

CHALCEDON

No. 405, April 1999

Report



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A TOOL FOR RESTORING
CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

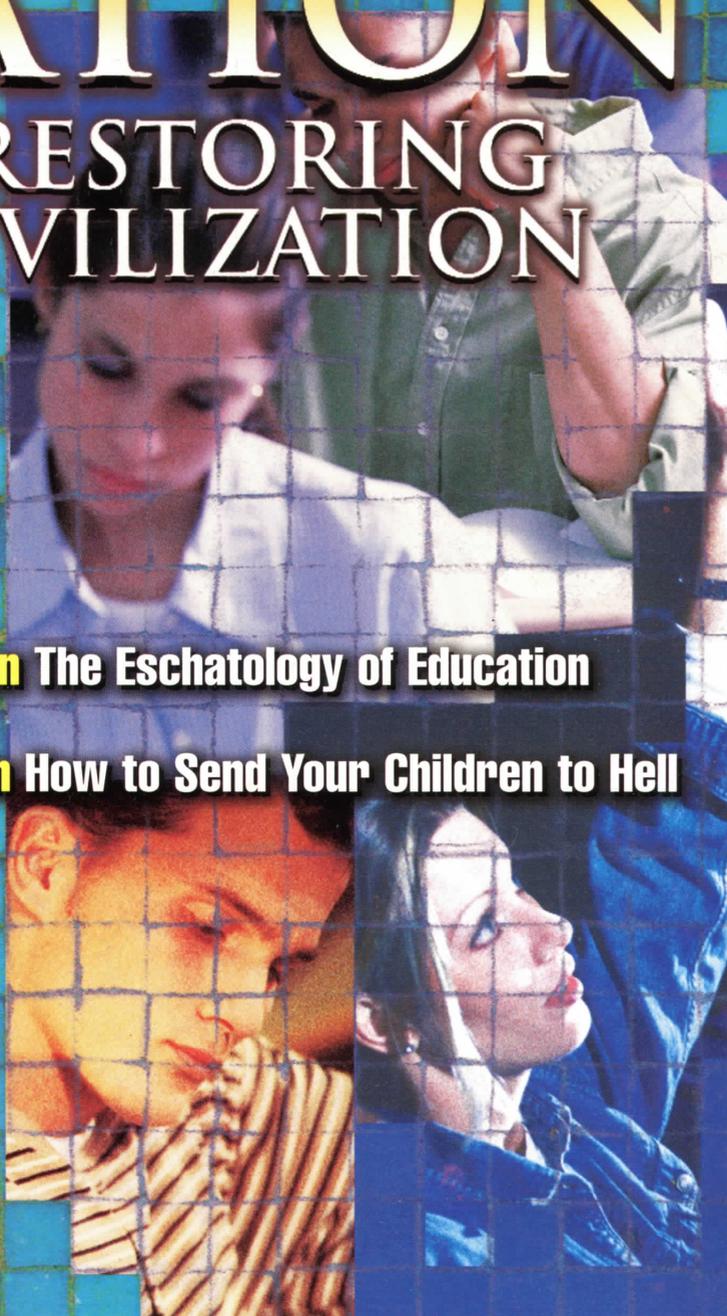
R. J. Rushdoony on Education and Law

Samuel Blumenfeld on The Real Revolution

Andrew Sandlin on The Eschatology of Education

Steve Schlissel on How to Send Your Children to Hell

... and much more



CHALCEDON *Report*

A Monthly Report Dealing With the Relationship of Christian Faith to the World

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Chalcedon Scholars:

Rev. R. J. Rushdoony is chairman of the board of Chalcedon and a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical Law to society.

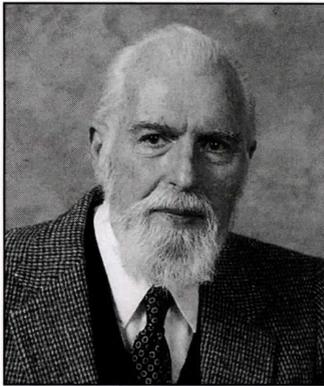
Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony is president of Chalcedon.

Rev. Andrew Sandlin is executive director of Chalcedon, editor-in-chief of the *Chalcedon Report* and *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, and president of the National Reform Association.

Rev. Brian M. Abshire is the pastor of Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, California; a Chalcedon board member; and Chalcedon's conference director. He can be reached at (209)544-1572 or Abshire@ix.netcom.com.

Education and Law

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony



Throughout history, religion, when successful, has best expressed itself in education and law. By means of some form of education, religions transmit themselves to children, to a people's future. By means of law, religion expresses itself in the government of people by defining good and evil.

Religions that fail to dominate and control education and law quickly become fading relics of the past, as was the case in the United States by 1950. The philosophy of John Dewey provided the non-theistic common faith of much of the world, especially the United States, and Deweyism was the humanistic religion of education taught by Dewey and his successors.

Meanwhile, millions of dead churchmen saw themselves as good Christians as they furthered anti-Christianity in education and law. More than a few churches with thousands of members have seen themselves as pillars of the Faith while barring all reference to Christian day schools or homeschools, or any favorable stand on God's law.

Christians today thus have a very difficult position: how to save the coming generation from humanistic education and humanistic anti-Biblical law.

By God's providence, since the 1950s, a growing number of Christian and homeschools are in evidence, and more and more pastors are teaching God's law.

The future of a society is its education and law. The number of professing Christians does not have much to do with it because most profession is faith without works.

A culture is a religion in action, governing faith and life; for people to profess a faith means to apply it totally, to live by it in every aspect of their being. I recall vividly, at the end of World War II, a young veteran, an American Indian, professed his faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. His immediate desire was to re-order his total life in terms of the Bible. He began with tithing, a very easy first step he called it, and continued it across the board. He saw himself as God's property.

Consider how much Christians could accomplish in our world if a considerable number took the same vein! Does our Lord expect anything less?

We have a tremendous task confronting us, a humanistic culture that is destroying Christendom. Here and there men of God like Paul Lindstrom, Joseph Morecraft, Steve Schlissel, Ellsworth McIntire, and others are confronting and conquering, but we need many more warriors of the Lord.

A different world requires a different people, and it is our task through Christian schooling to provide that different people. I had the privilege this week of listening to two homeschooled girls give evidence of their faith and learning. There is a splendor and magnificence to what we can accomplish in Christ. Let us then do it.

Due to space limitations, we had to cut Brian Abshire's column this month. To forestall the mountain of fan mail complaining about this decision (and save Brian from carpal tunnel syndrome from writing all the letters himself) we want to assure everyone that Brian will be back next month. He can be reached at (209)544-1572, or you can visit Reformed Heritage's website at www.reformedheritage.org. (This statement supplied by Brian Abshire.)

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The Eschatology of Education

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin



Traditionalist educators often talk about the “end,” or objective, of the educational enterprise. Every educational system and, indeed, every educational act, presupposes a particular objective beyond the educational event itself. Even if that objective is nothing more than the equipping of the individual

with certain basic tools needed to function in a society (and even the most basic educational endeavor entails more than this), every act and system of education implies some goal or purpose. Beyond this, every education presupposes an *eschatology*, a view of the future and last things. This fact is often less evident, but no less certain. Eschatology, as Rushdoony once observed, is not only about last things, but about *first* things. Every education implies some assumption, explicit or implicit, about the shape of the future.

Secular Educational Eschatologies

Communist education, for example, includes the assumption that history is governed by impersonal laws which guarantee the eventual triumph of the communist system (“dialectical materialism”). Communist education is not designed merely for a particular “end,” but also for a particular eschatology. Marx was convinced that certain historical laws dictated the inevitable triumph of the proletariat and the classless society. For this reason, among others, he considered rational argument with his ideational opponents futile, since men’s reason itself is conditioned by their historical situation (he somehow did not see how this fact called into question the transhistorical validity of his own views).¹ Communist education educates men not only *in* communist dogma, but also *according to* communist eschatology. Communists readily employ torture and brainwashing not primarily because they are inherently barbaric and inhumane (though many are), but because their dogma and its eschatology require barbarism and inhumanity: if man is nothing but materiality—a cog in a wheel—every aspect of his being can be externally reshaped to fit the communistic scheme, its eschatology, presumed to be historically inevitable.²

Similarly, Western humanistic education operates according to certain eschatological assumptions. John

Dewey, the father of modern “democratic” education, worked toward and heralded the day when religion would be considered nothing more than a common human consciousness which all men share in striving toward an unrealized ideal. He was not shy in asserting that historic Christianity was not compatible with this eschatological vision.³ Eric Hoffer spoke of the extravagant visions of the “true believers” who observe in their mind’s eye a better world and who are committed to making that vision a reality.⁴ The fact is, though, every religious and philosophical system and every coherent way of thinking implies some eschatological assumption—what the future looks like and how it should end. Even the most radical existentialists who deny any hint of determinism work toward a future in which men recognize *their* existential vision of radical human free will.

“Traditional” Education

Advocates of a return to the so-called “traditional” education (which in reality originated from merely quasi-Christian and Unitarian assumptions) hold that education should eschew any form of social engineering and limit itself to the 3 R’s—reading, writing, and arithmetic. This profoundly naive notion which governs many Christian educators today fails to take into account the question of why students should be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic at all. If the answer is, to make better individuals, the immediate response must be, “But why do individuals need to be made better?” And when we begin to answer that question, we begin to uncover eschatological assumptions.

Dispensationalism and Dominionism

Closer yet to the orthodox home fires, the present educational conflict of visions issues from two mutually incompatible eschatologies—dispensationalism and dominionism. (Actually, there is a third, natural-law amillennialism, but its proponents have not been prominent in the educational endeavors with which this editorial is concerned.) The major conservative Christian educational institutions and textbook publishers are decisively dispensational and evangelical, though this is gradually changing. The dispensationalists presently own a lion’s share of the Christian day school and homeschool textbook market. Their eschatology is evident throughout their curriculum, both in the textbooks themselves and in the education departments at their colleges and universities. It is not so much that they are dedicated to an inculcation of a systematic dispensationalism; rather, their dispensational

eschatology pervades their entire educational system. This presupposition is most immediately evident in their history textbooks where Christendom, Constantine, Calvin, and the Puritans are given short shrift, and where the anti-dominionist Romantic revivalists like Charles Finney, D. L. Moody, and Billy Sunday are lionized. Most of them are so violently “anti-Catholic” that they refuse to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Byzantine and medieval Christian civilization. To this imperfect though extensive Christian culture they counter hot-gospel revivalism that coincides with and contributes to the erosion of Christian culture.⁵ But what is true in their treatment of history is no less true in the other disciplines—their eschatology shapes their entire academic and educational outlook.

The Defeatist Presuppositions of Dispensational Educational Philosophy

These eschatological presuppositions are not merely substantive, however; that is, they are not merely disclosed within the instruction itself. In addition, the entire structure of the educational system is designed with the defeatist dispensationalist assumption in view. In the educational philosophy propounded by a leading fundamentalist university, for example, we read that the objective of Christian education is to conform the student to Christ’s image.⁶ Such a truncated description of the educational objective is possible only on pietistic, dispensationalist, or related theological assumptions. While it is true that a single *aspect* of Christian education is conforming the student to Christ’s image, this is only one aspect, and Christian education certainly cannot be defined in an individualistic manner as most modern dispensationalists define it. The dispensational educational system is inherently individualistic—it is concerned only with the individual as such. The statist educational system is inherently collectivist—it is concerned only with the individual immersed in the statist community (recall *Star Trek’s*, “the Borg”). By contrast, the authentically Biblical educational system is *covenantal*:⁷ the individual is important in his own right, but never in abstraction from God’s covenantal plan, including his covenantal eschatology. This maintains a Biblical balance between the one and the many in the educational realm.⁸ The dispensationalist educational system, by contrast, sees the individual in isolation from God’s covenant plan of history and is concerned with making him fit for heaven, or, at best, a pleasant, “separated”⁹ Christian, getting a few souls saved here and there and making it through this “veil of tears” the best he can until he earns his heavenly reward. It is not clear why a knowledge of academic disciplines like math, history, science, language, philosophy, and so forth is necessary based on the dispensationalists’ defeatist assumptions, and this points to a glaring incongruity in most of the modern Christian educational systems and their textbooks.

Educational Schizophrenia

Because their defeatist dispensationalism fails in epistemological self-consciousness, they maintain—albeit unintentionally, of course—a small dominionist element in their educational paradigm. They are training students in academic disciplines from an avowed Christian perspective. While this perspective is often compromised and sometimes defective in their hands, it does represent a distinct antithesis to the secular humanism of most modern education. This highlights one vexing problem with which the dispensationalist educators are not prepared to deal: what happens if the distinctly Christian content of their education gradually becomes pervasive in the modern world? How should Christians act when they are the dominant rather than recessive gene in society? Because the dispensationalist educators’ eschatology considers this scenario an impossibility, it shields itself from the inherent schizophrenia of its own system. Most of these educators acknowledge, at least in principle, that Christianity and humanism are antithetical systems that cannot peacefully coexist. One is constantly at war with the other. What is the implied eschatology of this conflict? The dispensationalist educators’ answer is, “Increasing irrelevance and defeat for Christians.” The problem, however, is that this defeatism defeats their very educational enterprise.

The very nature of a distinctively Christian education is such that it educates distinct Christians who *act* distinctly as Christians. But dispensational eschatology wipes out, in principle, the eventuality of the effects of any distinctly Christian education. In other words, dispensational education is at root incompatible with Christian education. The majority of today’s Christian educators do not recognize this fundamental incompatibility, of course, and go merrily on their way espousing an inherently incongruous system. Its eschatological assumptions cannot sustain its educational philosophy. Its educational philosophy says, “Distinct Christianity is at war with distinct humanism (and all other non-Christian systems), and is designed to confute, confound, and supplant them.” Its eschatological assumptions, however, say “Distinct Christianity is designed to become less distinct, more compromised, and eventually to be overwhelmed and supplanted by humanism and all other non-Christian systems.” For this reason, most major Christian educators and their universities and colleges and textbook publishing houses are inherently schizophrenic.

Transitional Institutions

There is a good historical explanation for this schizophrenia. Most of these institutions originated between 1890 and 1950, a transitional era during which the main outline of Christian ethics still dominated American society, though the Biblical and orthodox theology on which it was based had clearly been abandoned.¹⁰ Many of these institutions are generally

conservative, both theologically and politically, although their theological conservatism is no more grounded in historic Christian orthodoxy than their political conservatism is grounded in an explicit reading of the Bible. In many ways, it is merely a bland Woodrow Wilson-style classical liberalism that they maintain. These Christian colleges and universities and textbook publishers attract patrons and students disturbed by the increasing depravity of modern culture. Many of them pine for the more genteel days of post-World War II America and the Eisenhower administration, unaware that these years themselves constituted a transition from the older Puritan covenant-keeping society, to the modern flagrant “post-modernist” covenant-breaking society in which the 60s sexual revolution has secured the *status quo*.¹¹ This “conservative” era for which they long was itself intensely “progressive”—an inherently unstable transitional phase from social covenant-keeping to social covenant-breaking. These Christian educational institutions are themselves transitional institutions. They arose within a historical period that had abandoned an explicitly Biblical Faith in all of life, but still enjoyed the fruits of that Faith in the wider culture. The full effects of the abandonment of the Christian Faith were not, of course, perceived at that time—not nearly as much as they are perceived today. Much like the medieval educational institutions which survived and succeeded despite their adoption of pagan Aristotelianism, but whose theologically compromised philosophy was later decimated by the epistemologically self-conscious Enlightenment,¹² today’s dispensationalist educational institutions cannot long survive the frontal onslaught of an epistemologically self-conscious paganism on the one hand, and an epistemologically self-conscious Christianity on the other. These dispensationalist institutions are adept at turning out nice little pietistic dispensationalists, many of whom in time often become nice little pietistic humanists. These students are often acutely aware of the depraved culture around them, but their schizophrenic education has not equipped them to respond to it properly. They either escape from it, assimilate some of it and live as compromising Christians, or adopt it altogether and become full-fledged pagans. They were never taught either by precept or example that the valid aspects of the Biblical Faith in which they were educated have a divinely built-in mechanism which resists peaceful coexistence with any non-Christian expression of faith or life. Their inherently schizophrenic education blocks from view the great billboard which every distinctly Christian educator must show his students: *Conquer or Die!*

The Certain Demise of Defeatist Educational Institutions

Because of this, these compromising dispensationalist institutions will not survive in the next two or three generations—at least not as compromising dispensationalist institutions. Either they will return to

the full-orbed, explicitly Christian and notably Puritan Calvinistic Faith, which permits no rivals, or they will succumb to liberalism and modernism, or they will simply die. Their executives are transitional figures who were themselves trained in a transitional theology. They and their institutions are, therefore, transitory. Lord Acton noted in 1858 that, “The progress of history tends, not to reconcile opinions, but to make the distinction even greater between them, and to bring out in more naked contrast the antagonism of good and evil.”¹³ In the middle period of this historical flow, certain irreconcilable religious and moral views are less sharp, less differentiated. As time goes on, their utter irreconcilability becomes quite evident. The institutions owing their existence to the era of amorphous transition are caught off guard when the point of full historical self-consciousness arrives. They rarely are willing to rethink the unstable foundations of their institutional theology. This would call into question the very reason for their existence. They cannot compete with the increasingly intense epistemological self-consciousness around them (both that of Christians and non-Christians) without rethinking their entire theological premise; but if they rethink their entire theological premise, they implicitly indict their founding and existence. They (their institutional heirs, that is) usually opt to surrender to the evil of the prevailing culture. Or they simply die a slow death of attrition.

Why Christian Dominionism Will Prevail

As the presuppositions of the present cultural conflict become more evident, knowledgeable Christians will not be satisfied with the makeshift, halfway measures of these educational institutions and their compromising textbooks. As it is now, most of these institutions turn out, at best, above-average students who do not grasp the radical implications of the antithesis between covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking;¹⁴ the educational program itself is not sufficiently radical (meaning, “at the root”) to impel the sort of vigorous thinking and reconstructive thought which their distinctly academic disciplines actually require. Gary North is correct, therefore, to have drawn attention to the fact that the thought of Cornelius Van Til and Rousas John Rushdoony tends to attract the best and brightest Christian students—it offers them a vigorous, epistemologically self-conscious approach to the Faith which others fail to grasp or do grasp and intentionally retreat from.¹⁵ The increasingly intense warfare between covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking will not permit the continued success of these compromised dispensationalist educational institutions that have existed thus far only because the social climate in which they operate has supplied them with intellectual and cultural capital from a distinctively Christian past. These institutions have just about depleted the reserve funds.

Dominionist Eschatology of Education

It is *only* a distinctly postmillennial and dominionist eschatology (and this is what the Christian educational system implicitly is) that can both stand the test of time and reappropriate the territory presently occupied by Satan and his devout disciples. A consistently Christian education trains its students not merely *in* the 3 R's and not merely *for* conformity to Christ's image, but in the 3 R's and for conformity to Christ's image in the commitment to exercising worldwide godly dominion and the gradual, but relentless, advance of Christ's kingdom.¹⁶ Language is God's precious gift of communication whereby his disciples as his vicegerents or representatives extend the claims of his Son and the infallible Scripture throughout the earth. Science is a means of extending godly dominion over God's creation. History is a recounting of God's plan for man—including his plan for the future, the Christianization of all of life. Mathematics is an instrument of quantification in the dominion task.¹⁷ Every academic discipline should apply a distinct Christian eschatology—postmillennialism.¹⁸ Our Christian educational philosophy that necessarily presupposes the conflict with all non-Christian systems of thought and life equally presupposes the eventual triumph of Christianity—and every Christian's calling as God's vicegerent of, and co-inheritor with Jesus Christ over, the entire earth.¹⁹ Every endeavor of Christian education—every university, every homeschool, every curriculum, every textbook, every class, every lesson plan—should point, at least implicitly, to this dominion commission and postmillennial vision of Christianity.

It is by means of *this* sort of Christian education that Biblical Christianity will supplant every form of non-Christianity and the depravity of modern culture.

¹ See Isaiah Berlin's classic, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment* (New York, 1963).

² Mikhail Heller, *Cogs in the Wheel: The Formation of Soviet Man* (New York, 1988).

³ John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven and London, 1934), 84 and *passim*.

⁴ Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (New York, 1951).

⁵ Rousas John Rushdoony, *This Independent Republic* (Fairfax, VA [1964], 1978), 105-107; Peter J. Leithart, "Revivalism and American Protestantism," ed., James B. Jordan, *The Reconstruction of the Church: Christianity and Civilization 4* (Tyler, TX, 1985), 46-84.

⁶ Collaborative authorship, *The Christian Philosophy of Education* (Greenville, SC, 1978), 4. A much more rigorously Biblical statement is Stephen Perks' *The Christian Philosophy of Education Explained* (Whitby, England, 1992).

⁷ Louis Berkhof, "Covenant: The Covenant of Grace and Its Significance for Christian Education," in ed., Dennis E. Johnson, *Foundations of Christian Education* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1990), 65-81.

⁸ Rousas John Rushdoony, *The One and the Many* (Fairfax, VA [1971], 1978).

⁹ On the errors of Protestant sectarianism, see Richard Bacon, *The Visible Church and the Outer Darkness* (Dallas, TX, 1992). A Biblical summary of the notion of separation from evil institutions is found in Rousas John Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Fairfax, VA [1970], 1978), 202-204.

¹⁰ C. Gregg Singer, *A Theological Interpretation of American History* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1981 edition).

¹¹ E. Michael Jones, "The Nomenclatura Calls for a Referendum on the Sexual Revolution," *Culture Wars*, November, 1998, 13-17.

¹² Christopher Dawson, "Rationalism and Intellectualism: The Rational Elements in the Rationalist Tradition," in *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* (London and New York, 1933), 146-148.

¹³ Lord Acton, *Essays in Religion, Politics, and Morality*, ed., J. Rufus Fears (Indianapolis, 1988), 635.

¹⁴ Van Til, "Antithesis in Education," in Johnson, *op. cit.*, 3-24.

¹⁵ Gary North, "Publisher's Foreword," *House Divided: The Break-Up of Dispensational Theology* (Tyler, TX, 1989), xxxviii-xli.

¹⁶ "For the Reformed believer, Christianity, by virtue of its covenantal character, is a restless, recreating principle which never withdraws itself from the world, but seeks to conquer it for Christ," Geerhardus Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1980), 261.

¹⁷ Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum* (Vallecito, CA, 1981).

¹⁸ Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium* (no loc., 1957).

¹⁹ Andrew Sandlin, *The Reign of the Righteous* (Vallecito, CA, 1998).

EVANGELISM CONFERENCE SATURDAY MAY 1, 1999

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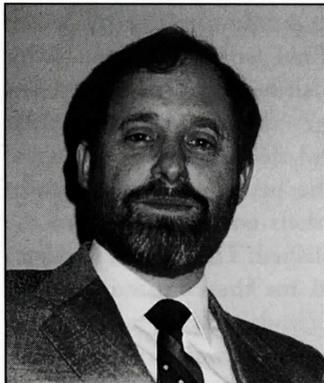
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Rev. Wayne Leigh, Pastor of Evangelical Reformed Church speaking on "The Means of Evangelism."
Rev. Andrew Sandlin, Executive Director of Chalcedon will speak on "The Law Brings Conviction of Sin."
Rev. Mark Henninger, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Pottstown, IL will speak on
"The Cross, the Gospel Solution."

Follow-up sessions will be held at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 2.

The Christian Home School and the Covenant Law of Deuteronomy

By Rev. William Einwechter



The book of Deuteronomy contains four separate commands to Christian parents to teach and train their children. These precepts are important to the Christian homeschooling family because they provide explicit Biblical support for the duty of parents to teach their

own children. However, the covenantal setting for each of these commands is frequently not understood or appreciated. First, Deuteronomy itself is structured in the form of a covenant—containing a preamble, historical prologue, stipulations, sanctions, and provisions for the continuity of the covenant. Thus, the education of children by their parents is an integral part of God's covenant; and the command to teach the children must be understood in the context of that covenant. Second, although the four specific commands to parents to teach their children are similar in wording, the setting within the covenant structure where each command appears is different. The import of this is often overlooked, and the repetition of these precepts is simply seen as a restatement of a fundamental duty. Rather, we should see that each command is placed where it is in Deuteronomy in order to emphasize four vital aspects of the training of children for the progress of God's covenant.

The significance of these four commands in Deuteronomy for Christian homeschooling will be explored here. In so doing, it is our hope that both the Biblical basis and the covenantal importance of homeschooling will be evident, providing both encouragement and a clear demonstration of the high calling of Christian parents in regard to the advancement of God's covenant in history.

1. *The Christian homeschool enables parents to give an important covenant witness (Dt. 4:9).*

The command of Deuteronomy 4:9 "to teach them [all this law] thy sons, and thy sons' sons" appears in the concluding part of Moses' first address to the nation where he calls the people to obedience based on the lessons of Israel's history. In 4:5-9, Moses exhorts the

people to careful obedience to the law of God for this is their wisdom in the sight of the nations, *i.e.*, obedience is essential to their witness to the perfection of God and his covenant. Israel's covenant with God is what makes them a great nation. Because of this covenant, God has delivered them from Egypt, revealing his love; and because of this covenant, God has given them his law, revealing his righteousness. By faithfully keeping God's law, Israel will walk in wisdom, enjoy God's presence, and will have peace and prosperity as individual families and as a nation, thus giving powerful witness to the glory of God and his covenant to the world. In 4:9, Moses states that this witness can take place *only* if: 1) they take heed to themselves to keep God's law, and 2) they teach God's law to their children. In other words, Moses emphatically states that the ongoing testimony to the greatness of God and his covenant to the world is directly tied to the faithful training of the covenant seed.

Therefore, Christian homeschooling parents must understand that the thorough teaching and training of their children in God's word is an essential part of their witness to the greatness of God and his covenant. There are two aspects to this witness. First, by obeying God's law in its extensive instructions concerning the teaching and training of children, Christian parents will raise up wise, disciplined, godly, mature, productive, and joyful children. What a contrast these children will be to those raised according to the wisdom of the world by ungodly parents! Parents who have obeyed God's wisdom in raising their children will be considered wise and understanding parents and give witness to the superiority of God's covenant and law. Second, by obeying God's law in regard to training their children, they will raise up a new generation with knowledge of and a commitment to God's word that will demonstrate the superiority of God's covenant in their homes, churches, and communities. In other words, when homeschooled children reach adulthood, they themselves will be a powerful witness to God's covenant through their wise and productive lives.

2. *The Christian homeschool enables parents to fulfill their covenant duty (Dt. 6:7).*

Deuteronomy chapters 5-11 set forth the basic stipulations of the covenant. In 6:1-5, Moses summarizes the covenant requirement that the people fear the Lord and keep his statutes and commandments—the first and greatest commandment being that they love the Lord

with all their heart, soul, and strength. Then in 6:6-9, Moses declares that to love God and keep his commandments requires three things: 1) to engraft God's law into your heart; 2) to inculcate God's law into your children's hearts; and 3) to establish God's law as the standard of truth for all of life. The command in 6:7 to teach God's law diligently to your children calls upon parents to teach the word of God in an incisive fashion, impressing the truth of that word upon their minds by frequent repetition and with penetrating power. According to verses 7-9, parents are to teach the word of God in both formal and informal settings with the goal of relating all knowledge to God's truth and bringing all spheres of thought under God's authority.

The context, therefore, of this command indicates that parents who are in covenant with God have an unalterable responsibility to teach their children God's law and how it applies to all of life. God's covenant places the duty of educating children squarely on their parents, not on the church or on the state. The Christian homeschool is ideally suited for the fulfillment of this covenant duty.

3. *The Christian homeschool operates in view of God's covenant sanctions (Dt. 11:19).*

Deuteronomy chapter 11 comes at the end of the section that establishes the basic stipulations of the covenant. Moses here summarizes the requirements of the covenant and gives a call for the renewal of the covenant. Interspersed throughout Moses' call is the promise and threat of covenant sanctions (11:14-17, 26-29). Deuteronomy 11:18-21 is nearly identical in wording to Deuteronomy 6:6-10. Both texts are intended as summaries of our covenant duty, and both contain the specific command to parents to teach God's law to their children (6:7; 11:19). However, in Deuteronomy 11 the command is directly related to the covenant sanctions by the word "therefore" in verse 18, and by the explicit declaration of blessing and cursing in the verses immediately following. Thus, the covenant duty of parents to train their children according to God's law is enforced by the promise of blessing for obedience and the warning of cursing for disobedience.

Christian parents must understand that God's commands concerning the training of their children are not idle suggestions, but *law* backed by definite sanctions—personal and corporate (cf. Dt. 28:4, 18, 32, 53ff.; Pr. 10:1; 17:21, 25; 19:13; 22:6; 29:17). By failing in their covenantal duty of education, Christian parents elicit God's curse on themselves and their children. Therefore, in view of God's covenant sanctions, Christian parents ought to act in the fear of God and earnestly strive to obey God's law concerning the education of their children. The Christian homeschool must believe in God's promise of blessing and tremble at God's threat of cursing.

4. *The Christian homeschool is vital for the continuity of God's covenant from generation to generation (Dt. 32:46).*

A central aspect of God's covenant is that of continuity. Accordingly, God makes provision in Deuteronomy 31:1-34:12 for the perpetuation of his covenant from generation to generation. The command of Deuteronomy 32:46 that "ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law" indicates the central importance of training the covenant seed for the continuity of God's covenant in history. This command is given at the close of the public ministry of Moses (32:44-47) as part of his final words to Israel. After exhorting the people to set their hearts to keep all the law of God, he solemnly charges them to *command* their children also to keep the law of God. By being part of the last words of Moses the principal importance of covenant parents teaching their covenant children the word of God is further established. The context indicates that this teaching is crucial for the continuity of the covenant.

It is interesting to note the significant variation in this command to parents. The three previous commands were to *teach* your children. Here, however, the mandate is to "*command* them to keep. . . ." Not only does this indicate that the goal of teaching the law is obedience, but the context of covenant continuity suggests something more. It suggests that the teaching and training have been faithfully carried out, and that the time has now come to give a solemn charge to the child not only to remember what has been taught but also to *keep* (guard and obey) it. Although parents are regularly to command their children to keep God's law, the setting implies a formal charge given at the time when they leave the home or when the parent is facing death (even as Moses charged the nation to keep God's law prior to his death). As the next generation, they are enjoined to carry on the Faith and keep God's covenant law. The Christian homeschool plays a vital role in the perpetuation of God's covenant from generation to generation; it looks to the day when sons and daughters go forth with the solemn charge to hold fast what they have been taught and to carry on the work of the covenant people in the world for the glory of God.

William O. Einwechter is an ordained minister serving Immanuel Free Reformed Church in Ephrata, Pennsylvania. He also serves as the Vice-Moderator of the Association of Free Reformed Churches, the Vice-President of the National Reform Association, and the Editor of The Christian Statesman. He is the author of the books Ethics and God's Law: An Introduction to Theonomy, and English Bible Translations: By What Standard, and the editor of the book Explicitly Christian Politics. He can be contacted at 9385 Royer Rd., Mercersburg, PA 17236, or by e-mail at weinwec@innernet.net.

A Truly Christian Curriculum

By *Quentin Johnston*

*The end . . . of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him. . . .*¹



So said John Milton in his letter to Master Hartlib in which he outlined his own unique approach to the education of the youth of his age. Although we may disagree with Milton's ideas, nevertheless, this statement is important for us as we consider the subject of a truly Christian curriculum because it cannot be reduced to a manual of methodology. Rather, it must be the very *raison d'être* of education. If we do not understand our goals, what we might call our *teleology*, then we are doomed to ply the oceans of educational philosophy like a tramp steamer of old, picking up cargo here and dropping it off there, never seeming to get home, and getting rustier and more decrepit as time passes. "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7).

So the intention of this article is to highlight the issues behind a truly Christian curriculum, knowing that there are a variety of methodological options open to us depending on the circumstances of the family or community that seeks to implement a truly Christian education for its children.

"Let's start at the very beginning"

"Let's start at the very beginning"

In "The Sound of Music," Julie Andrews sang, "Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start, when we read we begin with ABC; when we sing we begin with doe, rae, me. . ." Oscar Hammerstein II, who penned these lines, was about as wrong as he could be. Before we can consider "ABC," we need some understanding of the meaning of language. Language, like all things, is not a universal given that "just is"; it is an aspect of the created order that God has given us. In the opening words of Van Til's marvelous essay, "The Education of Man—A Divinely Ordained Need," we read:

There is perhaps no concept underlying our system of education better fitted to bring out the distinctive character of Christian education than the concept of creation.²

Creation teaches us the distinction between the Creator and the creature. This is crucial to a correct understanding of all things. An understanding of who God is, and who we are in relation to him, is the *sine qua non* of a truly Christian curriculum (as well as all of life). The Creator/creature distinction establishes the painful reality for autonomous man that all of his thoughts are derivative of God's thoughts; that all of creation, and this obviously includes all created facts, has meaning only in terms of God's revelation of himself and his purposes in Scripture.

Van Til wrote,

All of man's interpretations in any field are subject to the Scriptures given him.³

So here is the root of the difference between a non-Christian curriculum and a truly Christian curriculum; the locus of man's understanding of all facts is not man's autonomous intellect, but the self-revelation of God. Every concept, fact, or theorem we teach must have as its basic presupposition that the inerrant Scriptures truthfully reveal the Creator God. Oh, it is possible to construct in our own minds a reality that might convince others. We may be able to induce the unwary and naive to accept our definition and interpretation of factuality; but when God speaks, we find that we are as Job, simply another in a long line of those who darken God's counsel by words without knowledge (Job 38:2). If we are sensible we shall clap our hands over our mouths and say with Job: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?" (Job 40:4). When John describes Christ as the Word made flesh having dwelt among us, "full of grace and truth," this truth, in that it is "the complex of propositions that constitute the mind of God, is fixed, final, and eternal."⁴ In other words, starting "at the very beginning," means that we *begin* with God, and *proceed* with him. As Solomon said: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments" (Ps. 111:10).

R. J. Rushdoony cites Julius B. Maller when he says:

Since holiness is not a self-generating act but requires a conformity to God's law and righteousness, *an ignorant man cannot be saintly* . . . Knowledge is not self-generating, and the meaning of factuality comes not from the facts but from the Creator.⁵

Elsewhere he argues:

Education in the law is basic to and inseparable both

from obedience to the law and from worship. Anything other than a Biblically grounded schooling is thus an act of apostasy for the believer.⁶

It is this Biblical grounding that separates the truly Christian curriculum from a non-Christian curriculum, or from a fundamentalist curriculum for that matter. A truly Christian curriculum does not simply “baptize” non-Christian books or reprint 100-year-old texts. It does not “Christianize” the school by mandatory prayers before class and a daily chapel. Its primary educational goal is not getting students into the university. Rather, the Christian educator teaches his charges that all of life and thought must be conformed to God’s word simply for anything to be comprehensible. The curriculum must be based around this truth and, at every turn, point to Christ.

However, as Psalm 111:10 indicates, not only does wisdom come from a knowledge of God, but it is the daily obedience to God’s commandments that brings good understanding.

Let’s Aim for the Very End

Life is just what happens to you, while you’re busy making other plans.⁷

John Lennon was wrong. Our lives are not the product of faceless karma. Rather we live and move and have our being in the predestinating God. For Lennon, life was meaningless, and the question of the future was unimportant. All that mattered was the present. However, the question of the future is vital for the Christian because the future implies a destination and a hope. Yet, for so many Christians, the future is defined by too short-term a vision.

When most Christians, and I include many Reformed Christian parents, think of the future for their children, they are pleased with themselves if they put money aside for college fees. What the child will *do* at college is less important than the fact that he will *go* there. The assumption is that their child is a unit that must be helped to make a place for himself in a world of other units. Who he is, or what he is valued for, or how he is identified are all considered in terms of the individual, and his personal achievements. Even Christians who identify with the need for dominion in every area of life will treat their children’s future in purely particular terms without thinking of their child in the context of the wider church.

We read in Isaiah 2:2-3:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of

his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Our thinking about education and curriculum has to be in full cognizance of the task for which we are training our children. When I speak of “task,” I mean more than specific vocation, but rather the spiritual calling of discipling the nations, which, we have read, will be knocking on the door of the church, as it were, looking for answers. Isaiah 2 tells us that the dominion we are seeking to establish in the name of Christ comes about, not in the context of autonomous individuals, no matter how much education they might have, but in the context of God’s church triumphant. Our children, then, must be trained to see themselves as part of the covenant community called to administer God’s government.

Just as life is NOT “just what happens to you, while you’re busy making other plans,” so dominion will not just “happen to us” when we are looking the other way. We must tune *what* we teach and *how* we teach it to the dominion task to which our covenant children are called. Speaking of Christian education, Steve Schlissel has written:

Education is often viewed pragmatically (will it help Johnny get a job?), as opposed to covenantally (will it contribute to Johnny’s ability to take his place as a righteous man among the covenant people of God?).⁸

The truly Christian curriculum then is rooted in the Scriptures as the foundation of all knowledge, and flowers in the future expectation that God will make Christ’s enemies his footstool (*Ps. 110:1*).

From here we can consider the content of the curriculum.

Shaping Arrows

As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth. Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. (*Ps. 127:4-5*)

The main point of this verse is not that a man of God should have a large family, but that those the Lord gives are to be prepared for an offensive function. Just as the warrior or hunter will prepare different arrows for different purposes, length of flight, and depth of penetration, so the Christian warrior prepares his children for their differing tasks of dominion. Thus, although the core of a curriculum may be the same for most children, account has to be taken of the gifts and callings of each one.

Rushdoony avers:

Because the law is intensely practical, Hebrew education was intensely practical. The common opinion held that a man who did not teach his son

the law and a trade, the ability to work, reared him to be a fool and a thief.⁹

However, care should be taken not to confuse the importance of a practical education with the current emphasis arising from the "School-to-Work Opportunities Act" signed into Law in 1994 by President Clinton, which:

Codifies the concept that schools should track and train students into specific jobs... [into] mandated vocational training to serve the workforce.... The goal is not to graduate highly-literate individuals but to turn out team workers to produce for the global economy.¹⁰

While vocational training has its place, a good liberal arts curriculum provides the continuity with the past that is vital for the Christian. Basic literacy is fundamental to the flourishing of a godly society, and although liberals seek to defend illiteracy on the ground that people who cannot read have other, equally valuable, non-verbal skills, Clark is correct when he states bluntly that this is "a stupid effort to democratize society."¹¹

Foundational literacy should be sought in four disciplines:

1. *Reading*: the foundation of all learning.
2. *Writing*: the foundation of all expression of learning.
3. *Theology*: the foundation of all moral and intellectual logic and philosophy.
4. *Mathematics*: the foundation of all technical and scientific logic.

From these four disciplines will flow the other curricular subjects such as history, spelling, grammar, geography, languages, art, philosophy, science, and logic.

Because a child develops in certain stages, it is important not to swamp the student with material that may be inappropriate to his stage of development. Tom Parent, in his essay, *How Children Learn*,¹² sees three distinct stages of learning corresponding to the maturity of the child:

- a. Curiosity stage: birth-8 years-of-age.
- b. Analytical stage: 9-13/14 years-of-age.
- c. Expressive stage: 15-20 years-of-age.

Bearing these developmental stages in mind, the truly Christian curriculum will bring a child along in each academic discipline, building upon the skills learnt and mastered, "precept upon precept; line upon line" (*Is. 28:10*).

Languages can be introduced quite early; however, Greek is to be preferred over Latin as it has more value in terms of the study of God's word. In recent years there has been an interest in "Classical Education," and while in its Christian garb it has value, care should be taken not to assume that "the classics" are essential for a truly Christian education. "Hebraic" rather than "Greek," integrating the academic with the practical goal, should be the watchword.

Notice must be taken of the principle of unity that arises from our starting point, "All of man's interpretations in any field are subject to the Scriptures given him." Because God is One, all knowledge is one. As nothing can be abstracted from God and retain any meaning, so no one subject can be considered in isolation from the rest of the curriculum. The entire curriculum should be taught with the goal of developing an entire and integrated world and life view that is centered on Christ.

Children should grow up understanding the relationship between what they are learning in their "academic" studies and the "real" world they inhabit and are being called to disciple and govern. Discipleship by Dad of the boys and Mom of the girls in their vocations is vital so parents can prepare their covenant "arrows" to pierce the enemy's hide and advance the kingdom of God.

To think God's thoughts after him, to dedicate the universe to its Maker, and to be the vice-regent of the Ruler of all things; this is man's task.¹³

Special thanks to Edward Straka for his work in this area and for allowing me use of his unpublished monograph, *America Today & Christian Education*. Ed is a member of Church of Christian Liberty, and Director of Whitefield College, our four-year homeschool college.

¹ John Milton, *Of Education*.

² Cornelius Van Til, *Essays on Christian Education* (P&R, 1979), 123.

³ Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (P&R, 1969), 209.

⁴ Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Trinity, 1988), 169-170.

⁵ R. J. Rushdoony *Institutes of Biblical Law* (P&R), 185.

⁶ *op. cit.*, 21.

⁷ John Lennon, "Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)"; Double Fantasy Album <http://www.merseyworld.com/Imagine/>

⁸ Steve Schlissel, "Covenant Education: Grade School Through Seminary," *Chalcedon Report* (1/98), 36.

⁹ R. J. Rushdoony *Institutes of Biblical Law*, 183.

¹⁰ Phyllis Schlafly, Essay "School-To-Work Will Track and Train, Not Educate", <http://www.eagleforum.org/column/1997/mar97/97-03-12.html>.

¹¹ Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Trinity, 1988), 161.

¹² For more information on Biblical education, go to <http://www.homeschools.org/view/learn.html>, on the web-site of Christian Liberty Academy Satellite Schools.

¹³ Cornelius Van Til, *Essays on Christian Education* (P&R, 1979), 124.

Quentin Johnston, married to Pam, and the father of Lewis, was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was involved in the pastoral oversight of a church in Edinburgh for fifteen years before coming to the U. S. to complete his M.Div. at Whitefield Theological Seminary, Lakeland, Florida, at the invitation of R. J. Rushdoony. He is now Co-pastor of the Church of Christian Liberty, Arlington Heights, IL. He serves on the board of Christian Liberty Academy Satellite Schools and Whitefield College. For Christian Liberty Academy curriculum materials call (800)332-2741 or visit <http://www.homeschools.org>.

The Necessity of Biblical Christianity in Every School Subject

A Teacher's Guide

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The premise of this short Guide is radical enough: There can be no “real” education without presupposing at every point, Biblical truth and especially the reality of God the Son, Jesus Christ, in his mediatorial work. To have been the Mediator of our salvation before God the Father is not the whole of Christ’s significance. He mediates, in fact and by necessity, every relationship between Man and Creation, in terms of grace or judgment. In other words, we can’t see the true meaning of anything, unless God’s law-word is brought to bear upon it, in faith. While the unbeliever can have real “technical” knowledge, he cannot see the true meaning or relationships which are before him, because in his trespasses and sins, he is spiritually (and intellectually) dead, his mind is constantly in enmity with God and with God’s truth as revealed in the created realm (Romans 8:7). This provides the basis not only for the necessity of evangelism, but the restoration of all of education, rightly so-called, to its true foundation. Our prayer is that this guide will assist you in developing a consistent Biblical view of school subjects and also pedagogy, or the nature of teaching and of teaching methods. The terms “biblical” and “secular” are not meant to be exhaustively defined; many variations exist within each category.

Subject	Biblical View	Secular View
The nature of the teacher	Guides the process whereby the student learns and discovers revealed, objective truth in the Bible and it’s expression in God’s creation	Facilitates the process self-realization, where the student discovers “facts”, and determines for himself, their use and meaning, apart from any objective (God-given) standard
The nature of the student	Warped in his entire being, mind, body and spirit, by sin; needing the love and chastisement of the teacher (conversion), to develop the character necessary for true learning and personal growth by (God’s) grace	Innocent and plastic in personality and being, subject to the influence/conditioning of his environment (e.g. heredity, family, religion, school, society) “naturally” able to learn and grow, given the above
The goal of education	To bring every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ, wherein God is glorified through our faith and obedience to His calling on us.	To discover one’s self, one’s values, one’s potentialities and to be equipped therein, in a subjective, relativistic world of experience
The nature of knowledge	All facts are God-created and subject to the purposes of God; meaning is objective, to be revealed, and understood within a unified, created realm; truth and error in terms of God’s Word.	“Brute factuality”, facts are independent, un-interpreted, abstract, man’s rationality and experience only, constitute the basis of validity; truth and error subject to pragmatic tests
Curriculum	Core subjects which do not vary, supplemented by topical, relevant materials; develops the inherent gifts and the calling of the student	Developing processes of learning based on changing knowledge & environmental inputs; no core content, evolutionary standards of truth
Pedagogy (teaching methods)	Overcome sin, mental sloth; create orderliness in work, demonstrate cause and effect; leads to the love of God and His gracious work in the world; promotes the idea of Christian self-government as the foundation of personal character	Driven by student needs in terms of interests, learning styles, intellectual quotients; leads to personal validation only, and consensus (group) morality
Civics, Government & the Constitution	The civil authority is under God and must rule in terms of God’s law or forfeit it’s authority; civil government is very limited, primarily a ministry of justice, not the provider of health, education & welfare; constitution subject to original intent; taxes on land and inheritance unbiblical; tax rate should not exceed God’s tithe (about 10%)	After Hegel, “the state is God walking on earth” “the voice of the people, is the voice of God” society’s highest aspirations find their focus in the life of the State; the State mediates all law and relationships between citizens and entities in terms of equalitarianism; provides for/directs Society’s health, security and economics

The Necessity of Biblical Christianity in Every School Subject A Teacher's Guide

Mathematics	Numbers reflect invariant causality and truth; memorization of basic tables is fundamental; in God's universe, everything is accounted for and everything balances; man's sin obscures this	Numbers reflect relationships between things; relationships seem constant, but are subjective, given to evolutionary development; skills are utilitarian only; "proof of" moral and ethical neutrality of science
Composition & Grammar	Words have intrinsic meaning; Christ as <i>Logos</i> ; thinking is a verbal and written skill; meaning of words dependent on keeping of grammatical rules	"Deconstruction" of language, composition and grammar basic to man's right to reorder reality and to reinterpret it in terms of himself alone
Reading	Systematic phonics is the only method in which an alphaphonetic language system can be learned; 44 basic sounds, combined to form words; learning of language rules and exceptions is basic	"whole language," "look-say language" or learning to read by combining pictures, contextual clues and letter sounds causes reading disabilities and some suggest, forms of mental illness (neurological dysfunction)
History v. Social Science	History is the recording of God's providential works by man and seeing His purpose behind all events; politics, science, war, the arts, economics, geography, etc. are all areas in which man learns of God's grace or judgment	Social Science is to see man, in an atheistic world, reacting and shaping his environment through politics, science, war, and geography; history is meaningless because it's evolutionary premises can't reliably predict the future
Science	In the beginning God created, and what is called science is the knowledge of how God established orderly laws and relationships between all things; and how the created realm is a unified field of knowledge, facts and purpose	Evolution determines what is and is not accepted as "scientific fact"; posits a world where meaning must constantly be destroyed to make room for new and future meanings; results in intellectual and scientific relativism
Music & the Arts	All art reflects the mathematical orderliness of God's created realm and is subject to objective and unchangeable rules of aesthetics or composition; is used to express the glory (and beauty) of God's creation in all its forms; man's response either in rebellion or in discovery of truth; or of new (fresh) modes of its expression	Art is what the artist calls it; totally subjective in meaning; aesthetic rules either enhance the artist's purposes, or in their breaking, expresses the on-going need for intellectual and societal revolution-against form, beauty, structure, and the needs of the audience, or to pursue their radical transformation in evolutionary stages
Economics	The earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof; God's prior ownership gives Him the right to determine all material value and utility, and man's necessity to subject his knowledge and use of the material realm in terms of God's law; money is a fixed commodity, like gold or silver; finitude not scarcity (self-determined) is basic	The State is the owner and ruler of the material realm in order to insure societal goals and equalitarian relationships between man and the earth; all resources, being scarce, must be subject to the state's central planning, development and redistribution; money is a measure of value (and power), can be fixed or fluid
<p>That your way may be known on earth (Ps 67:2) Make known his deeds among the nations (Isa 12:4,5) May all peoples know that the Lord is God (1 Kings 8:60) The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:9) In God are hid all the treasures of knowledge (Col 2:3) Knowledge puffs up, but charity [love] edifies (1 Cor. 8:1) Hosea 4:6b My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...</p>		

Whose Job Is It?

By Joshua Rodgers



One doesn't usually associate high school students with high school teachers, though this is exactly the position I'm put into four days out of the week. Some of my students could easily out-score me in the SAT, ACT, and legions of other aptitude tests. Some of the individuals

I instruct are older than I am. Many of them hobnob with me before and after class. So to stand up and teach these people, while still a high school senior myself, makes things very interesting.

I attend Tri-City Covenant Church in Somersworth, New Hampshire, and I teach American history and government to Tri-City Christian Academy's freshmen and sophomores. I thoroughly enjoy my job. The racial, religious, and political diversity of my twenty-four students makes my classroom a refreshing and interesting place. A good number of my students come from fundamentalist backgrounds ("fundies," as a friend of mine calls them); others are members of my own rock-ribbed-Reformed-and-reconstructionist congregation; some attend churches vehemently at odds with Reformed theology; and several of my students aren't terribly religious one way or the other. The students' approach to America, and to American government, differs widely: I had one young man tell me that *anybody*—up and to and including his three-year-old sister—should be able to smoke cigarettes without the government interfering. Another student took issue with this, saying that the real problem in government was not its meddling in private affairs but the *men* in control of things. Men, this young lady explained, were sometimes "a little numb to what's going on."

As divergent as the opinions of my students may be, their outspoken opinions on hot-button issues always illustrate an astonishing fact. Come a noteworthy discussion—should pornography be available to minors? Should sixteen-year-olds be allowed to vote?—Two major groups always take sides: those who know what they're talking about, and those who don't.

This isn't as obvious an observation as you might think. A closer look at those well-informed students and their misinformed counterparts is quite revealing.

Religion always—*always*—plays a part in a student's approach to a discussion. And more often than not, those students who can hold their own in a debate (and actually have something valuable to say) come from homes that are firmly imbedded in the Reformed Faith. The leaders in my class are those who have a good hold of Christian reconstruction; leadership is not as evident in those students who attend churches that are characterized by antinomianism.

*To rebuild our nation
from the ground up, we
need a good comprehension
of where America started,
how it went wrong, and
how we can turn the tide.*

Risking arrogance, I'd like to use myself as a good example of a Reformed teen who was put into a position of leadership thanks to the teaching he received at home. The teachers who inspire me most aren't necessarily the instructors I interact with at Tri-City; they are, without a doubt, my parents. My mother and father have been married twenty years, and to raise and homeschool seven children—I was homeschooled up to ninth grade and still receive plenty of at-home instruction—is a feat I daresay most of my students' parents cannot top. Just the same, theonomy is taught (perhaps even stressed) in the homes of my class leaders. I think the following anecdote is a prime illustration of this point.

One Tuesday in late November, I walked into the classroom and abruptly asked what made the previous Sunday so important. It took ten minutes of mental teeth-pulling before a student realized what I was driving at: President John Kennedy had been shot thirty-five years ago that Sunday. An uproar shot up and down the rows of desks, and much of the discussion went something like this: "Who was John Kennedy?" "Didn't a guy named Harvey shoot him?" "So what?" "*Can we see the movie?!*" "May I go the bathroom?"

The student who answered the question attends my church, and he's been drilled in the fine points of dominion theology for years. Many of the students who did not know about John Kennedy, his alleged assassin,

and the assassination itself weren't among those students I'd call Christians. This is a prime example of the point I'd like to make: it is Christian youth, especially Reformed youth, who have a superior love and grasp of history. A nation's identity, a nation's past, a nation's future, mean absolutely nothing to death-centered, death-loving, disinterested, humanistic teenagers. The real interest in history in my class lies with Christian students. Specifically, *Reformed* Christian students. Some of my most diligent students are professing Christians but don't attend churches with a reconstructionist outlook—and that's fine with me—but I'm convinced that their church preference puts them at a disadvantage with their reconstructionist counterparts.

And why is that? Understand, reconstructionists are (as their name implies) building *on* something. We're not starting from scratch. To rebuild our nation from the ground up, we need a good comprehension of where America started, how it went wrong, and how we can turn the tide. Reconstruction in this nation will go nowhere if we don't come to terms with our nation's past. We can't repair that which we do not understand. My class, whether they know it or not, studies American history to be better equipped with their dominion task.

Make no mistake: many of my students, sitting in their neatly-ordered rows, *know the issues*. They know what they're all about: their Reformed Faith proclaims it. It is the Reformed students in my classroom that I can consistently depend on to present a coherent argument and actually have facts to back up their case. In answer to my questions I hear this refrain constantly from non-Christian students: "I don't *know!*" to which I reply, "What do you *think?*" Because like it or not, everyone *thinks*. It's all a matter of worldview: where are these unbelievers coming from? Where's their foundation? Small wonder they tune out in my class and get lost when a discussion begins. I once had a student blurt out that Communism could work under certain circumstances. I asked the young man to prove his point. He got a very perturbed look on his face (the unblinking stare of a duck that just got clubbed) and proceeded to regurgitate the Communism-could-work-under-ideal-circumstances line half a dozen times before I forced him to admit that Marxism never, *ever*, worked in early America (or anywhere else). But this shows what kind of argumentation skills, what kind of reasoning, ungodly teenagers use today. Basically, they're conditioned to spit out inane assertions that they've been spoon-fed since kindergarten, without any thought to confrontations or disagreements that might follow. What good is history to these heathen youngsters? They aren't planning on transforming society; America's past means nothing to them. They have no wish to rebuild their nation—thus they have no need to know it better.

When the JFK assassination debate broke out, a good eighty percent of my class couldn't tell me why November 22, 1963 was significant in American history. When I berated the class for their ignorance and asked them who was at fault, someone shouted back: "*You!*"

Whose job is it to tell us this stuff? *Yours!* 'Cause you're the teacher." "And is it my job to tell you everything?" I wanted to know. Well, no, actually . . . it's not. Recently a very bright young lady complained to me about her test, pointing out that I'd announced that I would go over the test in class before handing it out. I apologized for not finding time to review and asked her if she'd bothered to study for the test. Well, no, actually . . . she hadn't. It's the lack of initiative in some students that burns me. And it's the motivation of other students—students grounded in Reformed theology, with the proper dominion-oriented mindset—that I find tremendously encouraging.

Not to say that every single student who goes to my church, or who can tell me what TULIP means, is an all-star A-student. Sometimes teens brought up in solidly reconstructionist homes allow their fundamentalist opponents to pick up the slack. But the tide is turning in the right direction. Even better, many students who didn't care about history before are starting to see the sense in dominion theology. And that's good news for me. It tells me that in one corner of the world, tucked away in a small New Hampshire town, the kingdom is taking root.

Joshua Rodgers is the oldest of seven children and lives with his family in Alton, New Hampshire. He plans to pursue a career in writing.

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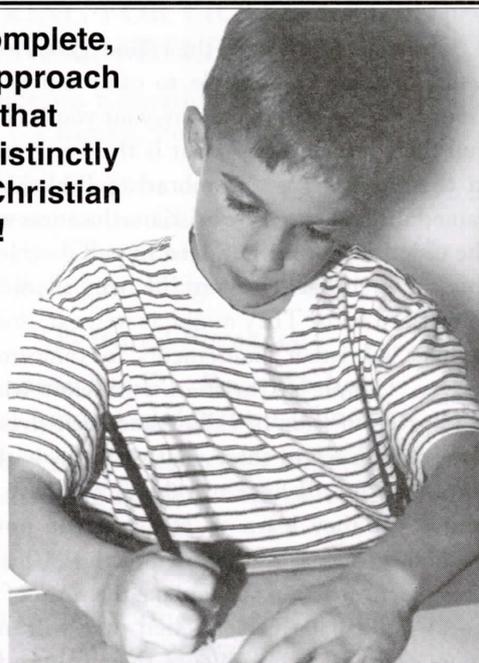
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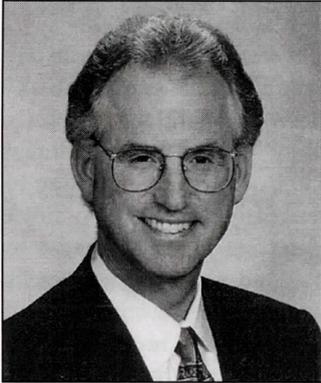
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Pull Your Load!

Harnessing the Power of a Christian Worldview through Career Planning

By Rodney Marshall



Gleaming in the early dawn two coupled six thousand horsepower locomotives roared from the station. Exhilarated as the newly built engines accelerated to a cruising speed of sixty miles per hour, the engineer turned his head to check his load astonished to see the one hundred twelve-car train unmoved a mile behind

him. Now what? Personal computers destined for vibrant businesses, leather chairs ordered by inside-the-beltway law firms, microscopes needed by crime-fighting forensics labs, paintbrushes for the master's hand: all idle, would never reach their destination because the engine never coupled with the load!

Christian youth have their God-given load to pull as well. They are responsible to carry out their call from God. How can you make sure your youth connect to and pull their load in life? What is their engine and what is in their train? An all-embracing Biblical view of life gained through a truly Christian education will give them the visionary power they need to pull their load. Without this comprehensive view of life, why should they bother to work so hard? They might as well eat, drink and enjoy popular "Christian" amusements, for tomorrow they go to heaven. Couple a Christian worldview with a specific God-given mission or calling and their lives will make a difference. Each of these youth will say with Paul at the end of his life, "I have run the race; I have finished the course," if they learn to transmit the power of their worldview into a lifetime of practical Christian action. This practical action should take the form of a God-given world-influencing career. Then they will use dozens of hours each week to influence their culture for Christ in every department of life. Too often the locomotive and the load never couple to make a train. Too often Christian youth learn theory in academics but fail to apply it to life through practical career planning.

A truly Christian world and life view embraces all of life and every noble occupation as under the lordship of Christ. The Christian then lives out his calling through

a career. When this career fits his God-given pattern of personality, interests, skills, and work and life values, the youth can focus on a career arena with potential for godly influence. The youth will indeed pull his load.

A powerful and all embracing Christian worldview motivated Dr. Abraham Kuyper to deliver great strength to his labors in every department of life in the Netherlands. His own personal mission statement expresses an excellent pattern for young people seeking to influence their world with Biblical truths through their work. His engine pulled with mighty strength. So can your youth when they grasp this kind of mission.

One desire has been the ruling passion of my life. One high motive has acted like a spur upon my mind and soul. And sooner than that I should seek escape from the sacred necessity that is laid upon me, let the breath of life fail me. It is this: That in spite of all worldly opposition, God's holy ordinances shall be established again in the home, in school and in the state for the good of the people; to carve as it were into the conscience of the nation the ordinances of the Lord, to which Bible and creation bear witness, until the nation pays homage again to God. (Abraham Kuyper, 1897)

Dr. Kuyper lived his mission statement indefatigably through his professional life of service to God as:

- Pastor
- Theologian
- University Professor
- Editor-in-chief of *The Standard*, a daily paper, and the official organ of the Anti-revolutionary party, which in politics represented the Protestant contingent of the Dutch nation
- Editor of the *Herald*, a distinctively Christian weekly paper
- Member of Parliament
- Prime minister
- Founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, which takes the Bible as the unconditional basis on which to rear the whole structure of human knowledge in every department of life
- Author
- Spokesmen for the cause of Christ

The history of the Netherlands in church, in state, in society, in press, in school, and in the sciences around the turn of the twentieth century mentions his name on almost every page. During this period the biography of Dr. Kuyper is to a considerable extent the history of the Netherlands.

The twenty-first century world our children will inherit needs the individual and cumulative labor of every Christian with the favor of God to cause a positive shift in culture. Each youth needs to prepare for that life of influence God intends. Some are called to set pulpits aflame with the same truths that moved historian Alexis de Toqueville to conclude that the greatness of America resulted from the effectiveness of her ministers. The calling of most will lead them to godly influence on the broader culture through law, politics, journalism, education, science, medicine, technology, architecture, engineering, the trades, the arts, management, entrepreneurship and so on. Each youth has a mission to fulfill. This purpose will energize each of them during the long years of preparation and the times of slow progress ahead. Like Dr. Kuyper they will leave their own

footprints in the sands of time if they address life and career planning with a Christian worldview.

Christian parents and educators, we must invigorate the career guidance process with an all-embracing view that considers a career as a venue for family provision and cultural change. We must use the ideas and tools now available to achieve a truly Christian approach to career planning for youth. Only in this way will the Christian education they have received achieve its intended end.

Ka-boom! Shaking the earth, the twelve thousand-ton train gradually accelerated to cruising speed. Three thousand miles later, bell clanging, the load arrived at its destination. May our youth pull their load. May they change the world of their generation through their work.

Rodney Marshall, M.Div. is Educational Marketing Manager for Larry Burkett's Christian Financial Concepts/Life Pathways providing career and educational guidance and money management products and services with a Biblical worldview. He can be reached at (972)539-1574 or rjmarsh@sprynet.com or www.findafuture.com.

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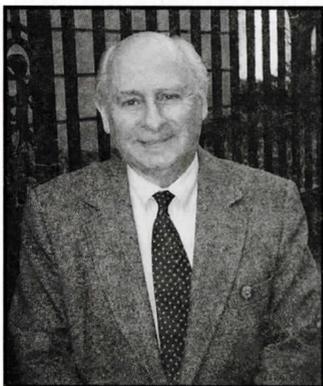
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Homeschooling: The Real Revolution

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

Liberal political analyst Michael Lind writes in the opening chapter of his book, *Up from Conservatism*:

American conservatism is dead. This is not to say that the conservative movement in American political history is over. Just as left-liberal Democrats continued to advance their agenda in the 1970s and 1980s—years after their ideology degenerated into an empty creed—so the right wing of the Republican Party may continue to expand its influence for some time to come. But those victories will be a result of external factors—the collapse of the left, the disorientation of the political center, the long-term conversion of the white South to the GOP, inertia—not of vigor or dynamism on the part of conservatives. . . . The project of sustaining a mainstream, centrist conservatism distinct from the far right in its positions, and not merely in its style, has failed.



Lind is perfectly right in describing “centrist conservatism” as lacking vigor or dynamism. Moderate Republicans are in essence liberals. Centrist conservatives are not revolutionaries or radicals. It is hard to describe what they actually are, except as careful politicians with a tepid free-enterprise agenda,

political pragmatists. You have to go outside Congress and the political system to find the true freedom movement in America: the homeschool phenomenon. There is no other movement in America that has done more to recapture the spirit of American freedom than homeschooling.

Homeschoolers are, without question, revolutionary; they are making a clean break with the statist institution of government education. It is government-owned and -controlled education which is the very foundation of the secular state which exerts its power by molding the minds of its youngest citizens to serve the mythical state.

The Founders and the “State”

The founding fathers never created a “state” which had certain mystical powers over its citizens. That kind of state was a concept concocted in the mind of the German philosopher Hegel, a pantheist, who saw the State as God

on earth. The Germans have always had a rather mystical view of the state and its power over the lives of its people, or “volk.”

In America, this Hegelian state has evolved into something that simply cannot be made compatible with the American idea of government. Thus, when American courts speak of a compelling state interest in education without defining the state, or what is meant by compelling, or education, the assumption is that Americans regard the state as some sort of higher godlike power that must be served. The state they are talking about is the mystical Hegelian state.

What we have in America is a government, not a “state” in the Hegelian sense. We have a government run by men who must conform to a Constitution which places limits on what the government can do. There are not limits to what the Hegelian state can do, a fact tragically demonstrated during the Nazi era. In addition, we have a constitutional republic, not a democracy. A democracy is simply majority rule. A republic, through its written constitution, limits what the majority can do to the minority. Representatives, elected by the citizenry, are obliged to adhere to the limits placed on them by the Constitution.

Most Americans speak of our government as a democracy. They have virtually no understanding of the profound difference between a democracy and a constitutional republic. This gross lack of understanding is the work of the statist education system which has a vested interest in keeping Americans ignorant of the true role of limited government. The mystical “will of the people” is now what is considered to be the essence of American democracy. The “will of the people” has now become the sacred mantra of the humanist state as long as the will of the people can be manipulated by the humanist dominated media.

Christian Homeschooling

The homeschool revolution was started by Christians who recognized the implicit conflict that exists between Biblical religion and secular humanism. When it became obvious to them that the government schools had been thoroughly captured by the humanists, these parents had no choice but to remove their children from them. And inasmuch as many private schools have been greatly influenced by humanist philosophy, these Christian parents found it necessary to do the educating themselves. Also, many of them were strongly motivated to follow God’s commandments concerning the education of children as given in Deuteronomy 6.

While religion was the primary moving force behind the early homeschoolers, they were also well aware of the academic decline within the public schools which no longer knew how to teach such basic subjects as reading or arithmetic. After all, it was in April 1983 that the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its now historic report, stating: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves." Sixteen years later, the schools are probably worse today than they were then.

Homeschooling Pioneers

These early homeschoolers were the pioneers in the movement. They were generally well-educated orthodox Christians who understood the political and cultural forces at work, and were willing to take the necessary steps to guard their children against the growing moral and academic chaos in the public schools. In those days, they were a tiny minority, and they tended to keep low profiles. However, whenever they were dragged into court by local superintendents who asserted implicitly that the children were owned by the state, ministers like Rushdoony were called by the homeschoolers to defend their God-given right to educate their children at home.

Those were the days before the creation of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). The pioneers, like the founding fathers, tended to be strong people, willing to accept the consequences of their actions, but also willing to fight for their right to control and minister their own children's education. And the law and tradition were basically on their side. There were no federal laws preventing homeschooling and, in fact, education was not even mentioned in the U. S. Constitution. Also, most state compulsory school attendance laws provided room for exemptions.

Nevertheless, here and there, local judges, backed up by the education establishment, ordered local police to actually drag children away from their families in conformity with the state's supposed compelling interest in education. That's what happened in Plymouth County, Idaho, in 1985. In such cases, the public and even the liberal media tended to sympathize with the homeschoolers. News pictures of perfectly decent children being dragged away from their parents were not good PR for the school authorities.

Some parents actually went to jail. That was the case with the Pangelians who in 1985 spent 132 days in jail in Morgan County, Alabama, because they had decided to homeschool their children without the school district's approval and refused to turn their children over to the state authorities when ordered. Again, jailing Christian parents for homeschooling did not make good PR for state officials.

Two years later, after the ordeal was over, Sharon Pangelian was asked why she and her husband didn't take the children and leave Alabama. She wrote:

That question was asked of us over and over before the trial. (And would continue to be asked during our time in jail, and even after we were released.) We answered the question the same way, over and over again: We don't want to be separated from our children at all. But if we run away, we teach them that courage has no part in liberty. If what you're doing is right, according to Scripture, then you don't run away. Fighting against oppression and ungodly usurpation of authority is indeed Scriptural, especially when it concerns the family.

That is the kind of courage and spiritual strength that undergirded the pioneers of the homeschool movement. In 1983, three homeschooling lawyers formed the Home School Legal Defense Association, "born out of the need to defend the growing number of home school families in each of our respective communities," writes Michael Farris, president of the HSLDA, who is also an ordained Baptist minister.

By 1990, more than 15,000 homeschoolers in all fifty states had joined the HSLDA, which offered legal services to homeschooling families who were experiencing legal difficulties in their communities.

A Thriving Movement

Today, the homeschool movement is thriving in a manner which would have been inconceivable twenty years ago. State homeschool organizations now have to rent large convention centers in which to hold their annual conventions which draw thousands of interested parents. Apparently, there is more to homeschooling than merely removing one's children from the morally corrupt public schools. There is now the sense that the new family lifestyle, which develops around homeschooling, is highly desirable because of the positive bonding it creates between parents and children. This is a particular blessing for the Christian family that seeks to live in conformity with Biblical truth, which is more easily imparted to their children.

While the early homeschoolers were considered pioneers, the families that followed were looked upon as settlers. The settlers created the state organizations, support groups, magazines, books, and curriculum that have evolved into what one can call the homeschool academic and political establishment. While they have a long way to go before they can equal the National Education Association in political power, the exponential growth of the homeschool movement assures that its influence will be felt in the state legislatures and the Congress of tomorrow.

Today's newcomers to homeschooling are more like refugees, fleeing the failed government schools. They

eagerly seek help from the settlers who are more than happy to provide it. But we should not be overly sanguine about the movement's success. The vast majority of Christians still put their children in the public schools. Also, many parents are seeking salvation in the new charter schools and the possible enactment of government voucher programs. They have yet to be weaned from the government trough. Nevertheless, the homeschool

movement as it exists today represents a triumph of parental independence and enterprise. Christians must do all in their power to support it.

Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the leader in U. S. homeschooling and phonics, and he has lectured on these subjects from coast to coast and abroad. State school authorities once called him statist education's "public enemy number 1."

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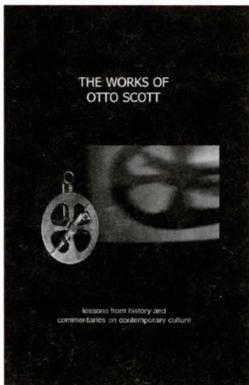
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Teachers, Curriculum, Control: A “World” of Difference

By Dan Smithwick

This article was taken from a research project based on nearly a decade of PEERS Testing. The full report is available from Nehemiah Institute in booklet format. The report includes a table showing the differences in thinking on ten PEERS items between Christian school students and Christian students in public schools. This is data that should be read by all Christian parents and pastors to understand the degree that secular humanism and socialism is having on our youth. See ad for details.

Borrowed Ethics



The past three decades have witnessed a remarkable growth in private Christian education, both in Christian day schools and in homeschooling. The effort has not been in vain. Standardized test scores repeatedly show that students in private Christian education far outpace their counter-

parts in public schools. It is reported that all homeschool students applying at Harvard last year were accepted.¹

On the other hand, public schools continue to deteriorate—academically, morally, and in safety. The number of shootings and killings (even by little boys) in public schools last year has shaken our nation into disbelief. We keep asking, “Why?”

This article is not an attempt to fully answer the question: “What has gone wrong in public/government schools?” Many good articles and books have already addressed that. I agree with those who say that the problem lies in the seed, not the plant. Responsibility for the education of children was misplaced over a century ago through the efforts of Mann, Dewey, *et al.* Christ-centered education was replaced with so-called child-centered education. When this transition began in the mid-nineteenth century, there still continued a strong Judeo-Christian ethic in the classroom. Prayer and reading of Scriptures were a normal part of the school’s

activities. When state-run education began, it borrowed the spiritual capital present in schools and *because of that*, it “survived” for many decades.²

Speaking of early American educators, Rushdoony said, “Absorbed almost entirely in the process of education, as a rule, it never occurs to these good men that the concepts that they took for granted of a good society were purloined from the Christian heritage that they have studiously ignored or denied.”³ Without faith in God and fear of the Lord as a focus of education, spiritual capital was not being replenished. Now it appears that the spiritual capital has been spent and that the system is coming unglued. The apostle Paul gave us a clear warning: “And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (*Col. 1:17*). How long it can continue is uncertain, but some are saying the end of public/government education is near.

Strange Bedfellows

We assert the mixing of school and civil government is not only bad business, but also bad theology. Education of youth is simply not a civil government function, Biblically speaking. Government schools should not be reformed; rather they should be dismantled, though carefully. What is truly needed is a thoughtful plan for separating school and state.

It was precisely the mixing of school and government that was the heart and soul of Dewey’s pedagogical reasoning. In 1894 Dewey accepted the position of chairman of the Department of Philosophy, Psychology and Pedagogy at the University of Chicago. It was here that Dewey established his Laboratory School. As noted by education expert Samuel L. Blumenfeld, “Here was, indeed, a master plan, involving the entire progressive educational community, to create a new socialist curriculum for the schools of America, a plan that was indeed carried out and implemented—he put forth his collectivist concepts of an organic society, the social individual, the *downgrading of academics* (emphasis mine), and the need to use psychology in education.”⁴

In 1897 Dewey published his “My Pedagogic Creed,” in which he stated, among other beliefs:

I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living; I believe that education is the regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that adjustment of individual

activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction... I believe that every teacher is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth. I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God.⁵

Dewey got his wish—a messianic school system, but without the God of the Bible. What his messianic system has gotten us is a mess. As Blumenfeld stated, “More than ninety years have gone by since Dewey set American education on its progressive course. The result is an education system in shambles, a rising national tide of illiteracy and the social misery caused in its wake.”⁶

Supporting Our Own Demise

What I am addressing in this paper is: “Why are the vast majority of Christian families still supporting government-controlled education by enrolling their children in state-run, dumbed-down schools?” The answers are many. Reasons often given by families are lack of funds for private school tuition, no Christian schools available in the area, and inability to homeschool. I am certain these are real issues for many parents and that there is much anguish in having “no choice.”

But one answer I hear often from Christian parents that is troubling is, “Our public school really isn’t all that bad.” Parents support this view with observations such as 1) there are many Christian teachers in our school (probably some), 2) our children are doing well (meaning they are coming home with A’s and B’s), 3) training at home and church is keeping our children on track spiritually, and 4) there haven’t been any shootings at our school. But do these provide sufficient evidence that the command “Train up a child in the way he should go—” is being met? The work of our Institute says, “Not so.”

Worldviews Identified

Test results gathered by Nehemiah Institute give strong evidence that in public schools “Christian Johnny” is not being educated in the way he should go. These results are from a Christian worldview assessment service (PEERS Testing) provided to many Christian educators who are assessing how Biblical or non-biblical the students’ thinking is on culture-shaping issues.

The PEERS Test identifies primary worldview philosophies in Politics, Economics, Education, Religion, and Social Issues (PEERS). Views in each category are identified as belonging to one of four worldviews: 1) Biblical Theism, 2) Moderate-Christian, 3) Secular Humanism, or 4) Socialism. Most people operate with basic principles from one or more of these worldview philosophies. Other worldviews which may have shaped our thinking include romanticism, atheism, New Age, materialism, nihilism (denying existence), and pantheism

(God permeates all). Each of these perspectives embodies a view on how man should live.⁷

What we all are commanded to live by, and what all men are judged by, is discerned under the Christian or Biblical worldview. This is God’s command for how man is to relate to him and to one another. The goal of education is to train up the child in the various disciplines according to a scriptural understanding of the subject matter. This is Biblical worldview education.⁸ It is objective truth for all disciplines, for all ages, for all times. PEERS Testing aids educators in determining to what degree students (and faculty) are comprehending Biblical worldview thinking.

Based on PEERS test results of thousands of students from nearly all states over the past 11 years, and from a variety of types of schools, we can objectively and statistically claim that public school students from Christian homes are not being trained in the way they should go. Overall PEERS scores for students in Christian schools vary from a moderate-Christian worldview to Biblical Theism. But scores from Christian-home students *in public schools* predominantly fall in the Secular Humanism or Socialism perspectives.

While many barometers indicate that public schools are failing, PEERS testing shows they may well be succeeding—toward the wrong goal! If the goal of public education is to institute a philosophy of state-controlled democratic capitalism (a short leap to socialism), as viewed by some,⁹ then I would have to say that government schools are close to claiming, “Mission accomplished.”

Three Pillars of Education

Differences in PEERS scores are not due to differences in religious training at home or at church. It is our opinion that the differences shown are primarily the result of three education factors:

- 1) Worldview brought to the classroom by the *teacher*;
- 2) Worldview presented in the *curriculum* (texts and tests); and
- 3) Worldview developed by observation that education in public schools is under the *control* of state and federal governments.

State-run schooling turned *teaching* from a ministry into a secular vocation. Biblically speaking, teaching is both a calling and a gifting from God.¹⁰ The teacher is to be a master in his area of expertise, have good communication skills in presenting his knowledge and understanding, and ability to motivate his students to become lifelong learners. The work of the teacher is to aid the student in preparation for his calling in life such that God will be glorified. All teaching should be theocentric in focus.

However, with government-run education, the focus was changed to a secular and evolutionary view of life. With this change in focus, methodology of teaching took on new meaning. Consider the following comment from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (N.C.A.T.E.):

Why is Teacher Preparation Important? [title] Some people still believe in the discredited view that “teachers are born, not made.”—Our needs as a nation have changed, and our expectations and requirements for teacher preparation must change with it. The movement for higher standards for student knowledge increases the need for teachers who are well-versed in the content which they plan to teach.¹¹

This statement is telling. The government sees educators first as trained workmen in *methodology* and only secondly needing to know about what they will teach. With this view, education became a professional vocation complete with degrees (B.Ed., M.Ed., Ed.D. and D.Ed.).¹² Educators were then state-certified, assuring others of their ability to “train up the child.” I believe this has led to expertise of subject matter giving way to technique of presentation, to some considerable degree.

I was a professional teacher in the military and in a Fortune 100 company. I also taught in public and private schools for a short period and have been teaching in adult Sunday Schools for over 25 years. It has always been my objective to be a master at what I was teaching and to be articulate in my presentations. I believe strongly in teacher preparation and in quality of presentation. Yet it has been my experience both in teacher training institutions and in the teaching profession to find many teachers who were anything but academically proficient in their field. Nevertheless they made a career of “teaching” with good classroom management skills and good teacher-pupil relationship skills. Sometimes not even with that.

The Heart of the Matter

The main problem in government-run education, I believe, is the *focus* it has established as a foundation for teaching as a profession. The government requires teachers to be anthropological in focus rather than theological. I still remember the “blank-slate, born-neutral” philosophy of children presented in education courses at North Dakota State University where I received a BS degree in math/education. One professor continually emphasized the view that *all* disciplinary action on children only inhibits their creativity! It was the teacher’s responsibility to “guide” the disruptive child into seeing his worth. The teacher training I received was immersed in such humanism. Denying children necessary discipline only enhances their misfortune and/or destruction.

Many, if not most, teachers in Christian schools received their education degree from state universities. Consequently, while being Christian in heart, they are

often humanist in mind. And with most Christian schools requiring state-certified teachers, due to their choice of being state-accredited, the humanistic worldview comes in with the teachers. PEERS Testing has substantiated this in many Christian schools. This will be increasingly problematic as more parents move their children to private schools. The increased demand for teachers may cause Christian schools to lower their guard in faculty selection.¹³ I believe Christian schools need to seriously reevaluate the supposed benefits of state accreditation versus the restrictions applied to the school regarding personnel selection.

With the humanist evolutionary focus in state-run education, *curriculum* became a canned approach to dissemination of knowledge. We find limited texts (state approved), standardized lesson plans (talk about stifling creativity!), rote-memory tests, group instruction, etc. Teachers are no longer required to be masters of their subject and students don’t have to learn how to learn. For the student, the goal of education is getting from test to test until one day he can say, “Done with education.” A substantial amount of work must be done by pastors, teachers, administrators, and parents to reverse this mechanistic view of learning.¹⁴

Yet *control* of education is the greater culprit in my opinion. The perceived provider of education becomes the master to serve. The aim of the student is to please the provider (I learn what he wants me to learn so I can have access to other benefits). The “right” to state-controlled education encourages a view toward seeking other social “rights” which only the “master” can give. The very perception that government is responsible to the student for education cannot help but cause him to believe that the government should now ensure him a job, housing, healthcare, security, etc. “You made me, now take care of me.” This is the fruit of messianic secular education.

These three components of government schools—teachers, curriculum and control—have created an environment in which the worldview of a student from a Christian home is pulled away from Christianity and toward humanism. However, Christianity doesn’t have to be rejected outright in the public-school classroom nor does humanism have to be taught explicitly (*e.g.*, quoting from the humanist manifestos) for this change in thinking to take place. It is simply the man-centered view of life presented in the child-centered classroom in preparation for the state-centered society that gradually shapes the anti-Christian mind.

One scholar who saw it coming was Dr. A. A. Hodge of Princeton Seminary. A century ago he said:

I am as sure as I am of Christ’s reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social nihilistic ethics, individual, social and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.¹⁵

Could anything have been more prophetic? I believe PEERS Testing corroborates Dr. Hodge's concern.

Frog in the Kettle

The move from Christianity to humanism in public schools has been a quiet and slow revolution. This is what traps so many Christian parents into believing that their public school is safe. The attitude, "If public school was good enough for me, it's good enough for my children (or grandchildren)," is pervasive among Christians. But after 12-16 years of "education" in a socialist-styled environment, most students will become functional humanists for life even if they remain in the church.¹⁸

I do want to say here that by God's grace and mercy, and by the work of faithful, dedicated parents and teachers, many students have achieved a good education in some public schools and are faithfully serving the Lord in their calling. This is in spite of their socialist-styled education environment. As a nation, however, we are badly missing the mark. Ironically, even the U.S. government issued a report saying so: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war . . . we have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinkable, unilateral educational disarmament."¹⁹

It is also worth noting that the test items listed in this study, as with nearly all PEERS test items, are issues not directly taught in any subject in school (public or private). Yet results show there appears to be a consistent pattern in thinking about self, family, and government which is developed from applying the Scriptures to academic studies, as occurs in Christian schools. This pattern becomes confused or reversed when the Scriptures are removed from education, as in public/government schools. Applied truth from the Scriptures makes the difference.

The educational environment of public schools sways students toward humanist and socialist views even though they come from homes and churches where those views are rejected. Given the lack of *Biblical worldview training* in most families and churches, especially in youth groups, I suspect it is not much of a contest.

Upon careful study of the results in the sample test items I believe you will be appalled at the thinking of public school students. If this study represents the mindset of the majority of youth from Christian homes in America, which I believe it does, it is hard to imagine the amount of spiritual darkness that will exist in our land in the next 20-40 years. What will make them think differently after high school?

No Choice

For many parents and pastors reading this article, I believe the response would be "I agree, but we have no choice—public school is our only option." I can personally identify with this position. In response to this, a few comments are in order:

1) Even though the education of our children may be formally in the hands of government schools, we are still *responsible* for their education. We cannot lay the blame for poor education or anti-Christian views or immoral behavior of our children at the feet of others.

2) There are a few excellent training institutes available to Christian families to counter the humanist and socialist philosophies in public education. Listed below are three organizations providing Christian worldview training to youth:

Summit Ministries
P.O. Box 207
Manitou Springs, CO 80829
(719)685-9103

Worldview Academy
219 N. Main, Suite 408
Bryan, TX 77803
(409)822-5045

Strategic Christian Services
2220 Northpoint Park
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
(707)578-7700

PEERS Testing in these groups demonstrate that their programs are effective in training students how to reason from the Scriptures to right understanding on a wide variety of political, economic, and social issues.

3) Self-paced independent study can be done at home by parents and students. We offer a course entitled *Developing a Biblical Worldview* (DBW) which works well in a home setting. I have used this with two of our children at high school level and saw firsthand how it helped them to spot humanism in their studies and become firm in Biblical reasoning.

4) I strongly recommend *The Noah Plan* from the Foundation for American Christian Education (F.A.C.E.). This is a comprehensive Christian education program for grades K-12. Although it is a curriculum designed for day schools and homeschooling, many of the resources used are excellent for independent home study. See endnote 8 for the address of F.A.C.E.

5) Two other excellent resource centers are American Vision, 10 Perimeter Way B-1, Atlanta, GA 30339, (770)988-0555 and The Wall Builders, P.O. Box 397, Aledo, TX, 76008, (817)441-6044.

6) And of course we recommend the ministry of Chalcedon. A regular diet of the writings from contributing scholars appearing in *Chalcedon Report*, as

well as of the book and tape offerings will build a mighty fortress against the enemy.

Tears and Sorrow

Parents and pastors need to realize that their children in public schools are being trained up into another world—a world hostile to the Christian Faith. Not only will this produce a culture that will not be blessed by God, but also one that his own faithfulness may require him to destroy. *“Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you” (Dt. 28:47,48).* Such was the plight of Israel over and over.

In church after church one finds horror stories of how children from good Christian families have gone astray. We are personally aware of several situations where parents had faithfully served their church, kept their children in Sunday school and made sure they were active in youth groups. And yet, upon graduating from public schools, the children would leave home and turn against Christian teaching. Often times the children were living in a manner bringing much shame and hurt to their parents. We have prayed and cried with close friends finding themselves in this situation. The question asked is, “Where did we go wrong?” It sounds cruel, but the real answer is that we have allowed pagans to be substantially involved with the training up of our children. With 2-3 hours per week of Christian training at home and church, it is simply no match against 35 hours per week of humanism found in most courses in public school.

Yet we are not without hope. God has always been in the business of making something out of nothing. The Lord is a master at redemption and restoration. If we will cooperate and pick up our responsibility as parents, and as the Church of Jesus Christ, education will be redeemed. But we are going to have to make some hard decisions and walk away from some bad situations.

If your family is actively involved in a Christian church and your children are in public schools, I encourage you to utilize PEERS Testing to begin the process of evaluating where your children rank in worldview understanding (see endnote for ordering information²⁰). Testing should then be followed with home or church-based training using some of the materials listed above.

Pastors—A Call to Action

Our family has moved several times in our 31 years of marriage. This has resulted in being members of several churches and having close relationships with many pastors. One common denominator I’ve found with all pastors we have had—none of them were looking for more work! I recently read a report that said the average pastor works six nine-hour days per week. So it is difficult

for me to say to pastors that more work must be done. But I have to. Maybe not more work, but at minimum redirecting priorities of time and financial resources.

Martin Luther once said, “If we are correct and right in our Christian life at every point, but refuse to stand for the truth at a particular point where the battle rages—then we are traitors to Christ.” I believe PEERS testing is uncovering a “particular point” for our age. Our youth are being taken captive, especially at the junior high and senior high grade levels in government schools, and the church is being robbed of her future. Pastor, this is a battle in which you must enter!

I am well aware that speaking against public schools from the pulpit is difficult, if not “political suicide.” But it can and must be done. One of our dearest pastor friends is senior pastor of a large Southern Baptist Church in Kentucky. There are many public school teachers in his church and his wife teaches in a public school. Yet I’ve heard him speak often about the battle that is raging in schools. A few years ago this church opened their doors to a large Christian school and now the transition from public to private education is under way. Pastors need to educate their flock about humanism and socialism, and about the church’s responsibility to confront error wherever it is found.

Parents and grandparents must be told that “their school” (the public school that didn’t hurt them?) doesn’t exist any longer. They must also be told that it was “their school” which produced the seed that now has blossomed into a humanist fruit-bearing tree. The history of what happened to education in America must be taught and now the war must be fought.

Conclusion

Government-run education is bankrupt. It has exhausted whatever spiritual/moral capital it once had. Government-run education is living (and dying!) proof of Jesus’ claim—But he answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’” (*Mt. 4:4*). No word, no life.

Teachers, curriculum and control of education make all the difference in the world—they make a worldview. Every student is going to come out of school with some worldview. It appears that a primary goal of the government school (perhaps even from the beginning) has been to make sure that it wasn’t a Biblical worldview.

I will add here that results of PEERS testing over the past decade shows that a wide difference in Biblical worldview understanding exists even among Christian schools.²¹ For a host of reasons, the humanist worldview has found its way into Christian education. We can’t just move our students to a different school setting, add prayer and a chapel service, and expect the problem of humanism to disappear. The issues of teacher training and curriculum development are still major problem areas for most Christian schools. Even the issue of *control* is a

problem in Christian schools. Frequently parents simply switched the control of the education of their children from one school board to another and left the responsibility for education of their children to others.

Furthermore, test results from a few Christian schools have even fallen below the average of public school students. Much work remains to be done in Christian education but overall results show the effort is well worth the cost in time and money. Nevertheless, time is of the essence. Each new kindergarten class that enters into the government, humanist system of education is being trained to go against the Christian Faith. If they stay through high school, most of them will live their lives as trained humanists. They will side with relativism and shun absolutes. The Bible will be gone.

If at all possible, Christian families and Christian pastors must make the decision to walk away from government-run schools and place their children in an environment of instruction in the word of God by the people of God.

¹ Statement made by representative of Elijah Company at a 1998 homeschool convention in South Dakota.

² Perhaps among the best writing as to this, and some other issues related to American state-run education is: *The Messianic Character of American Education* by Rousas J. Rushdoony (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1963).

³ *ibid.*, xii.

⁴ Samuel L. Blumenfeld, "Revolution via Education," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA, 1991), 158.

⁵ John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," in *The Early Works of John Dewey* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), Vol. 5, 84-85 (as recorded in same article referenced in note 4).

⁶ *ibid.*, 159.

⁷ For a fuller treatment of these worldview philosophies, see my chapter in *The Media-Wise Family* by Dr. Ted Baehr, available in most Christian bookstores. If you really want to know what the entertainment industry is doing to the American family, Dr. Baehr's insights, as an "insider" in the movie industry, are must reading. I also recommend that you visit their web site: www.movieguide.org.

⁸ Two educational programs providing superior Biblical worldview education, according to PEERS Test results, are Principle Approach and Classical Christian. For further information on Principle Approach, contact FACE, P.O. Box 9588, Chesapeake, VA 23321 (www.face.net); for Classical Christian contact ACCS, P.O. Box 9741, Moscow, ID 83843.

⁹ Andrew Sandlin, *Explicitly Christian Politics*, (Pittsburgh, PA: The Christian Statesman Press, 1997), 54.

¹⁰ God has revealed teaching to be a particular ministry of the church by equipping some people with special teaching ability (*Rom.12:7; I Cor. 12:28,29; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2,24; and Jas. 3:1*).

¹¹ See homepage for the N.C.A.T.E. www.ncate.org/about/whyprep.html.

¹² This is surely not to imply that all individuals with education degrees have gone on the wrong path but rather to point out that apart from Biblical truth, professional methodology will only hasten the path to destruction.

¹³ A significant value in PEERS Testing for Christian schools is to use it as a "screening tool" for recruitment of teachers. It is unique in identifying the worldview which the teacher

will be bringing into the classroom. The Institute also offers a self-paced worldview training course entitled Developing a Biblical Worldview, which can serve for in-service training of new faculty.

¹⁴ Two excellent readings on learning are *The Education of James Madison* by Mary-Elaine Swanson (The Hoffman Center, Montgomery, AL, 1992) [(205)272-1530], and *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* by Douglas Wilson (Crossway Books, 1991).

¹⁵ A. A. Hodge, *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes* (Philadelphia, 1887), 283.

¹⁶ Nehemiah Institute offers a set of Position Papers giving scriptural support for the scoring of statements used in PEERS testing. Papers are available on items most frequently missed by students.

¹⁷ *The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (Bantam Books, 1992), 19.

¹⁸ Relevant here is the current debate (fight?) in the United Methodist denomination over the issue of homosexuality in the church.

¹⁹ *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education by The National Commission on Excellence in Education* (Washington, D.C., 1983), 5.

²⁰ PEERS Tests are available in two versions: Junior high (BA12), \$9.00 and Senior high/adult (AA12), \$12.00. S/H free if ordered from this article by including memo "PEERS Study-98" on check. Send to: Nehemiah Institute, 3735 Harrodsburg Rd, #150, Lexington, KY 40513.

²¹ A very excellent report on differences among Christian schools, from PEERS testing results, appeared in the Fall 1994 issue of *Principle Approach Education* (Vol. 1, No. 2), written by historian and author Charles Hull Wolfe, Ph.D. A copy of the article may be obtained by contacting the Foundation for American Christian Education, P. O. Box 9444, Chesapeake, VA 23321-9444, or calling (804)488-6601.

Dan Smithwick is President of Nehemiah Institute. Dan holds a B.S. degree in mathematics/education. The institute is a research and educational private foundation providing worldview testing and training materials to Christian educators. Dan and Faye, wife of 31 years, have five children. He has been guest speaker on several Christian radio shows, most recently on Issues & Education with Bob and Geri Boyd and That's the Law with Dr. Herb Titus. For an information packet on PEERS Testing please call (800)948-3101 or send request to nehemiah@midco.net.

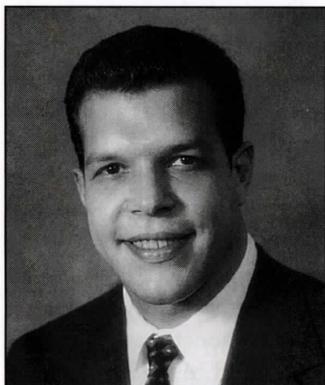
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Whole Language: Down for the Count? No Way!

By Carlo DiNota



Whether we're talking about teachers' colleges *per se* or education departments at a university, teacher training programs are of the same cloth. Let's not mince words. They're bastions of touchy-feely, amateur psychiatry. Examine any education textbook which is required reading for aspiring teachers, and

you'll find a recurring thread: competition among children is bad, strong discipline is oppressive, teacher-centered classrooms are a no-no, and testing is an inaccurate and intimidating means of assessing students. These ideological taboos have helped to define what has become known as the progressive approach to education. No surprise that behaviorists like Carl Rogers and Benjamin Bloom are held in such high regard in any education theory class.

No surprise also that education professors unanimously disapprove of intensive, systematic phonics. It is, after all, uncreative, too rigid, and *passee*. In my year and a half of taking education courses in order to be certified by New York State in teaching English, I never met one prospective reading instructor who could adequately explain what phonics is, nor did I ever meet one professor who could either. Yet the response I received when I inquired about phonics was always, "There's more than one way to teach reading." Same answer every time.

While linguists worldwide argue that an alphabetic system like English must be taught phonetically, America's educracy remains enthralled by the anti-intellectual mumbo-jumbo of whole language, which maintains that children learn to read by reading and through osmosis they eventually pick up the association of letters and sounds.

News flash: Forty-four percent of U.S. elementary and high school students read below basic level and nearly half of American adults have trouble with such common mental demands of life as reading newspapers. And what has been the predominant form of reading instruction in U.S. public schools over the last fifty years? Whole language and its equally idiotic forefather, look-say (AKA Dick and Jane).

But let's remember that schools of education (from whence the Mickey-Mouse pedagogy arises) are hardly bastions of sound intellectual scholarship, and thus we should not be shocked that the proper way to teach reading—via phonics—is not emphasized in our nation's teachers' colleges. James Koerner summed it up poignantly in his 1963 book *The Miseducation of American Teachers*,

indicting the education major as "one of the intellectually weakest, most nebulous, and generally unsatisfactory fields in higher education, although it is the biggest." Oh, and in case you've been away, standards in teacher-training courses have not improved in the 1990s. In April 1998, sixty percent of candidates seeking Massachusetts teaching certification failed a basic literacy test, with the Chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Education, John Silber, maintaining that a bright high schooler could have easily passed the exam.

The Phonics Movement

The phonics movement has gained momentum in the last few years, with California's Board of Education recently announcing its abandonment of whole language. The board's executive director has rightfully referred to whole language as a "heinous experiment." And the much anticipated 1998 report by the National Research Council, commissioned by the U. S. Department of Education and the National Institute on Child Health and Human Development, concludes that early elementary reading instruction must include phonics.

Public Education and Whole Language

Yet, expending tireless energy trying to incorporate intensive, systematic phonics into all our government schools is ultimately a useless endeavor. Phonics in every classroom would require the support of every teachers' college in America, which have heretofore abandoned phonics for the latter half of the century. It would mean that teachers' colleges would have to promote a structured, traditional curriculum, when it is rare to find any textbook used at these institutions that promotes "the old way." It would mean drastically reforming the National Education Association's caustic opposition towards phonics, and disbanding their hundreds of surrogate literacy councils that promote whole language. One look at the brazenly leftist resolutions passed at an annual NEA convention would reinforce anyone's pessimism that the teachers' union would support phonics, which for so many years has been a major issue with conservative education activists. And as *The Wall Street Journal* noted, when the National Research Council's study was released in March of 1998, the NEA was promoting whole language that very month at a Read Across America day.

It would mean forcing publishing houses, which have made millions due to the voluminous nature of whole-language reading curriculums, to trim down their books for the intrinsically lean and mean phonics primers, for a real phonics curriculum, like the McGuffey Readers of the

nineteenth century, would take up but a fraction of the shelf space that present whole-language materials occupy in a typical classroom. Whole language means big bucks for the publishing houses, while the more frugal genuine phonics does not. Never underestimate the influence of a publishing company on a school board, for they wine and dine big-city board members in order to lull them into signing a lucrative and sometimes exclusive contract promoting whole-language reading materials. Of course, it is possible that the publishers would create primers that claim to be phonics-based, when in fact they are filled with the gibberish of the sight/whole-word method. Phony phonics curriculums are, in fact, running rampant today.

Most importantly, introducing intensive, systematic phonics into every classroom would mean that the educracy would have to temper its impassioned allegiance to the likes of John Dewey, Edmund Burke Huey, G. Stanley Hall, Arthur I. Gates, William S. Gray, *et al.* Having taken education courses not too long ago, I do not see this happening. Education Theory 101 textbooks view these disciples of progressive education and non-phonics alternatives to reading instruction as the bedrock from which all significant pedagogical theory stems. It would be the equivalent of telling communists to forget Karl Marx, or for Deconstructionists to forget Jacques Derrida.

Entrenchment

I am often asked why the education establishment continues to embrace whole language when there is ample evidence that this system fails millions of children each year and has contributed to the epidemic known as functional illiteracy. In a word, *entrenchment*. Progressive education theory is deeply entrenched into the fabric of our government schools, and has been for the most part of this century. With teachers' colleges, teachers' unions, education publishers, educrats, and influential "experts" univocally joined in an almost Masonic-like brotherhood—embracing the gospel according to Dewey—one should not be so naive as to expect an "anti-progressive" method such as intensive, systematic phonics to ever assimilate into their value system.

Phonics did not sweep into government schools upon the publishing of Rudolf Flesch's best-seller *Why Johnny Can't Read* in 1955, and it won't make serious inroads today with the NRC report or pro-phonics editorials from the *New York Times*. And the noble edict from California's Board of Education which calls for the abandonment of whole language will inevitably be sabotaged by the teachers' colleges, teachers' unions, and other like-minded and influential brethren. Lest we forget, the Dewey cabal that created our nation's schools of education did so in part to establish homogeneous progressive thinking among all public school teachers. Today's educational professors who shape the impressionable minds of prospective elementary school instructors are simply incapable of turning on the disciples of look-say/whole language, if not philosophically unwilling to do so. In general, they haven't expunged dopey pedagogical theories such as guided fantasy, role playing,

sensitivity training, encounter groups, and values clarification, and history shows us that they won't expunge whole language either. In fact, history shows us that they'll probably change its name and make this reading method even more illogical.

As Thomas Sowell brilliantly argues in his book *Inside American Education*, university education professors suffer from an inferiority complex. Their scholarship is hardly taken seriously by professors in other fields of study largely due to its touchy-feely value system that borders on dopiness. I would add, education Ph.D.s fill their textbooks with highfalutin, pseudo-scientific language in order to hide the innate absurdity of their pedagogy. Hence we have the reading issue. Prior to the advent of public schools, parents taught their children to read with relative ease using phonics. The teaching of reading, which is such an important part of the learning process, is hardly a mystery, as homeschooling parents today demonstrate. You don't have to be an "expert" to teach a child to read so long as you stick to the time-tested phonetic way of teaching an alphabetic language system.

Yet today's education experts need to justify their existence and save face in the academic world, so they hyper-obfuscate the reading process via whole language and drown their propaganda with such bombast so to give the impression that only the holier-than-thou "professionally-trained" instructor could teach Johnny to read. Kenneth Goodman, reigning guru of modern whole language, reinforces this elite status with seemingly every written word. "Reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game," he writes. Heavy stuff. Serious scholarship, he would like us to believe. Yet wrong-headed through and through. I marvel at the lengths education experts will go to complicate such a simple issue as reading.

Absurd non-scholarship is a powerful influence on American education today, yet illogical pedagogy translates into danger for our children who bear the damaging consequences of, for example, Goodman's silly approach to reading. And when such revered early pioneers of modern education theory as G. Stanley Hall actually extol the virtues of *illiteracy*—stating that illiterates "are probably more active and less sedentary," "escape certain temptations, such as vacuous and vicious reading," and that maybe "we are prone to put too high a value both upon the ability required to attain this art" of literacy "and the discipline involved in doing so"—it is clear that today's pedagogical theory is rich in loony tradition.

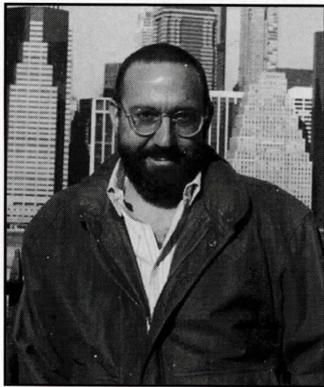
Government schools will never liberate themselves from the enthrallment of John Dewey and company. Therefore, enter at your own risk.

Carlo DiNota holds a B. A. from Villanova University and an MA in English from New York University. He is executive director of Literacy Unlimited, Inc. and is a former Roman Catholic high school English teacher and Yonkers (NY) city councilman. He resides in Boston and can be reached at Carlo2834@aol.com.

How to Send Your Children to Hell

By Steve M. Schlissel

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (Pr. 22:6)



Is Proverbs 22:6 a promise or a warning? The phrase, *in the way he should go*, is not translated in a manner true to the Hebrew. It should be *according to his (own) way*. Thus, you have in 22:6 a proverbial prediction that a child brought up and trained to follow his own road at

the beginning will be fixed in that path for life.

The proverb could be viewed as an encouraging “promise” in two possible ways. One, the most common, sees it as teaching that if you properly “parent” your child according to his covenant calling, it will result in lifelong faithfulness. The other “positive” way of viewing it yields a different meaning. Solomon would be speaking of the early identification of a vocational inclination in your son. If this inclination is cultivated, it will result in a lifelong and fruitful devotion to his chosen craft. As such, the proverb could be taken as some sort of inducement to early apprenticeships. If you see your son loves horses, *e.g.*, get him trained early on in that field by an expert. The phrase *train up* would then have the meaning of “dedicate” or even “launch.” Get him going in employing his natural gifts early and he’ll use them in that field for life.

But there is a third way to view this verse, and that not as a promise at all, but as a warning. The word would be teaching us here that *if* you bring up a child according to his own (sinful, natural) inclinations, you’ve ruined him for life. Thus, this proverb would be a complement to many other proverbs that treat the same subject. For example, 22:15 says, “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him,” and 19:18 warns: “Chasten thy son *while there is hope*, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.” By saying *while there is hope*, we find the author suggesting that there will be a time when training or disciplining will be, humanly speaking, vain, hopeless, fruitless, and useless. If you let him follow his depraved instincts out of the gate (as per 22:6), you’ll not get him back onto the path later in life.

This last way of interpreting 22:6 has the most to

commend it. First, it permits the literal rendering to convey a coherent message without tinkering. Second, it is supported by the discovery of very similar instructions and warnings when the same subject (child-rearing) is treated within the same inspired book. Third—and this is vitally important when testing the proper interpretation of an inspired *proverb*—it is true to life and common experience. “There is little hope for children who are educated wickedly. If the dye has been in the wool, it is hard to get it out of the cloth,” says Jeremiah Burroughs. And many have noted, as did William Gurnall, that the Christian “[r]eligion does not grow without planting, but will die even where it is planted, if not watered. *Atheism, irreligion, and profaneness are weeds that will grow without setting*, but they will not die without plucking up.” Let a child follow his own way when young and he’ll grow up to be a “garden” of weeds.

Above and beneath *all* possible interpretations of Proverbs 22:6, however, is a presupposition of the greatest importance: How parents raise their children *matters*. Those who start their thinking with election rather than covenant can easily fall into some sort of unbiblical fatalism. But since the Proverbs (not to mention the rest of Scripture) tell us of diverse outcomes resulting from different human actions, we are safely led to believe that the way we raise our children is a very important matter indeed, one which, in *more* than a manner of speaking, could very well impact where they will spend eternity.

It is never an honor to God for his people to speak of his sovereignty in such a way as to relieve themselves of their responsibilities. From Scripture, we are taught to believe that we can and ought to have such influence over our children that it is normal for it to lead unto *salvation*, with God’s blessing and the support of the covenant community (cf. *Gen. 18:16-19; 1 Tim. 3:4,5* and *Tit. 1:6*; note also *2 Tim. 3:14,15*).

Just so, we ought to know that our action or inaction could well lead to their *damnation*. And, if we fail to heed God’s warnings and guidance found throughout Scripture, at the last day we will not be able to plead God’s decree in our defense!

Seeing that hell is eternal, torturous separation from God and comfort, one would think that a parent’s most fervent desire would be to, aggressively and self-consciously train up his children to escape perdition and find refuge and fullness of life in God through Christ and covenant. Yet many regard this as just too much work.

For those so utterly perverse as to be indifferent to the matter, I present a method to make it a certainty. Here,

in 18 easy elements, is the proven formula for how to send your children to hell:

1. Raise your child to expect to get his own way. Ignore with all your power the Biblical counsel of Bishop Ryle in his little classic, *The Duties of Parents*:

First, then, if you would train your children rightly, train them in the way they should go, and not in the way that they would. Remember children are born with a decided bias towards evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong.

The mother cannot tell what her tender infant may grow up to be—tall or short, weak or strong, wise or foolish: he may be any of these things or not—it is all uncertain. But one thing the mother can say with certainty: he will have a corrupt and sinful heart. It is natural to us to do wrong. “Foolishness,” says Solomon, “is bound in the heart of a child” (*Prov. xxii. 15*). “A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (*Prov. xxix. 15*). Our hearts are like the earth on which we tread; let it alone, and it is sure to bear weeds.

If, then, you would deal wisely with your child, you must not leave him to the guidance of his own will. Think for him, judge for him, act for him, just as you would for one weak and blind; but for pity’s sake, give him not up to his own wayward tastes and inclinations. It must not be his likings and wishes that are consulted. He knows not yet what is good for his mind and soul, any more than what is good for his body. You do not let him decide what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and how he shall be clothed. Be consistent, and deal with his mind in like manner. Train him in the way that is scriptural and right, and not in the way that he fancies.

If you cannot make up your mind to this first principle of Christian training, it is useless for you to read any further. Self-will is almost the first thing that appears in a child’s mind, and it must be your first step to resist it.

Ignore this, I say, if you would set your child on a course bound for destruction. Instead, teach the child positive self-esteem; teach him that the greatest love is living inside of him—teach him that the world does indeed revolve around him.

2. Never spank him. Proverbs which suggest corporal punishment are barbaric and outdated (I heard a nun say so!). We are civilized. We’ve had the Year of the Child! We raise our consciousnesses, not paddles. Proverbs 13:24, “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him,” is wrong. Ignore it. So is 22:15. And forget 23:13,14 (“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death”).

If you are tempted to discipline corporally, try these excuses: a) “I was beaten as a child so I won’t hit my children.” (Of course, that’s like saying “My mother was fat so I don’t feed my kids.”) b) It’s against the law. c)

My mother-in-law doesn’t like it. Be creative and think of other excuses; you’ll find them easy to manufacture.

3. Almost as good as not ever spanking them is spanking them senselessly and/or severely. Biblical correction is loving, firm and controlled, and its effect life-giving. We don’t want that now, do we?

4. This is a favorite of many parents: never use Scripture in correction. Never explain to your child what God’s mind is on a matter. Do not take Deuteronomy 6:4-9 literally. If you leave God’s word out of it, you can convey to your child a belief that every conflict is nothing more than a battle of merely human wills.

5. Never admit you’re wrong. If you want your children to grow up hard and hostile, don’t ever let them see you humble or accepting correction. Don’t ever apologize to them; don’t ever swallow your pride.

6. Be a hypocrite. This is a great one to remember. Teach them *by your actions* that your words have no value for you.

7. Raise them to choose their own religion. After all, you can’t force them to believe.

8. Don’t pray with them or for them, publicly or privately. If you need an excuse, remember they once snickered at you when you tried. That’s usually enough to stop a guy.

9. Avoid singing psalms and hymns with your children. But if for some reason you find you must, never explain the meaning to them.

10. Answer every religious question with “Because we’ve always done it this way.” This is one of the most effective ways of convincing them that Christianity is merely a tradition and not the Truth.

11. Don’t warn them about evolution or other popular myths. Don’t inform them about heresies in history or their modern iterations. Tell them nothing about competing theologies and why orthodox churches reject them.

12. Let them express themselves in any way they choose—whether in their manner of dress, the way they wear their hair, or their language. Fads are there to be followed. If they want tattoos or multiple piercings, sit back and play the fat, passive idiot. Don’t interfere. After all, it’s their life. And don’t even look at what they read. They have rights, you know. Don’t you read ACLU bulletins?

13. Don’t make them work for anything. Love, after all, must be unconditional, right? So give everything and expect nothing. (That’s just what you’ll get.)

14. Talk down to them from infancy on. Don’t expect them to reach up to maturity—they’ll meet your expectations!

15. Don’t hug them or kiss them or tickle them, and be very stingy with telling them you love them. Avoid it altogether, if possible. It isn’t very manly, after all.

16. Let them lie and get away with it. Prove by this that truth is at a low premium in your household.

17. Let them fritter away time, aimlessly and without

purpose. Wean them from that puritanical idea that we rest well in order to work better. Try to instill in them the modern notion that work is in order to weekends—we labor so we can boogie!

18. Keep the TV on, especially commercial television. This is the easiest and surest way to direct children to the bottomless pit. Just think! It can be their third (and only real) parent, their best friend. Two hours of church on Sunday doesn't stand a prayer shaping their character when put up against 25 hours of television. Every absolute, from whatever source, will be forever relativized. Commercial television has got to be the devil's best friend, so let it own the living room, and the kitchen too. If at all possible, keep it on during dinner so it can have unrivaled claim to the title "lord and mediator of reality" in your home.

If you follow these 18 steps there is little question that your children will be among the denizens of hell.

But I rather think that you'll reject all this horrid nonsense (1-18 above) and buckle down to the most solemn responsibility God will ever call you to: parenting. If God gives us the ability to lead our children to perdition, why would anyone doubt that he gives us the ability, the responsibility—indeed, the privilege—of leading them to heaven? If we faithfully follow his method of raising covenant children, they will, all things

being equal, be among the population of heaven for all eternity. What an incentive to fidelity!

The covenant continues in the line of generations, but it continues there along the path of *faithfulness*, not presumption. We have incomparably great and precious promises from God, as well as warnings. He warns us that doing nothing is the wrong thing. *Train up a child in his own way, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* But he promises that doing the right thing will bring a harvest of fulfilled promises. Hear God musing to himself concerning his friend, Abraham: *For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice. To the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

That promise is for you and for your children, for as many as the Lord our God will call. It's a promise with conditions—what joy it is to fulfill them, seeing the reward they lead to! Amen.

Steve Schlissel has been pastor of Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn, NY since 1979. He serves as the Overseer of Urban Nations (a mission to the world in a single city), and is the Director of Meantime Ministries (an outreach to women who were sexually abused as children). Steve lives with his wife of 24 years, Jeanne, and their five children.

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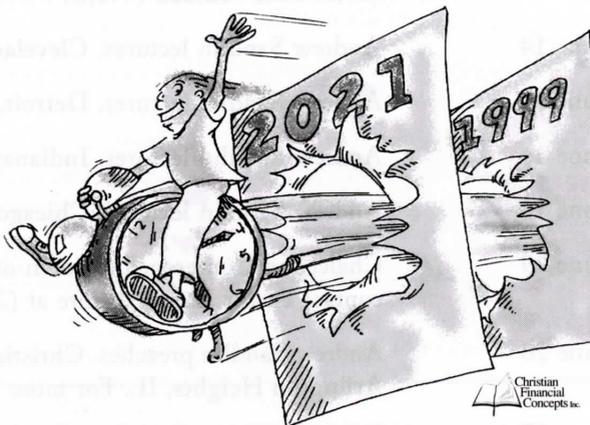
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Chalcedon Itinerary 1999

- Please note:** Due to time constraints, the Chalcedon Lecture series in Vallecito, CA has been postponed until further notice.
- April 11 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture. 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**. For more information, contact Pastor Brian Abshire (209) 544-1572.
- April 15-17 Steve Schlissel, **Lookout Mountain, GA**. Reformed Presbyterian Church. For more information, contact Pastor Kevin Skogen (706)820-9770.
- April 16 Andrew Sandlin lectures. 7:00 p.m. Sheridan Hotel at **Portland, OR** Airport (503)281-2500.
- April 17 Andrew Sandlin lectures. 7:00 p.m. Wyndam Garden Hotel at the **Seattle, WA** Airport (206) 244-6666.
- April 18 Andrew Sandlin preaches. 11:00 a.m. in **Seattle, WA**. For more information, contact Clint or Elizabeth Miller at (206)328-1025.
- April 18 Steve Schlissel, **Rome, GA**. For more information, contact Dr. Eddy Johnston (706)291-6448.
- May Peter Hammond travels to the U. S. for speaking engagements, details to be announced later.
- May 1 Andrew Sandlin preaches. Evangelical Reformed Church Conference in **Sacramento, CA**. For more information, contact Pastor Wayne Leigh (916)974-7744.
- May 13-15 Steve Schlissel, **Chicago, IL**. Illinois Homeschooling Conference. For more information, contact Ken Sisson (847)872-6279, ext. 309.
- May 16 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture. 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**. For more information, contact Pastor Brian Abshire (209)544-1572.
- May 22 Andrew Sandlin lectures. **Dulles Airport, VA**, details to be announced later.
- May 23 Andrew Sandlin preaches at Christ's Covenant Church, **Front Royal, VA**. For more information, contact Ralph Gibson at (540)636-8853 or Robert Clayton at (540)636-6860.
- June 13 Andrew Sandlin preaches at Shiloh Christian Church, **Leroy, OH**. For more information, contact Pastor Phil Vollman (440)354-8486.
- June 14 Andrew Sandlin lectures. **Cleveland, OH**, details to be announced later.
- June 15 Andrew Sandlin lectures. **Detroit, MI**, details to be announced later.
- June 16 Andrew Sandlin lectures. **Indianapolis, IN**, details to be announced later.
- June 18 Andrew Sandlin lectures. **Chicago, IL**, details to be announced later.
- June 19 Chalcedon Conference. Church of Christian Liberty, **Arlington Heights, IL**. For more information, contact Pastor Brian Abshire at (209)544-1572.
- June 20 Andrew Sandlin preaches. Christian Liberty Academy Commencement, Church of Christian Liberty, **Arlington Heights, IL**. For more information, contact Quentin Johnston at (847)259-4444.
- June 27 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture. 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**. For more information, contact Pastor Brian Abshire (209)544-1572.
- July 11 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture. 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**. For more information, contact Brian Abshire at (209)544-1572.
- July 12-17 Steve Schlissel lectures Student Worldview Conference, **Newport News, VA**. For more information, contact Byron Snapp at (757)826-5942.
- July 16-17 Andrew Sandlin lectures, **Philadelphia, PA, and New York City** area, details to be announced later.

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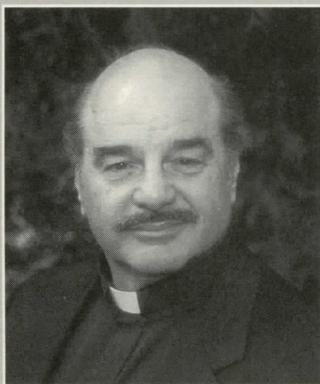
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