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Introduction

The principal goal of education is to raise men and women who are capable of living peacefully and productively in human society. It is to impart values and habits which are essential for social functioning, such as honesty and integrity, reliability and industry, prudence and courage, and charity toward all men. It begins with a mother's look and a father's nod and ends only with life.

Formal education is the conscious effort by the individual to acquire, or by parents to impart, the thoughts and skills essential in society. It may be the systematic study of various fields of knowledge with teachers and instructors in a formal setting and structure. In most instances, it is a group effort which reduces the economic costs, thereby increasing its affordability by more members of society.

Economic education imparts a sound understanding of human wants and scarce resources. It begins in the home with the work of the mother. Children are given tasks and taught to fulfill them correctly and punctually. It trains them for an exact and conscientious discharge of their duties in later life. Children may learn the wise management of their own labor, learning to economize. They may even discover that it is not so hard to obtain money as to spend it well.

Throughout most of American history church schools and neighborhood schools built on this kind of education. Private academies for men and seminaries for women continued it on the secondary level. Colleges and universities completed it. At the time of the Revolutionary War there were nine colleges; by the time of the Civil War there were some 200 institutions of higher learning, most of which were founded by religious denominations such as the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Congregationalist, Baptist, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic.

The drive for state education came from a variety of intellectual sources. The oldest source undoubtedly was mercantile statism which assigned much control over economic life to the state. Mercantilistic policies meant to create a skilled population so that it would be competitive in international trade and commerce. They retained their

popularity in remote areas of the United States until the coming of classical liberal ideas early in the nineteenth century.

The conflict between the old and the new was clearly visible in the Dartmouth College Case of 1819. The legislature of New Hampshire, in 1816, had seized the college, without the consent of the college trustees, by amending its charter of 1769. The trustees opposed the seizure and brought suit against the state government. Daniel Webster, New Hampshire's famous native son, argued successfully for Dartmouth College that the seizure violated the Constitution because it impaired "the obligation of a contract." The Supreme Court with Chief Justice John Marshall presiding found that the charter was indeed inviolable. This decision of the Court made the contract clause of the Constitution a powerful instrument for the judicial protection of property rights against political abridgement.

Many American intellectuals who joined the drive for public education in state institutions of learning were influenced by foreign philosophical thought, especially by that of Georg W. F. Hegel. He viewed government as the supreme manifestation of the universal spirit and glorified the state as the embodiment of all ethics. The spread of Hegel's thought in the United States helped to give rise to American nationalism and a movement toward universal education. Its champions argued for the necessity of a common language throughout the United States and common thought in democratic processes in political, social, and economic affairs which, in their judgment, only a common political school system could foster. In the words of one of the champions: He and his colleagues labored diligently "to extend the fostering care of the state to all classes of educational institutions in such a way as to bind them into a common brotherhood with common aims and common interests." (James Pyle Wickersham, *Education in Pennsylvania,* Lancaster, Pa.: Inquirer Publishing Company, 1886, p. 389)

Other advocates of a common system of state education received their inspiration from Robert Owen, the British industrialist and socialist reformer, who considered a system of centralized education as indispensable for the dissemination of his reforms. In Scotland he had built a model industrial town with company housing, nonprofit stores and schools. As his ideas spread to the United States his followers formed an Indiana community called New Harmony (1825). It failed as a result of numerous disagreements among its members. Robert

Owen, nevertheless, continued writing and lecturing on his disbelief in religion and his calling for the transformation of society through education.

Other reformers who became vocal and influential early in our century saw in political education a great opportunity to train children in cooperative living. John Dewey did much to formulate a new approach. He led the way toward the abandonment of authoritarian methods and the acceptance of learning through cooperative experimentation and practice. He promoted the revolt against abstract learning and strove to make education an effective instrument for integrating culture and vocation. John Dewey gave much substance and meaning to the progressive school movement.

To the reformers, the state power to teach and train teachers was the most potent tool for swaying public sentiment and influencing the public morals. It was an engine of indoctrination more powerful than any other in possession of government seeking a new order in human affairs.

Nearing the end of the twentieth century we can clearly discern the new order. It is an order in which politics directs the affairs of the world and makes everything right. Yet the strife of politics unsettles nearly all social and economic issues and poisons social relations. Concerned primarily with income, wealth, and benefits and their allocation by political force, it has given rise to a huge apparatus of government affecting the daily lives of all its subjects. Government education from the kindergarten to the university paved the way for armies of legislators, regulators, tax collectors, assessors, inspectors, policemen, judges, and jailers.

Pupils and students in government institutions of learning as well as many parochial and private schools which imitate the former, rarely, if ever, receive an introduction to economics. They do not learn that government has no funds of its own, but must take income and wealth from someone in order to benefit somebody else. They are unaware that an entitlement is never paid by the government out of its own funds, but by taxpayers; that inflation and credit expansion, which are the most popular method of government largess, do not add any wealth to the amount available, but merely enrich some people while they impoverish others. Students of economics at mammoth universities do not gain knowledge of the fact that it is not in the power of government to make everybody more prosperous. They may actually

be taught that a restriction of farm production, which raises food prices, benefits all members of society, or that a reduction in labor time and effort raises the standards of living of the nation. They may even be instructed that pro-labor legislation improves the conditions of all wage earners and that unemployment, which is bound to follow pro-labor legislation, is the fault of business. At state colleges and universities, government spending is hailed as a panacea for all social and economic evils, real or imagined.

State education tends to dull the critical sense of the students. Spending many years in the care and training of a host of teachers all of whom are obedient civil servants, the graduates themselves are likely to acquire the outlook and mentality of civil servants. And the enjoyment of cost-free education from kindergarten to graduate school makes all government spending appear to be natural, fair, and just. The M.D. or Ph.D. who, at taxpayer expense, spent twenty years of his life at public institutions of learning cannot easily reject the call for benefits and entitlements by other professions. The beneficiary of a $100,000 education provided by taxpayers cannot deny the Medicare or Medicaid recipient a $100,000 heart operation payable by the same taxpayers.

The most enthusiastic supporters of the New Deal, the Fair Deal, and all other political deals are intellectuals. After many years of public indoctrination they are unable to discern the failures and fallacies of popular policies. Few are astute enough, for instance, to see through the presidential assurance that the addition of thirty million people to the federal healthcare rolls will lower federal healthcare expenditures. Few can comprehend that a youth service corps which lends support to various levels of government continues to dull the critical sense of youth and prepares it for the command system.

On all levels of government education the freedom of serious reflection and analysis has long since given way to the "politically correct" attitude. To deviate from it is to invite censure, condemnation, and even dismissal. Woe to the teacher who would dare to question or even ignore the edicts of the agents of the Department of Education.

In recent years of "politically correct" teaching and "racial-quota busing," the quality of public education has declined visibly and continues to decline in most centers of population. Despite massive expenditures on the largest school system on earth, the most expensive

school buildings, and the most extensive curricula, the system is failing in all tests of a good education. After twelve years of mandatory schooling, many inner-city graduates are functionally illiterate. They may be fluent in foul language but unable to decipher a newspaper written in fourth-grade English.

Public schools surely do not raise ladies and gentlemen in the true sense of the word. Inner-city schools are built like medieval fortresses equipped with modern electronic devices guarding against firearms and other weapons. They are training grounds for gang warfare, foul speech, and atrocious manners.

Public schools disparage and deprecate Judeo-Christian morality. In the name of separation of church and state they cast out the Judeo-Christian foundation of public morality and replace it with the religion of politics and the omnipotent state. American public schooling displays all the characteristics of a pagan religion.

Public schools are centers of indoctrination. Most of their teachers and pupils idolize the state and its institutions and, in an occasional pilgrimage to Washington, supplicate at the marble temples of politics. Public instruction places great emphasis on political benefits and entitlements, rather than the will and ability to work. It places government in the center of all economic and social problems and calls on politicians to solve them. Yet, despite the visibly ominous consequences of public education it serves one important function: It occupies the minds of young people and keeps them off the streets. Massive child labor legislation and regulation condemn millions of young Americans to chronic unemployment. Minimum-wage legislation, licensing laws, seniority rules for labor unions and public service employment, and many other restrictions are designed to bar youth from finding employment. Simultaneously, mandatory schooling with swarms of truancy officers seeks to hold, instruct, and entertain reluctant and recalcitrant youth in the public school system until they are sixteen, seventeen, or even eighteen years of age. If it were not for the labor laws, many young people would seek and easily find employment in commerce and industry. If it were not for the truancy laws, many American youths would walk the streets in idleness and despair, yet there would be few public schools. Both sets of laws together imposing fines and imprisonment on violators seek to sustain the public school system.

With its deterioration in the inner cities and its godless indoctrination many parents are demanding the opportunity to choose alterna-

tive education for their children. In most states they have succeeded against much organized opposition by public school teachers and their unions to reclaim the freedom to choose. They may have the choice of different public schools, private academies, parochial schools, and even homeschooling. Yet, although they may not use the facilities, materials, and teachers of the public school system, they are not exempt from paying for them. The freedom to choose their children's education does not include the freedom to pay only for the education they choose. Public schools depend on tax exactions. And once again it is fair to conclude that, without the coercive powers of government, there would be few, if any, public schools.

The best possible school system is built on individual freedom, that is, absence of government coercion in the form of taxes, fines, and imprisonment. Free choice gives rise to free markets in which countless individuals offer their services to meet individual needs. The freedom to choose has served us so well and given us high standards of living in all other pursuits. Surely, it would do the same also in education.

This volume builds on hopes and aspirations of twenty authors who long for the recovery of individual freedom in education. They are convinced that freedom is not a gift of government; freedom must always be wrested from and jealously guarded against government.

—Hans F. Sennholz

I. SCHOOLING AND LEARNING IN EARLIER DAYS

Missing Chapters from American History

by Clarence B. Carson

It has fallen to my lot over the past two decades to examine and write reviews of a goodly number of textbooks. Most of those reviewed have been intended for use in the high schools, though some have been designed for use in colleges as well. I have reviewed scores of books on American history, an armful on world history (or European Civilization, as the case might be), several dozen on such varied subjects as American government, civics, problems of democracy, citizenship, and such like, a few on economics, a handful on geography, and several that hardly fit any known category.

Having toiled in this particular vineyard off and on over the years, perhaps I have qualified myself for drawing some conclusions, particularly about history textbooks. The conclusion I wish to emphasize here, of course, is that there are some chapters missing from history textbooks. But I also want to make clear that their absence is not simply incidental, and that their inclusion could have been of considerable moment. They are at the heart of the American experience, and the lessons which could be learned from them could have changed—and still might change—the direction of our development. The reason for this can be made clearer, however, by calling attention to some other conclusions I have drawn before discussing the missing chapters.

My most general conclusion is that the quality of these books has declined over the years. The quality did not begin to decline when I started reviewing them—at least, I hope it didn't—but it has gone down precipitously in recent years. I am not referring, of course, to what might be called the physical attributes, such as binding, paper, print, or any of the aspects of reproduction. So far as I can judge of such things, that has generally improved.

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Declining Quality Evident in Content

What has declined in quality has been the content. History used to be mainly narrative, supported by explanation and some analysis. Such narrative as remains in many books is now segregated from the rest of the contents by being set in boxes located here and there throughout the book. Analysis is often supplemented or supplanted by "attitudinizing"—as, "What is your opinion of thus and so?" Oversimplifications usually abound, but they are overshadowed by exaggerations which became more commonplace as graduates of the student revolution in the 1960s began writing textbooks.

But the written material in many books has to be squeezed between the overabundant pictures, drawings, charts, graphs, and maps so that if there were a story line to follow only the most tenacious could do so. As illiteracy has spread upward through the grades, the necessity for and the opportunity to read is being progressively removed from the books. Some of the books ape television with its constant shifting from one scene to another, one topic to another, and one idea to another. The assumption informing some of them seems to be that children have an attention span of ten seconds at most, and my suspicion is that it is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Even so, the decline in the quality of textbooks is more of an effect than a cause, an effect of the general deterioration of education in the United States. Given the premises and the political control of education that prevails, the quality of textbooks must decline. Moreover, given the disorder and undiscipline which is commonplace in many high school classrooms, it would affect matters only marginally if all textbooks had the uniform high quality of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Most schools are far too crowded with those who cannot or will not learn for textbooks to make any critical difference. Laying the responsibility on the textbooks alone would be like placing the blame for sinking in quicksand on the quality of shoes you happen to be wearing.

While there may be a thousand—or ten thousand—particular explanations for the deterioration of education in the United States, there is one basic reason which underlies most, if not all, of them. Virtually every public problem associated with education today is traceable to *forced* schooling and the extensive and increasing use of *force* in support of schooling.

For example, why has the quality of textbooks declined? Because as force became a dominant factor, the emphasis shifted from quality to quantity. Because schooling tended to replace education, since education is always qualitative while schooling is quantitative. Because you can force people to attend school, but you cannot force them to learn in any meaningful sense. Because quality of education and equality of schooling are incompatible with one another. Because textbooks are provided free of charge, and their selection is largely dictated by political considerations. Because if forced schooling is even to appear to succeed, what is taught, and the books used to teach it, must be geared toward the lowest common denominator of students. Because each step downward in the desperate effort to reach this lowest common denominator has ramifying effects which extend upward to affect the following years of schooling, the quality of teachers, the quality of administrators, and so on. Because ultimately, even the writers of textbooks will be deficient in that level of understanding which is necessary to produce quality textbooks, even if there were any significant market for them.

It would be possible to trace out many of the other effects of forced schooling in a similar fashion, but there is not space to do so here. Perhaps it is unnecessary to do so, however instructive the attempt might be. Perhaps the reason can be sufficiently summed up this way: The state, i. e., government, is incompetent to serve as schoolmaster. Allow me to cast my net wider, however, so as to make the point more expeditiously. Government is incompetent as a provider of economic goods and services. This incompetence has been exposed in theory, demonstrated in practice, been tried on vast scales and found unworkable, and can be illustrated with mountains of evidence. The incompetence of government as a provider of goods and services is directly attributable to its use of force. Force is inefficient in the production of goods and counterproductive in the distribution of goods. Hence, the incompetence of the state as a provider of goods and services.

A Marketable Item

Education is an economic good, or service, if you will. The fact that it has so often been treated as if it were not has misled many of us. Forced schooling makes it appear that it is an economic "bad," and the compulsion tends to make it into that. Charitable and tax support

of education tends to set it apart from a whole host of other goods. To the extent that it is free, it takes on the illusory character of being non-economic in character, useful, perhaps, just as is air, but non-economic.

But so far as education supplies some human want, so long as the supply of it is limited, so far as there are costs entailed in its attainment, so far as the allocation of scarce resources—whether they be time, teachers, books, classrooms, or what have you—are involved, it is an economic good. Moreover, education is an economic good which is, can be, and has been provided in the market. It can be broken down into its parts and distributed according to demand. It is possible to buy as little or as much of it as is wanted by the individual, and its distribution does not necessarily entail any imposition upon others. In short, it meets all those characteristics of an economic good which can be provided in the market.

It follows, then, if the above be accepted, that government is both incompetent and unnecessary to the provision of education. But the incompetence of government as a schoolmaster has dimensions which do not apply to many other goods. If government should undertake to monopolize the production and distribution of milk, for example, it probably would register its lack of competence in raising the price of it and show its authority by reducing the number of outlets. Its distributors might adopt the hauteur of postal clerks. Even so, it is doubtful that government provision of milk would carry in its wake the host of ills that attend government provision of schools.

It would probably still be permissible to pray over government-produced milk without violating the establishment clause of the Constitution. If the government should undertake to provide sex education for the cows it would probably arouse no deep human concern. Even the quality of milk would not necessarily be lowered, though it might be unpalatable to the taste because of chemicals introduced into it. I guess the fluoridation of milk would be controversial. But, by and large, government might provide goods for the body with only a limited impact on us. But when government undertakes to provide goods for the mind and spirit it necessarily intrudes into every nook and cranny of life.

The missing chapters from American history not only point toward these conclusions but also offer evidence for more fruitful approaches than some of those we have taken in more recent years.

Religious Freedom

The first missing chapter that comes to my mind is one on the development of religious freedom in America. It is also the one most relevant to education. Most textbooks mention religious freedom, of course. They may touch upon it in some fashion in their discussion of the settlement of the colonies. It may be well to mention, in this connection, that most high school textbooks give short shrift to the colonial period. There is even an educationist theory, apparently widely accepted, that colonial history should be dealt with extensively in the early grades and treated in a cursory fashion in high school. In consequence, they do not allot anything near the space necessary for adequate treatment of religion. Again, religious freedom may get a sentence, or even a paragraph, in the discussion of the First Amendment. That is about it. (Some government texts cover the constitutional aspects of the question a little more adequately.)

Establishment Clarified

There are several points that should emerge from any kind of adequate treatment of the development of religious freedom in America. The first one would be a clear presentation of the concept of an established church. This could probably best be done by reference to the Church of England at the time of the establishment of the colonies. Such characteristics of an established church as compulsory church attendance, tax support of religion, and liturgical and doctrinal orthodoxy could be listed. There is considerable evidence that even justices of the United States Supreme Court do not understand what an established religion is, so the subject must not have been well taught for quite some time.

The second point is crucial, if the subject is to have an application to government intervention in other realms. It is to make a careful explanation of why religion was once generally established in most countries. Children are inclined to think that any practices other than those with which they are familiar are odd. Thus, in order for them to understand an established church and its reason for being, it needs to be presented in terms they can grasp. In any case, it needs to be made clear that many people in earlier times believed that religion is the most important thing in life. (Some still do.) It was the greatest and

highest good. That being the case, they sought to use the strongest means at their disposal, i. e., government, to see to it that people received its benefits. Moreover, it was widely believed that religion was the cement of society, that all authority flowed from it, and that a people would lack unity who did not have a common religion. People have ever found it difficult to be tolerant about that in which they strongly believe, and they still do.

The third point to make is that religious freedom did not animate most of the settlements in America. Some people came in order to be free to practice their particular religions, but they were rarely tolerant of those of different faiths. (The Quakers and Baptists were honorable exceptions to this rule.) Thus, church establishments were widespread in the colonies.

A fourth point is that the belief in religious tolerance began to gain hold and spread during the colonial period. Its development paralleled that of a rising interest in individual liberty in other fields. By the time of the American Revolution, it was sufficiently widespread that several churches were disestablished, and eventually all were. Disestablishment freed both the churches from any government control or support and the people from interference with their religious beliefs.

The Case Against Intervention

The final point has to do with the case for religious freedom, which is, at the same time, the case against government control, support, or interference with religious belief. Thomas Jefferson's argument for freedom of religion points the way. He viewed government-established religion as an attempt to control the mind, an attempt both presumptuous and futile. Men will believe what they will regardless of the efforts of government. "It is error alone which needs the support of government," Jefferson said. "Truth can stand by itself. Subject opinion to coercion; whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion desirable? No more than of face and stature."[1]

Jefferson made it clear, too, that similar errors were involved in the use of force in other areas, and no more to be sought than in religion. He said, "Were the government to prescribe to us our medicine and diet, our bodies would be in such keeping as our souls are now. Thus

in France the emetic was once forbidden, and the potato as an article of food. Government is just as infallible, too, when it fixes systems in physics. Galileo was sent to the Inquisition for affirming that the earth was a sphere; the government had declared it to be as flat as a trencher, and Galileo was obliged to abjure his error."[2]

Jefferson had these stinging remarks to make on a bill that would have placed control over a system of education in the hands of state officials. "If it is believed that these elementary schools will be better managed by the governor and council, the commissioners of the literary fund, or any other general authority of the government, than by the parents within each ward, it is a belief against all experience. Try the principle one step further and amend the bill so as to commit to the governor and council the management of all our farms, our mills, and merchants' stores. No, my friend, the way to have good and safe government is not to trust it all to one but to divide it among the many, distributing to everyone exactly the functions he is competent to."[3]

Economic Freedom

Thomas Jefferson could argue against state control of education by showing the analogy with state control of farms and mills secure in the knowledge that the reader would share his convictions about how ridiculous the latter would be. We are not so favorably situated, for in our day governments, federal, state, and local, have seen fit to engage or intervene in a mass of enterprises that were once wholly private. This development can be attributed, at least in part, to another missing chapter in American history.

This missing chapter is one on economic freedom. It would probably fit in a textbook best at some place in the early nineteenth century. But such a chapter would need to begin well back in the eighteenth century and probably should go forward in time past the Civil War and the freeing of the slaves. This was truly one of the great eras in history for the development of ideas, the drawing of constitutions, and the adoption of practices in keeping with economic freedom. During this era the residue of medieval practices was cast off, the bulk of mercantilistic restrictions removed, property became fully owned and disposable by individuals, indentured servitude and slavery abolished, a large portion of a continent opened up as a common market, and all sorts of protections drawn around the contractual powers of the individual.

Not only do most textbooks fail to highlight these changes but they also fail to attribute the remarkable consequences to them. Most American history books have one or more chapters on agricultural and industrial development, of course. Nor do they ignore the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the United States was, in comparison with much of Europe, an economically backward nation. Whereas, before the end of the century this country had emerged as one of the leading industrial and commercial nations in the world. These developments are usually covered in sufficient detail, even when there is considerable niggling about rural and urban poverty and hardship. But it has long been the fashion to ascribe these economic developments to almost everything but economic freedom: to innovations in technology, to the development of banking, to foreign investment, to American isolation from European wars, and so on. Perhaps the most common explanation for American prosperity is what may be called "the abundant natural resources theory." This is the theory that America was especially blessed with natural resources which go far to account for the eventual prosperity. This explanation is both the most common and the least satisfactory of those usually given.

A Resource Gains Value as Use for It Is Found

The most basic objection to this theory is that what is found in nature ordinarily becomes a resource only when some use is found for it and made of it. A stream may be an obstacle or a resource, for example, depending on whether you wish to cross it or float a boat down it. A forest may be an obstacle or resource depending upon whether you wish to plow the land or make lumber. Iron ore only becomes a resource when it has been mined, smelted, has impurities removed, and is turned into objects of use. So it is with almost everything found in nature.

It should be noted, too, that the early English settlers on this continent had little reason to congratulate themselves on their prospects for prosperity because of any obvious resource advantages. The Indians along the Eastern coast were hardly prosperous generally. Indeed, they were probably among the least prosperous in all the Americas, were less numerous than in many other places, and were among the most backward in development. They did cultivate a few crops,

such as corn and tobacco, but by and large they were at the hunting and fishing stage of economic development.

But be that as it may, and whatever other explanations may be adduced for American economic development and prosperity, there is one that is central. It is economic freedom. It is the devising of a system within which the energies of a people could be released and constructively employed. It is the constructive employment of the energies of people which turns obstacles into resources, which makes of peace the occasion for productivity, which invents devices and applies technology, and which turned wilderness and barren plains into farms and locales for factories and commercial centers.

Of course, there was more behind all this than freedom, but freedom provided the opportunity. Something so central to American development deserves a chapter in history textbooks. And if such chapters had been there, it would have been less likely that we would today be in the slough of despond caused by the growth of the interventionist state. We would have been informed of the advantages of freedom and the dangers of intervention.

Voluntary Cooperation

There is a third missing chapter without which the two discussed above would be incomplete. It is a chapter on the voluntary way of social cooperation. I have never seen a book designed to be used as an American history textbook which had such a chapter. Indeed, I cannot recall seeing one which had a paragraph on the subject, per se, and I am not sure I have ever seen a sentence in one. Of course, some voluntary associations—e.g., the American Red Cross—may be mentioned in textbooks, and there are sometimes references to charitable undertakings of a private nature. But the phenomenon of the voluntary approach to social cooperation is rarely, if ever, covered.

Yet freedom evinced itself in two ways in America. It evinced itself in the development of individual rights and responsibilities. And it evinced itself in voluntary approaches to social cooperation. Nineteenth-century America has often been described as individualistic. So far as it goes, the description is accurate enough for one aspect of the country's ethos. But nineteenth-century America was also much given to social cooperation, individually chosen, and voluntary cooperation.

Europeans who visited America and wrote of it in the nineteenth century often remarked the great variety of voluntary undertakings. An Englishman who did so in the 1830s declared that "the Americans are society mad." He listed a score or so of the most prominent of these, such as, American Education Society, American Bible Society, and so on, but found it necessary to add that there "are many others."[4] Indeed, he had hardly scratched the surface, for voluntary associations ranged from those made for some temporary task to those which led to permanent organizations. Thus, people gathered in rural America for house raisings, quilting bees, corn huskings, and so on. Of a more permanent nature, they formed fraternal organizations, associations of veterans of wars, sporting clubs, professional groups, charitable organizations, and what have you.

But that way of describing it makes voluntary association appear peripheral rather than central to American life. Churches became voluntary associations after they were disestablished. Most schools and colleges were voluntarily organized and run until well past the middle of the nineteenth century. Above all, much work came to be performed in the framework of voluntary association for social cooperation. All sorts of arrangements were revived or devised for cooperation in the production and distribution of goods.

One of the great triumphs of voluntarism unfolds in the story of the churches and religion after disestablishment. There were undoubtedly those who feared for what would come to pass when religion was no longer upheld by the arm of the state. After all, who would see to it that people went to church? How would ministers be paid if not from some sort of tax receipts? Who would build and maintain church buildings? Who indeed? As it turned out, many people supported religious undertakings with greater zeal after than before disestablishment.

Church Growth the Voluntary Way

Voluntary religion flourished in nineteenth-century America, and has ever since. When William Byrd of Virginia made an excursion to the back country of Virginia and North Carolina in the early eighteenth century, he reported that there were many communities with no sign of a church. An Anglican clergyman accompanied him on the trip, and he baptized many adults who, presumably, had not been in

the vicinity of a minister of their faith since their birth. That changed after the Church of England was disestablished. New denominations were born; revivals swept whole areas, and religion took on a peculiarly American vitality. Even a friend of established churches had this to say: "I believe that in no other country is there more zeal shown by its various ministers, zeal even to the sacrifice of life; that no country sends out more zealous missionaries; that no country has more societies for the diffusion of the gospel; and that in no other country in the world are larger sums subscribed for the furtherance of those praiseworthy objects as in the eastern states of America."[5]

The churches are still with us today. They are still free. They are still voluntary undertakings. There are many fine church buildings, beautifully furnished, surrounded by well-kept lawns, and attended by a great host of seekers and faithful alike. But the significance of all this for many other aspects of our lives has been largely lost from view. In the place of established churches we have erected a large number of other government establishments which provide us with many things we judge to be good and which we fear we would be denied did not government provide or support them. There is a corrective for this, I submit, in some of the missing chapters from American history.

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1. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1788), p. 171.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

3. Edward Dumbauld, ed., *The Political Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1955), p. 98.

4. Frederick Marryat, *A Diary in America,* Sydney Jackman, ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 309.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

Education in America

by Susan Alder

Heirs of the Reformation, the first settlers came to North America with a firm belief in the necessity and desirability of education. The necessity was rooted in their belief in the "priesthood of all believers." The privilege of communion with and intimate access to God, which came through the reading of the Word and prayer, no longer remained the right of a priestly hierarchy but was open to all who believed. The responsibility of knowing God and thinking his thoughts after him required a thorough knowledge of his Holy Word, the Bible. This mandated that believers be literate; it also mandated that education be part of evangelism.

Parents bore the responsibility for seeing that children were literate, educated in the faith, and able to provide for themselves in society. This concept was rooted in the Biblical teaching that the family—not the church and not civil government—was created by God as the primary governing body in society. Well-governed families produced well-ordered societies. Thus, the family was the guardian of a society's character and culture.

Pastors and elders in the church were to encourage parents in their work and supplement it as necessary by instructing the parents or by direct involvement with the children when, for example, the pastor fulfilled his catechizing responsibilities or the parents asked the pastor to tutor the child. Often when several parents wanted the pastor to tutor their children, the pastor would instruct the children in a group instead of individually, thus forming a type of "school."

If parents were derelict in their duties, they opened themselves up to church—not civil—discipline, the goal of which would be that the parents fulfill their responsibilities as parents. Parents did not even consider that the civil government in any way had the responsibility

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or should assume the responsibility of providing for the education of children.

Even in the early years of the colonies, parents were able to choose from a variety of means to round out their children's education—private tutors (usually a minister), private schools, church schools, and apprenticeships. Private colleges were founded to provide higher education. Academies sprang up in larger towns to prepare students for college.

A notable exception to parental education came in the Massachusetts colony. A law passed by the General Court of the Massachusetts colony in 1642 required civil authorities to see that families educate children, servants, and apprentices. In 1647, the Massachusetts colony enacted a School Code which required appointment of a teacher in every township of 50 households. The teacher's salary was to be paid by parents or citizens of the community through a tax. Townships of 100 families were to set up grammar schools supported by the town.

Educator Samuel Blumenfeld says of these compulsory laws, "They were the ordinances of a religious community upholding the orthodoxy of its doctrines and providing for its future leadership. None of the other English colonies, with the exception of Connecticut which had been settled by Massachusetts Calvinists, enacted such education laws."[1] Blumenfeld also points out that the Bible commonwealth, peculiar to the Massachusetts colony, "lasted no more than sixty years."[2] With its demise and a relaxation of compliance with the old laws, private education boomed in the Massachusetts colony so that by 1720 private schools outnumbered public ones in Boston.

In 1636, John Cotton of Boston willed half of his property to establish a school for disadvantaged children and orphans. Thus the Boston Latin School became the first school established in America outside the home.[3] Educational endeavors in the colonies also included mission work. In 1649, the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England reported 101 Indian missions in New England.[4] There were other mission agencies and missionaries active at this time as well.

Education at this time was not only Christian in that it included instruction in articles of Christian faith, but Christian also in that it saw all reality defined by precepts and principles laid out in the Bible. As historian Clinton Rossiter has said, "The colonial mind was thoroughly Christian in its approach to education, philosophy, and social theory . . . ."[5]

The Great Awakening

Religious revivals occurred sporadically in the American colonies in the early 1700s. These culminated in The Great Awakening which spread from Nova Scotia to Georgia in the 1740s–1760s, touching the lives of the majority of colonists. The great preacher of the Awakening was George Whitefield. Prior to Whitefield's coming, traveling pastors spoke to congregations only at the invitation of their pastor. Whitefield bypassed this convention and preached in the open air to anyone who would listen. He insisted on a personal experience of salvation, and urged the laity to become involved in personal service to God. He insisted on an equality among believers and encouraged his listeners to question leadership if their teaching did not measure up to the truths of Scripture.

Since the revival took place wherever listeners could be gathered, no particular church had a claim to the converts. In fact, this revival brought converts into every fold. People who had seen God's hand at work apart from denominational affiliation became more accepting of each other—in spite of religious controversies that arose during this time. Historians have pointed to this time of revival as the beginning of a Protestant consensus among Americans.

The number of lay ministries increased. Many were formed by people from different denominational backgrounds who found they could work together in a common cause without a common theology. Among the ministries were schools for Indians, Negroes, and children of indentured servants.[6] Likewise, more colleges were formed to handle the swell of young men going into the ministry as a result of the revival. Presbyterians were especially active at this time establishing schools like William Tennent's "Log College" (1727).[7]

According to one historian, "After 1750, a real flourishing of independent educational efforts seems to have swept through the colonies. New secondary academies, a proliferation of free lance teachers in the towns, often young ministers, sometimes formerly indentured and without congregations, began to spread a new educational ethos."[8]

The number of schools continued to grow in pre-revolutionary America. By far, the majority were maintained by the churches and either provided educational opportunities for children of the church or for the poor. The number of charity schools increased in proportion

to the influx of immigrants. Consequently, charity schools were more numerous in the northern colonies.

Education in the South was completely private until 1730, and by 1776, only five public schools existed in the South.[9] Educational opportunities were provided for poor children through apprenticeship programs. Tutors were popular among wealthy planters. Plantation schoolhouses were common where children, not only of the owner, but neighborhood children came to learn.

In 1783, Noah Webster wrote his "Blue-backed Speller" which taught principles of religion and morals in addition to language. Authors Beliles and McDowell comment that the "Blue-backed Speller," which sold over 100 million copies in a century, "did more for American education than any other single book, except the Bible."[10]

Secondary schools designed especially to prepare young men for college dotted the colonies. However, tutors were often used in private homes to prepare the college bound. Nine colleges were in service on the eve of the American Revolution: Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, King's at New York, the College of New Jersey at Princeton, the College of Philadelphia, Rhode Island College, Queen's, and Dartmouth.[11]

Literacy abounded in the colonies prior to and after the Revolution. The Frenchman Pierre Du Pont de Nemours described what he saw in America in a book written at the request of Vice President Thomas Jefferson, entitled *National Education in the United States of America*. Having surveyed education in America, Du Pont de Nemours wrote:

> The United States are more advanced in their educational facilities than most countries. They have a large number of primary schools; and as their paternal affection protects young children from working in the fields, it is possible to send them to the school-master—a condition which does not prevail in Europe.
>
> Most young Americans, therefore, can read, write and cipher. Not more than four in a thousand are unable to write legibly—even neatly; while in Spain, Portugal, Italy, only a sixth of the population can read; in Germany, even in France,

not more than a third; in Poland, about two men in a hundred; and in Russia not one in two hundred.

England, Holland, the Protestant Cantons of Switzerland, more nearly approach the standard of the United States, because in those countries the Bible is read; and in that form of religion the sermons and liturgy in the language of the people tend to increase and formulate ideas of responsibility. Controversy, also, has developed argumentation and has thus given room for the exercise of logic.

In America, a great number of people read the Bible, and all the people read a newspaper. The fathers read aloud to their children while breakfast is being prepared—a task which occupies the mothers for three-quarters of an hour every morning. And as the newspapers of the United States are filled with all sorts of narratives—comments on matters political, physical, philosophic; information on agriculture, the arts, travel, navigation; and also extracts from all the best books in America and Europe—they disseminate an enormous amount of information, some of which is helpful to the young people, especially when they arrive at an age when the father resigns his place as reader in favor of the child who can best succeed him.

It is because of this kind of education that the Americans of the United States, without having more great men than other countries, have the great advantage of having a larger proportion of moderately well informed men; although their education may seem less perfect, it is nevertheless better and more equally distributed.[12]

After the Revolution

The victory of the Revolution and the great freedoms guaranteed by the new Constitution were made possible in part by the consensus of thought and purpose which emerged from America's first national event—the Great Awakening. After the Revolution, Americans thought their Republic could be maintained only by continuing with the same national solidarity.

America's first challenge to its new national solidarity came in the nineteenth century with the westward expansion, the growth of industrialized cities, and the influx of immigrants. Many feared those mov-

ing west would return to barbaric ways in the wilderness. The quick expansion resulted in several states being added to the union, thus shifting the balance of political power away from the East.

The churches were challenged on two fronts—proclamation of the Gospel to a rapidly expanding audience and education of the newly converted. Voluntary societies were formed to help meet these needs. Some were involved in providing missionaries to preach the word, some supplied teachers, some helped publish and supply books and tracts for the new converts; others were involved in humanitarian activities.

Books and tracts became important items for traveling pastors; they provided a continuing education in the absence of the pastor. Voluntary societies were formed to supply these. Most notable among the agencies formed at this time were the American Bible Society in 1816 and the American Tract Society in 1825.

Missionary and educational societies were formed to establish churches and train ministers. After the Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 set aside land in every township for the maintenance of public grammar schools, ministers served as schoolmasters until the schools could be made operational. In 1824, the American Sunday School Union began teaching the "Three R's" in addition to Bible lessons to children who might not otherwise attend school. Churches, in particular Presbyterian and Congregationalist, were very active in founding academies and colleges for higher education.

Textbooks relied on a Biblical understanding of reality and a Protestant understanding of history. Webster's famous dictionary of the American language, published in 1828, was the first American dictionary and defined words from a Biblical perspective using Scriptural references. Webster's "Blue-backed Speller" continued to be used. In 1836, William Holmes McGuffey published his *McGuffey Readers*. One hundred twenty-two million copies were sold in 75 years. Like Webster, McGuffey undergirded the content of his books with Biblical concepts and morality.

The Lure of State Schools

With the variety in educational options in early America, tax-financed schools did not receive widespread support. The Massachusetts Colony's early attempt at this type of public school failed. For

years afterward, Massachusetts communities disobeyed legislative directives to establish schools, choosing instead to educate their children through private means.

Although some of the early statesmen, including Washington and Jefferson, had spoken in favor of some type of national education, there was little interest among the general public.[13] In 1789, Massachusetts passed a law regarding establishment of tax-supported schools. Connecticut and New Hampshire passed similar laws. In 1796, Virginia enacted a state law establishing a state school system. Since the legislation was noncompulsory, Virginians neither taxed themselves for, nor established, tax-supported schools.

Although it theoretically left educational opportunities up to the states, the federal government in the Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 set aside land (one square mile) in every township. The income from the use of this land was to be earmarked for the maintenance of public grammar schools. Samuel Blumenfeld pointed out, "While the purpose of the land grants was to provide incentives to those who wished to establish communities in sparsely settled areas, the net effect was to encourage state governments to become involved in subsidizing education."[14]

None of the legislation passed in these years was compulsory. Therefore, parents continued to educate their children at home, with tutors, or in private or church schools. Many local governments paid tuition for poor students to attend the schools of their choice. Many missionary agencies built and maintained schools for the poor in the large cities.

For years, it appeared the only strong advocates of state schools in America were the Unitarians of Boston, who denied Christian doctrines and accepted Rousseau's philosophy that negative behavior in society was a result of mis-education—not man's fallen nature. The Unitarians felt that man, who was essentially good, could be saved from the evils of society if he were properly educated. Samuel Blumenfeld has documented the Unitarian success in its press toward compulsory, government controlled, tax-supported state schools in his book *Is Public Education Necessary?*

The Nineteenth Century

Christian efforts to evangelize, educate, and minister to the rapidly growing population continued to be successful. As America ap-

proached the 1830s, educational opportunities abounded. Anyone who truly wanted an education could have one. Although common schools were in existence at this time in various places, most parents (even those paying taxes to support the common schools) continued to send their children to private institutions. In December 1832, H. D. Robinson bemoaned the prevalence of Christianity in the culture of the day: "Christian newspapers are numerous and well supported, Christian prayer meetings, Christian Sunday Schools, Christian public and private academies and universities, and various other mighty engines of Christian influence, are planted like the artillery of Heaven against the ramparts of reason and truth."[15]

The educational system which was in place was obviously working very well. The majority of Americans were not interested in replacing it.

But the Unitarians would not be stopped. Eventually the resolve of the majority began to dissolve as the push for state education continued. Three factors became crucial in convincing Americans to reject the educational freedom that had built the greatest nation on earth. First, those interested in state education enlisted the support of teachers and clergy—even conservative clergy. While instilling doubt about the system that was successfully working, these spokesmen were effective lobbyists who won approval for their ideals in state legislatures before they were accepted by the citizens.

Second, approximately 35 million immigrants came to America in the nineteenth century. Unlike the first colonists, these were mostly poor and uneducated. Few, except the Irish, spoke English; many were Roman Catholic—whom many citizens thought presented a threat not only to American Protestantism, but the American way of life. Many wondered how these people would learn to participate not only in the American way of life, but the American system of government. Questions arose about the national loyalty of the Roman Catholics since they were served by priests whose allegiance was to Rome.[16]

Third, a move away from the religious principles of the colonists not only left the majority unprepared to refute the rationale behind the state school movement, but made them particularly receptive to it during times of stress. Bernard Bailyn has pointed out, "Public education as it was in the late nineteenth century, and is now, had not grown from seventeenth-century seeds; it was a new and unexpected genus whose ultimate character could not have been predicted and whose emergence had troubled well-disposed, high-minded people."

In spite of the success that had accompanied individual, missionary, and church educational endeavors, many Christians, encouraged by the Unitarians, began to look longingly toward the state school. Legislation forming these schools and taxes for funding them were considered a small price to pay to control the new elements threatening their "Christian culture."

Many Christians were persuaded that the state schools were the true savior of their society. Bible reading was incorporated into the new state schools—albeit in a "non-sectarian" way. Prayer was also a daily activity. Because the schools were to reflect Protestant plurality, denominational differences were not discussed. The burgeoning Sunday School movement, it was thought, gave the denominations the opportunity to see that children were taught the finer points of denominationalism.

The preservation of "Christian" America was a fundamental reason why Christians supported the state school movement in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many Christian parents were comfortable sending their children to the state schools, because they believed they would receive instruction in religious and moral values that matched their own. But in looking to the state schools, Christians made two costly mistakes: They turned from persuasion to coercion, from evangelism to state education for the preservation of their society. They also abandoned their own parental responsibilities.

Dissenters

One of the first groups to feel left out of the new state school system was the Catholics. The exclusive use of the King James Bible and the anti-Catholic references in religious practice and history classes forced Catholics to establish parochial schools to preserve their religious distinctives. As early as 1829 bishops urged establishment of Catholic schools. In 1884, instead of simply urging, the bishops commanded their formation. Thus the Catholic parochial school system came into being. Thomas F. Sullivan has pointed out, "In many places it was customary that when new parishes were founded, the first building to be erected was the school. Construction of the church, rectory, and convent could all wait until the school was operating and its debt at least partially retired."[17]

Other religious groups protested the rising public school move-

ment and continued to provide educational opportunities for their children. Among them were the Amish, Episcopalians, Quakers, Mennonites, Moravians, Lutherans, and Presbyterians. Those groups of the Anabaptist tradition (Amish, Mennonite, Brethren) were most consistent in insisting upon and providing for distinctive educational opportunities for their children. They understood it to be the only way they could hope to preserve their societal structure in the oceans of diversity that were sweeping across the country.

One hundred forty-two Swedish Lutheran congregations maintained 56 parochial schools in 1870; however, preservation of the Swedish language appeared to be the main goal of these efforts. Norwegian Lutheran clergy seeking to preserve their distinctives clashed with church members who wanted to become part of the New World. For the most part Lutherans tended to favor state schools. The debate was eased when Luther's writings were interpreted to show that church and state had separate functions and mandates from Scripture—the state receiving the educational mandate. More pressure was put on Lutheran schools, and the anti-German sentiment during World War I forced the closing of many of their schools. It became necessary to show loyalty to the American way of life.[18]

Presbyterians historically had been strong advocates of Christian education. Their activity after the Great Awakening resulted in the establishment of primary and mission schools as well as colleges. Not only did they provide educational opportunities for children in their congregations, they used education as a means of mission activity. But when interest in the common schools arose, certain clergy were strong supporters of the state schools. These pastors, like many others, thought the Sunday School system was sufficient to counteract the non-denominational instruction of the religious education in the state schools.

However, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1847 received a report on parochial schools which concluded, "our State schools, in their best estate, can teach no higher morals or religion, than what may be called the *average* of public morals and religion. So long as the majority do not receive the truths of grace, State schools, their creature, can never teach the Gospel. In some States, it is already a matter of debate whether the word of God shall be admitted, and even if this were settled to our wishes, it needs scarcely be said our necessities demand something far higher than the bare reading of

the Bible. In our State schools—Bible or no Bible—we have every assurance that Christ, and grace, and Gospel liberty, cannot, by authority, be so much as named; and without these there can be no Christian education."[19]

This General Assembly resolved to circulate copies of this report to its churches and expressed its firm conviction that every congregation "establish within its bounds one or more primary schools, under the care of the Session of the Church, in which together with the usual branches of secular learning, the truths and duties of our holy religion shall be assiduously inculcated."

In spite of this plea, the Presbyterian parochial movement of 1846–1870 was very disappointing, decimated by the rise of common schools, the division of the church into Northern and Southern branches, the Civil War, and theological disunity.

Northern Baptist efforts to establish academies in the late nineteenth century also met with failure. This failure was attributed to competition from state schools as well as a denominational ambivalence to the state school system.[20]

The final victory for state schools came as the states began to enact laws of compulsory attendance. Prior to the Civil War, only Massachusetts had such laws. After the Civil War other states began enacting them. By 1900, 31 states had some form of compulsory education law. As these laws became more coercive, parents lost more control over their children's education to the point that they had no say in which state school they could attend.

The Twentieth Century

Catholic Schools. Over the years, Catholic schools grew in number and enrollment until the 1970s when many families moved from the cities to suburbia. Unfortunately, the high costs of building and maintaining schools resulted in fewer being built to care for the newly placed suburbanites. Schools in the cities began to close because of lack of enrollment and funds to keep the schools open. Today, many Catholic schools in the cities have received a new lease on life due to enrollments of inner city children who are not Catholic. Many of these children are from poor families who sacrifice to send their children to the parochial school where they can receive a quality education in a safe environment.

Protestant Day Schools. The Supreme Court decisions in 1962 and 1963, which removed prayer and Bible reading from state schools, woke many Christian parents from their slumber. They began evaluating the state schools and found them wanting—religiously, morally, and intellectually. The American Protestantism of the nineteenth century had been replaced with the secular humanism of the twentieth. Parents began to seek educational alternatives for their children.

Once again, small private and church-operated schools began to adorn the American educational landscape. James C. Carper has said of private Christian schools, "Not only do these institutions currently constitute the most rapidly expanding segment of formal education in the United States, but they also represent the first *widespread* secession from the public school pattern since the establishment of Catholic schools in the nineteenth century."[21]

Although these Christian schools are diverse and are supported by a wide variety of churches, they share two key factors: They profess the centrality of Christ as the Son of God and a personal Savior, and they profess their dependence on the Bible in their educational endeavors.

A wealth of Christian curricula has been developed which teaches subjects from a Biblical perspective. Science is based on a creationist perspective. History is viewed as the record of God's interaction with man. The "Three R's" receive much emphasis. Reading is usually taught by the phonetic method. McGuffey's *Readers* and Webster's original dictionary have been reprinted as these schools look for texts with a strong Christian influence. Bible study and worship are part of the curriculum. Many topics which receive much attention in the state schools—such as sex education—are left to the parents. Thus, more of the school day is devoted to learning content. Overall, the academic achievements of students attending these schools is at least equal to, and more often higher than, the academic achievements of students in state schools.

Many parents and churches consider their involvement in the modern Christian school movement to be reclaiming what was lost in the last century. They try, as much as possible, to keep themselves free from government interference. Many refuse to report enrollment figures to state or federal education agencies on religious grounds. Thus, it is difficult to get a precise count of the exact number of these new schools and the number of students attending them. However, a

1987–88 *Schools and Staffing Survey* done by the National Center for Educational Statistics for the U.S. Department of Education estimated there were 9,527 Catholic schools and 12,133 "Other Religious schools" in America at the time of the survey.

As Christians resumed their responsibilities for educating their children, they found the state reluctant to give up control. In 1978, the State of Nebraska threatened to take children away from parents who chose to educate them at the Calvary Academy; eventually 22 Christian schools were caught up in a seven-year conflict with the state. In 1983, in Louisville, Nebraska, seven fathers spent 93 days in jail because they sent their children to a Christian school. In other places, Christian schools have been harassed by state officials because their teachers were not state certified—even though many teachers in Christian schools feel that to be state certified would be a sin. Zoning restrictions have been applied to stop churches from beginning Christian schools. In addition to government harassment, Christian schools have had to cope with allegations of racism, inferior instruction, as well as religious fanaticism. Nevertheless, the schools continue to grow.

Many support agencies for Christian schools have developed over the years. These groups provide a wide range of services including providing accreditation services, curriculum, placement services, and legislative warnings and updates. They also inform parents and schools of measures they can take which will make them less susceptible to litigation and stand by them when they are threatened. In addition to these agencies dealing with Christian school issues, there are many dealing with religious freedom on a broader level—such as family and parental rights—as well as Christian legal associations ready to defend Christians whose religious rights are threatened.

Dr. John Holmes, Director for Government Affairs for the Association of Christian Schools International, said forced federal mandates present the newest threat to Christian schools, in particular, mandates which deal with sexual non-discrimination. Last year, his organization alerted ACSI schools in 22 states about sexual non-discrimination bills. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has begun to step in to defend workers in Christian schools who feel the school has violated their religious rights. Six cases ended up in court last year. Dr. Holmes said that the very fact that the EEOC accepts these cases is

significant because Christian schools, which historically operate on very tight budgets, can be destroyed by legal fees.

It is estimated that approximately 12 percent of American children are in private schools, 80 percent of which are of some religious affiliation, the remaining 20 percent non-religious. It is estimated that approximately 630,000 children are being educated through homeschooling. These figures represent only those who have already opted for alternatives. A 1992 Gallup poll showed that 70 percent of Americans support choice in education. Christian parents have been the vanguard of the educational choice and parental rights movement. Perhaps many more will learn the lesson that school and state should be separate, just as church and state are separate.

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Education In Colonial America

by Robert A. Peterson

One of the main objections people have to getting government out of the education business and turning it over to the free market is that "it simply would not get the job done." This type of thinking is due, in large measure, to what one historian called "a parochialism in time,"[1] i.e., a limited view of an issue for lack of historical perspective. Having served the twelve-year sentence in government-controlled schools, most Americans view our present public school system as the measure of all things in education. Yet for two hundred years in American history, from the mid-1600s to the mid-1800s, public schools as we know them today were virtually non-existent, and the educational needs of America were met by the free market. In these two centuries, America produced several generations of highly skilled and literate men and women who laid the foundation for a nation dedicated to the principles of freedom and self-government.

The private system of education in which our forefathers were educated included home, school, church, voluntary associations such as library companies and philosophical societies, circulating libraries, apprenticeships, and private study. It was a system supported primarily by those who bought the services of education, and by private benefactors. All was done without compulsion. Although there was a veneer of government involvement in some colonies, such as in Puritan Massachusetts, early American education was essentially based on the principle of voluntarism.[2]

Dr. Lawrence A. Cremin, distinguished scholar in the field of education, has said that during the colonial period the Bible was "the single most important cultural influence in the lives of Anglo-Americans."[3]

Thus, the cornerstone of early American education was the belief that "children are an heritage from the Lord."[4] Parents believed that

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it was their responsibility not only to teach them how to make a living, but also how to live. As our forefathers searched their Bibles, they found that the function of government was to protect life and property.[5] Education was not a responsibility of the civil government.

Education Began in the Home and the Fields

Education in early America began in the home at the mother's knee, and often ended in the cornfield or barn by the father's side. The task of teaching reading usually fell to the mother, and since paper was in short supply, she would trace the letters of the alphabet in the ashes and dust by the fireplace.[6] The child learned the alphabet and then how to sound out words. Then a book was placed in the child's hands, usually the Bible. As many passages were familiar to him, having heard them at church or at family devotions, he would soon master the skill of reading. The Bible was supplemented by other good books such as *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, *The New England Primer,* and Isaac Watt's *Divine Songs*. From volumes like these, our founding fathers and their generation learned the values that laid the foundation for free enterprise. In *Against Idleness and Mischief,* for example, they learned individual responsibility before God in the realm of work and learning.[7]

How doth the busy little bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower.

How skillfully she builds her cell,
How neat she spreads the wax
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labour, or of skill,
I would be busy too;
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play
Let my first years be passed;
That I may give for every day
Some good account at last.

Armed with love, common sense, and a nearby woodshed, colonial mothers often achieved more than our modern-day elementary schools with their federally funded programs and education specialists. These colonial mothers used simple, time-tested methods of instruction mixed with plain, old-fashioned hard work. Children were not ruined by educational experiments developed in the ivory towers of academe. The introduction to a reading primer from the early nineteenth century testifies to the importance of home instruction.[8] It says: "The author cannot but hope that this book will enable many a mother or aunt, or elder brother or sister, or perhaps a beloved grandmother, by the family fireside, to go through in a pleasant and sure way with the art of preparing the child for his first school days."

Home education was so common in America that most children knew how to read before they entered school. As Ralph Walker has pointed out, "Children were often taught to read at home before they were subjected to the rigours of school. In middle-class families, where the mother would be expected to be literate, this was considered part of her duties."[9]

Without ever spending a dime of tax money, or without ever consulting a host of bureaucrats, psychologists, and specialists, children in early America learned the basic academic skills of reading, writing, and ciphering necessary for getting along in society. Even in Boston, the capital city of the colony in which the government had the greatest hand, children were taught to read at home. Samuel Eliot Morison, in his excellent study on education in colonial New England, says:

> Boston offers a curious problem. The grammar (Boston Latin) school was the only public school down to 1684, when a writing school was established; and it is probable that only children who already read were admitted to that .... they must have learned to read somehow, since there is no evidence of unusual illiteracy in the town. And a Boston bookseller's stock in 1700 includes no less than eleven dozen spellers and sixty-one dozen primers.[10]

The answer to this supposed problem is simple. The books were bought by parents, and illiteracy was absent because parents taught their children how to read outside of a formal school setting. Coupled with the vocational skills children learned from their parents, home education met the demands of the free market. For many, formal schooling was simply unnecessary. The fine education they received at home and on the farm held them in good stead for the rest of their lives, and was supplemented with Bible reading and almanacs like Franklin's *Poor Richard's*.

Some of our forefathers desired more education than they could receive at home. Thus, grammar and secondary schools grew up all along the Atlantic seaboard, particularly near the centers of population, such as Boston and Philadelphia. In New England, many of these schools were started by colonial governments, but were supported and controlled by the local townspeople.

In the Middle Colonies there was even less government intervention. In Pennsylvania, a compulsory education law was passed in 1683, but it was never strictly enforced.[11] Nevertheless, many schools were set up simply as a response to consumer demand. Philadelphia, which by 1776 had become second only to London as the chief city in the British Empire, had a school for every need and interest. Quakers, Philadelphia's first inhabitants, laid the foundation for an educational system that still thrives in America. Because of the sect's emphasis on learning, an illiterate Quaker child was a contradiction in terms. Other religious groups set up schools in the Middle Colonies. The Scottish Presbyterians, the Moravians, the Lutherans, and the Anglicans all had their own schools. In addition to these church-related schools, private schoolmasters, entrepreneurs in their own right, established hundreds of schools.

Historical records, which are by no means complete, reveal that over 125 private schoolmasters advertised their services in Philadelphia newspapers between 1740 and 1776. Instruction was offered in Latin, Greek, mathematics, surveying, navigation, accounting, bookkeeping, science, English, and contemporary foreign languages.[12] Incompetent and inefficient teachers were soon eliminated, since they were not subsidized by the state or protected by a guild or union. Teachers who satisfied their customers by providing good services prospered. One schoolmaster, Andrew Porter, a mathematics teacher, had over one

hundred students enrolled in 1776. The fees the students paid enabled him to provide for a family of seven.[13]

In the Philadelphia Area

Philadelphia also had many fine evening schools. In 1767, there were at least sixteen evening schools, catering mostly to the needs of Philadelphia's hard-working German population. For the most part, the curriculum of these schools was confined to the teaching of English and vocations.[14] There were also schools for women, blacks, and the poor. Anthony Benezet, a leader in colonial educational thought, pioneered in education for women and Negroes. The provision of education for the poor was a favorite Quaker philanthropy. As one historian has pointed out, "the poor, both Quaker and non-Quaker, were allowed to attend without paying fees."[15]

In the countryside around Philadelphia, German immigrants maintained many of their own schools. By 1776, at least sixteen schools were being conducted by the Mennonites in Eastern Pennsylvania. Christopher Dock, who made several notable contributions to the science of pedagogy, taught in one of these schools for many years. Eastern Pennsylvanians, as well as New Jerseyans and Marylanders, sometimes sent their children to Philadelphia to further their education, where there were several boarding schools, both for girls and boys.

In the Southern Colonies, government had, for all practical purposes, no hand at all in education. In Virginia, education was considered to be no business of the state. The educational needs of the young in the South were taken care of in "old-field" schools. "Old-field" schools were buildings erected in abandoned fields that were too full of rocks or too overcultivated for farm use. It was in such a school that George Washington received his early education. The Southern Colonies' educational needs were also taken care of by using private tutors, or by sending their sons north or across the Atlantic to the mother country.

Colonial Colleges

A college education is something that very few of our forefathers wanted or needed. As a matter of fact, most of them were unimpressed

by degrees or a university accent. They judged men by their character and by their experience. Moreover, many of our founding fathers, such as George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Ben Franklin, did quite well without a college education. Yet for those who so desired it, usually young men aspiring to enter the ministry, university training was available. Unlike England, where the government had given Cambridge and Oxford a monopoly on the granting of degrees,[16] there were nine colleges from which to choose.

Although some of the colonial colleges were started by colonial governments, it would be misleading to think of them as statist institutions in the modern sense.[17] Once chartered, the colleges were neither funded nor supported by the State. Harvard was established with a grant from the Massachusetts General Court, yet voluntary contributions took over to keep the institution alive. John Harvard left the college a legacy of 800 pounds and his library of 400 books. "College corn," donated by the people of the Bay Colony, maintained the young scholars for many years.[18] Provision was also made for poor students, as Harvard developed one of the first work-study programs.[19] And when Harvard sought to build a new building in 1674, donations were solicited from the people of Massachusetts. Despite the delays caused by King Philip's War, the hall was completed in 1677 at almost no cost to the taxpayer.[20]

New Jersey was the only colony that had two colleges, the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and Queen's (Rutgers). The Log College, the predecessor of Princeton, was founded when Nathaniel Irwin left one thousand dollars to William Tennent to found a seminary.[21] Queens grew out of a small class held by the Dutch revivalist John Frelinghuysen.[22] Despite occasional hard times, neither college bowed to civil government for financial assistance. As Frederick Rudolph has observed, "neither the college at Princeton nor its later rival at New Brunswick ever received any financial support from the state . . . ."[23] Indeed, John Witherspoon, Princeton's sixth president, was apparently proud of the fact that his institution was independent of government control. In an advertisement addressed to the British settlers in the West Indies, Witherspoon wrote:[24] "The College of New Jersey is altogether independent. It hath received no favor from Government but the charter, by the particular friendship of a person now deceased."

Based on the principle of freedom, Princeton under Witherspoon produced some of America's most "animated Sons of Liberty." Many

of Princeton's graduates, standing firmly in the Whig tradition of limited government, helped lay the legal and constitutional foundations for our Republic. James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, was a Princeton graduate.

Libraries

In addition to formal schooling in elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities, early America had many other institutions that made it possible for people either to get an education or supplement their previous training. Conceivably, an individual who never attended school could receive an excellent education by using libraries, building and consulting his own library, and by joining a society for mutual improvement. In colonial America, all of these were possible.

Consumer demand brought into existence a large number of libraries. Unlike anything in the Old Country, where libraries were open only to scholars, churchmen, or government officials, these libraries were rarely supported by government funds. In Europe, church libraries were supported by tax money as well, for they were a part of an established church. In America, church libraries, like the churches themselves, were supported primarily by voluntarism.

The first non-private, non-church libraries in America were maintained by membership fees, called subscriptions or shares, and by gifts of books and money from private benefactors interested in education. The most famous of these libraries was Franklin and Logan's Library Company in Philadelphia, which set the pattern and provided much of the inspiration for libraries throughout the colonies.[25] The membership fee for these subscription libraries varied from twenty or thirty pounds to as little as fifteen shillings a year. The Association Library, a library formed by a group of Quaker artisans, cost twenty shillings to join.[26]

Soon libraries became the objects of private philanthropy, and it became possible for even the poorest citizens to borrow books. Sometimes the membership fee was completely waived for an individual if he showed intellectual promise and character.[27]

Entrepreneurs, seeing an opportunity to make a profit from colonial Americans' desire for self-improvement, provided new services and innovative ways to sell or rent printed matter. One new business that

developed was that of the circulating library. In 1767, Lewis Nicola established one of the first such businesses in the City of Brotherly Love. The library was open daily, and customers, by depositing five pounds and paying three dollars a year, could withdraw one book at a time. Nicola apparently prospered, for two years later he moved his business to Society Hill, enlarged his library, and reduced his prices to compete with other circulating libraries.[28] Judging from the titles in these libraries,[29] colonial Americans could receive an excellent education completely outside of the schoolroom. For colonial Americans who believed in individual responsibility, self-government, and self-improvement, this was not an uncommon course of study. Most lawyers, for example, were self-educated.

Sermons as Educational Tools

The sermon was also an excellent educational experience for our colonial forefathers. Sunday morning was a time to hear the latest news and see old friends and neighbors. But it was also an opportunity for many to sit under a man of God who had spent many hours preparing a two-, three-, or even four-hour sermon. Many a colonial pastor, such as Jonathan Edwards, spent eight to twelve hours daily studying, praying over, and researching his sermon. Unlike sermons on the frontier in the mid-nineteenth century, colonial sermons were filled with the fruit of years of study. They were geared not only to the emotions and will, but also to the intellect.

As Daniel Boorstin has pointed out, the sermon was one of the chief literary forms in colonial America.[30] Realizing this, listeners followed sermons closely, took mental notes, and usually discussed the sermon with the family on Sunday afternoon. Anne Hutchinson's discussions, which later resulted in the Antinomian Controversy, were merely typical of thousands of discussions which took place in the homes of colonial America. Most discussions, however, were not as controversial as those which took place in the Hutchinson home.

Thus, without ever attending a college or seminary, a churchgoer in colonial America could gain an intimate knowledge of Bible doctrine, church history, and classical literature. Questions raised by the sermon could be answered by the pastor or by the books in the church libraries that were springing up all over America. Often a sermon was

later published and listeners could review what they had heard on Sunday morning.

The first Sunday Schools also developed in this period. Unlike their modern-day counterparts, colonial Sunday Schools not only taught Bible but also the rudiments of reading and writing. These Sunday Schools often catered to the poorest members of society.

Modern historians have discounted the importance of the colonial church as an educational institution, citing the low percentage of colonial Americans on surviving church membership rolls. What these historians fail to realize, however, is that unlike most churches today, colonial churches took membership seriously. Requirements for becoming a church member were much more rigorous in those days, and many people attended church without officially joining. Other sources indicate that church attendance was high in the colonial period. Thus, many of our forefathers partook not only of the spiritual blessing of their local churches, but the educational blessings as well.

Philosophical Societies

Another educational institution that developed in colonial America was the philosophical society. One of the most famous of these was Franklin's Junto, where men would gather to read and discuss papers they had written on all sorts of topics and issues.[31] Another society was called The Literary Republic. This society opened in the bookbindery of George Rineholt in 1764 in Philadelphia. Here, artisans, tradesmen, and common laborers met to discuss logic, jurisprudence, religion, science, and moral philosophy (economics).[32]

Itinerant lecturers, not unlike the Greek philosophers of the Hellenistic period, rented halls and advertised their lectures in local papers. One such lecturer, Joseph Cunningham, offered a series of lectures on the "History and Laws of England" for a little over a pound.[33]

By 1776, when America finally declared its independence, a tradition had been established and voluntarism in education was the rule. Our founding fathers, who had been educated in this tradition, did not think in terms of government-controlled education. Accordingly, when the delegates gathered in Philadelphia to write a Constitution for the new nation, education was considered to be outside the jurisdiction of the civil government, particularly the national government.

Madison, in his notes on the Convention, recorded that there was some talk of giving the federal legislature the power to establish a national university at the future capital. But the proposal was easily defeated, for as Boorstin has pointed out, "the Founding Fathers supported the local institutions which had sprung up all over the country."[34] A principle had been established in America that was not to be deviated from until the mid-nineteenth century. Even as late as 1860, there were only 300 public schools, as compared to 6,000 private academies.[35]

A Highly Literate Populace

The results of colonial America's free market system of education were impressive indeed. Almost no tax money was spent on education, yet education was available to almost anyone who wanted it, including the poor. No government subsidies were given, and inefficient institutions either improved or went out of business. Competition guaranteed that scarce educational resources would be allocated properly. The educational institutions that prospered produced a generation of articulate Americans who could grapple with the complex problems of self-government. *The Federalist Papers,* which are seldom read or understood today, even in our universities, were written for and read by the common man. Literacy rates were as high or higher than they are today.[36] A study conducted in 1800 by Du Pont de Nemours revealed that only four in a thousand Americans were unable to read and write legibly.[37] Various accounts from colonial America support these statistics. In 1772, Jacob Duche, the Chaplain of Congress, later turned Tory, wrote:

> The poorest labourer upon the shore of Delaware thinks himself entitled to deliver his sentiments in matters of religion or politics with as much freedom as the gentleman or scholar . . . . Such is the prevailing taste for books of every kind, that almost every man is a reader; and by pronouncing sentence, right or wrong, upon the various publications that come in his way, puts himself upon a level, in point of knowledge, with their several authors.[38]

Franklin, too, testified to the efficiency of the colonial educational system. According to Franklin, the North American libraries alone "have improved the general conversation of Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges."[39]

The experience of colonial America clearly supports the idea that the market, if allowed to operate freely, could meet the educational needs of modern-day America. In the nineteenth century, the Duke of Wellington remarked that "the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton and Cambridge." Today, the battle between freedom and statism is being fought in America's schools. Those of us who believe in Constitutional government would do well to promote the principles of competition, pluralism, and government non-intervention in education.

Years ago, Abraham Lincoln said, "The philosophy of the classroom will be the philosophy of the government in the next generation."

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3. Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607–1789.* (New York: Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 40.

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25. Max Farrand, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Berkeley, California, 1949), p. 86.
26. Bridenbaugh, p. 87.
27. Bridenbaugh, p. 99
28. Bridenbaugh, p 91.
29. Wright, pp. 126–133.
30. Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1958), pp. 10–14.
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Education Without Taxation

by Erica Carle

Though many have pointed to shortcomings in our system of compulsory education in the United States, most persons believe that tax-financing is essential if education is to be made available to all children. But suppose that one teacher could assure the elementary education of from 500 to 1,000 children at a time! And if this could be done in one large classroom, thus eliminating expensive school construction, the taxpayer might be relieved of a considerable burden.

Unbelievable as it may seem today, there was a teacher who not only managed the education of up to 1,000 children at once, by his own efforts, but who also taught hundreds of other teachers from all over the world to do the same.

In 1798, at the age of twenty, this educational genius opened his first school in London. At a time when education for the poor was almost unheard of, Joseph Lancaster invited factory workers, miners, peasants, even paupers to send their children. And the little ones came, often barefooted, ragged, and hungry—some eager, many skeptical at first. With remarkable speed, the youngsters began to read, spell, write, and figure. Those thought to be the least promising children of London blossomed into scholars. Well disciplined and responsible, they applied themselves with enthusiasm and orderliness, outdistancing students in the very best schools of that day.

Lancaster's school outgrew one accommodation after another, and by the time he was 21, he had designed and erected his own building. The sign outside the new establishment read: "All that will may send their children and have them educated freely; and those who do not wish to have education for nothing, may pay for it, if they please."

Word spread throughout England, Europe, even North and South America, that on Borough Road in London, one Quaker schoolmaster was teaching a thousand pupils of all ages to read, write, and figure.

Erica Carle, a Wisconsin housewife and free-lance writer, wrote this essay for the March 1962 issue of *The Freeman*.

A Sight to Behold

How could it be done? Visitors crossed mountains, oceans, and continents to learn the secrets. Those who came described what they had seen, "An orderly and beautiful spectacle . . . The children were full of joyful animation in performing duties agreeably varied from hour to hour . . . . The master had complete control. In an instant the whole hubbub could be stopped by the word, 'Halt!'"

Lancaster began by teaching fundamentals to a few of the most promising older boys. As soon as a lad achieved the required degree of proficiency, he became a monitor with the responsibility of devoting part of his time to teaching a class of ten younger children. There were monitors for reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling. In addition, monitors took attendance, ruled paper, gave exams, and promoted pupils. Assistant monitors stood by to take over teaching chores when the senior monitor received his own instruction.

Pupils were promoted immediately and individually upon achievement of the required work. They advanced, subject by subject, so that a bright speller moved forward as fast as he learned his words; in arithmetic one advanced as quickly as his skill and enthusiasm impelled him. Small classes provided a constant challenge, for, if a student missed a question, another who discovered the error assumed the former's place at the head of the class.

Lancaster developed an alphabet wheel, pioneered the use of individual slates, used reading sheets as a substitute for then-scarce books. Lesson books in arithmetic were his own creation. There were sand tables on which tiny fingers traced the letters of the alphabet.

All the senses were stimulated at once. The children saw words written by the monitor, and read them aloud as they, themselves, wrote; then all held up individual slates for correction.

About the room were posted brief mottoes and slogans to inspire the pupils. Lancaster originated a few of his own: "Let every child at every moment have something to do, and a motive for doing it." "A place for everything, and everything in its place."

On holidays the schoolmaster took his children on long hikes through the woods, teaching about, and enjoying, the wonders of nature. On Sunday evenings he frequently invited large groups of students to tea for informal discussion and brief lessons from the Bible. To Joseph Lancaster, living meant to teach, and he rejoiced in his

achievements. Nothing pleased him more than the thrill of awakening a young, receptive mind to a love of learning.

The System Spreads

It wasn't long before others patterned schools after his, and former pupils became masters of their own monitorial schools. Lancaster was much in demand for lectures, discussions, and consultation on his system.

Donations increased, and among the growing number of supporters were many famous and influential Britons: the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Kent, Lord Somerville, Robert Owen. In 1805, an audience with George III resulted in yearly contributions from members of the royal family.

The system was also being exported with remarkable success. New York City was the center of greatest activity in the United States. In 1805 a private group, called the New York Free School Society, was formed under the leadership of De Witt Clinton, later Governor of New York. Clinton's remarks in an address some years later add credence to stories of the effectiveness of Lancaster's system:

> When I perceive that many boys in our school have been taught to read and write in two months who did not before know the alphabet, and that even one has accomplished it in three weeks—when I view all the bearings and tendencies of the system—when I contemplate the habits of order which it forms, the spirit of emulation which it excites—the rapid movement which it produces—the purity of morals which it inculcates—when I behold the extraordinary union of celerity in instruction, and economy of expense—and when I perceive one great assembly of a thousand children under the eye of a single teacher, marching with unexampled rapidity, and with perfect discipline to the goal of knowledge, I confess that I recognize in Lancaster, the benefactor of the human race.[1]

It is difficult to understand how a system of education which was once so popular and successful could be almost completely forgotten. If, as history seems to indicate, Lancaster's system was effective, why isn't it used today?

With Occasional Setbacks

The answer lies partly in factors beyond his control, partly in success that was too great, and partly in his own personality; for, while Lancaster was a genius at educational organization, he was a great deal less gifted in his talent for balancing financial accounts. He tried to do too much! When he saw that some of his boys were coming to school hungry, he raised subscriptions to enable him to give them a hearty meal every day. Many of the monitors were from other areas and lived with Lancaster as part of his "family" until they were ready to leave and establish their own schools. Bright scholars were rewarded with handsome gifts: books, medals, and toys. Much of the equipment used, such as slates and slatepens, had to be made in small factories he was compelled to establish.

He opened a printing office for textbooks and pamphlets. The expected profit from his many enterprises did not materialize. The financial picture was so bad in 1808 that Lancaster went to debtor's prison.

Friends later obtained his release, and soon thereafter the schoolmaster, with some misgivings, allowed his friends to take over the financial arrangements for his enterprise.

At first, little real change took place. Between 1807 and 1810, Lancaster traveled over 7,000 miles, spoke 140 times and established nearly 100 new schools for 25,500 pupils.[2]

Financial difficulties continued, however. In addition, new complications arose. Despite the fact that all his reading lessons were taken from the Bible, Lancaster steadfastly refused to allow his schools to be used for the promotion of any particular religious denomination. For this stand, he aroused the fury of a vocal faction of the Church of England.

Particularly incensed after Lancaster received the King's patronage, Mrs. Trimmer—an educationist and writer—attacked the schoolmaster with venomous intensity. He was damned and degraded in print, on the platform, and from the pulpit. He was called a destroyer of religion, a goliath of schismatics, an infidel and atheist. Fear was expressed that education would slip from the hands of the Church into those of this Quaker imposter.

Mrs. Trimmer consulted Dr. Andrew Bell, a former missionary, who had used a similar system with remarkable success in India. The

missionary schoolteacher had no quarrel with Lancaster, who had freely acknowledged his debt to Bell for some features of his own system. Mrs. Trimmer, however, stirred sufficient fear and jealousy that in 1811 a rival education group called "The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church" was formed under the direction of Dr. Bell.

Controversy Arises

With the turmoil, Lancaster's schools lost some supporters, but many Church of England members remained loyal to his cause. Lancaster and Bell themselves remained aloof from the controversy, but bitter public arguments charged with emotion developed between the advocates of the rival systems.

For Lancaster personally, the unexpected animosity was upsetting. Yet, the long-range result of the heated, bitter competition was a race to create more schools and better schools and to serve greater areas.

Andrew Bell's original philosophy had been that the poor should not be over-educated, since it would tend to make them unhappy with their station in life. Yet, there was the competition of the Lancasterian system feeding little ones knowledge just as fast as they could digest it.

Sometimes, the very rate of learning in Lancaster's system caused alarm. In one case an anxious father consulted the clergyman of his parish with the complaint that his children were learning so much, so fast, only witchcraft could produce such results.[3]

Taken Over by Friends

In 1810, Lancaster spent six months in Ireland and returned jubilant with the success of his trip. In his absence, however, and without his knowledge or permission, the committee which managed his financial affairs had been greatly enlarged. The work was no longer his own venture. His status had been reduced to that of paid employee. Many difficulties and disputes followed, until in 1814 Joseph Lancaster and the friends who had "helped" him went their separate ways.[4]

By this time Lancaster had awakened many to the fact that it was possible to do a creditable job of education at very little expense; and education was becoming a lively political issue. The government began

to conduct surveys, promote its own ideas, and even tried to appoint school inspectors. The first reaction to interference was so violent that inspections were seldom made. Later, however, Parliament voted financial aid to the British and Foreign Society, as it was now called, and the competing National Society. The contributions were eagerly accepted. Thereafter, schools were compelled to comply with the inspection edict. Next to go was the monitorial system; the end of Lancaster's idea in England came in 1847 when the Society accepted government assistance for the training of teachers.[5]

In New York City

Meanwhile, New York City's educational history had followed a similar pattern. As the Free School Society's first school began to grow out of its original quarters, a new location was needed. The City of New York donated a larger building on the condition that children at the almshouse be educated.[6]

On February 27, 1807, New York State joined hands in the educational effort. A law was passed appropriating $4,000 to the society's building fund, plus $1,000 per year for general expenses.[7]

In 1812, as education was moving along nicely, the legislature appointed a representative to look after the state's money. In January 1813 Gideon Hawley took office as the nation's first State Superintendent of Schools. In the same legislative year, the principles were established of permissive taxation by local communities for school buildings, and that a teacher must have certain moral and scholastic qualifications to be determined by local authority.[8]

In 1818 Joseph Lancaster determined to begin life anew by viewing the development of his system in the New World. He received a hero's welcome, spent many happy days viewing the schools and expressing approval or disapproval. He was elated by the warm enthusiastic reception from the students themselves.

Lancaster spent much time in New York, as well as Philadelphia, Boston, Montreal, even Caracas, Venezuela, at the invitation of Simón Bolivar. He made as many enemies as he did friends. Among Lancaster's most outspoken foes were many teachers. While some viewed the system as a personal challenge, an exciting adventure in education, others believed they were suffering a humiliating indignity in being reduced to the supervision of "transient, ignorant, and unskilled moni-

tors."[9] Despite such opposition, Lancaster retained his enthusiasm and confidence in his system and was planning a return to England to revitalize it there, when a wagon struck and killed him in New York City in 1838.

Four years later the Board of Education of the City of New York was created, established its own schools, and took over responsibility for education. Fearing the effect of total political domination of education, the Free School Society, which had earlier been renamed the Public School Society, continued to operate. But laws permitting taxation for schools had already given the city a seemingly unlimited source of revenue. Economy no longer seemed necessary, or even desirable. In 1846 the Education Department banned the monitorial system in favor of pupil-teachers, and in 1853 the Public School Society merged with the city system.

Today

Today, many view the political system of education in the United States with dissatisfied, but resigned, acceptance. It is inadequate and expensive and hasn't lived up to its most modest promises. There is no evidence that we are better citizens, that we are troubled by fewer criminals, or even that we have a more peaceful world through knowledge. In many cases the very basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic have been imparted with a good deal less than phenomenal success.

While the politician may have been a well-meaning, though crafty, suitor in the cause of universal education, premarital promises have been forgotten or overlooked.

That no one would have educated the poor if "society" had not assumed the responsibility has been accepted as a proven truth. In the United States we have been told for more than 100 years that tax-supported, political, compulsory, secular education is one of the great social reforms. Yet, had universal education not been pushed into a hasty marriage with the politician, methods developed by Joseph Lancaster might have survived. His system succeeded once in turning out eager, well-disciplined, helpful, moral, and brilliant scholars. Perhaps one day it will be needed and allowed again.

1. *The Life and Writings of De Witt Clinton* (Baker & Scribner, 1849), p. 318.
2. Henry Bryan Binns, *A Century of Education, 1808–1908* (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1908), p. 45.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
6. Albert Ulmann, *A Landmark History of New York* (New York: D. Appleton Century Co., 1939), p. 184.
7. *The Life and Writings of De Witt Clinton,* p. 320.
8. Edgar W. Knight, *Education in the United States* (Ginn & Co.), p. 287.
9. *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (Macmillan & Co., 1933).

State Subsidy to Private Schools: A Case History of Destruction

by John Chodes

This is a story of how government aid entangles private schools in public policy and eventually leads to state control. It is especially pertinent today because many parents with children in public schools are lobbying state legislatures for help: tax credits, vouchers, or even direct subsidies to put their children into private schools. Parents hope that they can obtain government aid and still maintain control over their children's education.

History shows that this is an illusion. State subsidies to private schools create legal conflicts that lead to their eventual takeover or destruction. The conflicts arise from inherent contradictions between parental values and public policy.

Our story begins in the 1790s in the slums of London. A young Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, was excluded from an education monopolized by the Church of England because of his religion. His father taught him at home. Embittered, Lancaster conceived a radical, cheap method for schooling the poor and disenfranchised such as himself. His "monitorial system" was so effective, it spread around the world.

Lancaster had the brighter children (the monitors) teach the slower, in order to cut costs. This also developed their leadership ability. There was one monitor for every ten students. Because of this small-group interaction, no one was bored, even though the subjects taught were more than the basics. They included algebra, trigonometry, and foreign languages.[1]

Lancaster's methods brought out students' entrepreneurial spirit. They were paid to be monitors in "merit badges," which were like Green Stamps, having considerable value when redeemed in bulk. Students purchased school goods and services with them, learning marketplace dynamics.[2]

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The system was profitable even with a tuition fee of only four shillings a year. Lancaster felt it was critically important that the students, no matter how poor, pay so as to strengthen their motivation to succeed.[3]

Four shillings was a fraction of what it cost to operate church-run or private schools. Lancaster, however, had cut costs to the bone. Students wrote on slate instead of paper. Paper was expensive, slate indestructible. One book per subject per class was used. Each page was separated and placed on a board suspended over a circle of ten students. Each group studied that page as a lesson. Then the groups rotated. Lancaster even designed prefab school buildings that could be constructed in days.[4]

The State's Monopoly in Education

Since the Enlightenment, all governments, whether monarchies, democracies, or dictatorships, have considered education a legitimate arena for state monopoly. Values, the rules of citizenship, respect for authority, and homogenized cultural diversity were imperatives for stability.

Freedom lovers, on the other hand, saw the danger of extending despotism through this process. Also, church and private school systems perceived that state-funded education would undermine them, since their values often were at odds with government policy.

Due to these fears and the large taxpayer expense, government-financed schools advanced slowly in the United States. Then the Lancaster system attracted state attention because of its extreme economy. Taxpayers could accept its small burden.

The negative aspect for government was that Lancaster's methods produced leaders. They were entrepreneurs, not bureaucrats. To the state, "good citizenship" meant restrictions on self assertion.

In 1805 New York City was an isolated island of educational choice and freedom. It had many private and church schools. Some were free, some inexpensive. It had no state-funded common schools. It was surrounded by a government near-monopoly of education throughout the rest of the state, financed via the School Fund, which pressed for school uniformity throughout its domain. The city resisted.

There was an illiteracy problem in New York City associated with

poverty. Children not affiliated with a religious or charitable organization often didn't attend school. In April 1805 several prominent philanthropists met to discuss an educational plan to reach these youngsters. Benjamin Perkins had just returned from England where he had seen the Lancaster system in operation. He felt it was perfect for New York. The others agreed.

They incorporated under the title: "A Free School for the Education of Poor Children who do not Belong, or are not Provided by, any Religious Society."

Its charter directed the Society for a Free School to seek private contributions. Unfortunately, this meant disregarding Joseph Lancaster's original insights. Student payment and profitability were cast aside. This diffused the advantage of the marketplace and self-motivation. Charity became the philosophical basis.

Initially, contributions kept the Society free from political influence. In the first year enough money was raised to open a school and hire teachers. There was no thought of or need for a state subsidy.[5]

The Influence of De Witt Clinton

The private nature of the Society for a Free School changed radically when De Witt Clinton was elected president and began to assert his influence. Clinton (1769–1828) was one of the most famous political figures of his day. He was a 10-term mayor of New York City and also served as the state's governor. He promoted state intervention in education as an "indispensable foundation of democracy . . . the first duty . . . and the surest evidence of good government is the encouragement of education . . . that will watch over the liberties and guard them against fraud, intrigue, corruption and violence."[6]

Clinton had heard of Lancaster's early success and the low cost of his methods. When Benjamin Perkins went to England on business, it was Clinton who asked him to investigate how the Lancaster method worked in practice. Perkins' report created the Society for a Free School along Lancasterian lines.[7]

Clinton attached himself to the Society from the outset. The trustees were only too pleased to have him participate. His prestige made it easy to raise contributions.

Even though the Society had no need for government subsidy,

Clinton approached the state legislature for assistance. With his political clout, the Society received state aid. The trustees believed his view that it was important to be in the good graces of the government.

The initial $4,000 grant toward building a school and $1,000 for expenses was less than had been raised privately. Yet even this small subsidy required changes in state tax policy. To pay for it, the levy on taverns and liquor was raised.

Then Clinton showed his true colors. In an 1807 speech at the opening of a second Society school, his views were diametrically opposed to the Society's stress on student self-assertion and entrepreneurship. Clinton blamed the business ethic and wealth for moral depravity and poverty. He stated that schools should perform a social, not a personal function. Now that the state had a toehold, Clinton altered the Society's position to be more like the government's.[8]

Subsidy Alters Ideals

Subsidy was never needed, but subsidy radically altered the fundamental stance of the Society for a Free School. State aid provoked a charter revision which extended the Society's operations to "all children who should be the proper objects of gratuitous education." Then the name was changed to the Free School Society. No longer were the poor and disenfranchised the targeted student group. The new aim was universality. This was the state's position through its common schools, putting it on a collision course with both the common and the religious schools. The original charter's careful wording ("... for the education of poor children who do not belong, or are not provided by, any religious society") had avoided conflict with other systems.[9]

The new charter meant another change: Education was no longer important for employability and self-improvement. Now the Free School Society (F.S.S.) reflected the state policy of education to "enlighten" voting habits: "[What educational system] is best adopted to meet the wants of the state? In our country ... the ballot box ... a power, capricious and mighty ... which rolls over the land with the tremendous pressure of an ocean swelling on and overbearing every obstacle .... such a power must be controlled and guarded or its exercise will be the destruction of everything dear to the citizen ...."[10]

Secular vs. Nonsectarian

In 1813 the Free School Society accepted a portion of the state's School Fund. This proved to be another crucial error, allowing New York State to extend its power into the city. This made the F.S.S. more like a government agency, formalized by having the mayor, city recorder, and first judge of the city on its board of trustees.

Superficially, it seemed that the state and the F.S.S. were in agreement on curriculum policy. In fact, they were completely at odds. This disagreement, never reconciled, would finally bring down the Free School Society.

The School Fund was created to develop the state's own common school system. Curriculum was mandated along secular lines. The F.S.S. taught its students a nonsectarian point of view. This difference generated the conflict of public versus private values in the legislature.

Common schools were compelled to exorcise any trace of religion or partiality in values from their curricula. Free School Society schools provided the basic moral tenets that all Christian sects could agree upon, but which favored no single denomination. (Religious schools that followed a specific doctrine were labeled "sectarian.")

Both secular and nonsectarian schools tried to be universal. But the state legislature wondered: Can the Free School Society receive the School Fund with no legal objection, or is it simply another Christian sect? If the latter, then state aid would be unconstitutional.

No matter how the F.S.S. twisted to adjust its position to the state, it couldn't be done. A major collision was inevitable. John Spencer, Secretary of State of New York, said the F.S.S.'s curriculum values would "endlessly be a source of irritation and complaint" to the legislature.[11]

These explosive forces led to a confrontation from an unexpected source and resulted in a landmark legislative response, all stemming from the subsidy.

The Bethel Baptist Church ran a school for its parishioners. The trustees voted to build a second school on New York City's Walker Street. The Free School Society eyed the site with the same intention. Bethel and the F.S.S. each feared that a rival school in the same district would diminish its own enrollment. Contrary to law, Bethel also re-

ceived a portion of the School Fund. Both sides appealed to the state for help, thus turning a simple property dispute into a legislative battle.

Initially the Free School Society tried to get the legislature to revoke Bethel's share of the School Fund by raising the issue of separation of church and state. Then the F.S.S. evoked the specter of religious intolerance, predicting that each sect would fight desperately over the remainder of the fund. "A spirit of rivalry [will] disturb the harmony of society [and put] prejudices in the minds of children," the F.S.S. maintained.

All this helped the Free School Society win the battle, but it was a Pyrrhic victory. The city expropriated Bethel's school but, in the process of pleading its case, the F.S.S. brought into the open questions that the legislature used against it. For instance, there was the contradiction of taxes for a civil purpose (the School Fund) being controlled by a private organization. This generated a landmark amendment to the School Fund bill. The State gave New York City's Common Council the power to administer the Fund, bringing the common school secular curriculum into the city for the first time. The F.S.S.'s nonsectarian studies came under State attack.

In defending the expansion of secularism, a State Assembly report tried to show that secularism calmed the "dangerous passions" of religious rivalries. In fact, it drove many of the religious groups to humiliate their rivals as they fought for a share of the School Fund. State officials themselves fanned denominational hatred with comments like "ecclesiastical despotism is the most oppressive tyranny" to justify withholding monies from the sects.[12]

Now the state was in a better tactical position to overpower objections to a common school monopoly. The *coup de grace* against educational pluralism was completed by a second battle against a religious school system.

Subsidies Lead to Strife

It was 1840. The F.S.S. (now renamed the Public School Society to show its universal character and association with government) ran 98 schools and taught 23,000 students annually.[13]

The Catholics petitioned the Common Council for money from the School Fund. Their spokesman, Bishop Hughes, said his people could not send their children to P.S.S. schools, which excluded their

form of Christianity. The Catholics wanted to create their own schools with the state's help.[14]

This put the Public School Society into a legal bind, due to its entanglement with the School Fund. Committed to universal education, it was forced to accommodate the Catholics or face losing the subsidy. The attempt at compromise with the Catholics created new turmoil with the State.

The P.S.S. tried to draw the Catholics into its system by expurgating blatantly anti-Catholic portions of its textbooks. Bishop Hughes was unimpressed. In arguing to the Common Council, Hughes presented the implications of secular schools that no one had stated before: Both the state and the P.S.S. were moving from a common education toward a common religion via secularism, which excluded Christianity but presented its own rational morality.[15]

The issue became more exacerbated, but nothing was resolved. Bishop Hughes escalated the struggle by shifting the debate to the State legislature. He organized a political party to put forward candidates who would vote to give Catholics some of the School Fund. This failed, but it drew Governor Seward and Secretary of State Spencer into the controversy. The gradual retreat by the Public School Society turned into a rout. All the charges that the Catholics hurled at the P.S.S. were now included in Spencer's proposal for a new school bill. He attacked the P.S.S. as a closely held corporation where the taxpayers had no control over its administration. While this wasn't true, the legislators believed it. Spencer detailed the endless conflicts between the secular and nonsectarian views that would never be resolved until the state controlled all education.

Spencer mollified the Catholics by saying that in his plan, voters in each school district would choose the moral values they wanted. But since the rules of the School Fund outlawed all religious teaching, politicians, not voters, had already determined the correct ethics.[16]

In 1842 Spencer pushed a bill through the state legislature that enlarged the New York City common school system by creating two distinct branches: the secular schools and the P.S.S. schools. A new bureaucracy, the Board of Education, coordinated the two branches. Now State commissioners could inspect P.S.S. schools to see if any religion was being taught. If so, all funding would be withdrawn.[17]

By 1847 the end was at hand. The Public School Society petitioned the Board of Education for money to build a new school. The

petition was denied because nonsectarian doctrines would be taught in it. Only secular values were permissible. This was the kiss of death. The city immediately absorbed every P.S.S. school and hired all the trustees as State employees. The Public School Society, which over a 40-year period had taught more than 600,000 children in New York City, was gone. Pluralism and large-scale private education ceased to exist in New York State.[18]

If we ignore the tragic history of the Public School Society we will repeat it today. Current efforts to win government aid to private schools via vouchers and tax credits will mean another cycle of legal conflict and restricted freedoms.

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13. Bourne, p. 359.
14. Ravitch, pp. 36–45.
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II. THE CULT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Education: State Coercion or Free Choice?

by Dennis L. Peterson

A friend and I were discussing the pros and cons of the recently defeated school prayer amendment when our conversation shifted to problems in the American educational system. I suggested that the root of the problems lay in the system's public nature and that education should be strictly private.

This prospect visibly shocked my friend, so I suggested he sit down before he heard my next proposition. "Education in America," I postulated, "should be not only a private, nonpublic function but also strictly voluntary."

My friend sat down abruptly, mouth agape. "What!?" he cried out in protest. "You *are* crazy!"

As radical as this view seems to the average American, there are some compelling arguments in its favor which warrant consideration.

Those who oppose public, compulsory schooling are not against education. They agree that education is one of the most important ingredients in any successful family, corporate, or national order. All wise people down through history have recognized this fact.

Aristotle: "All who have meditated on the art of governing man kind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth."

Martin Luther: "The prosperity of a country depends, not on the abundance of its revenues, nor on the strength of its fortifications, nor on the beauty of its public buildings; but it consists in the number of its cultivated citizens, in its men of education, enlightenment, and character."

Abraham Lincoln: "Upon the subject of education ... I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we, as a people, can be engaged in."

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John F. Kennedy: "Education is the keystone in the arch of freedom and progress."

The importance of education, especially in today's world of rapid technological advancement, is undeniable. Proponents of strictly private education are against not education as such but rather the *forced* education of everyone by *government*.

All of the educational debates, studies, and task forces notwithstanding, Americans have largely ignored the real needs of education. It has become a game of sorts. The "experts" have been more concerned with methods than with students' minds, more enthusiastic about tools than about teaching, and more interested in social change than in student achievement.

A few people, such as Luther Burbank, realized early what was happening to American education. He remarked, "If we had paid no more attention to our plants than we have to our children, we would now be living in a jungle of weeds."

The education of individuals is neither a toy to be played with nor a laboratory rat for scientific experimentation. It is a tool designed to achieve specific objectives. The most important things in education, therefore, are not necessarily the methods, although those are essential, but rather the objectives and those who establish them.

Different people have different educational objectives, depending on their philosophy of life. Joseph Stalin, for example, openly admitted that he viewed education as "a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed."

The content, teachers, and pupils are all correlative to the objectives and the objective-maker. All of these aspects of education work together to accomplish the objectives established from an educational philosophy.

Seeds of Socialism

For years now, the public school system has gone through the process of sowing the seeds of progressivism and socialism, during which time the basics were de-emphasized in favor of more "relevant" subjects. The nation is now reaping the fruit of those seeds: functional illiterates who cannot think for themselves, draw conclusions, or express themselves in a logical, coherent manner.

In the past the individual families, religious groups, and private

schools dominated education, but today it is state and national governments that dominate the field. The willingness of those governments to assume the responsibility of educating young people has been in direct proportion to the unwillingness of parents and private enterprise to shoulder their educational duties.

Once in the driver's seat, providing the financial backing for the system, the government began to change the goals and objectives of American education to conform to the interventionist goals of the socialist state. Dramatic changes were made in curricula. Methods were "improved," ostensibly to help the individual while in reality serving the ends of collectivism. Attrition took its toll. Teachers and administrators who still believed in individual liberty and freedom of choice were replaced, when they retired or resigned, by those who shared the government view. The product of these changes is a generation of gullible non-thinkers, blind followers of the state.

Compulsory, statist education has reigned supreme in our nation for most of the twentieth century. It has forged full-steam ahead over the principles of freedom and individualism, leaving in its wake countless problems for society.

Compulsory Attendance

First, compulsory attendance policies have brought into the classroom young people who do not want to be there. It is assumed that all students need and desire the education provided. Some students, however, have neither the desire to learn nor the intention of allowing others to do so. They are in school to "have a good time." As a result, they create increasingly more disruptive discipline problems.

Second, compulsory attendance has lowered the overall quality of education for everyone. The present system is supposedly trying to be fair and equal with every student. It cannot discriminate, therefore, by providing a different quality education for different students or by having high admission standards that disqualify certain students.

"Let the revolting distinction of rich and poor disappear," François Babeuf declared in his *Manifesto of the Equals*. "Let there be no other difference between human beings than those of age and sex. Since all have the same needs and the same faculties, let there be one education for all, one food for all."

In order to achieve this absolute equality within the system, all

standards must be reduced to the lowest common denominator. Equality never raises standards; it always lowers them by restricting the high achievers. If admissions and work-quality standards are so lowered, as has been the case in much of American public education, the result or product can only be low in quality.

Third, by reinforcing the idea that government is providing a "free" education for everyone, compulsory public schooling has decreased the value of education in the minds of the students and of society in general. That which one gains without effort is seldom appreciated. If quality, competitive education must be earned by the individual, he will value it much more highly than if a mediocre education is forced upon him without his desiring it. For proof of this fact, consider the attitude of the Japanese toward education. Education in Japan is a privilege, not a "right." It is something that must be worked for. The result: higher quality graduates and, in the long run, a more productive and successful economy.

Fourth, compulsory education has led to the promotion of students solely on the basis of age or other purely social considerations. It does not matter what the student has accomplished, if he is a certain age he must be advanced with his own age group. Similarly, it discourages the promotion of exceptional students for the same reason: They must remain with their peers.

On this point, it is very enlightening to read the accounts of Jesse Stuart and to compare his philosophy of education with that of modern, statist educators. In his book *The Thread That Runs So True,* Stuart recounts his early experiences as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse with students who were sincerely interested in learning. He taught them to advance from where they were (even if it meant a strapping teenager having to learn to read with first graders) to where they were achieving to their potential. None of this social promotion to remain with their peers. It was promotion based strictly on achievement.

Finally, the current system has invited trouble and conflict from opposing moral views. Public education, in order to avoid any semblance of catering to any particular moral, religious, or political creed or philosophy, ostensibly avoids teaching any moral standard at all. In the place of a specific morality, however, the system teaches amorality or situational ethics. In reality, it is substituting its own religion—statism—in the place of traditional religious values.

The Next Stage

H. G. Wells, one of the foremost proponents of a one-world, collectivist government, realized the importance of State control over education in order to bring about his Utopia. "Men's thoughts and motives will be turned by education, example, and the circle of ideas about them," he predicted in "The Next Stage of History." The people who will run this centralized government will be those who control the educational systems of the nations of the world. Their goals and desires, rather than the interests of the individual, will be sought and achieved in this utopian society.

The State can force students to attend school, but it can never force them to learn. Only those who truly have a desire to learn will do so. Even then, they will only retain and apply a fraction of all that is presented to them. And in the public, compulsory system, the fraction retained is further reduced by the negative influence of students who have no desire to be in school.

And what if that which is learned is not true? Josh Billings must have had this in mind when he said, "It is better to know less than to know so much that ain't so."

Moral Guidance

As to moral virtue, that is distinctly what education is to provide. As early as the passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, morality was considered to be the domain not only of religion but also of education. The Ordinance read in part, "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

The Ordinance did not say that government was to *operate* schools; it said that government was to *encourage* the operation of schools. It did not say government was to *avoid* religion and moral instruction; it said government was to *encourage* it through education. And it certainly did not say government was to encourage one particular brand of religion, even statism; it said, "religion," pure and simple.

John Ruskin wrote in 1853, "Education does not mean teaching people what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. It is not teaching the shapes of letters and the

tricks of numbers, and leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery and their literature to lust. It means, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is a painful, continual, and difficult work to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise, but above all—by example."

What is the alternative to the public, compulsory educational system? It is the exact opposite: private, non-compulsory education.

Who would determine which schools survived, and who would insure quality education? The free market: consumer demand and consumer choice.

Wouldn't such a system be awfully haphazard, inconsistent, and unstable? It would at first glance appear that way. But to anyone familiar with it, the entire free market system seems haphazard. There is, however, a method to the madness. The schools which best meet the needs and desires of the greatest number of consumers would survive, make a profit, and educate the students of the nation.

This system would operate in the same way as business in the free market. Those businesses which best meet the demands of the consumers, make profits and stay in business; those which do not, suffer losses and eventually fail. The consumers, by their expressions of choice, would determine and ensure high quality.

A private, non-compulsory school system would be able to provide for the diverse religious needs and preferences of the people as well as for the diverse social, physical, and intellectual needs of their students. And they would do this without offending any single sect or denomination—except of course, the statists. Each group could have, if it so chose and if it had enough demand within its own constituency, its own school.

This is really not so extreme as it may at first sound. In fact, it is the very system upon which our country was founded.

Early Private Schools

The first schools in the New World were private and were usually operated by religious groups. Since most of the early settlements were composed of only one or two distinct religious groups, education tended to be sectarian and community-supported. The "Old Deluder Satan Act," which was passed in 1647, provided that every township

in the Massachusetts Bay Colony having a population of fifty householders would appoint and support a teacher for their children. Although the entire population of each township so affected paid for the education, this was not "public" education in the sense in which it exists today.

There were no state colleges or universities in the early colonial period. All institutions of higher learning were private and, like the lower schools, were usually run by religious groups. The first college in the New World, for example, was Harvard. It was founded by the Puritans of Massachusetts in 1636. Similarly, the Anglicans started William and Mary; the Presbyterians, Princeton; the Episcopalians, Columbia; the Baptists, Brown; and the Dutch Reformed, Rutgers.

Although most students in the United States today attend schools in the public system, an ever-increasing number are attending private schools. One out of ten students now attends such a school. And these schools are increasing in number at the rate of three or four every 24 hours.

This trend alarms statists and supporters of government education. They have begun fighting it with every weapon in their arsenal. They are determined, like most unions, to eliminate this undesirable competition and to retain their monopoly on education. The key to the success of statism and collectivism is the monopoly they hold on the education of young people.

Several weapons are being used to offset the surge of private schools, especially that of religious private schools. The employees of most of the religious-oriented schools have, until recently, been exempt from unemployment taxes. Operating as non-profit, educational arms of the various founding religious groups, they have also been (until recently) exempt from Social Security taxes.

The most recently acquired and perhaps most fearsome weapon now in the hands of the state is the argument of public policy. The U. S. Supreme Court ruled in 1983 (*Bob Jones University* v. *United States*) that in order to qualify for tax exemption, educational institutions "must serve a public purpose and not be contrary to established public policy."

A wide variety of religious groups expressed their concern about this ruling. The Mennonites, who are pacifists, predicted, "When it becomes the established public policy for this nation to have a war . . ., that could result in the Internal Revenue Service coming in and taking

away our tax-exempt status." Jews, who provide separate programs for men and women in their religious educational system, also fear that if stated public policy becomes strict equal rights regardless of sex, they might lose their tax exemption.

Even one of the justices voting with the majority, Lewis Powell, expressed concern that the ruling could be interpreted to mean that "the primary function of a tax-exempt organization is to act on behalf of the government in carrying out governmentally approved policies." Carried to its extreme, this ruling could effectively take away the freedoms of hundreds of private schools and ensure the control of our children by a government educational monopoly.

Left to themselves and unhampered by government intervention, however, private schools will prosper or fail according to consumer choice. The best interests of the individual will be fulfilled, and the entire nation will profit.

Is it likely that we will ever see our nation adopt a policy of strictly private, non-compulsory education? Unfortunately, probably not. The idea is too radical to most people today.

The closest thing we can work for and hope to achieve is to keep government interference and regulation to a minimum, to maintain an atmosphere that is supportive of, rather than detrimental to, private, free-choice education for all who desire it. Only in this way will proponents of the freedom philosophy and all other views have the opportunity to share in the marketplace of ideas.

Valueless Education

by Ray L. Colvard

It was found that all his property . . . was represented by valueless shares in bubble companies.

William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

We can create an entertaining kind of excitement in the classroom talking about the great government-financed swindles of history: the Mississippi Bubble of Louis XIV and the South Seas Company of George I. We hold students' interest as we tell about the larcenous grabbing of railroad subsidies by California's Big Four. We can join with students to denounce the government partnerships which puffed up a utilities balloon for Samuel Insull and financed the invisible storage tanks of Billie Sol Estes. "The art of government," Voltaire said, "consists in taking as much money as possible from one class of citizens to give to the other." We support that, insofar as it does not touch our own enterprise.

In or outside the classroom we teachers ignore the bureaucratic beams which are in our own eyes. As an integral part of a government bureaucracy, we excuse our federal dependency and even enhance the role of government's intervention in our schools. The National Education Association, in the true spirit of Parkinson's Law, actively lobbies for a cabinet post—Secretary of Education. We blandly ignore the widespread taxpayers' votes which have turned down educators' bond proposals election after election. We might consider the possibility that their votes are expressions of "no-confidence" in our programs and that American taxpayers may believe that they have been conned into investing in America's fastest growing bubble company—public education.

In favoring our security over freedom and the equality of mass performance over individual excellence, we are systematically under-

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Mr. Colvard, a retired teacher, resides in San Diego. This article originally appeared in the January 1973 issue of *The Freeman*.

mining the fundamental concept of a free market economy. The thrust of our policies has been to place the public school systems among the liabilities rather than among the assets of the wealth of the nation. A fair question might be this: Should public education be allowed to go the way of the stagecoach and canal boat? Henry Hazlitt noted: "It is just as necessary to the health of a dynamic economy that dying industries be allowed to die as that growing industries be allowed to grow." A case could be made for rendering out what is valueless in educating the nation's youth.

Premises Stated

To paraphrase Leonard Read, the *Freeman* reader has a right to know my biases. Certainly I favor education. Long years of classroom teaching in public schools have whitened my hair, thickened the lenses in my bifocals, and rounded my shoulders. I am proud of my work and I have a solid respect for the great majority of my co-workers. I cannot objectively appraise the superintendents, associates, and assistants in my business. They keep their own counsel. Nor can I speak for the educational directors, specialists, and consultants. They seem to meet and confer with others at their hierarchical level. Meanwhile, in the classrooms across the nation we teachers and our students are trying to do the best we can with what we have. We don't do what we do well enough, however. The most charitable thing that can be said for us is that we are in conflict and are confused about our purpose and our far goals. A harsher indictment would be that we are effectively conditioning our students for purposeless living in a valueless society.

Students are not given freedom in our structured programming to exercise the principle of choice, to grow toward maturity in value judgment. The late Abraham H. Maslow wrote that education of youth, if it has purpose beyond the custodial, must be concerned with man's final values: "Questions: What is the good life? What is the good man? The good woman? What is the good society and what is my relation to it? What are my obligations to society? What is best for my children? What is justice? Truth? Virtue? What is my relation to nature, to death, to aging, to pain, to illness? What is my responsibility to my brothers? Who are my brothers? What shall I be loyal to? What must I be ready to die for?"

We have encouraged our youth to "do it if it feels good." We have

avoided fixed values. It would seem that our primary aim has become bigness. We expand our programs wildly to maintain our position in claiming financial and legislative support from an expanding government.

An old folk song runs through my brain. It begins with, "There was an old lady who swallowed a fly, I don't know why she swallowed the fly . . . . " To get rid of the fly, according to the song, she swallowed in turn a spider to swallow the fly, a bird, a cat, a dog, a cow, and then, a horse. The song ends abruptly with, "she's dead, of course." As teachers we note apprehensively that mushrooming problems in public education have progressed far beyond the "fly" stage, and we fear we are approaching the year of the "horse." An uncomfortable feeling prevails that successive decades of American educators have jumped down the pedagogic gullet in search of an elusive fly which is becoming more and more enveloped in the hierarchical bowels of birds and cats and other misplaced instructional innovations. Even among educators we need to place a limit on gullibility.

Thomas Paine wrote these lines in *The American Crisis* No. 1, December 23, 1776: "What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated."

Old-Fashioned

Recently Professors William Ebenstein and Edward Mill published *American Government in the Twentieth Century*. Dr. Ebenstein has lived under two extremes of socialism, the Nazi control of the means of production and the Communist ownership. His is a profound gratitude to America. His text's chapter, "Democracy and the Free-Market Economy" reflects his feeling. I asked a colleague how he had presented this chapter's concepts to his students. He said, "It was a riot. I let the class comedian in each section read it aloud. The kids broke up laughing over the American housewife pushing her cart in the supermarket being called a reincarnation of the goddess of liberty. When the kids got to the 'crap' about customer sovereignty they were about ready to hold a demonstration in the cafeteria."

"My class thought the description of the market system was especially well presented," I told him.

"Strictly right-wing," he said.

John Maynard Keynes gave us this truism: "Economics is not everything." He went on to say, " . . . Do not let us over-estimate the importance of the economic or sacrifice to its supposed necessities other matters of greater and more permanent significance." Keynes' thesis was that individual economic freedoms must give way to the collective need in the planning of a welfare state. Professor B. F. Skinner calls the desire for freedom a "fetish" and Herbert Marcuse notes in *One Dimensional Man* that independence is overrated: "Freedom of enterprise was from the beginning not altogether a blessing. As the liberty to work or starve, it spelled toil, insecurity, and fear for the vast majority of the population. If the individual were no longer compelled to prove himself on the market, as a free economic subject, the disappearance of this kind of freedom would be one of the greatest achievements of civilization."

Traditionally in public education we have vocally set major importance on individual liberties. Our property in freedom and our freedom to own property we have asserted, and many of us firmly believe, is the foundation of our economic system. We would that each man become an independent participant in a market, that he be free to determine where and for whom he shall work and what and from whom he shall buy. We believe in the maximum freedom for every man.

The President's Commission on National Goals stated in their 1960 report that: "Schools and institutions of higher education . . . have a particular responsibility to ensure freedom of expression by students, faculty and administrators alike. We must bring up young men and women to believe in the individual and to act upon that belief. There are subtle and powerful pressures toward conformity in the economic, social, and political world. They must be resisted so that differences of taste and opinion will remain a constructive force in improving our society."

The Urge to Conform

In a curious kind of logic the drive toward alienation from our society is unimaginative and collective. The matron in a *New Yorker* cartoon a few years ago looked at her husband who was wearing sandals, jeans, granny glasses, and a beard and asked: "Do you have to be a non-conformist like everybody else?" On the campus and from

the pulpit the phrase "materialistic capitalism" is spouted by liberal scholars and clergymen with the caustic distaste that was, in the McCarthy era, reserved for the term "atheistic Communism." The mouthing of political economic labels, however, does not indicate an adherence to a principle.

For a teacher to talk realistically with students about socialism and the welfare state may appear as foolhardy as it would be for a politician to denounce motherhood or for a minister to advocate sin. The trend in our teaching, directly and indirectly, is toward favoring some form of socialist economy.

There is a wry comfort for some of us in knowing our ideological counterparts around the globe have their troubles too. In Czechoslovakia educational leaders complained in the official party newspaper, *Rude Pravo,* last year that children learn in schools that socialism is good, but the free enterprise ideas they hear at home confuse them. "The school gives the children a materialist, atheistic, world outlook, but in the family there is still a belief in God and churchgoing."

The freedom of an American has three fundamental limits: (1) the regulations of organized society, (2) the rights of other individuals, and (3) the capacity of the individual. Within these dimensions each individual in the nation has every right to reach as high as he is able. Obviously such a concept of individual freedom would demolish the myth of mass equality and the belief in community ownership which are the stock in trade of slavemasters and slaves, of despots and dependents.

Early Warning

A quarter century before Robert Owen established his fanciful experiment in community brotherhood at New Harmony, Indiana, and almost three centuries before Karl Marx published *Capital,* John Adams warned the nation against leveling schemes:

> Debts would be abolished first; taxes laid heavy on the rich, and not at all on the others; and at last a downright equal division of everything be demanded and voted. The idle, the vicious, the intemperate, would rush into the utmost extravagance of debauchery, sell and spend all their share, and then demand a new division of those who purchased from them.

> The moment the idea is admitted into society, that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence.

There is a terrible paradox for us, as teachers, to proclaim a declaration of independence. We are as a profession among the most devoted adherents of what Ayn Rand calls "the cult of depravity and impotence." We fear to test ourselves or our ideas in the marketplace. We claim the benefits of weakness: tenure in office so that we need not compete, and compulsory attendance for students so that we are ensured a monopoly. We pay lip service to individual freedom, but we join with the economically non-productive who claim welfare rights, and the politically privileged who demand subsidies. If the concept of freedom is cloudy to us, it becomes virtually impossible to clarify our value judgment for our students. This point may be clarified by the explanation which is said to be overheard in Warsaw: "Under Capitalism man exploits man; under Socialism it's just the opposite."

Twenty-Five Centuries of Socialism

I seek no quarrel with those whose conviction it is that individual freedom is a burden from which they would be relieved. I do not, however, wish them to relieve me of my freedom because they believe that my freedom should seem onerous to me.

The renouncing of personal independence, and absolute obedience to law, has been the keystone of twenty-five hundred years of socialism. The "philosopher kings" of Plato, the "general will" of Rousseau, the "cooperation" of Robert Owen, and the "Welfare State" of Bismarck all lead to what the socialist novelist George Orwell pointed out as the basic feature of socialism: a totalitarian and terroristic nightmare. There is neither a collective conscience nor a collective responsibility. The purge trials of Moscow, the extermination camps at Auschwitz, and the peoples' court at Peking are ultimate examples of socialism following its collective dream.

Ironically, it is the "good" socialists who pose the threat to individual freedom in America. In spite of Marxian agitators like Herbert Marcuse and activists like Angela Davis, American institutions have little to fear from Marxism. The great danger is the relentless drive for

a Utopia of Fabian Socialism as it is permeated through the Skinner Box of public education. It was the promise of Sidney Webb that "the inevitability of gradualism" will save the world from the evils of capitalism.

Fabians of the 1880s, as the society was formed, would support no violent overthrow of government, no seizure of political power. They would form a socialist elite to reconstruct society "in accordance with the highest moral possibilities." They would remake man in their image through education, by planting doubt as to the political capacity of the average man, and by teaching him to look to a social elite for direction. The national state, according to the Fabians, was a machine which they could take over and use to promote the general welfare.

Goals Achieved

A measure of the Fabians' success may be gauged by noting their goals as stated in the 1880s: social security, compulsory insurance managed by the state, minimum wage laws, and progressive taxation on income and inheritance. The *Fabian Essays* of 1889, edited by R. H. S. Crossman, were writings by comfortable and patient men and women willing to use existing political machinery to achieve *their* social solutions in a far distance—years, decades, centuries.

The Fabians preferred John Stuart Mill over Karl Marx. They chose evolution over revolution. As summarized in the Fourteenth Edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica,* " . . . the impact of Fabianism has been through the gradual permeation of Fabian ideas among teachers, civil servants, politicians, trade union officials and others in influential positions." The Fabian Socialists' goal was not public ownership of all industry, "but a planned economy in which public and private ownership exist together."

The name of a thing changes, but the thing remains. Today the term "Fabianism" is virtually unknown while its principles are being widely espoused by today's educators under the concept of "the general welfare." Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the rise in individual freedom was a continuous and spectacular phenomenon. During this century the trend has reversed itself, and the concept of Jeffersonian Democracy seems about as archaic to many Americans as the belief in the divine right of kings. It is now the collective right of the welfare state which holds primacy.

A Way of Life

The Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal has observed Americans of this century as objectively as did the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville during the nineteenth. In *Beyond the Welfare State,* Myrdal points out to us that socialism, whatever else we may choose to call it, is now our way of life:

> The sanctity of private property rights to do what one pleases with a piece of land; or the right to keep all, except a nominal tax charge, of one's income and wealth for private consumption or investment; the freedom to enter upon any profession one wants at one's own risk; the right of the employer to negotiate individually with his workers, to pay the smallest salary he can for the job, and to hire and fire whom he wants, when he wants; or the right of the worker to leave the shop as and when he desires; indeed, the free choice to own, acquire, and dispose, to work or to rest, to invest, to trade, to move—all these time honored individual liberties are gradually eaten away by the controls of organized society.

At all levels in our national educational bureaucracy are those who firmly avow and actively foster the principles of Marx and Mao. Others favor the benefits of collective responsibility. Idealists preach "brotherhood" and the commune as the way of life. They search for a new philosophy of hedonism in a mass surrendering of reason and of living by emotion. They would drop out of competitive social systems and return to a pastoral and primitive world. These lovable and not so lovable "fringes" in our schools have only modest and fluctuating followings. But those who continue the fourth generation exposition of Fabian principles are malevolently corrosive.

Say What You Believe

Teachers who believe in the merits of the market system need to clarify their own value systems. When Jesus asked, "Who is a neighbor?" his parable pointed clearly to a significant fact—that an individual, not a collective society, had come to another individual's assistance. We hear the rhetorical question: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

and we have been altruistically conditioned to respond with "yes." The answer should be "no." When Cain posed this weasel-worded question, rather than state a forthright answer, he had never been expected under the Hebraic Code to provide for his brother's welfare. He'd just been expected to contain his envy and to refrain from murder.

Our task as teachers who believe in the free market is what Albert Jay Nock called "Isaiah's Job." To paraphrase the words of Nock, there are in the nation's classrooms many teachers who believe in the value of individual freedom. "They are obscure, unorganized, inarticulate, each one rubbing along as best he can . . . ."

Thoreau noted that "public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion." It is the values of the individual teacher, what he thinks of himself and in what respect he holds his students, that determine his classroom goals. There are powerful drives toward mediocrity. Only as free individuals can we reverse the course of history.

We can depict the role of American capitalism for what it is—the moral, non-material base of our freedoms. Professor Peter Viereck wrote in *The Unadjusted Man:* "Private property educates its possessors in the moral qualities of sturdy independence, sense of responsibility, and the training of judgment and character brought whenever free choice is exercised in any field, including the economic field. It is these moral qualities, not the gluttonous material ones, that have historically associated the rise of personal liberty with the rise of personal property."

It was the fundamental faith of a century of freedom-seekers from Locke to Jefferson that freedom for property would in the end result in liberties for men. During the decade before 1776 Colonial newspapers carried the motto on their masthead: "THE UNITED VOICE OF ALL HIS MAJESTY'S FREE AND LOYAL SUBJECTS IN AMERICA—LIBERTY AND PROPERTY, AND NO STAMPS." Conversely, the emotive nihilistic feeling of valuelessness which permeates the minds of floundering youth in the 1970s is summed up in the lyrics of a popular song, " . . . freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose . . . . " Freedom in teaching and in learning is more than an idea; it is a skill which will eventually disappear if it is not used.

Any true teacher, whatever his political bias, would take issue with critics of the 1972 Oldsmobile who based their criticism on the embryonic malfunctioning of the 1902 production model. Yet in hundreds

of classrooms across the nation there is a continuing denouncement of laissez faire. Denunciations are formed against capitalism because of the monopoly policies of Jay Gould and the "watered stock" sold by Daniel Drew. Surely we need not continue fighting the mouldering ghosts of Henry C. Frick and George Pullman in this age of polyesters and jets.

Man Is Evolving

Capitalism is by historical standards still a young force. It is yet unpatterned and largely experimental. It is still creating and evolving. Its value systems are those of freedom, individualists, and responsibilities. The philosopher Teilhard de Chardin saw man as nature's phenomenon, "the ascending arrow of the great biological synthesis." No teacher would restrain creativity and aspiration. "Man's chief purpose is the creation and preservation of values," stated Lewis Mumford. "That is what gives meaning to our civilization, and the participation in this is what gives significance, ultimately, to the individual human life."

Socialist dogma of envious and vitriolic criticism toward American capitalism labels it "Social Darwinism." Their frustrated name-calling should be a major source of our renewed confidence in our adoption of freedom of choice as man's greatest value. "Social Darwinism," like "laissez faire," is not a term for which individualists need apologize. Man evolves in accordance with his freedoms. The great lesson that Darwin gave us is that man has not evolved. He is evolving.

The End of Schooling

by John K. Williams

Few people in Western democracies are happy with their state-school systems.

Teachers are unhappy, believing that they are not appreciated by the community and are puppets controlled by failed teachers who have engineered an escape into the protected, bureaucratic worlds of administration, curriculum development, and educational research. Parents are unhappy, lamenting their children's lack of basic skills and tired of helping their offspring prepare countless "projects" about dinosaurs or the environment. Employers are unhappy, having failed to exorcise a strange desire for secretaries who can spell and office workers who, communing with their calculators to determine the product of 30 and 20, sense that an answer of 1.5 might suggest that the wrong button has been pressed. Academics are unhappy, asserting that first-year college students are barely able to produce coherent essays.

Educationalists are not slow to proffer excuses for such a state of affairs. Schools, it is pointed out, are expected to solve nearly all social ills, ranging from venereal disease to disrespect for the environment. Little school time remains for such trivia as reading, writing, or arithmetic.

Maybe. Nonetheless, the average Australian parent and taxpayer had cause for concern when a massive research program carried out by the Australian Council for Educational Research discovered, among other disturbing facts, that 27 percent of 13,000 children tested could not, after at least six years of schooling, divide 56 by 7 and that 20 percent could not comprehend the simplest of newspaper stories. The Swedish people have witnessed the steady erosion of the Swedish University Entrance Certificate, which once almost guaranteed admission to any European university, to the point where it rarely satisfies the entrance requirements of such a university. A recent volume edited by

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The Reverend Doctor John K. Williams has been a teacher and currently does free-lance writing and lecturing in Australia. This article is from the September 1982 *Freeman*.

Gerald Berbaum *(Schooling in Decline;* Macmillan, 1979) testifies to "wide spread disillusionment about the effectiveness" of state-controlled, compulsory schooling in the United Kingdom.

The United States tells a similar tale. There, such tests as the Iowa Tests for Basic Skills and the Scholastic Aptitude Test reveal that good student performance in the 1930s deteriorated sharply in the late 1940s, improved slightly in the decade 1953–1963, declined rapidly from 1964 until 1978, and showed a modest improvement in 1979–1980.

The massive overall decline is not confined to particular states, regions, or population groups; is not caused by an increasing number of students taking the tests (the "spread" of scores does not widen); and cannot be attributed to statistical random chance. An increased "dropout" rate cannot be postulated as the reason for the decline: The most able of students are registering declining scores; they also have declined at late elementary and junior high school grades where attendance is compulsory.

Unfortunately, debates on schooling tend to focus upon incidentals. "Progressive" methods of teaching are attacked or defended. Teachers are sometimes condemned for laziness and ineptitude, sometimes hailed as heroic souls attempting an impossible task devised by people who have, since their own school days, never been thrust into a classroom. Both a shortage and a glut of educational technology have been blamed by those troubled about schooling.

What is rarely discussed is the institution of compulsory, state-controlled schooling as such. It is widely agreed that this institution is the backbone of a civilized, democratic society. Yet a perusal of its history is disturbing.

Espoused by Martin Luther

Effectively, the case for such schooling was launched in the sixteenth century by Martin Luther. "I maintain," he wrote, "that the civil authorities are under obligation to compel the people to send their children to school .... If the government can compel such citizens as are fit for military service to bear spear and rifle, to mount ramparts, and perform other material duties in time of war, how much more has it the right to compel the people to send their children to school,

because in this case we are warring with the devil, whose object it is secretly to exhaust our cities and principalities of their strong men."

Luther's argument is simple. He knows the truth: Satan is waging war against humanity. He knows that weapons are necessary for victory against Satan: an ability to read the Bible and an acceptance of Luther's theological views. Men and women holding views contrary to those of Luther and instructing, or supporting schools which instruct, their children in these views are corrupting their children and subverting a godly state. Since error has no "rights," those in possession of "the truth" must correct such parents and compel them to send their children to schools where they will be instructed in the tenets of the "true faith" and enabled to read their Bibles.

Melanchthon, a disciple of Luther, drew up in 1528 an edict demanding that every town in Germany establish at public expense a school where conscripts in the war against Satan could be prepared for battle. In Geneva another Protestant reformer, John Calvin, was similarly making a case for schools where all children were to be instructed in the "true faith" and "in the languages and worldly sciences" which served as a necessary preliminary for such instruction. Like Luther, Calvin was supremely confident that his possession of "the truth" gave him warrant to override the wishes and desires of parents who did not share his beliefs.

State Schools in Prussia

The first national system of compulsory state-controlled education emerged in Prussia. Kings Frederick William I, Frederick the Great, and Frederick William III succeeded, by the nineteenth century, in discouraging non-state schools, establishing an elaborate system of state-controlled schools, and placing the supervision of such schools under the direction of the Minister of the Interior. In 1810 state certification of teachers was instituted and in 1812 children were prohibited from leaving school until they had passed a state-set and state-administered examination. A complex bureaucracy checking on schools and presiding over this examination of necessity emerged.

Once again the "rightness" of such educational conscription seemed self-evident. Rulers *knew* what was in the best interests of the ruled, hence recalcitrant parents whose vision of the "good life" for

themselves and their children was not in accord with their "real" well-being could coercively be corrected by the state.

A rationale for this had been provided by the eighteenth-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Calvin and Luther claimed to know "the truth" because God had revealed it. Rousseau did not claim such privileged access to the deity, but he postulated a reality which, in its wisdom and beneficence, exceeded the knowledge and goodness of any individual person or group of people. Over and above the many "wills" of individuals, valuing and seeking different goals, there existed a "general will." An intellectual elite was able to determine the edicts of that "general will" and, by virtue of that knowledge, coercively implement those edicts.

Rousseau's "General Will"

Although frequently depicted in texts dealing with the philosophy of education as an advocate of child-centered learning, Rousseau's educational philosophy in truth depends upon the existence and authority of this "general will." In *Emile* Rousseau does, it is true, depict the ideal educational system in terms of a child who, freed from the constraints of an adult's will, explores nature and its necessities (which, being "natural" constraints will not be resented) and thereby learns all he needs without being directed by any person.

Yet this is but part of the story. Emile has a tutor. His task it is to create situations in which nature will "teach" his charge precisely what he, the tutor, wishes it to teach. With a complacency bordering upon cynicism, Rousseau notes that "[there] is no subjection more perfect than that which retains the appearance of liberty" and that "[no] doubt [the pupil] ought not to do anything but what he wants to do, but he ought not want to do anything but what you want him to do; he ought not to take a single step that you have not foreseen." By systematically "hiding his hand" the tutor avoids any clash between his own will and that of the child. The pupil thus equates his will and the tutor's will. He is thereby conditioned to equate his own will with the "general will."

The nineteenth-century philosopher G. W. F. Hegel went further. The state, through which the "general will" found expression, was the earthly manifestation of the "Absolute" or "God." Liberty was found by individuals who recognized the state "as their own substantive mind" and took the objectives of the state as "their own end and aim."

Freedom in the U.S.

Compared with this exalted notion of the state, the view of government set forth in the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution seemed pedestrian and simplistic. The authors of these documents perceived liberty in terms of the rights of individuals and groups to formulate, and strive to realize, any non-coercive vision of the "good life." The important but limited role of government was to enjoy a monopoly of coercive power and to use that power against individuals or groups who sought to impose their vision of the "good life" coercively upon others. Freedom was equated with the liberty of individuals, not the rule of the majority.

Given such an understanding of government, schooling was purely private. The early colonists, usually refugees from religious persecution, naturally established schools which would impart their faith to their children. In addition to such schools, parents, tutors, and non-denominational private schools saw to the education of children. It would seem that they were, in terms of basic literacy, remarkably effective: Those who, in the early and mid-nineteenth century sought to establish a state-controlled system of schooling did not, in their voluminous writings, refer to any widespread illiteracy which had to be combatted.

Similarly, those advocating state-controlled schooling in the U.K. did not defend their cause by reference to widespread illiteracy among the poorest. Indeed, Professor E. G. West has pointed out that in early nineteenth-century England a frightened government imposed steep taxes upon paper to discourage the poor from exercising their capacity to read by communing with such volumes as Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*. "Here . . . we have," writes West, "the paradox of a public managing to educate itself into literacy competence from personal motives and private resources, despite the obstacle of an institution called government which eventually begins to claim most of the credit of the educational success" *(Education and the State: A Study in Political Economy,* London, 1970). Precisely the same situation held in Australia where the case mounted for state-controlled schooling in no way depended upon any alleged illiteracy cursing the poorest (and again it is worth noting that radical political groups produced a multitude of pamphlets directed to the poorest—presumably poor but literate).

Social Benefits of Schooling: The Views of Horace Mann

The key to the case for state-controlled schooling which so excited intellectuals was the belief—not unlike the belief of Luther and Calvin—that they, an elite, were in the possession of a "truth" which obligated them to direct, guide, and if necessary correct the views of the masses. By linking Rousseau's notion of the "general will" to "majority rule" nineteenth-century U.S. intellectuals believed that they had discovered in the "will of the majority" (as, of course, interpreted by themselves) a reality marked by a wisdom and a goodness not to be found elsewhere. Schooling controlled by that "will" would result in nothing but good for the community.

Horace Mann, one of the foremost advocates of state-controlled schooling in the U.S.A., was not perturbed that the growth of the state-controlled system of schooling in Prussia he so admired had been paralleled by a growth in militarism and despotism. He was confident that the "quiet, noiseless development of mind" nurtured by that system would, in time, lead to "the people [asserting] their right to a participation in their own government." Indeed the benefits Mann asserted would flow from state-controlled schooling to the community exceeded the blessings Luther and Calvin expected would be enjoyed by their godly commonwealths. "[N]ine-tenths of the crimes in the penal code would become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills would be abridged; men would walk more safely by day; every pillow would be inviolable by night; property, life, and character held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes respecting the future brightened."

That such a system of schooling would be expensive did not deter its advocates. Asked John Quincy Adams, "Shall monarchies steal a march on republics in the patronage of that education on which a republic is based?" He answered his own question: "On this great and glorious cause let us expend freely, yes, more freely than on any other."

Adams' advice that a nation should "expend freely" upon a state-controlled system of schooling has been heeded, and not only in the U.S.A. Most developed nations are pouring ever-increasing sums of money into their schools. Yet, as already noted, it would seem that the community is receiving less and less for its investment. Whilst some people still perceive, with Mann, the school as the remedy for all social ills, the expectations of the majority are more modest. They expect the

school to *train* their children in basic skills, *educate* their children in the habits of critical and creative thought, *socialize* their children, and *mind* their children.

Planned Conditioning, Lack of Education

Schools do succeed in "minding" children, keeping them "off the streets" where they might "roam" (whereas adults "walk") or "loiter" (whereas adults "stand"). They succeed in "socializing" children, although the current wisdom would have it that such must not involve conditioning children in patterns of behavior specified by an adult. (Whether this lack of planned "conditioning" simply leads to random "conditioning" by the mob, and explains why teachers in some U.S. and U.K. schools are demanding guards and "danger money," is an interesting speculation.)

Blandly to assert that state-controlled schooling neither trains nor educates overstates the case: Doubtlessly those of us who can read must acknowledge the truth of the bumper sticker asserting "If you can read this, thank an elementary teacher" and number among our benefactors such teachers. (Fortunately, those who cannot read are unable to decode the bumper sticker and conclude that they should blame an elementary teacher!) Yet the fact is that too many children are showing fewer and fewer skills after investing more and more of their years in schools consuming larger and larger sums of taxpayers' money. A massive empire has been spawned, ruled by a priesthood of administrators, research workers, curriculum developers, "resource personnel," and bureaucrats. They, not children, have proved the beneficiaries of compulsory, state-controlled education.

Those concerned with the quality of schooling are forced, inexorably, to question state-controlled schooling. So are those who take pluralism seriously. If liberty is understood in terms of the rights of individuals to formulate, and strive to realize, their own non-coercive visions of the "good life," then state-controlled education is anathema.

What skills *must* be taught? Who is to say, for example, that reading, writing, and arithmetic are more valuable than carpentry? Could one not imagine a religious group which regarded reading, writing, and arithmetic as signs of an evil, worldly wisdom? Does the majority have the "right" coercively to correct this value judgment? If so, is it

conceded that such a group, were it to constitute the majority of the populace, would have the "right" to make the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic a crime?

Again, even assuming total agreement as to the value of literacy, who is to specify what books are read? Is *Little Black Sambo* a banned book or compulsory reading? Are primary readers to depict "normal" families or lesbian couples who have adopted or conceived by artificial insemination a child? A neutral teacher antiseptically presenting all conceivable human life styles embodies a hidden, and therefore all-embracing, curriculum: the notion that value judgments are merely the idiosyncratic expressions of individual tastes, a viewpoint which, although popular, is simply unacceptable to most religious believers and many humanists.

Return to the Marketplace

Those concerned with the quality of schooling, and those concerned with individual liberty, are led by different routes to one conclusion. Schooling must be returned to the marketplace. Consumers, at long last, would be free to register dissatisfaction with incompetent schools and teachers by the withdrawal of paying custom and, conversely, would again learn to value competent teachers and schools. Diversity in schooling would be encouraged—a diversity which can be dismissed as "divisive" only by people holding to an ideal of cultural homogenization which is sadly anachronistic in a pluralistic society. Schools freely chosen and privately funded would become "mediating structures" which, like churches, unions, corporations, and associations, foster a sense of identity and belonging; a reality which in a pluralistic and highly mobile society, is no longer fostered by "society as a whole."

Restoring Personal Choice

The market would encourage teachers to improve their professional skills, would indicate approaches to teaching which "work," and would stimulate creative people outside the present educational system to devise and market learning materials which, because of their effectiveness, would be purchased by schools and teachers. Specialized schools developing particular skills could be created by gifted teachers,

students spending only part of their educational day and educational dollar at such schools. The poorest, assisted by voluntary associations to pay school fees, would have returned to them some control over their own decisions for their children and thereby recover some of the self-esteem which a well-intentioned state and its minions undermined when decisions once made by individuals and families were made for them by the "experts."

Most importantly, the dream of Martin Luther and John Calvin that they, an elite, could use the school system to impose their vision of the "good life" upon others would be ended. That dream evolved into a nightmare which flourished in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, still curses the U.S.S.R. and other Marxian countries, and threatens to envelop nations which once knew what liberty meant but are sleep-walking their way back into captivity by an allegedly all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present state.

Those who still cherish liberty face the mammoth task of wresting control of schooling from the state and returning it, not to some abstraction called "the people," but to flesh and blood men and women whose visions of the good life vary and whose hopes for their children differ. Fortunately such people should be joined in this task by all who care about the quality of schooling available to their children and their children's children.

Public Education: How Free?

by Rolf McEwen

Numerous virtues have been ascribed to public education, but it is certainly not free in any sense of the word. Although tuition is not paid at the classroom door, we know that taxes are taken from people at large to pay for public schools. Costs per pupil per year range between $2,000 and $7,000 in various states. Although we know that taxes pay for these services, there is often an illusion that schooling in America is somehow "free."

We know that education for youth in America is mandatory. During several decades of the mid-nineteenth century, it was decided in various legislatures that compulsory education was good for the people and for the nation, perhaps to ensure an educated populace capable of democratic self-government. It was thought that representative government required a level of education which could not be guaranteed without institutions mandated and financed by taxation and government promotion. It was sometimes considered a matter of national security, that a superior knowledge might be achieved in the people, providing a higher level of productivity and a competitive edge in world markets. Legislators considered it a matter of law to establish excellence in education through a public, tax-supported system. Therefore, the freedom to choose *not* to go to school was removed, and compulsory attendance laws were enforced. Citizens were not free to neglect school attendance, and they were not free to neglect tuition payments through taxation.

The intentions of those promoting tax-supported public education were good. Compulsory education laws were intended to promote the general welfare and to ensure that parents would not neglect their children's education, exploit their services at home, or manage family resources so that funds were not available for tuition payments. But

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the good intentions of lawmakers have not brought success. Public schools are not successful in guaranteeing student proficiency or in maintaining school attendance. Only about 75 percent of students entering high school graduate, and many of those are considered functionally illiterate. It is estimated that 20 percent of Americans cannot write a letter or read the newspaper.

Can we say then that public schools have succeeded? Have literacy and educational proficiency improved during the century or so of public schooling? Studies have shown that literacy rates in eighteenth century America were higher than they are today. Thus, ironically, the general public was more proficient academically before the introduction of compulsory education and government support of schools.

How can this be? Why have the public schools failed to provide educational excellence? Vast amounts of money are being expended, voluminous studies have been conducted, graduate schools promote advanced programs, and yet the results are so disappointing.

Perhaps the reason lies in simple concepts such as individual initiative and freedom of choice. Do not most people find it profitable to be able to read and write? Do not most people wish to make the most of their own lives, to compete successfully for desirable employment and higher incomes? It appears sensible that the pursuit of happiness provides sufficient incentive for people to improve themselves educationally. Thus the need for schooling is in one's self-interest, although perhaps "schooling" is not the most accurate term, for maybe it is actually learning that people seek. When schooling is mandated by law, that sense of "opportunity" which arises from free choice vanishes, and often a stubborn and uncooperative spirit finds its way into the classroom, causing disruption and hindering the learning environment for eager students. Attitude is affected by compulsion, and poor attitudes hinder education.

Likewise, the economic compulsion attached to taxation creates additional attitudinal problems. There are those who do not willingly submit thousands of dollars to the local schools, and their attitudes find expression in the surrounding culture. Often these taxpayers believe that they should have some freedom to choose their children's school. Perhaps they wish to select the teachers for their children, or the curriculum. This is not practical or possible in our public school system. Parents are unable to effect change or to choose from a variety of alternatives because the system is rigid and often controlled by

district administrators or policymakers far removed from the local community. When state funds are provided to local schools, strings are often attached. It is difficult for local communities to operate schools free from bureaucratic control at state and federal levels. It is frustrating to teachers to be manipulated and directed by restrictive policies; it is frustrating to parents to be unable to make choices of schools and teachers; and it is frustrating to students to have to submit to state-mandated coursework.

Many are persuaded that abandoning compulsory education laws and tax-support for schools would result in empty classrooms and impoverished schools, but there is little historical evidence to support this theory. If it is in the interest of people to develop knowledge and skills in order to acquire desired employment and financial success, will they neglect their education? Quite the contrary, students will yearn more eagerly for education than they do under the compulsion of current law. They will perceive education not as a requirement, but as an opportunity. Administrators will not be burdened with trying to provide discipline for uninterested students, and schools would arise to meet the demands of various student interests and abilities. The market would soon be competing for students, and students would be competing for the best schools and the best teachers. The entire psychological atmosphere surrounding schools and education would be improved, would be more positive, and there would be excellence in a variety of programs. Of course, there would be some who would choose not to attend school. But those same students are not attending under the present circumstances.

Whose Responsibility?

Is it the responsibility of government to decide that citizens should be educated? Should the state decide what is proper curriculum? I believe these matters are better left to parents and individuals. The enormous expense now placed upon society is not efficiently managed. Attitudes are not right. The bureaucracy has promoted attendance and conformity, but has failed to maintain creativity, interest, and excellence. Money has proven to be insufficient to mend the ills. The truth is that what education requires, government cannot provide. It needs freedom. Education needs a free market without government funding,

direction, interference, or assistance. What the legislators intended to improve they diminished.

One might ask "You don't think you're going to abolish public schools in America, do you?" It does seem rather incredible to pose such a possibility. It's an appealing possibility, nevertheless. It's sometimes just enjoyable to pipe dream. The sad fact is that public education has declined for the past twenty-five years. More and more money is tossed at the problem, but results are dismal. Achievement tests have recently shown some improvement, but only due to a drastic lowering of difficulty in the tests. If the 1960 editions of standardized tests were administered to students today the results would indicate inferior levels of achievement in all academic disciplines.

Private schools would take up the task of education and provide services at a variety of locations, with varying costs, philosophies, and areas of specialization. Students and parents would select schools of their choosing, and they would examine the programs more closely than they do under current conditions. Parents would have to take more interest in their children's education because they would have to inquire into schools and teachers and curricula. The choices would promote lively debate and inquiry in the community as parents sought the best education at the lowest cost.

Teachers' salaries would be determined by market competition. Good teachers would be promoted and poor ones would be weeded out. The bureaucracy would be unable to protect jobs for poor teachers entrenched in their positions. Teachers would sense greater support from parents and greater interest from students. Stultifying regulations and controls would be lifted from their backs, and they would acquire added freedom to stimulate learning and improve achievement. In short, the entire academic atmosphere would obtain a shot of vigor in the course of competition, freedom, and choice.

Now, why is all this a pipe-dream? Because people believe the experts whose self-interest is served by continuing the current system. Citizens are too busy to examine the problem and too docile to take responsibility for education themselves. The government system is easy on such people because it makes choices for them and thinks for them. We must rouse ourselves and take responsibility for our own lives rather than leaving it to government to provide for us, to educate us, and to make our decisions. If we give the government 40 percent of

our national income and tell them to spend it for us, they will. And in fact, they do. Education is a good place to begin directing our own lives by allowing people to choose their own schools, or no schools, and to see education as the opportunity and responsibility that it is.

III. CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

The Dilemmas of Public Education

by Clarence B. Carson

A great many issues have reached the level of public debate today concerning public education. They range from questions that plumb the philosophic depths to everyday problems of student discipline. They range, that is, from questions as to the origin of life and of plant and animal species on this planet to the question of whether teachers should be permitted to use corporal punishment in the classroom. There are those who believe that only the doctrine or theory of evolution should be taught in public schools. On the other hand, there are many equally convinced that an account of Divine Creation should be given at least equal time. Then, there is the question of whether or not prayer should be permitted (or perhaps encouraged or required) in the public schools.

Indeed, there is a great variety of controverted and complex issues about such matters as sex education, the content of the curriculum, athletics, public policy about private schools, the right of parents to teach their children, homosexual teachers, the teaching of contemporary literature in which obscenities and profanities abound, the use of the schools as instruments of social reform, frills versus basics in education, the unionization of teachers, the compulsory busing of children to achieve racial integration, the quality and character of textbooks, and so on and on.

It is not my intention here to take sides on these issues. Rather, it is my purpose, in the first place, to call attention to the fact that the issues exist, that they involve vexing questions, and that when they are pushed on one side or the other they tend to become dilemmas. In the second place—and this is my main point—they are dilemmas because they are being approached in the framework of public policy. They are dilemmas of *public* education, i.e., of government-supported and -controlled education. The contentions arise from efforts to use govern-

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ment for differing ends, indeed, diametrically opposed ends, quite often. This may not be unusual in itself, but the differing positions on education are being pressed at a level at which no generally satisfactory resolution is possible. They are dilemmas.

A dilemma is a "situation requiring a choice between equally undesirable alternatives." Granted, at the level at which the debates have been conducted the issues do not appear to pose a question of choice between equally undesirable, or even unequally undesirable, alternatives. It appears that those who have taken sides would be quite pleased if their position could be made to prevail. Take the issue of prayer in the public schools. Presumably, those who favor them would be quite satisfied if the schools would have prayers, and those who oppose would be equally satisfied to have prayer prohibited.

That, however, is largely an illusion. Undoubtedly, there are many who would like to see prayer instated in the schools or classrooms. Beyond that, a considerable portion of these would like to see an attitude of piety toward God, toward human relations, and toward their studies prevail more generally among teachers and students in the schools.

Nor is there any good reason to doubt that there are others who would like to see prayer excluded from schools. Beyond that, there may be those who would like to see all pious, religious, or believing attitudes excluded from education, that the whole undertaking be carried on in a secular and skeptical framework.

No American Consensus

But I doubt very much that there is an American consensus for a political solution to this question. More important, those whose careers depend upon knowing such things, i.e., politicians, clearly do not believe that there is a consensus for political action on the prayer issue. The best evidence for this is that constitutional amendments on this issue have been hanging fire for 20 years now. None has ever mustered the two-thirds majorities necessary to get an amendment out of Congress and before state legislatures or conventions. So far as we may judge there is no consensus behind a constitutional amendment that would permit or authorize prayer in the public schools. But even if an amendment were adopted, it is not at all clear that the issue would be resolved.

The truth seems to be that there is no acceptable political solution available. There is the dilemma. A political solution involves the use of force. Probably, most of those on either side of the prayer issue would be exceedingly reluctant to employ force to achieve the full measure of what they wish to see established. That is, most of those who want prayer in the schools would not wish to see teachers forced to lead prayers or preside over them.

Indeed, it is not at all clear how anyone could be forced to pray or what desirable end could be achieved by it. Such use of force would be contrary both to the nature of prayer and of education. On the other hand, surely those who oppose prayer in the schools do not envision sending SWAT teams or the National Guard to prevent small children from giving thanks by repeating: "God is great. God is good. Let us thank Him for our food." In short, it may well be equally undesirable to many Americans either that there should or should not be prayer in the public schools or that force should be directly applied to achieve either end. That is a true dilemma.

(Since some may suppose that the courts have settled the prayer issue by their rulings, some observations on that may be helpful. The Supreme Court has nullified state laws specifying prayer and Bible reading in public schools. Such laws were held to be in conflict with the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Other courts have made rulings on a variety of religion-related practices in the schools. Thus far, however, United States Marshals have not been sent forth to interdict prayer in any particular school, and public prayers are still made in a goodly number of schools.)

Force Is the Issue

The dilemma, I am saying, is not in the issues; it arises from the prospect of the use of force. Ultimately, the dilemmas of public education arise from compulsory attendance and the financing of schools with tax money. It is these things that make the questions public issues. It is these things, too, that make any solution difficult, if not impossible, short of tyrannical measures. This is true not only for the prayer issue but for most of those that have come to the fore in recent years.

Even so, it may be of some help to see how the issues have come to the forefront. More specifically, I want to explore a little the setting in which the issues have arisen. It is not surprising, of course, that

people should differ among themselves about what should be done or how to go about doing it. Each of us differs in some or in many respects from others. We differ in background, experience, temperamental make-up, tastes, preferences, abilities, goals, and intelligence, to name a few ways. From these individual differences arise differences of opinion. Nor is it difficult to surmise why we might differ with one another quite often crucial a matter as the education of our children. Fortunately, most of us do not usually set such store by each of our opinions that we are inclined to make a federal case, as the saying goes, about every difference. But on some matters within their hierarchy of values, many people feel strongly about their beliefs and principles. Some of these fall for many people in the arena of education; in some senses, all of them do.

Diverse Origins

Some of these differences might well assume some importance in any country, but the diversity of the population in the United States has increased both their number and importance. From the earliest English, French, and Spanish settlements, America was a land of immigrants. The diversity of the population has increased rather than diminished over the years. From the eighteenth through better than three-quarters of the twentieth century, peoples from virtually every land have come or been brought here, sometimes in small numbers and at others by the thousands and tens of thousands. At various times, they have come from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Bohemia, Russia, China, Japan, Transylvania, Serbia, Turkey, Iran, the Gold Coast of Africa, Mexico, Cuba, and so on and on. Virtually every culture, race, nationality, language, and ethnic grouping in the world is represented among those who have settled in America.

Of religious sects, denominations, and churches virtually every spectrum of belief is or has been present in America. There are Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, Buddhists, Moslems, and Shintoists. There is a wondrous variety of Protestant sects and denominations: Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples, Congregationalists, Nazarenes, Evangelicals, Quakers, Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and many, many more. But no brief listing can begin to capture the diversity of religious belief or unbelief in

America, for in addition to those who profess some religious belief, or belong to organizations which do, there are atheists, agnostics, skeptics, free thinkers, Communists, communitarians, and a variety of groupings holding religious-like beliefs. All of these beliefs have greater or lesser import on beliefs and preferences about education.

While it would not be possible to exaggerate the differences among groups and individuals which have some bearing on what may be wanted by way of education, it may be possible to overstate the case for most communities. When we look at the United States as a whole, what we may see is a great hodgepodge of peoples, groups, and organizations representing almost every spectrum of diversity.

By contrast, communities are often much more nearly homogeneous than any description of the nation would suggest. For example, in many parts of the rural and small town South, there may be churches of several denominations, but the religious motif is apt to be Southern Baptist. In parts of New England, it may be Congregationalist; in Western Pennsylvania, Presbyterian; in Utah, Mormon; and so on. Even in cities where there may be the most diverse religious, ethnic, and racial differences, there are often fairly homogeneous groupings of people in particular sections.

But whether a community was diverse or homogeneous in its makeup, people tended to associate in their own particular churches, clubs, organizations, and what have you, to preserve their own ways within enclaves, as they chose, or to slough off many of their differences and fit into a more general American pattern. A great degree of harmony amidst wide diversities was generally possible in America by those who were different keeping their distance from one another, minimizing the extent of their involvements, or going along with the prevailing customs. *E pluribus unum* expresses a truth only if that in which Americans were one be limited and restricted to a small number of common interests.

Schools Provided by Communities and by Churches

For most of American history, schooling tended to mirror and reflect the diversity of America. Schools tended to be provided, when they were provided, by communities and churches. Historically, schooling in Western Civilization was allied with if not tied to religion. In the Middle Ages, Catholic churches generally provided such formal

schooling as existed. Cathedrals had their own schools as a rule. Generally speaking, too, after the Protestant Reformation where there was an established church it had the oversight of all formal education, whether or not it provided the schooling. During the colonial period in America, the only experiments of any extent in compulsorily provided education were in New England. Otherwise, people were left free to provide such education in whatever form they would for their children.

Nor was there any great change in most regions after the American Revolution for the better part of a hundred years. Lands were sometimes set aside for schooling when the public domain was broken up for selling. But the initiative for providing schools was generally left to communities, towns, and churches, or whoever had an interest in it. Churches did sometimes support schools. Towns and communities often did so as well. The cost of schools was often defrayed by tuition paid by parents, and it was sometimes supplemented by charitable contribution. Sunday schools were widely organized by churches in the nineteenth century, initially as a means to teach children the fundamentals of reading and writing. In any case, the providing of a school for a frontier and rural community was not usually especially expensive. The men of the community could get together and raise a building. A schoolmaster could be paid in much the same way as a minister for the church, if he were not one and the same person.

Local Control

But however the school was provided, it was generally done by some local community. The community controlled the school, so far as it was controlled, and those who were sufficiently pleased by what was offered could send their children to it as circumstances permitted. The diversity of the population of America was undoubtedly reflected in the schools from community to community and region to region, so far as there was any will to make it so, and people pretty much had such schools as they could or would.

Even after governments began to become involved and some tax support began generally to be provided, there was no great change for a good many years. The movement toward tax-supported schooling and compulsory attendance was largely made between the Civil War and World War I. Schools were generally still locally owned and con-

trolled, however, and many high schools were still private or semi-private. (Some churches, notably the Roman Catholic and Lutheran, maintained schools for their communicants, where they were sufficiently concentrated for that.) Local boards made the basic decisions about education, levied charges, hired teachers, and, presumably, reflected community values. Even so, schooling became public education as compulsory attendance laws were passed, and tax support became widespread. The stage was being set for the dilemmas which we now face. Local boards made the transition much easier, but they may have only served to delay the surfacing of the dilemmas.

At any rate, the schools have been transformed in the twentieth century. They have been very nearly nationalized and secularized as well as made more or less uniform. They have been transformed into instruments of or for social reform on a national scale. Control over the schools has been wrested from local communities and is now in the hands of state and national bureaucracies, legislatures, and the federal judiciary. Local boards may still make intermediate decisions, but they do so within a framework of guidelines and prescriptions that make them mostly errand boys. It is this transformation that has brought the dilemmas of public education to the surface, given rise to strident demands, and provides the setting for the urgency of some accommodation or resolution.

The transformation has been effected mostly since World War II, but it was prepared and advanced for several decades before that.

Overcoming the Differences

It is tempting to speculate as to how anyone could conceive a national and uniform system of education that could encompass and accommodate the diversities of Americans, but it would be irrelevant to do so. No one ever has, and I dare say no one could. What was conceived, rather, was a system which its proponents hoped would act as a solvent upon the differences, obliterate them, if you will.

As I was preparing this article, I received a little leaflet entitled "The Internationalization of Accounting Curriculum." It contained this revealing sentence: "Education, in its essence, and by definition should result in the diminution of provincialism." On the contrary, I would say that education might either heighten or diminish provincialism, depending on its content and emphasis and the receptiveness or

resistance of the ones being educated. But no matter. Most likely. the person who wrote the sentence couldn't distinguish clearly between an essence and an apple, and he certainly did not bother to define education. What matters is that he was writing out of a vision of education that has become deeply ingrained over the past seventy-five years.

It is a vision of using the schools to transform man and society. The idea was advanced most vigorously and directly by the proponents of what was called Progressive Education, but it came to permeate the whole field of pedagogy, which has marched under the flag of "Education" for most of this century. John Dewey was the leader of Progressive Education, and its center was Teacher's College of Columbia University. Progressive educationists usually described the transformation they aimed at as making America democratic, or more democratic. By that description, however, they meant mainly equality. That is not to deny that they may have favored democratic methods, sometimes anyway, but rather to assert that their animating ideal was equality.

The thrust of this idea of equality was to remove all differences, to bring the high low and the low high, or, as George S. Counts, a Progressive, said, "the school should be regarded . . . as an agency for the abolition of all artificial social distinctions. . . ." (Quoted in John H. Snow and Paul W. Shafer, *The Turning of the Tides* [New York: Long House, 1956], p. 30) To Progressives, all distinctions were arbitrary, of course. As John Dewey pointed out, "Democratic abolition of fixed differences between 'higher' and 'lower' still has to make its way in philosophy." (John Dewey, *Problems of Men* [New York: Philosophical Library, 1946], p. 15)

Professional Educators

In short, the Progressives did not conceive a philosophy of education which would embrace the diversity of America. Instead, they advanced a plan to use the schools as an instrument for removing, obliterating, or crushing the differences. Progressive Education eventually blended with or became the dominant influence in professional education, i.e., the teaching of teachers in pedagogy. There have been three main stages thus far in the movement to nationalize and make uniform the public school (indeed, so far as they could, all schools) in America.

The first was to give a dominant role in schooling to the faculties of education departments, schools, and colleges. This was done by requiring state certification of teachers, requiring education courses for certification, and by founding numerous normal schools, teacher's colleges, and education departments.

The second stage was to bring all public schools under the control of state departments of education. Certification was a major means to do this, but it would have been of little account without state leverage. This was achieved in most states by financing and the laying down of guidelines in order for schools to receive state money.

The third stage is the effort to nationalize education more directly. Federal aid to education was the opening wedge. There is, of course, now a cabinet level United States Department of Education, and the federal courts now wield great power over the schools.

In large—and to summarize thus far—there is a vast educationist establishment in America. It includes not only the federal, state, city, and county bureaucracies with their hierarchy of officials, but also thousands of educationists in colleges and universities, and hundreds of thousands of teachers in the public schools. This establishment exercises decisive influence over the public schools, and much influence and some controls over private schools. The establishment may not be a monolith, but it is certainly monolithic in tendency. If anything, it has become much more cohesive in recent decades by the widespread organization of teachers in national labor unions. The common thread which holds it together at the ideological level is educationism.

The thrust of this establishment has been to secularize, nationalize, and make uniform the schools and schooling. This establishment has wrested the control over the schools from local communities and vested it in bureaucracies at ever greater remove from them. The ultimate power over the schools now rests in the Supreme Court of the United States, which is about as remote from popular control as it is possible to get.

Differences Aggravated

This, then, is the setting of the dilemmas of public education. The educationist establishment has not succeeded, not yet anyway, in wiping out the diversity in America. They are succeeding, rather, in exposing the dilemmas of public education. The differences and diversities

have been exacerbated rather than obliterated, and lowest common denominator schooling has given rise to a rising tide of resentment to it. Some of these resentments are represented in contemporary debates on public issues. The educationist establishment would be in deep trouble if it had to answer only for the declining achievements of the pupils it serves, the disorders in the schools, and the low caliber of so much of the teaching. But the nationalization and secularization of education (or schooling) has brought dilemmas to the fore for which there are no solutions in public education.

There is a way out of this morass. There is a way to restore schooling to local patrons, the control over education to parents, and freedom to learning. There is probably more than one way to go about attempting to do these things. Proposals for a voucher system to enable people to choose their schools and pay with tax money have gained some followers over the years. Whatever the merits of these and like proposals, they do not go to the heart of the problem, by my analysis.

The heart of the problem is compulsory attendance and tax-supported schooling. It is these things on which an educationist establishment has been built; they provide the levers for the control over schooling. So long as attendance is compulsory and schooling is tax-supported, the dilemmas will remain; the diversity of America and the differences among people will take care of that.

There is a way, however, to free education from the trammels of government control. It is the free market. It is to leave schooling to the market and education to those who are willing to seek it. It is the way to provide both for the inevitable differences among individuals and the diversity of the population in America. I am aware, of course, that many people favor what they call public education, although it is becoming equally clear that a considerable portion of Americans are less than enthusiastic about the current product.

It is hardly surprising that public schools should be widely, even generally, accepted as desirable. Anything established as long as a hundred years is likely to be widely accepted. If public baths had been established in towns and communities as long as schools, they would no doubt have gained widespread acceptance. How would people bathe themselves, after all, if there were no public baths? Surely, the poor would have to go dirty!

Church and State

But perhaps I should choose an example closer to home, since most Americans have little familiarity with public baths. This example comes at least from our common historical background. As recently as the early seventeenth century, most Europeans apparently believed that an established church was essential to the unity and well-being of a country. (Indeed, the relics of established churches still survive in such countries as England and Sweden.) Moreover, many believed that the government should assist in compelling attendance at churches and that the church should be tax-supported. Many people found it difficult to imagine how religion could survive without full-fledged support of the state.

There were still a goodly number of people who believed at the time of the writing of the United States Constitution that some sort of state support for churches was desirable, and several states still had an established, or government-favored, church. There were others who believed even more confidently that religion should be freed from the toils of government, that people should be free to speak and act in accord with their own consciences, that it was folly to use force in such delicate and profound matters. They carried the field eventually.

Actually, there was no possibility of having an established church in the United States without arousing animosities that would wreck the union. Anglicans in South Carolina would hardly accept the Congregational church of New England. Quakers and Baptists would accept neither, and the great variety of denominations and churches in America made the establishment of any church a potentially divisive and explosive issue of the first order.

The happy decision reached by the Founders was to forbid Congress to establish any church or interfere with any that might exist in the states. The result was so generally satisfactory that even those few states which had some sort of government support or preference for a particular denomination removed it. Nor did religion perceptibly decline and wither away in the United States without government support. On the contrary, religion flourished, churches abounded, and denominations proliferated. Religion, left to the market, so to speak, and to private giving and support, satisfied both the desire for variety,

which flows from individual differences, and the longing to share faith and beliefs with others. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a single American today who would favor a governmentally supported national church.

The case for freedom of education is hardly less substantial than that for freedom of religion. Indeed, for many today, they cannot have full freedom of religion without also having freedom of education. For many thoughtful persons, God substantiates all knowledge, and if He is not acknowledged, the foundation stone is missing from learning. Given the diversity of America, a national school establishment is no more appropriate than would be a nationally established church.

In one respect, at least, an established school is much more grotesquely unjust and intolerant than an established church. When compulsory attendance at church was required, adults as well as children were required to attend. By contrast, we visit the compulsion only upon children, those among us who are the weakest, least able to resist, least able to fend for themselves, and who have no voice in political decisions. This system of compulsion permeates education, stifles curiosity, and turns what could be a wondrous adventure of the mind for those who have the aptitude and desire into almost insufferable boredom.

Compulsion has turned schooling into a "bad" rather than a good. The dilemmas of public education and the insuperable problems in so many contemporary schools are a direct consequence of the compulsion. I do not know what forms schooling might take if it were left to the market and voluntary giving, nor what great variety of ways people might find to become educated. I am certain that if people valued these things and were free to provide for themselves, they would do so. And, for me at least, it would be exciting to see what kind of changes would be made when those who would provide schooling and help to educate should turn their attention to serving customers rather than compelling attention. Only those who want to learn ever learn much worth knowing in any case. Rather than having dilemmas and national problems of education, we might have in their stead opportunities for teachers and learners unbounded by state compulsion.

Shall the Needy Inherit Our Colleges?

by F. A. Harper

A friend who is unusually talented and devoted to the cause of liberty has asked for advice on specifications for some college scholarships he wants to finance. He has tentatively included "financial need" as a requirement for a grant, along with character, scholarship, and the like. I have suggested that he delete "need" as a requisite for a grant.

Most scholarship awards in the United States now specify need as a condition of any grant. The practice has become so prevalent that any suggestion to omit it calls for some explanation; otherwise the suggestion is likely to be discarded without even a thought. These are my reasons.

From Childhood to Self-Reliance

In order to bring the question into focus, let us start with the birth of the child.

A child at birth is wholly dependent on grants of aid as a matter of survival. His food and the like are not what he himself has produced, or what has been obtained in exchange for what he has produced. Ascribing to his own endeavors the genesis of his own creation is stretching the biological point a bit too far.

So parents, ordinarily, assume the responsibility of caring for the newborn, according to his need. If any aspect of merit is to be ascribed to it at all it is the hope and expectation that he will grow and later develop the latent talents of self-reliance which he is presumed to possess at birth.

In order for this hope to become a reality, it is important that the child develop as rapidly as possible from an object of need to one whose existence rests on reward for his own attainment. This attain-

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ment should more and more take the form of economic production to supplement his other satisfactions.

For economic attainment, merit is best tested in the marketplace. The worth of the goods and services produced and traded there is judged by consumers who are allowed to vote according to their own contributions to the market. Each consumer may bid as high as he wishes.

The producer's need is not a factor of any importance in the market place. Ordinarily when we buy something, we do not even know who the producer was, so could not consider his need even if we wanted to. No consumer, for instance, buys a can of beans in a supermarket under the assumption that it tastes better or is more nutritious if produced by a destitute farmer, rather than if produced by one who is not so destitute. He judges the can of beans, not the bean producer's needs, when he buys it.

In rearing children to live in a free society, then, we should help them to develop as rapidly as possible from dependence to independence; from reliance to self-reliance; from reward for mere existence to reward for meritorious attainment; from claims of need to recognition of merit; from being objects of charity to being productively capable of rendering acts of charity themselves. Such should be our aim, as rapidly as we can wean them of the needy condition of their birth. That is the heart of our parental responsibility.

As the days and years pass, the child should be allowed to grow in the sense of self-reliance. Latent abilities—those hopes that merited care of the newborn—should be allowed to bloom. If we fail in that, we shall render him a disservice rather than a service. If we fail, we teach him that somebody owes him a continuing existence in spite of his own efforts, merely because he has been born. If we fail, we create in his mind a fertile soil for socialist indoctrination.

That, I believe, is a reasonable guide and objective in the educational process. And the granting of scholarships should be aimed that way.

The Market for Scholarships

Learning, to be sure, seems quite unlike things produced for sale in the market. It may enhance the learner's ability to produce, but its salable fruits are of a separate form and occur subsequently to the

learning process itself. Consumers in the market do not buy the person's learning itself, as they buy a bushel of potatoes he has produced; they buy, instead, any useful derivatives of his learning. So a youngster's merit for a scholarship must be judged in some way other than like appraising the direct worth of potatoes.

A scholarship is presumably related to the youngster's promise of further notable attainment in learning. And merit should be so judged, in my opinion. It should be judged strictly on the basis of what the student has already demonstrated and attained, in terms of his scholastic attainment, character, and other such qualities. That is the evidence of his ability to live a life of worthy attainment and good character.

What the scholarship applicant is trying to sell and what the grantor is offering to buy, in the scholarship market, is evidence of the presence of these qualities of scholastic purpose in highest degree. If judgments of worth are to be fairly rendered, the buyer should be impersonal about all other considerations than these which comprise the object of his purchase—as he does when he buys bread or medicine or a car.

This Matter of Need

The matter of need has become an increasing concern in our lives, even as we have increasingly removed it from our living in the United States. It has come more and more into the content of educational materials, into the teaching of our children, and even—as is our present concern—into the granting of collegiate scholarships. In all these ways we are training our children to live by the Marxian doctrine:

> From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.

There is nothing wrong with having needs; we all have them, and always will. But as a philosophy of life with which our children are being widely inculcated, this Marxian concept of need is like a "hot rod" without brakes. "Need" grows without bounds whenever it is severed from a responsibility for acquiring satisfaction through one's own endeavors.

Thus the Marxian doctrine of irresponsibility creates an ever-in-

creasing and insatiable appetite. Teaching this to our children by either word or deed does them a serious educational disservice; one expression of this is to make need a condition of granting scholarships.

Need, per se, has nothing whatever to do with scholastic merit—and in that sense, it has nothing to do with merit for a scholarship. Why, then should need be made a consideration of a grant? Why should not youngsters of college age be taught that meritorious attainment is a prime consideration in the scholarship market? Aspirants would then have this worthy star to guide them during the years prior to eligibility.

Is Saving Sinful?

Were such a plan to be followed, a scholarship might be awarded to the offspring of parents who are not needy; who are neither paupers nor false claimants of pauperism. Is that a bad thing?

Denying a scholarship to a youngster whose parents are not poverty stricken is in effect teaching him the lesson of socialism. He is being taught that his parents' wealth is a sin for which he shall be made to suffer—at least to the extent of being denied an award, in spite of his personal worthiness of character and attainment. The socialists might even try to justify this outcome by recalling that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the offspring, even unto the third and fourth generations.

If "need" is to be adjudged meritorious in making such awards, it follows that the possession of economic means becomes a demerit. In other words, if parents, by using ability and industry and thrift, have saved enough to be without need, their attainment becomes a matter of demerit—some sort of sin—so far as the child's position is concerned in the market for scholarships.

No Work for the Wealthy

Any correct concept should be taught to children as early as possible, I assume. So if the idea is right that wealth is sinful—that hard work and thrift comprise a demerit because they eliminate need—why not teach it to them from the start? Why wait until college age to teach it?

If the child goes to the neighbors, hoping for a job mowing their

lawns or something, why not have the neighbors inform him that unless his parents are paupers, he cannot have a job—have need established as a condition requisite to a job?

If such reasoning is valid for the granting of scholarships, why is it not equally valid for all forms of work and remuneration? By this concept, ability to do a good job shall have no merit except where the person is also needy.

Were this idea to be carried out consistently, there would be no work for the wealthy or for the children of the wealthy. They would then all be denied employment. Probably there is no better way than this by which to ruin character and cause juvenile delinquency. And as applied here, the ruination would be imposed upon some of the best of human stock, biologically.

Charity Still Possible

Though we have been considering scholarships for merit, something should be said about instances of dire educational need. How are needy youngsters to obtain a college education if their need is not to be included as a requisite for scholarships?

In the first place, real education may be obtained in ways far less expensive than those currently fashionable in this country. Luxury living is not an essential ingredient of the educational process. The educational means of many great men are ample proof of this.

Second, employment is available at high rates of pay during vacation periods and while going to college, for those whose need is really pressing. I have known many industrious and thrifty youngsters who have accumulated enough from their own earnings to pay a large part—even all—of their collegiate costs. If their industry makes them no longer eligible for scholarship awards because they are no longer needy, how can this mean anything to them except an object lesson in socialism?

Third, many credit sources are available to any able student whose real need exceeds the funds otherwise available from his own efforts, from his family, or from other sources.

Fourth, in discussing scholarship grants we are presumably dealing with the relatively few exceptional youngsters and not with cases of only marginal educational ability. We are dealing with the cream of the crop, in order that they may attend some outstanding college or uni-

versity. An important purpose is to induce them to strive for scholastic and character attainment, the same whether of poor or rich parents. Let children of all economic levels compete freely in this regard. Whereas children from poor families should not be arbitrarily handicapped, neither should they be rewarded for reasons other than scholarship and character. Let it be a fair race for all.

Finally, charitable aid may well be offered and made available for all needy youngsters who lose out in the race for merit scholarships. Such assistance is perfectly proper. But charitable aid should not be confused with grants presumed to be based on intellectual merit and proven abilities. Charity should carry its true label.

I do not mean to say, in other words, that assistance to college students should be exclusively of the type I have advocated here. I mean only to say that in my opinion we have rather gone overboard about this matter of need as applied to collegiate aid, until we widely honor it with the term scholarship. If we are to avoid educating our youngsters in the ways of socialistic thought, we should base merit scholarship on merit and not on need. Unless we drastically change our way of thinking, I fear that we shall continue moving toward a time when the needy shall inherit our colleges from the worthy.

Why Teacher Power Had to Happen

by Melvin D. Barger

A cloud that was once the size of a man's hand has now grown to become a stormy presence engulfing public education throughout the United States.

This new presence is "teacher power," the political strength of the public teachers' unions and their allied organizations. John Ryor, president of the National Education Association, calls "teacher power" a term that has grown from a "wistful cliché to an unchallengeable reality" and insists that its uses must include making teachers the "foremost political power in the nation" and seeing to it that teachers "are no longer blocked out of educational decision making."[1] Two years ago, one of Ryor's predecessors, Dr. Helen Wise, listed as an NEA goal the election of a "veto-proof Congress" as far as education bills are concerned.[2] Other teachers' organization leaders are saying similar things. Meanwhile, state legislators and Congressmen are beginning to feel the heat of teacher power as wielded by the NEA and its rival organization, the American Federation of Teachers.

The initial effects of teacher power are noticeable increases in strikes and other exhibitions of teachers' militancy and political strength.[3] Further down the road, however, it is likely that teachers' organizations will completely dominate public education, even to the extent of shaping all curricula and calling the shots on the acceptance or repudiation of any specific educational philosophy. As in any political controversy, this development is seen as "good" by teachers and their allies and called "bad" by many others.

However it's regarded, teacher power is not an isolated development. It was really something that "had to happen" as a result of our system of public education and government interventions in private union-management relationships. The surprising thing is not that teachers have finally begun to exercise political power; rather, it is that

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it took them so long. From now on, however, the message is indeed clear: teacher power is Mr. Ryor's unchallengeable reality, and coping with this newly discovered power is bound to become an awesome problem in almost every community.

To some people, the exercise of teacher power will be viewed as proof that teachers are being greedy and non-professional and "don't have the interest of the children at heart." But teachers, now a well organized pressure group, believe that they have fallen behind other groups and that "professionalism" has been a ploy to keep them from organizing. They are also careful to say that all of their actions, including strikes that close schools, are for the benefit of the children. A few teachers may feel qualms about this new militancy, but more of them are beginning to act and think like union members.

Why did this "have to happen"? Why couldn't teachers—and other public employees for that matter—be content with the traditional privileges and status of their special kind of employment? Why did they have to launch a bid for power that now looms as a revolutionary movement that may completely change the schools?

There are several reasons why teachers are acquiring so much new muscle. Most of these reasons are rooted in our compulsory system of public education. Public schools, largely with general approval and consent, use several forms of compulsion that tend to "stack the deck" in favor of the producer group (i.e., the teachers) at the expense of the consumers (the taxpaying public, parents, etc.). Compulsory education, harnessed with the compulsory practices of the labor union movement, gives teachers far more bargaining power than the typical craft or industrial union has in dealing with private employers. We must assume that teachers' organizations will take full advantage of the weapons given to them by the public educational system. At this point, it's difficult to see how reasonable checks can be made on their future demands. Here are some of the elements of teacher power that will have to be re-examined in the years ahead:

1. Compulsory taxpayers' support of public schools. The public school has long been a cherished American institution that has been considered to be operated in the public interest. For one thing, it has been generally accepted that a democratic form of government requires citizens to be literate and fairly knowledgeable, and that large numbers of people would be denied education if there were no public schools.

Therefore, public education has been the responsibility of the community, and has usually been supported by the property tax.

This system had its drawbacks and was always a potential threat to individual liberties. However, it also had a number of checks and balances that kept it from becoming tyrannical and wrecking local budgets. For one thing, property owners voted in school millage elections, and were always likely to express their approval (or disapproval) of their schools in this way. At the same time, local school boards could control the schools to a certain extent, and local voters usually had direct access to board members. This wasn't always fair—indeed, it was often viewed as oppressive by schoolteachers—but it did serve to maintain a certain balance between community attitudes and the policies of schools.

Parents could still feel that the schools were acting as their surrogates in the classroom. This worked reasonably well, and most older persons will remember that their own parents and teachers possessed similar values and attitudes. Each reinforced the authority of the other, and if you were punished in school, there was a good chance that you might receive further punishment at home. Meanwhile, the school was also expected to perform in "delivering" education. Much is said to deplore the fact that many Americans once attended school only through the eighth grade, but the fact is that *such students then possessed reading and writing skills at that level.* It is now common knowledge that a high school diploma is no longer proof that one necessarily has a high school level education.

But there was always a hidden weakness in the local tax-supported public school system. This weakness was in its susceptibility to takeover. In order to wrest control away from the community, it was only necessary to change the support base from local to state and federal. Taxpayers lose voice in school matters when state and federal boards take charge. Voting on local school millages, on the other hand, still retains some of the aspects of the marketplace, even though it is admittedly a somewhat unsatisfactory governmental program. But effective citizen control is lost when the schools are controlled or directed from state and federal offices. When that happens, the only way to make individual views known is to organize as a pressure group, and this is too difficult and time-consuming for most parents.

The system is then ready for teacher control, since teachers are already organized as a pressure group and know what they want. Their

leaders are well aware of the additional leverage they have in working with state and federal officials rather than local systems, so they have been the leading advocates of increased state and federal support of schools. Not only does this give them additional funds to bargain for, it also increases their own control of the school systems and effectively neutralizes the power of parents and local boards.

2. Compulsory attendance. Another weapon of the teachers' unions is that students are forced to attend schools in most states until they reach certain ages. Again, this compulsion has always been viewed as "good" by most Americans. The fear is always expressed that without compulsory education many children will grow up illiterate. We are apparently supposed to believe that any number of future Albert Einsteins and Jonas Salks would be deprived of ordinary reading and writing skills if we did not have compulsory school attendance laws.

The fact is, of course, that few parents would neglect their children's education even if attending were not compulsory. Some of them still have to resort to private education, such as tutoring, in order to help their children over serious learning difficulties. Also, compulsory attendance may even hamper the educational process, since it brings in students who do not benefit from the teaching and often disrupt classrooms to such an extent that other students are shortchanged. Compulsory attendance has been vastly oversold as an instrument to advance general educational levels, and some knowledgeable people are beginning to challenge it.

But it's not likely that teachers' unions will ever seriously oppose compulsory attendance. It is one of the things that contributes to teacher power.

3. Teacher education and certification. You have to be against God and motherhood to oppose the idea of graduate education and intensive certification of teachers, because these programs are supposed to be proof of greater competence and professional skill. This drive for increased education for teachers created a huge network of expensive teacher-training courses across the country, and it has made the "teaching certificate" a condition of employment in many systems.

The rationale for all this training is that individuals become better teachers if they possess graduate degrees and teaching certificates. But one way to learn about the value of these academic credentials is to

find out what teachers themselves think of education degrees and courses. In many universities, the graduate education degree is considered much easier to obtain than other types of degrees, and required courses for teachers are jokingly referred to (by teachers) as "monkey courses" or "Mickey Mouse courses." Upon examination, the system of graduate teacher training actually turns out to be an elaborate device for raising teachers' pay levels and for excluding others from the teaching field.

By raising educational and certification requirements for teachers, the unions have been given a form of licensing power. We can also predict that teachers' organizations will soon begin taking steps to limit the number of persons who can enroll in teacher education programs. Another device they are likely to use in controlling entry to the field is to reduce the opportunities for student teachers to obtain the classroom experience that is necessary for preliminary acceptance. In this case, the teachers would be borrowing a tactic from the craft unions, which arbitrarily limit the number of apprentices who are permitted to work.

4. Education as a "right." We should not overlook the influence of the various rights movements in giving teachers more power over the educational system. In recent years, the idea has surfaced that every individual has a right to an education, with society (i.e., government) being obliged to furnish it. Like many of the new "rights," this one has great potential for harm and can impose backbreaking burdens on the nation. Such rights, like the so called "right to welfare," really are privileges or "pseudo-rights" that contain a number of deadly booby traps. Nevertheless, the idea that the individual has a right to an education has gone largely unchallenged, and probably will get further acceptance before it falls into disrepute.

For teachers, the "right to an education" philosophy means endless opportunities to build up their empires and to increase the budget in every school. We will hear teachers making the claim that children are being robbed of their right to an education because of large classroom sizes, lack of teaching aids, aging school buildings, or lack of special teacher training. We may also see the day when every student, regardless of qualifications or motivations, will be entitled to public education through college. This has already become the philosophy in New York City, where the "free" City College has been forced to

accept hundreds of near-illiterate students. This may appear to be a farcical and self-defeating action to outsiders, but one must never forget that such a practice has the effect of creating many teaching jobs.

5. Compulsory unionism. Finally, the teachers' organizations and other public workers' unions owe much of their muscle to unions in the private sector, which established the precedent for the new militancy and tactics of teachers. Craft and industrial unions acquired unusual power more than 40 years ago with the passage of the Wagner Act, which forced employers to bargain with them and enabled labor organizations to force employees to join unions or pay dues into them. In one stroke, this legislation wiped out a number of natural checks and balances in labor-management relationships and gave unions the power to demand wages and benefits at above-market levels.

The unions were successful in convincing the public that most of their gains were at the expense of employers and could somehow be squeezed out of profits; thus, strikes were always represented as being against certain companies and not against the public. The unions were also able to convince non-unionized workers that they, too, were indirectly benefiting from various labor settlements, despite the fact that union activity had the effect of raising prices and increasing the numbers of workers who were competing for non-unionized employment (hence forcing wages down in that unorganized part of the economy).

Apparently few people, including leading economists, realized that if every worker belonged to a militant union, the result could only be a high level of unemployment, because it would be impossible to give everybody the same pay and benefits of workers in highly skilled trades or in capital intensive industries such as steel and automobiles. Union leaders did nothing to explain such facts, since it has been in their interest to increase their membership in every possible way and to present their mission as a struggle to force management to share swollen profits with the workers.

Meanwhile, teachers and other public employees began to feel that unionized employees in the private sector were moving far ahead of them in pay and benefits. There has been a tradition that public employees should not be permitted to strike, but it is obvious that such laws are not likely to be enforced by vote-conscious public officials. The rapid build-up of government activity in every field has created

vast armies of public employees with common interests and considerable political power.

The same rationale that is used to justify strikes in the private sector can also be used to justify strikes of teachers and other public employees. Other union members, though perhaps personally disturbed when their own teachers and garbage collectors go on strike, cannot really oppose such strikes in principle without undermining their own position. The leaders of craft and industrial unions are in a similar bind; they need the political support of public employees' unions and must therefore defend the right of public employees to strike.

So it is unrealistic to believe that special laws can be passed or enforced to make teachers and other public employees moderate their demands. The unionization of these groups was really a logical extension both of union growth and of the expansion of government into so many fields. True, it will prove to be somewhat more difficult for public employees to present their case, since they are not bargaining with a private employer who can be accused of making "unconscionable profits." But with these unions acquiring considerable political power, they don't have to be overly concerned about such matters.

Where Will It End?

With so many forms of compulsion working in their favor, teachers will undoubtedly attain Mr. Ryor's goal of becoming the foremost political power in the nation. There are few countervailing forces that might prevent them from reaching this goal. Most of the efforts to launch private schools and other movements in competition with the governmental educational effort are spotty and are not likely to offer suitable alternatives to the existing system. Teacher power is indeed an unchallengeable reality, largely because power has been placed in the hands of teachers' organizations and there's nothing around that can challenge it.

Some libertarians have long realized that the educational system was headed in this direction. Writing more than 12 years ago, Leonard Read noted that the teachers were in a good position to seize control of public education: "The government educational effort is a political apparatus and behaves accordingly. The indifference of voters invites special interests to assume command. For instance, if teachers ade-

quately organize, they can easily control the government school system and supplant the voters as the responsibility-authority fountainhead. The deputies, the superintendents, the Board of Education, and the voters become the teachers' aides, so to speak, helping primarily as taxpayers."[4]

This does not mean, however, that we are about to enter a long night of dictatorship at the hands of teaching professionals. Teacher power is bound to create its own excesses, and the same compulsions that give teachers so much leverage in controlling the educational system are dangerous weaknesses in their program. Some libertarians have always feared that teacher control of the governmental educational system will bring brainwashing and total thought control. The more probable result is that the abuses of teacher power will also tend to discredit government education. As the system comes to be more completely the fiefdom of teachers, the problem of winning public support and cooperation is bound to become acute.

We can also be certain that teachers will be unable to deliver the kind of results that are promised in all their shrill rhetoric about the quality education that is supposed to come about when teachers receive more pay and benefits. Public schools are bedeviled by many problems that are not likely to dissolve no matter how much power teachers possess. We can even predict that teacher pressure to increase expenditures for public schools will tend to demonstrate the limitations of government education. Teachers will be forced to re-examine their programs or to falsify the results of teaching. In fact, a form of the latter practice is seen in the current policy of issuing diplomas to poorly educated students.

Still another reaction to teacher power will be the growing disenchantment of liberal intellectuals who have heretofore favored public education. These intellectuals, despite a certain naivete about human nature, believe that educational standards should be high and many of them are becoming critical of public schools and excessive egalitarianism in education. This disenchantment is likely to result in more criticism of public education from unexpected and influential quarters.

Meanwhile, there is certain to be a small but lively market for private education of all kinds in the years ahead, unless compulsion is used to stamp it out. Private education is still alive and well everywhere in the United States. The parochial schools and exclusive private schools are only part of it. There are also thousands of students receiv-

ing instruction from tutors, private classes, business schools, trade schools, privately supported colleges, foundations, correspondence schools, self-improvement courses, apprenticeships . . . well, you name it. And there's still a great deal of respect for the grand education that a person can obtain simply through his own reading and conversations with others. Teachers will probably seize enough power to dominate the governmental educational apparatus and the formal schooling program. They are not likely to control the education of people who want to think for themselves. Given the conditions of our times, teacher power had to happen—but its use and abuse is likely to be a sound education for all of us.

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1. John Ryor, "The Uses of Teacher Power," *Today's Education,* November/December 1975, p. 5.

2. Reported by Frank Kane in the Toledo *Blade,* December 16, 1973.

3. See Paul Friggens, "Teachers on the March," *Reader's Digest,* February 1976, pp. 112–115. In the 1974 elections, 229 of 282 teacher-assisted candidates won in the House of Representatives; in the Senate, 21 of 28.

4. Leonard E. Read, writing on "Academic Freedom," in *Essays on Liberty,* Vol. X (Irvington, N.Y., Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1963), p. 370.

The Failure of American Public Education

by John Hood

Many American critics believe that the major problem with public education today is a lack of focus on results. Students aren't expected to meet high standards, the argument goes, and the *process* of education takes precedence over analyzing education *results* in policy-making circles.

This is a valid argument (as far as it goes). Indeed, it can be taken one important step further. We not only fail to hold individual students accountable for poor performance, we have also failed to hold the entire government-controlled school system accountable for its performance since at least World War II. Public education is itself a failure. Why shouldn't individual students follow its example?

The history of reform efforts in American public education is replete with half-hearted measures, with almost comical misdiagnoses of education problems, with blame-shifting, and with humbug. Everyone is an expert (most have, of course, suffered through the very system they want to reform). At any one time during the course of school reform, an illusion of debate often obscures a surprising consensus on the heralded "magic bullet" of the decade—be it school centralization or progressive education or preschool education or computerizing the classroom—that will solve America's education problems. These magic bullets always misfire. But instead of changing their weapon, policymakers simply put another round in the chamber, foolishly believing that the newest fad will succeed despite the failures of its predecessors.

Some critics believe that public education reforms fail because they are compromised or sabotaged by the education lobbies—teacher associations, administrators, and the legislators in their pockets. There is certainly some truth to that explanation, as we shall see. But in many cases, attributing the failure of reform to subversion merely exonerates

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that reform. Most reform ideas are either irrelevant or destructive of education. They would fail whether organized political interests opposed them or not.

Many conservatives believe that American public education is in poor shape today because of cultural and social trends, most beginning in the 1960s, which destroyed classroom discipline, the moral basis for education, and a national consensus on what students should learn. Again, there is some truth in this proposition, but ultimately it fails to explain why American students do not possess the communication and computational skills they need today to succeed in college or in the working world.

Furthermore, many free-market thinkers believe that applying market competition to the public schools will solve many of America's educational problems. I'm sympathetic to this argument, but it ignores the role of government policies other than student assignment to schools, which inhibit school success. When government policy continues to impose rigid personnel rules, bureaucracy, regulations, and a mandate to use education to engineer social or political outcomes, a school cannot successfully impart the needed skills, knowledge, and perspective to its students—whether these students choose to be there or not.

Lastly, the rhetoric of school reform often ignores the crucial role of individual decisions (by students, by parents, by business owners, by educators) in determining educational outcomes. You can lead a horse to water, the old adage goes, but you can't make him drink. It's a folksy way of imparting an important individualist truth. Providing students opportunities at school does not guarantee success if students watch television rather than do their homework—and parents let them. By assuming that any set of reform ideas can magically create a well-educated citizenry, we oversell the role of policy-making. Education requires initiative, a trait notoriously difficult to create or impose.

A Century of Reform

Public education and public-education reform share a common history. There is no past paradise when all students excelled. There is no perfect prototype for public education hidden in history, to be uncovered today and bestowed on a thankful nation. Rather, American public education is best thought of, historically, as mediocre. It was a

serviceable system for preparing students for an agrarian or assembly-line world in which only an elite pursued higher education.

Public education in America really began in earnest after the Civil War, when government-funded and -controlled schools supplanted the earlier system of private education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, some 57 percent of the 12 million school-aged Americans in 1870 were enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools, though only about 60 percent of those enrolled attended school on any given day and the average school year was 132 days. By the turn of the century, the percentage of school-aged children attending public schools had risen to 72 percent, with almost 70 percent of enrollees attending on any one of the 150 days in the school year. Most public education still occurred in the early grades—only two percent of the student population were in ninth grade or higher. By 1989 almost 90 percent of school-aged children attended public schools. Almost all attended class daily (with some important local or regional exceptions) and the average school year had grown to 180 days—still too short, say many modern critics, but a 40 percent increase since Reconstruction. Most students stay in school at least throughout the high-school grades, while a record number are pursuing higher education.

American policy-makers and educators began to create in earnest our centralized, monopolistic public education system at the turn of the century. For example, over a relatively brief period from 1890 to 1910, public schools increased their share of the high-school population from two-thirds to about 90 percent—a proportion of public to private schools which has persisted until the present day. There were a number of factors motivating this change. During the last few decades of the nineteenth century, public education had grown steadily as a primarily locally controlled phenomenon, often emulating or taking over ownership from private schools. Education was still basically focused on learning skills, such as reading or arithmetic, and schools often reflected their communities in very obvious ways.

But by the start of the twentieth century, a number of different groups began to believe that a comprehensive, centrally controlled (at least on the city or state level), and bureaucratic public education system was crucial to America's future. The Progressive movement, for example, sought to replace haphazard government decision-making (such as that provided by political machines or community schools) with a more standardized, "predictable" approach. At the time, they viewed

such change as necessary to eliminate corruption and graft. Similarly, the child welfare movement began to press for changes in family life—for replacing child labor and family neglect with public education.

Simultaneously, American business leaders began to see a decentralized, "patchwork" education system as a liability in international competition. U.S. manufacturers, especially, saw the rise of Germany as a significant economic threat and sought to imitate that country's new system of state-run trade schools. In 1905, the National Association of Manufacturers editorialized that "the nation that wins success in competition with other nations must train its youths in the arts of production and distribution." German education, it concluded, was "at once the admiration and fear of all countries." American business, together with the growing labor movement, pressed Congress to dramatically expand federal spending on education, especially for vocational instruction. Also, business and education leaders began to apply new principles of industrial organization to education, such as top-down organization and a "factory-floor" model in which administrators, teachers, and students all had a place in producing a standardized "final product." These leaders created professional bureaucracies to devise and implement policy.

Finally, perhaps the most important boosters of America's new public education system were what we might today call "cultural conservatives." The turn of the century, after all, was a time of tremendous immigration. As more and more immigrants arrived in America, bringing with them a plethora of languages, cultural traditions, and religious beliefs, American political leaders foresaw the potential dangers of Balkanization. The public education system, once designed primarily to impart skills and knowledge, took on a far more political and social role. It was to provide a common culture and a means of inculcating new Americans with democratic values. Public schools, in other words, were to be a high-pressure "melting pot" to help America avoid the dismal fate of other multinational polities. American political leaders were all too familiar with the Balkan Wars of the early 1900s, and were intent on avoiding a similar fate.

The Expanding Role of Public Education

By now, you should be experiencing a heavy dose of déjà vu. These themes and concerns have continued to dominate American public

education until the present day. "Do-gooders" throughout the twentieth century have sought to expand the role of public education in all aspects of what was once family life, such as instilling moral values, providing health and nutrition, fighting delinquency and crime, and protecting children from physical and psychological abuse. Today, they are the primary advocates of Head Start and other supplements to school that intervene in virtually every aspect of a student's life.

Business groups, especially national organizations and corporate magnates, have frequently played a high-profile role in educational affairs during this century, constantly warning of the economic threats posed by international competitors (as in the Sputnik scare of the 1950s or the "competitiveness" debate today) and supporting a professional, centralized approach to public education (in stark contrast to what the same business leaders believed was appropriate in economic policy).

Finally, a host of groups across the political spectrum have looked to public schools as a key means of accomplishing what they consider to be important political or social objectives, such as racial integration, social tolerance, democratic participation, or environmental awareness.

The history of public education reform is a story in which these groups—sometimes in concert and sometimes in opposition to professional educators with their own designs—jockey for position to make their indelible mark on the school policies of the day. Reform efforts have reappeared regularly. In the 1940s, the watchword was "life adjustment education." Educators, worried about a growing dropout rate and the seemingly frantic pace of post-War technological innovations, sought to help students adjust to a changing world. One example of a class introduced in public schools during this period was entitled "Basic Urges, Wants, and Needs and Making Friends and Keeping Them." That's the *1940s,* not the 1960s.

This "promising" development fell victim to the education scare that began when the Soviet Union put its Sputnik satellite into space in 1957. The focus shifted back toward learning basic subjects, though in new and sometimes misguided ways. A flurry of activity followed the Sputnik scare, exemplified by such innovations as new math, open classrooms, programmed instruction, and ungraded schools (which are now making a comeback). During the 1960s, these ideas began to filter throughout the American public education system (all the more susceptible to fads and trends because of its increasingly centralized

nature). Some of these notions worked in particular schools, while failing dismally in others—another common result of school reforms generally. In the 1970s, some new ideas were added to this increasingly unwieldy mix, such as the behavioralism craze, whole-language reading instruction, mastery learning, and the spread of standardized testing of both students and teachers.

Finally, during the 1980s the school reform bandwagon got a new set of tires and a fresh coat of paint. Following the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, governors instituted all sorts of teacher training and testing programs, curriculum changes, and higher performance standards for students. At the same time, states dramatically increased spending on all facets of public education. And President Ronald Reagan, promising to eliminate the U.S. Education Department during his campaign, actually helped administer a significant outflow of new federal money for public education, mostly directed toward specific programs for needy or minority students.

What Was Gained?

Despite the widespread public impression, felt every five years or so since World War II, that something "new" was happening in public school reform, education statistics tell a different story. They demonstrate very little change in student performance (and most measurable changes were downward). Here's a brief report card on four decades of public education reform:

Many so-called education experts believe that class size—the ratio of students to teacher—must be reduced to improve learning. We've already tried it. From 1955 to 1991, the average pupil-teacher ratio in U.S. public schools dropped by 40 percent. These experts also proclaim that lack of funding hamstrings reform, and that the 1980s were a particularly bad time for school finances. Wrong again. Annual expenditures per pupil in U.S. public schools exploded by about 350 percent in real dollars from 1950 ($1,189) to 1991 ($5,237). In only two years during this 40-year period did spending fall: 1980 and 1981. Spending grew by about a third in real terms from 1981 to 1991.

The average salary of public school teachers rose 45 percent in real terms from 1960 (the first year data are available) to 1991. This increase masks a more variable trend. Real salaries rose until 1974, when they began to level off and even decline. The average salary reached a

trough of $27,436 in 1982, after which it rose to an all-time high of $33,015 in 1991. Instructional staff in public schools generally saw their earnings increase faster than the average full-time employee—from 1950 to 1989 the ratio of instructional-staff salary to the average full-time salary in the U.S. increased by 22 percent (although it sank from 1972 to 1980).

Student performance has hardly kept pace with the dramatic increases in resources devoted to public education. While the percentage of students aged 17 at the beginning of the school year who graduated from high school rose 30 percent from 1950 to 1964, it has leveled off since then. In fact, the 1991 percentage is lower than the 1969 peak of 77.1 percent.

Evidence from the National Assessment of Educational Progress and other performance measures shows how poorly served America's public school students really are. Just five percent of 17-year-old high school students in 1988 could read well enough to understand and use information found in technical materials, literary essays, historical documents, and college-level texts. This percentage has been falling since 1971.

Average Scholastic Aptitude Test scores fell 41 points between 1972 and 1991. Apologists for public education argue that such factors as the percentage of minority students taking the SAT can explain this drop. Not true. Scores for whites have dropped. And the number of kids scoring over 600 on the verbal part of the SAT has fallen by 37 percent since 1972, so the overall decline can't be blamed merely on mediocre students "watering down" the results.

Only six percent of 11th graders in 1986 could solve multi-step math problems and use basic algebra. Sixty percent did not know why *The Federalist* was written, 75 percent didn't know when Lincoln was president, and one in five knew what Reconstruction was.

Another measure of the failure of public education is that almost all institutions of higher education now provide remedial instruction to some of their students. The Southern Regional Education Board surveyed its members in 1986 and found that 60 percent said at least a third of their students needed remedial help. Surveying this evidence of failure among college-bound students, former Reagan administration official Chester E. Finn, Jr., wrote that "surely college ought to transport one's intellect well beyond factual knowledge and cultural

literacy. But it's hard to add a second story to a house that lacks a solid foundation."

Why American Public Education Fails

There are several characteristics of government institutions which, common to virtually all American public schools, inhibit the successful operation of schools. These include: *Rigid personnel rules and regulations*. Those schools with little to no interference from outside supervisors or regulators on hiring and firing decisions tend to be the most effective schools as measured by student performance. John Chubb of the Brookings Institution and Terry Moe of Stanford University provided a good explanation for this in their 1990 book *Politics, Markets and America's Schools:*

> Among the reasons why direct external control may interfere with the development of an effective school, perhaps the most important is the potentially debilitating influence of external control over personnel. If principals have little or no control over who teaches in their schools, they are likely to be saddled with a number of teachers, perhaps even many teachers, whom they regard as bad fits. In an organization that works best through shared decision-making and delegated authority, a staff that is in conflict with the leader and with itself is a serious problem . . . such conflict may be a school's greatest organizational problem. Personnel policies that promote such conflict may be a school's greatest burden.

Tenure is not the only barrier to successful school organization. School organizations that call for greater differentiation among teachers and pay some teachers more than others on the basis of performance or drawing power rather than seniority clash with government-mandated salary schedules. Positions and salary levels are decided by the state without any relationship to a particular school's situation. To foster successful reorganization of schools and more effective and efficient use of teachers, school systems or even individual schools must be able to employ their teaching staff as they see fit and pay them accordingly. If a school has a hard time finding a good science teacher (not a hypothetical situation in many districts) it should be able to set

the salary for that position at a level which will attract qualified persons.

Uniform salary schedules were originally enacted to address racial and social inequities among teachers, not as a "better way" of organizing the teaching force. These inequities have largely been addressed and can be prevented by other means. But like so many governmental policies, uniform salary schedules have outlived their usefulness. Reorganization might involve paying teachers of one subject more than teachers of another subject, or paying a good teacher with ten years' experience more than a mediocre teacher with 15 years' experience. As education researcher Denis Doyle of the Hudson Institute wrote: "There is no mystery as to how to find and retain qualified teachers of mathematics or the sciences. Pay them what the market demands, provide them with benefits that are competitive, and create a work environment in which they can derive genuine professional satisfaction. Pay differentials are the answer."

And yet mediocre teachers, who dominate teacher unions, and the education lobbyists in Washington and the state capitals continue to resist this basic change.

A civil service system. A related set of problems for American public education stems from the early twentieth-century view that public services can and should be delivered by a regimented, compartmentalized civil service. All indications are that the teaching profession will best be organized in the future as firms providing specific services to schools, rather than as a unionized set of government employees with tenure and little performance-based accountability. They should, in other words, come to resemble law firms. In teaching firms, more senior partners would enjoy tremendous name recognition and respect, attracting clients for the firms while imparting their proven teaching strategies to junior partners and associates. Can you imagine such a system evolving within today's public education system?

Monopoly. It's not an attack on teachers to suggest that they, like all other workers, respond to incentives. When a school enjoys monopoly control over its students, the incentive to produce successful students is lacking. When student performance doesn't correlate with reward on the school level, individual teachers see no need to go the extra mile to help students when the teacher next door receives the same rewards for merely babysitting. And without the pressures of

competition in education, parents are bothersome nuisances rather than clients who might potentially go elsewhere if not satisfied.

Centralized decision-making. When decisions on such issues as the makeup of the history curriculum or the daily school schedule is mandated from above, school leaders lose initiative and school policies become disconnected with the students and teachers they supposedly exist to serve. At a time when American industry is abandoning the factory model and top-down management as hopelessly irrelevant to modern enterprises, so too must schools seek better lines of communication and a more effective way to make decisions about everyday problems.

Tinkering around the edges of the public school system might reduce the impact of one or two of these government characteristics, but they'll never be eliminated without substantially limiting government interference in education.

There is much disagreement about whether these characteristics have become more pronounced over the last few decades. But the trend lines aren't the point. In a world in which the returns on education dropped off fairly rapidly in the upper grades and college—in other words, when a junior-high school education was enough to obtain gainful employment and function in society—America could basically afford to have an inefficient, bureaucratized, and ineffective system of public education. When students fell through the cracks, they had a fairly soft landing. Today, however, technological innovation and a host of other factors have dramatically increased the returns on education. All students must be able to compute, communicate, and think to make their way in an increasingly complex and confusing world.

The Triumph of Politics

What *has* clearly been on the rise in recent decades is the use of America's public schools for the purpose of engineering some social outcome deemed desirable by political leaders. This is an unavoidable, and perhaps insurmountable, failing of government-run education.

Both liberal do-gooders and conservative culture warriors look to public education to achieve public goods. In the 1950s and 1960s, a national focus on the problem of racial segregation helped steer educa-

tion policy away from questions of excellence to questions of equity and access. In the 1970s, activists bent on such diverse causes as environmentalism, humanism, spiritualism, and even socialism began to target the school curriculum. They produced all sorts of programs, handbooks, textbooks, and other materials, and used political influence to have these adopted as part of the school day in many jurisdictions. Meanwhile, America's developmental psychologists and early childhood experts, deep in their environmentalist (in the sense of non-genetic) phase, got the attention of educators and political leaders. They argued that formal education should be supplemented with special counseling and self-esteem programs, that formal education should be extended into the preschool years, and that the federal government should be involved in funding these early-intervention and compensatory education programs. Policy-makers believed them. So we now have Chapter 1, Head Start, in-school counselors, and other "innovations," the usefulness of which is now in great doubt.

When every call for fundamental change in American education is rebutted not by arguments about student achievement but by arguments focusing on race, class, social mixing, and other social concerns, it is difficult to imagine real progress. When teachers spend much of their day filling out forms, teaching quasi-academic subjects mandated from above, and boosting student self-esteem (as contrasted with self-respect, which is earned rather than worked up), learning is difficult if not impossible. While government is wholly unsuited to teach America's students because of all the characteristics listed above, private schools offer an example of what American education could be. After trending downward for decades, private school enrollment increased during the 1980s. This year, private schools accounted for about 12 percent of America's students. The fastest-growing segment of the private school market is the non-religious school, but Catholic and other parochial schools continue to supply excellent education opportunities to poor children and minorities both in inner-cities and in rural areas. Studies show that private schools produce better students than public schools do, even when you take into account for the selectivity of some private schools.

It's true, as some public-education boosters charge, that even private school students have shown some declines in achievement over the past half-century—but that proves only that other influences in society besides schooling can have a significant impact on student

performance. Private schools provide a better education than public schools even though American families generally do not sufficiently value education and students often lack initiative and concentration.

By any reasonable measure, America's monopolistic, bureaucratic, over-regulated system of public schools is woefully unprepared to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Political, business, and education leaders continue to talk about "reforming" the current public education system. They should, instead, be discussing how to replace it.

Educational Vouchers: The Double Tax

by Gary North

Last year the Bush administration, responding to pressure for choice in education, proposed the voucher system. "Specifically, the president's proposal would give a $1,000 scholarship to every child of a middle- or low-income family in a participating school district. Parents must be permitted to use the scholarship at any lawfully operated school." So wrote Lamar Alexander, President Bush's Secretary of Education, in the conservative newspaper *Washington Times* (August 30, 1992).

Notice two key elements of the recommended legislation. First, there will be no vouchers for the rich, however "rich" may be defined by the statute or in subsequent legislation. When it comes to vouchers, all families are equal, but some are more equal than others. Every family will be entitled to participate, since tax money is paying for it—every family except those families that might be willing and able to buy such services apart from the voucher system. When the subsidies force up the price of private education, the way Medicare has forced up the price of American medicine, the rich or the scrupulous will have to look out for themselves. This is a compulsory wealth-redistribution program. It is not politically neutral. Neither is education.

Second, pay close attention to the key words: *lawfully operated schools*. What does "lawfully operated" mean? It means lawfully operated in terms of local, state, and above all, federal rules and regulations. It means that every private school that accepts a single voucher payment from one student will be as subject to federal bureaucrats as any college or university is if it enrolls a student who has received federal scholarship aid. How many Grove City Colleges are there? How many private schools will turn away students who come with government checks in hand? Not many.

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There is a rule in all things associated with state funding. Anyone who ignores this rule is either naive or suicidal. Here is the rule: *If you take the state's nickel, you accept the state's noose.* You may prefer an older version: "If you take the queen's shilling, you do the queen's bidding." In short, you do not get something for nothing.

The overriding economic question regarding educational vouchers is this one: "At what price will parents sell their birthright, namely, control over their children's education?" A subordinate question is this one: "At what price will private school administrators sell their ability to deal with parents?" Sadly, we can be fairly sure of the answer: a low price.

The More Things Change . . .

The amazing fact is that the education voucher issue has changed very little since *The Freeman* published an earlier version of this essay in May 1976. The political conservatives are still trying to "clean up the public schools" by introducing competition through vouchers. The Christian school movement is still confident that vouchers will help them financially but without any negative side effects, such as the introduction of controls by the state. The public school teacher unions are still totally opposed to vouchers because vouchers will create "elite schools"—supposedly a very undemocratic thing to allow, at least until it is time to choose a college for your children.

Some things have changed, however. The public schools cost more to operate per child enrolled, even discounting for price inflation. Public schools are far less safe. Achievement scores have dropped. And the voters are finally aware of the extent of the decline.

What I wrote in 1976 is equally true today: The fundamental issue is the locus of sovereignty in education. We need to ask: Who is responsible for the education of children—parents, churches, or the state? My answer has not changed: parents. My political analysis has not changed: Any element of coercion by the state, including financing, shifts the locus of sovereignty away from parents toward the state. My economic analysis also has not changed: To discover who is operationally sovereign over education in any society, follow the money.

We are continually bombarded by newspaper and magazine headlines informing us of the continuing "crisis in education," which actually is a crisis in government-operated education. Virtually all the avail-

able data reveal that the crisis is accelerating. Inner-city schools have become literal battlefields between rival gangs, between teachers and students, between administrators and increasingly vociferous faculty unions, and most important, between outraged parents and the whole system. Yet the crisis is in no way confined to inner-city schools. The suburban schools of the white middle class are burdened with the multiple plagues of student boredom, drug addiction, and rapidly increasing alcoholism. Twenty-five years of falling scores on the college entrance examination reveal the steady nature of the erosion, despite the acceleration of costs associated with the public schools.

Educators cannot bring themselves to admit that the crisis is anything more than a temporary aberration—an aberration from the "normal" which itself was dead long before today's administrators were born. The theories multiply, the explanations proliferate, and the crisis gets worse. What the last decade has brought is an understanding on the part of the public and a minority of government school employees (untenured, generally) that there is no answer.

Like the sinking ship which finally takes on too much water, the government education system is irretrievable. It will be useful in the future only as scrap. But what about those millions of students who will go through the system before it finally sinks? Will they too become useful only as scrap?

Parents are becoming aware of "the discussion syndrome." The endless discussions in half-empty halls between a few parents and local administrators have not altered anything. The teacher conferences, the administrator conferences, the PTA conferences, and all the other conferences have proved useful only for the cataloguing of the unsolved and increasingly unsolvable problems connected with government education. Solutions have not emerged from conferences—or at least no solutions acceptable to parents, administrators, school boards, students, state legislators, and an angry group of levy-rejecting voters. If there are no solutions, why pay higher taxes? This is the reasoning of the voters. The reasoning of the school administrators is different. They only want to discover a new source of tax money that will be acceptable to the voters, or better yet, that will not be subject to public elections at all.

The Locus of Sovereignty

The ultimate source of the educational crisis stems from an error in first principles. Once committed to this error, the public education system has floundered repeatedly. To locate the source of the error, men need only ask themselves a single question: Who is responsible for the education of a child? The answers, of course, are varied: the parents, the church, the civil government, or a combination of the three.

The conflicts in education are in fact conflicts over a much more fundamental issue: the locus of sovereignty, and hence, the locus of personal responsibility. The person or institution which possesses sovereignty must be the one which takes on the responsibility. By affirming the legitimacy of tax-supported education, voters have attempted to transfer their responsibilities for the education of their children to another agency, the state. Yet at the same time, they affirm their own sovereignty over the content and structure of the educational system. That they have lost almost every battle in their war with tenured, state-supported educational bureaucrats is the direct result of the public's abdication of personal responsibility, family by family, for the education of their children. The war was lost on the day that parents, as voters, decided to transfer the financial responsibilities of educating their own children to other members of the body politic. While Horace Mann can be regarded as the general who was victorious in the 1830s and 1840s over private education in Massachusetts, he was only conducting mopping-up operations. The end had been determined two centuries earlier when the Puritans of Massachusetts affirmed the principle of compulsory local education, with subsidies to poor families.

Any system of education must ultimately be the reflection of, and product of, the philosophical principles of those who finance the system. The decision about the financing of any institution inescapably determines the shape and content of that institution. Modern men, being secular, now recognize this fact when applied to the institution of the church. They see that a state-supported church is antithetical to the principle of freedom of conscience. They see, as do religious zealots like Roger Williams, that state-financed churches become the tools of the state which supplies the funds. But modern men do not see that this strict relationship between financing and operations applies *a fortiori* to government school systems. Somehow, they think, education is corrupted when churches are involved, but not so when governments

are involved. Like the established churchmen of two centuries ago, today's priests and parishioners of the public schools refuse to recognize the nature of their relationship to the state.

Who Pays?

Do men finance their children's educations directly, through the personal financial sacrifice of the family unit? If so, then the family is sovereign over education. The school is then merely an extension of the family. The family makes use of the efficiencies associated with the division of labor. Parents hire professional educators to train their children, but those who are hired are paid to adapt their educational skills to the needs of the families that are financing the education. This can be done directly, through family-controlled school boards, but it can also be accomplished through the indirect means of the market. The family hires the tutor, or the school, in the same way that it hires any other servant. The parents are directly responsible for their children, and the selection of a school is an act of responsible stewardship. The family has not delegated the responsibility of educating the children to anyone else. It controls the purse strings—the ultimate affirmation of earthly sovereignty.

The more distant the source of the school's funds from the family, the less control the family has over the selection of the teachers and equipment. If the church finances the education of its members' children, then a layer of institutional bureaucracy is interposed between parents and teachers. This may be agreeable to many parents, but if church members other than the parents are expected to finance the school (as is the case in most instances), then they too have a legitimate right to determine school policies.

The bureaucrats gain their greatest control in tax-supported systems. Sovereignty is so diluted at the level of the individual citizen that the expertise of the professional and tenured bureaucrats is overwhelmingly powerful. But their power is not tied to a personal relationship with the children (as it is with a parent), nor is it linked to a financial dependence on the parents, nor is it even linked to a community of shared values, as in the case of a church school. Their power stems from the unwillingness of legislators to turn off the funds. And the legislators' unwillingness to interfere stems from two primary facts of political life: (1) the experts have an aura of invincibility about them,

plus tenure; and (2) the voters still believe in the establishment of the public-school church. It is easier to give speeches than to take action, so legislators give speeches. Most of them are re-elected most of the time, so the policy pays off in the coin of the political realm: votes.

The crisis of education is therefore a crisis in the realm of values, with the values of the parents coming into conflict with the values, philosophies, and incompetence of those in control of the tax-supported educational system. If the parents continue to capitulate to the philosophy of public education, then they will continue to be defeated in their attempts to gain the kind of education they want for their children. There is only one way that all parents can gain such satisfaction: They must pay for the education of their children. They can earn the money or they can convince some third party to give them or their children the necessary funds on a voluntary basis, but the parents must pay. If they want to get what they pay for, they must pay directly, rather than paying through the coercive means of state taxation.

Until men are willing to cut off the political funding of the established church of America, they will see the educational crisis escalate. The visible sign of sovereignty is the ability to pay for a service and the willingness to do so. Nothing short of this will suffice to solve the crisis in the government schools, for the educational crisis is ultimately a conflict over sovereignty. He who pays with his own funds will win; he who continues to pay by voting cannot possibly win.

Pseudo-Market Schemes

The Bush administration's voucher plan was inspired by a suggestion made by Professor Milton Friedman, one of the most technically proficient economists in America. As a defender of the principle of market efficiency, he has been able to gain many adherents within the economics profession. He has been especially successful in challenging the inefficiencies of the federal regulatory commissions. One of his most popular and widely read books, *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), was a landmark of the 1960s, for it was popularly written by a professional economist who had long before established his technical proficiency before his peers. Some of the policy recommendations of the book, such as the abolition of occupational licensure by civil governments, have not been taken seriously by most economists and certainly not by professionals who now hold occupational licenses from the civil

government. Yet from the point of view of those who are convinced of the technical superiority of the free market over governmental regulation, it is this kind of uncompromising stand taken by Dr. Friedman which is most valuable in the defense of freedom, not to mention capitalism.

The problem that many free market advocates have with some of Dr. Friedman's policy recommendations is that too often he spends many pages in devising ingenious schemes that would make government programs more efficient and, Dr. Friedman fervently hopes, less burdensome to the taxpayers, businessmen, and innocent citizens of the land. These policy recommendations have one feature in common: They are pseudo-market devices. They would create a kind of shadow market—"almost a free market"—that could provide success indicators analogous to those provided by a truly free market. In doing so, he argues, these pseudo-market alterations would make government more responsive to the needs of citizens.

The Voucher Scheme

Perhaps the most interesting of all of the pseudo-market policy recommendations promoted by Dr. Friedman is his educational voucher plan. Under such a school financing system, each family would receive one voucher for each school-age child in the family. The voucher would be redeemable in money upon presentation by a private school to the state or local government. Its value would be equal to the average per student cost of education in the district. (This figure, by the way, is seldom even calculated by school boards, for obvious political and public relations reasons, and when it is calculated, it virtually never includes such crucial items as the interest which the government might have earned had it sold off the school buildings and invested the money elsewhere, such as in a bank which would loan the purchase money to a local profit-making school.) The parents could then send their students to a public school or to a private school. If the cost of tuition were higher in the private school than the value of the voucher, the parents could make up the difference by paying more money.

The advantages of this scheme, argue the supporters of school vouchers, would be considerable. The parents gain back their lost sovereignty. They decide where the children will attend school. The public schools would be forced to compete for students, thereby increasing

their efficiency. Private schools would spring up everywhere in response to the existence of vouchers. The diversity of educational opportunities would be fostered. The costs of administration would be very low, we are assured.

There is no doubt that the logic of the voucher program is initially impressive. Parents would seem to have far more power in selecting educational alternatives under the voucher system. The conformity of bureaucratic education would be challenged by a new diversity. It would save money and increase freedom. What more could we ask for? In any case, what more can we expect in an age of wealth redistribution? This is always the key argument in favor of the creation of pseudo-market schemes: No way exists to re-establish a truly free market, so this is the best we can hope for.

The Locus of Sovereignty Revisited

It all sounds so plausible, yet it overlooks the fundamental problem of voucher-financed education. The question must still be asked: Where is the locus of sovereignty? And the answer must still be the same: the civil government. The voucher program violates the most important principle of education: Parents are responsible for financing their children's education. He who is responsible is also legally sovereign, and vice versa. Operationally, the source of the funding determines the locus of sovereignty. The goal of all those who would defend market arrangements must be to determine the *moral* locus of sovereignty in any particular circumstance, and then see to it that the sovereign agent be made legally and economically responsible for the exercise of his power. By failing to demand that parents be the source of funding for their own children's education, the promoters of the voucher scheme have abdicated their responsibility in extending the principles of voluntarism and personal responsibility.

In the voucher system, the source of the funding is still the taxation system. The financing is based on the principle that it is legitimate to use political power in order to grant benefits to one group at the expense of another. The principle of coercion is still dominant. The dominant principle, over time, will thwart the elements of voluntarism in any pseudo-market scheme. The state is still the operational sovereign over education, simply because the threat of violence, which is the state's legal monopoly, is the source of the funds for education. There

is no doubt that Dr. Friedman recognizes this fact, yet he does not emphasize it. He believes that the technical alteration of the way in which coercively collected taxes are redistributed can overcome the sovereignty of the state. He acknowledges that the authority of the parents in a voucher scheme cannot be absolute. The state-financed "educational diversity" under a voucher system is a diversity operating within government-established guidelines. Money spent by the state can never be on a "no strings attached" basis. There is always more demand for government money than there is money available to meet the demand (unless the purchasing power of government money falls to zero). Those who are legally responsible for the distribution of tax money must have legal guidelines or else rampant waste and dishonesty will instantly appear, and the treasury will be emptied overnight. This is why statist education must be bureaucratic education, with guidelines imposed from above, since the money comes from the state.

There is no escape from the rules of bureaucracy in a voucher system. Friedman acknowledges this fact: "Governments could require a minimum level of schooling financed by giving parents vouchers redeemable for a specified maximum sum per child per year if spent on 'approved' educational services. Parents would then be free to spend this sum and any additional sum they themselves provided on purchasing educational services from an 'approved' institution of their own choice."

The key word, of course, is "approved." Why Dr. Friedman has chosen to put the word in quotes is not altogether clear. Does he mean "kind of approved"? Certainly, he is wise enough to know that when the state bureaucrats approve or disapprove, they do not hide their actions in quotation marks. They simply decide. They decide in terms of criteria appropriate to the continued functioning of the statist educational bureaucracy. As Dr. Friedman wrote: "Any subsidy should be granted to individuals to be spent at institutions of their own choosing, provided only that the schooling is of a kind that is desired to subsidize." *Desired by whom* to subsidize? The parents? Hardly; they are the ones to be dictated to, not dictated by. The parents will be told where they can freely spend their vouchers, and they have to that degree lost their sovereignty. The state provides the funds through its monopoly of coercion; the state shall determine, coercively, how and where those funds are to be spent.

Controlling the Alternatives

What the decades-long erosion of the government school system has provided is a long list of reasons why it would be profitable for each family to remove its children from the subsidized schools. A small but growing minority of parents is doing just that. The state bureaucrats are legally prohibited from providing sectarian schools, ideologically prohibited from providing free market education, and apparently unable to provide competent instruction. They see their task as ensuring standards, which means ensuring educational conformity. The rise of an independent school system is a threat to public school administrators. They are as hostile to alternative educational programs as the postal system's administrators are to United Parcel Service or anyone else carrying first-class mail.

What we are witnessing is a conflict over sovereignty. Who is responsible for the training of children, the state or the parents? The lines are being drawn far more sharply today than at any other time in this nation's history. Pseudo-market schemes cannot solve questions of ultimate sovereignty, or at least they cannot solve them to the benefit of free market institutions.

State schools rest on a whole series of erroneous assumptions. First, that the state is ultimately sovereign in the field of education—the quasi-parent of every child. Second, that the state schools can teach children totally neutral values—universally acceptable principles that all education must provide. Third, that it is the moral as well as legal obligation of taxpayers to finance the school system. Fourth, that the professional, tenured, and civil-service-protected officials of the educational monopoly are the people best prepared to operate the educational system.

The voucher system challenges directly only the last of these assumptions, and then only superficially. After all, state schools will still be permitted to operate. The voucher system necessarily requires the *licensing of schools*. For those who favor bureaucratic licensing of alternative educational systems by the state bureaucrats whose jobs are threatened by alternative educational systems, I recommend chapter nine of Dr. Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom:* the chapter on occupational licensing.

As private schools continue to replace the disintegrating govern-

ment schools at the primary and secondary levels, the state's educational bureaucrats will have to take decisive action to protect their monopoly. One way to accomplish this is to refuse to certify any more schools. (I am assuming that outright abolition will not be tolerated politically or in the courts.) This approach may work for a time, since parents are concerned about quality schools. By some peculiar twist of logic, the parents of private school children somehow believe that the state licensing boards are competent to certify educational performance, despite the fact that the state schools, which the boards have authorized, are anathema to the parents in question. Private school administrators, who come to parents in the name of a superior educational program, are equally hypnotized by the boards of certification. The most intelligent response is that made by Robert Thoburn, owner of the profit-making Fairfax Christian School of Fairfax, Virginia: "If the bureaucrats want me to certify their schools, they can come to me and I'll look over their programs. That's my view of certification."

If the certification ploy does not work, then the last hope of state educational bureaucrats is the voucher system. If parents continue to send their children to uncertified schools, then the state must find a way to convince private school administrators that they must register with the state and conform their programs to state educational standards. The voucher system is the most logical means of achieving this goal. Vouchers will create a second, pseudo-free market school system, using "free" in both senses: independent and without cost to the users. The state-operated schools will then compete with the state-licensed schools. Almost no third alternative will be economically possible.

Taxed and Taxed Again

Those parents who want their children out of the government-operated schools (which their taxes support) will also be paying for the operation of voucher-supported, state-licensed schools. These parents must turn down the first subsidy (free public education in a government school), turn down a second subsidy (vouchers for government-licensed schools), and come up with after-tax income to finance their children's education in a truly independent school.

This is assuming they can find such a school. To do so, they must locate other parents equally committed religiously and ideologically to the principle of independent education, and also financially able to

Can Private Schools Survive "Privatization"?

by Saralee Rhoads

Long years of abuse have eroded the foundation of free enterprise so long cherished as the American experience, and *America 2000: An Education Strategy,* a report released last year by the U.S. Department of Education, bodes ill for an already weakened private sector. Most tragic of all has been the diminishing understanding of the free enterprise system by a citizenry once attuned to its pulse and dedicated to its health.

Nowhere is this fact more obvious than in the field of education. Studies purport to show that literacy in colonial America, at least on the Eastern seaboard, was nearly total. Educated at home and in private schools many a farmer read Greek, and frontiersmen recited the poetry of Ovid and Donne. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* "sold 600,000 copies to a population of 2,500,000, twenty percent of which was slave and another fifty percent indentured."[1] Most important of all, everyone read the Bible. Two hundred years later 19 *million* adults are labeled functionally illiterate.[2]

The national Committee on Excellence in Education's 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk,* included this assessment of American government education: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves."[3] Since 1983 the response to this report has been so muddied by emotion, illogical rhetoric, and a confusion of terms that many conservatives and clerics—mainstays of private education—are now improbable allies with the providers of government schooling in a whole new debate on "choice" in education.

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An Historical Perspective

Dialogue is dependent upon communication. Everyone is talking, yet the free flow of ideas has been curtailed by doublespeak. "Privatization" and "choice" take on whole new meanings from one context to another. The resultant confusion divides the proponents of private education, setting the nation adrift in uncharted waters.

To appreciate the current dilemma we must look at word origins and their meanings. "*Free enterprise* means that the government leaves individuals *free* to own businesses and make a living dependent on their own *enterprise* (initiative)."[4] Such a succinct definition deserves amplification. *Private* enterprise is privately owned, privately administered, privately regulated. With the introduction of public funds (ownership), publicly certified workers (administration), and governmental rules (regulation), private enterprise ceases to be private. "Privatization" of "public" education is, by definition, the coupling of two mutually exclusive terms. The best example of loss of private control through governmental infusion of public funds is in education.

Government schools are but one facet of the largest bureaucracy in the nation today. The government is the largest provider of education in the country. It sets the standards for certification of teachers, regulates teacher education, its think tanks and programs and agencies influence textbook production, and each generation graduates as creatures of public educational philosophy.

The process is accelerated by the influence of the National Education Association in politicizing teachers and maintaining a national legislative agenda. At first the NEA exerted influence, but now the policy-setting potential opens a whole new realm of control.

Horace Greeley and later James Coleman established a direct correlation between the results obtained when the educational services were *privately* provided as opposed to public education. Reduced class size, intensive emphasis on values, and "bright flight" notwithstanding, all private school students outscored their public school counterparts on standard achievement tests.[5] In contrast, as federal outlays for elementary, secondary, and vocational education increased by $20 billion from 1966–1975, SAT scores dropped approximately 70 points.[6] In 1959–60 public education consumed $375 per pupil; in 1967 it consumed $3,977.[7]

Despite extensive efforts to improve public education and rapidly

geted for lavish outlays of federal grants and electronic networks to coordinate programs nationally. Some may be schools designated for change within a particular district, others may be private schools applying for federal seed money, already qualifying for Federal assistance through maintenance of current regulatory standards. As of March 1992, almost 700 teams nationwide have applied for existing funds, representing school districts, businesses, associations, colleges, and think tanks.[10] Initial projections estimated costs of $690 million, not counting programs administered under the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development.[11] The President's Fiscal Year 1993 budget request includes an additional half-billion dollars for grants to states and communities developing "opportunity scholarships." Disturbingly absent from the discussion is the concept of equity, as outlays of federal funds are channeled into a small number of model schools, leaving extensive portions of the population with no substantial help at all. How much money will actually be funneled into education? No one knows.

The injection of more federal monies into government schools is widely accepted, but none of these costly programs, even with private money injected, will make public schools private. The same red tape, the same teachers, the same school boards still control outcomes. Each will still be a public school.

Less widely accepted has been the concept of publicizing the private sector, though now it is presented more attractively by calling it "privatizing the public sector." Yet the result is the same. Instead of making public schools private, all private schools become public. Lamar Alexander, Secretary of Education, asserted, "The definition of 'public school' should be broadened to include any school that serves the public and is held accountable by a public authority."[12] Public education may be minimally improved through innovative programs, but private education will be drastically downgraded to equalize opportunities. A broad range of proposals is being suggested to remedy the disparity between public and private education, but basic to each type of funding is the direct or indirect infusion of government money into private education, with the result of making all schools public schools.

Efforts to ameliorate the dismal state of public education have created a loose coalition of strange bedfellows. Proponents of change call it "privatization of public education" or "choice in education."

increasing expenditures, the downward trend continues. A *Washington Post* editorialist indicted experts, parents, and students alike when 1989 SATs dropped yet again: "What jolted me about the scores is the dismal fact that they are averages. It's bracing to bear in mind that many of the kids scored higher than 476 or 424, but it's stupefying to realize that many scored lower—down in the semiliterate 300s."[8] Each year brings notice of a further decline. Indeed, 1990 SAT scores averaged fifty points below scores of college-bound seniors twenty years earlier. President Bush, in speaking to students and faculty at the Lewiston Comprehensive High School on September 3, 1991, remarked, "Every day brings new evidence of crisis. Last week, we learned that SAT scores have fallen again. Scores on the verbal SAT have tumbled to the lowest level ever. And these numbers tell us: Our schools are in trouble."[9]

Understanding *America 2000*

The President's comprehensive package to remedy our nation's educational woes includes six vital points:

"1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.

"2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

"3. American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter . . . .

"4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

"5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy . . . .

"6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning."

Federal involvement will include a 15-point accountability package, Congressional scholarships, state and local incentives to programs of "choice," federal seed money for establishment of Governor's Academies for School Leaders and Teachers, and grants for development of alternative teacher certification programs. Development of a new (voluntary) nationwide examination system in conjunction with the National Education Goals Panel, with incentives to encourage colleges and employers to consider test results in accepting applicants is one large part of the overall package. More than 535 schools are tar-

The multiplicity of proposals and terms employed, however, blur distinctions between public education and private enterprise.

Four types of options exist. Two "choice" programs target government schools only, but critics advocating social change predict their impact alone insufficient to produce any real improvement.[13] The other two types of programs serve to "publicize" the private sector. A description of all four illustrates the difference between restructuring public schools versus publicizing the private sector.

Intra-district options introduced in Massachusetts, Idaho, and Michigan allowed open enrollments among public schools within a single district. These represent public school "choice" programs.

Inter-district options have proliferated in metropolitan areas across the nation. Typical are magnet programs in which youngsters from various districts have the option of transferring to a specialty school in another district, the shift of funding handled through the administrative shuffle of paperwork. Broader in scope, this is the second type of public school "choice" program.

Voucher options seem clear cut, but in 1991, 27 different voucher proposals were introduced in 14 states. In Milwaukee the plan excluded religious schools, offering $2,500 to the private non-sectarian school chosen by parents with a low-income status. In Pennsylvania, on the other hand, $900 vouchers were available to religious schools as well. With vouchers, taxes are directly funneled to the schools.

Negative tax credits were instituted in Epson, New Hampshire, where parents paid for a child's tuition at the school of choice, and then received tax credit for sending the child to a school outside his residential district.

Each instance of government funds supporting private education illustrates a clear case of political intrusion into the free enterprise system. Ownership transfers out of private hands into the government's broad grasp. No matter how broadly or narrowly conceived the program, whether government money extends into sectarian or non-sectarian schools, whether home schools are included or not, each opens the door to governmental control of the private sector. Initial provisions may safeguard curriculum, school administration, and specify governmental non-interference, yet federal anti-discrimination requirements resulting in civil rights litigation and First Amendment challenges illustrate the fallacy of misplaced trust—there are no guarantees, no safeguards.[14] Statutory requirements for providing transporta-

tion, establishing racial balance, providing school-performance data and audit data led one author to conclude: "An education system organized as a public utility might better serve all these interests."[15] Well intentioned efforts to introduce competition and open doors of choice spell the demise of free enterprise in private education with the introduction of government ownership, and thus the inevitable control of the private sector.

Controlling the Purse Strings

The Department of Education (employing 4,737 workers) currently comprises four main agencies, eight offices with assistant secretaries and ten regional offices (staffed by an additional 4,655).[16] It requires the oversight of nine Congressional committees and is audited by the GAO.[17] The additional numbers employed in administering programs and grants nationwide are unknown.

Its budgetary allocations are enmeshed in a web of interrelated categories administered through the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Disaster Relief Account. Analysis of the many accounts resembles a juggling routine as slotted funds are sprinkled into the various sub-categories. For example, $632 million is allocated for the establishment of drug-free schools. The School Improvement Program is but one of 14 subheadings under elementary and secondary education. It specifically lists drug-free schools, yet its line-item expenditures account for only one one-thousandth of that total. More than $631 million remains unspecified in other programs or summary budgets, therefore without accountability.[18]

Elementary and secondary education is targeted for various other program allotments: the proposed Educational Excellence Act, $690 million; Certificate Support Fund, $200 million; Compensatory Education, $6.2 billion; Educational Block Grants, $449 million; Math and Science State Grants, $242 million; Drug Free Schools, $632 million; Disabilities, $2.7 billion; and Vocational Education, $1 billion. Additional federal capital outlays for education and training total $35.1 billion.[19] Bearing in mind that current federal funding for education represents only seven percent of all education expenditures,[20] one can only surmise the extent to which this chain of bureaucratic employment could expand if the broad-reaching reforms proposed are

actually realized and placed within the purview of federal regulation. As funds trickle down to state and local programs, what percentage actually benefits the individual child, even indirectly?

By virtue of the fact that all government funding is regulated, its recipients accountable to 435 representatives, 100 senators, and millions of taxpayers, private, autonomous control of government subsidies is a misnomer. Not only is all public money subject to intense scrutiny, its expenditure is subject to the whim of men and women who reside on Capitol Hill, who have interests in satisfying constituents and special interests (not the least of which is the NEA), each crying for expanded services. Control of the purse strings limits freedom. The very underpinnings of successful private education are incompatible with the required accountability (control) of government funding.

The Death Knell of All Education

Four steps, in relatively short order, will make all education—public and private—extinct once government funding becomes a widespread reality. First, private schools will become dependent on this new source of money, and in time, unable to exist without it. Expanded services, payments for renovations and building additions, accommodation to government regulations, and the free flow of cash make it inevitable. Second, private schools electing to safeguard their freedoms, not taking advantage of "free" government money, will not be able to compete. Higher rates of tuition will ultimately close their doors. Third, when the only schools left are government schools, is there any assurance that the quality of public schooling will not precipitously decline as it has before? The resultant government monopoly will preclude any form of competitive standards. Finally, costs will skyrocket as offices are set up nationwide to monitor the expenditure of government funds, protect students from exploitation, and expand services as further "needs" arise. Eventually the aim will be the maintenance of programs, not the education of children. Compliance with government policy and maintenance of the status quo will assume greater and greater importance as more workers become dependent on government-subsidized salaries.

Nowhere will this be felt more deeply than in the private sector. Mollified consumers of public education will know no difference.

Their watered down education has satisfied them for years; but there will be a Remnant, perhaps educated in private institutions or home schools themselves, who will faintly remember a time when education meant a search for truth. A Remnant will find dusty books packed in the attic, brush off the cobwebs, and rediscover the principles of private enterprise upon which our nation was established. Then will begin the second American revolution, as our children's children again fight for the freedom we once held dear.

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IV. GLIMPSES OF FREEDOM

Disestablishing Public Education

by Anna David

Lawrence Seals is a cheerful 11-year old who lives in an urban West-Side Chicago neighborhood. Once a gang member, he was one of 150 inner-city children who made up the class of 1988 at the Corporate/Community School of America (C/CSA).

Created and funded by corporations, C/CSA is a "break-the-mold" school, a reform laboratory aiming to find answers to the problems that plague inner-city urban schools—crime, high dropout rates, violence, poor academic achievement. More than 80 percent of C/CSA's students come from single-parent families; 60 percent live below federal poverty levels. "It was terrible," says Lawrence of his days in the gang. "At least I didn't kill anybody."

But last summer, weary of resisting the gangs who tormented him on his daily walk to and from school, Lawrence announced to C/CSA's principal, Elaine Mosely, he was dropping out. Her response: a scalding reminder of what lay ahead if he walked out on his education and his future. Less than two hours after Dr. Mosely pleaded with her pupil to stay in school, Lawrence delivered to her office a promise to come to class—a promise he has kept. His handwritten note brought tears to her eyes. "Some kids would respond to pressure with a knife or a gun. But Lawrence responded—in writing. He has grown in inner strength. It's a profound example of how we can teach children to respond to the challenge of the streets."

C/CSA is run much like a business, with a 15-member board of directors, seven of whom are corporate executives. Their leadership, which includes aggressive management of financial resources and continual student performance measurement, has resulted in a school that boasts a 97 percent average daily attendance rate and a majority of students at or above national grade-level average performance levels. Last year, for example, nearly 88 percent of the school's six-year-olds

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were at or above the national grade-level average in reading. By comparison, 26 percent of Chicago public school six-year-olds had reached the grade-level average. Similar results appear in math and vocabulary. In addition, C/CSA operates year-round for about $1,000 less than the $6,000 spent per pupil in Chicago public elementary schools.

C/CSA is a working example of a market solution to the national education crisis. While public education remains mired in poor academic performance and financial crises, the private sector is proving that free market enterprises are vastly more efficient, more creative, and more responsive than government bureaucracies.

Throughout the United States, elementary and secondary school enrollments continue to rise while many states struggle just to prevent an existing budget deficit from widening. Overall education expenditures are also sky-rocketing. At $600 billion, or 12 percent of Gross National Product, the United States spends more on education than do most competitor countries whose students outperform ours on standardized tests.

Corporate Involvement in Education

By 1989–90, more than half (51 percent) of all school districts in the United States had entered into public-private partnerships, involving about 2.6 million volunteers, with an estimated value of $225 million, an increase of 125 percent since 1986, says the National Association of Partners in Education. About 30 million, or 65 percent of all students in 1989–90, attended schools in districts that had partnerships with business. According to the U.S. Department of Education, about 50 percent of these partnerships involve the donation of goods and services; 25 percent the donation of money; and 25 percent a combination of goods, services, and money.

Indeed, business has given enormous amounts of money to public education but has rarely known what, if any, good it has done. A 1991 survey by SchoolMatch, an Ohio-based consulting firm that matches business with public schools and subsequently measures performance, shows that a majority of companies that give financial resources to schools have little idea of the outcomes of that investment. But that's changing. The private sector is seeking a return on investment—educated and educable workers. Creating innovative models, it is showing

it can provide the programs necessary to encourage educational excellence.

Private companies have contracted to provide ancillary services in education for decades. Transportation, maintenance, labor negotiations, standardized testing, data processing, and professional services of lawyers, architects, and consultants are frequently provided by the private sector. Current patterns in private provision of school lunch programs, for example, suggest 30 percent growth per year during the next 10 years, according to the Reason Foundation's *Privatization 1992*.

Private Teaching Practices

In the late 1980s, a renegade band of teachers decided to follow suit. Abandoning the security of tenure and union contracts to venture into private practice, these teachers "live or die" by the results they provide, says Chris Yelich, founder and president of the American Association of Educators in Private Practice (AAEPP). "Competition and accountability have led to innovation, efficiency, flexibility, and diversity," she says. "If schools are not happy with the result, the contract is not renewed."

Public educators often lack the incentive to produce results, to innovate, to be efficient, to make the kinds of difficult changes that private firms operating in a competitive market must make to survive. Private practice teaching breaks this monopoly and significantly upgrades the professional status of teachers, leading them to be directly accountable to their clients—and either succeed or fail.

Some limited contracting is now permitted in Wisconsin, where AAEPP has more than 100 members, and also Michigan, Minnesota, Maryland, Florida, Illinois, and North Carolina. It is in Raleigh, North Carolina, that one private firm, Dialogos International, received a contract with the Wake County Public Schools to teach French, German, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, and Japanese in kindergarten through fifth grade. This was after the state passed a law in 1985 requiring all children in grades K-5 to study a foreign language by the 1994–95 school year. The school board estimates the annual cost of a contract with a Dialogos teacher, at about $19,000, is 30 to 50 percent less than the annual salary of a classroom teacher. And if the county is not

happy with the language instruction, it can choose not to renew the contract. In the current system, schools find it nearly impossible to fire an incompetent teacher.

Since 1986, teachers have opened a variety of private practices. In Milwaukee, former elementary school teacher Kathy Harrell-Patterson opened her own school, Learning Enterprise of Wisconsin, to help young mothers improve basic learning skills. "No one school can meet the needs of every child," she says. "We're catching those kids who fall through the cracks and unfortunately, there are quite a few of them."

Others run computer-assisted learning classes, instruction in foreign languages, math, science, and music, to gifted or remedial students, or through methods such as experiential learning or peer-teaching. However, obstacles encountered by private practice teachers suggest problems are inherent in joint operations. While more individual teachers favor the option of private practice, their unions have labeled it "union busting." And while school boards are permitted to contract, agreement from the local union is imperative or boards could face a strike.

For many, the real goal is to get government out of schools altogether. A handful of private firms have made major inroads into private practice. Aware that many public schools are only too relieved to be rid of problem students, one private, for-profit firm, Ombudsman International, provides education to dropout students. For a $3,000 to $4,000 per-student fee—about half the public school per-student fee—Ombudsman boasts a 90 percent retention rate.

Effective Private Alternatives

Private alternative education is more than twice as cost-effective as running a public school district-sponsored program, says Ombudsman president James Boyle. For example, an average district-sponsored program in 1991–92 cost $428,000 for 60 students—a cost of $7,200 per student; next year the cost is expected to rise to $492,000, or $8,200 per student. The company's schools, housed in shopping centers or business and industrial parks, are staffed by certified teachers, and the pupil-teacher ratio is no higher than 10 to 1. Ombudsman teachers assess each student in English, reading, and mathematics before entering the program, and develop individualized instruction. Stu-

dents work at their own pace three hours each day, five days a week, receiving lessons and tests on video-display terminals. Students enroll in an Ombudsman program on a private-tuition basis, or are referred by school districts who retain the remainder of state aid for their students after meeting the private company's fee.

Another private firm, Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI), runs its own private schools, and also has two major contracts to manage public schools. EAI provides its own teaching program, and with the help of subcontractors KPMG-Peat Marwick and Johnson Controls World Service, aims to cut 25 percent from the public schools' administration and operating budgets. Chairman David Bennett knows it can be done; after all, EAI's own private schools operate efficiently for significantly less money while its students outperform those in the public schools.

Corporate philanthropy, once a well intentioned, feel-good public-relations exercise, is increasingly meeting education needs. For example, the $200 million New American School Development Corporation, made up entirely of private grants, is the single largest non-federally funded education project in U.S. history.

In addition, 1991 saw the birth of privately funded education scholarship programs—private funds for low-income students to attend private schools. Beginning with Golden Rule Insurance Company's scholarships for low-income Indianapolis students to attend private or parochial schools of choice, other corporations and foundations have followed suit. This year, Kinetic Concepts, Inc., USAA Federal Savings Bank, and the San Antonio Express News; Partners Advancing Values in Education and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation in Milwaukee; and the Vandenberg Foundation in Michigan, all announced similar plans to provide scholarships for low-income students. Golden Rule Insurance Company's Choice Charitable Trust spokesman, Tim Erghott, expects half a dozen more programs within the year. These scholarship plans create incentives for parents to investigate schools, and for private schools to respond to parents' preferences.

The growth in private sector provision of education services is evident, too, in the growth of for-profit learning centers that provide after-school remedial instruction and summer school programs. Parents, increasingly concerned about the quality of public schools, want

to supplement their children's public education with academic courses and learning skills in a small classroom setting they feel the public schools cannot match.

Since 1980 almost 500 Sylvan Learning Centers, an international franchise chain nicknamed the "McDonald's of Education," have opened. All centers work on the same formula: individualized basic-skills instruction after school and during weekends and holidays with an emphasis on accountability. The student begins with a two-hour battery of standard diagnostic tests, including examinations to determine if the student has any hearing or vision problems. Based on the student's ability level, instructors prepare a curriculum that may include workbook exercises, audio-visual aids and computer-aided instructional programs. Standardized exams are used frequently to check progress. Sylvan not only provides the basic instruction many parents feel their children do not receive in the public classroom, but while public schools continue to release students at 3 p.m. when many parents are still at work, Sylvan ensures the students' after-school time is spent in an enthusiastic learning environment.

Private summer schools are experiencing a boom largely due to widespread cutbacks in public school summer programs. In fact, since 1986 private summer school programs—costing as much as $5,000 for six weeks—have increased by 55 percent, according to Peterson's national directory of private summer schools and camps for children and teenagers.

Some of the most successful private schools that already exist are religious or church schools. Of the 5.2 million children in private education, for example, more than half attend Catholic schools where students typically score two grade levels above the national average in math, reading, vocabulary, and writing, and where the dropout rate is estimated at less than one percent. This compares dramatically with the national average dropout rate of 29 percent. As a result, 86 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college, compared with the national average of 57 percent. According to the National Council on American Private Education, Lutheran schools teach an estimated 247,000 students (1988 figures); interdenominational Christian schools, 233,000; Baptist, 335,000; Jewish, 158,000; and Episcopal, 85,000 students.

In the meantime, a growing number of parents aren't waiting for public education to improve, or for vouchers, or chain-store style pri-

vate schools. Instead, increasing numbers are teaching their children at home. An estimated 350,000 children are now homeschooled, compared to only 15,000 in the early 1980s, says the Department of Education. Although homeschooling is legal in 50 states, the laws vary widely. In some states, parents must be certified teachers; in others, parents must only notify the district of their intentions, and have the curriculum approved by school officials. The rise in homeschooling is a dramatic illustration of parents ultimately exercising market choice.

After an era when business leaders, as Chicago's Teach America president Patrick J. Keleher says, "seem to have been mesmerized by the titles, the jargon, and perhaps the flag-waving that comes out of the incredibly powerful education establishment," competitive market principles are now being increasingly applied to education. Performance expectations and increased academic achievement are the returns on investment the private sector seeks, and in doing so, it provides the economic reality check public education in this country so desperately needs.

Homeschooling and Educational Choice

by Dennis L. Peterson

The 1992 election campaign brought to the forefront of public attention an issue whose time apparently has come: school choice. The condition of public education has deteriorated until parents are demanding the opportunity to choose alternative schools for their children, whether different public schools, private academies, or parochial schools.

Conspicuously missing from the discussion, however, has been an alternative form of schooling that has already been the choice of the parents of an estimated 250,000 to 1,000,000 children: homeschooling. According to an article in *USAir Magazine* (March 1991), its estimate of 500,000 homeschooled youngsters is "perhaps only half the actual number," and the total is increasing every year.

Five years ago, my perception of homeschooling was at best neutral and in some instances openly negative. I saw homeschooling as an over-reaction of well-meaning but misguided parents to admittedly bad conditions in public education. I could understand and support one's choice of a traditional private school; I had even taught in several such schools, and two of my four daughters were enrolled in one. But homeschooling was a step off the deep end. Whoever made that choice deserved whatever harassment they got from hostile local or state government officials.

Today, however, my perception has changed dramatically. After careful research and consideration, my wife and I stepped off the deep end, too. We pulled our two oldest daughters out of their traditional private school and began teaching all four of our daughters (the youngest two were kindergarten age at the time) at home. We are now in our fourth year of homeschooling and are more convinced than ever that we made the right decision.

Mr. Peterson is a homeschooler and a frequent contributor to *The Freeman*. This article appeared in the February 1993 issue.

Countering Objections to Homeschooling

Several objections are raised against parents' homeschooling their children. Perhaps the most frequent contention is that it robs the children of opportunities for proper socialization and therefore leaves them unprepared to interact with not only children their own age but also adults. Most homeschoolers, however, including ourselves, are involved regularly in myriad outside the home social situations. Church youth group activities, scouting, various sports leagues, and a variety of clubs offer sufficient opportunities for socialization. Experience reveals, in fact, that in many cases homeschooled children are actually *better* able to interrelate with their peers and older folk as well. Many support groups are available among homeschooling families to provide for social activities as well as for opportunities for public performances by the children. Our girls regularly take part in plays, recitations, and work demonstrations sponsored by the support group to which we belong.

Perhaps the second most frequently voiced objection to homeschooling is that untrained parents are not certified professional educators; therefore, they are incapable of adequately teaching their own children. Beside the fact that state certification has never been a guarantee of teaching ability or professional qualification, there is much that can be said to counter this charge. Not even the *best* classroom teacher, with from 15 to 30 or more students, can know any individual child as well as do his parents, let alone provide that child with the individual care and attention he often needs.

The homeschooling parent, on the other hand, has an almost ideal teacher-student ratio of from 1:1 to 1:5, thus permitting a great deal of individual attention. Former Secretary of Education William J. Bennett wrote in *The Devaluing of America,* "When serious teachers are asked the single most important improvement that could be made in education, they invariably say greater involvement and cooperation on the part of parents." One could not ask for a higher degree of parental involvement than homeschooling provides for the child.

But the argument goes further than parental involvement. The typical homeschooling family, according to the *USAir Magazine* article quoted earlier, has "one principal wage earner, almost always the father, making almost $30,000 per year. *Both parents enjoy approximately 1.5 years more education than the average American*" (emphasis

added). Homeschooling parents are not generally high-school dropouts; they are well-educated. For example, in a random sampling of the 30 or so parents in our local support group, more than two-thirds are college graduates (and many of those have graduate degrees), and several are former teachers.

Even for the parents who are not trained educators, however, the availability of curricula specially designed for homeschool parents make successful home-based education possible. As the number of parents opting to educate their own children has increased, so has the demand for high-quality teaching materials. With greater demand has come a proliferation of educational publishers, many of them university presses, who are willing to provide the specialized curricula and related materials. Resourceful parents have learned to mix and match curricula to meet the individual needs of their children. An entire industry has evolved to research, develop, test, and market these textbooks and teaching aids.

Life Is Education

Homeschooling parents also have capitalized on extra-curricular learning opportunities, proving that education, rather than being confined to the traditional classroom and restricted to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. five days a week for nine months a year, is perpetual and unlimited. Education is life; life is education. Thus, they make wise and frequent use of family field trips, learning at times and in places that often are inaccessible to students in traditional schools.

For instance, our family enjoys camping. We count our camping trips as school days because we consciously plan educational activities for the children. We study biology together as we explore mountain streams and hike nature trails. We learn together about how our ancestors lived as we visit living history exhibits, watch mountain craftsmen, and listen to park rangers' nightly talks on the pioneers and Indians who once lived in our rugged mountains. We create both verbal pictures and visual sketches as we contemplate the nature around us in the wild. We learn how to provide for our health and safety in the wilderness and how to appreciate and care for our land's natural resources. Perhaps the best part about all of this learning is that the girls never complain that they "have to go to school." They now know that learning and having fun as a family are complementary, not competitive, activities.

Homeschooling is not a panacea, and it is not for everyone. Whoever considers it should carefully count the costs before taking the leap. In deciding to homeschool our children, we carefully weighed and willingly chose to accept the following limitations and restrictions.

First, homeschooling leaves us less personal time to do what we as parents would do individually or together as a couple. Homeschooling (if it is done right) takes an awful lot of time in preparation and application. It can tend to monopolize one's thoughts and conversations, to say nothing of the time it takes. It certainly intrudes on private time, especially one's hobbies. For example, part of the price I must pay to homeschool our daughters is giving up some of my own reading and writing activities. My wife can spend less time with her crafts and gardening or lawn care.

Second, it can mean living in a house that *looks* well lived in and that is by no means in showcase condition. The yard may at times have to go an extra week before it gets mowed. The laundry may pile up. The next remodeling or redecorating project may get bumped to the back burner indefinitely. But what is a house if it is not a place where real people live? Besides, we have found that many of those cleaning tasks can get done through teamwork with each family member carrying a little of the load and applying a few of Leonard Read's economic principles for boys and girls—picking it up if you drop it, putting it away if you get it out, and cleaning it up if you mess it up. And in the process, the children are learning responsibility.

Finally, homeschooling is an added financial burden. Just because we are not using the facilities, materials, or teachers of the public school system does not exempt us from paying for them. But we choose to accept the additional expenses of textbooks, materials, registration, higher field trip fees (most places don't give homeschoolers group discounts) and testing required by homeschooling. For our situation, this averages an additional annual expense of about $600. But we believe the benefits far outweigh the cost.

Control of Curricula and Teaching Time

One such benefit is that we have gained control of the curricula of our children and are able to devote time and effort teaching the facts, values, and principles that are most important to us as a family. Because we select and teach the materials, we do not have to worry

about a stranger foisting onto our children values or ideas foreign to our beliefs. We have no fear of a teacher using a program that supposedly is designed to "clarify" values but that in reality *undermines* the values we hold.

Another benefit is that it gives us control of teaching time, permitting us to devote either more or less time to certain lessons according to the individual needs and interests of each child. No longer does our brightest daughter have to sit and wait for other slower students to finish their work before she can go on to new lessons. No longer must a slower daughter be frustrated to tears because the teacher cannot take time to offer her individual help lest she hold the entire class back; she, too, can proceed at her own pace. Plus (and our girls *really* like this point), we do not lose precious time getting everyone lined up to go to the rest room, lunch, or recess!

A third benefit is that we are getting priceless, never-to-be-repeated opportunities to know our children as individuals because we spend so much time doing things together. We have become firm believers in the idea that children need not only *quality* time but also large *quantities* of time with their parents. Homeschooling permits both.

Another benefit is the flexibility that homeschooling affords. Although few interruptions are permitted when our school is in session, we can be flexible in times of emergency. If pressing business demands that we travel on a school day, we don't have to pull the girls out of classes; we take the classes with us and learn as we go. We can have school at night, on Saturday, or even on holidays. We can conduct classes in the summer if we want (although we generally try to adhere closely to the local public school calendar because most of the girls' playmates attend public schools).

But just as homeschooling has many tempting benefits, it also has some dangers. Perhaps the danger most widely feared among homeschool parents is interference by government. As the number of parents who homeschool has increased, so has the number of situations in which government has tried to force parents to compromise their convictions or even to give up homeschooling altogether. Some parents have been challenged because they are not certified to teach, do not have college degrees, or have refused to register with local authorities. Of those who have been so harassed, a few have been sued or even jailed for various violations. Some local public school authorities seem

especially bent on discouraging homeschooling within their districts because each homeschooler represents thousands of dollars in lost revenue for their schools if funding is allotted according to individual school enrollment.

In recent years, however, many authorities have begun to be more cooperative with homeschoolers. Every state now permits some form of home education, each with somewhat different rules and regulations. In our state, for example, any parent with a high school diploma may homeschool his or her child through the eighth grade; parents of high schoolers must have a college degree. (Parents without a degree may apply for a waiver, but none has ever been granted.) Students must have at least a 180-day school year and must be tested in grades 2, 5, 7, and 9. Homeschoolers must be registered with either the local school superintendent or a private "umbrella" school. Although the cooperation of local officials seems to make the climate for homeschoolers better, that in itself seems to be a cause for concern: Whenever the power of government is involved in something—even for apparently good causes—the recipients of such favor or tolerance should beware.

This is the greatest fear my wife and I have of the much discussed government-sponsored school choice plans. Unless the choice is *totally free,* government can and will make its power felt somewhere in the "choice" process. Perhaps it will come in the guise of limiting the choice to only other public schools, to "approved" or accredited private schools, or to parents who have degrees from government-approved colleges or even to parents who have been certified. If the voucher plan is approved for a school choice program, wherever government funds or tax credits are extended, so is the strong, controlling arm of government. Government funds always come with strings attached.

Undoubtedly the best possible school choice plan would be the free market: no government coercion to attend *any* school. That means total freedom to choose—whether that choice be public schools (should any survive the competition of the free market), private schools, homeschooling, or even no school at all. Let the market, which has brought the United States such unsurpassed material prosperity, bring us a similar educational prosperity.

The Case for Religious Schools

by August W. Brustat

The early settlers came to these shores impelled by the strong desire to worship God in their own way. Our institutions were forged by a people who put their religion at the center of life's concerns. Our history was shaped by the religious convictions which prevailed in these states. If a contrary system of beliefs and values had guided our forebears, American history would be quite different; and this would be a different country today. Thus, if we would preserve our institutions and further their development we cannot neglect the role of religion. We must make room for religion in our system of education.

H. G. Wells would not see eye to eye with me on religion; but he said, "Education is the preparation of the individual for society, but his religious training is the core of that preparation." And Charles W. Eliot, when he was president of Harvard, declared, "Exclude religion from education and you have no foundation upon which to build character." As a matter of fact, when you come right down to it, there is no way to exclude religious instruction from education; there is only the choice of one kind of religion or another. One can plan a curriculum which includes instruction on the God concept, the moral law, the Bible, prayer, the spiritual life. Instruction along these lines would accord with the common understanding of what is meant by religion. But if each of these things is rigidly excluded from the curriculum, the result is to inculcate habits of thought and attitudes which constitute a denial of religion harder to cope with than an outright atheism.

For one reason or another, an outspoken religious program can hardly be carried out in the government school system. With a mixture of children from different backgrounds and from homes adhering to various and varied religious tenets, serious complications might easily

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The late Reverend Mr. Brustat was Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church and Trinity Christian School, Scarsdale, New York. This essay first appeared in the May 1956 issue of *The Freeman*.

develop if religion in any form were brought into the classroom. Nor will such programs as Released Time or any other part-time agency of religious instruction solve the problem. An unbalanced educational program which emphasizes the purely secular five hours a day and five days a week, and fits into this schedule one, or at the most, two hours of religious instruction, gives the child the erroneous impression that religion is a relatively unimportant thing which may be relegated to the background of life.

Unless the serious study of religion is integrated with other studies and given a status at least equal to other parts of the curriculum, youth will be inclined to look at the world as though God were not both in it and beyond it as its Creator and Sustainer. The gap in our educational system is a challenge to our churches. They can meet this challenge by establishing their own schools.

That this is not a new concept, I readily admit. The parochial or church school is not making its debut at this time. In fact, the church schools in America antedate the government school systems by over two hundred years. The first government school was organized in Dorchester, Massachusetts, as recently as 1839, although the church and its schools had received tax support since early Colonial days. Prior to 1839 all education on the elementary, secondary, collegiate, and post-graduate levels was in the hands of the church. Through all the previous decades of our history education was the distinctive prerogative of the church. Our original great American universities were all founded by the church. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, William and Mary, Syracuse, to mention just a few, were founded and administered by religious denominations. As late as 1860 there were 246 colleges and universities in America, of which all but 17 were under the auspices of the church. In many respects these were the years of America's real greatness, the years when our forefathers laid the solid, godly foundations of our American Republic.

No doubt the fact that for three generations now the government schools through taxation have been able to erect palatial buildings and equip them with everything that educators believe essential, has given present-day Americans the false impression that the government school has always existed. But such is not at all the case.

Here the question may be posed: Since the church once had a virtual monopoly on education, why was it relinquished? How did the government school system gradually gain such prestige and power as

almost to eliminate the church schools and other private educational institutions?

We would offer several suggestions. There was, first, the gradual development of secularism in our society. Secularism may be defined as the resolute exclusion of God and religion from daily life. It is the deliberate effort to live life apart from God. Men's minds were increasingly enamored of and devoted to "things." Materialism was fashionable.

Modern inventions and discoveries brought the industrial-mechanical age to America. As a consequence, wealth increased. This was a danger signal; for when wealth increases while God is relegated to the background of life, a moral and spiritual flabbiness ensues. In his "The Deserted Village," Oliver Goldsmith expresses it succinctly in these words:

> Ill fares the land, to hastening
> ills a prey.
> Where wealth accumulates, and
> men decay.

The humble "little red schoolhouses" which the church could afford to maintain for a circumscribed segment of the population, the children of the parish, seemed hopelessly inadequate when compared to the palaces of learning which taxation could erect. But education is by no means the automatic result of elaborate buildings and equipment.

By the turn of the twentieth century, when government schools had all but completely routed private church schools, there was a confident faith that, at long last, man had reached the Golden Age; that all wars, all national problems, and all international tensions were definitely terminated. Had not the Carnegie Foundation for Peace succeeded in outlawing war forever? So man proposes; but he fails to reckon on the fact that God finally disposes. Man forgot that "the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." World War I served to shatter some illusions, the great world-depression which followed humbled us still more, and World War II convinced many that a world which had outlawed God was in danger of destroying itself.

And so the last two decades have seen a recrudescence of church

schools—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish—in which America's youth is again being taught that God is, and that He holds man morally responsible for his life and actions. However, only a start has been made. Estimates indicate that between 17,000,000 and 20,000,000 American children still receive no formal religious education whatsoever.

This plea for church schools is not intended to suggest that any pressure be brought on parents to seek religious instruction for their children. Parents have the inherent right to choose whatever schools they desire for their offspring. This is a plea that they be allowed to choose freely, according to their own judgment and sense of values, and that those who choose religious instruction be not penalized for their choice.

From a practical viewpoint it is poor stewardship to keep churches closed all week except Sunday for Sunday services and to keep its education facilities unused all week except for a few random meetings. A weekday church school makes a fuller use of these facilities and has the added value that children daily beat a path to the doors of an institution that counts on God.

Private or church schools have produced outstanding leaders in every field of endeavor. Arthur E. Traxler, Executive Director of the Educational Records Bureau, wrote: "Although in recent years not more than one boy in one hundred has been educated in the private schools of the United States, those schools have . . . educated approximately as many leaders as all the public schools combined."

It may be in order to call attention to the fact that when the Constitution was adopted in 1789, it made no provision for a national system of education. Our Founding Fathers recognized that parents are primarily responsible for the education of their children and alone have the God-given authority to delegate that responsibility to others, whether in the church or the state. To delegate a right is not to abandon it. The school, whether secular or religious, is only a branch of the home and should be guided by it. Our present-day educational demagogues might well bear this fact in mind.

Today's socialistic, one-world-minded philosophers—among them those who are at present agitating for federal aid to education, which would eventually lead to federal control of education—would turn it over to society or the state. Herbert Spencer noted this trend already in his day and spoke out against it in these words: "Agitators and

legislators have united in spreading a theory which ... ends in the monstrous conclusion that it is for parents to beget children and for the State to take care of them." Recently a Communist source bluntly voiced this pseudo-liberal concept in these words: "Society possesses an original and fundamental right in the education of children. We must accordingly reject without compromise ... the claim of parents to impart through family education their narrow views to the minds of their offspring." With this we must violently and vehemently disagree.

Marxists and Fabian Socialists exile God from His heaven and would rob religious parents of their inalienable right to educate their children as they want them educated. They would consequently make of man a puppet of the ruling regime, a cog in the economic machinery of the commonwealth, a soulless automaton bowing to the dictatorial will.

By all means, our system of instruction should meet the exacting task of scholarship in science, history, literature, and in every other field. But without neglecting these areas it should do more. It is important to know how the universe works, but it is of infinitely greater importance to have an awareness of the God who makes it work. It is important to know the physical sciences, but much more important to know the Deity that put them into operation. It is important to know astronomy, but it is much more important to know Him who places the stars in all their glittering glory in the infinite meadowlands of heaven. It is important to wrest the secrets of God from the earth, but much more important to know Him who reveals to us the secret of man's pathway to God.

These objectives can best be accomplished through the agency of the church or parochial school where, in addition to the so-called "Three R's," is also taught the vital fourth "R"—Religion.

Let Education Go Commercial

by Thomas L. Johnson

The fundamental problem in education is not an educational problem at all: it is a social one. It consists in the establishment of a new and better relationship between the two great sections of society—children and adults.

—Maria Montessori

"Not too many of us realize how bad American schools are from the point of view of humanity, respect, trust, or dignity," stated Charles E. Brown, once the Superintendent of the Newton, Massachusetts, schools. "The values they transmit are the values of docility, passivity, conformity, and lack of trust," adds Charles E. Silberman, author of *Crisis in the Classroom*. This damning view of the role of schools in society is echoed by many thousands of concerned Americans who also recognize the many tragic circumstances that exist in schools. Some of them are attempting to offer solutions to the myriad problems.

Unfortunately, one rarely if ever hears the suggestion that the answer to the educational dilemma or "crisis" might well be found if the schools were to be dissolved and replaced by educational businesses, that is, businesses that operate like other enterprises in a competitive and open manner with the intention of satisfying customers. Most people, even staunch capitalists, consider education to be some special endeavor not to be perverted by the business world and thus pooh-pooh any suggestion of educational enterprises.

"It is time for our schools to get themselves, or us to get them, out of the jail business," wrote John Holt in *The Underachieving School*. The fact that schools are operated as "jails," which do not function to please customers but to satisfy those in charge, is very likely the expla-

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nation of the vast number of problems that permeate all levels of education, both private and public.

But how will the elimination of schools and their replacement with businesses of education solve all those problems that one is always hearing about? What of the inevitable question of discipline, of truancy, of cheating, of grades and degrees? How would such problems as teacher and student boredom and apathy be alleviated? And then there's the dropout problem.

What could happen in educational businesses to remove the always present conflict between teachers and students which results in little or no learning? How could one eliminate the unnatural competition among students (who compete for grades and pleasing the teachers, and rarely for knowledge), the rigid and outdated curriculum, the physical mistreatment of students by teachers and administrators (where corporal punishment is permitted), or the whole concept and practice of having to fulfill specific requirements in order even to enter certain schools?

What of the question of incompetent teachers, or the matter of the physical damage to schools carried out by frustrated and angered students (millions of dollars are spent each year by school systems in major American cities to pay for the replacement of broken school windows)? Or what of the need to eliminate a negative approach to learning which now exists in schools and the introduction of techniques allowing for individualized instruction? And then there is the vastly important matter of economics, of the financing of education, which has provoked much concern and heated debate in numerous communities across the nation. (According to a recently published Copley News Service release, "the yearly bill for education in America is now running at around $85 billion. Allowing for inflation, that is double what it was a decade ago.")

Could educational businesses solve these and many other concerns which have caused such a flood of outrage from students, teachers (particularly new young teachers who really want to teach, but find most of their time occupied with paperwork and disciplining students), parents, politicians, and many other thoughtful individuals? Let us examine this question and see.

Discipline

The chronic, all-pervading, and seemingly insoluble problem that besets mainly primary and secondary schools is that of discipline—how to keep order in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and the like. One might even say that the matter of discipline is the bane of all administrators and teachers, as well as students. But then how could it be otherwise, considering the way in which schools operate?

Just suppose that we adults were required, by law, to attend an institution five or six hours a day and to perform certain tasks or learn specific information for which we might have little or no interest. Suppose that we had to follow unquestioningly the commands of those in charge, and knew that if we should decide to complain too vigorously about anything that we would probably be punished physically or penalized scholastically—that our very future might be placed in jeopardy if we should speak out too often.

And how would we like it if in this institution we had to keep silent most of the time, move from one place to another only when bells rang, and receive written permission to go almost anywhere in the building if this varied the slightest from our regular schedule? And how would we feel if we knew that almost all of our actions were being watched, not only in the classroom, but by hall monitors (guards), and that if we tried to escape from this institution we could be picked up by the police and returned, or if we refused to go back or continued to escape, we could be sent to prison (another type of prison, that is)?

Not only would we adults, realizing that our very rights were at stake, create a constant discipline problem under these circumstances; we probably would be enraged enough to engage in a full-fledged revolution. Well, students have to put up with precisely these conditions in schools, and it is amazing that they have not done more than just attempt to assert their rights occasionally and thereby create discipline problems.

Now what would happen to discipline if schools were abandoned and we instead turned to businesses of education? The problem of maintaining order and obedience would, for all intents and purposes, vanish. Since a business cannot force customers to use its services and cannot require its clientele to buy specific items, it cannot usurp the

basic right of each individual: the right of free choice. Educational enterprises would only be able to offer certain courses of instruction and hope that the prospective customers, mainly young people, would find these of sufficient value to voluntarily purchase them. Students would only sign up for those classes that they really desired, and could drop out of any they found not to be of value.

In such circumstances, classes would contain mainly students who desire instruction in a particular subject—who, out of interest (which is the only valid motivation for learning), really want to learn what is being taught. In such a class, the likelihood that anyone would cause disruption is slim; if someone did, it probably would be the other customers, the students, who would demand that the culprit pipe down or leave. The interested students would not wish to lose even a bit of the instruction for which they, or their parents, had paid and which they desired to learn.

Boredom

Boredom is the inevitable cardinal element present in any environment where individual interest and choice are either limited or absent, and where everyone is trying to force someone else to do something that he doesn't want to do—where everything is done by permission ("Teacher, may I . . .") and not by right, and where much of the time is spent doing busy- or make-work just to fill the number of minutes in a class period.

But businesses cannot afford to bore their customers; if they do, they go out of business. Boredom would become a thing of the past in education if students were free to choose only those subjects which they wished to study, *when* they wished to study them, and were free to drop out of a class if they found it to be of no value or of no interest at that particular time. It is the trapping of students in classrooms that results in boredom, unrest, frustration, and anger (that leads to drug-taking and the destruction of property). Educational businesses, wishing to please both customers and employees (teachers), would have no desire to create circumstances that would be damaging to all parties concerned—no desire to bore anyone.

Grades and Degrees

One hears a great deal about these outmoded tools of the educational institution, and some schools have even tried to eliminate them, without success. No matter what variation on a theme is utilized—whether it be written teacher evaluations, or pass and fail grades or the full scale of number or letter grades, or whether the institution grants diplomas, certificates, degrees or just overall evaluations of students—it is the educational institutions and teachers that are evaluating the customers, and not vice versa. Therein lies the problem, and the reason why schools can operate as prisons.

How many students would continue to attend schools as they are now operated (unless forced to do so by either their parents or by compulsory education laws) if grades and degrees were eliminated? How many parents would continue to put up with the tragic circumstances which they know their children are exposed to in schools if they did not think that it was an absolute necessity for their offspring to have a diploma or degree in order to survive at a decent level in society? But the grades and degrees that hold the entire operation of the schools intact would be absent from educational businesses.

A business cannot certificate an individual to a particular place in society. It cannot act as a screening agency, allowing some to progress and others to stand still, fall back, or fail. A true business only has the right to sell goods or services for which there is a demand, and to prosper or fail according to how well it is able to satisfy its customers.

Businesses of education would not offer to sell degrees, diplomas, or certificates, but only instruction, and any evaluation of the customer (student) that might transpire would be at the request of the customer, without fear of punishment or failure. After all, businesses must please customers, not intimidate them. True businesses of education would be ones in which the customers evaluated the teachers and the overall operation of the institution, to determine if customers are getting their money's worth for the service, instruction, they are purchasing—not the other way around, as is now the case. And when individuals went job-hunting, it would be the employers who would, at that time, evaluate prospective employees rather than accept a scholastic certification as to what an individual knows.

Other Problems

But what about all of the other problems that beset the realm of education? Would they also disappear if schools were displaced by businesses of education?

Cheating certainly would. If a student is not working for a grade or a degree, or does not have to please the teacher, but is only striving for knowledge of interest to him, what possible reason would he have for cheating? And what possible type of competition could exist in such a setting except that of a healthy and natural competition; a competition among students for knowledge, for understanding, for truth?

The conflict that now exists between student and teacher (as always exists between prisoner and guard) would also disappear, for in a business situation the teacher would attempt to please the customer by offering valuable instruction, and the student would cooperate with the instructor in order to learn. Instead of being in conflict, they would be working together to achieve mutually desirable goals, as is always the case in a free enterprise setting.

Certainly, the outdated and rigid curriculums that now are forced upon students by schools, via state and local boards of education, would have to be set aside if schools were replaced by educational businesses. After all, customers will only purchase that which they desire. In a business environment, course offerings would be constantly changing and would be continually updated. And there would be no holding back on the use of technological advances to offer individualized instruction whenever this seemed appropriate to the course. Innovation is the hallmark of a free market, and stagnation a main feature of an authoritarian, bureaucratic system.

And what of all those entrance requirements? Does one find special requirements for shopping at the supermarket, department store, or laundry? Of course not. These businesses are out to attract customers, not to limit their buying the goods and services that are for sale. Educational businesses would surely operate in like manner.

Also, anyone, regardless of age, could purchase instruction in a course and not have to worry about first having gotten a grade school, high school, or college education in order to be qualified for entrance. Thus, *real* equality of opportunity in education would finally come into existence.

Eliminated would be the dropout problem that now plagues so many school systems. A free enterprise approach calls for dropping in, not out. It also calls for the treating of customers with respect and courtesy. It would be difficult indeed to imagine a businessman inflicting corporal punishment on his customers; it simply would not occur. "We aim to please" is, and must be, the businessman's motto.

As for incompetent teachers, they would soon be weeded out of the business of education; as their lack of ability became known, few if any customers would voluntarily sign up for their classes. Only the best would survive in educational businesses, the same as in any business setting.

Financing

Finally, what about the matter of money? What of the economics of the educational world? Schools, which operate like giant bureaucracies with their administrators increasing like rabbits—with assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, coordinators of this or that, along with scores of secretaries and clerks, all at handsome salaries—and whose customers must attend under force of the law, have little or no interest in economy. The only concern is to determine how much more the school board dare ask of taxpayers for next year's budget.

But businesses of education could not operate in this manner. They would have to obtain their funds from individual willing customers, just as other businesses do. And because it has been demonstrated that the rate of learning increases tremendously when interest is the driving factor, rather than coercion, only a fraction (probably less than half) of the time now devoted to studies in schools would be needed to learn an equivalent amount in a business situation—thus, a tremendous saving in energy and money. Also, competition is extensive in a business environment, and costs are inevitably lowered as a result of open competition, thereby allowing even the poorest families to afford the costs involved in giving their children an education in basic subjects.

With educational businesses, customers would only be purchasing just what they want—what they are interested in—rather than being forced to sit in classrooms throughout the day. Thus, many of the current costs of education would disappear. Only in a free market setting does one find economic efficiency.

There are those who would argue that all of the problems which are associated with education cannot really be resolved because of the nature of the circumstances; because, they claim, the child is simply not able to make sound judgments and therefore cannot be allowed freedom of choice in matters mental. But anyone who has carefully observed the child will have discovered that a youth of 5 or 6 years of age has a keen sense of judgment—he knows when his teacher is helpful or not, when he is learning or not, and he most definitely is aware of what he is interested in knowing at that particular time.

Judgment is not only his capability, but his right, and if this be denied the child, by placing him in an authoritarian school where he is obliged not to judge and choose, but obey, he must experience serious harm. As Maria Montessori points out: "It is easy to substitute our will for that of the child by means of suggestion or coercion; but when we have done this we have robbed him of his greatest right, the right to construct his own personality. If the child is constantly acting at the command of the teacher, or at her suggestion, his own psychic activity may fade away and disappear under the stronger will of another; the personality may become broken and depressed; and abnormal developments will begin to appear." (*Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* by E. M. Standing)

Perhaps the most succinct and revealing indictment of schools was expressed by Charles E. Silberman in his extensively researched book *Crisis in the Classroom:*

> It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public school classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere—mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self. The public schools—those "killers of the dream," to appropriate a phrase of Lillian Smith's—are the kind of institution one cannot really dislike until one gets to know them well. Because adults take the schools so much for granted, they fail to appreciate what grim, joyless places most American schools are, how oppressive and petty are the rules by which they are governed, how intellectually sterile and aesthetically barren the atmosphere, what an appalling lack of civility obtains on the part of teachers and principals, what contempt they unconsciously display for children as children.

Must we continue this mutilation, or could we perhaps find a solution to this dilemma by trying something new? No matter how much money is pumped into the educational system, or how many new programs are devised and tried out on the students, the problems that are centuries old continue to exist. Would it be taking too much of a chance to try a new approach, one which involves freedom and mutual respect rather than force and the obliteration of rights?

Why not let education go commercial? Why not try the free enterprise approach which has made this nation the greatest in the world? If the business environment could sustain our rights as free citizens and give us a bounty of goods and services undreamed of by most people of the world, just imagine what this same environment could do for the child and the development of his mind. We might yet achieve that much sought, but always elusive goal—the American Dream—if we would only displace the scholastic prisons, the schools (those "killers of the dream"); if we would only free the children.

Education for One's Own Sake

by Leonard E. Read

In previous chapters I have tried to demonstrate that government is organized police force and that its function is to keep the peace; that education is a peaceful, creative, productive pursuit of the type disastrously affected by government intervention. Now, were government to step aside in education as it has stepped aside in religion—that is, if compulsory attendance, state-dictated curricula, and forcible collection of the wherewithal to pay the school bill were omitted—education would be left to the free market.

Were this break with tradition to take place, what would happen?

Strange as it may first appear, no one can know! Some will say that this admission is a retreat from my argument that education would be improved if left to the free, competitive market. On the contrary, it is in support of the free market as the sole, effective means of improving education.

If you are compelled to do as someone else dictates, if unnatural obstacles are placed in your way, if you are relieved of responsibilities, I can at least predict that you will not function to your fullest in a creative sense. But no one can even roughly predict what wondrous things you will create if released from restraints and dictation, that is, if freed from obstacles. Indeed, you cannot make such predictions about yourself. What new idea will you have tomorrow? What invention? What will you do if a new necessity, an unexpected responsibility, presents itself? We know that creativity will be increased, nothing more. . . .

Leonard E. Read (1898–1983) established The Foundation for Economic Education in 1946 and served as its president until his death. This article is adapted from a chapter in his book *Anything That's Peaceful,* originally published in 1964.

Religious Freedom

In the United States, we have rejected the use of the police force for the purpose of determining one's religion. Are high moral standards and improving attitudes toward one's life and the lives of others—prime objects of religion—of less value than knowing how to read or to write or to add two and two? Indeed, are not both education and religion intimately personal matters, one as much as the other? Is the education of another any more of my or your business than the religion of another?

In many countries—certainly in the U.S.A.—the idea of (1) being compelled by government to attend church, or (2) having the government dictate clergymen's subject matter, or (3) having the expenses of religious institutions forcibly collected by the tax man, would be an affront to the citizens' intelligence. Why do people believe in applying police force to education and letting religion rest on self-determination? Logically, there appears to be no basis for the distinction. Tradition, custom—living with a mistake so long that reason is rarely brought to bear—may be the explanation.

Being a disbeliever in the management by the police force of any creative activity, I have on countless occasions asked individuals in various occupational levels if they would let their children go uneducated were all governmental compulsions removed. The answers given me have always been in the same vein. If you will try this yourself, you will be impressed with how alike the answers are: "Do you think I am a fool? I would no more let my children go without an education than I would let them go without shoes and stockings. *But* some forms of compulsion are necessary, for there are many persons who do not have the same concern for their children as I have."

And there you have it! Police force is never needed to manage my education, only necessary for the other fellow! The other fellow's weakness—the possibility of his having no interest in himself or in his offspring—is far more imaginary than real. It is, for the most part, a fiction of the compulsory, collectivistic myth. Should you doubt this, try to find that rare exception, "the other fellow." If every parent in this country were to consider authoritarianism in education as applying only to himself and could divorce from his thinking the "incompetency of others," there would be no police force applied to American

education. Let any reader of this thesis, regardless of wealth status, honestly try this exercise and arrive at any other conclusion!

A Parental Responsibility

A child, from the time of birth until adulthood, is but the extension of the parents' responsibility. The child can no more be "turned out to pasture" for his education than for his morals or his manners or his sustenance. The primary parental responsibility for the child's education cannot properly be shifted to anyone else; responsible parenthood requires that some things remain for one's own attentions, no matter how enticingly and powerfully specialization and division of labor may beckon one. And, the education of one's children is a cardinal case in point.

This does not mean parents should not have help—a lot of specialized assistance—with their educational responsibility. It does mean that the parent cannot be relieved of the educational responsibility without injury to himself—that is, without injury to his own person and thus to the child who is but the extension of his personal responsibility.

Police Force Interjected

How does the application of police force to education bear on this question? It tends to relieve parents of educational responsibilities, including the study that might have involved themselves. Compulsion—police force as boss—says, in effect, to the parent: "Forget about the education of your child. We, acting as government, will compel the child to go to school regardless of how you think on the matter. Do not fret unduly about what the child will study. We, the agents of compulsion, have that all arranged. And don't worry about the financing of education. We, the personnel of authority, will take the fruits of the labor of parents and childless alike to pay the expenses. You, the parent, are to be relieved of any choice as to these matters; just leave it to the police force."

Second, these police force devices falsely earmark the educational period. They say, ever so compellingly, that the period of education is the period to which the compulsion applies. The ceremonies of "graduation"—diplomas and licenses—if not derivatives of this sys-

tem, are consistent with it. Government education is resulting in young folks coming out of school thinking of themselves as educated and concluding that the beginning of earning is the end of learning. If any devotee of government education will concede that learning ought to continue throughout all of life, he should, to be consistent, insist on compulsion for adults as well as for children—for the octogenarian as well as for the teenager. The system that is supposed to give all an equal start in life tends to put an end to learning just at the time when the spirit of inquiry should begin its most meaningful growth.

A Faith in Freedom

It was stated above that no one could know what would happen were there to be no more police-force-as-boss in education. That assertion is correct concerning specifics and details, but there are generalizations which can be confidently predicted. For instance, one knows that creative energies would be released; that latent potential energies would turn to flowing, moving, power-giving, kinetic energies and activities. Creative thought on education would manifest itself in millions of individuals. Such genius as we potentially and compositely possess would assert itself and take the place of deadening restraints. Any person who understands the free market knows, without any qualification whatsoever, that there would be more education and better education. And a person with a faith in free men is confident that the cost per unit of learning accomplished would be far less. For one thing, there wouldn't be any police boss to pay for. Nor would there be the financial irresponsibility that characterizes those who spend other people's money. The free market is truly free.

Not only is this faith in uninhibited, creative human energy rationally justified, but also there is evidence aplenty to confirm it. In other words, this faith is supported both theoretically and pragmatically. Except in the minds of those who are temperamentally slaves—those who seek a shepherd and a sheep dog, those who are ideologically attuned to authoritarianism—there does not exist a single creative activity now being conducted by man in voluntary action that could be improved by subjecting it to the police-force-as-boss. But put any one of these activities, now voluntarily conducted, under government control, leave it there for a short period, and general opinion would soon hold that the activity could not be conducted voluntarily. . . .

It is a separation from reality, a blindness to the enormous evidence in support of freedom—like being unaware of our autonomic nervous system and its importance—that accounts for much of our loss of faith in the productivity of an educational system relieved of restraints and compulsions. The restraints, be it remembered, are in the form of taxes—the taking away of the wherewithal to finance one's own educational plan. The compulsions are in the form of forced attendance and dictated curricula. . . .

The myth of government education, in our country today, is an article of general faith. To question the myth is to tamper with the faith, a business that few will read about or listen to or calmly tolerate. In short, for those who would make the case for educational freedom as they would for freedom in religion, let them be warned that this is a first-rate obstacle course. But heart can be taken in the fact that the art of becoming is composed of acts of overcoming. And becoming is life's prime purpose; becoming is, in fact, enlightenment—self-education, its own reward.

Education Is a Private Responsibility

by T. Robert Ingram

I have had a continuing interest in the schools of our country ever since, as a boy, I was plunged into the socialist experiment started in the Denver public schools in 1925 and 1926. In one way or another I have kept an eye on school matters throughout my own school and college life, during thirteen years of newspaper work, and ten years as seminarian and priest in the Episcopal Church. So, in the two parishes I have served, the weekday education of children has been one of my major concerns, and I have helped to found two schools, Southwest Episcopal School in Houston and St. John's School in Abilene.

There were three main reasons for founding these schools. First, there was the conviction that all instruction, or teaching, or education (whatever we call it) is basically religious and therefore of primary concern to the Christian church. Second, there was a general agreement that schools now controlled by tax-supported agencies are unsatisfactory. Not only are they unable to offer the desired kind of doctrinal instruction, but also they are falling behind the traditional high standards of Christian scholarship. Third, there was, and is, a need to use our money to the full advantage since we are a community of strictly limited resources.

Convinced of the correctness of the thesis that all education is basically religious, it follows that we, as a church, are forced to accept responsibility in society for this duty. Just as the church is a place to worship, so is the church also a place to acquire, interpret, and evaluate knowledge. We cannot expect non-Christians to do Christian teaching, and we do not look for Christians who are not active in the church to do so. Moreover, since we believe all education is a religious function, and since as Christians we believe the church and the state are separate

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The Reverend Mr. Ingram, now retired, was Rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Houston, Texas. This essay first appeared in the November 1957 issue of *The Freeman*.

Southwest Episcopal School was renamed St. Thomas Episcopal School in 1959. In 1992–1993 it enrolled 640 students in grades K-12.

and autonomous organisms of society, we believe it is a primary duty of the church to supervise and conduct its own schools. It should not pass the buck to the state, whose social function is quite different.

The Old Testament authority to teach may be found in the famous sixth chapter of Deuteronomy: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." These mighty words echo and color the Great Commission of the Risen Christ: "Go ye therefore and teach *all* nations."

Consult the Record

The obligation of the Christian church to provide schooling is thus inherent in her very existence. Her ability to do so in the United States today has been demonstrated dramatically in the last five years. The extent of the Roman Catholic school system is well known. The Lutherans of the Missouri Synod are equally well established. And a virile school movement has developed in Baptist, Evangelical, Episcopalian, and other groups in this decade.

A program of weekday education is well within the capacity of any active church. All that is needed is that strange ingredient of conviction that flowers into deeds. This may be accomplished without hostile action of any kind against any other schools.

Church people do not need to overthrow the "public" school system; they do not need to organize a political machine; they do not even have to formulate a philosophy of education. Nobody who rejects the idea of a school system run as part of the Christian church need be forced to support the church school with his earnings, or to send his children there. But if freedom includes the right of churchmen to send their children to a school where education is consistent with their faith, then churchmen have a similar right to establish their own schools. Certainly nobody else can be expected to undertake this necessary job on their behalf.

The principle that schooling is a function of the church is one that was never questioned by the Founding Fathers of our country, and has been lost sight of for only a few decades—a relatively short time in the life of Christendom and of our people. Until 1837 when Horace Mann introduced in Massachusetts the first state board of education, even tax moneys for schools were expended largely through church institutions; and even Mann did not live to see his Prussian-inspired plan run its

course to the removal of religion itself. That this end result was clearly foreseen and greatly feared in Mann's own time, however, is shown by the repeated assurances he had to give that he had no such intention and that he agreed that religion was the foundation of education. In 1848 he wrote: "I avail myself of this, the last opportunity which I may ever have, to say in regard to all affirmations or intimations that I have ever attempted to exclude religious instructions from the schools, or to exclude the Bible from the schools, or to impair the force of that volume, that they are now, and always have been, without substance or semblance of truth."

School and Church Confined

The church-controlled structure of schools is still to be seen in our non-state universities and colleges, all but a few of which were founded under the auspices of some branch of the church. The return of primary and secondary schools to the sphere of church control is no departure from either tradition or reason, but rather a restoration of both.

It is a lie to speak of "freedom in education" if parents have no choice of what is to be taught to their children, but must accept a majority political decision as to curriculum. In tax-supported schools, this is the case, and must be the case. It would certainly breach a principle if sectarian doctrines were taught in schools operated by any unit of government, federal or local. Yet when religious bodies have their own schools, the possibility of choice thus made available for churchmen in no way militates against the "freedom" of statists to continue to tax everyone for state-run schools to which they can send their children. Since we may reasonably suppose the statists will continue to thrive in our midst for a long time, the fear that there will be no state-supported schools if there are also church schools is groundless. The devotees of the tax-supported school system often complain that to allow such sectarian schools would be a divisive force, making for disunity. This argument, however, begs the real question. The real question is simply what is the real source of our unity—Caesar or Christ?

Those who believe that the only binding force for a people is in the police power—civil government—would, as a corollary of that belief, see this cohesive power threatened by the mere existence of

denominational school systems. More mature people, however, know that uniformity under the sword is not the unity we want anyway. The real unity for even a religiously variegated people lies in a universal principle that reads: "Whatever you are, be a good one." There is no necessary disunity for Americans in our diversified religious picture. The variety of privately supported religious bodies is rather the ground for our astonishing national harmony. In any event, people who put their trust in God, as Americans profess with their very money to do, must rely on the unity derived from allegiance to God rather than from a monolithic system of education answerable only to civil government.

That this truth has come home with real force to many in our nation today is evidenced by the number of church schools that have sprung up from coast to coast since World War II. I am in touch with developments among various denominations, but I will limit my remarks to my personal experiences.

A Plan Carried Through

In my present parish, school and church were planned and developed together. St. Thomas was a new parish, and so it was possible to conceive church and school as a unit from the start, and to plan every phase of growth as a whole. This was particularly helpful in laying out buildings and buying property. By the winter of 1954, the Vestry had found a site for its proposed church and school and set a timetable for moving to the site and opening school in the fall of 1955.

There was no cash on hand except for a small building fund, and no financial guarantee. If we wanted a church, it was going to cost us less than $150,000 for minimum requirements of land, Sunday school rooms, and a place to worship. At least a third of this cost would go for Sunday school rooms. We did not have enough money to spend $50,000 for rooms to use for one hour each week, especially when we would also be required to pay taxes for the public school building that our children would attend during the week. While one building was in use, the other would be empty. We think one building in one community is enough. Now it is true we have to pay school taxes anyway. We have to pay more, therefore, than we would if church schools were the rule rather than the exception and more church buildings were so used. Nonetheless, we felt we would be getting value

received for what we would pay extra in the quality of schooling for our children.

A headmaster was engaged in April, a school board appointed by the vestry, teachers hired for kindergarten and six grades of school, and registrations opened. I remember talking to one parent in my temporary office in a rented house adjoining the new site. She said, "Where is the school?" I pointed to the vacant five acres. "There," I said. She signed up. Southwest Episcopal School is now completing its second year of operation with an enrollment of 112.

Cost per Pupil

The average tuition is $250 a year. That compares with the cost in the two fine Houston private schools of like operation of $700 a year. We are making available to people of modest means an education that will equip their children to compete on the highest levels in the finest colleges and most exacting professions in the nation. Moreover, we think our economics are of vital concern to the general public—the taxpaying public. We think it is good sense dollar-wise for the general public—which is already under extreme pressure for school buildings—to make use of church educational buildings or parish houses already in existence in every city. Many of the same people pay for them anyway. Why build more? Why build double and parallel facilities?

The actual cost per pupil at Southwest Episcopal School in 1956–57 was $260 per year. This was an inefficient year, with two classes of only 11 or 12 students each. Estimated cost per pupil next year, with low enrollment of 180 now in sight, will be $225. With a school of 210 students, or only six less than the capacity, the average annual cost would be $191.60. This is for a school whose teachers are paid salaries comparable to those in the public schools; a school where classes are limited to 24; a school where there are available the resources of the entire church community which includes a score of Doctors of Science, Doctors of Philosophy, university professors, and other professional people to say nothing of business executives. By comparison the cost to the general public of educating each child —apart from the expense of construction and maintenance of school buildings—was $230.40 a year per pupil in 1953–54. Salary increases

last year raised this nearly 10 percent to at least $245.00. If the general public can have top quality education at a cost of at least $50 per pupil less than it costs in tax-supported schools; and if it can at the same time eliminate the duplication of classroom buildings by restoring the schools to church control and supervision, the savings will be enormous. The benefits of school construction now being asked for through federal financial grants, can be made immediately available from coast to coast simply by using existing church buildings. No time is lost in construction, no more money spent.

The best index of the Southwest's strength and achievement is in the enthusiasm of the parents and the reputation in the community. This has been so favorable that a second section of kindergarten and of first grade will be added during 1957–58 and the present combined fifth and sixth grades will be separated. There is a good possibility of a capacity enrollment of 216. Four new teachers are to be added to the staff, and three classrooms. This has been accomplished with no advertising except the enthusiasm of parents of children now in school.

Tax-supported schools are required to take all comers and work with them for at least ten to twelve years in most states. Obviously, they cannot conform to any particular church's sectarian position. In addition, since the schools must accommodate all children, they can neither point toward the slow scholars, nor the fast ones. They cannot establish a discipline of learning expected, not of the majority, but of the skilled and expert few. As a result, unless there are special schools to provide the highest possible scholastic equipment to those who want it, our nation can in one generation be stripped of an irreplaceable resource.

My experience has shown that any ordinary American community which can support a church can operate a school in connection therewith. If we could do it, anybody can. No extra capital funds are necessary, no fancy window dressing. All that is required for a school are teachers, pupils, and a place to meet. I believe it was Mark Hopkins who taught on the end of a log. The school can pay its own operating expenses with modest tuition, or the cost can be absorbed by the congregation.

It is not a matter of merely arguing for the soundness of a theory. This can be done.

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