

Eating, Sleeping, and Breathing Bible School Education

By

Melinda Poitras

Missionary Kid to Ghana, West Africa

I sit around tables sometimes and listen to my friends talk about the “glory days” of their childhood and all of the experiences that they had in public school. The way the education system worked where they were from, the people around them, the hardships they faced: persecution, exposure to sin and the outside world, cafeteria food. They also discuss the teachers: some quirky, some geeky, some hardnosed, some brilliant, some absolutely life changing. I don’t have much to say during these discussions because I never went to public school. I was homeschooled in Africa. My teacher was quirky, geeky, hardnosed, brilliant, *and* absolutely life changing. She was married to another teacher. And as teachers – they raised me. Quite possibly, to be a teacher. Time will tell.

How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? (Romans 10:14-15)

My parents both have this passionate desire to see the world educated. Not just about Math or Science but about Jesus, the salvation He offers, and the many ways to better the world around you and your own personal life afforded in His word. They wanted the world to hear all of the truths that are available to it. They took this passionate desire to Africa and there they met up, teamed up, and eventually shackled up. (Underneath the banner of holy matrimony, of course.)

My father has this idea in his head though. You won’t talk to him for very long without hearing about it – even if you are only a casual acquaintance. He wants as many people to be reached as possible, as quickly as possible. It isn’t enough for him to teach people how to live their lives – he desires to teach them how to teach others to live their lives as well. Because of this, I grew up eating, sleeping, and breathing Bible School education.

Our entire lives revolved around this passion. The desire to see people educated- the end goal being that they would in turn educate others. My parents live their lives by the principle found in Romans 10:14-15. But not just by going where God sends them. *But by sending as many others as possible where God would have **them** go.*

What was it like being raised by such teachers?

Education was the main focus of their lives – the main goal of their ministry. It was also the main topic of conversation. Who was teaching what class. What concepts were getting through – what concepts were not getting through. Who fell asleep at their desk. Who was trying. Who was not. Who was grasping the teaching and who couldn’t care less. How this illustration went, how that point came across. Enrollment. Courses. Housing conditions. Test grades.

Amazing actually. It was amazing. Because I always knew that my parents were a part of something bigger than they were – something that made a difference. That they weren't just changing lives. But those lives were changing lives. And those lives were changing lives. All by teaching the things that they had been taught.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations... (Matthew 28:19)

I should probably interject something about the Global Association of Theological Studies from a missionary kid's perspective in here. You know about it, it's that program that is dedicated to putting all of our Bible Schools on the same curriculum so that Bible Schools globally will not only have a uniform curriculum – but a curriculum that proves itself to be the definition of excellence.

Here's what GATS looks like to me: My Dad has been quoting Matthew 28:19 for as long as I can remember. You might think that it's enough to fulfill this Scripture by merely going to a foreign nation to live and teach there. But Dad's been quoting it enough to realize that it says "all nations." So, he's joined hands with a group of very talented educators to try and do just that. This process has been in the works for a long time and I have been privileged to bear witness to it.

What Education Looks Like

From birth, I've been surrounded by lesson plans, new ideas, Bible Schools, and a powerful passion and desire to see God's Word spread to every nation, tribe, and tongue. If you asked me what education looks like to me I would say: It looks like Dad's briefcase. It looks like a printing press spewing pages and pages of lessons to be used for Portable Bible Schools. It looks like my sister standing outside under a tree going through the motions of "Father Abraham." It looks like my Mom sitting on the couch, glasses crooked, editing (or producing) a lesson plan. It looks like two teachers who met in Africa and dedicated their lives to teaching others of all ages. To me, education looks like Matthew 28:19 in motion. And while I may not have much to say about public school, I have a thing or two to say about education. Because I had a good teacher *or two*.