

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." HOSEA 4:6

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce these risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

Multiculturalism: The New Anti-Americanism

Much is being written these days by professional educators about multicultural education, but few among the lay public actually know what it is. Despite this widespread public ignorance, multicultural education is now an integral part of the American school curriculum. In fact, multicultural education is now considered so important that the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has given it a very prominent place in teacher education programs.

The NCATE's publication, *Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Education* (July 1982), states: ❖

Multicultural education is preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters. . . . This preparation provides a process by which an individual develops competencies for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving in differential cultural settings.

Provision should be made for instruction in multicultural education in teacher education programs. Multicultural education should receive attention in courses, seminars, directed readings, laboratory and clinical experiences, practicum, and other types of field exercises.

Multicultural education should include, but would not be limited to experiences which: (1) promote analytical and evaluative abilities to confront issues such as participatory democracy, racism and sexism, and the parity of power; (2) develop skills for values clarification including the study of the manifest and latent transmission of values; (3) examine the dynamics of diverse cultures and the implications for developing teaching strategies; and (4) examine linguistic variations and diverse learning styles as a basis for the development of appropriate teaching strategies.

Although NCATE's requirements for teacher training, which became effective in January 1979, are quite explicit, nowhere in the NCATE's publication is there a definition or description of what multicultural education really is. We get hints in the requirements. We are told of "culturally diverse and complex human encounters" and "differential cultural settings." We are also told that multicultural education has something to do with racism, sexism, parity of power, values clarification, the transmission of values both manifest and latent, the dynamics of diverse cultures, linguistic variations, etc.

But what does it mean in language that

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the average individual can understand? What does it mean to parents whose children will be subjected to multicultural education? What does it mean to the local school board which will be required to implement a state-mandated multicultural education program in the local school?

Defining Multiculturalism

A rather comprehensive treatment of the subject can be found in the Spring 1984 issue of *Theory Into Practice*, the journal of the College of Education at Ohio State University. That issue contains 13 articles on multicultural education covering many aspects of the subject.

Multiculturalism is based on the notion that the traditional Judeo-Christian model of American values is no longer valid as the model to be held up to children in the public schools. These values are generally associated with white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant culture, usually referred to as WASP culture by its critics. The educators believe that WASP culture is in decline and is not being replaced by another dominant model. In fact, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) statement on multicultural education is entitled "No One Model American." Ergo, many models will take its place.

A multicultural society is one made up of many equally valid ideals that can serve as equally valid models for young Americans. No one is required any longer to conform to the once dominant Judeo-Christian ideal, and the public schools are now required to convey this message to the students.

For decades the compelling rationale for public education was that it provided the means of Americanizing the millions of different immigrants who came to these shores. It provided a common body of values for all Americans. But apparently that rationale no

longer holds. According to Charles A. Tesconi, dean of the College of Education at the University of Vermont:

"We all know by now that homogeneity has not and does not characterize American society. We know how great a myth the 'melting pot' turned out to be. . . . American society, then is best characterized as a mosaic of an extensive, highly diverse array of cultural elements.

"As a descriptor, multiculturalism points to a condition of numerous life styles, values, and belief systems."

Teaching Moral Diversity

And how is multiculturalism, therefore, to be taught, and what will be its desired results?

"By treating diverse cultural groups and ways of life as equally legitimate, and by teaching about them in positive ways, legitimizing differences through various education policies and practices, self-understanding, self-esteem, intergroup understanding and harmony, and equal opportunity are promoted."

Thus, multicultural education embraces much more than mere cultural pluralism or ethnic diversity. It legitimizes different lifestyles and values systems, thereby legitimizing moral diversity. The concept of moral diversity is in direct conflict with the Biblical concept of moral absolutes on which this nation was founded.

Yet, our public schools, in order to be accredited, are now required to teach that there are no moral absolutes, that every individual has the right to freely choose his or her morals, and that ethics are situational. The result has been moral anarchy.

Thus, American public schools are no longer to be used to inculcate a common set of moral and spiritual values based on our Judeo-Christian heritage but are to be used

to promote a plethora of competing values systems, with Christian fundamentalist values cleverly excluded from competition. In other words, the public school is now a market place of competing pagan and anti-Christian belief systems. The students have a choice, *but the market is rigged*. That, in a nutshell, is multicultural education.

A New Worldview

How is multicultural education taught? It is not a course which is taught separately from the rest of the subject matter. It is, in reality, a worldview which, in the words of Theresa E. McCormick, specialist in multicultural education at Emporia State University, "must permeate the total educational environment."

That means that multicultural education, in the words of Sandra B. DeCosta, associate professor at West Virginia University, "must be carefully planned, organized, and integrated into all the subject areas. But most emphatically it must begin when children first enter school."

Thus, it is now official policy in the public schools to inculcate moral anarchy in American children beginning with grade one. It is now official policy of the public schools to deny that there exists a common value system known as Americanism — unless by Americanism you mean moral anarchy.

Celebrating Americanism

Yet we know that Americanism does exist and does constitute the basis of American consciousness: the conviction that this nation was created with God's help and blessings to demonstrate to the world that with the true God all good things are possible, and that without Him we will be consigned to the same tyranny and misery that now afflicts the millions who live under

paganism or communism.

During the recent celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty that concept of Americanism was expressed over and over again in song and speech in three simple words: *God Bless America*. Those three words acknowledge the existence, efficacy, and sovereignty of the God of the Bible. They express the essence of Americanism, the peculiar consciousness that makes us different from other peoples.

While that consciousness was given to us by our founding fathers who, for the most part, were indeed white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants, one does not have to be white, Anglo-Saxon, or even Protestant to accept it. There are many blacks, Hispanics, Latins, Slavs, Catholics, Jews, etc., who accept it.

Becoming an American does not mean aping WASPS. It never did, and it never will. It means accepting the essence of what the founding fathers stood for and died for. That essence is founded on Biblical principles which include the concept of moral absolutes. The public schools now presume that blacks, Hispanics, Indians, Asians and other immigrant children are incapable of understanding or unwilling to accept the philosophy of the founding fathers. Therefore they won't even teach it to them.

What kind of Americans will the public schools turn out? Americans ignorant of their nation's founding principles, incapable of defending their country against foreign ideologies, adrift in a sea of moral and cultural anarchy, at the mercy of fears, slogans, and environmental fanatics.

Stepping Stone to Globalism

Multiculturalism is also an important stepping stone to globalism, that concept of a future world government which the public schools are now promoting. In an article entitled "Multicultural Education and Global

Education: A Possible Merger", Donna J. Cole of Wittenberg University writes:

"A multiculturalized global education would address the basic concern of where the individual fits into the mosaic of humanity and where others fit in the same mosaic. . . . [It] would aid students in understanding that our membership in groups affects our values and attitudes. . . . [It] would assist students in recognizing the need to be flexible and adjustable citizens in a rapidly changing world."

The National Education Association (NEA) of course endorses multicultural-global education. Its resolution of 1986 states:

The National Education Association believes that multicultural global education is a way of helping every student perceive the cultural diversity of the US citizenry so that children of many races may develop pride in their own cultural legacy, awaken to the ideals embodied in the cultures of their neighbors, and develop an appreciation of the common humanity shared by all peoples of the earth.

Notice that the NEA recognizes no American culture that the student may take pride in. He is to take pride in his own "cultural legacy" and learn to appreciate the cultures of others, but nowhere in sight is there an intrinsic American culture based on peculiarly American values to appreciate, take pride in, or identify with.

The purpose of globalism is to prepare young Americans to accept as inevitable and desirable a world, socialist government in which American national sovereignty will be surrendered for the greater good of "a new world order." In any case, multicultural global education is another good reason why parents must remove their children from the government schools. Social studies professors have rewritten American history to play down patriotism and national pride, and multiculturalism even denies the existence of such a thing as Americanism. This is no way to build an American future.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. An Australian View

(The following article was written by Mr. Charles Francis, a senior Melbourne Barrister and Q.C.)

Traditionally in Australia human rights have been protected by what is known as common law, a tradition which we adopted from England and which many of the States by their Constitutions, in fact, expressly affirmed. In England since Norman times, it was always assumed that there was a body of laws, which were the customs and usages of the English people, and which governed the English people and their rights. The body of laws was known as the common law of England. The common law of England was transported to the Australian colonies at an early stage. It soon came to be recognized in Australia that our colonists (who for the most part came from the United Kingdom) continued to enjoy those rights which traditionally were previously enjoyed by them as citizens of England.

By way of example since early in the 19th Century, it was never disputed in Australia that we as citizens had the right to own property, the right to freedom of religion, and the right to educate our children as we thought fit. Those three traditional rights are mentioned specifically, because it is no longer certain that we will necessarily continue to enjoy them.

Indeed, it seems clear that significant inroads have now been made into our rights as parents to educate our children as we think fit. Insofar as our freedom of religion has inherent within it the right to bring up our children in our own religion, that right is equally under attack. A significant element

in the erosion of that right may well result from Australia's recent commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our ratification of this Convention does not make it the law in Australia, but by signing the Convention a government indicates its intentions to make the Articles part of the law of the signatory country in the future.

The history of referenda in Australia has demonstrated that the Australian people have always had a singular reluctance to entrust any additional powers to government. Since 1982 the Commonwealth Government, only too well aware of this reluctance, has sought to attract new powers to itself by using international conventions, which purport to create rights, the enforcement of which thereafter necessitates giving to the Commonwealth Government additional powers, powers which quite clearly were never given to it either by the States or by the people but which are now assumed under the External Affairs power. One such right the Commonwealth hereafter no doubt will claim to have is the right to interfere in the relationship between parents and children.

The Christian Context

It is, of course, frequently argued that we in Australia now need to adopt such Conventions and pass Bills of Rights because it is said we have no Bill of Rights as does, for example, the United States of America. That statement, though technically correct, is very misleading. The common law which we inherited from England operates as a huge and exceedingly wise Bill of Rights, because within its framework is contained and defined that law which governs most of the human rights and human relationships which we the Australian people now enjoy.

It is also of considerable significance

that our common law was devised within the context of a Christian nation. Because our common law was devised in a Christian context and because many of the early Chancellors of England were, in fact, clerics whilst others like Sir Thomas More, though not clerics, were deeply steeped in Christian theology and tradition, the human rights which the common law preserves have a close affinity with Christian philosophy. That, no doubt, is one of the reasons why the radical Left in Australia now so frequently and enthusiastically denigrate common law. That Christian context is readily apparent in those provisions of the common law which controlled family life and the relationships of parents and children. Just as the Fourth Commandment told children to honor their parents, the common law gave to parents (in particular to the father) the right to determine how the children of the family would be brought up.

It is, of course, no secret that a number of our present parliamentarians are humanists. Some of our Members of Parliament have demonstrated a firm commitment to the eradication of Christianity and its influence in this country so far as it may be possible. You may remember the public statement of one Commonwealth Minister (who incidentally played a significant part in the adoption of this Convention) when he publicly indicated his hope to rid Australian children of the pernicious influence of Christianity.

State Control of Children

Some of the arguments advanced to support Australia's signing of the Convention require brief consideration. First of all, it has been argued that more than fifty nations have already signed the Convention, so why shouldn't Australia sign also. This is a little like the teenage argument—everyone else is

doing it, so why shouldn't we? Unfortunately, most of the nations of the U.N. are not democracies. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Marxist states, dictatorships, and those governments where all power is concentrated in the hands of a few people will sign this Convention, because the Articles of the Convention tend to transfer the power to control children from their parents to an all powerful state.

Moreover, many governments sign Conventions with no intention whatever of enforcing any of the rights conferred, except for those rights which it may suit the State to enforce.

Secondly, it is argued that there is much ill treatment of children in other countries, that in many parts of the world children live in dire poverty, and that Australia by demonstrating its commitment to the Convention will help those children. I do not believe the signing of such a document by Australia can necessarily effect any change in the attitude of either governments or people in other countries, nor of course can the Convention itself do anything whatever to remove poverty in a country.

Finally, it has been argued that there is much physical and sexual abuse of children in Australia today, and that therefore the Convention is now necessary. In my view, the best way to deal with physical and sexual abuse is through the criminal law and the processes of the Courts, and perhaps even more important, we need to ascertain the cause of this phenomenon in order to eradicate the cause rather than dealing with its results.

Much of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child is, of course, unobjectionable, but it seems to me that there are five Articles which create grave problems, namely Articles 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16. These Articles will prove a panacea for spoilt brats in the future Western world, will make it impos-

sible for many parents to exercise proper control or discipline over their children, and will tend to place teachers in a far more dominant position in the determination of the destinies of children. In the final analysis, many of the decisions of parents as to how their children should be brought up will, in future, be determined ultimately not by the parents themselves, not necessarily even by teachers, but by the bureaucrats in Canberra.

Let us now turn to consider those particular Articles of the U.N. Convention, which, in the view of a number of lawyers, will radically change the future relationship of parents and children, depriving parents of most of their traditional rights.

Article 12 is the first Article in a chain of 5 Articles which provide a libertarian charter of children's rights. Its implications, therefore, require some close attention. Article 12 assures to a child the right to express views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Children Versus Parents

The purposes behind this Article are not necessarily readily apparent. It would suggest that whenever a parent purports to lay down the law on any subject within the home — as, for example, the time by which a fourteen-year old daughter is to be home in the evening — there is now, at the very least, a charter for protracted debate. It would also seem, however, that Article 12 was probably included as a preliminary right to enable children to ventilate elsewhere their disagreement with parental rulings. Because Article 12 couples within it an insistence on the right of the child to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, it is apparent that the intention of this Article does not simply relate to such mat-

ters as the custody of the child in divorce proceedings between parents, which are judicial, not administrative proceedings. Article 12 is also fairly plainly a preliminary right to enable the child to enforce the rights guaranteed by Articles 13-16 in proceedings against the child's parents. . . .

Article 13 assures to the child the right to freedom of expression, which is declared to include "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds". In practice, I believe Article 13 will make it impossible for parents to resist exposure of children in schools and elsewhere to material which parents may find objectionable on religious, moral or other grounds.

As we now live in a community in which homosexuality is legal, and as our State and Federal Governments have been at pains to remove any stigma from homosexual and lesbian activities (even to the extent of providing funds for such groups), it would seem abundantly clear that the active promotion of the notion of homosexuality as an appropriate lifestyle is now regarded as a lawful activity.

The right of a teacher to express to pupils the view that homosexuality is a valid lifestyle would appear to be protected by Article 19 of Schedule 2 of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (1986). The right of the child to receive such information, if the child (not the parent) wishes to receive it, would now appear to be guaranteed by Article 13 of the U.N. Convention regardless of the wishes of the parents. . . .

No longer will a parent necessarily have the right to withdraw a child from extracurricular classes, such as sex education, if the parent disapproves of the way the subject is taught. The parent who sought to prevent a teacher informing his fourteen-year old son that he should consider adopting a gay lifestyle would, in Australia, be at risk of being

held to be in breach of both the U.N. Convention when it becomes law in Australia and the Human Rights Act.

Limiting Parents Rights

Article 14 declares the "right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion". By the Convention, parents and guardians are afforded only the limited right to direct children in the exercise of this right. Nor is any real protection given even to that limited right. It is one to which the State "gives respect", but the right cannot be enforced and in its entire context "giving respect" appears to be almost valueless. As the only parental right mentioned in the Article is the right of parents to direct, it seems implicit that a parent in the future will not be able to require a young child to go to Church or Sunday School if the child does not wish to do so. In this regard, there appears to be no right "to control" the child's practice of a religion.

Parents may also find that Article 14 can create difficulties for them if they are confronted with a relatively young child who wishes to join some fringe religious sect, or an adolescent who wants to join a satanic cult. The parent would have a right to advise, but not necessarily any right to intervene. As children increasingly become aware of the contents of Article 14, it will become a growing difficulty for parents to try to encourage their children to adhere to the traditional religious practices of the family.

Article 15 "recognizes" the rights of the child to freedom of association and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. Such rights could make it difficult for parents to resist associations for their children with persons whom parents find objectionable or whom they consider (perhaps with complete justification) to be a bad influence on their children.

Inappropriate Rights

To me the rights to freedom of association and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly are peculiarly inappropriate rights to be given to young children or adolescents. When this Article becomes law, we can look forward to demonstrations in our cities organised by children. Neither parents nor teachers would necessarily have any power or right to prevent children participating in these activities.

Australia is committed, as part of the Convention, to teaching children even at Primary level about these various rights, and material has been prepared for this purpose. Already some parents have been confronted with the situation in which children have come home and announced that they will no longer perform those household duties which have been allocated to them within the home, because they have now become informed at school of their "human rights".

Article 16 includes protection of the child's right not to be "subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy". The inclusion of the word "arbitrary" may permit children to resist intrusion by parents into anything that children consider to be private to them, including medical treatments, and presumably any intrusion whatever which may occur in the child's bedroom or any other part of a home set aside for use of a child. The medical practitioner, who without the parents' knowledge and without reference to them puts a thirteen-year old daughter on the pill, could no doubt justify his or her conduct by the verbiage of Article 16.

Supporters of the Convention will, of course, immediately point to Article 5 as being a safeguard for the rights of parents. . . Article 5 requires the State party to the Convention to respect the rights of parents

"to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention." It is to be noted, however, that the right "to control" the child is omitted from Article 5, presumably a deliberate omission. As a matter of interpretation when certain rights are specified and other rights are not specified, the implication may be that the unspecified right can no longer be sustained.

[The Convention] suggests that parental conduct will be subject to external scrutiny. Indeed, it is implicit in the Convention that the signatories to it will police parents within their countries to ensure compliance with the Convention. . . . We can look forward, therefore, to a new bureaucracy which will investigate children's complaints, drag parents in for questioning whenever it thinks it appropriate, and arbitrate on family disputes.

Many Australians today consider that this country is already too undisciplined. The implementation of this U.N. Convention in Australia will inevitably lead to a further breakdown in the ability of parents to exercise any proper discipline or any proper control over their children.

Those parents who already tend to exercise too little control over their children will be provided with a quite adequate excuse for their irresponsibility. They will now say (with considerable justification) that the State does not permit them to control their children, so that the control and discipline of their children is a matter for the government.

For those responsible parents, who exercise proper control over their children and who endeavour to bring them up as well disciplined citizens with a sense of duty to the community in which they live, the task in the future will be immeasurably more difficult.