

TENTMAKERS

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STARTING A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

By Gary North

Fighting against the relentless pressures of secular humanism is a discouraging battle today. Almost every institution has been captured by the humanists, who then cry for ever-larger quantities of tax money to subsidize their efforts. Humanism, especially the socialist varieties, is an ineffective system of government, and the parasitic nature of modern humanism has become obvious to millions of people, even if they fail to understand the reasons for humanism's inability to deliver the promised utopia. Yet habits are not easily broken, and despite the fact that people recognize the failures, they still vote for the politicians who have built their careers on the politics of envy.

There is one area where the humanists are losing. This is the area of day-school education. In Los Angeles, fewer than 30% of all students enrolled in the schools are white; four years ago, the figure was about 40%. Mandatory bussing across town, with children on the busses for up to three hours a day, was inevitable, given the suicidal logic of humanistic judges. Now that their logic is the law of the California school system, the middle-class whites and blacks are pulling out. The private schools which were languishing in 1976 are filled and highly profitable today. The idiocy of humanism, with its bureaucratic, blind enforcers, is presently destroying the single most important humanist institution: tax-supported elementary education. Soon, the high schools will feel the squeeze. The centers of statist indoctrination are being abandoned by the tax-paying public. What can we expect next? **The taxpayers whose children are at last in private schools are going to rebel against the local taxes that are used predominately to finance the government schools.** A local tax rebellion is virtually guaranteed.

The failure of the government school systems since 1965 has been the most conspicuous failure of the politics of confiscatory humanism that we have seen in our generation. Confiscatory humanism now faces a resurgence of private education, and this private education revival is overwhelmingly Protestant, fundamentalist, and independent of ecclesiastical and denominational control. It is the greatest threat which the humanists have ever faced in this country. The churches have been no threat at all over the years. The churches have failed to innovate, or challenge the power of the humanists, or to organize the opposition. The independent schools, born in the midst of a battle and in terms of that battle, are not the weak, mumbling, embarrassed, compromised bureaucracies that the institutional denominations have become. They have not been the targets of three generations of dedicated socialists and communists, whose strategy from 1900 on was to capture the seminaries, colleges, and finally the churches of America. The

schools, being decentralized, are too difficult to control or capture. They are small, struggling, undercapitalized, and therefore indestructable. They are too diversified to capture. The only way the liberals could hope to do it would be to capture the Accelerated Christian Education (A.C.E.) program in Texas, since that is the source of the curricula of most of the recent Protestant schools. Fat chance! Dr. Don Howard, who runs A.C.E., is a staunch conservative. His book, *Rebirth of a Nation*, provides an outline of his social philosophy, and it is nothing resembling the mealy-mouthed pietism which has paralyzed American fundamentalism for three generations. (Order from A.C.E., Rt. 1, Box 114, Lewisville, TX 75067: \$4.95.)

The confiscating humanists are now nearing the end of the road. The next generation of young people in most of the major urban areas will be outside their unholy temples. The nation's middle classes are in the process of doing what the elite among the confiscating humanists have done for a century, namely, pulling their children out of the public schools. "Free at last, free at last: now we're paying, and we're free at last."

Consider what this really says about confiscating humanism. Humanists have collected taxes to support America's only established church, the public school system. They have offered access to these schools free of charge. They have established all sorts of licensing requirements to create barriers to entry for private competitors. They have offered free transportation to users. **And still they are losing!** A subsidized, zero-user-cost, monopolistic, compulsory system is collapsing. What greater testimony is available to the failure of tax-supported institutions than this one? Right before our very eyes, **we are seeing the defeat of the central institution of modern humanism.**

On the Sidelines

As always, the overwhelming majority of American Christians are on the sidelines, standing around, not knowing who to cheer for, barely aware of the nature of the competition. Consider this scenario: every southern Baptist parent, every charismatic parent, every conservative Methodist, every Campbellite parent, and every member of every Bible-affirming splinter group, not to mention the conservative Lutherans and Roman Catholics, simply stop sending their children into the public schools. They don't call for the destruction of the public schools. They don't organize anti-bond issue campaigns. They just pull their own children out of the public schools. Tomorrow. They get together at church one evening and agree to start a school and hire a teacher. This seemingly

obvious act of Christian principle would topple the humanistic schools, and probably the entire humanist network, overnight. The public schools would go broke, immediately. They would be left with nothing but the sons and daughters of humanists to teach—a fate worse than death for the humanistic teachers who have been hired to do the indoctrinating. In one day the whole humanist program for America would be destroyed. Not maybe; assuredly. And all it would take would be an act of principle by Christian parents.

They won't do it, of course. They will wait until their kids are bussed, or half the student body is on drugs, or their daughters are pregnant, or their sons are beaten up, or the principal of the local high school gets caught in bed with the 14-year-old daughter of the head of the school board. If the whole faculty were caught drinking beer on a Saturday afternoon, traditional fundamentalists might consider pulling out, but if the teachers are content merely to teach treason and rebellion to America's Christian tradition, the parents will put up with it for a few years longer.

But it won't go on forever. Even southern Baptists can learn. Someday some idiot bureaucrat is going to make mandatory something or other that trips the fuse of the local fundamentalist establishment, and a new Christian school will open up in response. Year by year, these schools are opening up.

The fighters in American political circles are those with something worth losing. That's why the Christian school movement, not the institutional church, is the focus of today's battle. The churches are less relevant to people, because everyone thinks he can pick up and leave if he doesn't like his local church. But there are not enough Christian schools to permit this. It's either one or two local schools, or else it's the public school. That means parents have to put up with minor disappointments in the Christian school, whereas they can quit the local church for any reason, and some other local church will open its doors to them. In the Christian school movement, parents have to fish or cut bait. They have to take a stand. This begins to teach them what the war is all about.

The school-operating pastors who face the pressures of public school bureaucrats also learn what a fight is all about. The bureaucrats can afford to ignore the churches, but they cannot afford to ignore Christian schools. Those pastors who are fighting to turn this nation around are almost always defenders of the Christian school movement. Maybe they are headmasters. Maybe they are on the board of a church school. Maybe they are simply parents. The fact is, the trenches are filled today with pastors who at long last have an institution worth defending which is also, from the humanists' point of view, an institution worth attacking.

Pastors and churches that sit on the sidelines today, waiting to see whether to join the Christian school movement, or "recapture the public schools for Jesus"—as if Jesus wanted to capture a State-financed, compulsory educational institution—will remain no threat to the confiscatory humanists. Those who are counting noses, or standing around with their fingers in the wind, trying to see whether the public schools are going to win, simply are not in the battle for a Christian America. They are trend-tenders, bureaucratic receivers of salaries, and, frankly, Quislings. There is no neutrality in this battle. You are either for socialist redistribution (government-financed indoctrination), or else you are for the freedom to choose (private education). There is no third choice. (Sadly, the voucher system, which is still fundamentally socialist, because it involves compulsory taxation and confiscation, is being offered by humanist educators to financially strapped Christian educators in order to hook them on government money. Once hooked, the regulations and "approved programs of study," not to

mention racial and religious quotas; will tie the independent schools in knots. He who pays the piper calls the tune. If the State pays the piper, it will eventually imprison the piper, so as to reduce the costs of hiring him.)

Onto the Field

Basic to any systematically Christian preaching ministry should be a continual defense of Christian education. The idea must be inculcated in the minds of laymen that they are fully responsible for their children's education, not the civil government. Only with the preaching of full personal responsibility for our actions will this country be turned around. The parents are financially responsible for the education of their children; they may seek private aid, such as a church or voluntary charity, but their neighbors are not morally responsible for the education of the Christian's (or anyone else's) children. When this kind of preaching is encountered, men will either leave the church, or defy the pastor, or get their children out of the public schools. The first step solves the pastor's problem of responsible preaching, since those remaining are either serious about the faith, or else subject to discipline.

We must drive out irresponsible members by means of consistent preaching. We must confront them in their pews and in their lives with God's word: that they are not to turn their children over to the State. Any pastor who does not preach this continually, until every member has pulled his children out of the public schools, is not presenting the whole counsel of God to his people.

But this kind of preaching is expensive. Some well-heeled members may leave. Public school teachers may leave. Masons may leave, if their commitment to the government schools (a philosophy which has been supported by Masonic organizations) is greater than their commitment to Christian education. But this is the cost of being a pastor.

Furthermore, if there is no Christian school alternative in the community, or none which is in conformity to the church's profession of faith, then the pastor may have to start such a school, or work with a member to start one. But not having a school to go to locally is no excuse at the day-school level. They can be started and must be started. This improves the public stand of the church, the level of knowledge of the younger members, and the safety of the pupils. There are no true disadvantages in getting a Christian school started.

There are dozens of arguments against starting a Christian school, but the best answer is Christ's: He called His people to conform themselves to Him and His way of life. The government schools, by law, are religiously neutral, meaning that by law they are satanic, however inconsistent they may seem today. You are either with Christ or against Him, He said; those who gather not with Him scatter abroad (Matt. 12:30).

If there is a non-ecclesiastical litmus test for an orthodox, godly ministry—one that the whole community can see—it is the creation of a Christian school. It need not be a parochial school, but it should be a thoroughly Christian school, and it should have support from the pulpit. A godly minister should have this as one of his church's chief social goals: the eradication of government-financed education.

A good way to improve the finances of a church is to improve the finances of the members. Private education is the best long-term capital investment a parent can make. It will pay off in the future. If parents don't make this investment, then the future of the church will be far more difficult, not to mention expensive.