of the religious affiliations of the persons who filled out the survey. It appears that there were adequate category choices since less than 4% of respondents checked the “Other” category. However, notice the

significant increase in the School Non-Denominational category from the Personal Religious Affiliation to School Religious Affiliation in Figure 1. What factors influence this discrepancy?

Perspective and Purpose (Figures 2, 3, & 4)

Figure 2 shows the percentage of people that rated certain CCC purposes as being of the strongest degree of importance. This is a viable way to analyze the order of importance of each criterion because every perspective statement had someone respond with a four. This helps us to analyze which elements are most essential to a CCC.

Figure 3 shows the average response of each perspective statement on a scale of one to four. This is simply another way of analyzing and ranking the data. This graph also helps to support the data in Figure 4. Using two different methods to rank the importance of each purpose element helps solidify the ranking. Notice that there are only slight changes in the order of importance between the two graphs.

There are 6 CCC perspectives that had an average score of 3.7 or higher, and at least 78% of the respondents felt that they were very necessary (highest rating). These are ranked in order of importance: 1) imparting the truth 2) live responsively for His glory 3) strengthen students' relationships with God, others, and creation 4) teacher role-modeling 5) worship God in all things 6) spiritual growth. On average, only 20% of respondents gave a ranking of 3 or lower to these 6 perspectives.

Individualism (Figure 5)

It should be noted that of all 33 purpose and perspective statements A.5.5 *Community service* ranked 30th. However, in graph B.4 of Figure 5, 79% of respondents said that community service was just as or more important than learning mathematics in school. If one judges importance by time spent, would the time that students are involved in math or community service reflect that statistic? Generally, community

service in a school is an extra-curricular activity while math is a required course. What would a CCC look like if this ratio of mathematics learning to that of community service existed?

There is a significant discrepancy between C.3 and C.16 even though the questions are nearly identical. Why is this? Those that feel individual success is just as important as the community drops 14% from 60% to 46% in graphs C.3 and C.16. Are people unsure of the importance of the role of both?

The results of C.15 and C.18 seem to be paradoxical. While 77% believe cooperation is more important than competition, 73% believe that the individual is mostly responsible for her learning. Yes, we are all ultimately responsible for our actions and our learning. However, this comparison would suggest a predominance of individual over the community.

Conformism (Figure 6)

Why does creativity and developing unique talents rank so low in the purpose and perspective elements? A.3.3, A.4.1, and A.4.8 ranked 16th, 23rd, and 28th out of 33 respectively. However, herein lies the quandary. In B.2, C.13, and C.21, at least 73% said developing unique, God-given talents was more important than any set of standards. It would seem that respondents in a CCC would overwhelmingly support the development of unique abilities. However, C.4 in Figure 6 shows that 40% feel that meeting standards is more important than personal growth. If so many respondents are in favor of developing unique gifts and recognize that the Holy Spirit gives us all different gifts, then why are standards ranked high?

People's beliefs toward what is honored and celebrated in a CCC are encouraging. Graph C.13 in Figure 6 reflects that 97% of people believe that the unique gifts of students are just as or more important than that of a set of standards. Graph C.21 concurs with and reflects the same message as C.13. This is very critical since we

must recognize, develop, and honor the gifts and abilities that God has given each student. Additionally, 98% of participants, in graph C.13, believe that in choosing the content of a CCC it is just as or more necessary to glorify God rather than meet state requirements.

Unfortunately, people seem to be very diverse in their philosophy regarding the grading and evaluation of students' work. Question C.4 had the third highest standard deviation of all the questions from the survey. This means that the participants' views on this subject were much more diverse than any other question. It could be that this is where the philosophy bumps up against the classroom application. Could people be unsure how grading has anything to do with developing unique gifts?

Authoritarianism (Figure 7)

The modern rock band Pink Floyd may have said it best in their classic song *Another Brick In the Wall*: "We don't need no education. We don't need no thought control." Further along in this anthem their view of education emerges, "Hey teacher! Leave them kids alone. All in all, we're just another brick in the wall" (Waters, 1979). Certainly, many students throughout the world in the past few decades have felt the exact same way going through school- probably why the song was so popular. There are many causes for this.

Based on the graphs in Figure 7, almost 75% of respondents said that the teacher should be the one to develop classroom rules, design procedures, choose content, and evaluate students' performance. In C.22, less than 10% felt that a teacher is more of a commanding officer and the majority felt that the teacher is more of a guide. If this is the case, then why are the teachers making all the classroom decisions related to rules, content, and evaluation?

How often do students actually get to choose what they will study and learn? Clearly, graph B.15 shows that 86% of people believe that students should have at least

some say in what they are studying. When they do get a choice, is it most likely for an independent project, rather than unit topic for a required class?

Whether or not a teacher should be a resident expert or a fellow learner seems to perplex participants, based on C.22 and C.23. A common vision of many schools is to create life-long learners. If this is the goal for students, how much more true should it be for those who are then teaching them? Educators who are truly dedicated to Christian education I doubt would ever say that they 'have arrived' and are done learning. Is it plausible that a teacher can be both a resident expert and a fellow learner?

Intellectualism (Figure 8)

As you can see, graph C.11 indicates that 96% of people feel a CCC should teach students to rely on God as much or more than on their own mind. A few interesting questions for further reflection might be the following: How does a CCC actually go about teaching students to rely on God more than their own intellect? Do we just tell them to, or does the curriculum actually immerse them into experiences that cause them to rely on God?

Graph C.10 shows that 73% of participants viewed academic achievement as being equally important as active service in Christ. Respondents to this question were more unified than the respondents to almost any other question. One must ask, "How often do students get the chance to actively serve in the CCC?" If the most common response were they get to serve God by getting good grades on their test, it would be interesting to see if the curriculum favors intellectualism. Is just as much emphasis placed on creating opportunities for uniquely gifted students to serve humankind? Notice that 89% of all people surveyed, in question C.14, said that being a competent servant of Christ is just as important or more so than being competent academically.

Graphs B.11, C.5, and C.20 show that a majority of people are just as concerned about the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills of students as they are about academics. Again, how often are these elements part of the curriculum?

Emotions are incredibly powerful and have an immense impact upon students. 73% (graph C.19) of people recognize that we must value emotions as much as the intellect in a CCC. The data supports this in graph B.16, which says that 92% believe emotions are just as or more important than social studies.

At least 92% of everyone surveyed agreed that it was just as or more important that a CCC be designed to cultivate students' actions in relationship to God. Many agree that actions speak louder than words. How often are students allowed to respond in action based on what they have learned?

Discussion

Purpose and Perspective

Anyone earnestly seeking a CCC should consider the six elements in Figure 4 to be the core of their school's mission/vision statements. Educators might argue that the aforementioned six elements already form a foundation of their school. Make no mistake- these are not merely glib statements to aggrandize the halls of the home or school! Those in search of a CCC need to boldly proclaim these as the focus of their schools if they are to truly serve the King. Every decision regarding teaching and learning should reflect obedience to the aforementioned purpose and perspective elements. Whether it is a decision of what content, skill, or assessment to choose or how to teach a lesson or what pictures to put on the wall, it should honor these six elements.

Individualism

It is obvious that Individualism has no place in the Body of Christ. The Lord Almighty has made it abundantly clear that my gifts and talents are no more important

than yours or anyone else's. Each person has a significant and purposeful role in the Body of Christ. Those involved in education must be aware of the individualistic influences in their personal and public life. The same then goes for schooling. It is imperative that the CCC will value each individual by him/herself as well as place an equal focus on the role of that individual with respect to the Body of Christ. The community is not more important than the individual- it is equally important.

A devastating effect of Individualism is a general lack of concern for the local and global community- especially with respect to the poor, homeless, and downtrodden. A CCC must do everything in its power to make sure that its graduates have a deep sense of social injustice. A CCC should provide innumerable opportunities where students can actively serve their communities and be a light in a dark world. Experience tells us repeatedly that simply talking about it is ineffective.

Conformism

Many respected educators will argue that because Christ has redeemed all of creation, all is fit to study. However, "all things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial." Even though God created every relationship that exists in mathematics, does that mean every child benefits from the minimum 1,800 hours of math in their K-12 education? A CCC must have prayerfully and carefully selected content. Does the content help students become better followers of Christ or better prepared for the next grade level? Will everyone be taught the same content? How much time will be spent on each subject? Will the curriculum be divided into disciplines or thematic units? Is the purpose of a CCC to make sure students meet specific standards or develop their unique gifts and talents?

The Holy Spirit gives unique gifts and talents to each person. A CCC must recognize this and find ways to help students develop these gifts. All too often, schools

try to cram students into a specific mold. A CCC must help students discern their unique calling so that they may effectively serve the Body and the world for His glory.

Authoritarianism

More than just teaching discipline, a CCC should empower students. One of the best ways to empower students is to give them choices. Yes, they may fail. It may take longer than you had hoped to go through a lesson. Nevertheless, the result is empowerment and experience in decision-making. Students should be given choices in classroom rules, procedures, and, even content! Benefits are that the curriculum becomes much more meaningful and relevant.

Sharing power requires a great deal of humility. Humility is not at all popular in our current society as it denotes weakness and vulnerability. Through personal experience, I have learned that as frightening as it is to an educator, being humble speaks volumes to students. It allows for stronger teacher/student relationships and allows greater learning to occur.

It is imperative that teachers treat students as people and vice versa, because we are created in the Image of God and therefore respect and value should be mutual. A balance must be struck between students' and teachers' power of choice. Although the teacher has authority, it is imperative that there be a sharing of power amongst teacher and students.

Intellectualism

We must be critical in our analysis of current curricula. Do we expect students to participate in theoretical exercises all day long and then go home and act out their faith? Does the curriculum give numerous opportunities to respond in action or simply reflect? A CCC must allow students to act on their faith as much as think about it, else the actions may never come.

A CCC should teach the whole child. We need to educate students' intellect and emotions. We need to not only be sensitive and value students' emotions, but also help students cope and understand their emotions. Educators know and brain-based research confirms that learning is nearly impossible for an emotionally distraught student. A CCC should build in support mechanisms to meet the emotional needs of each student.

Some may fear that we will let emotions control our school. If that were the case, then one would still be in violation of the greatest commandments. Simply basing an education on emotions is just as reductionistic as basing one on intellect or physical strength. The written curriculum must address every component of life because they are all significant. The written curriculum is the 'framework of bones' in the 'body of the school'.

Conclusion

Implications

As one might expect, the data allude to discrepancies between theory and practice in many areas. Inevitably, this is our human nature. The apostle Paul said it so well when he said, "I say one thing and do another." It seems that the general population truly desires a CCC. Moreover, in many instances there is a high level of agreement concerning the essential elements in a CCC.

It seems many people involved in a CCC are clear as to what the purpose of it is, but unclear as to how exactly they should fulfill it. Thus, many spirits of this world (philosophies) have not only gained a foothold in many CCCs, but they have 'taken the castle by storm'. Based on this survey, it seems that many people know that some philosophies should have no part in a CCC. However, people become confused when it comes to the details. People often fail to see how the specific teaching and learning elements in the classroom contradict the overarching Christian principles of the school.

Keep in mind that it is not so much about having all the right answers. These are immensely large and complex issues. All the more reason that we need the power of the Holy Spirit backing us. It really comes down to asking questions that are more significant. Do we know where our school is going? What will the curriculum look like in the next five, ten, or twenty years? Do we have a goal or destination? Do we have a map to get there? Do we have the necessary tools? What do we hope our students will have learned by the time they graduate? What sort of lifestyle will students be living upon graduation? These sample questions should be asked frequently by those responsible for curriculum development, management, and implementation. Furthermore, in a CCC these questions should be asked by everyone, not just a small handful of visionaries!

I think the entire thesis converges to this: a CCC must be structured around the Truth of the ages, yet dynamic enough to accommodate the movement of the Holy Spirit. For this I refer to the Wisdom of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3, verses 1-8:

There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest.

A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to rebuild.

A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away.

A time to search and a time to lose. A time to keep and a time to throw away.

A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak up.

A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace

(Holy Bible, 1996).

There is a time for everything in a CCC. There is a time for mathematics and a time for social studies. A time for thinking and a time for doing. A time for math and a time for

community service. A time to be emotional and a time to be intellectual. A time to focus on the community and a time to focus on the individual. A time to be relational and a time to be academic.

What an impossible task! That is why those developing the curriculum must be in such deep communion with the Holy Spirit. It is essential to teach students good communication skills, yet we must be flexible enough to allow them to develop the gifts that the Spirit has given them. Whatever the curricular structure is, it must also be dynamic. Moreover, this does not mean equilibrium must be attained between two competing elements. It means that we are sensitive to the Spirit's leading when one is to be favored over the other.

Limitations

It is important at this point to note what I would consider a glaring error on my part of the survey development. For the rating scale delimiters on the question, "How often does one ask the following questions when deciding what to teach in a CCC?" I used absolutes, from never to always, to define the scale of 1 to 4. I believe that use of absolutes in this question alone skewed the results such that fewer people answered with a four. This is especially clear when comparing the results from each one of the categories. The mean answer to this group is much lower than the other four question groups.

I also realized, much too late, that I forgot to put a gender question in the demographics section. It does not hamper the study. No gender indication just simply means that one cannot analyze any questions by gender.

People can interpret many of the words and terms used in the surveys differently. Terms like heart-knowledge and head-knowledge may mean different things to different people. Other words may have negative connotations for people. People who have had

bad experiences in math are biased. If asked to choose which is more important, math or community service, they may choose community service just because they hate math.

The data gathered from the thesis surveys may not be very random. Selecting the interviewees was not a random process even though efforts were made to choose diverse respondents. Mailing and emailing survey forms was not a random process either in the sense that I did not just pick people from the phone book. Furthermore, the results may be biased to those that have Internet access.

The results of this thesis are not conclusive. They are more likely representative of current trends in Christian curricula. Regardless, we must continue to research educational issues and I implore Christian educators to continue creating a database of research that is specific to Christ-centered curricula. Yes, it is important for us to learn from the secular research, yet we must realize that research is desperately needed regarding issues specific to Christian education and Christ-centered curricula.

I pray that you have grown through reading this thesis and that somehow your actions will better reflect our Savior and King. Moreover, I pray that many people will further analyze this rich source of data. I hope that more people are inspired to explore in depth the essential elements of a Christ-centered curriculum.

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Appendix

Christ-Centered Curriculum Survey

A worldwide survey to discern what people believe Christian Education is all about!

Greetings in the name of Christ! My name is Adam Sterenberg and I am a Christian schoolteacher in Michigan, USA. I am currently pursuing my Masters in Education at Dordt College in Northwest Iowa, USA. The intent of this survey is to find out what people around the world believe to be the essential elements of a Christ-centered curriculum. Thank you so much for helping to advance His kingdom!

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Purpose and Perspective (A)

Please remember the following for this survey: CCC stands for Christ-Centered Curriculum and that curriculum is defined as, "anything that is directly related to the teaching and learning of students." PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS AS TO HOW YOU THINK A CCC SHOULD BE!

In three sentences maximum, explain what makes a curriculum Christ-centered.

Question 1: How often does one ask the following questions when deciding what to teach in a CCC?

1= Never ... 2 ... 3 ... 4= Always

1. What is God's purpose for what we are studying? _____
2. How has what we have been studying been affected by sin? _____
3. What action does God want us to take by learning this? _____
4. How can we deepen our relationship with Christ by studying this topic/concept? _____

Question 2: How necessary is it that the following goals permeate every aspect of teaching and learning a CCC?

1= Not Necessary ... 2 ... 3 ... 4= Very Necessary

1. Strengthen students' relationship with God, others, and creation _____
2. Discover the blessings of God in the things He has created _____
3. Live responsively for His glory _____
4. Relevant and meaningful to students _____

Question 3: Rank the following elements of a CCC.**1= Not Necessary ... 2 ... 3 ... 4= Very Necessary**

1. Mastering the taught content _____
2. Critical Thinking & Discernment _____
3. Development of Creativity _____
4. Physical Development _____
5. Emotional Development _____
6. Developing Relationships _____
7. Service & Discipleship Skills _____
8. Spiritual Growth _____

Question 4: In a CCC, how often would students experience and/or express the following discipleship elements?**1= Rarely ... 2 ... 3 ... 4= Frequently**

1. Develop unique gifts, talents, and callings..... _____
2. Be Responsible to the community, world, and all of creation..... _____
3. Serve God, others, and various communities..... _____
4. Fix the "wrongs" in society..... _____
5. Discern their calling and develop gifts accordingly..... _____
6. Worship God in all things..... _____
7. Live a healthy physical, spiritual, emotional life..... _____
8. Be creative..... _____
9. Discern wisely in relevant issues..... _____

Question 5: To what degrees of importance do the following elements of a CCC rate?**1= Not Important, 2= Somewhat Important, 3= Important, 4= Extremely Important**

1. Devotions/Chapel _____
2. Teacher role-Modeling _____
3. Leading students to a
saving relationship with Christ _____
4. Each lesson has a Christian
Perspective _____
5. Community service _____
6. Academic rigor _____
7. Imparting the Truth _____
8. Teaching using the methods
that Jesus used _____

Content and Skills of a CCC (B)

Each of the following "tension" questions will have five degrees to choose from. For example, "Which do you like better- red or green?" If you clearly like red better, then you will choose the dot farthest left. If you clearly like green better,

you will choose the dot farthest right. IF YOU LIKE THE TWO COLORS THE SAME, CHOOSE THE CENTER DOT. Or, choose the dots to whichever side you "lean". REMEMBER: THIS IS HOW A CCC SHOULD BE.

1. The content of a CCC is rooted in

New ideas

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Tradition

☐

2. The content of a CCC is chosen based upon

State Requirements

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

That which glorifies God

☐

3. The content of CCC is selected through

Intense Prayer

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Thorough Research

☐

4. Which is more important in a CCC?

Mathematics

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Community Service

☐

5. A CCC uses

Secular textbooks

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Christian textbooks

☐

6. Which is more important in a CCC?

Heart-Knowledge

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Head-Knowledge

☐

7. Of these two factors, which more clearly defines a Christian School?

The people in it

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

the written curriculum

☐

8. In a CCC, students are given more opportunities to

Act on their faith

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Think about their faith

☐

9. In a CCC, a student is given opportunities to express and act on their faith in

Bible class

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Every class

☐

10. Students learning in a CCC focuses on

Classical knowledge

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Innovative knowledge

☐

11. A CCC's content concentrates more on

Knowledge acquisition

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Building character

☐

12. A CCC primarily uses

Textbooks

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Staff developed units

☐

13. In a CCC, knowledge and learning tends towards

The abstract

☐
☐
☐
☐

The practical

☐

14. Questions asked of students in a CCC are more

Open-ended

☐
☐
☐
☐

Close-ended

☐

15. Content in CCC is chosen/directed by the

Teachers

☐
☐
☐
☐

Students

☐

16. In a CCC, which is more important for students?

Emotional Health

☐
☐
☐
☐

Social studies knowledge

☐

17. Which is more pertinent in a CCC?

Christlike conflict resolution

☐
☐
☐
☐

Learning a sport in gym class

☐

Teaching Methods (C)

1. In a CCC, should subjects are taught

Thematically
(integrated)

☐
☐
☐
☐

Separately
(by subjects)

☐

2. The classroom procedures (ex. rules) in a CCC are developed by the

Students

☐
☐
☐
☐

Teacher

☐

3. With regards to student learning, a CCC will advocate and honor

Individual success

☐
☐
☐
☐

Community success

☐

4. In a CCC, grades are given based on

Personal effort/growth

☐
☐
☐
☐

Achieving set standards

☐

5. In a CCC, values which more highly?

Relationships

☐
☐
☐
☐

Academics

☐

6. In a CCC, classroom management is the responsibility of

Teachers

Students

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. When evaluating (grading) a student's performance, in a CCC, it is done by the

Student

Teacher

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. In a CCC, the curriculum is designed to cultivate a student's

Beliefs about God

Actions in relationship to God

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. A Teacher in a CCC motivates 'unmotivated' students by

Encouragement

Punishment

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. A CCC honors and celebrates

Academic achievers

Active servants

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11. In a CCC, students learn how to

Rely on God

Rely on the mind (logic)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. Classroom management in a CCC is

Proactive

Reactive

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. A CCC celebrates and honors

A standard set of gifts

The unique gifts of each child

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. In a CCC, success is measured by being

A competent servant of Christ

Competent in academics

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. Which is valued more in a CCC?

Competition

Cooperation

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. In a CCC, teaching and learning are a success when the

Individual succeeds

Whole class succeeds

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

17. In a CCC, students are taught

Directly (Lecture)

Indirectly (class discussion)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

18. Say that Amy is a student in a CCC. Who is more responsible for her learning?

Amy

The entire class

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

19. Which is more important in a CCC?

Intellect

Emotions

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

20. In a CCC, which is more valuable?

Developing healthy relationships

Mastering Paragraph structure

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

21. Which is more important for a student who is part of a CCC?

Developing their God-given talents

Meeting national or state standards

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

22. In a CCC, the teacher is viewed overall as a

Guide

Commanding officer

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

23. Teachers involved in CCC are viewed more as a

Resident Expert

Fellow learner

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

If your explanation of what makes a curriculum Christ-centered has changed at all, please describe it below in a maximum of 3 sentences.

**Congratulations! You've made it to the end.
Thank you so much for your time and God bless you!**

Personal Information

Name: _____ Age: _____

Email Address: _____

City, State, Country: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Personal Religious Affiliation: _____

School's Religious Affiliation: _____

Circle how you are/were involved in Christian Education:

Student teacher	Parent	Grandparent	Support Staff	Pre K-5
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6-8 Teacher	9-12 teacher	College Professor	Administrator
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Curriculum Developer/Coordinator	Financial Supporter	Volunteer
----------------------------------	---------------------	-----------

Homeschool Student	Homeschool Parent	Other: _____
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I have been involved in Christian education for how many years? _____

Encouragement or constructive criticism for Adam:

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VITA

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Excellence in Education—Significant Educator Award 2001

Who's Who in Teaching—1999

A summary of this research will be published in Christian Educators Journal in the spring
of 2005.

To download raw survey data, thesis, and graphs, go to the above website.

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