

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

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

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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."

An Overview of the Year: The Struggle for Educational Freedom Intensifies

Now that we've published twelve issues of the Blumenfeld Education Letter, a review of the year may help us discern trends and suggest strategies for the future. First, a look at the education establishment. There is no indication at all that the leadership of the education establishment is ready or willing to deviate from the course set by the progressive humanists early in this century. The levers of power in the foundations, graduate schools of education, teachers colleges, state departments of education, major professional organizations and major professional publications are in the hands of the progressive humanists and will, no doubt, remain there for the foreseeable future.

The progressive-humanist agenda was mapped out early in the century by socialist John Dewey and colleagues whose goal it was to destroy the rugged individualism of dynamic pioneering America and replace it with a collectivized personality that could exist comfortably in a socialist society. To accomplish this, the emphasis in education was shifted from the development of academic and literacy skills with its emphasis on language study to the development of social skills with its

emphasis on social interactions, activities, values, emotions, and social studies.

There have been some changes since Dewey's time. The bloom is off the socialist rose, as the reality of socialism as practiced around the world has tended to turn most people off. The only way that Communism can advance today is through deception and terror. But the true impetus behind communism and socialism is satanism -- the hatred of God and the desire to separate man from God. Satanism can flourish in a capitalist society under the guise of humanism and New Age spiritualism. Thus our educational leaders can lead our children down the satanic path to a godless new world order via socialism, humanism or New Age spiritualism.

The only major instrument of power that the education leaders do not completely control is the U.S. Department of Education which is, at the moment, in the hands of Reagan-appointed neo-conservatives. This accounts for the dissonance that exists between Secretary William Bennett and NEA president Mary Hatwood Futrell. The neo-conservatives tend to direct their criticisms at the National Education Association

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rather than at the educational leaders in the graduate schools or foundations. Obviously, that's because of the NEA's showy political power and militant activism.

However, the best neo-conservative criticism of the system has not come from the U.S. Department of Education, but from neo-conservative professors such as Diane Ravitch, Joseph Adelman, or Allan Bloom, whose book, The Closing of the American Mind, has attracted considerable attention. But will Bloom's book change any more minds among the educational leaders than did Rudolf Flesch's book, Why Johnny Can't Read, when it was published in 1955? We doubt it.

The present trend in educational reform does not include any fundamental changes in the humanistic curriculum. What it does is consolidate power into fewer progressive-humanist hands so that the pagan cultural revolution can continue despite growing opposition. The Carnegie Forum's plan to centralize teacher certification in a national policy-making body controlled by teachers is already being pushed through a number of state legislatures. The goal of the program is to give the organized teachers total power over who enters the profession and who doesn't.

Teacher salaries will also be greatly increased, for the public has been led to believe that the crisis in education is a result of taxpayer apathy, selfishness and greed. Naturally, the guilt-ridden public will agree to pay higher taxes and, therefore, continue to finance the radical humanist revolution.

Despite the successful enactment of reform, the educational leaders are warning us of massive failures to come. This was the message that came out of a conference of the Forum of Educational Organization Leaders held in Washington, D.C. on June 1, 1987. To my mind, this was the most important educational conference of the year: first, because it was a conference of leaders, men and women who have the power to make policy

and implement it (as we have seen it done over the past two years in every state legislature), and second, it was an admission on their part that they do not know how to educate (or do not intend to educate). Can you imagine Marva Collins warning parents who send children to her school to expect massive failure? How long would her school last?

Note also the interesting contradictions coming out of the mouths of the leaders. On the one hand, we are told that the reforms (higher salaries, smaller classes, newer equipment) enacted at great cost, were needed to improve education. On the other hand, despite these reforms, we are told that we must expect massive failure.

In other words, there is no way the American people can win with public education. It is a gangrenous institution at the very heart of America, affecting the health and sanity of millions of children, undermining our economy, destroying our ability to compete internationally, responsible for producing an underclass of young adults whose lives have been ruined and/or crippled by educational malpractice or sheer miseducation. And believe it or not, this inefficient, morally corrupt and spiritually bankrupt system is the largest and costliest government enterprise in the United States. Anyone who continues to tolerate and support this system is either blind, stupid or naive. That does not mean that there aren't some good public schools. Undoubtedly there are, but they are the exceptions to the rule.

The NEA

It has been three years since the publication of NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education. Our expose of that organization, of course, did nothing to change the course of the NEA in its drive to continue and complete the progressive-humanist revolution. Its leadership is so firmly committed to the goals of the radical left that one can predict with 99.9 percent accuracy what the NEA is going to do or say in

any given situation. The fact that the Communists keep heaping praise on the NEA is enough to convince us that the Communists consider the NEA to be the most important and powerful political instrument in the hands of the radical left in the United States. After all, when you control a nation's school rooms, you control that nation's future. It's such a simple idea. But until conservatives and Christians begin to deal realistically with this progressive-humanist control of American education, the future of freedom will be in great jeopardy.

The only way out of this leftist trap is the privatization of American education, the breakup of the great governmental education monopoly, and the restoration of complete educational freedom. This may seem like an unreachable objective. But is it? Never has the public been more dissatisfied with the performance of public schools, and never has more evidence of the system's failures been brought before the American public. Britain recently privatized several of its largest government enterprises with great success. These enterprises, which had been millstones around the taxpayers necks, are now quite profitable and paying dividends to their millions of shareholders. It is amazing that no business leader of great stature in the United States has advocated privatizing American education.

The privatization movement in Britain would have been inconceivable a decade ago. Here in the United States we have thousands of private schools that cost the taxpayer nothing and provide excellent education to about 20 percent of American children. Since we know how much better and less costly private education is, why don't we conservatives decide that privatization of education is not only a good idea, a politically viable idea, but that it offers us the only possible chance of breaking the progressive-humanist stranglehold on our culture? If that's the kind of drastic, unthinkable strategy it will take to win, then that is what must be done. Of course, there

will be the organized public school lobby to contend with. But there are a lot more parents than educators, and conservative politicians should appeal to the parents who are desperate to see their children educated.

Victor Gold summed up the conservative dilemma in The American Spectator (Sept. 1987):

"... The ugly American truth is that despite four Republican victories in the last five presidential elections, the heralded conservative 'revolution' has been a one-dimensional thing -- a political current running against a cultural tide that continues to move the country leftward. . . .

"We follow the election returns, see the liberal agenda rejected -- at least, on the presidential level -- and conclude the tide has turned. But the leading social indicators -- education, the arts, the media -- argue otherwise. . . . Conservatives may win political battles but liberals are still winning the cultural war, in the end dictating the true national agenda."

The unfortunate truth is that conservatives have long surrendered education to the left and are now so used to it that they cannot even contemplate what must be done to change the situation. They content themselves with shooting arrows at the educational behemoth in the hope that the left will readily see the truth and wisdom of the conservative viewpoint and change. The neo-conservatives believe that "reform" of the system is possible, but seven years of control over the U.S. Department of Education has brought forth a reformist mouse that will soon be devoured by the NEA cat.

The Christian Response

The vast majority of Christian families still send their children to public schools. The result is that many Christian children are educated out of the faith and become either run-of-the-mill secular humanists or worse. There are those Christians, of course,

who sincerely believe that they must remain in the system in order to redeem it. They are not fazed by the overwhelming evidence that the system cannot be redeemed, and they are willing to sacrifice their children on the altar of public education because, for some reason, they consider the public school as some sort of sacred institution, virtually in the same category as the church.

But the recent court reversals in Tennessee and Alabama may finally convince some of these Christians that the public school is the permanent captive of the humanists and no longer a suitable place, if indeed it ever was, for Christian children. What these court reversals really mean is that the public schools will never be able to serve the educational needs of the Christian community, and the sooner Christians realize this, the better.

Fortunately, many young Christian families have already come to this conclusion and have put their children in Christian schools or are home-schooling them. I have had the pleasure of addressing Christian school and home-school conferences in Florida, Michigan, Illinois, Virginia, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, and elsewhere. The Christian school movement is acquiring greater political understanding of the issues involved, while the obvious benefits and responsibilities of home-schooling are attracting many young families who hunger for a way of life based on Christian values.

The home-school movement is particularly significant in that it represents a sharp break from progressive-humanist trends by whole families acting as families -- the primary social units of a Christian society. This is an unprecedented development in a modern secular state where the whole idea of family has been redefined to suit alternate pagan lifestyles. That is why it is being looked on with great concern by the humanist statist who see in home-schooling the first real grass-roots challenge to their dominance and world view. The future success of home-schooling depends on

the extent to which Christian parents are willing to assert their unalienable rights to educate their children at home without interference from the state. This will be the crucial battleground for Christian freedom in the years ahead.

For that reason I am now putting much effort into the formation of Parents for Unalienable Rights in Education (PURE), an organization for home-schoolers who recognize the significance of the struggle for parental rights and Christian freedom. Joining me in this effort are many good home-schoolers, including Ed and Sharon Pangelinan, the Christian couple who spent 132 days in jail in Alabama for the "crime" of educating their two children at home. The spirit that led Ed and Sharon not to compromise on the issue of parental rights is the same spirit that gave birth to this nation in 1776.

The basic mission of PURE will be to reassert the concept of God-given "unalienable rights," which has lost much of its meaning in our humanistic culture. People seem to forget that the basis of our freedom is that very concept, spelled out clearly in our nation's founding document, the Declaration of Independence. The purpose of government, according to that document, is "to secure these rights." But when the government begins to deny and/or take away these rights, we have encroaching tyranny.

History teaches us that freedom is rarely lost all at once. It requires a series of steps or measures that progressively whittle away the practice of freedom until one is "free" only to choose what the rulers offer. Americans largely gave up or lost educational freedom in the name of free education for all in a government school. But now we know that "free" education costs the taxpayers billions of dollars and it doesn't even educate. It produces functional illiterates by the millions. But now we've been trapped by an intricate web of laws and regulations that have put us into a veritable straitjacket. The mission of PURE will be to show

Americans how to get out of that straitjacket and restore sound education without government involvement.

It is important that Americans understand what this heritage of unalienable rights is all about. If they don't, they are liable to be the last generation of Americans to enjoy them.

Another important mission of PURE will be to make America aware of the importance of a good family life. America is only as good as its families, for families make up the backbone of this country. Home-schooling does more to enhance and enrich family life than any other activity. It creates strong, loving bonds between parents and children. It creates a generation bridge permitting the transfer of the knowledge, wisdom and values of one generation to the next. It provides a rich array of experiences and interchanges between family members that they will always cherish. It creates a family that not only respects education but pursues it as a way of life. It creates parents who continue to learn and grow along with their children. It fosters social and political awareness in a time of rapid cultural and technological change. It provides a safe haven for children in a culture obsessed with sex, violence, rock music and blasphemy. It is a dynamic force for good in a nation beset with such overwhelming problems as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, crime, AIDS, alcoholism, teenage suicide, and growing illiteracy.

This grass-roots movement, based on a solid foundation of Biblical principles and motivated by uncompromising Christian courage, has the potential of saving America from its descent into humanist totalitarianism.

So there is indeed hope, as each Christian family becomes a fortress for the Lord, a center of Christian learning, a repository of the Bible, connected in fellowship with other Christian families producing children who will create the foundation of a new American civilization, developed in harmony with its Biblical roots.

Are Achievement Tests Getting Easier?

In a recent interview with Secretary William Bennett conducted by Allan H. Ryskind, editor of Human Events, Ryskind asked the Secretary if the recent upward blip in test scores is a result of genuine student improvement or a norming down of the tests? Here's the exchange:

"Q. The Administration has claimed that test scores from the first grade through high school have been on the rise recently. Isn't it true that even these testing vehicles such as the Iowa test, the Stanford test, the California one, and even the SAT tests are regularly normed down or simplified? And I say this because I have some good reason to believe it, having seen some of these tests. The Iowa test, for instance, cut 30 minutes off its test in the early '80s, and the Stanford test, primarily Level 2 for second- and third-graders, has fewer questions in every category in its 1983 edition than in its 1973 edition.

"More significantly, a knowledgeable elementary school teacher -- who happens to be my wife -- tells me that the 1973 edition of the Stanford Level 2 test contained quite a stiff section on science -- 27 questions. It also contained a social study section of 27 questions. In the '83 edition, the two were combined under one heading of environment, containing 27 questions altogether. Even the SAT tests are said to be normed down.

"A. I can't really give you a satisfactory answer because I don't have all the details of the examples you cite. But certainly there is no cause for jubilation in terms of rising test scores because even if tests haven't been renormed, test scores dropped precipitously over the last two decades, and they haven't gotten back nearly to where they should be."

Of course, Bennett could get the facts if he really wanted to. Instead of awarding large grants to humanistic education labs in graduate schools, he

could order a study of the achievement tests to see if, indeed, they have been dumbed down in order to deceive the public about the true level of student achievement. This is important information for us to have if we are to realistically evaluate the performance of public education.

Bennett was also asked: "Do you have any ideas about home schooling?" His answer: "Nothing very interesting." On the matter of reform, Bennett once more iterated his well known position: "I don't want to give up on the idea of reform because I believe in the idea of public education, I believe in the idea of a common curriculum for the kids. However, if the system proves intransigent and will systematically ignore things that are important, then you've got to give the parents an opportunity to opt out."

Of course, the system has long proved that it is intransigent and ignores things that are important -- such as the correct way of teaching reading. The reading problem was brought before the educators in 1955 by Rudolf Flesch. But the educators still -- in 1987 -- refuse to make the fundamental changes in methods that would eliminate the reading problem in a very short time. Instead, they have made the problem far worse than it was in 1955, and created a whole new profession of special educators to deal with the learning disabilities they create in the classroom.

William Bennett's support of public education is unconditional and unequivocal. The only saving grace is that he believes that parents ought to have the right to "opt out" if the system fails. But failure or not, according to Bennett, the system must be preserved.

Again we are dealing with the myth that public education is some sort of sacred institution, a dispenser of common values, like a national church. As a politician Bennett is obliged to pay lip service to this myth whether he believes in it or not. Fortunately, we don't. We believe that private schools and home-schools are probably turning

out, on the whole, better Americans than the public schools. Mr. Bennett himself is a product of parochial schools. He ought to know. (Human Events, 9/19/87)

Christian School Wins Case in Massachusetts

A U.S. District Court ruled on 7/27/87 that the New Life Baptist Church Academy of East Longmeadow, Mass., need not comply with the requirement that the school board supervise and monitor the testing of students at the Academy. According to Rev. David Chase, pastor of the church and superintendent of the 119-student academy, strictly following state compulsory education laws would be a sin because it would place the government above God. "We're also happy the judge recognized that we sincerely have strongly held beliefs. That's always a question -- as to whether they believe that we hold such beliefs or not," Chase said.

In the 94-page ruling, Judge Mark Wolf said the town was insensitive to the church's "sincere religious objection to submitting their education ministry for government approval."

State law requires school committees to approve private schools and authorizes prosecution of parents who send their children to schools that are not state approved. However, the East Longmeadow process "would foster a constitutionally unacceptable degree of entanglement between the government and religion," said Wolf.

The judge forbade the town from prosecuting parents of pupils who attend the Baptist school, but did not rule on the constitutionality of the state's compulsory education law.

Thomas Kenefick III, attorney for the school board, warned that Wolf's ruling might leave school boards across the state without "constitutional muster" in requiring private schools to submit for approval under state education guidelines.

"The decision is significant because what it does is highlight a very significant problem -- that the school committee in towns or cities may or may not have a scheme that would pass constitutional (challenge)," Kenefick said.

"One problem is that my school committee had a guideline to follow from the state Department of Education, but it did not provide any basis on how to survive a constitutional attack."

State Education Department attorney Robert Blumenthal said the ruling would be reviewed for possible impact and an advisory would be issued to school boards statewide.

However, he said most religious or parochial schools have always willingly sought the approval of local school committees. (Boston Herald, 7/29/87)

Alabama and Tennessee Court Victories Reversed

A three-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit Court on 8/24/87 overturned last October's ruling by U.S. District Judge Thomas G. Hull that the First Amendment right of Christian children to free exercise of religion was violated by their forced exposure to humanistic, anti-Christian textbooks. The case, Mozert v. Hawkins County Board of Education, resulted in an important victory for Christian children in public schools. (B.E.L. #5)

According to Chief Judge Pierce Lively, who wrote the court's main opinion in the reversal: "The plaintiffs did not produce a single student or teacher to testify that any student was ever required to affirm his or her belief in any idea or practice mentioned in the various stories and passages contained in the Holt series.

"However, the plaintiffs appeared to assume that materials clearly presented as poetry, fiction, and even 'make believe' in the Holt series were presented as facts which the students

were required to believe. Nothing in the record supports this assumption. . .

"It does not require a person to accept any other religion as the equal of the one to which that person adheres. It merely requires a recognition that in a pluralistic society we must 'live and let live.'

"If the Hawkins County schools had required the plaintiff students either to believe or say they believe that 'all religions are merely different roads to God,' this would be a different case."

Judge Cornelia G. Kennedy wrote that permitting the children to opt out of the reading course "would result in substantial disruption to the public schools" and in "a public school system impossible to administer."

Judge Danny J. Boggs wrote, "As we ultimately decide here, on the present state of constitutional law, the school board is indeed entitled to say 'My way or hit the highway.'"

In the Alabama case, where secular humanism was ruled a religion by Judge W. Brevard Hand (B.E.L. #8), the 11th Circuit Court did not address the question of whether secular humanism is a religion for First Amendment purposes, but asserted that it is not being promoted in the textbooks that were banned. The reversal was made on 8/26/87.

Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. wrote: "Use of the challenged textbooks has the primary effect of conveying information that is essentially neutral in its religious content to the school children who utilize the books; none of these books convey a message of governmental approval of secular humanism. . . .

"There simply is nothing in the record to indicate that omission of certain facts regarding religion from these textbooks of itself continues an advancement of secular humanism or an active hostility towards theistic religion." (Educ. Wk. 9/9/87)

The reversals indicate two very important points: one, that the public schools can not be forced to accommodate the educational needs of Christian children, and two, that if Christians don't like it, they can "hit the highway."

AIDS Statistics Update

Cumulative Cases and Deaths

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total Cases</u>	<u>Total Deaths</u>
1979	11	
1980	58	
1981	318	
1982	1,312	
1983	4,031	
1984	9,362	
Apr. 22, 1985	9,760	4,760
Dec. 30, 1985	15,948	8,161
Jun. 30, 1986	22,173	12,186
Dec. 29, 1986	29,003	16,301
Jun. 22, 1987	37,386	21,621
Sep. 7, 1987	41,735	24,019

Cumulative Cases of AIDS in Major U.S. Cities as of 9/7/87

New York City, NY	10,851
San Francisco, CA	4,090
Los Angeles, CA	3,549
San Diego, CA	526
Miami, FL	1,149
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	529
Houston, TX	1,346
Dallas, TX	796
Newark, NJ	957
Jersey City, NJ	463
Washington, DC (Metro Area)	1,221
Chicago, IL	1,009
Philadelphia, PA	818
Boston, MA	663
Atlanta, GA	666
Seattle, WA	403
New Orleans, LA	360
Denver, CO	369

Cumulative Cases of AIDS

	<u>Number of Cases as of 4/22/85</u>	<u>Number of Cases as of 12/15/86</u>	<u>Number of Cases as of 9/7/87</u>
NY State	3702	8963	11950
NY City	3415	8218	10851
CA	2220	6390	9583
S.F.	1141	2911	4090
L.A.	821	2386	3549
FL	614	1911	2813
Miami	336	856	1149
NJ	584	1717	2366
Newark	241	712	957
TX	487	1712	2747
IL	199	714	1123
PA	207	648	1021
MA	174	577	906
Wash, DC	143	509	762
GA	142	553	865
PR	119	313	394
MD	115	416	656
CT	103	330	468
WA	98	337	509
LA	98	325	496
VA	83	329	481
CO	75	281	440
OH	67	246	441
MI	65	246	379
MN	44	158	230
AZ	42	159	260
NC	38	169	278
IN	33	114	193
HI	33	101	165
OR	32	113	203
WI	25	77	146
MO	23	146	291
SC	22	104	157
KY	21	59	86
OK	17	76	147
AL	16	70	158
RI	15	48	92
NV	14	63	99
DE	13	40	55
UT	11	49	71
TN	8	98	126
WV	7	20	36
KS	7	52	84
NM	7	41	67
IA	7	35	55
NH	5	23	35
MS	5	36	58
AK	5	20	34
AR	3	40	66
NE	3	21	37