

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 those risks.

"Without vision, the people perish."

Is Your Child Attending a Zoo? or How to Evaluate Your Local Public School

Every September over 40 million American children return to their public schools to be "educated." Among them are about 4 million first graders entering public school for the first time. Many of them have had a preview of things to come in kindergarten or preschool. But the first grade is where "learning" becomes formalized, structured, and serious. That is where the child will be introduced to the basics of whatever it is the educators intend to teach.

Back in the early 1930s, when this writer attended primary school, it was easy to know what was meant by the basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Reading, for the most part, was taught from an alphabetic-phonetic point of view; writing meant cursive writing, not some form of ball-and-stick printing; and arithmetic meant learning the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts by drill. Rote was considered okay in those days because, as everyone knew, arithmetic is a counting system which requires memorization for optimum usage and speed.

Today, even the educators have a hard time defining what they mean by basics. They no longer teach mere reading. They teach language arts, literacy, communication, body language, whole language, invented spelling, critical thinking, and HOTS -- higher order thinking skills. In writing they teach manuscript, or print script, or a form of calligraphy, or slant print. Eventually they get around to cursive in the third grade when the teacher and pupils are too busy discussing nuclear war, overpopulation, South Africa, and sex to devote much time to cursive.

As for arithmetic, the subject no longer exists. It is now all called Math, and includes not only a vague semblance of what used to be called arithmetic, but also math concepts, set theory, numeracy, and how to use a calculator.

The Cognitive Skills

All of that is subsumed under the heading of "cognitive skills," a term devised by cognitive psychologists who

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believed that the behaviorists simply did not pay enough attention to what was going on in the mind. And so they created a whole new area of psychological study concerned with how children learn.

The cognitive domain is only one part of the basic curriculum. The other is the affective domain concerned with values, emotions, behavior, socialization, interpersonal relations, activities, sexuality and death. The affective domain is nothing more or less than the humanistic world view which is now the philosophical foundation of American public education.

In other words, the public school is the parochial school of the humanist religion, and the affective domain is the religious aspect of the school's curriculum. In Catholic schools they teach, or used to teach, the catechism, along with the basics. In Protestant schools they teach, or used to teach, the Bible as well as the Westminster catechism. In public schools they teach humanist doctrine and beliefs in the affective domain.

What is interesting to note is that the form the basics take is determined by the religious orientation of the school. The old-style basics, the three R's, are most compatible with theistic, Biblical religion in which God is the author of a reality that can be studied and known, a reality ordered by God's sovereign rule. The new-style basics, or cognitive skills, are a product of humanistic religion and its evolutionary concepts of man, society, and the world. Cognitive psychology is not only compatible with atheistic behaviorism but also with New Age paganism, mysticism, and pantheistic cosmic vision.

The Humanist Catechism

Thus, parents who put their children in public schools must be made aware that they are putting their children in a parochial school with a

highly developed, well-defined world view which determines how and what their children will be taught. The curriculum, the subject matter, the teaching methods, the required reading are not only compatible with that world view but are its very products and fully reflect its values, morality, standards, spiritual vision, and messianic mission. To ignore all of this is to ignore the impact, the deep influence, all of this will have on the child's life.

As R. J. Rushdoony has said, "Humanistic education is the institutionalized love of death." Thus, for many children, a public school education is a death sentence. Since the early 1970s, when death education was introduced in the public schools, over 50,000 teenagers have committed suicide. Death education, of course, is now a permanent part of the public school's humanistic curriculum, a permanent part of the humanist catechism known as the affective domain.

One Third Become Disabled

That is why, to this writer, September is the saddest month of the year. It is the month in which 4 million eager, healthy American children will enter the first grade of the parochial public schools where they will begin the process of learning to hate life and love death. At least one third will become "learning disabled" within a year, losing their healthy sense of self, relegated to a life of needless torment, tragedy and incompetence. A second third will be damaged but not destroyed. And the last third will be chosen as the gifted and talented to be eventually initiated into the humanist elite or priesthood.

Any astute observer will be able to discern in the computer printout of that first grade's records who will be in what category for the next twelve years. The labeling process begins early and can stigmatize an individual for life.

September is also the month of the big back-to-school sales promotions. The women's magazines, which distribute their September number in August, devote their lead articles to the usual back-to-school issues: how to prepare your child for school; how to get to know your child's teacher; how to become a school volunteer; how to get involved with the PTA; how to get your child to obey the teacher and do what he or she says. None of the articles ever bothers to warn parents of some of the emotionally harmful things their children may be taught or of the educational malpractice that now abounds in the public schools.

Asking the Right Questions

But parents can indeed find out what is going on in the school their child is attending by simply asking the right questions. The same questions, of course, can be asked of both public and private schools, and the answers you get will enable you to evaluate that school.

First, find out where your child's teacher got his or her training. If he or she is a product of a state teachers college then you know that that teacher attended the equivalent of a humanist seminary where humanist indoctrination was the daily fare. If that teacher also claims to be a Christian, then try to find out to what extent he or she has been influenced by humanist doctrines. You may or may not be able to get that information, depending on how friendly or open the teacher is and how well the conversation goes. By volunteering information about your own background and beliefs, the teacher may be willing to do likewise.

On the other hand, if the teacher clams up or goes on the defensive or feels that his or her privacy is being intruded upon, then obviously a conflict exists between the teacher's world view and yours. For all you know that teacher may be a highly trained change agent proud of his or her role

in creating the new world order of tomorrow. However, always be polite, respectful, friendly, and innocently curious. Never come on as an inquisitor.

Read the Textbooks

Find out what textbooks are being used in your child's class and look them over carefully. You may have to spend a morning in the school library reading the books. Take notes if particular books disturb you. If possible, look over the teacher's instructions to see what is being taught and how. Remember, the textbooks were, for the most part, written by humanist educators whose mission it is to proselytize children to their point of view. These textbooks comprise the humanist catechism. If the principal or teacher want to know why you are so interested in the textbooks, simply tell them that the Secretary of Education has said that it is important for parents to get involved in their children's education and that you'd like to know what your children are being taught so that you can help them.

The Reading Program

Find out how they teach reading. The school will probably be using a basal reading program, that is, a series of books based on a particular methodology. Most of the basal programs used in American schools today are whole-word oriented with incidental phonics thrown in. These programs are usually called eclectic. If you ask whether or not they teach phonics, the answer will always be yes, for if they teach so much as the sound of one letter in the context of a whole-word program, they will insist that that is phonics. But it isn't.

True phonics is a program of intensive, systematic phonics in which children learn and are drilled in the letter sounds before they read whole words. In true phonics, children

develop an automatic association between letters and sounds so that they can become phonetic readers.

The Sight Vocabulary

The most important question to ask is: Do you teach a sight vocabulary? The answer will invariably be yes, thus confirming that they are using a sight or look-say or whole-word teaching method. Teaching a sight vocabulary is teaching children to look at English words as little pictures or configurations of meaning like Chinese ideographs without the children knowing that the letters stand for sounds. According to Rudolf Flesch, imposing an ideographic teaching technique on an alphabetic writing system can cause reading disability.

Thus, if the school is using a whole-word, eclectic basal reading program many of the children in that school will become reading disabled. Also, the school may be using a new "whole language" reading program with exciting, colorful reading books. Don't be fooled. Whole language is the latest fad in reading instruction and is based on whole-word methodology. In fact, the top promoters of whole language are extremely anti-phonics. (See BEL #31, The "Whole Language" Fraud.)

The Writing Program

Find out how they teach writing. If the children spend the first year or two mastering ball and stick or some sort of print script, then there is a good possibility that your child will never become a good cursive writer. In schools where print script is emphasized, cursive is generally introduced, if at all, in the second or third grade. By then the children are so busy with other things that the teacher has no time to supervise the development of a good cursive script and the children don't have the time to practice it adequately. In addition, some children refuse to stop printing, which they may have perfected, and learn an

entirely new form of writing. They resent having to learn to write all over again and will remain printers for the rest of their lives.

Find out how they teach arithmetic. The teacher may not even use the term arithmetic and talk only about "math." Look over the workbooks to see if there are any memorization drills of the arithmetic facts. If not, then your child will be handicapped when dealing with numbers. If the teacher tells you that memorization is no longer necessary because the children will be using calculators, ask how the children will know when they've made an error on the calculator. If the facts are not in their heads, they will simply depend on the calculator readout, whether it is right or wrong. Besides, there are times when one must do some arithmetic without the help of a calculator. What then? The purpose of formal schooling is to provide the youngster with basic skills. If the school does not provide these skills, what good is it?

Does the school have Special Ed classes? Are they full of normal kids who can't read because of look-say? Or are the children truly handicapped, with real physical and mental problems? Most of the kids in Special Ed are there because of educational malpractice. Make sure that your child does not become one of them. Teach your child the basics at home.

The Affective Domain

That about covers the cognitive skills. Next, you'll want to find out about the affective domain. Does the school teach values clarification by using lifeboat or fallout shelter survival games in which children must decide who is to live and who is to die on the basis of the person's social usefulness? Does the school teach death education in which children are required to write their own obituaries, plan their own funerals, visit cemeteries and funeral parlors? Does the school teach sex education or family planning and emphasize the use of

contraceptives? Does the school teach the meaning of such concepts as chastity and abstinence? Or do the teachers put the emphasis on "safe sex," premarital recreational sex, abortion, etc.?

What is the moral bias of the school's sex education? If it isn't Christian, is it humanistic, nihilistic, or simply amoral? Can there be such a thing as values-neutral sex education? Isn't the "make-your-own-decision" attitude telling kids that as long as the decision is theirs, whatever they decide is okay?

The school will no doubt also have an AIDS education program. Ask to see the written program so that you may read it yourself. The emphasis will no doubt be on condoms and safe sex.

Is the School Safe?

Find out to what extent drugs are a problem in the school. Are the laboratories monitored and safe? Is there drug dealing in or around the school? Does the school have a drug education program? Is the purpose of the program to acquaint children with the wide variety of drugs that exist and what their effects are? Or is it to let children know how drugs destroy lives and how they can protect themselves against the pushers? Read the program's written material.

Find out if your child will be required to fill out inquiry surveys dealing with his or her sexual experiences, personal emotions, family life, parents' religious and political beliefs. Such surveys are usually made in the context of values clarification, but they are clear violations of family and personal privacy.

New Age Practices

Find out if your child's teacher uses Eastern religion meditation techniques to reduce student stress. Such new age practices are now widespread in

the public schools and may include out-of-body experiences and the use of spirit guides. Such practices may put children in conscious contact with demons which then may wreak havoc in their emotional lives. Coupled with death education, the child may begin having nightmares, become demon possessed, fall into depression.

Find out if there have been any suicides in the school. A series of suicides among students may indicate a strong satanic presence in that school. But be cautious when inquiring about new age practices in the school. Do not be accusatory. Simply seek information. New age teachers are very sensitive to inquiries by Christian parents. In Colorado a teacher sued Christian parents for injury to reputation and emotional distress and won a cash judgment of \$110,500. Also, most principals will protect their new age teachers and let them do their thing in the classroom. Your concern must be the mental and spiritual health of your child. You will not succeed in forcing the school to change its curriculum or practices just to suit you.

Social Studies

Read the social studies textbooks to see what kind of a mess the humanists have made of history, geography, economics, anthropology, government, etc. Back in the old days, history and geography were taught as separate subjects in an orderly, organized way. Local and U.S. history were taught chronologically so that the student could learn how America came into being, how freedom was won. The purpose of history is not only to teach us about our origins but also of the mistakes of the past so that we need not repeat them.

But the humanists have a different use for history. They write their versions of it to show how it all leads inevitably to a world government so that the students can be prepared to shed our national sovereignty when the right time comes.

A Humanist Concept

The whole concept of "social studies" was created by progressive humanists to bring children into the humanist world view. And that is why so many young Americans have so confused a knowledge of American history and so poor a sense of geography.

So read the textbooks carefully. See if whatever history and geography is taught is done so in a sound and objective manner. How is religion considered? Are the religious foundations of America taught? How is our form of government presented? How is the theory of evolution taught -- as theory or fact? What do the books say about communism? Is it presented as a legitimate, alternative political system, or as the tyrannical hell it really is? What do they say about free enterprise? Don't be surprised if you want to toss the books out the window. That's where they probably belong.

How is grammar and composition taught? Do the students ever get a chance to write whole sentences and essays, or do they merely fill in blank spaces in workbooks?

What about the physical appearance and condition of the school? Is the school clean, well maintained, absent of graffiti? Or does the school seem unkempt, disordered, run down? What kind of decorations are used? Do you find good art on the walls or an endless array of cartoon animals and inane posters? Are the lavatories clean and well maintained? You may have to visit the school several weeks after classes begin to see if the neatness of the opening week is maintained. A school building full of litter, graffiti, broken toilets, and idiotic wall decorations is not an atmosphere that encourages learning.

Is There a Dress Code?

How are the teachers and students dressed? Is there a dress code, or

does the school resemble a gypsy carnival? Do the girls wear sexy clothes and the boys dress as if they were at a rock concert? If so, the school will have succumbed to the chaotic life style of today's youth culture and will hardly be able to rise above it esthetically, morally, or academically. When the young are left to their own devices, and their elders refuse to impose moral restraints or cultural standards, the young will, out of anger and spite, drag down their elders to their lower chaotic level. When parents and educators abdicate their responsibility to protect the young from destroying themselves, they put their entire civilization in jeopardy.

Does the school teach appreciation of classical music or play rock and roll in gym classes?

Is your local public school a zoo? A zoo is a school in which the teachers are afraid of the students, cannot impose discipline, where learning is a joke, the atmosphere slovenly, and no one really wants to be there.

The Bus Ride

Then there is the matter of the bus ride. How much time will your child be spending on a bus going to and from school during the school year? Can you and your child make better use of that time at home in a home-school program? There is also the concern with physical safety, traveling in bad weather, confronting bullies, the threat of assault.

Getting beaten up is no fun for your child, even though some educators consider it to be an essential life experience in the process of socialization, an important form of peer interpersonal relations. Maybe you were beaten up or terrorized or severely teased when you were a child and remember it fondly. But if such memories remain as permanent traumas in your life, you may want to spare your child such experiences.

Last but not least is the matter of AIDS. What is the school's policy on admitting children with AIDS and keeping teachers and cafeteria workers with AIDS on staff? Will your child be sitting next to, and playing with, a child with AIDS whose condition has been kept secret? Is Russian roulette now part of the affective domain? See what kind of answers you get from the principal.

However, it is quite possible that after evaluating the school you may honestly decide that it is clean and neat, the children well cared for, the instruction program satisfactory, the teachers competent, the principal a respected member of your church, and the bus ride acceptable. But just remember that every public school, bar none, is a humanist parochial school. That is the bottom line. That being said, as they say in values clarification, make your own decision.

Michigan Home Schoolers Must Be Taught By Certified Teachers

A Michigan state appeals court has ruled that children attending home schools in that state must be taught by certified teachers.

Two families who taught their children at home argued that the state law violated their right to religious freedom because their religion forbids them to submit their children's education to state authority. The children's truancy convictions were upheld by the appeals court last month.

The court acknowledged that the law places a burden on the defendants' right to free exercise of religion. "However, we found the burden minimal when compared with the state's compelling interest that high quality education be afforded our children," the ruling said.

David A. Kallman, a lawyer for one of the families, said the case will be

appealed to the state supreme court. (Educ. Wk. 9/6/89)

Comment:

As long as Christian lawyers accept the state's phony assertion that it has a "compelling interest in education," they will continue to lose their cases. The state does not have a compelling interest in education. If it did, it would not use teaching methods that create functional illiteracy. In fact, if the state really had a compelling interest in education, it would encourage home schooling, because that's where the kids are getting educated.

Also, it is interesting that the judge gave more importance to the state's so-called compelling interest, which is nowhere to be found in the Constitution, than to religious freedom, which is guaranteed by the Constitution. Obviously, this case was not very well argued by the Christians.

They should have challenged the state's assertion that it has a compelling interest in education by exposing the educational malpractice that is rampant in Michigan's public schools. They should have challenged the state to define what it means by education. After all, the public schools are merely the parochial schools of an illegal establishment of religion called humanism. They should have challenged the notion that certification guarantees a "high quality" education. What certification does is simply force teachers to undergo humanistic indoctrination in teachers colleges, so that they may perform their duties as lay ministers in the humanist public schools.

Certification also prevents perfectly competent professionals from teaching because they lack the state's bogus credential.

We hope the Christian lawyers will do better in the appeal.

Dropout Loses Driver's License

A 17-year-old who dropped out of 9th grade has lost his challenge to a West Virginia law that requires students to remain in school until age 18 to qualify for a driver's licence.

State District Judge Paul Zakaib ruled last month that the state's compelling interest in education outweighs an individual's privilege to hold a driver's licence. Paul Jordan, an assistant attorney general, said he expects the case will be appealed to the state supreme court.

Michael Means, who is married, was denied a new driver's license by the Department of Motor Vehicles after he dropped out of school in 1988. Mr. Means's lawyer argued unsuccessfully that his client was entitled to drop out because the state requires school attendance only until 16.

The state has revoked 787 teenagers' licenses since the law took effect last year. The measure apparently prompted some 1,800 dropouts to return to school, officials said, but half of them dropped out again.

Texas and Florida passed similar laws this year. (Educ. Wk. 9/6/89)

Comment:

Apparently, the state's "compelling interest in education" has become the supreme law of the land, overriding the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, religious freedom, as well as all of the commandments of the Bible. Nothing must stand in the way of getting dropouts back into school! What hypocrisy.

Why did the dropouts leave school in the first place? Because they weren't learning anything, and they knew that their time could be much better spent out in the real world earning a living. Many dropouts never learned to read. So school was a constant humiliation, a daily reminder of how dumb they were. Yet, they stayed in school and put up with the pretense that they were being "educated" just to

please parents and the establishment. But how much of a lie can a human being take?

It is significant that of the 1800 dropouts who returned to school, half have dropped out again. Apparently, there was nothing compelling about the education they were getting. In other words, it is better to be out of school without a license than to be in one with a license.

The judge's reasoning was rather strange. He equated education with merely being in a classroom. If the judge was so concerned about education, why didn't he state what kind of education the dropouts should be given?

But you would think that ten years of wasted time in a public school would be enough to satisfy the state's compelling interest. And if no significant education took place in those ten years, why did the judge believe that another two years of involuntary servitude would do anything but rob the individual of his freedom? (Incidentally, since when is a driver's licence a privilege and not a right?)

When it comes to education, the judiciary seems to be living in a fantasy world where educational terms are seldom defined and lies are accepted as fact. The problem with most defending lawyers is that they often appear to be as ignorant as the judges. And what's worse is that those lawyers who know the facts lack the courage to tell the emperor that he has no clothes.

But there are a few good judges and a few good lawyers, which accounts for the occasional victory that is scored for educational and religious freedom. This war for educational freedom will be a long one, with most of the battles being fought in the court houses of America. It therefore behooves us to become well acquainted with how the courts do business, for from now on we will be spending more and more of our precious time inside those confusing palaces of justices.