

REMARKS BY SAMUEL L. BLUMENFELD AT THE NORTH CAROLINA
HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Five years ago, in April 1985, I was invited to speak at the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in Raleigh. I arrived in Raleigh the evening before and was met at the airport by two young ladies who took me to their home where they had laid out on the dining room table the North Carolina ^{Basic} Education Plan, an awesome document of many parts and pages, which was to be voted on by the North Carolina legislature.

They asked if I would kindly read through the material and evaluate it. They had set up a legislative breakfast for the following morning at the State Capitol, at which I was expected to tell the invited legislators and guests what I thought of their department of education's latest education plan.

Now mind you, this was two years after the release of the famous A Nation at Risk report, which had come out in April 1983. It was supposed to be North Carolina's response to the education crisis. I read through the plan and was appalled by what I found. Its basic philosophy and orientation was totally humanistic. I was particularly interested in the curriculum plan for reading instruction -- for reading is the foundation of any education program. Without a sound reading instruction program, no educational system can succeed.

Having spent many years in the never-ending war between phonics

and look-say, having written a book on the subject entitled THE NEW ILLITERATES, I knew what to look for. Would the state of North Carolina finally teach children to read properly? I was shocked to find that the program was based on look-say, whole-word pedagogy. And I was angry -- angry that the state would use the taxpayers money to buy reading programs that would guarantee the perpetuation of the reading problem in North Carolina and would cripple thousands of North Carolina children, preventing them from ever developing the academic and intellectual skills they would need to succeed in the working world.

The next morning I met the dozen or so legislators who showed up for the breakfast and told them what I thought of the education plan before them: it was awful. I said:

"I understand that North Carolina is next to the bottom in SAT scores in the nation. Only South Carolina has outdone you. They're at the bottom. What are you trying to do in North Carolina? Are you vying with South Carolina for the distinction of having the lowest scores? Are you tired of being number two? If you pass this education plan as is, you will be at the bottom, you will be number one."

As you can imagine, some of the legislators were not too happy with what I had told them. So I said, "If you really want to improve education in North Carolina, there is one simply thing you can do that will cost the taxpayer nothing in additional revenue. In fact, it will save you money. All you have to do is mandate the teaching

of intensive phonics in the first grade of every elementary school in North Carolina, and you will improve reading ability dramatically."

Well, some of the legislators took what I had to say to heart and tried to do exactly that. There was even an emergency meeting of the education committee to discuss the matter. But North Carolina's commissioner of education, Craig Phillips, become aware of my suggestion and went down to the legislature to make sure that no such program was mandated. He won and the children of North Carolina lost. And where do you think North Carolina's SAT standing is today -- exactly where I predicted -- at the bottom. South Carolina is now second.

What does this experience tell us? First, it tells us that the education establishment of North Carolina is determined to maintain the affective, humanistic curriculum it has imposed on the public schools of this state, and second, that the legislature is powerless to change it. Why? That's a question I can only answer with one word: politics. The organized education establishment simply has the political clout to get what it wants. And that is why parents have no choice but to take their children out of the public schools if they want them to get a decent education. You see, the politicians are more beholden to the educrats than to the parents.

But then you're probably asking: why are the educational leaders of North Carolina imposing a curriculum which clearly is dumbing down the children of the state? First, let me say that what is happening in North Carolina is happening in every state of the union.

of John Dewey's progressive education program which was devised early in this century to change America from a capitalist, individualistic, and religious nation into a socialist, collectivist, atheist or humanist society. That plan is still very much in place, enhanced by the socialist fervor of the hippies of the sixties who are now the tenured professors in our universities and graduate schools.

The Reagan conservative revolution made no dent in the thinking of the education establishment. All you have to do to confirm this is read the journals of education published by the graduate schools of education and the professional associations run by these same people. They may make dull reading, but that's the only way you can find out what the educators are really up to. And what are they up to? They are pushing the "affective domain" with every bit of power they've got. What is the "affective domain"? It is that part of the public school curriculum that deals with the children's values, feelings, behavior, self-esteem, sexuality, and attitudes toward drugs and death. Its components include values clarification, multiculturalism, globalism, sensitivity training, situational ethics, transcendental meditation, New Age relaxation techniques, Eastern mysticism, sex education, drug education, and death education.

The "affective domain" is, in reality, the religious content of the public school curriculum. But, you say, it is forbidden to teach religion in the public schools. And you are right if you are talking about the Christian religion. But it is not so when it comes to humanism -- the religion which is now in all of the

public schools of America. All of the components I have just rattled off are based on the doctrines and tenets of humanism.

Don't the educators know that humanism is a religion, you may ask. They ought to. After all, it was Judge Brevard Hand who ruled in 1987 in the landmark Alabama Textbook Case (Smith v. Board of School Commissioners of Mobile County, Ala.), that secular humanism is a religion. Judge Hand wrote:

"The court is holding that the promotion and advancement of a religious system occurs when one faith-theory is taught to the exclusion of others and this is prohibited by the First Amendment religion clauses.

". . . For purposes of the First Amendment, secular humanism is a religious belief system, entitled to the protections of an subject to the prohibitions of, the religion clauses. It is not a mere scientific methodology that may be promoted and advanced in the public schools."

And if you don't want to take Judge Hand's word for it I can cite chapter and verse from any number of humanists who have asserted that humanism is a religion. Here's what George E. Axtelle, newly elected president of the American Humanist Association, told an audience in 1959:

"Ours is no revealed religion. It is a religion, an intellectual and moral outlook shaped by the more sensitive and sympathetic souls of our time. . . Ours is a task, not a doctrine. . . . Our fundamental goal must be to make the Humanist Way of Life a reality in our communities, our state and our nation."

And in 1954, a writer in the Humanist magazine wrote:

"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."

And if that isn't convincing enough, how about the following, written by a fellow named John Dunphy in the Humanist magazine of January-February 1983:

"I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being.

"These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level -- preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new -- the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery. and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian idea of 'love thy neighbor' will finally be achieved."

What do you think of that? That's what one young humanist leader of tomorrow calls your religion: a rotting corpse. That's in league with the other forms of blasphemy in the art world we've heard so much about. What it means, of course, is that our enemies make no bones about how they feel about us. Remember, that is the mentality that now dominates American education. This is a religious war, a spiritual war, make no mistake about it. The fight to preserve educational freedom, what little is left of it, is going to be a long and hard one.

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Now the religion of humanism also affects the way academic skills are taught in the public schools. In the old days we called them the three Rs -- reading, writing, and 'rithmetic. Now they are called the "cognitive domain" in which they teach the cognitive skills. In the cognitive domain, they no longer teach reading. They teach language arts, literacies, communication, body language, whole language, holistic reading, critical thinking, generic thinking, higher order thinking skills -- everything except clear thinking.

As for writing, children are now taught to print for the first two years and are then expected to pick up cursive somewhere along the way on their own. There is no such thing as penmanship or a correct way of holding a pen. Hold it anyway you want! And there is no emphasis on correct spelling. It's now invented spelling. Spell it anyway you want! The theory is that if you show a child how to spell a word correctly, the experience will be so traumatic that the child may never want to write anything again and his or her self-esteem may be damaged for life.

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. Now, I understand, they are working on a new new math. The old new math destroyed the calculating skills of millions of children. Heaven knows what the new new math will do.

Going from the traditional three Rs to the cognitive domain required a revolution in curriculum development by humanist educators and psychologists who spent millions in federal, state and private research funds to give us what we have today. The result has been an educational disaster of such enormity, that our Secretary of Education, Dr. Lauro Cavazos, said last May:

"We must do better or perish as the nation we know today."

But that's exactly what the humanists want. They want the old patriotic, Christian, sovereign America to write its own obituary and epitaph the way kids are required to do ^{so} ~~it~~ in death education. They want America to become a territory within a humanist world government. Humanist Manifesto II states:

"We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate. Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government."

Of course, giving up American sovereignty means giving up American freedom. It also means giving up Christian freedom, the freedom to obey God's commandments, the freedom to educate your children in a Godly manner as prescribed in the Bible.

But humanists are totalitarians at heart. That's why they find communists so easy to relate to but Christians not at all. Humanists may sing paeans in favor of human dignity, rights and worth. But that only applies to fellow pagans. When it comes to Christians, they get apoplectic with intolerance. The last thing they want in their world utopian state are fundamentalist Christians exercising Christian freedom, educating and rearing their children in accordance with Biblical principles.

And that is why they are proselytizing Christian children in public schools, training the gifted and talented to be the humanist leaders of tomorrow, and dumbing down the rest of the population sufficiently so that the American people will be led into the new world order without resistance, like sheep. After all, if you can't read, you are more likely to accept what the ruling humanist elite will tell you.

And that is why the educational establishment is very unhappy with the home-school movement, which is so very largely Christian. The National Education Association has made it quite clear that it opposes home schooling. Its 1988 resolution (C-34) on the subject states:

"The National Education Association believes that home-school programs cannot provide the child with a comprehensive education experience.

"The Association believes that, if parental preference home-school study occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used.

"The Association further believes that such home-school programs should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents."

Don't you just want to hug these people? They really go out of their way to endear themselves.

They want to strip you of your unalienable right to educate your child in the manner that you choose. They're very much in favor of choice when it comes to deciding the life or death of an unborn child. But when it comes to your child's education, they want you to be licensed and to teach the same curriculum that is dumbing down the kids in public school. A state-approved curriculum.

They say that the state has a compelling interest in education. But if its interest is so compelling, how come it isn't educating the already children it/has in the schools it owns and operates?

If the state really had a compelling interest in education, it would be doing all in its power to encourage home schooling, because that's where the children are being educated.

And standardized test scores bear that out. Wherever home schoolers have been tested, they've done better than their public-school counterparts. For example, in Tennessee, where about 900 home schoolers were registered with the state in 1989 -- even though it is estimated that about 4,000 Tennessee children are being taught at home -- home schoolers did quite well. According to the Chattanooga News-Free Press of Dec. 11, 1989:

"State tests show that second-graders are about equal to their classroom-educated counterparts. But by the fifth grade, home schoolers have passed their classroom peers in reading, and by the seventh grade home schoolers excel in both math and language, scores show."

The reason why home schoolers generally do so well is because one-on-one tutoring is far superior to the classroom where children who need help often get lost in the crowd. In tutoring you get immediate feedback, immediate correction, and thus the child is less likely to develop bad academic habits. Also, home-schooling parents are more apt to teach their children to read by intensive phonics than by the discredited, inefficient look-say method. This makes an enormous difference when the goal is academic excellence.

Another reason why home schoolers excel is because home educators are highly motivated, dedicated parents, committed to providing their children with the best education possible. They want their children to become the best that America has to offer.

There is no question but that the benefits of home schooling outweigh the difficulties by a wide margin. And that is why the

movement is attracting so many new young families.

The first and most obvious benefit is that home-schooling restores the Christian family. It set you right with God and puts you in obedience to His Word. We are told in Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go and, when he is old, he will not depart from it."

What a tremendous role model for children are parents who conduct their family life in accordance with God's law. We read in Ephesians (6:4): "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

About a year and a half ago, the television show 20/20 had a segment on children and heavy metal music -- music full of satanism, devil worship, violence, and sex. A music journalist was asked if there was anything dangerous about such music. On the contrary, he replied, there wasn't anything wrong with heavy metal music. In fact, it was good because it gave the kids something to believe in!

Yes, children need something to believe in, but if parents send their children to schools where God is considered impotent and irrelevant, and the parents don't care, the children will seek something to believe in that is relevant and very potent -- the music of the devil.

Parents who live in accordance with Biblical principles will serve as lifelong role models for children who must live in a very corrupt world.

Home-schooling creates a generation bridge rather than a generation gap. The true purpose of education is to pass on to the future generation the knowledge, wisdom and values of the previous generation -- to create a bridge of generations, so that the children of tomorrow can build on the foundation of the past. But the public schools deliberately create conflict and rebellion because they want the child-ren to reject the religious values of their parents. Home-schooling creates friendship and harmony between generations through the loving gift of teaching.

Home-schooling creates mutual respect -- mutual love. "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exodus 20:12) Children love parents who not only teach them what is important, but who correct them when necessary. "Correct thy son," the Bible tells us, "and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." Children want to know what is the right thing to do.

The public schools are giving condoms to children so that they can play Russian roulette with a deadly disease. Loving parents will teach their children the ~~maxxing~~ rules of sexual behavior as given in the Bible.

Also, parents respect the intelligence of their children.