

# BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

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### A BOOTSTRAP CURRICULUM (Part II)

by Gary North

What Oliver Cromwell faced with Oxford and Cambridge in 1655 was a pale imitation of the pervasive control of higher education by secular humanists today. But if Cromwell as England's Lord Protector and as Chancellor of Oxford, was unable to transform England's two universities, what possibility do Christians have today of transforming in the United States over 3,000 colleges and universities, all but a few dozen of which are humanistic to the core, with all the others deeply compromised in most of their departments? Additionally, when the state becomes the primary source of funding for higher education, and the state is also legally committed to humanism's (and pietism's) false doctrine of religious neutrality in education, how is it possible to reconstruct higher education biblically?

The long-term answer is obvious: **the eventual abolition of all taxpayer-funded education.** This de-funding of state education is the most important single task of Christian Reconstruction outside the reformation of the three covenantal institutions: church, family, and state (in that order). Two centuries ago, Voltaire longed for the day in which the last king would be strangled in the entrails of the last priest. Christian Reconstructionists should long for the day when the last university president is strangled in the last yard of red tape from the last Department of Education. There can be no permanent reconstruction of the social order without the complete abolition of all government funding of education except for the specialized training of a handful of people who commit to serve as officers in the military services.

This sounds like a utopian goal. It will remain a utopian goal until the day that all levels of government go bankrupt. That is to say, it may not be a utopian goal for long. But we need to get this clear: **the completion of a systematic program of comprehensive Christian reconstruction is impossible as long as funding for education is compulsory.** Until sovereignty over education is transferred back into the hands of those who pay for it voluntarily, there can be no thoroughgoing, successful Christian reconstruction of the social order.

#### The Initial Defection

There is no doubt whatsoever that secular humanism is dominant in the final stages of modern education, that is, nearly sovereign over the granting of advanced degrees (B.A., B.S., M.A.) and absolutely sovereign over the granting of terminal degrees: the Ph.D., the M.D., and the J.D. (law). In the final stages of education, where formal certification is an inescapable requirement for entry into the professions, secular humanists dominate the entire process, including the written entry examinations to the guild (accounting, medicine, and law). Certification was the most important control device that the universities had over medieval

life as far back as the late eleventh century. It was their self-anointed but widely acknowledged authority to control formal certification which served as the universities' lever against any outside control of the university curriculum. This is still the case in the major professions.

Through most of man's history, apprenticeship has been the basic mode of training. Prior to the nineteenth century, formal certification was not required for entry into any profession except the office of minister of the gospel in the hierarchical denominations (except the Methodists). Here is the crucial educational fact: **the first institution to delegate the training of its leaders to the humanists was the church.** The church required university training for its theologians and legal specialists from the medieval period to the modern world. Nevertheless, the church did not really control the content of the education provided by these universities. Because the church had defected on this fundamental issue—control over the training of its leaders—the rest of the Western world eventually followed its example.

Beginning in the first two decades of the twentieth century, there was a successful move in both the legal profession and the medical profession to require formal certification of all candidates for these two professions. Much of the money to promote the creation of this new professional class came from the Carnegie Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. The studies of medical education by Abraham Flexner (who was not a physician) just before World War I, and similar studies of legal education, persuaded state governments to require all candidates for guild testing first to complete a formal program of certification at state-accredited institutions. This transferred authority over the professions back into the hands of the academics.

The same thing had been done over a century earlier in France, beginning in 1795. Those men who did not attend the major institutions of higher learning in France had no access to the teaching profession and the other major professions of French life. (F. A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, Liberty Press, [1952] 1979), ch. 11.) The Germans imitated this system in the mid-nineteenth century. Then, in early twentieth century, the United States followed the Germans' lead. But it had begun with the church. Many leaders of the French Revolution, including Robespierre, had been trained and certified in church schools and colleges. In fact, Continental Europe's left-wing Enlightenment tradition began as a reaction to the teachings of the Jesuit order, yet it was also a self-conscious imitation of the Jesuits' hierarchical, centralized, and nearly autonomous structure. (In the Anglo-American right-wing Enlightenment, the model was the Scottish Presbyterian Church.)

The fact remains that it was the church that first defaulted on its responsibility to control the education of those who gained access to its highest offices. Formal academic certification by an independent or nearly independent institution not under the direct control of the church became the mandated means of gaining eligibility for the laying on of hands. **The church began the process of the secularization of modern life.**

The American family followed the church's lead, beginning in Massachusetts in the 1830's: the secular public school movement. The family was replaced by the state in the financing of education, and then both state and family steadily gave up control over the content of education to the professional bureaucrats who dominated teacher training. This was exactly what the Massachusetts Unitarian educator Horace Mann had planned. It was a classic **bait-and-switch** operation. The bait was the promise of an improved social order based on zero-tuition education for the masses. The switch was the transfer of authority over education to self-certified bureaucrats who were committed to replacing Christianity. (Rushdoony, *The Messianic Character of American Education*.)

### Permanent Influence

Those of us in the Christian Reconstruction movement have said again and again that in the modern world, as in the ancient pagan world, the state is the primary agency of sovereignty in most non-Christian thought. In some ways this statement is correct. In other ways it isn't. The state exercises the greatest earthly power at any given point in time. The state has a lawful monopoly of violence. But in some very important ways, it is not the primary alternative to church and family. The school is. The historical reality is this: **no system of civil government has had the long-term influence that the major universities of the West have exercised.** There is no civil office of President, Prime Minister, Premier, or General Secretary that has ever possessed the influence, long-term, that Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, and Yale have had in Anglo-American culture, or that the *écoles* of France have had in French culture. Hitler was a brief episode in German history; Tübingen is permanent. Governments rise and fall; tyrants appear and disappear; but the universities remain, seemingly forever.

In the United States, the most prestigious universities are private, not public: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Columbia, and Chicago. The Ivy League schools are all private. The University of California, Berkeley, is the only taxpayer-financed institution in the list of America's top elite universities. They are all humanistic. It is worth noting that Princeton University was considered a second-rate institution until Presbyterian humanist Woodrow Wilson took over as its president in 1902 and transformed it almost overnight into a thoroughly secular humanist institution, whereupon it rose into the top ranks, as evaluated by the humanists who dispense such informal but authoritative ratings.

Tradition is extremely powerful in higher education. In the twelfth century, the University of Paris developed a four-year undergraduate curriculum, and nothing since then has shaken that decision. There is no particular technical reason today for a four-year curriculum, but it has always been the worldwide standard for undergraduate education. Similarly, the basic structure of the university's pedagogy has not changed. Professors still lecture to students, still grade examinations, and still exercise almost total autonomy within the classroom.

The university has been correctly described as the last remaining medieval institution in the modern world. The reason why it is the last remaining medieval institution in the West is because the university was **the original modern institution** in medieval times. It asserted and gained judicial

autonomy from God's three covenantal institutions: church, state, and family. Because it rapidly achieved a degree of judicial autonomy that is legitimate only for one of these three covenantal institutions, the university was able to establish itself functionally as a fourth covenantal jurisdiction. There has been a struggle ever since for control over this jurisdiction by the church and the state, but these attempts have proven to be futile. Today's politicians are as incapable of removing a "politically correct" tenured Marxist lesbian in some state university's English department as Cromwell was incapable of removing Scholastics and rationalists from Oxford and Cambridge in 1655. But there is at least this difference: Cromwell's government did not finance Oxford and Cambridge.

### Humanism's Monopoly and Subsidized Tuition

The division of intellectual labor informs us that there are constraints on every parent's ability to educate a child. These constraints become obvious to most parents by the child's early high school years. But most Christian parents make a serious error: **the delegation of their lawful educational authority to humanists four years before it becomes institutionally necessary.** Christian parents generally send their children to taxpayer-financed high schools. Only a few Christian parents are willing to maintain control over their children's educations beyond the seventh or eighth grade. They give up fighting four years before they need to.

Then comes college. At this point, those few parents who have maintained control over the content of their child's education through the twelfth grade – either directly (home schooling) or tutorially (day schools) – must delegate education to the humanists or the humanists' judicial allies (pietists). They have no choice. There is no systematically Christian, non-pietistic, non-"natural law"-based home school college curriculum or college. From this point forward, any hope on the part of the parents that they are in control of the content and structure of the child's education necessarily fades. **Parents can exercise only a financial veto; rarely can they play a positive educational role.** Few of them exercise this legitimate veto.

Parents at this stage acknowledge that they possess neither the skills to teach the child directly nor the financial ability to hire specialized, individual tutors for the child. In any case, privately hired tutors are not authorized to grant state-approved academic certificates, and this is what the parents and the child insist on receiving. The parents must therefore seek out corporate "tutors" who are affordable only because they tutor many children at once: the division of labor principle in action.

The university or college selected will surely teach humanism's worldview: the myth of neutrality. Secular colleges provide privately funded academic humanism and state-funded academic humanism. A few colleges provide Christian academic pietism, which devoutly defends humanism's academic worldview: the myth of neutrality in "common ground, natural law" academic subjects. **Christian parents inevitably must fund the child's education in a college that teaches a lie: the myth of neutrality.** Price competition then becomes crucial: most Christian students enroll in taxpayer-funded colleges. Christian parents ask: "If we have to delegate educational authority of our child to a faculty of liars – and we have to – why pay retail?"

### Running the Humanist Gauntlet

What should Christian parents do about college for their children? Apart from a divorce, college is the most dangerous spiritual challenge that most American Christians ever experience. College is the rite of passage into modern life. The humanists have wisely gained a monopoly over this rite of passage. At least two centuries ago, they saw the

necessity of gaining control of this rite of passage before they gained control of any other institution, including the church itself. They understood that they did not have to gain control of the church first - in fact, they could not gain control of the church - until they had gained control of the institution which certified those candidates of the ministry who would later control the church. Harvard fell to humanism in 1805 when a Unitarian was allowed to take over a professorship in moral theology. From that point on in the United States, the humanists understood what they had to do: gain absolute control over the institutions of higher academic certification, and do so in the name of the myth of religious neutrality.

The Christian parent cannot expect his children to be able to evade this gauntlet in his lifetime. There is no Christian college that offers anything more than a compromise with natural law theory. The best that a Christian parent can hope for today is to send his child to a school that has a **somewhat** decent moral environment, which is not **too** politically liberal, which is only **partially** compromised by secular humanism, and which will give his child a **better than average** academic education. This is the best that a parent can hope for, and it will cost him a minimum of \$40,000 to \$50,000 to gain this minimal, compromised education for his child. In short, **all accredited higher education compromises Christian parents**. Therefore, price becomes a major consideration. They send their children to state schools.

Today, few Christian parents are naive enough to believe that their child can become a lawyer, a physician, an architect, an engineer, or a member of any other profession apart from the child's certification by an institution of higher learning. This means that the child must go through a process of secularization in order to gain access to what has become effectively a monopoly card or union card for entrance into the professions. This was the hammer that both Oxford and Cambridge held over English life from the twelfth century onward, the system that Cromwell and the Puritans were unable to dislodge.

The educational goal of Christian parents should be to prepare their children to overcome what is **academically inevitable**: humanist college education. What is inevitable in modern life is that the child must go through the academic gauntlet of humanism at the collegiate level and the graduate school level. There is no escape from this responsibility. The Christian parent must prepare to cut the apron strings. The problem is, most Christian parents cut them too early: when the child enters a public school, generally at age five.

The parents' battle for the mind of their child must begin long before the child goes to college. Very few Christian parents really understand this. I have long been supportive of the summer seminars that David Nobel operates through his Summit Ministries in Manitou Springs, Colorado. Summit Ministries trains Christian students for at least the preliminary lower-division battles of humanistic education at the collegiate level. But Christian parents have to be realistic. This is only a two-week program. Parents cannot legitimately expect a two-week program to prepare a child for what he will face at the university level, and also expect it to eliminate all of the intellectual baggage that he or she has picked up in a public high school. When Nobel asks these students how many of them attend or have attended a public high school, 80% to 90% of them raise their hands. It is naive to expect a two-week program to overcome that four-year gauntlet, and also simultaneously inculcate the student against another four-year gauntlet, plus three or four years of graduate school.

No Christian parent can hope to see his college-age child trained in a self-consciously Christian academic envi-

ronment that adheres to a self-consciously biblical curriculum. No such liberal arts institution exists anywhere on earth. Philadelphia Theological Seminary, alone among seminaries, does accept high school graduates, but it is not a liberal arts institution.

One of the most frustrating things I face in my calling is to answer letters from dedicated young people who want to know where they can go to school to get a Christian Reconstructionist education. That is to say, where can they get a state-certified or church-certified Christian Reconstructionist education? I am impressed by their enthusiasm almost as much as their naiveté. There is not even the possibility of getting a self-consciously Christian liberal arts education anywhere in the world today, let alone a Christian Reconstructionist education.

What I am saying, then, is that Christian parents must realize well in advance that if a child is to gain access to the jobs that offer middle-class or upper-middle-class income, he or she will be forced at some point to go through the certification gauntlet that the humanists have controlled for over a century. If this is their goal for the child rather than an independent business career, they must face the inevitable. They must train the child as carefully as they can, and gain the cooperation of specialists in Christian education as early as they can, in order to prepare the child for the inevitable academic gauntlet. This preparation is crucial. If it is not done, the child becomes a sitting duck at college. Christian parents must not be naive in thinking that they can safely send a child into a humanist environment prior to the collegiate level. That is to say, **they must not allow themselves to be seduced by the public high school's lure of zero tuition**. But most of them not only submit, they do so enthusiastically. Self-deception is a powerful force if the price seems right. (The real price can be very high.)

### An Integrated High School Curriculum

What is needed is a fully integrated high school curriculum. It should have the following features. First and foremost, it must recognize that after age 10 or 11, the student's mind moves from grammar to logic. He begins to notice the world around him in a broader context - a world beyond what he personally has experienced. Students in the first two years must move away from grammar - memorization and recitation - to logic: understanding cause and effect in God's world. In English, for example, they must cease diagramming sentences - the last phase of grammar - and start writing outlines and preliminary essays. They must be introduced to literature. They must begin to apply what they already know about the structure of the English language.

The problem with the modern curriculum is that the courses are taught as independent worlds of knowledge. The student does not get the sense of God's sovereign control over history: its progressive movement towards a final judgment. There is no integrating social theory: cause and effect in history. The Bible teaches that **cause and effect in history are covenantal**; this is not taught by either the humanists or the pietists.

The entire curriculum must reflect the covenantal basis of cause and effect in history. The freshman and sophomore years should be devoted to a study of Western civilization. The English course should parallel the history course, and both should parallel the Old Testament history and New Testament history course (freshman year). Every reading assignment should reinforce the lesson of the other courses: **what men believe about God, man, law, cause and effect, and time affects the way they interact with God's world**. The freshman year should begin with creation and end at A.D. 70. The sophomore year should cover

Western history from A.D. 70 to the present, a course paralleled by a Western literature course and a church history course which emphasizes the development of doctrine.

The science course should also begin with creation and end with the demise of Greek science. Students should read *The Genesis Flood* or some scaled-down version. They must be taught geology in terms of the Noachic flood. In the sophomore year, they should study biology in terms of what they learned about creation in the freshman year.

Saxon's high school math books are on target: they remove geometry as a separate course. Geometry appears in the context of algebra. Geometry is a classic exercise in Greek speculation: leading nowhere in particular and studied for its own sake, i.e., salvation by knowledge. We need more than Saxon, however. We need advanced math courses that teach that the Trinity must be presupposed in order to make math conceivable. (Vern Poythress, "A Biblical View of Mathematics," in North [ed.] *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*, Ross House, 1976.)

In the junior year, students must begin studying early American history: 1600-1865. This should be paralleled by a history of American literature course, where the student must be inoculated against Emerson's transcendentalism, and an American government course showing the move from Christian local governments to a "neutral" national Constitution. This should be paralleled by a course in the history of American religion: from Calvinism to the Second Great Awakening. The senior year should bring the student from the end of the Civil War to the present: the rise of secular humanism and centralized power. The religion course should take them from the social gospel to liberation theology. The literature course should move from Walt Whitman to the present. Students must be inoculated against Whitman.

The standard chemistry and physics courses must be offered, but students should be given a few electives, mostly concentrating on the skills of rhetoric: speech and debate (one year), poetry and creative writing (one year). Not every student needs to study physics. But economics must not be an elective.

The standard 50-minute daily course does not teach most American students either to read or speak a foreign language. Modern foreign languages should be taught in intensive summer school programs, where the foreign language is spoken eight hours a day for eight weeks. The student is totally immersed in its vocabulary, grammar, and conversation. Students should then be required to subscribe to an entry-level foreign language magazine during the academic year, with three-hour Saturday meetings held once a month to make sure they are keeping current.

This academic program will take decades to write, coordinate, and publish. It will also take millions of dollars to put in final form. The Christian Reconstruction movement has neither the teachers nor the funds to produce this. But the lack of money is the least of our problems. What we need is a continuing stream of well-trained, epistemologically self-conscious college students who will commit their lives to working on the development of this curriculum over the next three decades. We are short of dedicated people. If we can locate the academic remnant, the money will follow.

### Recruiting the Academic Remnant

What we need today is a preliminary system of partial

academic reconstruction, discipline by discipline, which can be imparted to college-age students through audio tapes, video tapes, seminars, workbooks, newsletters, and other kinds of simple, low-cost, systematically Christian curriculum materials. **Serious Christian students must bootstrap their way through college.** I do not mean financially; I mean epistemologically. The student has to do it on his own. But he needs guidance: my job and DeMar's.

Christian students have to bootstrap their own college educations. They must pay a kind of double tuition. They must go through the daily gauntlet of secular humanism in their classrooms, and then bootstrap themselves in their spare time in order to know the truth. What this means is that **only the most dedicated students will pursue this process of self-awareness and self-reconstruction.** This is inevitable. In the early stages of a movement, it is only a **dedicated elite** that is willing to pay such a high personal price. This has to be done off campus: quietly, inexpensively, and systematically. The student has to pay this price, and those who provide the materials have to pay a price. Very few parents will pay for this. Very few churches will pay for this. This leaves only the remnant to pay for it.

### Conclusion

The next phase of the Christian Reconstruction movement must involve a move away from the publication of broadly based theological books and materials and toward the development of an off-campus collegiate bootstrap curriculum. We must acknowledge the existence of the biblical principle of the division of labor. We must not remain content to extend our work with only a half dozen to a dozen men sitting in front of word processors, turning out a book a year or a book every other year. We need many more people to grapple with the issues that are raised in every academic discipline by the conflict between reason and revelation. We need to recruit and train the next generation of students who can begin to develop the high school curriculum materials that are so desperately needed today. These students must do this not from a very low academic level but from a very high level. They must understand what is needed at a graduate school level so that they can develop the materials at the high school level. This is a bottom-up operation. This cannot be implemented from the top. The "top" is humanist or pietist.

Christian Reconstructionists must not continue to produce materials that are mainly suitable only for upper-division college students or even graduate school students. We have to begin to produce materials that are suitable for college students. We must recruit and train the next generation. What I am calling for, therefore, is a new program of recruiting. I am calling for the development of an off-campus training program aimed at bright students who want to commit themselves to the reconstruction of a particular academic field or a particular profession. We have to try to attract these students from the day they walk onto the college campus. We have to give them guidance through the four years of college. We have to lead them to materials that will enable them to get through the graduate school level. This has not been done in the last 20 years of the Christian Reconstruction movement, but now it must be done. We are short of funds. Worse, we are short of dedicated students. But we must start with what we have.

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