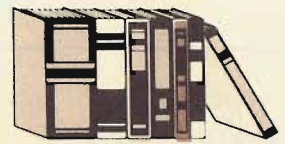


The Blumenfeld Education Letter



"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."

The War Between Humanism and Christianity Examined in "The Messianic Character of American Education"

There is no doubt that Dr. Rousas J. Rushdoony has done more to advance the cause of educational freedom in America than any other Christian theologian. His classic study, *The Messianic Character of American Education*, first published in 1963 and recently reissued by Ross House Books, is a monument to independent scholarship and historical investigation. In that book we see clearly delineated the philosophical conflict between humanism and Christianity that has been raging for decades throughout American culture and particularly in the field of education.

That humanism not only threatens Christian education but educational freedom in general is well demonstrated by the link Dr. Rushdoony shows existing between religious liberty and educational freedom, for education is basically a religious function, even when it is atheistic, and Christian education is hardly viable without religious freedom. As Dr. Rushdoony writes in *Roots of Reconstruction* (p. 11):

Among Nietzsche's manuscripts, after his death, was found a slip of paper on which he had written these words: "Since the old God has been abolished,

I am prepared to rule the world." This is the meaning of humanism's inescapable totalitarianism. Total government is a necessity, and everything in man requires it. If there is no god to provide it, then man must supply it. . . .

In the United States, the efforts of federal and state governments to control churches and Christian Schools are the logical results of their humanism. There must be sovereignty and law, and it must be man's, not God's, is their faith. Clearly, we are in the basic religious war, and there can be no compromise nor negotiation in this war. Humanism seeks to abolish the God of Scripture and rule the world.

In America, the aims of humanism can only be achieved through the control of children and their education. The ultimate issue, therefore, is the ownership of children. Dr. Rushdoony writes (*Ibid*, p. 10):

The first and basic premise of paganism, socialism, and Molech worship is the claim that the state owns the child. The basic premise of the public schools is this claim of ownership, a fact some parents are encountering in the courts. It is the essence of paganism to claim first the lives of the children, then the properties of the people.

Thus, religious and educational freedom essentially rest on the foundation of

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God's ownership. In the end, the issue of Christian liberty can only be resolved in a philosophical confrontation between Christians and the state, the result of which must be the restoration of genuine religious liberty if this country is to remain faithful to its original conception. Dr. Rushdoony writes:

The church and the Christian School are not the property of the state, nor are they the property of the congregation: they are the Lord's, and can be surrendered to no man.

The principle of God's ownership was implicitly understood by the Founding Fathers who wrote the U.S. Constitution and upheld God's sovereignty over man. As long as the civil government remained subsidiary to God's sovereignty, it was legitimate and thereby supportable by Christians. But the introduction of secular, government owned and controlled schools and colleges began to erode that basic understanding in the minds of the American people. Hegel's statist philosophy, with its pagan-inspired pantheism, slowly absorbed the loyalty of the academic elite so that the state, in Hegel's words, became "god walking on earth."

Slowly but surely the concept of religious freedom gave way to that of religious toleration. Religious freedom had meant that the state had no jurisdiction over the church, its schools, or its affairs. But the new doctrine of religious toleration meant that the state granted certain privileges to churches and religious schools at its own pleasure, privileges, such as tax exemption, which could be withdrawn at any time for some "compelling state interest." Dr. Rushdoony writes (*Ibid*, p. 150):

The fact is that religious liberty is dead and buried; it needs to be resurrected. We cannot begin to cope with our present crisis until we recognize that religious liberty has been replaced with religious toleration. . . .

We may be able to live under religious tolera-

tion, but it will beget all the ancient evils of compromise, hypocrisy, and a purely or largely public religion. It will replace conscience with a state license, and freedom with a state-endowed cell of narrow limits. This is the best that toleration may afford us in the days ahead.

The simple fact is that we already have a public, government-ordained religion. It is called Humanism, and its most popular festival is Halloween, which is of pagan, Druidic origin. Today, it is lavishly and nauseatingly celebrated in all of the public schools of America as one of the many insidious means now being used by government educators to paganize or de-Christianize American children.

The Centrality of Family

However, Dr. Rushdoony's most noteworthy contribution to the heated debate over educational jurisdiction is his profound analysis of the central role of the family in Christian society as based on Biblical principles. He writes (*Ibid*, p. 35):

In Scripture, the family is the basic institution of society, to whom all the most basic powers are given, save one: the death penalty. (Hence, the death penalty could not be executed on Cain.) The family is man's basic government, his best school, and his best church. . . .

To review briefly the basic powers which Scripture gives to the family, the *first* is the control of children. The control of children is the control of the future. This power belongs neither to church nor state, nor to the school, but only to the family. . . .

Second, power over property is given in Scripture to the family. . . . God gives control of property into the hands of the family, not the state, nor the individual. . . .

Third, inheritance in Scripture is exclusively a family power, governed by God's law. . . .

Fourth, welfare is the responsibility of the family, beginning with the care of its own.

Fifth, education, a basic power, is given by God to the family as its power and responsibility. The modern state claims the right to control and provide education, and it challenges the powers of the family

in this area also. . . .

Humanistic statism sees control of the child and the family as basic to its drive towards totalitarianism.

Even though the above was written in 1979, we see the accuracy of that analysis in the federal government's recent enactment of Goals 2000 and the enactment in various states of Outcome Based Education which calls for greater and greater state intrusion into family life. The extensive data-collection projects of the National Center for Education Statistics will give bureaucrats the intimate private information needed to impose government control over children and families.

Since the aim of humanistic education is not to educate in the traditional sense, but to change the beliefs, values, and behavior of the students, behavioral scientists have emerged as the true developers of the American school curriculum. Their aim has been to transform the American public school into a humanist parochial school, and they have devoted years to developing the necessary means to bring this about. One of the basic tenets of behaviorism is that the younger the child, the easier it is to change his or her values. Professor Benjamin Bloom, the godfather of Outcome Based Education, wrote in 1956 in his famous *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (p. 58):

The evidence points out convincingly to the fact that age is a factor operating against attempts to effect a complete or thorough-going reorganization of attitudes and values. . . .

The evidence collected thus far suggests that a single hour of classroom activity under certain conditions may bring about a major reorganization in cognitive as well as affective domains. We are of the opinion that this will prove to be a most fruitful area of research in connection with the affective domain.

Forty years later, the research has been completed and the programs are now in the schools! Note the presumption of the psy-

cho-educators that they have the right to reorganize the attitudes and values of the children without their parents' knowledge or consent. But according to Scripture, as Dr. Rushdoony makes quite clear, the family has the responsibility for the education of its children, not the agents of the state.

Defender of Homeschoolers

As a champion of educational freedom, Dr. Rushdoony has been a pioneer in the advocacy of homeschooling because he recognizes that there can be no educational freedom without the family taking full responsibility for the education of its children. He has testified in various courts throughout America at more hearings and trials involving homeschoolers than any other Christian leader, and his testimony has helped clarify the legal and philosophical issues involved. The Christian homeschooling family is of particular significance because it has made a complete break with the humanist institutions of the state. This is surely a revolutionary act because it rejects the power of the state to impose its will on the Christian family.

There is no doubt that the decline of Christianity in America is due to the capture of its educational institutions by the humanists. The process started as early as 1805 when the Unitarians took control of Harvard University and began their long-range campaign to eradicate Calvinism as the chief spiritual and cultural force in America. Dr. Rushdoony writes (*Messianic Character*, p. 333):

The Messianic Utopianism of early educators often took extravagant form, as claims were made that prisons, crime, sin, war, tyranny, and every form of evil and disharmony would disappear with the triumph of universal statist education. . . . Although other churches made their contributions to the movement . . . it was Unitarianism in particular which gave itself wholeheartedly to the cause of messianic educa-

tion and statism. The influence of that church on 19th century America is too seldom appreciated. . . . Institutional Unitarianism under-rated itself because it had a marginal doctrine of the church; it sought "establishment," in a very real sense, in and through the schools, and the schools became the embodiment and establishment of Unitarian faith in salvation by statist education.

Dr. Rushdoony amply documents all of this in *The Messianic Character of American Education* by providing insightful biographical studies of the major individuals who transformed American education from its God-centered origins to its present atheist-humanist philosophy. He examines the lives of such luminaries in the pantheon of public education as Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, Nicholas Murray Butler, G. Stanley Hall, J. B. Watson, Edward L. Thorndike, John Dewey, and others. All of these "educators" had one thing in common: they rejected Christ as the true Messiah and created a new messianic vision based on science, evolution, and psychology, the chief apostles of which were Darwin, Marx and Freud. A reading of this book alone should convince any Christian that America's secular educational institutions are the primary cause of the nation's moral and spiritual decline—aided and abetted by a decadent entertainment industry. That is why an exodus by Christians from these institutions and the creation of new God-centered institutions is imperative if America is to be restored to its moral and spiritual health.

Humanism as a Religion

Although some atheist humanists deny that their philosophy, or world view, constitutes a religion, other humanists are quite ready to proclaim humanism as a religion. In fact, the Humanist Manifesto of 1933 was written by young Unitarian ministers as an expression of their creed. Proof of this can be

found in *The Humanist* itself, the official publication of the humanist movement.

The forerunner of *The Humanist* was *The New Humanist* which first appeared in 1928 as a monthly bulletin of the Humanist Fellowship, an organization formed by Unitarian students from the University of Chicago and its related theological schools. Its early editors — Harold Buschman, Edwin H. Wilson, and Raymond B. Bragg — were young Unitarian ministers. It was on the initiatives of Bragg that the drafting of A Humanist Manifesto (1933) was begun. Professor Roy Wood Sellars wrote the first draft. The Manifesto appeared in the April 1933 issue of *The New Humanist*. In an article entitled "Humanism as a Religion," published in *The Humanist* (Vol. 1, 1941, p. 5), Sellars wrote:

Undeniably there is something imaginative and daring in bringing together in one phrase two such profoundly symbolic words as humanism and religion. An intimate union is foreshadowed in which religion will become humanistic and humanism religious. And I believe that such a synthesis is imperative if humanity is ever to achieve a firm and adequate understanding of itself and its cosmic situation. . . .

To the thoughtful of our day, humanism is being offered as this kind of a religion, a religion akin to science and philosophy and yet not a mere abstract of these specialized endeavors. . . . Religious humanism rests upon the bedrock of a decision that it is, in the long run, saner and wiser to face facts than to live in a world of fable.

In November 1962, Edwin H. Wilson wrote in *The Humanist*:

Of the 34 persons who signed the Humanist Manifesto in 1933, all but four can be readily identified as "religious humanists" who considered Humanism as the development of a better and truer religion and as the next step ahead for those who sought it.

In June 1951, Wilson had written:

Today, I am suggesting that there is in the

world as a present and potent faith, embraced by vast numbers, yet seldom mentioned--a fourth faith--namely Humanism.

And in *The Humanist* of 1954 (Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 180) we read:

Since humanism appears as a genuinely living option for many people, especially among students, teachers, and intellectuals generally, it may be appropriately studied as a religion. Indeed, it is not unfair to call it the fourth main religious option, along with Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism, for thoughtful men in the contemporary Western world.

Thus, humanism is, for many humanists, a religion on a par with other religions. And that is why the war between humanism and Christianity can be viewed as nothing but a religious war declared by humanists on Christianity. The Manifesto of 1933 states:

Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

In other words, the humanist program calls for taking control of and transforming all of the cultural and religious institutions and associations of the nation so that they will be made to effectively advance the humanist agenda. No other religion in America calls for taking over the institutions and associations of other religions. We are supposed to be living in a society where religious freedom is respected by all religions. But we have it in the words of the Humanist Manifesto itself the intention of humanists to reconstitute everybody else's religions, rituals, and ecclesiastical practices to conform with humanist goals.

And that is why the humanists have no qualms about imposing their religious beliefs on all the children in the public schools, regardless of the different religions of the parents. Clearly, the humanists are violating the Constitutional prohibition against a government establishment of religion. But they are so strongly motivated by their messianic fervor, that the objections of Christians to the humanist agenda is dismissed as censorship, intolerance, paranoia, or insanity.

Are Christians Insane?

Speaking of insanity, the summer 1993 issue of the secular humanist magazine *Free Inquiry* published a series of articles under the heading "Is Religion a Form of Insanity?" One of the articles, "The Mental Health of Atheists" by John F. Schumaker, seemed to prove just the opposite. He writes:

If we define mental health in the traditional way as the absence of psychopathological symptoms, then we see that religion does tend to act in the service of mental health. The reverse is true when one defines mental health in terms of more humanistic concepts, such as autonomous functioning, rationality, cognitive flexibility, and the like. . . .

Recently I edited a book titled *Religion and Mental Health*. . . . My own chapter . . . concentrates on the mental health consequences of atheism. There, I refer to my research showing atheists to have 45 percent more symptoms of psychological disturbance than their strongly religious counterparts. . . .

. . . I managed to find three other studies that approximated an acceptable assessment of mental health in decidedly irreligious people. Coincidentally, two of them used the same test that I used in my above-mentioned study, namely the Langer Symptom Survey Scale (LSS). . . .

One study found the irreligious sample to have 85 percent more symptoms as measured by LSS (Crawford, Handal, and Weiner, 1989, *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 31, 16-22). That research team also found that irreligious people showed themselves to be significantly less psychologically well-adjusted as measured by tests of life satisfaction and social adjust-

ment. In a different study, using only women as subjects, irreligious people had 63 percent more LSS symptoms than highly religious people (Handal, Black-Lopez, and Moergen, 1989, *Psychological Reports*, vol. 65, 971-975). Therefore, three similar studies, using the same mental health index, found irreligion to be associated with considerably more symptoms of psychopathology.

In a different type of study, irreligious individuals were compared to their religious counterparts on the extent to which they felt that "life is worth living" (Hadaway and Roof, 1978, *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 19, 297-307). People for whom religion was extremely important found their lives significantly more "worthwhile." It is interesting that people with low or medium intensity religion fared no better than those with no religion at all. This was also found in two previously mentioned studies. So it may be, as some thinkers have speculated, that weak or ambivalent religion only serves to upset people. The real psychological benefits of religion may be reserved for those who embrace religion wholeheartedly.

Sometimes it pays to read secular humanist literature! You'd think that Dr. Schumaker's researches would have turned him into a religionist. Alas, such is not the case. Concluding his article, he writes:

If religion is generally beneficial to psychological health, that is unfortunate. . . . While I agree with [Paul] Kurtz that it is possible to live without religion, I suggest that most people find such a road to be psychologically bumpy. As long as it feels so good to succumb to the transcendental temptation, I fear that religion will live on as our "murderous god of health," a term Peter Schaffer used in *Equus* to describe "normality," a related curse.

Therefore, according to Dr. Schumaker, people believe in religion because it makes them feel good and thereby enhances their mental health. But the research shows that only deeply religious people derive psychological benefits from religion. Those with low or medium religious beliefs feel just as bad as atheists, probably because they are full of doubt and inner conflict. This should explain why the orthodox are so well adjusted to the real world and so well focussed when it comes to such matters as home-

schooling. And, no doubt, this is why they are so greatly feared by secular humanists and the luke warmers.

Concerning the future, Dr. Rushdoony offers this optimistic view (p. 332):

The future has never been shaped by majorities but rather by dedicated minorities. And free men do not wait for the future; they create it. The difficulties and problems in that venture are to them not a hindrance but a challenge that must be met. Those critics of the schools who wait for the state or society to act work on the same premise of the primacy of the group. The futility of their cause is thus foreordained. Free men do not look to the state for the opportunities and results of freedom.

That is why the homeschool movement represents the essence and best hope of a free society in which individual families decide freely how to educate their own children. Its growth is the best indicator that "free men do not wait for the future; they create it."

(*The Messianic Character of American Education* can be ordered from Ross House Books, P.O. Box 67, Vallecito, CA 95251. Price: \$20 per copy, plus \$2 for postage and handling. All foreign orders and orders over \$20, add 15%. California residents add 7 1/4% sales tax. Payment must accompany all orders.)

School Health Survey Alarms Parents

When the questionnaire arrived in the mail at her Lexington (Mass.) home last Thursday, Pamela Mann said she felt that a campaign she has been waging to protect the privacy of medical records in the computer age had suddenly hit home. The survey, which asked about the health of Mann's kindergartner and the family's insurance coverage, was part of an effort to computer-

ize the Lexington school system's health records, the letter explained.

Not only would the detailed information become part of her child's permanent school record, but the data would be transmitted — anonymously, the letter assured parents — to the state as part of a pilot program also being carried out in other Massachusetts towns to measure the health of school-age children in the state.

Last weekend, Mann and Dr. Denise Nagel — a Lexington doctor and activist for safeguarding medical records — collected signatures from more than 300 parents who want to keep their children's medical histories out of school computers. They're worried that their children's grade-school health records could cost them jobs or health insurance years from now. Mann is a member of the Massachusetts chapter of the Coalition for Patient Rights, a group that aims to protect the privacy of medical records in the computer age.

The petition drive comes at a time of heightened concern about the vulnerability of personal information stored in computers. Sabine Hederg, director of the state project, said a committee of educators, school nurses and parents was established to address privacy issues.

Federally Funded

The Lexington survey, sent to all parents of public school kindergarten students, is part of a federally funded project aimed at compiling a national data base on the health of school-age children. The survey asks a series of questions, including the educational background of parents and their smoking habits, how often the family moved during 1994 and which one of 22 health plans it uses. But what most worries parents is a category that lists 46 health conditions, from asthma and attention deficit disorder to obesity and

leukemia. As a result, some parents are omitting from the form information which they feel may harm their child in the future.

State Rep. Jay Kaufman (D-Lexington), who chairs a legislative subcommittee on medical records privacy, is working with local parents who are opposed to the project.

"We just don't have the technology to keep data bases protected," he said. (*Boston Globe*, 6/6/95)

Comment:

Even though there are more conservatives in Congress than ever before, the bureaucratic octopus continues to incrementally impose its totalitarian agenda on the American people. Personal, intimate information about each citizen is crucial to a government that wants to regulate the lives of the people under its control. While the political left bemoans the loss of its power in Congress, it still asserts enormous power through its control of the government bureaucracies that are paid to carry out the mandates of all the liberal-socialist legislation passed by previous Congresses. Thus, each day, more and more regulations are devised to tighten the liberal stranglehold over the American people. The government always offers some benign pretext for gathering the information it wants. It always pretends that it is only trying to serve the people better.

Once the government collects all of this information about the health of American children, the next step will be a government health plan, with compulsory immunizations for all children, treatments, home visits and anything else a fertile bureaucratic mind can think of to expand its control over others.

That is how freedom is being lost in America, incrementally, bit by bit, so that most people don't even notice that it is happening. The present Congress is trying to slow down the process, but the next election will tell us if the American people are wak-

ing up fast enough to finally reverse the totalitarian trend for good.

Public Library in Vermont Offers Gay Books to Kids

When a 6-year-old boy went home from the library in Rutland, Vermont, recently with a copy of "Daddy's Roommate," a picture book that tells the story of a divorced father and his male domestic partner, he touched off a debate here that has drawn national attention. The board of trustees for the Rutland Free Library held a meeting on 6/6/95 to consider a request by the boy's mother, Karol Raiche, to create a special area in the children's section for "Daddy's Roommate" and other books that some parents might consider inappropriate for young readers.

Raiche's proposal has received support from some residents and from conservative Christian groups outside the state. The library's decision to resist her idea has been praised by civil liberties attorneys, gays and lesbians, and liberal church organizations. Raiche and her supporters have broadened the scope of their complaint to include two gay periodicals, *Out in the Mountains* and *Out* magazines, as well as *Art Forum*, a modern art magazine that sometimes publishes sexually explicit art and photographs. These, she said, should not be available to children without parental permission.

Raiche sought the support of national groups such as the Virginia-based Family Friendly Libraries, which has lobbied libraries to remove "Daddy's Roommate" and other books that deal with homosexuality from library shelves. In 1992, the public libraries in Seekonk, Mass., decided to keep the book on the shelf despite a petition from more than 200 adults who asked that it be removed. (*Boston Globe*, 6/6/95)

Comment:

These same battles are being waged all over the country. Christian parents complain about the pornography and inappropriate books openly available to their children, while liberal librarians with the help of the usual liberal organizations scream about "censorship." Recently, according to *U.S.A. Today* (6/2/95), a sophomore by the name of Rachel Bauchman at West High School in Salt Lake City asked a judge to stop her choir from singing graduation songs referring to "God" and "Lord," arguing that being forced to sing such offensive words violates her rights and that quitting choir could jeopardize her grades.

Naturally, the liberals would argue that Ms. Bauchman was not trying to censor anybody or anything. She was just trying to enforce our much vaunted separation of church and state, and according to the *Boston Globe* of 6/9/95 the federal judge agreed with her. He granted the offended young lady her request and a court order was issued forbidding the singing of the offensive songs. However, the students in the choir defied the court and sang a religious song at the graduation. These students now face disciplinary action for their "crime." Punishments may range from "discussing the incident . . . to expulsion," West High School principal Bill Boston said at a press conference.

Several years ago a similar complaint regarding an acknowledgment of the existence of God given by a rabbi at a high school graduation in Rhode Island ended with the court deciding that such invocations were unconstitutional. The atheists in America want every public institution to conform to their atheist views. They will not tolerate any publicly funded acknowledgment of the existence of God. But they will fight to the death for public funding of prohomosexual books for children in the public libraries.