

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge" HOSEA 4:6

Volume II, Number 1 (Letter # 5) EDITOR: Samuel L. Blumenfeld

January 1987

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."

The War Against Christianity in America

The origin of the war against Christianity in the United States can be traced back to the early days of the public school movement when Unitarians, Owenite socialists and atheists, and Hegelian pantheists vehemently rejected the mainly God-centered world view of the founding fathers and sought to secularize education and substitute salvation through education for salvation through Christ.

However, it wasn't until the turn of the century and the rise of the progressive education movement that the war in America took on the militancy which characterizes it today. The progressives were, for the most part, members of the Protestant academic elite who no longer believed in the religion of their fathers and transferred their faith to science, evolution, and psychology. The scientific method provided the means to acquire unlimited knowledge of the material world, evolution explained the origin of life and man, and psychology provided a scientific means of studying man's nature and controlling his behavior. There was no need for supernatural religion in the progressive scheme of things.

Early in this century the progressives embarked on a messianic mission to change America from a capitalist, individualistic, believing nation into a socialist, collectivist, atheist or humanist society. They were motivated by the need not only to prove the non-existence and/or irrelevance of God but to deal with the age-old problem of evil: what causes it and how can it be eliminated?

According to the Bible, evil behavior in man is the result of his sinful nature. Man's disobedience in the Garden of Eden resulted in his fall from grace, his loss of immortality, and his coming under the influence of Satan. Only obedience to God's law and salvation through Christ can save man from the horrible consequences of his sinful nature.

The progressives naturally rejected this explanation which, to them, was little more than mythology and fairy tale. To them, there was no God, and man was merely an animal, a product of evolution, neither innately good nor evil. The causes of evil, they believed, were ignorance, poverty and social injustice, and once these were

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eliminated, a just, crime-free, utopian society was possible.

All that had to be done was to identify the causes of social injustice, and a scientific cure to man's social ills could be contrived. According to the progressives it was our capitalistic, free enterprise economic system with its emphasis on private property and individualism which caused social injustice. And underpinning all of this was the Christian religion with its libelous view of human nature, its emphasis on the supremacy of God's law over man's law, its support of the notion of unalienable rights and private property.

Thus, the progressives declared war on Christianity. Why? Because it posed the most formidable obstacle to their entire revolutionary program. But their aim was not merely to destroy Christianity, but to replace it with a new secular religion. In 1908 John Dewey wrote, in an essay entitled "Religion and Our Schools":

Those who approach religion and education from the side of unconstrained reflection . . . are of necessity aware of the tremendous transformation of intellectual attitude effected by the systematic denial of the supernatural. . . .

It may be that the symptoms of religious ebb as conveniently interpreted are symptoms of the coming of a fuller and deeper religion. . . . So far as education is concerned, those who believe in religion as a natural expression of human experience must devote themselves to the development of the ideas of life which lie implicit in our still new science and our still newer democracy. . . . It is their business to do what they can to prevent all public educational agencies from being employed in ways which inevitably impede the recognition of the spiritual import of science and democracy, and hence of that type of religion which will be the fine flower of the modern spirit's achievement.

The war on Christianity worked its way downward, from the graduate schools of education and psychology where John Dewey and his colleagues trained the future educators, until finally it reached the local schools through the new teachers, administrators and bureaucrats in the state departments of education. Christianity was eliminated in the new curricula and textbooks, and the new humanist religion was inserted in its place.

With the help of the courts and the American Civil Liberties Union the humanists have been able to eliminate from the public school virtually every manifestation of Christianity: school prayer, silent or vocal; grace before meals; Bible study; references to Christianity in school art or decoration; benedictions at graduation; Christian stories and themes in textbooks.

The current battle is over "equal access" -- whether Christians even have the right to exercise religious freedom during extracurricular activity or use public school facilities for religious purposes after school hours.

Nor have the humanists limited their war on Christianity to the public school. They have embarked on a long-range campaign to expunge Christianity from all government institutions and to bring Christian children under their control in private and home schools.

The humanists do not want freedom of religion; they want freedom from religion, and any public manifestation of Christianity is in their eyes an affront to their atheist sensibilities.

When seen in this context, it is quite easy to understand the anti-Christian character of public education and the proliferation of court cases involving religion in the schools. The humanists are on the offensive and advancing slowly and steadily, while Christians are fighting defensively, but retreating on virtually every front. Christians have lost the war in public education and are now trying to stem the assault on private church schools and institutions.

But the humanists have done more than simply eliminate Christianity from the public schools. They've erected mammoth fortresses of humanist culture in the state universities and colleges all across America. These fortresses are protected from Christian influence by the judicial doctrine of the "separation of church and state."

The humanists have also captured many private universities and colleges originally founded by churches and denominations. And even the churches themselves have been heavily influenced by humanist ideology.

In other words, we are really in the final stages of this long war. But the war is by no means over. In fact, Christian resistance is finally beginning to take shape, and the possibility of a Christian counter-offensive becomes more plausible for a variety of reasons:

1. The growth of the Christian Reconstruction movement, an awakening to the virtues of the Calvinist world view which is providing the strong backbone needed to resist humanist tyranny and reconstruct society on a Christian foundation.

2. The growing separation of fundamentalist Christians from the humanist culture and the establishment of new Christian churches, schools, colleges, and universities.

3. The growth of the Christian home-school movement, which is strengthening the Christian family in an era of moral disintegration.

4. The anti-abortion movement with its increasing pressures on the judiciary and medical profession; the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment.

5. The bankruptcy of humanist morality and the social anarchy it has created -- causing in its wake tremendous disillusionment among many humanists and non-Christians.

6. The growing recognition among many non-Christians that a final humanist victory will mean an end to American freedom as we've known it for two hundred years.

7. The growing AIDS plague which will put a stop to the humanist sexual revolution and awaken Americans to the realization that "the wages of sin is death."

Thus, there is plenty of reason for hope. But the nation will inevitably go through some very trying times, and Christians may very well suffer more defeats before the situation turns in their favor.

Tennessee: What kind of Victory?

The decision handed down in Tennessee by Judge Thomas G. Hull on Oct. 24 in Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools has been hailed by Christians as a great victory and denounced by humanists as a serious setback.

The case came into being when a group of fundamentalist Christian parents objected to their children being required to read the Holt series textbooks which, in the parents' view, offended their religious faith. When the parents were unable to persuade the board of education to remove the books from the schools, they requested that their children be provided with an alternative reading arrangement.

Instead of complying with the parents' request, the board unanimously adopted a resolution requiring teachers to "use only textbooks adopted by the Board of Education as regular classroom textbooks." When the Christian students refused, on religious grounds, to read the Holt series or attend the reading classes in which these books were being used, they were suspended from school for three days. When the students, on return to school, still refused to read the Holt books, they were suspended for ten days.

At this point the parents withdrew their children and enrolled them in private Christian schools. They then sued the board of education for "money damages for the expenses incurred in sending their children to private school and an order of the court requiring the school system to accommodate their religious beliefs by providing alternative reading instruction."

Although the liberals characterized the Christian plaintiffs as advocating textbook censorship, this was hardly the case. The Memorandum Opinion states:

"It is important to note at the outset that the plaintiffs are not requesting that the Holt series be banned from the classroom, nor are they seeking to expunge the theory of evolution from the public school curriculum. Despite considerable fanfare in the press billing this action as 'Scopes II,' it bears little relation to the famous 'monkey trial' of 1925. These plaintiffs simply claim that they should not be forced to choose between reading books that offend their religious belief and foregoing a free public education."

The judge decided in favor of the plaintiffs, ruling that indeed the public schools were quite capable of accommodating the Christians and that "this accommodation could be achieved without substantially disrupting the education process. . . . Moreover, such an accommodation might promote a spirit of religious tolerance in the school system and impress upon the student body the high regard this society has for religious freedom."

This was not what the humanist educators wanted to hear, and so they are appealing the decision.

The court also ruled that the Christian parents could home-school their children in reading while still sending them to the public school for other subjects.

What does this decision mean? If sustained by the higher court, it will mean that public schools will have to provide textbooks for Christian children that do not offend their religious beliefs. Will boards of education comply? We shall see.

The decision also confirmed the rights of parents to home-school their children, particularly if the public schools cannot or will not accommodate the parents' wishes.

There are, however, some negative aspects to this case. Anti-Christian humanism permeates virtually every aspect of public education and for the plaintiffs to have singled out the reading textbooks as the sole offenders will give educators and judges the idea that Christians are satisfied with everything else in the curriculum.

But what about values clarification, situational ethics, sensitivity training, multiculturalism, globalism, evolution, transcendental meditation, magic circles, sex education and death education? Are Christians willing to accept these in other subjects in exchange for alternative reading programs? Besides, the Vitz report has shown that Christianity has been eliminated from textbooks in all subject areas.

The simple truth is that the public schools cannot satisfy the real educational needs of Christian children, for a Christian curriculum demands a God-centered world view in every subject.

The positive result of the case, however, is the affirmation of parental rights and the notion that the state's so-called "compelling interest" in education can be served without offending a family's religious beliefs.

(Late development: Judge Hull has awarded the seven families \$50,521.59 to reimburse them for tuition, school lunches, mileage to and from school and the parents' lost wages while attending depositions and court sessions. "The money spent was a reasonable expense,"

Hull said. "They had to go somewhere and they had to go fast." Boston Globe 12/16/86.)

Christians Lose in Michigan

In a 3-to-3 ruling, the Michigan Supreme Court upheld a lower-court decision affirming the state's "right" to regulate church schools. The ruling was handed down 11/24/86. The state's regulations require Christian schools to hire state-certified teachers, provide an education comparable to that in public schools, and comply with reporting requirements set by the state board of education.

The plaintiffs, represented by noted constitutional attorney William B. Ball, may seek a rehearing of the case.

School Christmas Scene Ruled Unconstitutional

A superior-court judge in Snohomish, WA, has ruled that a Christmas display erected in 1985 at Olympia View Junior High School in Mukilteo School District violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment. The display, which included a nativity scene, was ruled in violation of the Constitution because it advanced the religious preference of the sponsoring teacher and a majority of his students. The parents who objected to the display filed suit against the district in Dec. 1985.

(When are Christians going to sue schools for displaying Halloween scenes and thereby promoting the pagan Druid religion?)

NEA and AFT Fight Creationism

Both the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) have joined the

fight against the 1981 Louisiana law mandating the teaching of "creation science" whenever evolution is taught in the classroom. The case is being heard in the U.S. Supreme Court.

In their briefs, the unions argue that creation science is a religious belief, and requiring teachers to teach it violates the separation of church and state. The court is to decide by July.

Iowa Church Schools Defy Court Rulings

Despite the fact that the Iowa Supreme Court has ruled that church schools must hire state-certified teachers and submit enrollment and curriculum reports to the state, 77 of Iowa's 230 private schools have refused to comply with the state's regulations.

So far the state has taken no action against the schools.

Michigan Home Schools to be Regulated

The Michigan board of education ruled on 10/8/86 that home-schooling parents in Michigan must comply with state regulations governing private schools, including one requiring that all teachers be state certified.

Three home-schooling families contended that the state has no authority to regulate their affairs. Lower courts have ruled in favor of the state, but have noted the lack of a formal regulatory scheme.

As a result of the board's action, the state's intermediate school districts will bear the responsibility for seeing to it that home schools comply with state standards and regulations. (Educ. Wk. 10/22/86)

Ten Percent of Legislators are Former Educators

According to a new book, "Educators as Lawmakers: A Directory of State Legislators from the Education Profession," more than 800 -- about 10% -- of all current state legislators are or have been educators.

The study was published by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and confirms what we have asserted, that more and more educators are getting involved in politics and voting for measures to enhance the power of the education establishment. The directory is available for \$10 from AACTE, One Dupont Circle, Suite 610, Washington, DC 20036.

Black Parents Turning to Private Schools

Disillusionment with public education is moving more and more black parents to seek private education for their children. According to Joan Ratteray of the Institute for Independent Education, "Black parents want smaller schools, more attention, and a safe, disciplined environment." (Educ. Wk. 12/3/86)

ACLU Fights Lease to Christian School

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a suit in San Diego to stop the planned lease of land owned by Miramar College, a public community college, to the Mira Mesa Christian School.

Faculty and staff of the college oppose leasing the land to the Pentecostal church school because it violates the constitutional separation of church and state.

Meanwhile, the 85-student church school has moved two portable classrooms onto the Miramar campus. The

church school will not move until the case is decided against it. (Educ. Wk. 11/12/86)

Can Christians Win in Court?

The Tennessee case proves that Christians indeed can win in court, even though they've lost many other cases. The NAACP lost many cases before it won the big one. Christians must do the same.

But they must fashion cases that make sense and advance the cause of Christian freedom. When courts rule that Christian schools must hire state-certified teachers, Christians must then sue the state teachers colleges for advancing anti-Christian, humanist doctrine in their teacher training in violation of the separation of church and state.

When courts rule that Christian schools must offer an education comparable to that in the public schools, they must insist on a full, detailed description of "comparable education" by the state and then sue the state for advancing the religion of humanism.

Christians who send their children to church schools should also sue the state for forcing them to support through taxes humanist, anti-Christian education in public schools.

All of this will be costly. But if the humanists can do it, so can Christians. Fundamentalist churches must organize and create a legal defense fund to pay for such cases. Only by going on the offensive and challenging the humanists at every turn will Christians be able to restore the legal framework of their freedom.

Liberal Parents Fight Christian Influence

A group of parents in Lake City, Florida, have sued the local school district for removing a humanities book

from use in a high school class because of a complaint by Rev. Fritz Fountain that the book contained sexually offensive material.

Rev. Fountain is pastor of the Berea Baptist Church in Lake City and his daughter attends the local high school.

The suing parents are being legally assisted by the Florida chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. According to the ACLU spokesperson, "The decision to remove the book was based on religious grounds; therefore it establishes a religious doctrine in the schools."

The plaintiffs have asked for an order preventing the school board from suppressing the book, and are seeking \$50,000 in damages.

Secular Humanism on Trial in Alabama

A trial to determine whether or not secular humanism is being taught unconstitutionally in the public schools of Mobile County, Alabama, began on 10/6/86. The case stems from the Supreme Court's ruling last year in Wallace v. Jaffree in which the Court overturned an Alabama law authorizing moments of silence in public schools for prayer or meditation.

The plaintiffs are parents who supported the school prayer law. U.S. District Judge W. Brevard Hand invited the plaintiffs to file a memorandum seeking to bar "the unconstitutional advancement of the religion of Humanism . . . by the Mobile County school system."

The plaintiffs are receiving legal assistance from the Freedom Council Foundation. The defendants have been provided legal counsel by People for the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union. (Educ. Wk. 10/15/86)

Iowa Court Halts Bible Giving in School

Gideon Bibles no longer will be distributed in Iowa schools, according to an agreement settling a 1984 lawsuit on behalf of an 11-year-old girl and her father who protested when the Bibles were made available to students in the Adel-De Soto Community School District.

The Iowa Civil Liberties Union sued on behalf of Steven J. Feierstein of De Soto and his daughter, Jenna, against the school district and Gideons International, a non-profit organization which has been distributing free Bibles to hotels and schools for the last 75 years.

The ICLU and the Feiersteins argued that the school district's policy in permitting the free distribution of Bibles on a voluntary basis violated the separation of church and state.

A Humanist's Creed

The following quotation is taken from The Humanist magazine of Jan./Feb. 1983:

"The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new -- the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of Humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never realized Christian ideal of 'love thy neighbor' will finally be achieved." (John J. Dunphy, "A Religion for a New Age.")

Apparently the humanists consider Humanism to be a "new faith," or religion, destined to replace the old faith. Now if only Christians can get the courts to take the humanists at their own word: that Humanism is indeed a religious faith and that promoting it in a public school just as

much violates the much-vaunted "separation of church and state" as the promotion of any other sectarian faith.

Church Home for Girls Raided in Mississippi

On 9/14/86 the church-run Bethesda Home for Girls in Hattiesburg, MS, was "raided" by 30 state agents of the Mississippi Welfare Department, a handful of deputy sheriffs, two Episcopal priests, and the State Commissioner of Welfare, Thomas Brittain. A court order was served on Rev. Robert Wills, director of the home, but no reason was given for the court order. All 117 teenage girls were taken "downtown," questioned, and then released to their parents or placed in foster homes.

Commissioner Brittain also shut down the Sunday church service at the home. Rev. Jerry Falwell was informed of the case, flew to Hattiesburg, held a press conference and hosted a pastors' rally. This caused a temporary retreat on the part of the Welfare Department.

Currently, the Bethesda Home for Girls remains open as a boarding school with an enrollment of 24 girls.

Letters from Readers

Publisher's Note:

The following are excerpts from a letter received December 2nd.

-- Peter F. Watt, Publisher

"Dear Peter,

"Thank you so much for sending me How To Tutor (Blumenfeld's). I have read the Reading section and it seems to be like Sam Blumenfeld's The New Illiterates, which I have used. I am also using Sam's Alpha-Phonics, which is just wonderful! I have used the Spalding phonics program in conjunction with Sam's and my students are doing beautifully!

"Peter, I have never seen anything like this before! I have been a Learning Disabilities teacher in the Public Schools for 8 years (and 2 years for the Bureau of Indian Affairs) and have not had anything like the miraculous improvement that I've seen this year!! Two of my second grade students each knew 5 and 6 words consistently in August and were terrible behavior problems. The teacher told me today that she will start them in the primer the day after Christmas break. They have gone through the 2 pre-primers and are in a 3rd one from another series. She told me that she tried some words that they had never seen before and they could read them. Both boys are elated to be doing so well and do not have behavior problems anymore!

"Peter I can not believe this progress that I'm making with all these students. [The writer goes on to list numerous standard texts and workbooks she has used in the past.]

"And I have never seen even a third of the growth that I have made this year!!

"I never knew there was such a thing as intensive phonics! (A structured, logical, orderly way of teaching phonics) I am so very very thankful that I have found this -- I am also very angry for not having been exposed to it in my 6 YEARS OF COLLEGE. (Master's Degree!)"

Emphasis and punctuation are letter writer's, not ours.

What else can anyone say about the problem; this public school special education teacher says it all!!

[Name and address of teacher withheld because of her fear of being fired.]

Vital Quotes

"To exclude God from education is not neutrality but warfare."

-- R. J. Rushdoony