

Notes:

- Healthy families are the building blocks of healthy nations. We must train two generations.
- Knowing the Hand of God in the history of your nation provides confidence in curriculum design.
- Christian education is the greatest defense a nation can have!
- Educational reformers must write the vision and the ‘story.’

Applying the Principles to Your Calling and Nation!

1. What is God speaking to you? What is your calling? His plan? Your vision?
2. What are the next steps? How will you strategize to accomplish your vision?

REBUILDING THE WALLS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Principles for Nation Building

Elizabeth Youmans

Summary:

1. Rebuilding is dependent upon the character and values of those in leadership:

Character qualities of the two leaders:

Nehemiah	Ezra

2. KEY biblical principles gleaned for educational reformation:

- Reformation begins with intercessory prayer.
- Rebuilding is a faith walk and not for the fainthearted.
- Reformation is only possible with God’s plan and wisdom, not man’s!
- One righteous individual with an ear to hear God’s voice can impact a nation through education!
- Laying Christ and His Word at the heart of education is crucial for transformation.



Rebuilding the Walls of Christian Education

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Notes:

First Principles of Rebuilding from Nehemiah:

1. God placed civil governor Nehemiah with religious educational reformer Ezra to rebuild the defense of Jerusalem within and without.

Principles:

2. Hearing God's Word brought personal and corporate repentance.

Principles:

3. The national institutions were rebuilt based upon the Law of God.

Principles:

Rebuilding the Wall of Christian Education: Principles for Nation Building

Introduction: Christian education, the greatest defense of a nation!

Notes:

1. Education is not neutral. It is a religious function of society and produces the values and traditions of the culture and institutions of a nation.

2. Education forms the spirit and the character of a nation. Therefore, to build a Christian civilization, the philosophy of education must be rooted in Christ and His Word.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.” (Hosea 4:6)

3. Christian education is the best defense of a nation (2 Chr 32:8).

“The role of education is more important than preaching the gospel and making laws, because it is the foundation of both!” (Noah Webster, Father of American Christian education, 1789)

4. Definition of education:

[Root: Latin, e duceo, to lead out of.] The bringing up, as of a child, instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties. (Webster's 1828 Dictionary, See 2 Tim 3:16-17)

Education imparts the religious values of those in control. By definition, education is an active not a passive process! Modern education requires children to participate in the “information mill,” where countless hours are spent filling in workbooks and memorizing information to be parroted back to pass required tests. Students are taught everything except the art of thinking and reasoning!

There are four active verbs in the definition:

- **Illumine** the understanding:

Illumine is a biblical word. The root of this word is light. Who is the light of the world? Jesus Christ! The Word incarnate!
(Jo 1:1; 14)

- **Correct** the temper:

Discipline and formation of character; training children in the art of Christian self-government

Rededicating the Wall:

1. This new beginning was celebrated with hymns of thanksgiving to God (Ne 12:27-43).

Principles:

2. The wall, the gates, and the people were purified with sacrificial blood (Ne 12:30).

Principles:

3. The leaders and two choirs circled the wall and held a worship service in the courts of the temple (Ne 12:31).

Principles:

Notes:

5. Israel's providential history was taught to restore the remembrance of God's Hand in the life of their nation (Ne 9:1-37).

Principles:

6. They renewed covenant with God and drafted a new document (Ne 9:38).

Principles:

7. The responsibilities of the covenant were reiterated and ratified (Ne 10:1-39).

Principles:

Notes:

- **Form** habits and manners of youth:

Not just habits and manners of civility and sociability, but habits of Christian scholarship, such as thinking and reasoning with the revelation of God's Word and building skills of rhetoric and writing to articulate and defend a Christian world and life view.

- **Prepare** them for their destiny:

Equip them for their divine calling and place in history (Ps 139)

5. The Book of Nehemiah and its companion Book, Ezra, contain the principles of godly leadership and nation building.

Nehemiah in Hebrew means comforter.

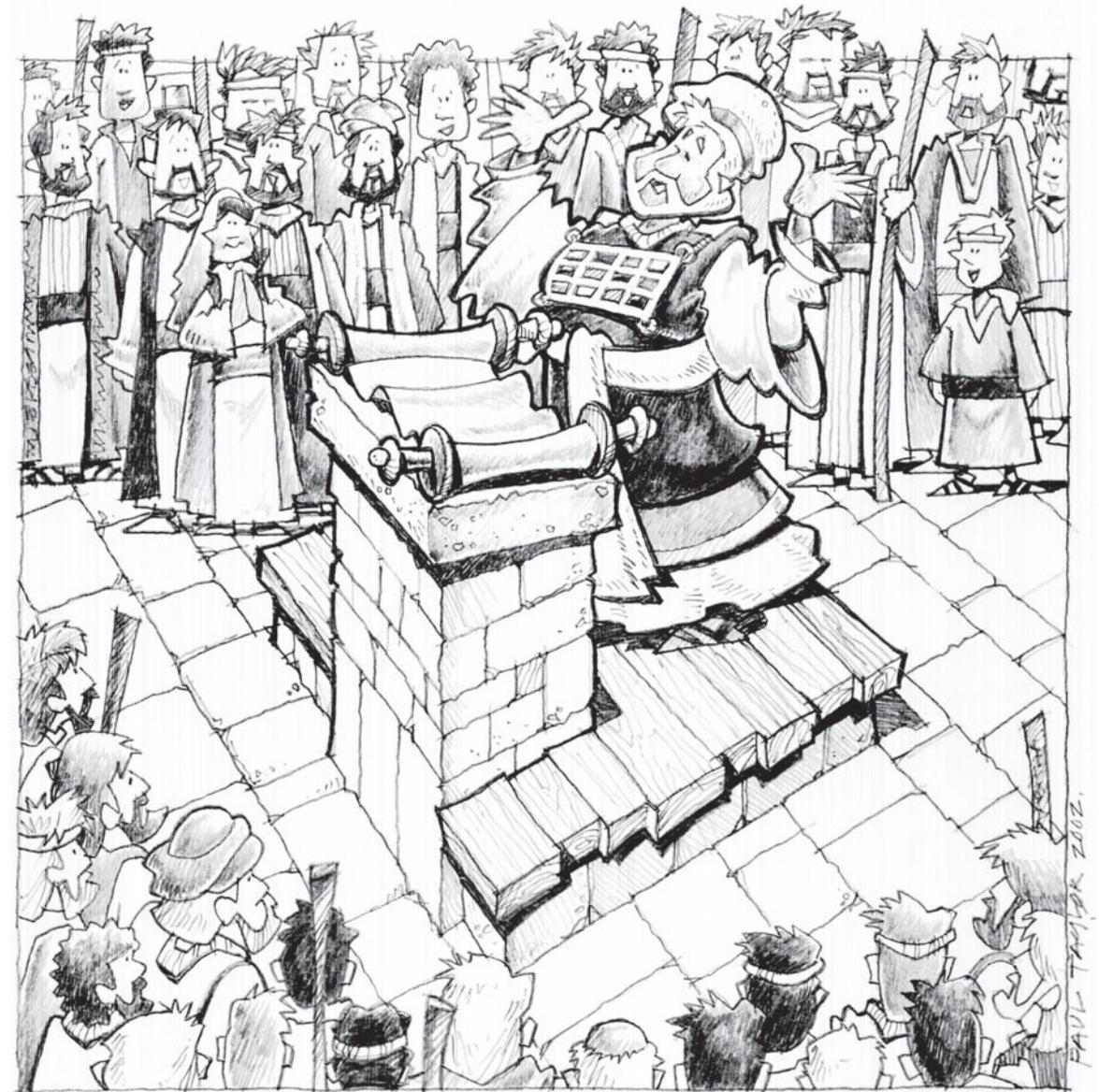
Ezra in Hebrew means help.

God gave a plan of restoration to civil governor, Nehemiah, and religious educator, Ezra, to rebuild the broken wall and burned gates of Jerusalem as a prelude to the restoration of individual lives, institutions, and the nation. This teaching draws the parallel of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem to rebuilding a nation through an educational system with Christ and His Word at the heart.

Timeline of God's Hand:

- 722 B.C. God's judgment fell on Israel by Assyria.
▼ The northern kingdom of ten tribes was conquered, carried into captivity, and scattered among the nations.
- 586 God's judgment fell on Judah by Babylonia.
▼ The southern kingdom fell after many warnings from God. The royalty, healthy men, and young boys were taken into bondage to Babylon, "the Hollywood of the ancient empires," for 70 years.
- 539 Persia conquered Babylon.
▼ God moved on the heart of pagan King Cyrus, who encouraged exiles to return to their homelands and extended favor to the Jews.
- 537 Prince Zerubbabel returned to Jerusalem.
▼ With 50,000 exiles, Zerubbabel returned to rebuild the temple. Not all the Jews desired to return to Jerusalem. The temple restoration was completed in 515 B.C.
- 457 High priest Ezra returned with 2,000 priests, Levites, and temple servants.
▼ With the return of the high priest, the temple was appointed and worship restored. Ezra interceded on behalf of the remnant and renewed God's covenant.
- 444 Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall.
▼ God moved on the heart of Nehemiah, cupbearer to the Persian king, to fast and pray for Jerusalem. The plan and power of God were imparted to rebuild the wall. He found favor with the pagan king and received resources and passage across enemy borders for the return to Jerusalem. The wall was restored in just 52 days!
- Ezra restored God's Word to the people, reminding them of God's Hand in their history. The work was not complete until the people were rebuilt spiritually and Israel's institutions rested solidly on God's Law!

The Word of God at the heart of education renews hearts and minds!



Ezra, the educator, read the Law day and night in Jerusalem's market place for all to hear!

Renewing the Covenant:

1. Ezra, the high priest and religious educator, read the Law day and night in the marketplace for all to hear (Ne 8:1-3). (See illustration on opposite page.)

Principles:

2. Ezra taught the people God's Word and translated the words to give the meaning (Ne 8:8 & 13).

Principles:

3. The initial response of the Jews was to weep at their loss and repent for their sins (Ne 8:9).

Principles:

4. They celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles (harvest feast) (Ne 8:10-18).

Principles:

Surveying the Degeneration of the Wall:

1. Before Nehemiah and his men even arrived in Jerusalem, the enemy heard that "someone had come seeking the welfare of the sons of Israel" (Ne 2:10).

Principles:

2. Nehemiah surveyed the broken wall alone at night. He began at the Dragon's Well and the Refuse Gate and walked the wall noting the destruction and burned gates (Ne 2:12-13).

Principles:

3. Nehemiah spoke the vision and rallied support from the remnant:

"Then I said to them, 'You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach.' I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me and also about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, 'Let us arise and build.' So they put their hands to the good work" (Ne 2:17-18).

Principles:

Strategies for Rebuilding the Wall:

Jerusalem's wall is symbolic of 'the place where God dwells.' In this teaching, the wall of Jerusalem represents Christian education—the greatest defense a nation can have!

1. Nehemiah began the restoration of the wall by rebuilding the burned gates, the points of entrance and exit in the wall (Ne 2:11-17).

The gates in Jerusalem's wall were literally rooms with wooden doors hung on the outside and the inside of the wall. In these rooms was stored God's Law. The city elders sat in the gates and used the Law to settle disputes about passage in and out. (See illustration on opposite page.)

In Scripture, gates symbolize:

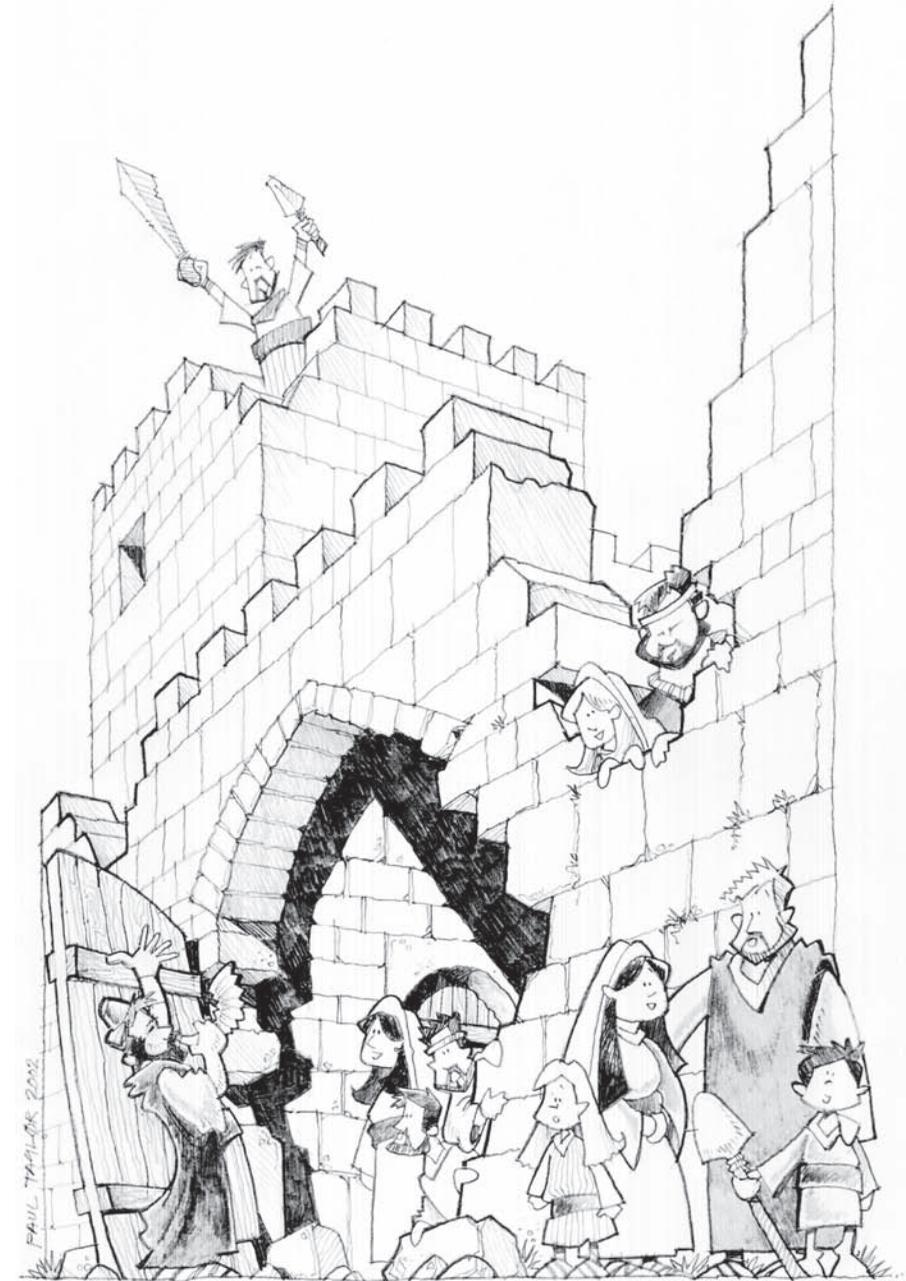
- Authority
- Truth
- Protection

Principles:

2. The Levites, who were the teachers and musicians, were also the gatekeepers. They were trained as warriors to protect these weak places on the wall.

Principles:

Families are the building blocks of nations



Tools for rebuilding: Godly leadership; families working in unity; a sword in one hand and a building tool in the other!

Notes:

3. Nehemiah placed the builders together in family units on the wall working in unity with other families (Ne 4:13). (See illustration on opposite page.)

Principles:

4. The tools used for rebuilding were a sword in one hand and building tool in the other (Ne 4:17).

Principles:

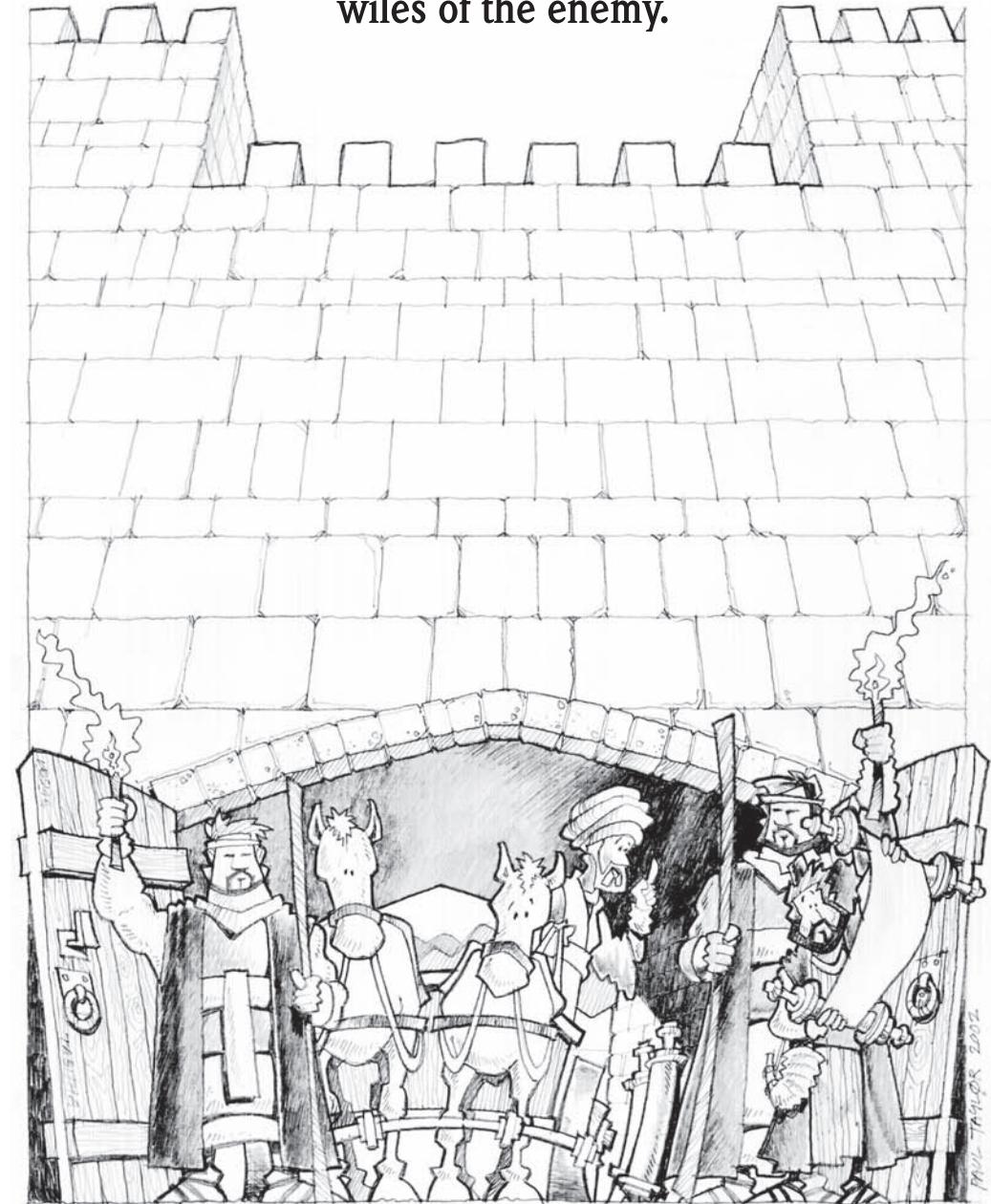
5. Nehemiah stayed focused on his calling and always encouraged his people (Ne 6:2-3).

Principles:

6. Nehemiah was prepared for the spiritual battle when work of rebuilding was attacked in many ways:

- Mockery, 4:1-6
- Conspiracy, 4:7-13
- Weariness, 4:10
- Fear, 4:14
- Blackmail, 5:1-19
- Compromise, 6:1-4
- Slander, 6:5-9
- Betrayal, 6:10-14
- Discouragement, 8:10

Gates in the wall of Christian education must be guarded against the wiles of the enemy.



God's Law (truth) was the source of authority and protection in the ancient gates in Jerusalem's wall.

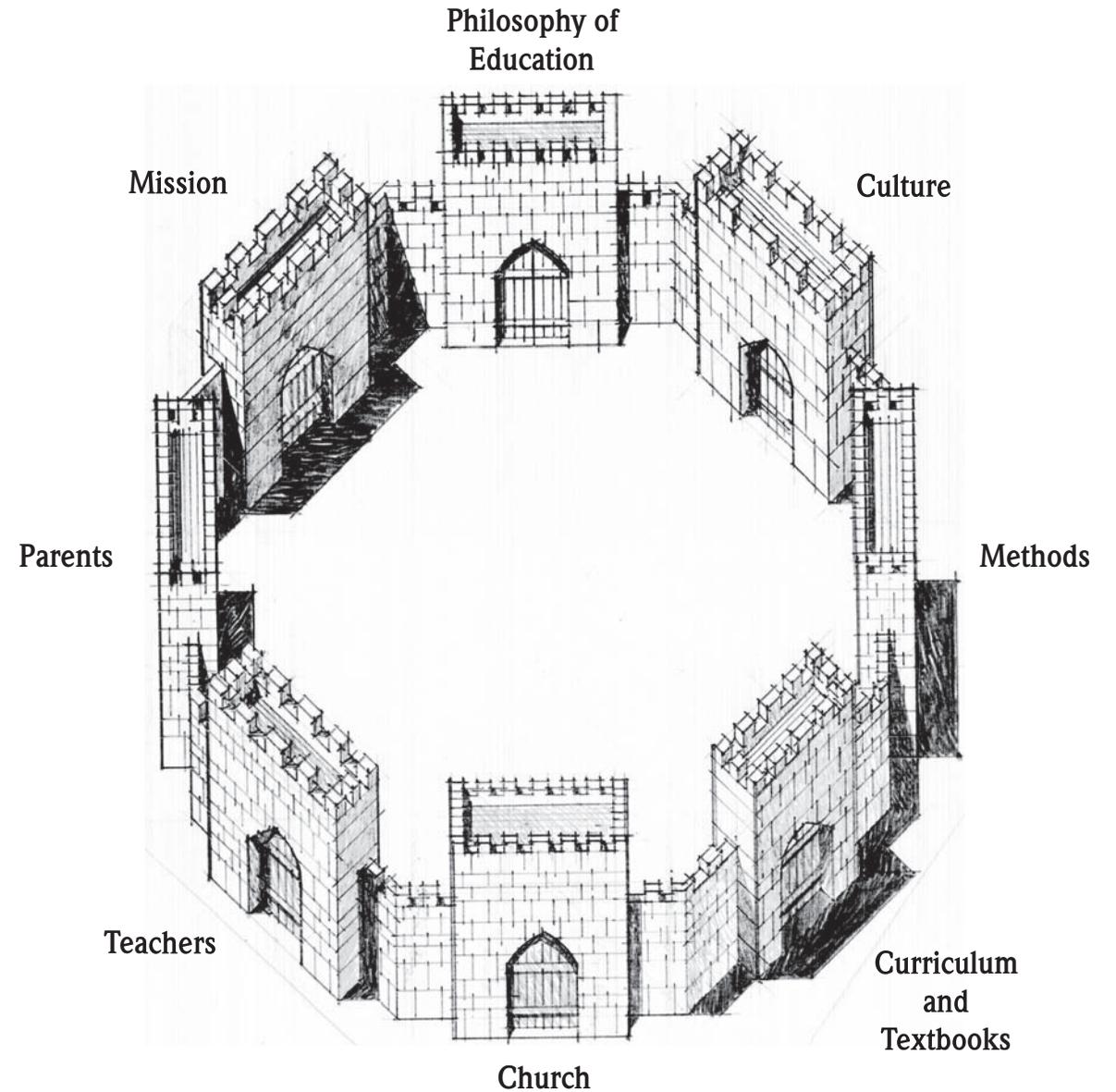
What are the 'gates' in the wall of education today?:

(See illustration on opposite page.)

1. **Philosophy of education:** Education is not neutral, it reflects the worldview of the teacher.
2. **Mission:** All Christian schools have one: "Raise up a generation of Christian leaders . . ."
3. **Parents:** Mandated by God for the education of their children.
4. **Teachers:** Teachers are the heart of education.
5. **Curriculum and Textbooks:** Contain the worldview of the author. Today, most Christian curriculum is patterned after secular curriculum.
6. **Methods:** Reflect the way we perceive children. We need a Christian view of children made in the image of God.
7. **Culture:** Reflection of the spiritual values of society
8. **Church:** Has responsibility to teach and equip families to be salt and light.

Principles:

The 21st century war is one of ideas waged for the hearts and minds of our children!



Christian education is the greatest defense of a nation. Gates, the weakest points on the wall, must be closed to the enemy's passage and guarded.