



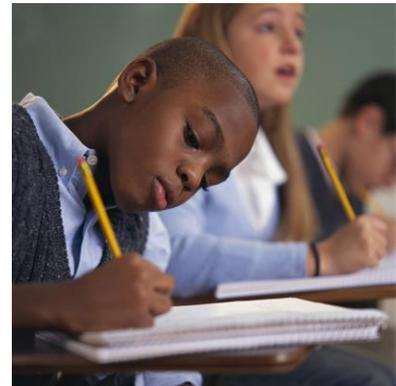
"From Where I Sit ..."

Education Is Still Important!

As 2013 draws to an end, it is appropriate to remember the highpoints of the closing year and to consider the potential "resolutions" for the New Year. For the majority of us, there are probably many for each category. I would like to make the case that among the resolutions that might be chosen for the coming New Year, excellence in education should still rank high.

In the recent Special Issue of Forbes magazine entitled "2014 Investment Guide", Forbes publisher, Rich Karlgaard writes about what I will call the "secondary" importance of academics. In his article "Smarts in Business 'Is Not about IQ'" (page 46), Karlgaard cites NetApp CEO Tom Georgens' interesting observation where he said, "I know this irritates a lot of people, but once someone is at a certain point in his or her career—and it's not that far out, maybe five years—all the grades and academic credentials in the world don't mean anything anymore. It's all about accomplishment from that point on." From one vantage point this is a true statement but from another it leaves much to be desired. In the context of Mr. Georgens' point one must consider that he is the CEO of a \$6.3 billion data storage company (NetApp) and in such a large enterprise one could readily expect there to be many different layers and levels required to be attained before achieving the status of a corporate leader. I don't know about you as a reader of this series, but I don't know of or run into many people who on a regular basis read Forbes magazine not to mention interact with persons highlighted or cited in its pages; but I do know that at some point along the way, one's academic achievements and scholarly credentials will play or have played an important part in the world of their respective employment opportunities. And it was most likely for a period that was much later than "five years."

What I'm saying in so many words is that education and excellence in education is still important. I contend that the audience to which the publisher of Forbes magazine writes is quite different than the reality in which the majority of our congregations and members live. Accordingly difficult cultures exist and different expectations are projected. Georgens says that in as little as five years, if your foot is firmly in the door, academics become secondary and from that point on it's all about performance. But publisher Karlgaard pushes the point further to say that it is about more than performance, it's about what Maynard Webb, chairman of Yahoo's board of directors calls, "... that grit factor" which he defines basically as "hard work." Karlgaard's position is that "... grit leads directly to becoming smarter ... because grit results in an increased ability to learn more and adapt faster." Hence he closes his article with the statement, "In the real world it's grit that makes us smart."



During the month of December, in addition to celebrating the birth of the Christ-child, we as CME's also celebrate the founding of the CME Church. The Church that was formed for freed slaves of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and organized by 41 ex-slaves with a primary focus on promoting education and the educational opportunities that had been denied them as slaves. In the 143 years since the founding of our great church, our fore parents have demonstrated their "grit" not by just getting an education and insuring the same for their children

and grandchildren, but also by learning more (with the attainment of advanced degrees) and adapting faster to insure additional opportunities for the present and the future.

In a world somewhere, it may be true that one will only need to depend on their academic achievements and scholarly credentials for about five years after moving into the real world of employment, but I believe for “me and mine” and perhaps “you and yours” we must never stop learning, never stop growing, never stop adapting, never stop achieving, because education and the excellence of education is still important. Or at least that’s the way it looks to me ...

“From Where I Sit”

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*(Copies of earlier articles may be found on the
Personnel Services Webpage of the CME Website at www.thecmechurch.org)*