

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."

Values and Public Education: The Cultural Civil War

(Conclusion)

The following is the conclusion of the text of a lecture given by Sam Blumenfeld at Hillsdale College, March 11, 1991, in a seminar sponsored by the Center for Constructive Alternatives. The first part appeared in the March 1991 newsletter.

But how does all of this work in the classroom today? Humanistic psychology has been so widely accepted, so deeply absorbed and institutionalized by the educational system, that the educators themselves see it as the system's underlying philosophy.

And that is why affective education is considered the indispensable part of the public school curriculum. Why? Because it deals with values, beliefs, feelings, and behavior. As Arthur Combs has said:

"Modern education must produce far more than persons with cognitive skills. It must produce humane individuals. . . . We can live with a bad reader; a bigot is a danger to everyone.

"What is needed is a humanistic psychology expressly designed to deal with the human aspects of personality and behavior,

a psychology which does not ignore the students' belief systems but makes them central to its concerns."

Now when I was going to elementary school back in the 1930s, the last thing the teacher was concerned with were my feelings or belief system. She didn't want to know how or what I felt. She wanted to know if I was learning what she was teaching.

Affective education has opened the schoolhouse door to every sort of lunacy the humanists can dream up. So now we not only have sex education, sensitivity training, and values clarification, but also death education, drug education, magic circles, role playing, transcendental meditation, yoga, eastern religion, etc.

The Lifeboat Game

One widely used technique for clarifying values in the classroom is the lifeboat survival game, or fallout shelter game. I was given the instruction sheet for the latter

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exercise by a parent in Clarkston, Washington, where I was lecturing. It was used in the 9th grade at the local high school. Ninth graders are about 14 or 15 years old.

The lesson is entitled, "Who Should Survive," and the instructions read:

"The following 15 persons are in a bomb shelter after a nuclear war. These 15 persons are the only humans left on the earth. It will take six weeks for the external radiation level to drop to a safe survival level. The food and supplies in the shelter can sustain at a very minimum level, seven persons for six weeks. It is your task to decide which seven persons will survive. Be prepared to justify your choices."

First of all, notice how the problem is rigged. How do these 15 persons know that they are the only humans left on earth? How do they know that it will take six weeks for the outside radiation level to fall? If they have that kind of scientific knowledge, maybe they also have a radiation-proof suit that one of the survivors can put on and find adequate food somewhere on the outside. Also, who among the survivors has the right to decide who is to live and who is to die? None of these questions are brought up. Instead, these 15-year-olds are now supposed to play God and sentence 8 people to death in a situation which could easily be changed with a little imagination and resourcefulness.

Cast of Characters

Here are the 15 persons:

1. Dr. Dame, 39, white, no church affiliation, PhD in history, college professor, good health, married, 1 child, active and enjoys politics.
2. Mrs. Dame, 38, white, Jew, MA in psychology, counselor in mental health clinic, good health, married, 1 child, active in community.
3. Bobby Dame, 10, white, Jew, special

education classes for 4 years, mentally retarded, IQ 70, good health, enjoys his pets.

4. Mrs. Garcia, 33, Spanish-American, Roman Catholic, 9th grade education, cocktail waitress, prostitute, good health, married at 16, divorced at 18, abandoned as a child, in a foster home as a youth, attacked by foster father at age 12, ran away from home, returned to reformatory, stayed until 16, 1 child 3 weeks old.

5. Jean Garcia, 3 weeks old, Spanish-American, good health, nursing for food.

6. Mrs. Evans, 32, Negro, Protestant, AB and MA in Elementary Education, teacher, divorced, 1 child, good health, cited as outstanding teacher, enjoys working with children.

7. Mary Evans, 8, Negro, Protestant, 3rd grade, good health, excellent student.

8. John Jacobs, 13, white, Protestant, 8th grade, honor student, very active, broad interests, father is a Baptist minister, good health.

9. Mr. Newton, 25, Negro, claims to be an atheist, was in last year of medical school until suspended for homosexual activity, good health, seems bitter concerning racial problems, wears hippy clothes.

10. Mrs. Clark, 28, Negro, Protestant, college grad, engineering, electronics engineer, married, no children, good health, enjoys outdoor sports and stereo equipment, grew up in ghetto.

11. Sister Mary Kathleen, 27, nun, college grad, English major, grew up in upper middle class neighborhood, good health, father a businessman.

12. Mr. Blake, 51, white, Mormon, HS grad, mechanic, "Mr. Fix-it," married, 4 children (not with him), good health, enjoys outdoors and working in his shop.

13. Miss Harris, 21, Spanish-American, Protestant, college senior, nursing major, good health, enjoys outdoor sports, likes people.

14. Father Franz, 37, white, Catholic, college plus seminary, priest, active in civil rights, criticized for liberal views, good health, former college athlete.

15. Dr. Gonzales, 66, Spanish-American, Catholic, medical doctor, general practitioner, has had 2 heart attacks in the past 5 years but continues to practice.

That completes our cast of characters. And now we can start clarifying our values. I can imagine the students deciding to get rid of the easy ones first — Bobby Dame, the mentally retarded Jewish boy, and Dr. Gonzales who will probably have his third heart attack before the six weeks are up. It's interesting to note that in Hitler's Germany, Nazi doctors decided that the mentally defective were socially worthless and should therefore be killed. This practice started in the 1930s, before the war.

Easy Victims

Two more easy victims are Mrs. Garcia, the ex-prostitute, and her nursing infant. The fifth will no doubt be the black homosexual atheist who wears hippy clothes. He's hardly the type you'd want to help generate a new human race. So far it's been pretty easy. But we have three more to go.

Dr. and Mrs. Dame look pretty safe. He's got a Ph.D. and she's got an MA, which means they can start a graduate school of psychology as soon as they crawl out of the shelter. Goodness knows the seven survivors will need one to help create their new world order. Mrs. Evans, the 32-year-old black teacher, and her 8-year-old daughter look safe. Mrs. Evans has an AB and an MA in elementary education, which means that the education establishment will have survived the nuclear holocaust. John Jacobs, the 13-year-old white boy is a shoo-in. The kids in the class will certainly identify with him.

Mrs. Clark, the 28-year-old black elec-

tronics engineer, will probably be spared because she's good at repairing stereo equipment. Sister Mary Kathleen, the 27-year-old nun, is obviously a loser, unless she's willing to give up her virginity. Mr. Blake, the Mormon mechanic, is a little too old, all of 51. Besides, he doesn't have a college degree. Miss Harris, the 21-year-old Hispanic nursing major, looks good as a future breeder of children. Father Franz, the 37-year-old priest, is a problem. Maybe the kids will permit him to live if he gives up his celibacy.

Tough Decisions

Tough decisions for the kids to make. And, of course, this exercise has afforded the children the opportunity to discuss such subjects as infanticide, mercy killing, euthanasia, homosexuality, rape, prostitution, interracial marriage, religion, ethnic differences, etc. Incidentally, this cast of characters tells us much about the values of the educator who dreamed it up. If you will notice, five of the fifteen persons are white males; the one black male is a homosexual, and the one Hispanic male is old and sick. So only white males will survive. Of the five white males, the Ph.D., the 13-year-old boy and either the Mormon mechanic or the priest will be among the final winners. Did you ever doubt that the Ph.D. would survive?

As for the females, the situation is fraught with social and racial overtones. The exercise starts with eight females: 2 whites (the Master of Psychology and the nun); 3 blacks (the MA in elementary education, her daughter, and the electronics engineer); and 3 Hispanics (the prostitute and her baby and the student nurse). After eliminating the prostitute and her baby, the kids will have to eliminate two more. Who will they be? The nun? One or both of the strong black females? The Hispanic student nurse, or the Master of Psychology? Maybe Dr. Dame will

take a shine to one of the black females and decide that Mrs. Dame, the lone surviving Jew, is dispensable. Who needs a Jewish problem in the brave new world? Or maybe the Mormon mechanic and the 13-year-old boy will decide to solve the race problem once and for all by eliminating the three black females. Why start off a new world and a new human race with a race problem? The possibilities are positively enticing.

Well, have your values been sufficiently clarified? Can you imagine the emotional turmoil and confusion such an exercise can cause in the minds and hearts of the 15-year-olds who are forced to deal with it? The exercise clarifies nothing. It's a kind of moral masturbation that humanists love to engage in. It confuses the whole issue of values. Above all, it tells you that there is something sick in an educational system that conducts education in this perverse, depressing, idiotic way.

Phony Choices

Incidentally, when I was given this class exercise by the parent in Clarkston and read it, I complained about it in a press interview. I thought it was pretty awful. The principal of the high school was informed of my complaint. He defended the assignment as one that teaches students the "process one goes about in making choices." He said that the exercise was not unrealistic in this age of nuclear issues and that not to discuss such issues would be a disservice to the students.

Think about that for a moment. The principal would have us believe that it is perfectly realistic for children to think of themselves as one of fifteen sole survivors in a world-wide nuclear holocaust. Statistically, it is far more likely that anyone of these children will win the state lottery or the Irish Sweep Stakes than find himself or herself among the last fifteen survivors of the hu-

man race. So why not give the children an exercise in deciding what they would do with fifteen million dollars if they won it in a lottery? It would be a lot more fun, a lot more realistic (for hundreds of people in America have actually faced that problem), and a lot healthier than ordering the executions of eight survivors of a nuclear holocaust. One would think that in such a situation, every human being would be precious enough to want to save. But humanists don't think that way.

I believe that what makes humanism and humanistic psychology so malevolent, so destructive, is their profound atheism, an atheism not based on indifference toward God, but hatred and defiance. It is not insignificant that what drove Maslow in search of the holy secular grail was the hatred he had for his mother and everything he thought she represented. He never forgave her. He even refused to attend her funeral. Yet, toward the end of his life he could see that he had made some serious mistakes in his psychological scheme. But by then his ideas had been absorbed by so many hedonists and pagans and lunatics that the damage could never be undone.

Silver Lining

And so, the civil war continues. How it will end no one knows. However, there is a faint silver lining off in the distance. The home-school movement, which grows stronger by the day, indicates that many families in America are willing to take matters into their own hands when it comes to the education of their own children.

Their abandonment of the public school represents a radical break with the cultural and statist norms of our society. Something fundamental is taking place when citizens abandon institutions that were once considered sacred.

The only solution to this conflict over values is to restore full educational freedom in America, to get the government out of the education business thereby diminishing the political and economic power of the education establishment, and to repeal the compulsory attendance laws which make our youngsters virtual prisoners of the state for twelve years. When people argue that without compulsory attendance some children will not go to school, I reply that no school is better than public school.

I feel sad in having to say this because I went to public schools and got a fairly decent education. But that was half a century ago. Things are different today and we must move forward. Frankly, I am convinced that public education is doomed. It is a sick dinosaur destined for extinction. It no longer works, and it survives only because of its political power.

What value is there in a system that doesn't work and can't work? Recently, John Gatto, who was named New York City's Teacher of the Year, appeared before a hearing in which he castigated the school system for "the murder of one million black and Latino children." He got a standing ovation.

This country has indeed reached a point of decision, but the decision isn't being made by the educators or our political leaders. It is being made every day by parents who now know that there is no other way to change things. And that's the way it will probably be for some years to come.

Teenager Takes Over Classroom With Loaded Rifle

Police in Franklin, Massachusetts, said a 14-year-old student armed with a rifle took over a classroom with 25 students and shot out a window at Horace Mann Junior High

School on 3/18/91. The youth, whose name was not released because of his age, was soon disarmed by police and placed in the Department of Youth Services custody for 15 days observation.

Franklin police said the boy snuck a loaded .22 caliber rifle and a Bowie knife into school with the help of two friends around 7:30 a.m. The boy entered a classroom with the weapons and ordered the teacher to leave the desk. He then sat down at the desk and fired a shot through the window, drawing the school's principal into the room. The youth ordered the principal to sit on the floor.

Moments later, two Franklin police officers entered the classroom, and while one distracted the boy, the second disarmed him. The youth was charged with juvenile delinquency by armed assault, illegal possession of a firearm and possession of a deadly weapon.

Police said the boy had family problems and had demanded that the father be brought to school. The rifle belonged to the father, police said. (*Boston Globe*, 3/20/91)

Comment: Franklin, Mass., is the birthplace of Horace Mann, the father of centralized, bureaucratized public education. Mann was convinced that the public schools would solve America's moral problems and wipe out juvenile delinquency, crime and other societal ills. Too bad he's not around to see how well his ideas have worked out!

It's Official: America Is A Christian Nation

According to an opinion poll that surveyed 113,000 people around the nation, 86.5 percent identified themselves as Chris-

tians, 3.7 percent professed to belong to non-Christian religions, 7.5 percent claimed no religion, and 2.3 percent refused to answer the questioner. The survey, the largest and most comprehensive effort to draw a portrait of religion in America, was commissioned by the Graduate School of the City University of New York.

The survey found that while 86.5 percent of Americans, or 214 million people, are Christians, they are split into many denominations and groups. Catholics represent 26 percent of the total population, Baptists 19 percent, Methodists 8 percent and Lutherans 5 percent. Jews make up only 2 percent of the population.

While much has been written about the New Age religions, the number of adherents found was practically insignificant. Oregon turned out to have the largest number of atheists, 17 percent of the population, more than double the national percentage of 7.5.

Few Blacks Are Muslims

Of the nation's 1.4 million Muslims, 40 percent are black. This is less than 2 percent of the total black population which is overwhelmingly Christian.

Other interesting findings: Unitarians have the highest divorce rate of any group; most Americans of Irish ancestry are Protestant; the Greek Orthodox have the lowest divorce rate; most Arab Americans are Christian.

Buddhists number about a million in the U.S., and Hindus about a half million. Among smaller groups with fewer than 50,000 members are Bahai, Taoist, Rastafarians and Wiccan.

The data were collected through telephone interviews with 113,000 adults over a 13-month period, from April 1989 to April 1990, by the ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa. The margin of sampling error

was estimated to be plus or minus less than one percent. (*NY Times*, 4/10/91)

Comment:

This survey should finally put to rest the notion that America is not a Christian nation but, rather, some kind of religiously neutered society adhering to a neutral code of morality that tolerates differing value systems in the interest of democratic harmony. Of course, professing to be Christian and behaving like a Christian are two different things. That would account for the vast number of "Christians" having abortions, getting divorced and engaging in pre-marital sex. The real problem is Christian leadership. Apparently, most Christian ministers go along with the secular consensus, approve of the public schools, and accept the cultural norms of our society. Their Christianity is more social than covenantal. The result is that most Christians in America are more pagan in their social and cultural behavior than Christian. Their Christianity is more form than substance, molded to conform with America's commercial pressures and humanistic statist institutions.

Yes, America is a Christian nation, but a very confused Christian nation.

Neil Bush: Dyslexic

Barbara Bush, renowned for her interest and activities in promoting literacy, has contributed an article to *Their World*, the annual publication of the National Center for Learning Disabilities. Titled "L.D.: The Other 'L' in Literacy," the First Lady's article describes how she and her husband helped their son Neil overcome a learning problem rooted in a mild case of dyslexia.

Noting that they found schools and teachers who could assist him, she writes, "Our son was lucky. But too many of our

learning disabled adults are not." Fortunately, she adds, diagnostic services are spreading throughout the United States, along with specialized instruction.

Their World also includes a message from Neil Bush describing his initial difficulties as a junior high school student and saying, "Being the fastest reader with the quickest comprehension would be nice, but is not required for success and happiness."

A copy of Their World may be obtained by writing the center at 99 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, or by telephoning (212) 687 7211. (*NY Times*, 3/1/89)

Comment: Undoubtedly, Neil Bush was taught to read by the look-say method, which produced the symptoms of dyslexia. But like so many parents, the Bushes apparently believed that Neil's problem was not caused by educational malpractice, but by some learning disorder that Neil was born with. We trust that Neil's reading problem had nothing to do with his involvement in the Silverado Savings and Loan scandal.

Anti-Suicide Programs Produce Unwanted Effects

Teen suicide-prevention programs in schools may actually stir up depressed feelings rather than help youths who have tried to kill themselves, according to a new study. Although there was little evidence that the programs reduced suicides and suicide attempts, "there was some evidence of unwanted effects," researchers wrote in the study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in December, 1990.

"There is a clear need to evaluate such programs to determine their efficacy and safety," the researchers wrote. Researchers studied the effect of prevention programs on

the attitudes of pupils in the 9th and 10th grades who said they had tried to commit suicide.

They found that those teens continued to believe suicide was a possible solution to their problems and that they would be less likely to seek help or discuss their feeling with peers who haven't tried to kill themselves.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among people 15 to 24 years old. A psychiatrist not connected with the study said the results aren't surprising and supports theories that teenagers have a romantic view of suicide.

The study evaluated the effect of school-based suicide prevention programs on 973 teens, 63 of whom said that twice they had tried to kill themselves. The students were divided into two groups, with 524 participating in prevention programs, including 35 suicide attempters. The other 449 — 28 of whom had tried to take their lives — did not participate in the programs.

The programs, some lasting as long as three hours, were intended to raise awareness of teenage suicides by describing the warning signs of young people at risk and recommended counseling. Participants were surveyed about their attitudes toward suicide before and after the programs.

"Attempters exposed to programs were significantly less likely to recommend that the programs be presented to other students and significantly more likely to indicate that talking about suicide makes some kids more likely to try to kill themselves," the study said.

Of the teens who had tried to kill themselves, 26.7 percent thought the programs increase the chances that youths will attempt suicide. Only 11.5 percent of those who hadn't attempted suicide thought the programs might increase suicide tries.

Researchers also concluded that the

attitudes of suicide attempters who did not participate in the programs were not significantly more negative than those who did. (*Quincy Patriot Ledger*, 12/26/90)

Comment: So far, no major research has been done on the unwanted effects of death education and its possible contribution to teenage suicide. We breathlessly await such research. Meanwhile, the above study is a step in the right direction.

Sexual Slang Upsets Parents

Teaching children slang is one thing, but teaching them sexual slang is a different story, according to parents in Plymouth, Conn., who are outraged by a health class that uses colloquialisms. Last month, parents discovered that the Fisher Middle School health teacher was explaining sexual slang in a unit covering human sexuality. The news spread quickly in this blue-collar town of 12,000 in the northwestern section of the state.

About 70 parents showed up at a board meeting, some expressing shock. The board suspended the AIDS education and human development and sexuality units of the health and life skills class and appointed a committee of 17 — including parents, a clergyman, a physician, teachers and the superintendent of schools — to review the way the units are taught. (*Boston Globe*, 12/25/90)

Homosexual, 29, Sues Boy Scouts

A judge's ruling in California has cleared the way for a homosexual man to proceed with a discrimination lawsuit against the Boy Scouts of America and its national policy banning homosexuals as poor role mod-

els. Timothy Curran, 29, was asked to leave the Scouts in 1980 when he took a young man to his senior prom. He filed his lawsuit in 1981 when his bid to return as an adult leader was rejected.

Superior Court Judge Sally Disco ruled late Tuesday that the Mount Diablo Council in the San Francisco Bay area is subject to California's Unruh Civil Rights Act. The act forbids businesses from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion or disability.

Disco said the council is a business because it has considerable property holdings and makes money by selling products to the public. The Boy Scouts had argued that it is a non-profit organization free to promote its own moral philosophy.

Curran, a free-lance television editor and former Eagle Scout, said he wants to serve as a scout leader and is not seeking monetary damages. (*Wilmington, DE, News Journal*, 11/9/90)

Comment:

The humanists like to tell us that tolerance of alternative life styles and moral codes is the essence of a democratic society. Yet, the Unruh Civil Rights Act is forcing the adherents of one moral code to adopt the moral values of an other group. All of which demonstrates that no society can adopt two opposing moral codes without producing endless social conflict and confusion. One moral code must predominate. Since this is a Christian nation, one would suppose that a Biblically based moral code would prevail. But Christians, in their eagerness to tolerate anything and everything, have abdicated their responsibility as guardians of Christian morality. The result is moral chaos and confused children—not to mention confused parents.