



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

The impact of 'ecumenical' schools.



Academics at Queen's University in Belfast have produced a study which indicates some of the effects of educating Roman Catholics and Protestants together. Christians should note their comments too!

Their report follows six years of research into the political attitudes and identities of young people.

It suggested those at integrated schools were more likely to reject traditional identities and allegiances.

Professor Bernadette Hayes, Professor Ian McAllister and Lizanne Dowds used a range of surveys to study if the attitudes of people who had an integrated education differed from those who went to a segregated school.

Their report is entitled: "In search of the middle ground: Integrated education and Northern Ireland politics."

Professor Hayes said: "These results, tentative as they are, add weight to the studies which have shown that integrated schools can and do have an impact on the outlooks of the pupils who attend them."

Protestants who attended an integrated school were less likely to say that they were British or unionist; however, they were not willing to adopt an Irish or nationalist identity. Catholics who attended an integrated school were less likely to endorse an Irish identity, but were more likely to say they were neither unionist nor nationalist.

80% of Protestants who attended a fairly mixed or segregated school favoured the union with Britain, compared to 65% of those who went to an integrated school.

51% of Catholics who attended a segregated school supported Irish re-unification, compared to 35% of those who had experienced integrated education.

BBC Northern Ireland education correspondent Maggie Taggart said: "There is an argument that parents who choose integrated education are more likely to be liberal minded and that is transmitted to their children.

"However, recent research suggests the type of school a child attends has a bigger influence on attitudes than parents."

What the report does prove beyond any doubt is that the ethos and philosophy of a school have a very definite impact upon the minds of its pupils.

This is something that those involved in Christian education within the Free Presbyterian Church have been striving to impress upon Christians for over 25 years! The dire consequences of children being raised under the influences of unconverted and ecumenically-minded teachers in the state system are far-reaching and heart-breaking.