

# 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 these risks.  
"Without vision, the people perish."

## The Importance of Homeschooling to America

Spring is homeschool convention time in America. Virtually every state in the union now has a statewide homeschool association that usually holds its annual convention in April, May, or June. Large states like California and Texas now have more than one convention. The Tennessee Home Education Association scheduled six regional conferences in 1996: Bristol in March, Jackson in April, Nashville in May, Memphis in May, Athens in June, Chattanooga July 21-22, and Knoxville July 28-29.

Virtually all of these state associations are Christian in orientation, and they continue to grow in membership and convention attendance. Homeschooling is no longer considered eccentric or marginal. It is becoming a mainstream alternative with all of the complexities and problems that arise with rapid growth and expansion. Also, more and more non-Christians are beginning to homeschool and are setting up their own associations. Even some Unitarians are now homeschooling, in direct contradiction to their longstanding dedication to and support of the public school. When Unitarians start deserting the public schools, then

you know that public education has just about had it.

In a conversation I had with one homeschool association president he remarked that the homeschool movement had entered a new stage. He said that in the beginning, about ten or fifteen years ago, you had the pioneers who began to homeschool before anyone knew about it. They created the state organizations that now exist. Then came the settlers who expanded the organizations and homeschool magazines and spread the word about this new educational phenomenon to friends, neighbors, and church members. Newspapers began writing feature stories about homeschooling families, and even the education establishment began to take notice. There were court cases and court victories which began to establish a solid legal basis for homeschooling.

### The Third Stage

And now, he said, we are in the third stage: the time of the refugees. These are the newcomers to the homeschool movement,

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streaming out of the public schools because of the failures and disasters plaguing the system. Many of the new people flocking to homeschool conventions this spring were young parents with babes in arms who have no intention of ever letting their child see the inside of a public school. Many of the refugees are in a state of near-panic, realizing that they will have to start teaching their children at home this fall but without the faintest notion of how to go about it. And so they have come to these conventions eager to learn how to homeschool and to talk to veteran homeschoolers to find out how they got started. They want to be assured that they too can do it.

Another interesting phenomenon is the growing number of Christian parents who are removing their children from Christian schools in order to homeschool. These are parents eager to enjoy the new family lifestyle that comes with homeschooling. There are now enough church-going homeschoolers who are beginning to influence other non-homeschooling church members. The homeschooling family is becoming the new model Christian family, in which dad is the spiritual head and the children are brought up in accordance with Christian values. The Bible sets the behavioral standard for the family where grace is said before meals and family devotions become an important part of daily life.

This year I spoke at three homeschooling conventions and one conference. A convention, in addition to having speakers, workshops, and exhibitors, usually also has association business on its agenda with regional representatives voting on officers and other matters. A conference is simply a meeting or gathering organized by homeschooling advocates at which there are speakers, workshops and exhibitors.

At the Homeschoolers of Maine convention in April I gave an address on "18 Reasons to Homeschool." I wound up citing 23 advantages and benefits of homeschooling, which the audience enjoyed. I also spoke on "Outcome Based Education and Its Impact on the Family." After the talk there were many requests for copies of Mark Tucker's letter to Hillary Clinton. (That epistle could become a best seller if one could find a mint version of the letter.) The program note stated:

In this presentation, Dr. Blumenfeld describes what Outcome Based Education is all about and why it is incompatible with our ideas of individual freedom. Since OBE monitors individuals from birth onward, its impact on the family will be substantial. Can homeschoolers escape the OBE net? Only if they are informed and vigilant.

### **Defeating Mark Tucker**

Christian homeschoolers realize that the humanist state is not about to let them escape the tentacles of government control. Even though the freedom to homeschool is now well established in law, Mark Tucker's Human Resources Development System is designed to include everyone, "from cradle to grave, young and old, poor and rich, worker and full-time student." I told the homeschoolers that the only way to avoid being forced back under government control was to oppose the legislation that would implement Mark Tucker's plan. My intention was to make homeschoolers aware of the importance of their becoming politically involved. In fact, many of them in Maine vigorously opposed the imposition of Goals 2000 by their governor who managed to get the state legislature to vote in favor of it. But the battle is not at all over. This governor may not get a second term because of the Christian homeschoolers' opposition. The

presence of a large, well-organized Christian homeschooling association in Maine will in time prove to be an important political force that the politicians will have to reckon with.

Clearly, the development of political clout will have to be on the agendas of these state Christian homeschooling associations. They are already being organized into a considerable national force by the National Homeschool Legal Defense Association, led by Michael Farris. The HSLDA was founded during the pioneering period by a group of Christian homeschooling lawyers who realized that homeschoolers would need the help and protection of dedicated attorneys to make their cases forcefully in the courtrooms of America in defense of parental rights in matters of education. In recent years the HSLDA has also taken on lobbying activities in Washington in behalf of homeschoolers.

### **Strong Christian Worldview**

This was the sixth annual convention of the Maine association. I had spoken at their first convention, held in a church. This latest convention was held in a spacious convention center of the downtown Holiday Inn in Portland. The growth of the movement was reflected in this new convention environment which still maintained its strong Christian character. One of the keynote addresses was a powerful dramatic portrayal of the life of Christ by George Sarris, an extremely talented storyteller from Connecticut. Sarris put on an amazing performance in which he played all of the parts in this Gospel account. No doubt he will become a favorite speaker at Christian homeschool conventions.

Another keynote speaker, Rob Shearer, lectured on early church history. The pro-

gram note states:

There is much we could learn by studying and reflecting on how Christians in the past have faced the struggle to live redeemed lives in a fallen world. Our problems are not new problems. Rob will present sketches, stories, and observations on Constantine, Benedict, Augustine, Hildebrandt, Francis, Dominic, Waldo, Wyclif, and Hus.

As the reader can see, Christian homeschool conventions provide strong spiritual nourishment for young parents seeking to redeem their families in a fallen, pagan, humanistic society. This is education with meaning!

### **Growth in Florida**

I also spoke at the Florida Parent Educators Association convention in June held at the Hyatt-Orlando Resort. Several thousand families converged on this convention center to attend over 50 workshops and seminars and visit any number of exhibitors. It was a pleasure to see so many parents poring over books and curricula for their children. Obviously, the parents learned a great deal as they crowded into the various lecture halls, listened attentively, took notes, bought books and audio tapes. The association published a 48-page convention guide for the occasion. I lectured on my new book, *The Whole Language/OBE Fraud* and gave a workshop on teaching reading by intensive phonics. It was wonderful to find so many young parents eager to learn the truth about what is happening in America.

I also learned much at this convention. Probably the most popular lecture at the convention was one given by Dr. Larry E. Shyers who earned his Ph.D. at the University of Florida by doing "A Comparison of Social Adjustment between Home and Traditionally Schooled Students." He compared

70 homeschooled children with 70 traditionally schooled children and the results showed unequivocally that the homeschooled kids were the better adjusted in every way. Even he was amazed with the results, for he had started the survey in 1981 with an anti-homeschool bias. Dr. Shyers is putting all of his findings in a book which should put an end to the constant questioning about "socialization."

### **The Backyard Scientist**

Also at the convention was Jane Hoffman, the Backyard Scientist from Orange County, who put on her usually exciting workshop, demonstrating to parents and children alike how fascinating science can be. The program note stated:

Using lots of exciting, thrilling, and electrifying hands-on science experiments parents can repeat at home, the ever-bubbly Jane Hoffman will instruct parents in basic science concepts and will introduce parents to the world of hands-on science instruction methods. Attendees will appreciate the easy-to-find, low-cost materials called for in Jane's science experiments thus proving that science instruction does not have to be expensive to be effective. Parents will gain confidence to be effective teachers of science.

Jane has given her workshops at many homeschool conventions across the country. Who knows how many parents who disliked or flunked science in public school have been taught by Jane how fascinating science can be? These homeschool conventions, attended by thousands of young parents over the last ten years, have done wonders to awaken an exciting interest in education as a family pursuit. One can feel this growing intellectual curiosity among these young parents who actually come to these conventions to learn something and not merely whittle away their vacation time at poolside.

Other workshops covered such topics

as "How not to teach like the public schools," "Building a Biblical World View," "Understanding Math and Making It Easy," "Overview of Scientific Creationism," "Education Online: Homeschoolers Meet the Internet," "Effective Lobbying," "Teaching the Trivium," "Don't Forget the Marriage," etc. Where else could you find such a variety of workshops but at a homeschool convention? The homeschool convention is changing the way thousands of young families spend their vacations! Productive learning is the new way to enhance family life.

### **Growth in Ohio**

I was also a keynote speaker at the Christian Home Educators of Ohio convention in Columbus in June. I had spoken at their first convention in 1984 in a church with about 300 attendees. Now they were holding their convention at the Columbus Convention Center with thousands in attendance and a 140-page program. The spectacular growth of the homeschool movement in Ohio is merely a reflection of the growth of the movement nationwide. Nearly half the people at this convention were first-time attendees representing the new exodus of refugees from the public schools. That's what made this convention particularly exciting. My keynote speech, "Why Homeschooling is Important for America," was listened to attentively by several thousand people in the largest hall of the convention. I am pleased to say that it got a standing ovation.

How can one not be impressed by this growing phenomenon in America of young Christian parents taking back their responsibilities to educate their own children in the manner most consistent with Biblical teachings? In my talk I related how America had changed in its worldview from a predomi-

nantly Christian one, in which God's sovereignty over family, church and civil government was acknowledged, to an anti-Christian humanist one in which the state assumed sovereignty over family, church and civil government. I said:

In America, the ultimate aims of humanism can only be achieved through the control of children and their education. The fundamental issue, therefore, is the ownership of children. Do humanists have the right to indoctrinate children in the public schools with humanist values without the knowledge or consent of the parents?

I then quoted Dr. R. J. Rushdoony on this issue:

"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."

I then related the following story to illustrate what Dr. Rushdoony had said:

There are many cases in which compulsory school attendance laws have been used to deprive parents of their children. The most egregious case I know of is that of Barry Bear, an 18-year-old youth, who has spent the last five years in state custody in Iowa because of truancy. Barry's mother, Anna Bear, is a white woman married to a Native American with whom she has had four sons and a daughter. The family lives on a reservation near Tama. Barry is mildly retarded and has what the public schools like to call "special needs." But like many retarded children, Barry suffers from a variety of ailments, mainly gastro-intestinal. And so, when it came to attending school, Barry was absent a great deal. However, that should not have bothered the school, since Anna Bear taught school for twenty years, was certified, and could teach Barry at home.

However, in May 1989 the Iowa Supreme Court ordered that Barry, then 12, be forced to attend school. His parents refused. And so in 1991, after a long court battle, Barry was removed from his home and placed in foster care. Barry has now been in state custody for

five years. He's been in four or five foster homes, four or five public schools in which he's learned how to tie his shoelaces but not much else. He is presently at a residential hospital where he is being drugged and has become addicted. This mild, gentle boy has become a violent young adult who wants to go home and be with his parents and brothers and sisters, but the state will not let him go home. He is now their prisoner, and even though he has reached the age of 18 and is beyond compulsory school age, the court refuses to release him. Why? Because they own him and they want every homeschooler in Iowa to know that they own him and every other child they can get their clutches on.

And we know why. The *Des Moines Register* of Jan. 12, 1989 carried the following small item under the heading of "Statehouse Briefing":

"Iowa prosecutors are seeking more power to intervene in truancy cases and have suggested law changes that could give county attorneys more tools to use against fundamentalist Christians who want to teach their children at home.

"Recommendations from the Iowa County Attorneys' Association include a change in the state's juvenile code to add truancy to the list of reasons officials can start proceedings that can lead to removing the child from the home or to terminating the parents' rights to their child."

### Legal Kidnapping

Thus the humanist state can legally kidnap any child it wants through the compulsory education laws, and keep that child prisoner for as long as it wants. Which means that the issue of Christian liberty can only be resolved in a philosophical confrontation between Christians and the state. I say philosophical confrontation, not a physical confrontation, since the government has shown little restraint in its handling of citizens who disagree with its laws. (The ATF called out the U.S. Army with tanks and helicopters and 70 armed agents just to serve the hapless David Koresh with a search warrant for what?—a technical gun violation which would have gotten Koresh maybe 3 months in jail if found guilty.) Which means that you don't confront this crazy government physically if you want to survive. As long as this civil war can be fought in the courts and in the polling booths and by the legal actions of its citizens, there is no reason for physical confrontation.

### God's Sovereignty

Our goal must be the recognition of God's sovereignty over this nation. 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. . . .

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. Statism, the philosophy that the state is the supreme power, slowly absorbed the loyalty of America's academic elite.

Slowly but surely the concept of religious freedom gave way to that of religious toleration. The original concept of religious freedom 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 because of a "compelling state interest." . . .

I think you can sense why the homeschooling movement is so important to America during this time of cultural civil war. The means to restore Christian liberty and Constitutional government are limited by the very circumstances of the battlefield. The battlefields of this civil war are to be found in the court houses, the legislatures, the media, and most important of all, in the actions that citizens can take to further the cause of freedom and godly government.

### Making the Choice

One of the most important actions families can take is to remove their children from the government schools and homeschool them. By now about a million families have made that choice, and their actions have had an accumulative effect on American life that is only now beginning to be felt. . . .

Despite the obstacles involved, the withdrawal of children from the humanist state system is significant because it means that those children will be free from statist, humanist, indoctrination. It means that the Christian family will be free to raise its children in a godly way, in a way that conforms with the principles and values of the founding fathers. These are the children who will mold America's future and restore God's sovereignty over our government.

What is also important is what the homeschool movement is doing for the Christian family. They are rediscovering the benefits and joys and blessings of family life. For it is in the family that love for one another and love of God is nurtured. The very act of educating one's own children is a godly act called for in Deuteronomy. And therefore, it brings the Christian family in obedience to God's law and reestablishes the family as a unit governed under God, equal to the civil government. American civil government was never meant to usurp, replace or negate family government.

The civil government must respect family government for they both derive their legitimacy from

the same divine source. But today's civil government has done all in its power to make the family totally subordinate to the state by taking control of the children through compulsory attendance laws and using state social agencies to undermine the integrity of the family.

### Families on the Rocks

It is true that dysfunctional families pose a problem for society. But in the past it was the church or private agencies that dealt with such problems. Today, when the state takes control over a family, it plays the role of God. Social workers place children in foster homes that sometimes turn out to be worse than the homes they were taken from. And, of course, drug addiction and unwed teenage motherhood have exacerbated the dysfunctional family problem. Detached from God, these people become the victims of their own innate depravity.

But we should not lose our freedoms, and parents should not lose their rights simply because a portion of the population acts self-destructively. We cannot expect the drug addicts and unwed teenage mothers on welfare to save our country. Nor should we let them prevent us from doing what has to be done to restore America as a nation under God.

And so, the homeschool family is on the front-line of this civil war, and we can only win this long, drawn-out war one family at a time. The quiet revolution is taking place right under the very noses of the humanists, and there isn't much they can do about it.

### Rediscovering the Family

Meanwhile, the homeschooling family is creating a revolution in American family life. The Christian family that lives in obedience to God sets a standard of morality that will stay with their children for the rest of their lives. That even some homeschool children may go astray is inevitable, knowing what we do about human nature. But the vast majority are becoming the kind of citizens we can all be proud of.

And so, the reconstruction of the American family is one of the great benefits of the homeschool movement. The homeschooling family creates a generation bridge instead of a generation gap. Parents can pass on to their children their spiritual and moral values, thereby creating family continuity unto several generations.

Homeschooled children learn to respect their parents' intelligence, and the parents, who know their children better than any stranger could, enjoy teaching their children. I've always thought that one of the greatest pleasures of parenthood must be the act of instructing one's own children in all that is good and valuable, showing them what a wonderful world they were born in, what a wonderful God we have who has given us life and inspired our founding fathers to create a country of such great freedom.

What a joy it is to introduce a child to poetry, or great music and art, or the wonders of nature, or to playful puppies and kittens, or to horseback riding, swimming, ice-skating, and heaven knows what else.

### Kids Learn Better at Home

Did you know that homeschoolers learn better than public schoolers? Wherever homeschoolers have taken standardized achievement tests, they've come out ahead of the public schoolers. Why? Because the home is a better place to learn than a school. One-on-one teaching is far more effective than the classroom. Also, at home the preschoolers learn from their older siblings. They can't help but learn because they hear it and see it all around them.

And did you know that homeschooling parents learn more than their children? Quite an interesting phenomenon. Many parents don't realize that when they begin teaching their children math or grammar or history or a foreign language they are also learning these subjects. In fact, because homeschoolers generally use phonics to teach their children to read, they improve their own reading skills by learning the phonics they didn't have when they were in school. Most of today's young homeschooling parents were taught to read by the Dick-and-Jane look-say method and were deprived of the kind of intensive phonics necessary to become a good reader. Thus, learning phonics through teaching it to their children has been enormously beneficial.

### A Safe Haven

Another important benefit of homeschooling is that the home is a safe haven for children in a world awash with drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, violence, and moral corruption. Children need all the protection they can get. If you want a child to get involved with drugs, send him or her to a public school, the principle market place for drugs in America. That's where peer pressure is used to hook a child. If you want your child to become suicidal, just give him a good dose of death education. If you want your child to become sexually active, just give him or her explicit sex education beginning in kindergarten with instructions on how to use a condom. If you want your child to lose his religious faith, just subject him to endless lessons about evolution, critical thinking—which means criticizing your folks and your religion. If you want your child to start putting rings through his nose, and safety pins in his eyebrows or navel, send him to a public school where his peers will persuade him of the beauties of self-mutilation.

Homeschooling provides healthful socialization, not the negative kind you get in the public school. In homeschooling, brothers and sisters get to know one another very well and they become lifelong friends. In the public school, brothers and sisters go their separate ways, bonding with their own clique of

friends, engaging in mischievous behavior, drinking, smoking, dating, getting high, listening to acid rock music, having sex. Homeschooled kids get to know other homeschooled kids. Their Christian code of morals determines their behavior. They believe in courtship, not dating. They are future oriented, planning to have long, healthful, productive lives. The public school teenager lives for the moment, the thrill, the party. Otherwise, they are bored, hanging out at malls or parking lots, killing time before going home to surly parents.

### Taking Back Time

Perhaps the greatest dividend that homeschoolers enjoy is the taking back and mastery of their own time. Time is one of the most precious commodities a family has, and the more time a family can devote to its own improvement and enjoyment, the better it is for all of its members. Public schools squander the best time in a family's life. They rob the family of the time that could be spent together, learning, playing, creating. The state wants that time in order to do its work of indoctrination. But that time belongs to your family.

Another important development among homeschoolers is their political awakening. They know that they must get more God-fearing men in the Congress and state legislatures. They made quite a difference in the elections of November 1994. Homeschoolers must become politically active and stay politically active, for the other side would like nothing better than to get politicians in power who will vote to make homeschooling illegal.

I think you get the gist of what I am driving at. You are very important to America's future, more important than you will ever know. You are the revolutionaries doing God's work, one family at a time. I like to look at our education system as a big hour glass, the top part representing our humanist public schools filled with sand. The bottom part, representing the homeschool movement, is still largely empty. Each grain of sand is a child, and every second of that hour several grains of sand fall through the tiny hole separating the top from the bottom. Eventually the top will be empty. How long it will take, no one knows. But I look forward to the day when the public schools will be virtually empty not because we have abolished public education but because the parents for the most part will have abandoned it. Yes, there will be those who will send their children to public schools out of ignorance, or indifference, or a misguided loyalty to an institution that no longer works. But the taxpayers may decide that keeping the public schools open for that diminished group is uneconomical and simply provide the families with tuition to attend private schools. Who knows, we may yet see such a day in the not too distant future.

Those of us who have witnessed the phenomenal growth of the homeschool movement over the last ten years know that this is truly a silent revolution taking place basically out of sight of the general public. The local newspaper will occasionally do a feature story on a homeschooling family, or a periodical like *Education Week* will actually do an article on homeschooling as an educational alternative. But no one in the establishment as yet understands the larger ramifications of the movement, its profound Biblical premises, its emergence as an authentic alternative lifestyle based on Christian principles.

One thing I have noticed from the homeschoolers that put their names on our mailing list. They live mainly in small towns, in rural areas, away from the moral cesspools of our large cities. Big city folks have really bought into humanist pagan morality as reflected in television sitcoms and talk shows, the movies, the disco dance halls, the gay bars, the late-night pornographic comedians, etc. The popular magazines reflect the same humanist worldview. In other words, in order to live the life of the Christian homeschooling family, one must separate oneself from the American mainstream culture with all of its perversions. This is more easily done in small towns or on farms where one is not totally surrounded daily by the images, noises and temptations of a corrupt and perverse culture.

It will not be easy for teenage and young adult homeschoolers to make their way in such a culture. But homeschooled children for the most part usually develop the ability to see the pagan culture for what it is: the temptation to self-destroy. Homeschoolers tend to think objectively and independently because they are usually good readers, with heads filled with Biblical verses and knowledge and the understanding of what their parents had to do in order to defy the system

and educate them at home. Moreover, as homeschoolers they identify themselves with a movement that provides its own social rewards and healthy pleasures.

At the Ohio convention, I had the opportunity to meet Joshua Harris, son of Greg Harris, who now edits and publishes a new Christian magazine for teenage homeschoolers called *New Attitude*. I was impressed by his earnestness, intelligence and entrepreneurial dedication. He is blazing a new journalistic trail for his fellow homeschoolers. That's the kind of spirit and enterprise the homeschool movement encourages when it puts its faith in the children being educated at home. Who knows what we shall see when today's homeschooling children are the adults of tomorrow. Incidentally, homeschoolers tend to have and enjoy large families, while humanists, concerned about overpopulation, are killing theirs in the womb. In the end, demographics may win this war for us.

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