When William Bennet was serving as Secretary of Education, under President Regan, he commissioned a study of Public Education in America. The article that was published was entitled “America at Risk”. He was not referring to the kind of attack that we have experienced in New York and the Pentagon, but rather, to the risk in the area of Public Education. One of the conclusions published in the study was that “we are graduating individuals from High School and College that are not prepared for work or life”. There is little evidence that things have changed, except to diminish, since this report was published. Is Christian Education also ‘AT RISK” in our churches and in America? Are we witnessing the fulfillment of prophecy recorded in 2 Timothy 3:7, “Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”.

If this four year study of Public Education by Mr. Bennet, is correct, then how do we evaluate the status of Christian Education in our time and in our churches? How can we, as Christian Educators, evaluate the results of our teaching in Sunday School classrooms across our Evangelical Conventions, especially in the BMA and Southern Baptist Convention? What results could we expect if we could test the true results? What method would you suggest that we use to evaluate our teaching effectiveness? What evidence is there that our educational methodology is producing biblical results that we so desperately need?

It is readily apparent that those who teach in our church schools week after week face an incredible task. They hardly ever have the same students two weeks in a row. Students vary in educational levels and spiritual maturity. On any given Sunday a teacher will have those who have been Christian a long time along with those who are new believers. Some are well educated, even with College degrees, sitting beside those who have not finished Grade or High School. Many church Sunday School organizations no longer have age grouping, especially in the Adult and Youth departments, so this factor can be added to the equation.

Cultural and ethnical backgrounds can vary immensely in some Sunday School classes. Add to this the fact that many of those who are in teaching positions have had little, or, no training in teaching methodology or instructional theory. Many times they have been in teaching positions with no educational training in Bible, let alone in the study of Bible doctrine. And the reality is that many of the students who attend these classes now will become church leaders and teachers in the future only to extend the same teaching practices that they have observed. The haunting question confronts all of us: “How well prepared will they be”?

Dr. Howard Hendridks, in his book “The Seven Laws of the Teacher”, stated: “It takes a college degree for someone to teach our children that two plus two equals four, but anyone will do in our church educational leadership positions.”

Of course, we hear the same old arguments from traditional church leaders: “We have to do things the way we do because we do not always have qualified teachers to teach our classes. And, we cannot have qualified teacher requirements because we would not have enough teachers if we did that”. This is one reason why our efforts in establishing and maintaining effective life-changing teaching programs and life-changing leaders in our churches is diminishing.

In this Website, the CELDM Team will attempt to promote educational strategies that can aid in bridging the ever widening weakness in Christian educational philosophy and methodology.