

The humanist madrassa, and what to do about it

Public education in the United States is nothing if not thorough. It submerges children in a humanist belief system and holds them under for 13 years before sending them on to universities that provide higher education in lower values.

The education on offer in the public schools is remarkably integrated. Training in the theory of evolution informs and supports the entire system. If man evolved from lower life forms, he is not wonderfully made in the image of his Creator. Because he is just another element in the ecosystem he has no meaning apart from it. He may terminate life in the womb because it has no significance beyond flesh and bone, a soul. He may couple indiscriminately because no objective truth exists to deny the impulses of his flesh, God.

The claims of its apologists notwithstanding, public education is not values-free. The curriculum is infused with this humanist rationale from the dissection of a frog to the proper use of a condom. Unsurprisingly, Christian attempts at compromise with such a system have proved unavailing. Moses and Darwin cannot both be right; efforts to find a middle ground failed because there is none. Our Lord requires us to make choices.

As a result, Christian parents have fled the public schools in ever-swelling numbers in recent years. Many have chosen to educate their children at home. Others have sought a solution in private schools, with varying degrees of success.

The secularization of public education creates an a priori argument for a Christian alternative, but not just any will do. Many "Christian" schools adopt a curriculum scarcely distinguishable from that of the public schools and top it off with chapel on Wednesday morning. This is serving the same old stale piece of pie with a dollop of whipped cream. It might taste a little better but it provides no more nourishment. The mission of many such "Christian" schools is to prepare students with a first-rate humanist education to ascend to well-regarded universities that sneer at God.

Parents in search of a truly biblical system for whom home schooling is not an option have turned to Christian classical education, which reaches back to a pre-Enlightenment time when God's word informed and infused the curriculum. From science to history to literature to art, all truth proceeds from the mouth of God.

The Bible undergirds all instruction. God's creation cannot be explained or understood without it. This system does not ignore contemporary advances in science or, for that matter, theology; it views them in the context of a God-centered universe.

For American Christians in the 21st century, our children and grandchildren are our domestic mission field. It has ever been thus but the obstacles to raising a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord now proliferate daily. The humanists have caught a wave and are riding it for all it's worth. Celebrating the California Supreme Court ruling legalizing the marriage of homosexuals, Mayor Gavin Newsom of San Francisco said, "As California goes, so goes the rest of the nation. It's inevitable. This door's wide open now. It's going to happen, whether you like it or not."

Islam has its madrassas for indoctrinating children in the faith. Humanists have made U.S. public schools their madrassas. We must ask: Who will speak for Christ?

Christian classical educators are doing so. Their schools offer a curriculum steeped in a biblical worldview for K-12 training and to supplement the efforts of home-school parents. Christian classical schools, however, are far too few. Houston, the fourth-largest city in the U.S., has one such high school. Many children are completing middle school in a classical setting only to move on to public or private schools that do not complete the cycle. They are birds pushed from the nest before they have learned to fend for themselves in a hostile environment. There are educational as well as religious and cultural reasons for insisting on Christian classical training through 12th grade.

Interest in this approach has been limited to Christian parents who see the benefit of it for their children. It must expand beyond them to those with a kingdom perspective who grasp its value for Christ's Church. Instruction for children on Sunday morning and Wednesday night is not enough in a culture infected with the detritus of Enlightenment rationalism. Preachers are no longer America's teachers; professors and pundits are. The humanists are on the march. If not Christians equipped with a biblical worldview, who will stand against them?

A Church long dormant has not sharpened the Sword of Truth in so long that it will find itself defenseless if it does not rouse itself soon. Christian classical education is one strong weapon remaining in an armory going bare.

The Circe Institute will hold its seventh annual Conference for Classical Educators in Houston July 24-26, 2008. Dr. Gene Edward Veith of Patrick Henry College is the keynote speaker. Christians -- parents and

others prepared to make a stand -- would do well to attend. Information is available at www.circeinstitute.org or 704.786.9684.