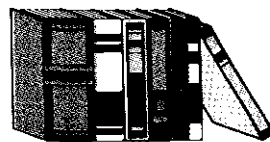


The Blumenfeld Education Letter



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

December 1987

EDITOR: Samuel L. Blumenfeld

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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."

PURE A New Movement for Parental Rights

On Sept. 25-26, 1987, Parents for Unalienable Rights in Education (PURE) held its first organizing meeting in Amarillo, Texas. Because of the delays encountered in mailing out notices of the meeting, attendance was small. But attendees came from as far away as New Hampshire and Arizona, and at the close of the meeting on Saturday, it was obvious that enthusiasm for the new organization was tremendous. In fact, after the meeting on Friday evening, everyone simply moved into the dining hall of the church-school building and continued to discuss the various issues until midnight.

The simple purpose of PURE is to mobilize parents to defend and assert their God-given, unalienable rights as parents. There was a time in the early history of our country when unalienable parental rights were considered so fundamental to our conception of society that the mere idea that someday these rights might be denied was unthinkable. But something happened on our way to the 20th century. A new philosophy of government arose in the minds of men that put the state in the place of God as sovereign over our lives. And in one fell swoop, the idea of God-given, unalienable rights was stricken from our legal vocabulary. It is true that

politicians now and then refer to God-given rights when promoting the leftist statist agenda, but they do so in the same spirit that liberation theology is used to promote Marxism-Leninism. True Christians, however, are not fooled by such semantic trickery.

The idea to create PURE arose out of events which took place in Idaho beginning in November 1984 when the three Shippy brothers and their wives were jailed for the "crime" of home-schooling their 16 school-age children. The Shippys had removed their children from the public schools because the education they were getting there conflicted with their religious faith. Although home-schooling is technically legal in Idaho, the school officials imposed such difficult regulations as to make home-schooling virtually impossible.

Their regulations demanded a "full description of the proposed home school," including names and qualifications of teachers; sample of all instructional materials; "the schedule of instruction by hour, day, and week;" the methods and standards for measuring academic achievement; and "the methods by which normal social growth and peer interaction will be provided." Also,

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the Shippys' homes would have to meet state safety regulations for public buildings.

Clearly, the Shippys could not possibly meet the demands of the school officials who obviously were intent on denying the Shippys their right to control their own children's education. And because the Shippys would not voluntarily return their children to the public schools, the court ordered the children to be taken from their parents and placed in foster homes. And so on January 10, 1985, about a half-dozen sheriff's deputies arrived at the home of Sam and Marquita Shippy and forcibly took the six children from their parents. The kicking, screaming, frightened children were stuffed into patrol cars and driven off. It wasn't until the next day that the Shippys were informed of their children's whereabouts.

The judge ordered the children placed indefinitely in foster homes. The four boys were put in a county detention home. The parents' visiting rights were limited to two hours each Sunday.

This happened in America, in Idaho, the rugged West, where individual freedom is supposedly held up and cherished as an American ideal. Apparently, school officials, judges, and sheriff's deputies no longer respect or uphold this ideal. They've sold their souls to Big Brother, the godless state, and the "land of the free and the home of the brave" are outmoded images of the past.

I happened to be visiting my publisher, Peter Watt, in Boise, Idaho, at the height of this shameful crisis. I met Peter's good friend Bob Forrey, who represented the Shippys in the Idaho legislature. Forrey had decided that the only way to resolve the problem was to introduce a bill in the legislature modifying the compulsory school attendance law. To announce this move, he held a press conference at the State Capitol which drew great media attention. But it was obvious to me that

unless the legislative drive was accompanied by strong public support, it would never succeed, for the legislators would be under strong pressure from the Idaho Education Association and the state department of education to reject Forrey's bill.

It was then that I came up with the idea of creating an organization -- Parents for Unalienable Rights in Education (PURE) -- to fight for parental rights and rally public support for Bob Forrey's initiative. As a result, a small group was formed, but it was neither strong enough to impress the legislators nor influential enough to get the courts off the backs of the Shippys.

On leaving Idaho, I became convinced that what was needed was a national PURE organization, because what the Shippys had faced in Idaho was being, and would be, faced by home-schooling parents in many other states. For example, only three months after the Shippy children were taken from their parents, Ed and Sharon Pangelinan were found guilty by a court in Alabama of the same "crime" of home-schooling. They were jailed for 132 days for refusing to hand over their children to the state. Other parents all over America were being harassed, persecuted, dragged to court, threatened, fined and jailed for simply exercising their unalienable rights as parents to educate their children without interference from the state.

There was no doubt in my mind that if Christian parents did not resist the state's trampling on their fundamental, unalienable rights, they would lose them forever. This was nothing less than a life-and-death struggle with the statists and humanists over the future of this country. If Christians lost, America would become a collectivist, totalitarian entity in a world socialist system, and our children would never enjoy the great heritage of freedom our Founding Fathers bequeathed us. They would be owned lock, stock and barrel by the state, to be used for the state's malevolent purposes.

By 1987 I was able to gather enough support for PURE to begin organizing nationally. A meeting was held in May in the Boston area to test our concepts. The results were most encouraging. The Amarillo meeting in September gave us further opportunities to shape our program. We are confident that our coming meeting on March 25-26, 1988, at Christian Liberty Academy, Arlington Heights, Illinois, will provide PURE with the activists needed to launch our program.

PURE's Program

Our intention is to organize 50 state PURE committees because we are convinced that the battle for parental rights will be won or lost in the state legislatures. Compulsory school attendance laws, which are being used to destroy parental rights, are state laws, and only state legislatures can modify or repeal them. And because our state legislatures are so overwhelmingly dominated by the state teachers associations -- the affiliates of the NEA -- and the state departments of education, our main efforts must be directed toward educating our legislators on matters of parental rights and educational freedom.

Therefore we hope that parents from as many states as possible will attend our March meeting. Each state will have its own state committee which will, in turn, encourage the creation of local chapters throughout the state.

The state committees will establish liaison with their state legislatures, identifying those law-makers friendly to home-schoolers, Christian schools, private schools and parents who want a fair shake in the government schools. It is important to identify those legislators who truly respect and honor parental rights in matters of education. We will support them when they come up for reelection. We will also question every legislator on where he or she stands on parental rights and educational freedom.

Local PURE chapters will make their views known directly to their legislative representatives. The pressure to respect and honor parents' rights will be difficult for the legislators to ignore. Since politicians are in the habit of counting noses around election time, it may dawn on some of them that there are more parents who vote than teachers or educational bureaucrats.

Information Network

One of the most important functions of PURE will be to disseminate information and news about home-school harassment and persecution via all of the media available to us. Most Americans have never heard of the Shippy or Pangelinan cases. They'd be shocked if they did. Apparently those who control the national media choose not to disseminate the kind of news that would awaken Americans to the steady loss of their freedoms. Were it not for the 700 Club and other Christian media, virtually nothing would have been known about the jailing of Rev. Sileven, the Shippys, and the Pangelinans. PURE's information network will endeavor to get the news out as quickly and widely as possible and make sure that it gets national attention for as long as necessary. While the media will play up a Gorbachev visit to a nauseating degree, it neglects the very news that Americans need to know about how parents are being tyrannized by a state education establishment drunk with power. Our information network will begin to redress this situation.

Another important function of PURE will be to bring to our members information, news, books, periodicals, newsletters, and educational materials that are virtually unobtainable through America's mass distribution channels. Thus, PURE members will have access to far greater knowledge than that which reaches the average American through the regular media. Our information network system will make us better informed, better able to meet the

challenges of our adversaries, and better able to inform our neighbors with news unavailable through the mass media. Each PURE committee and chapter will become a veritable news agency for the truth.

National Home Education Week

One of the projects of PURE is to get state governors and the President to designate the first full week in May -- in 1988, May 1-7 -- as National Home Education Week. While it may be too late to get such recognition in 1988, we will advance the idea until recognition is achieved.

In the meantime, PURE committees and chapters will be encouraged to use National Home Education Week as a time in which to visit their representatives in the state legislatures.

The Cherry Pie

The cherry pie has been chosen as the symbol of PURE because (1) it reminds us of George Washington who was home-schooled, (2) it is wholesome and can be easily baked at home, and (3) it makes a wonderfully symbolic gift to present to legislators when visiting them. We will encourage our members and their children to present home-baked cherry pies to their legislators during their visits in National Home Education Week. We think it will impress the law makers with the wholesomeness of our movement, provide excellent photo opportunities for the media, disarm our enemies, and stimulate friendly competition in pie-making. While we are serious in our long-range program to restore parental rights and educational freedom, we see no reason why we cannot have fun in the process. Home-schooling families experience great joy in what they are doing, and Parents for Unalienable Rights in Education will become a joyful movement for all involved.

Home School Industries

A special project of PURE will be the creation of a distribution network for products and crafts made by home-schooling families. Our goal is to publish a mail-order catalog listing all of the products and crafts available to the public and how to order them. This project will stimulate the creation of family industries to help increase family income and economic independence. Also, such activities teach children a great deal about arithmetic, entrepreneurship, and how our free-enterprise system works. It prepares them early in life to use their ingenuity and intelligence to earn money and to enjoy the process. The work ethic ought to be inculcated early in life and there is no better way to do it than in a family enterprise where each member can contribute his or her creativity and talent.

Should family industries and services develop as we expect them to in the years ahead, we shall organize family industry fairs in conjunction with our annual conventions.

Our Yearly Convention

PURE will hold an annual convention as a means of getting members to know one another, to share knowledge and experiences, to combine resources, to coordinate activities nationwide, to hear important speakers and to measure our yearly progress. The convention for 1988 will be held at Christian Liberty Academy, 502 West Euclid Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004, on Friday evening March 25 and all-day Saturday, March 26.

We have found home-schooling families to be gregarious, sociable, and eager for fellowship with other home-schooling families. The annual convention will also give children the opportunity to meet other home-schooled children, to become pen pals, and exchange home visits. Vacations can

become much less expensive when tourism is combined with visits to fellow members' homes. Wonderful life-time friendships can be formed in this way. Also, it is obvious that families with similar interests may want to share their experiences. A convention will provide that opportunity to meet.

We shall also encourage the holding of state and regional conferences wherever the number of members is large enough to support such activities.

The Media

While it is true that the media tend to be liberal in their political, social, and moral views, I have found that the education establishment -- particularly the NEA -- has few friends in the media. Many reporters and TV personalities have families of their own and respond positively to our arguments in favor of parental rights and alternatives to government schools. The failures of public education are so widely recognized that the public is eager to hear about the successes of alternatives. Therefore we shall encourage state PURE committees and local chapters to establish contact with their local newspapers, radio and television stations and make themselves available for interviews and talk-shows. The Christian media is particularly receptive to our message.

Also, national PURE will coordinate press conferences so that they can occur in all 50 states at the same time. Only through this kind of concerted action will our voice be heard across America. In addition, we will encourage local chapters to present their local media people with delicious home-baked cherry pies at appropriate occasions. What a way to make an impression!

PURE's Board of Directors

The seven-member Board of Directors of PURE is as follows:

Samuel L. Blumenfeld, Chairman
(Boston, Mass.)
Sharon Pangelinan, Vice Chairman
(Amarillo, Texas)
Owen Haney, Treasurer
(Amarillo, Texas)
Rosiland Kress Haley
(Lubbock, Texas)
Karl Reed
(Mammoth Spring, Ark.)
James Henry, Jr.
(Chattanooga, Tenn.)
Warren Rushton
(Salt Lake City, Utah)

Sam Blumenfeld is the author of two books widely used by home-schoolers, How to Tutor and Alpha-Phonics. He has spoken at many home-school conventions and testified at several home-school trials. He is also affiliated with the Chalcedon Foundation.

Sharon Pangelinan and her husband Ed spent 132 days in jail in Alabama for the "crime" of home-schooling their two children, Ruben and Marisa. Sharon and Ed relate that harrowing experience in their new book, Guilty of Love, published by Paradigm. Sharon is editor of PURE's newsletter.

Owen Haney is publisher of The Christian Times Weekly. He has home-schooled seven children.

Ros Haley is a dedicated patriot who founded the Rosiland Kress Haley Library in Lubbock, Texas, in 1976 to help students understand the meaning of Americanism and the Christian Free Enterprise System.

Karl Reed is the author of Our Reeds Grow Free, the story of how Karl and his wife home-schooled nine children. He also pastors a small country church and lectures on Christian home education.

James Henry, Jr., is an attorney who presently home-schools six children. He is one of Tennessee's most eloquent advocates of privatizing education.

Warren Rushton is the former editor of the Home School Journal, published

by The Council of Christian Home Educators, a Bible-based organization dedicated to the defense of Christian freedom.

Membership

Anyone who wants to join PURE may do so by writing to PURE headquarters in Amarillo for a membership blank. Dues are \$35 per individual, or \$60 for an entire family. All members receive the PURE newsletter at no extra charge.

For information about membership or the convention to be held at Christian Liberty Academy on March 25-26, write to: PURE, P.O. Box 3732, Amarillo, Texas 79106, or call Sharon Pangelinan at 806-373-8849.

Parents Oppose Hypnotism in Class

A group of parents in the East Gibson School District (Indiana) have charged that hypnotism and transcendental meditation are being used in the classroom to change their children's moral values. But School Superintendent William Carnes has contended that the program is designed only to improve children's thinking.

The new program, Tactics for Thinking, was developed by the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory in Aurora, Colorado. It consists of 22 methods of improving thinking skills in children. Methods include "attention control," "deep processing," "memory framework" and "power thinking."

Teachers mix these techniques into their regular instruction to help teach math, spelling and other elementary subjects. One exercise has students "focus their attention on some stimulus (e.g., spot on the wall)" and to "focus all their energy for about a minute." Some exercises are designed to "clear children's minds." One exercise has the children visualizing such things as a ball changing colors. How any of this helps develop thinking skills has not been explained.

According to the Superintendent, the teachers learned the course during the summer in Evansville, Indiana. (Evansville Courier, 12/9/87)

Comment: The lab that developed this program is one of many supported by grants from the U.S. Dept. of Education. Another example of wasted taxpayers money. The public schools will try anything but genuine teaching. As long as parents put up with this nonsense, the educators will keep dishing out their hocus focus.

NEA Moves to Control Teacher Licensing

Nevada has become the first state to approve a union-controlled Commission on Professional Standards for the licensing of teachers. Calling the new state board their "own model blueprint," National Education Association officials boasted that their union would control the appointments of 5 of the 9-member board to prescribe standards for licensing teachers.

In Montana, a 7-member Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council was signed into law. This advisory council calls for a majority of classroom teacher members. NEA officials have hailed it as "an important step in the right direction of providing classroom teachers with control over certification." Their aim is to "create teacher-majority standards boards in every state."

Similar proposals were defeated in 1987 in Colorado, Connecticut and Maryland. Others remain to be voted on in 1988 in Arkansas, Hawaii, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Vermont. The NEA has announced that support for such legislation will be a "litmus test for deciding which legislative candidates to endorse."

This drive for union-controlled standards boards is a direct fulfillment of NEA president George Fischer's call for NEA control of the entire profession. He said in 1970: "Within ten

years, this organization will control the qualifications for entrance into the profession. . . work has begun to secure passage in each state where such legislation is needed. With these new laws, we will finally realize our 113-year-old dream of controlling who enters, who stays, and who leaves the profession." (Insider's Report, Concerned Educators Against Forced Unionism (CEAFU), Nov. 87)

Home-Schoolers in Tennessee Outscore Public Schoolers

More than 200 home-schoolers outscored nearly 245,000 Tennessee public school students on the 1987 standard tests, a report from education Commissioner Charles Smith revealed on 8/13/87.

The 213 home-schoolers did better than their public school counterparts in the second, third, sixth and eighth grades.

The tested students were among 561 youngsters who attended 352 home schools in Tennessee during the 1986-87 school year. Smith said 10 school systems had 10 or more home school students.

A 1985 law recognizing home schools requires that second-, third-, sixth-, and eighth-graders pass the same standard tests that are required of public school students.

Smith said 59 home-school second-graders were among the nation's top 16 percent in reading ability as tested by the Stanford Achievement Test and in the top 10 percentile in math. The 62,456 public school second-graders who took the same test were among the top 35 percent in reading and the top 15 percent in math.

On the state basic skills test, Smith said, 81 home-schooled third-graders had mastered 86 percent of the required reading skills, compared with 79 percent for 61,105 public school students. The home-schoolers mastered

84 percent of the math skills, compared with 80 percent for public school third-graders.

In the sixth grade, 43 home-schoolers scored 86 percent in reading, compared with 76 percent for 59,603 public school sixth-graders. The home-school youngsters scored 72 percent in math, compared with 66 percent in public schools.

In the eighth grade, 30 home-schoolers scored 89 percent on reading and 79 percent on math. The 61,518 public school students scored 82 percent on reading and 72 percent in math.

Despite this excellent showing, state Sen. Leonard Dunavant, R-Millington, said legislation will be introduced in 1988 to tighten the current law requiring parents who plan to teach their children at home to let their local school superintendent know before the school year starts.

Dunavant, a member of the Oversight Committee, said, "There are a lot that are falling through the cracks that we don't know about."

The 1985 law, which Dunavant sponsored to compromise bills to outlaw home schools and allow them to operate without restriction, permits students to attend private or church-affiliated schools without any report to public school officials.

Home schools may not involve children of more than one family and parents must notify the local school superintendent before the start of the school year of the names of the children, the curriculum, the educational attainment of the teaching parents and similar information.

"There are some people who are not attending religion-supported schools that are . . . really not reporting to anybody," Dunavant said. "We need to tighten that law so local superintendents can have reporting so that these children can be tested." (Chattanooga Times, 8/13/87)

Comment: The senator might better spend his time insuring that the public school students of Tennessee are not cheated by the rampant miseducation that prevails in that state's schools. According to U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Tenn., 450,000 Tennesseans are functionally illiterate, meaning they can perform simple reading and writing tasks such as signing their names. An additional 750,000 Tennesseans are marginally literate, and 200,000 cannot read or write at all. Apparently, an awful lot of students in Tennessee's public schools are falling through the cracks. But Senator Dunavant seems to care little about them. Could it be that he is more anxious to please the Tennessee Education Association than find out why the public schools are doing such an inferior job of teaching?

Our Man of the Year

We cast our vote for Armando Valladares, the Cuban Christian who spent twenty-two years in Castro's prisons for the "crime" of being philosophically opposed to communism. Through horrendous suffering and degradation he retained his dignity, his courage, his love of God. His book, Against All Hope, is a mighty testament against the evil of communism and an affirmation of a man who knows he was made in God's image. His book should be read by every American, particularly students who may not understand why Cuban prisoners in America prefer to die in American jails than return to Castro's Cuba.

Vital Reading

Education's Smoking Gun by Reginald G. Damerell, Freundlich Books, 80 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

The subtitle of this remarkable book is "How Teachers' Colleges Have Destroyed Education in America." The well-planned, structured and linguistic delivery of this book hits its target

like a well-aimed artillery salvo. The author's encounters with educationists and their pitiful policies are detailed in an engaging narrative that could only have been gained by the eleven years Damerell spent in mind-to-mindless combat as a faculty member in the education department of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

There is no question in the author's mind as to whose hand is clenched around the weapon that destroyed our public schools and put our nation at intellectual risk. It is the 1,287 teachers' colleges that have fostered mental disarmament for millions of adult citizens who have attended public schools and are now virtually unemployable by industry and unfit for military service in this highly technical age.

Damerell was a Madison Avenue advertising specialist who was brought to Amherst to produce audiovisual materials for the department of education. They made him a professor of education, and as such he observed a great deal of the absurdity that goes on there. He was particularly incensed by the way America's black minority has been damaged by the educationists who have foisted faulty teaching methods on classroom teachers. He cites the crippling effects of affirmative action degrees and promotions, bilingualism, and dysfunctional instructional fads.

Damerell reveals how education schools undermined traditional reading approaches that were effective before 1930. Downgrading the importance of language has blocked the student's avenue to thinking and effective communication essential for employment and success in life.

What is Damerell's solution? Close the teachers' colleges and have all future teachers major in an academic subject.

-- H. Reg McDaniel, M.D., former member Texas State Board of Education