



Education and Individual Freedom

Individual freedom is derived from the concept of religious freedom, which is derived from the Biblical teaching that salvation is an individual and personal matter and can only be achieved through a direct and personal relationship with God. Because the Puritan colonists came to the North American wilderness in order to exercise religious freedom, they understood that individual freedom and responsibility were at the heart of Christian practice, since they believed that salvation, forgiveness of sin, and life after death could only be had through belief in Jesus Christ as Savior. And why was salvation needed? To protect individuals from their own sinful natures. Calvinism taught that man was innately depraved and needed salvation in order to live a productive and godly life. (Catholics call it "original sin," while the Eastern Orthodox call it "ancestral sin.")



Since the Puritans came to North America in order to practice their Calvinist creed, they were at first not tolerant of the practices of other Christian denominations. They understood that individuals could hold diverse religious beliefs, but they rejected the notion of competing denominations in the Biblical Commonwealth.

Thus, Roger Williams, who believed in the separation of church from civil government, was forced to leave the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 and founded the free colony of Rhode Island, where different denominations were welcome. By so doing, Williams enhanced the idea of individual freedom by accepting the notion that there were among Protestants more than one way to salvation, more than one way to interpret the Holy Scripture.

In any case, personal salvation, forgiveness of sins, and life after death were God's gifts to individuals, not the collective. That divine gift was the backbone of individual freedom, which translated into political terms, was then codified by Thomas Jefferson in The Declaration of Independence, which stated: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

That was the divinely inspired clarion call to the Revolutionary War, the motto of which was "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." Indeed, it was the pulpits of the Calvinist churches which gave the patriots the sense of sacrifice and religious zeal needed to fight a long, bitter war against the British crown. And when victory was finally achieved, it was up to the Founding Fathers to create the



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on March 29, 2012

framework of a new government for a free people. The result was the Constitution of the United States. It was John Adams who said, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

Because Christians were constrained by the laws of God, they did not need the laws of government to control or regulate them. Which is why the Constitution limited the power of government. And it was that political freedom that unleashed the creative powers of individual Americans who then went about building the greatest, richest, and most advanced nation in the history of mankind.

And that is why education in the new American civilization stressed individual achievement and responsibility. Biblical literacy was at the heart of that education, which required a high level of general literacy. Indeed, high literacy remained the core of American education until the Progressives entered the scene at the end of the 19th century and shifted the emphasis away from literacy to socialization, from individualism to collectivism.

Who were the Progressives? They were members of the Protestant academic elite who no longer believed in the religion of their fathers. Influenced by Hegel, Darwin, and Marx, they considered the Bible to be mythology. They now put their faith in science, which provided unlimited knowledge of the material world; evolution, which explained the origin of living matter, discounting the story of creation in Genesis; and psychology, which explained human behavior and provided the means to control it.

The Progressives were also socialists. Why? Because they had to deal with the problem of evil and they were convinced that socialism provided the means to eradicate it. What caused evil? Where did it come from? Religion taught that man was innately depraved, sinful by nature, and that the only way to deal with evil was through personal salvation. By living according to God's law, one could overcome the sinful temptations that all human beings had to deal with. But since the Progressives no longer accepted that belief, they decided that the true causes of evil were ignorance, social injustice, and capitalism. So if they got rid of ignorance through secular education, replaced social injustice with social justice, and replaced competitive capitalism with egalitarian, collectively owned property, they would create utopia — heaven on earth.

But in order to prove that they were right and the Bible was wrong, they had to change America into a socialist society. The way they chose to do it was to take control of the public schools, impose a socialist curriculum, and inculcate American children in the principles of socialism.

The new curriculum would downgrade the teaching of those subjects that bolstered individualism: high literacy and the traditional subjects that increased knowledge of the world and stimulated intellectual curiosity. John Dewey, philosophical leader of the Progressive movement, spelled out the plan in an essay he wrote in 1898, "The Primary-Education Fetish." First, he attacked high literacy as an academic goal. He wrote:

The plea for the predominance of learning to read in early school life because of the great importance attaching to literature seems to me a perversion.

Dewey then argued how important it was for the child to experience life through classroom activities, projects and social interaction before learning to read. He wrote:

No one can clearly set before himself the vivacity and persistency of the child's motor instincts at that period, and then call to mind the continued grind of reading and writing, without feeling that the justification of our present curriculum is psychologically impossible. It is simply superstition: it



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on March 29, 2012

is a remnant of an outgrown period of history.

In his anti-God zeal for socialism, Dewey deliberately overlooked the true reason why primary education had always emphasized literacy. Because we are endowed by our maker with a strong language faculty, located in the left hemisphere of the brain, children teach themselves to speak their own language virtually from birth. The strength of that faculty turns every child into a veritable dynamo of language learning. And the purpose of primary education is to enable the child to expand that burgeoning language faculty by learning to read our alphabetic writing system phonetically.

That the Progressives planned to impose their program on the schools stealthfully was made plain by what Dewey wrote further in the article:

Change must come gradually. To force it unduly would compromise its final success by favoring a violent reaction. What is needed in the first place, is that there should be a full and frank statement of conviction with regard to the matter from physiologists and psychologists and from those school administrators who are conscious of the evils of the present regime.

In other words, deception would be the primary modus operandi of all of those involved in the conspiracy. They knew that what they were planning would favor "a violent reaction" from parents and conservatives should the plan become known. Dewey wrote further:

There are already in existence a considerable number of educational "experiment stations," which represent the outposts of educational progress. If these schools can be adequately supported for a number of years they will perform a great vicarious service. After such schools have worked out carefully and definitely the subject matter of a new curriculum, — finding the right place for language studies and placing them in their right perspective, — the problem of the more general educational reform will be immensely simplified and facilitated.

One of the "experiment stations" that was created in 1917 to test the new Deweyite curriculum was the Lincoln School, attached to Teachers College at Columbia University. John D. Rockefeller Jr. was so impressed with John Dewey's utopian plan that he funded the school with \$3-million and sent four of his five sons to be educated there. All four — Nelson, Laurence, Winthrop, and David — became dyslexic because of the way they were taught to read. So it was known quite early that the teaching method at the school could create functional illiteracy, which it still does today. The method was known as the "look-say" or "sight method." Today it is known as "whole language."

One hundred years later, America has been so dumbed down by Progressive education, that some critics believe that we are beyond the point of no return, and that America will be permanently crippled by a population lacking the intellectual skills that come with high literacy. The Progressives had predicted that one day our population would be so thoroughly dumbed down that they would vote for a socialist as President.

And they did in 2008.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.