

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 those risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

The "Education President" Wins! An Open Letter to President-Elect George Bush

Congratulations, Mr. President-Elect! We are delighted that you made ideology a campaign issue, thus giving the American people a clear choice between a conservative candidate and a liberal candidate. They chose the conservative. Which means that you, Mr. President-Elect, have a mandate from the people to pursue a conservative course, exercise conservative judgment, and uphold conservative values.

That the people chose liberals for Congress and their state legislatures is not because they wanted liberals, but because on the state and local levels the choices were seldom as clearly delineated as they were at the presidential level. It should be noted that the ultra-liberal National Education Association and its state and local affiliates were chiefly responsible for the liberal victories on the local and state levels.

Unfortunately, there are no conservative organizations at state or local levels that can match the militantly organized teachers in terms of money, political organization, and effective political action. The educators' years of political experience, their singular goal of electing liberals, their endless supply of money have made them the single strongest force in American politics. That their liberal objectives, when exposed in the glare of a national campaign, are rejected by a large majority of the American people, is quite clear.

Vanguard of the Left

But when the organized teachers work at the local level, they are seldom recognized for what they really are: the political vanguard of the far left in America. And because they are active and well financed in every school district, every town, every city, every county, their power is far greater than their numbers would imply. The Reader's Digest of May 1984 called the NEA's 1,172 full-time, professional organizers "the largest grassroots political army ever

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deployed in the United States." And until such time as conservatives can match that organized effort, liberals will control the Congress and state legislatures of America.

Which brings us to the pressing question at hand: how will the "Education President" be able to improve American education with a hostile liberal Congress and a hostile education establishment standing in the way?

The answer is surprisingly simple: by going around the Congress and the education establishment and going directly to the parents and taxpayers of America. The fastest and most effective way to improve education in America is to encourage the development of private alternatives. They not only provide better and safer education than the public schools but they save the taxpayer much money.

Saving the Taxpayers Money

It now costs the taxpayer about \$4,800 a year to "educate" a child in a public school. The four million children being educated in private alternatives are saving the taxpayers of America \$19.2 billion a year!

As you know, Mr. President-Elect, the public schools are producing academic failure at unacceptable levels. The business community is particularly concerned about the inability of many of our young people to do the jobs needed to compete in the international marketplace. David Kearns, Chairman of the Xerox Corporation, has denounced the public schools as a "failed monopoly," producing workers "with a 50 percent defect rate." Businesses must hire workers "who can't read, write or count," he said -- then spend \$25 billion a year to train them! (USA Today, 10/27/87)

The "A Nation At Risk" report, issued in April 1983, set the education reform movement in motion. But the "reforms" have failed to improve education. Why? Because what parents and businessmen really want is not what the educators want. The educators want more money and power for themselves but no significant change in the way children are taught in the public schools.

The Need for Reading Reform

A simple case in point is the way reading is taught. Back in 1955 we were told by Dr. Rudolf Flesch that the reason why Johnny couldn't read was because of the way he was being taught to read -- the wrong way. Flesch explained how in the early 1930s the professors of education changed the way reading is taught in American schools. They threw out the alphabetic phonics method, which is the proper way to teach children to read an alphabetic writing system, and they put in a new whole-word, look-say, or sight method that teaches children to read English as if it were Chinese, an ideographic writing system. Flesch explained that when you impose an ideographic teaching technique on an alphabetic writing system, you get reading disability.

Since the publication of Why Johnny Can't Read (1955), there has been an on-going debate between advocates of phonics and advocates of look-say as to which teaching method works better. The education establishment has clung to the look-say method despite mounting evidence that it has caused our very severe and costly illiteracy problem. It is now estimated that about two million young adults emerge from our public schools each year as functional illiterates -- that is, with literacy skills so poor that they might as well be considered illiterate.

The Educators Choose "Whole Language"

Despite this blight of reading failure which has made us a nation at risk, the education establishment is not about to return to the method that worked so well for hundreds of years: intensive, systematic phonics. Instead, they are pushing a new fad called "whole language," which is simply the discredited look-say method dressed up in fancier clothes. The hostility to intensive phonics by educators is still as intense and uncompromising as ever.

Thus, while parents and business leaders clamor for the kind of changes that will improve reading, the educators are determined to experiment on millions of children with a teaching method that is demonstrably harmful.

A Logical Solution

There is, however, a good, straight-forward way, Mr. President-Elect, to deal with this problem. Have your Secretary of Education authorize a controlled experiment whereby the three teaching methods can be fairly tested. Designate ten schools to use intensive phonics, ten to use a regular basal reading program, and ten to use whole language. In that way, we shall be able to determine once and for all which method is the most effective. Until such an experiment is conducted, the debate will go on and on, and millions of children will suffer needlessly.

Actually, such an experiment is already going on in America. There are many private schools and even some public schools using intensive, systematic phonics programs; vast numbers of public schools using the regular basal programs; and some schools using "whole language." It would not be difficult for the Department of Education to monitor the effectiveness of these programs in their respective schools and report back to you and the American people.

In any case, Mr. President-Elect, there can be no improvement in American education without a true improvement in reading instruction. If this is not done, our literacy will continue to decline and our working population will be sorely handicapped by a lack of basic academic skills, and our ability to compete will be greatly impaired.

Encourage Private Alternatives

Of course, you will meet with stubborn resistance to these needed changes from the education establishment. And that is why it is so important, Mr. President-Elect, to encourage the development of private alternatives -- those thousand points of light of which you spoke so eloquently during your campaign. Parents and children cannot wait for the educators to reform the present system, and that is why they are turning to private schools and creating home schools.

Home schooling is now the fastest growing educational phenomenon in the United States. It is creating better and stronger families; well-bred, moral children with a mastery of basic academic skills; and better educated parents. In the home-schooling family, education is a way of life.

But the ultimate success of this movement depends on the recognition by government and its bureaucrats that parents have the unalienable right to educate their children at home, in accordance with their own values and beliefs, without interference from anyone -- the very same right exercised by the parents of our Founding Fathers. This movement, Mr. President-Elect, is worthy of your support and encouragement. It may very well be the salvation of this country.

Liberals Cannot Deliver Excellence

Do not be surprised if public education continues to decline academically during your administration. The educators will take every dollar the federal government will give them, but they will not deliver the excellence that conservatives want -- for one simple reason: American public education is and has been controlled for decades by liberals, humanists and behavioral psychologists. They are the enemies of our conservative values, and to win their favor you will have to betray the values you hold dear and become an accomplice in the destruction of American children.

If all of this sounds terribly pessimistic, it is -- because we have studied the problems of public education for over twenty years, and in that time we have learned one important lesson: that what exists in public education today is not the result of accident, drift, or error. It is the result of careful planning and even more careful implementation of concepts and programs devised by history's best-financed, best-trained "educators." In fact, what we have today is exactly what they have wanted, and it is unlikely that even a President will be able to get them to want something else.

Yes, there will be "reforms" in the system, but only such reforms that give the educators more of what they want. And, unfortunately, their enormous influence in Congress and the fifty state legislatures virtually guarantees that they will get what they want.

And so we will get more "whole language," more values clarification, more multiculturalism, more globalism, more Soviet-American exchanges, more teacher power, more blatant anti-Christianity, more federal and state funding of failed programs, more disparagement of conservative values, more hostility toward home schooling, more disdain for parents' rights, more drugging of children in public schools, more death education, more school-based sex clinics, more condom distribution -- in short, more social chaos and moral anarchy.

We wish you well, Mr. President-Elect, but don't be fooled by the organized educators.

Democrats Win Seats In Key State Legislatures

Democrats retained control of most state legislatures and made key inroads in those states that are expected to be big battlegrounds for redrawing the nation's political map after the 1990 census.

"This has to be a loss of epic proportions for the Republicans," said Tim Dickson, executive director of the Democratic State Legislative Leaders Association. "George Bush not only doesn't have any coattails, he doesn't have any coat."

Republicans have long complained that they are under-represented in

Congress and state legislatures because Democratic-controlled state governments draw up district boundaries favorable to Democrats.

Republicans scored big gains at the state level in the last two presidential years, and party officials hoped to elect a total of 3,000 Republicans to state legislatures nationwide in 1988. Results from the election show they gained at most 30 seats.

This year, however, Democrats retained control of both legislative chambers in Florida, Texas and California -- all states that stand to add members of Congress in the upcoming re-districting. (Boston Herald, 11/10/88)

Comment:

The enormous effort that the NEA and its state affiliates have made to strengthen their control of state legislatures is reflected in the results of the Nov. 8th election. We have been warning conservatives that unless they are able to put into the field a political army as effective as the organized teachers, they will lose a lot of legislative elections. Conservatives have been slow to respond. But there are ways to beat the organized teachers at their own game:

(1) Conservatives should begin getting their message to the teachers through direct mail. Forty percent of the teachers vote Republican. A good many of them are conservative. It should be possible to reach them with an urgent message to organize as a counterforce to their liberal colleagues.

(2) Pat Robertson's campaign performed an important task for the Republican Party. It organized a nationwide grassroots network of Christian political activists who can become the nucleus of a conservative political army. These activists should be organized and trained locally to get involved politically in every phase of the process. Potentially, they are the one force that can beat the organized teachers on the local and state levels. But much work will have to be done to encourage these people to become permanently involved and active in politics.

(3) The growing network of conservative and Christian organizations must double their efforts to get the conservative political, economic, and moral message to the American people. More conservatives must get into the media business if we are to counteract effectively the enormous power of the liberal media and education establishment.

(4) Christian leaders must urge Christian parents to remove their children from the public schools. It makes no sense putting Christian children in atheist, anti-Christian schools. By doing so Christians are not

only harming their children spiritually, but they are supporting the very enemy who is trying to destroy them. The NEA and its affiliates would be considerably weakened if Christians removed their children from the public schools en masse.

These are just a few of the steps that conservatives can take to counteract the organized power of the liberals.

Idaho Teachers Become Top Political Power in State

The defeat of several Republican incumbents in the Idaho legislature when the state voted 63% in favor of George Bush, has sent political shock waves across the state. The unseating of Republican Senators Jim Risch, William Ringert and House Majority Leader Jack Kennevik is attributed to the power of the Idaho Education Association.

Steve Ahrens, Idaho manager of governmental affairs at Boise Cascade, analyzed the upset as follows:

"The pre-eminent player in Idaho politics now is the Idaho Education Association. Without question. Not only did they outspend the business PAC by more than 2 to 1, but they provided a cadre of volunteers that the other side could not match. They put feet on the street. They provided hands to knock on doors, bodies to man telephone banks, identify voters, get out the vote.

"The sudden appearance overnight of a hundred signs for a candidate, along entryways to polls, was not accidental. I don't know who did it but I'll bet it was teachers. They're to the point of polling a year in advance of the election to identify issues that are on people's minds and what their own members think of that and then tailor their approach to the results of that poll.

"Everything they're doing is exactly the way it's written in the civics

books, involvement, participation, commitment, everything is right on target. The difference is they're doing it and nobody else really is.

"There's another player there that we should mention which is the unions, the AFL-CIO. Once, they were the de facto Democratic party in Idaho. That's deteriorated to the point they're hardly a factor at all. I think their political action committee spent \$10,000 or something. They've been supplanted both in the state picture and in their role in the Democratic party by the professional teacher's union.

"It's my opinion business influence is slipping. They continue to do what business has traditionally done which is open the checkbook and write out contributions. They do not, they're not even matching education in that respect anymore, although if you added up all the total company contributions they'd exceed. But they're just not matching the feet on the street, and that's really decisive." (Idaho Statesman, 11/13/88)

Comment:

What is the lesson of Idaho? That conservatives had better do something to counteract the political effectiveness of the organized teachers, or relegate themselves to a diminishing minority status in the state legislatures of America.

The organized teachers have been knocking off conservatives in the primaries to prevent them from even getting on the ballot. Then, should a conservative actually get on the ballot, the teachers' political army will rise to defeat him.

If this state of affairs is permitted to continue, pretty soon there may be no conservatives at all in any of our state legislatures.

Appeals Court Reverses Vicki Frost False Arrest Victory

In its second major blow against the parents in the Tennessee textbook controversy, on 7/12/88 the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against Vicki Frost in her false arrest and false imprisonment lawsuit. The court claimed that the school district did not violate any of her constitutional rights.

The appeals court also reversed a jury verdict of \$70,000 won by Mrs. Frost in March 1986 against the Hawkins County School District, in a case related to the textbook case. Mrs. Frost had been falsely arrested and jailed on 11/22/83 when she visited the principal's office and asked for her daughter to be removed from a class using the objectionable Holt, Rinehart & Winston readers.

The principal asked Mrs. Frost to leave and read a state trespassing law to her. A policeman who had been called to the school by Mrs. Frost as a witness then arrested her. She was jailed for several hours and then released.

In December 1983 a judge dismissed the two trespassing charges against Mrs. Frost. Later, Concerned Women for America (CWA) filed a civil rights action against the school district, policeman, and others for the false arrest. A jury found that the school district had violated Mrs. Frost's constitutional rights and awarded her \$70,000 in damages. The school district appealed.

In its opinion, the 6th Circuit claimed that no constitutional violation occurred, because Mrs. Frost still could have decided to "transfer Sarah to a private school."

Cimron Campbell, the CWA lawyer, attacked that reasoning:

"Does that mean that a public school can arrest parents who come into the building, because the parents could have enrolled their children in a private school? I can't believe the court

would have ruled the same way if some other religious minority were being persecuted."

On 10/10/88 CWA filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court with the hope that the case will be heard and that the high court will affirm the right of students to opt out of using public school materials that violate their religious beliefs. (CWA News, Sept. '88, Nov. '88)

Teen Girls Afflicted By Sex Diseases

According to Dr. Gary Schoolnik of Stanford University, the most common cause of sexually transmitted disease among teen girls is a virus that is strongly linked to cervical cancer.

"It was very surprising to find that HPV (human papilloma virus) infection has risen to the top when compared to . . . chlamydia and gonorrhea," he said.

Chlamydia, which causes infertility, was the most common cause of sexually transmitted disease. HPV can cause genital warts and a condition linked to cervical cancer.

In a study of 1,400 sexually active girls 14-18:

-- 18 percent of 200 whose cervical tissue was examined with a new DNA test had HPV -- more than for chlamydia and gonorrhea combined.

-- 78 percent of infected girls had a cancer-causing strain.

-- The longest time from infection to a precancerous state was 2½ years, much sooner than expected.

Once the DNA test is approved, it should be used with Pap smears to detect HPV, Schoolnik said. Pap smears alone detected only 5 percent of those infected. (USA Today, 10/6/88)

Americans Flunk Geography

Americans aged 18 to 24 ranked last in an international comparison of geographic knowledge, and American adults of all ages scored among the bottom third, according to a study released 7/27/88 by the National Geographic Society.

The nine-nation study found that 75 percent of Americans surveyed were unable to locate the Persian Gulf on a map, and fewer than half could identify the United Kingdom, France, South Africa or Japan.

The survey also found that one out of seven -- a figure that would project to 24 million American adults -- could not identify the United States on a world map and half could not identify Nicaragua as the country in which the Sandinistas and contras are fighting.

Each year Professor Noel Potter gives freshmen at Dickinson College a blank map of the United States and has them fill it in. Each year the results are depressing.

"The Midwest is a great, gray blob for about half of them," said Potter.

At Shippensburg University, John Benhart, chairman of the geography department, also gives his students a geography test each fall.

"It was absolutely incredible," Benhart said of this year's results. "Eighty percent missed 30 of 40 basic country locations in the world. Many of them couldn't locate Canada, Mexico, Japan, China or Brazil." (Idaho Statesman, 7/28/88; Boston Herald, 11/14/88)

Comment:

U.S. public schools no longer teach geography because it requires students to learn factual information. Today's educators consider factual knowledge to be unimportant, especially since it would detract the students from such important subjects as values, feelings, sexuality, death and dying, suicide counseling, critical thinking, drug education, etc.

More Money Does Not Produce Better Students

According to figures released by the U.S. Dept. of Education, higher teacher pay and the more money spent per pupil does not result in better student performance as measured by graduation statistics.

For example, North Dakota, which has the 3rd highest rate of graduates (89.7%), ranks 46th in average teacher pay (\$21,284) and 31st in average student spending (\$3,481). Whereas New York, which ranks 3rd in average teacher pay (\$32,000) and 2nd in student spending (\$6,011), ranks 45th in graduations (64.2%).

According to Dr. Emily Feistritzer, director of the National Center for Education Information in Washington, D.C.: "Regardless of what statistic is used to determine the success of a school system, there has been no evidence that pumping money into the education system leads to improvement in student abilities. Yet educators

continue to demand that taxpayers spend more on schools. They say teacher salaries are low -- but the fact is that they are not. The average teacher salary is comparable to what college graduates make in general, and teachers get 10 weeks of vacation each summer."

In contrast to free-spending public schools, she said, "Catholic schools spend about one-third the amount per pupil, and their teachers receive notoriously poor salaries. Yet their students out-perform their public school counterparts.

"Our public school system is top-heavy with administrative personnel. Only about 40 percent of personnel costs go to teacher salaries." (National Enquirer, 10/25/88)

Vital Dates

Second Annual PURE Convention:
Christian Liberty Academy, Arlington Heights, IL. Fri-Sat, Apr 28-29, 1989.
Contact: Owen Haney (806) 359-7048.

State	Graduation Percentage and Rank	Average Teacher Salary and Rank	Amount Spent Per Pupil and Rank	Mississippi	63.3 (46)	19,447 (50)	2,362 (51)
Alabama	67.3 (39 tie)	\$23,500 (31)	\$2,565 (47)	Missouri	75.6 (22)	23,468 (32)	3,189 (37)
Alaska	68.3 (36)	43,970 (1)	8,253 (1)	Montana	87.2 (6)	23,206 (34)	4,091 (15)
Arizona	63.0 (47)	25,972 (24)	3,093 (40)	Nebraska	88.1 (4)	22,063 (40)	3,634 (23)
Arkansas	78.0 (15)	19,904 (49)	2,658 (45)	Nevada	65.2 (42)	26,960 (19)	3,440 (33)
California	66.7 (41)	31,219 (5)	3,543 (25)	New Hampshire	73.3 (27)	22,011 (42)	3,542 (26)
Colorado	73.1 (28)	27,387 (18)	3,975 (17)	New Jersey	77.6 (16 tie)	28,718 (9)	5,395 (3)
Connecticut	89.8 (2)	28,902 (7)	4,743 (6)	New Mexico	72.3 (29)	23,977 (28)	3,195 (36)
Delaware	70.7 (33)	27,467 (16)	4,610 (8)	New York	64.2 (45)	32,000 (3)	6,011 (2)
Florida	62.0 (50)	23,785 (29)	3,529 (27)	North Carolina	70.0 (34)	23,775 (30)	2,982 (43)
Georgia	62.7 (48 tie)	24,200 (27)	2,966 (44)	North Dakota	89.7 (3)	21,284 (46)	3,481 (31)
Hawaii	70.8 (32)	26,815 (20)	3,807 (21)	Ohio	80.4 (11)	26,288 (22)	3,527 (29)
Idaho	79.0 (13)	21,480 (44)	2,484 (49)	Oklahoma	71.6 (31)	22,060 (41)	3,146 (39)
Illinois	75.8 (21)	28,238 (12)	3,781 (22)	Oregon	74.1 (25)	26,690 (21)	4,141 (14)
Indiana	71.7 (30)	26,083 (23)	3,275 (35)	Pennsylvania	78.5 (14)	27,422 (17)	4,416 (11)
Iowa	87.5 (5)	22,603 (39)	3,619 (24)	Rhode Island	67.3 (39 tie)	31,079 (6)	4,667 (7)
Kansas	81.5 (8 tie)	23,427 (33)	3,829 (20)	South Carolina	64.5 (43)	23,190 (35)	3,058 (41)
Kentucky	68.6 (35)	22,612 (38)	2,486 (48)	South Dakota	81.5 (8 tie)	18,781 (51)	3,051 (42)
Louisiana	62.7 (48 tie)	20,054 (48)	3,187 (38)	Tennessee	67.4 (38)	22,627 (37)	2,612 (46)
Maine	76.5 (20)	21,257 (47)	3,472 (32)	Texas	64.3 (44)	24,588 (26)	3,298 (34)
Maryland	76.6 (19)	28,893 (8)	4,450 (10)	Utah	80.3 (12)	23,035 (36)	2,390 (50)
Massachusetts	76.7 (18)	28,410 (10)	4,562 (9)	Vermont	77.6 (16 tie)	21,835 (43)	4,031 (16)
Michigan	67.8 (37)	31,500 (4)	4,176 (12)	Virginia	73.9 (26)	25,473 (25)	3,520 (30)
Minnesota	91.4 (1)	28,340 (11)	3,941 (18)	Washington	75.2 (23 tie)	27,527 (15)	3,881 (19)
				West Virginia	75.2 (23 tie)	21,446 (45)	3,528 (28)
				Wisconsin	86.3 (7)	27,976 (14)	4,168 (13)
				Wyoming	81.2 (10)	28,103 (13)	5,114 (5)