



Κατανῶμεν *Let us consider...*



All Education is Religious Education

by Luke Shawhan

“Education is a completely religious endeavor.” Douglas Wilson

Every parent must ask “How should children be educated?” For some, religious convictions determine the proper method of education. For others, sports, academics, community, or cost are the determining factors. Yet, all parents who embark on the journey of education must understand one truth: all education is religious education. Overtly or subvertly, directly or indirectly, mistakenly or mischievously—every school (whether private, public, or homeschool) teaches a religious viewpoint. Why is this true? First, everyone is religious. Second, the questions brought about by education can only be answered by religion. Finally, examples from “secular” education demonstrate a school’s religious viewpoint.

Every person is a religious person because every person’s existential questions are answered by religion: What is the purpose in life—to serve God, to serve humanity (or both), to chase pleasure, comfort, power, etc? What is the greatest good? What are the origins of man? Because religion shapes the answer to every existential question, *it governs the totality of life*. It cannot be dropped off to be picked up later, shed like animal fur, or bifurcated according to the day of the week. Now, people may change religions or act inconsistently with the teachings of their religion, but religion is always present. Religion offers the light by which every person sees the world. The modern idea of a secular, irreligious person is a falsehood. The followers of these ideas hold the creeds and doctrine of secularism or humanism.

These existential questions function as the foundation of education. R.L. Dabney, a Presbyterian pastor, Confederate army chaplain, and the Chief of Staff to Stonewall Jackson, stated: “Education is the nurture and development of the whole man for his proper end.” What is the “proper end” of man? Only religion can answer this question. Religious convictions sculpt the image of the ideal man; and education sculpts pupils into the ideal man. Therefore, all education is undergirded by religion. Whether it is tolerance and relativism, high self esteem and good grades, Christlikeness

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The mission of Grace Classical Academy is to provide an education designed to help our children know the love, grace, truth and holiness of our glorious God and, from this understanding, strive for excellence in knowledge, wisdom and service.

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Now to him who is
 able to do far
 more abundantly
 than all that we
 ask or think,
 according to the
 power at work
 within us, to him
 be glory in the
 church and in
 Christ Jesus
 throughout all
 generations,
 forever and ever.
 Amen. (Ephesians
 3:20-21 ESV)

and the knowledge of God—whatever the school’s vision of the ideal man, these traits will be chiseled into the students through the math, history, science, and language lessons.

The popular American philosophy of education, “fact-dispensing,” disputes Dabney’s definition of education. Popular American philosophy argues for a neutral education that teaches facts about— but not bias toward— a particular worldview. Yet, this philosophy crumbles under the junior-highers favorite question: “Why?”. “Why must math, writing, science, history be learned?” “Why torture us?” The answer to “Why?” reveals education’s religious nature. Is the greatest good to develop skills in order to work a well-paying job, which will hopefully lead to early retirement? Is becoming a productive and helpful member of society the greatest good? Or, is loving the Lord with heart, soul, mind, and strength; serving people; and obeying Him in every aspect of life the greatest good? Each answer to the question “Why?” molds the image of the ideal man into the lives of students. (Remember, the key word is *greatest*. Christian education labors to develop job skills and mold productive individuals. Yet, these are not the greatest values of Christian education.)

All education is religious education, whether or not the educational institute advertises itself in such a manner. Are there any examples of this? Clearly, overtly religious schools display this truth in their recitation of sacred scripture, creeds, etc. But what about “secular” institutions? In June of 2014, Reuters ran a story describing the shift of families that no longer celebrate “Father’s Day,” but “Fathers’ Day.” The article described methods school teachers use to normalize same sex marriages in the classroom. Having table settings for two moms at a Mother’s Day lunch, encouraging students with two fathers to write a letter to “my family” when other students wrote letters to mothers— these are the practices the school utilized to reinforce the normalization of homosexuality. The article quoted one first grade teacher’s belief on the issue: “This is the right age group to foster tolerance,” [she] said. “If we could talk to all of them at such a young age, we could wipe out prejudice.” This religious education hits close to home. The word “tolerance” is painted on the sidewalk at a Springfield elementary school as a character value. I asked a school-age family member, who is an SPS student, what the word meant. He told me, “Tolerate the intolerable.”

World Magazine revealed another example of religious secularism’s grip in American schools: advanced placement tests. “Blasting the Past” (Sep 20, 2014, p. 64) reports a US History teacher’s dismay after the release of a new “framework” for testing. After reading about the new framework, the teacher, Larry Krieger (who has taught AP US History for decades) was shocked to see that certain events and persons of American history—James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, Valley Forge, D-Day— were excluded from the new testing, although they had been included in the old testing. Krieger concluded that “the framework presents a relentlessly negative view of American history that emphasizes conflict, oppression, and exploitation while totally ignoring the innovators, entrepreneurs, and dreamers who built our country.” Secularism esteems a

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thoroughly negative view of America's history, and American schools teach this value to American children.

The final example requires a separate essay, but can be touched on here. Hitler is famous for his quote "He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future." As Führer of Germany, Hitler took control of the schooling of Nazi youth, forced families to enroll their children into the "Hitler Jugend" (a sort of Nazi boy scout program) and attempted to vilify Christianity in Germany. In his vilification, Hitler attempted to replace Christianity with Nazi-worship. In Cologne, one prayer taught to children receiving meals from the Nazi state: "Fold your hands, bow your head and think about Adolf Hitler. He gives us our daily bread and helps us out of every misery."

Every parent in every school must wrestle with the question, "How should children be educated?" but must also understand that every child is educated according to religious beliefs. In Matthew 10:24-25a, Jesus says, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master." In the context, Jesus is refuting the Pharisees' claim that he casts out demons by Beelzebul. But the truth of His statement can be applied to education: It is enough that children become like their teachers. Parents must know the religious beliefs of the school; for children will follow in the beliefs, lifestyles, and patterns the school teaches. Are children called to follow the one ideal man, the image of the invisible God, the sustainer of the universe, the Savior of the world—Jesus of Nazareth; or, to exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship at the altar of another religion?

"Education is the most powerful ally of Humanism, and every American public school is a school of Humanism. What can the theistic Sunday Schools, meeting for an hour once a week, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?" Charles Francis Potter; *Humanism: A New Religion*

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Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. (Luke 11:23 ESV)

PASSAGES FIELD TRIP



If we did not have the Bible, we would not know right from wrong.

Ben Vandiver



I can't believe we saw something [original Dead Sea scroll fragments] so old!

Landry Howland

We have 10 Bibles and do not read them. Historically, people have died for [the Bible]. The exhibit showed our lukewarm faith.

Blake O'Dell



THE JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL TOOK A FIELD TRIP TO THE PASSAGES, AN EXHIBIT DISPLAYING THE HISTORY OF SCRIPTURE. HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR THOUGHTS:



If we did not have the Bible, history would be drastically different.

Katie Sparks



If it were not for the Dead Sea Scrolls, we would be less certain of the accuracy of Scripture.

Jackson Frazier



It was great to see how many people have fought for Scripture. It encouraged my faith.

Lauren York



If we did not have the Bible, the world would have a lot less hope. The Scriptures brought hope.

Tori Umlauf



It was a cool experience that showed the faith of past Christian heroes.

Silas Garrison

STUDENT WORK

Freedom from Comparisons

by Olivia (Livi) Tolbert

"Comparison is the thief of joy." Theodore Roosevelt

I began to study ballet seriously at the age of thirteen, which is considered quite late for the majority of dancers. It was easy to look at the other dancers and feel worthless. I stayed in a younger class for a year, and it was very discouraging that a fifth grader could land a sequence when I— an eighth grader— could not. Whenever the time would come to go out and dance a new choreography, I never felt comfortable standing in front of fifteen people and performing a sequence I barely knew; and when I did know it, I messed up frequently. The other girls had been dancing years longer than I, and it was very evident in all of our exercises. After a particularly devastating experience (which was meant to inspire me and not depress me), I made a vow I would never step on the dance floor again. Yet God brought to my mind that He is everything I will ever need, and though I may stumble around during my double and triple pirouettes, He still loves me: no more and no less than everyone else. A quintuple pirouette with a proud heart does not bring glory to God, but a single pirouette with a humble heart may show His glorious name.

While we may fail in this world, He never leaves us. While we may compare ourselves to each other, He does not. It was never a part of His plan for His people to compare themselves to each other. In I Corinthians 12, Paul instructs the Church in the different gifts of the Spirit, and these instructions can be applied to everyday life as well. Paul says: "...There are different kinds of gifts, but the *same* Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the *same* Lord. There are *different* kinds of working, *but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work*" (emphasis added).

These verses are so precious because of the uniting of the different gifts and the uniting of the Church body. While we may see one job or act of service as more godly or worthwhile, to God all are equally important if done with a heart that pleases Him. When comparing myself to others, I could not bring glory to God. Comparison stole away the joy that God had given me to experience. Yet when I go out to dance with my head up, courage in my heart, and the spirit of God in me, I can bring glory to His name, no matter what anyone else does.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



Staff Birthdays

October

October 3 - Jody McNulty

October 3 - Kaydi Harp

October 14 - Chris Beeson



November

November 2 - Alex Deren

November 8—Marion Winkler

November 15 - Michale Nelson

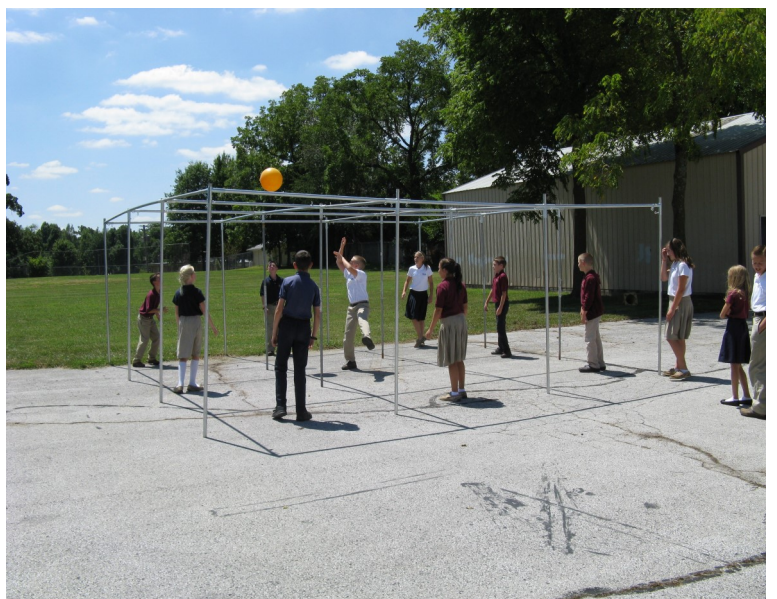
November 27 - Jill Sellers

December

December 5 - Robin Harrison

December 11 - Curt Brannan

AROUND THE SCHOOL





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October 2014

- 1 Tuition Due
- 1 **School Pictures**
- 10 **End of 1st Quarter**
- 13-17 **No School, Fall Break**
- 13-14 Teacher Training
- 14-15 Optional P/T Conferences
- 23 GCA Skate Night,
Springfield Skateland,
6:00-8:00 PM
- 31 **Reformation Day**

November 2014

- 2 **Daylight Savings
Time Ends**
- 3 Tuition Due
- 7 1st-8th Grade History
Day/All School Open
House. 6:30 PM
- 11 Veterans Day
- 14 Uniform Order Day
- 20 **High School History
Day, 9:30 AM**
- 21 **Fabulous Foot Day**
- 24-28 **No School,
Thanksgiving Break**
- 27 **Thanksgiving Day**

December 2014

- 1 Tuition Due
- 5 **Elementary/Jr. High
Choir Concert. 7:00 PM**
- 11-18 Finals, 7th—12th grades
- 19 **Christmas Dress Day
End of 2nd Quarter
All-School Chapel
Early Out: 11:30 AM**
- 22-31 **No School, Christmas &
New Year's Break**
- 25 **Christmas Day**