

THE BIBLICAL EDUCATOR

"To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" Proverbs 1:2

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Editorial Office: 1007 E. North Street, Anaheim, CA 92805
Subscription Office: P.O. Box 6116, Tyler, TX 75711

CHRISTIANITY AND GEOGRAPHY

By Jim West

You are hunting deer in the mountains during the heart of winter. You come upon deer-tracks in the virgin snow and thus are *assured* that deer are near because you see clear evidences of their being. So, this planet in which we live evidences the "tracks" of the Creator. It is (as Calvin says) "the theater of God's glory" (Romans 1:20).

The creation's Creator then is the presupposition of the discipline of geography which *describes* (graphy) the *earth* (geo-) with its vast resources, climates, peoples, places, topographies, etc.

Man and Geography

The crowning achievement of the creation was man whom God made in order that he might "dress" and "keep" the Garden of Eden. But the Garden was no more the center of the earth than the earth is the physical center of the universe. Adam's responsibilities entailed not only rule over the Garden, but rule over *all* the earth (Genesis 1:27). Moreover, man was to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue* it. . . ." (Genesis 1:26a). Therefore, since man was to cultivate all the earth his calling was and is a geographical calling par excellence (Acts 17:26). And this geographical calling was to extend to the very corners of the universe, the stars included (1 Corinthians 3:21).

Sin has not completely transformed this "theater of God's glory." (Man's perception of it has changed. For instance, man sings that the "world is a stage, the stage is a world of entertainment!") It is true that the "whole creation groans and travails" as a result of Adam's fall. Thistles and thorns were to spring up as a consequence of sin and the Noachic Flood was eventually to come upon the earth as the cosmic penalty. But in the post-diluvian life of Noah you see this geographical calling of man *renewed* (Genesis 9:1, 20).

An Important Geographical Psalm

Psalm 104 is a geographical cornerstone. Every student should study it and every teacher should provide detailed exegesis. A quick description of this Psalm is now in order: the heavens are like a beautiful curtain (v. 21). God is the sovereign who makes the clouds His chariot (v. 3). Therefore, the earth will not be removed (v. 4). This God is also the Lord of the waters which are also compared to a beautiful garment (v. 6). Since over two-thirds of the earth is water, it is important to emphasize that at the Flood God "set a bound that they (the waters) may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth." (vss. 7-9; Genesis 9:11-16). Rain comes from God (v. 13). God supplies staples for both man and animals; He provides wine to refresh his heart, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart (vss. 14-15). His Lordship is over the trees (vss. 16-18). The seasons are *God's* seasons and the sun shines so that man might *work* (vss. 19-23). In all this the glory of God is reflected (vss. 31-33). And if men will not reflect this glory by praising God (versus 1, 35), then they as *sinner*s who have squatted in God's world will be destroyed (v. 35).

Geographical Man is a Religious Being

Most textbooks stress that geography is primarily concerned with man's needs of food, shelter, and clothing. While giving lip-service to religion, such textbooks come close to practicing the Marxian brinkmanship *Chat man is essentially what he eats*. The Christian teacher must pull down this animalistic anthropology. Geography indeed is about *man* but man only as the crowning achievement of God's creation (exegete Psalm 8). Not even man's eating is amoral: the first Adam ate disobediently; the last Adam declined food in order to demonstrate that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4). Even eating and sheltering are *sacred* tasks (1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 127:1). Jesus *does* highlight food and clothing (shelter falls under the canopy of "clothing") as *common* needs among men (Matthew 6:30-32). But Christ also *differentiates*: He says that the anxious care of these things is unique to the heathen (v. 32) and that Christians are to "seek *ye first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all *these* things will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Thus, the effort to satisfy man's physical needs is a geographical expression that is *emphatically religious*.

Yet, just as there is an essential commonality among men, there are also innumerable differences. There is a diversity of language, race, nationality, culture, etc. The American social critic Max Lerner amusingly observed:

In England, everything that is not forbidden is permitted. In Germany, everything is forbidden unless it is permitted. In France, everything is permitted even if it is forbidden. And in Russia, everything is forbidden even if it is permitted.

Some Practical Assignments

After laying the Biblical foundation for the study of geography, various tasks *supplemental* to the textbook are recommended.

1. Have the students draw a world map *from memory* together with the names of all the oceans, continents, gird-lines and their longitudinal and latitudinal dimensions. This will at first appear a formidable task (even for the geography teacher!) but after some months of practice should be and can be mastered.
2. Have the students study a country while stressing the influence of its religious heritage upon the way the people live. Of course other features of the nation should also be noted. Consider this enlightening quip by Richard Armour:

Wars have raged all around Switzerland for centuries, but this little country has never been invaded. Stronger nations have been frightened off by the rugged terrain and the possibility of hearing someone yodel. Another deterrent has been the fierce St. Bernard dogs, with casks of brandy tied to their necks, always read to take a nip.

3. Supplement your lectures with some "pepper and salt" from the *Reader's Digest* "Notes From All Over." Did you know that in Jamaica speed bumps are called "sleeping policemen?" The account of a town in Hell, Norway will bring interest. Because of the town's unusual name, many tourists travel there. When two Lutherans traveled there they sent a card home to their

Pastor which read: "Dear Pastor, we passed through Hell today, and we're concerned. Almost everyone seems to be Lutheran." How much snowfall does the South Pole receive annually? Only four to six inches. In Dubronik, Yugoslavia, there is a clock tower that strikes not only on the hour but at three minutes after—for those that are always late! Americans visiting Moscow are asked why the elderly can afford only canned pet food. But Americans visiting Peking are asked if it is true that Yankee homes have milked piped into them.

4. Teach Geography by antithesis. Whether it be the worship of Hindustan's phallus and cow or the Mariolatry of Romanist countries or the eco-idolatry of the United States—the teacher must stress the curse of creature-worship and the blessing of Creator-worship (Romans 1:24).
5. Do not be a Deistic geographer. There is no mechanical clock of providence. Christ *personally* rules the universe (Colossians 1:16-17).

ECONOMICS: THE HEART OF A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

(First in a Series)

By Kevin Craig

The title of this article either immediately and unrelentingly grabbed your attention, or else it appeared so preposterous that you passed right by it, and are now coming back to it, perhaps a year later, to confirm your worst suspicions. In either case, you should be pleasantly surprised. In this series, we shall approach Economics from a distinctly Biblical perspective ("I've heard *that* before!"), show its importance for the Christian ("I'll believe it when I see it!"), and give some practical ways that Economics can be integrated into the Christian curriculum ("Practical? Economics?!").

Economics—"The Dismal Science"

Undoubtedly, the reason you are so skeptical that Economics can be of any help to your Christian education is that you see Economics as "the dismal science." Economics earned that title as a result of 19th century economists who continually predicted doom and gloom for mankind—men like Malthus, who said that man must die either of war or mass starvation. Today economics is seen as "dismal" because it is boring, esoteric, abstract, impractical, contradictory, and purely theoretical. It offers no solid answers to any financial or political problem, and hence offers no practical, concrete, and successful guidance to 20th century man. In short, Economics is today a *non-Christian* discipline.

It is not hard to diagnose the illness plaguing Economics. It is sick because it has departed from the Bible. The Bible sets down everything we need to know about "Economics" and how to run a nation. Everything. But sinful men are reluctant to admit that God has set forth such a complete and authoritative Word; especially if it leaves no room for their great intellectual monument-building. So they rebel, and begin inventing their own systems of Economics, usually empowered not by the Holy Spirit, but by the coercive arm of the State. Economics today cannot be discussed apart from *politics* and questions of continually increasing governmental power. Economics today has for its foundations completely unbiblical assumptions concerning the role of the State, the nature of Man, his purpose, and the importance of the family in God's plan for the nations.

"Economics" Re-defined

Our first task, then, is to set Economics in its proper place, by giving it a Biblical definition. The Greek words from which we get our word "economics," or "economy," are found in the Bible 19 times. If we were to transliterate the word, we would have passages like these:

"There was a certain rich man which had an *economist*, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him,

and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thine *economics*; for thou mayest be no longer an *economist*" (Luke 16:1-12).

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the *economist* of God" (Titus 1:7).

"Moreover it is required in *economists* that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2; cf. Heb. 31:1-6, Neh. 13:13).

What is *economics*? The word comes from a compound Greek word, *oikonomia*, from *oikos*, meaning "house," and *nomos*, meaning "law." *Economics* thus means "home-law," or "the managing of a home." Once we understand Economics to mean "the managing of a house," then immediately we see how practical and important Economics is! Are any of your children going to be involved in the management of a house? They had better be! And they had better know the practical applications of God's Home-Law!

When people ask if we teach "Home Economics" at our school, the first thing I tell them is, "Stop being redundant." Since "Economics" literally means "home-law" or "the management of a house," to speak of "Home Economics" is as silly as saying "God's Home Home-Law," or "the Management of a Home Home."

True vs. False Economics

Yet the presence of the word "Home Economics" reveals some important things about our culture. When we think of "Home Economics" we think of women, or mothers. Truly, a mother's place is in the home (I Tim. 5:14; Titus 2:5). But shouldn't *fathers* be concerned with "Home Economics"? In education, the father has a very important role, as the whole of the book of Proverbs indicates (see 13:1), and as is commanded in such passages as Deut. 6:7-9, and Exod. 12:26-27. In our culture, fathers are very delinquent concerning the catechising of their children. The "unexciting" task of teaching children the Bible is not considered very "intellectual" or "macho." Fathers, being swayed by our backslidden culture, would rather engage in intellectual games and theoretical abstractions. Men now do "Economics" while women do "Home Economics." "Economics" thus has connotations of academic theorizing, while "Home Economics" is the realm of the practical, nitty-gritty issues of day-to-day life. But neither men nor women are allowed to be impractical and strictly "intellectual." God's Law is practical and leaves no room for ivory-tower philosophizing. Biblical Law is a blueprint for action and a plan for victory. The speculative and non-concrete connotations of the word "Economics" indicate that it has departed from the simple, plain, concrete demands of Biblical Law.

If you have ever thought about teaching Economics in your home or school, you've probably been wondering about such terribly esoteric items as "Supply and Demand," "Gross National Product," "Marginal Utility," and "elasticity of demand." And having wondered about these terms, you no longer wondered about whether or not you were going to teach "Economics!" On the other hand, this may be healthy. As we have said, Economics is boring, irrelevant, and useless, precisely because it has nothing to do with the Law of God as found in the Bible. You may be very concerned about teaching Biblical Law and as a result of your commitment to the Bible as a standard for practical Godliness in life decided against teaching what is commonly called "Economics." Good. If you follow the Bible, you do not find commands to sit back in your armchair and "analyze" current economic problems, or to speculate on the effect of a hypothetical economic-political policy. Detailed graphs, lengthy charts, complex formulae, and reams of statistics are not the bulwark of the Christian Mandate. One does not need to know how to compute elaborate questions for the elasticity of demand in order to know the difference between a *legitimate economic exchange* (anchored righteously in *just weights of hard money*) and an *unbiblical exchange* (drifting covetously on a shoreless ocean of debt). Yet when we think of "Economics" we invariably think of some mathematical complexity. But what do these Aristotelian games have to do with *God's Home-Law*? Will they contribute to the *Godly Management of Families*? A

Biblical Economics is one that is vitally concerned with *life*, and to teach Economics is to train one for the demands of living for Christ. (And by "living for Christ" we do not mean a mystic spirituality that perennially keeps a person's feet two feet off the ground. We mean a practical ability to obey God's Law and to have a genuine impact on one's society (Matt. 5:13-14). The Bible is practical. Biblical laws on Money, Debt, and Wages, if *genuinely applied*, and not merely *discussed* or *debated* against non-Christian "systems," would have sweeping results, the likes of which we can't imagine. Businesses and families would be transformed (Rom. 12:1-2).

The Importance of Economics

On the other hand, many do not teach Economics because they find matters about money, debt, inheritance, welfare, and other issues, "worldly." Very bad. Money is not "worldly." Material prosperity is a gift from God (Deut. 8:18) and is to be used according to His Law (II Chron. 12:1). If you do not teach Economics because you have been told it is "worldly," then you have some incompetent and dangerous friends. (Read "Economics and Eschatology" in R. J. Rushdoony's *God's Plan for Victory*, pp. 41-46). Families are today *being destroyed* because of inflation, which is fundamentally a problem with the "money." Many blame the government for inflation, but families and the businesses they run have done more to bring about inflated, debt-ridden "money" than the government. In the final analysis, the government is but a reflection of the sinful states of families. For 100 years, fundamentalists have been saying that Economics is not "spiritual." The only thinking that is not Spiritual is our neglect of Biblical laws concerning money. We must change our way of living. God never says that Money is "worldly."

Debt: now *that's* worldly! And I'll bet that the people who have been telling you that Economics is worldly are the same people who are mortgaged up to their eye-balls, can't make payments on their charge-cards, and will in no way leave a decent inheritance for their children (Prov. 13:22). You may have been influenced by popular teachers who assert that Economics is worldly. I know of one who had to be *taken to court by the heathen* in order to be made to pay the bills incurred by his "ministry." That's a real fine testimony to the unsaved, let me tell you. These covetous Christians are ungodly Economists, or stewards, of God's gifts, continually running their "ministries" in the red. Consider what the Bible says about debt: Romans 13:8, Proverbs 22:7. Some of these lawless Economists encourage their followers to become sinful usurers. Consider what the Bible says about charging a fellow Christian interest on a loan: Exod. 22:25; Ezek. 18:8, 13, 17 (cf. "Stewardship, Investment, and Usury: Financing the kingdom of God," in *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, pp. 799-824.) The situation is bad enough when a Christian charges interest to a poor, destitute Christian. The lawlessness is intensified when the borrower wants the money for a lavish church building. Funny how those who declare Economics to be "worldly" will gleefully loan on interest to a well-enough-off Christian, but wouldn't think about loaning to a poor believer.

Consider what the Bible says about the poor: God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah not so much for their sexual sins as for the *economic* sins. God has assigned the task of ministering to the poor as the defenseless *to the family*. Not to the government, and not even to the institutional "church" (see David H. Chilton, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators*, ch. 2). Sodom and Gomorrah were judged mainly for the failure of their families to minister to the poor (Is. 10, 17; 3:9, 14, 15; Exek. 16:49). Sodom and Gomorrah were rebellious, callous, and covetous; they wallowed in the glitter of "economic prosperity" created by their insatiable thirst for credit. Their greed for more goods than they had labored for eventually destroyed first the poor (Amos 8:4-5), then themselves (Prov. 13:11). Undoubtedly there was a national welfare system to placate their consciences; I can hear them complaining about "oppressive taxes" and "government interference" even now. Let the government educate our children, mint our money,

feed the hungry, and defend the fatherless, and just hope they don't get in my hair. "Welfare" is a function of Godly *Families*; yet how many "Economics" classes teach our duties toward strangers, widows and orphans, or tithing, gleaning, lending and slavery laws? This is certainly what the Bible is talking about when it speaks of "Economics." God will not judge this nation because our children cannot calculate the GNP; God will judge us because (can we admit it) we are like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Family Economics vs. Statist Economics

The "State" has no business in normal economic life. That principle is basic to Biblical economics. It is demonstrated with great clarity in Chilton's book, *Productive Christians*. Involvement of the State in economics is indicative to rottenness in the bones of a culture. Involvement of the State in economics indicates that *the families* of the nation are neglecting their duties. Therefore, Chilton and other Biblical economists have noted that an expanding State brings the judgment of God. Why does God judge the nation with an oversized civil government? Because the families have been disobedient. The link is clear if we remember that Economics is the primary role of the *family—by definition!* The judgment of God is primarily a judgment on families, not the oversized State. It is immediately evident, then, why Economics is so important in any Christian education. We *must* raise up a generation of Christians who will again manage their families Biblically—in every sphere they touch: business, welfare, and all earthly activities. The *only* way to reduce the power of the State is for families to assume the functions presently carried on by the State, in unbiblical usurpation of family prerogatives. Responsibility for Money, Welfare, and Production, must be taken by Christians in their capacity as heads and members of *families*. Transformation of our "economy" is preeminently a grass-roots movement. Gary North, with unparalleled wisdom, has seen this:

Any program of Christian reconstruction which does not begin with the family is doomed. Changes in church structure may be important, as are changes in the political structure. But the family is central. It should be clear by now that reform, if it is to be successful, must come from the ground up, or better put, from the families up. It will seldom come from the well-paid bureaucrats in any and every institution, for they have been successful in terms of the existing arrangements and are generally unwilling to renovate that structure in which they have succeeded and from which they derive their self-esteem. Without a doubt, the family is the chief institution in any program of positive social change. In fact, any successful program will be the product of Biblically centered families. The program which does not come out of the experience of the families and those working intimately with family problems will remain a blueprint in the dusty archives of some forgotten or reviled social engineer (from the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Symposium on the Family).

"*God's Home Law*." If your curriculum is Christian, it must not only squeeze Biblical economics in somewhere, it must be centered around economics. In English, reading, and all subjects, God's Laws for families must pervade. Teachers must have a vision; a dream of a Godly society; a knowledge of how God's Family-Law may see practical application. If you have no idea what God's Laws concerning Money require, you cannot possibly teach them to your children; the family in the next generation will stagnate further, and God's judgment will be inevitable. We are told to make this nation a "disciple" of Christ and His Law (Matt. 28:18-20). The Great Commission, and its partner, the Dominion Mandate (Gen. 1:26-28), are grass-roots Commissions. It means deep-rooted cultural change, not just a few million walking down aisles. Families must be the salt of the earth.

Economics—"oikonomia"—is clearly the heart of the Christian education.

AN EDUCATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

By Rodney N. Kirby

#15 "Babel and Language"

"Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:9).

Notice that the confused language situation caused a loss of dominion. After God confused the people's language, they "left off to build the city" (vs. 8). Their work was hindered due to their linguistic confusion. This shows, once again, the central role language plays in God's created order. We mentioned this when we dealt with Gen. 1:3, "And God said..." Language is necessary for the fulfillment of the cultural mandate (Gen. 2:19). A confused language hinders the proper exercise of dominion.

This explains much of man's impotence today. Our language has become confused, imprecise, and muddled. As a result, people can not communicate with each other, and it is much more difficult to exercise dominion. "Black English" is taught in the schools, with the result that blacks are more and more segregated from the rest of society because they cannot communicate except with other blacks. (It has been pointed out that those who advocate teaching "Black English" are those scholars, making \$50,000 a year, who do *not* speak in Black English themselves! One wonders how far they would have gotten if they did. "I be wanting a job in yo' school.")

In our schools, we must insist on precision in language. The children must be trained to speak coherently (without "y'know, uh, y'see") and grammatically. They must be trained to organize their thoughts logically. They must learn the subtle nuances of variation between synonymous words (most linguistics say there are no true synonyms). All of this is to increase the precision with which we use our language.

The question comes up, "What about teaching foreign languages in the schools?" We have here in our text the beginning of "foreign languages" (hereafter called "FL"); what place should they have in a Christian school?

First, let's examine some reasons for FL study. One is that, in our present day, communication and travel have developed to the point where we may expect to come in contact with people who speak a different language—in business, vacations, or mission work. Also, there are an increasing number of immigrants coming into America—Cubans, Mexicans, Southeast Asians, etc. Therefore, it is said, we must teach FL's in the schools, so the children will be able to function in this world.

However, this reasoning has problems. Primarily, the question may be raised, "How do we know *which* FL to teach?" We cannot know during a child's school years where he may go when he graduates, or with which immigrants he may have dealings. All that is necessary in cases like this would be a crash course in the desired language when needed—much like missionaries have. Besides, at least in the business and travel world, English is spoken everywhere. It would not be difficult for a manager to find a bilingual shop foreman; and in the major tourist areas, people have learned from the English language to get more English money.

A second reason given for FL study is that it is required for advanced study in almost any field. Most graduate schools, and some colleges, require several years' FL study as an entrance requirement.

However, not every student will become such a scholar. There would be no need to teach all students a FL, unless the school served exclusively as preparation for college. But, even in this case, the school would not be able to teach all FL's the students might need in college, for this varies with the field of study. A student's knowledge of German would be of little value if he specialized in Latin American history (unless he tried to find Hitler "alive and well in Argentina!"). Besides, for advanced study,

a *reading* knowledge of the language is all that is needed; the FL need not be learned well enough to converse in that language. In reading, one can take the time to figure out the meaning, look up words in a dictionary, etc., which he cannot do in conversation. Such a reading knowledge again can be gained in a crash course as the need arises (say, the Greek and Hebrew courses at seminaries).

Other reasons are sometimes advanced—learning a FL increases the mental discipline of the child; knowledge of a FL will increase the child's understanding of English (grammar, vocabulary, etc.). These in themselves are not sufficient to justify teaching a FL to all students. The same ends can be accomplished in easier ways—say, a strengthened emphasis on analytical English grammar.

There is another reason, however, which is unique to the Christian school. As a *Christian* school, we base all learning upon the revealed Word of God. This Word was originally given in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Thus, if we want the students to be able fully to understand the Word of God, we should teach them the Biblical language.

When should this begin? The earlier, the better. Young children learn new languages much easier than do older children or adults. Children before they reach their teens can learn to speak FL's without an accent, although this is irrelevant to our concern with Biblical languages. Also, they learn the structure of the language better, and are better able to "think" in the FL, without having to go through the process of mentally translating back to English. And so, we should begin with the Biblical languages in elementary school.

We will suggest here a possible plan for this. Of course, many other things must be considered in curriculum planning—overall goal of the school, availability of qualified teachers, time allowed in the schedule, etc.

FL study should begin with Hebrew, in the second semester of Kindergarten or in First Grade. This should continue through high school. The elementary grades would concentrate on learning the language itself; beginning around grades 8 or 9, most of the work would involve readings in the Hebrew Bible (probably coordinated with the Bible class), with the high school grades going into some exegetical work in the Hebrew. As for materials, the Jewish schools have a complete line of materials for teaching young children Hebrew—readers, flash cards, games, story books, etc. A catalogue of these materials may be obtained by sending \$1.00 to KTAV Publishing House, 75 Varick St., New York, NY 10013, and asking for their textbook catalogue.

Sometime in Junior High or High School, Biblical Aramaic can be picked up. Its similarity with Hebrew will make it somewhat easy to learn. This could be integrated with a study of Daniel (which is written partly in Aramaic).

Biblical Greek could be started about the sixth grade, and would continue for four years. High school years would be spent in reading from the Greek New Testament and early church fathers. Greek is started later than Hebrew because it is not taught conversationally, as is Hebrew, but systematically. Greek, more so than Hebrew, requires an emphasis on the grammar—it is vital to know the difference between a present and an aorist infinitive, for example. This is better taught to older children.

In High School, if the high school is primarily geared to college preparatory work, the students could study two years each of German and Latin. These two languages would be useful in almost any field of study the student would enter.

One objection often given to teaching FL's in the schools is that the children forget them as soon as they get out of school. This is because they are not used. By concentrating on the Biblical languages, this can be avoided. The children can learn the languages well enough to read the Bible in the original languages, and can use this all their life (perhaps checking up on the pastor, who has probably forgotten his!).