



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 9, 2020

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Looking for a Private School? Choose Wisely!

There are many good private schools throughout the country, including religious ones. But parents beware: Many are not what they are advertised to be.



Walking through the Christian Heritage Academy (CHA) in Del City, Oklahoma, one gets the sense of being almost on another planet, or at least in another dimension. The children are well-dressed, smiling, and respectful. They seem genuinely happy. Their manners are impeccable. The quality of their scholarship, too, would put many college students to shame. Their knowledge of American history and the Bible, even in the lower grades, far surpasses that of the average American adult. And remarkably, the school did it all without a single penny of government money.

“We have a totally different approach to education,” explained Headmaster Josh Bullard, who graduated from CHA in 1979, before leading a tour of the school and introducing us to the teachers and other staff who oversee the education of nearly 700 students. “Our vision is to train American Christian leaders for every sphere of society.” And they do a great job, too, with their students not only performing far above average academically but also acquiring a Christian education and learning how to think critically — and biblically. From CHA, they go off into politics, law, ministry, business, and more.

At another, similar school in Chesapeake, Virginia, known as the Stonebridge School, kindergarten students were learning how to sound out letters with phonics — something that has been largely cast aside in government schools, even though Common Core-style methods of memorizing sight words were debunked as quackery as far back as the mid-1800s. In the fourth-grade classroom, many of the children’s cursive handwriting looked as if it had been produced by a calligrapher — it was absolutely beautiful. And the art was just amazing. Everything about this school was surreal.

On a tour around the school with Head of School Kathy Rader, it was clear that — like CHA — something was very special about this place. Even though teachers and faculty do not spend all year preparing the students for standardized tests, their average SAT scores are far above the national average, as well. Just as at the Christian Heritage Academy, the goal is to provide a solid Christian education and prepare leaders to impact America and the world for God.



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While the schools are 1,500 miles away from each other, they share something in common. Both rely on the “Principle Approach,” a philosophy and method of education that “produces Christian character and self-government, Christian scholarship and Biblical reasoning.” Both schools take scripture seriously. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” says 2 Corinthians 3:17, one of many biblical references to liberty and godliness going hand in hand that can be found at the schools. The Principle Approach, which is not affiliated with any particular Christian denomination, is now being used in hundreds of Christian schools from America to Brazil and Uganda and beyond.

Dr. Carole Adams, president of the Foundation for American Christian Education (FACE), is one of the nation’s top authorities on the Principle Approach. Stonebridge is actually a demonstration school for it. And CHA, while not affiliated with FACE, relies on the Principle Approach as well. Dr. Adams told *The New American* that a truly Christian education will include four components: worldview, curriculum, philosophy, and results. “To be considered Biblical, Christian education, all of these components must be in conformity to the Word of God,” she said, adding that biblical truths (or principles) are the foundation of every subject.

It works. Students who attend Principle Approach schools hold to a much more biblical worldview than any other category of students, even including Christian homeschoolers. Nehemiah Institute President Dan Smithwick, who has been studying people’s worldviews for many years, confirmed this with hard data. His “PEERS” test asks questions about “Politics, Economics, Education, Religion, and Social Issues” (PEERS) and then determines how well those line up with the institute’s understanding of what Scripture teaches. It has become very popular with churches and homeschool groups. But Smithwick, who has served on boards of Christian schools, found that even many self-proclaimed Christian schools are falling short of fulfilling their promises.

“Biblical worldview education is what is promised by all private Christian schools today,” Smithwick told *The New American*. “However, our worldview assessment program, PEERS Testing, tells a different story. We are increasingly seeing the influence of secular/socialist philosophy being embraced by youth even from Christian homes. Cultural Marxism has made deep inroads into education, even Christian education, which is evidenced by results of the PEERS test.... Most Christian schools have unknowingly adopted philosophy and methodologies of education developed by scholars in Secular Humanist institutions.”

However, the exceptions to the trend are the Christian schools affiliated with the Principle Approach, he said. “I urge Christian families and church leaders to investigate the meaning of true biblical worldview education and see the difference from traditional education,” Smithwick continued, adding that he believes proper Christian education is crucial to continuing the biblical promise of a remnant being preserved by God.

Many Christian schools bill themselves as nondenominational, meaning that they teach basic biblical principles that Christians hold in common — what the great Christian apologist C.S. Lewis called “Mere Christianity” — without getting into doctrinal differences. Others are definitely denominational. Not all private schools are alike, and it is up to the parents to decide the best educational alternative for their children.

For those who want to enroll their children in a Catholic school, there are still many available that provide a rock-solid academic experience combined with thorough religious training in the Catholic



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faith. For instance, networks of traditional Catholic schools across America affiliated with the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP) offer excellent education to thousands of families.

There are also phenomenal Jewish schools that provide an outstanding academic education infused with the faith and values of Judaism. One of the nation's first was Yeshiva Schools of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which continues to provide a top-notch education to hundreds of students from the area. "For learning to be truly meaningful, it cannot be limited to a certain set of subjects, given at a particular time, or place," Dean Rabbi Yisroel Rosenfeld told *The New American* in describing the school's proven philosophy. "Rather, the process of education must address the whole child as he or she develops and matures at home, in school, and in the community."

Yeshiva Schools accomplishes that by "taking education far beyond the classroom, while keeping it within the context of Jewish tradition," Rabbi Rosenfeld continued. "For example, we provide opportunities for students to apply what they've learned in the real world. They work with children with special needs, visit seniors in residential centers, and get involved with projects to improve our neighborhood and the environment. In this way, Yeshiva Schools educates students to be knowledgeable, responsible, and productive members of society."

Today, there are many other options for private educational choices, too. Across America, for instance, parents are forming cooperative "schools" where families get together and parents contribute their time and expertise. A father who specializes in computer programming might teach a programming course, while a Hispanic mother might teach Spanish. In addition, there is a resurgence in the one-room schoolhouse movement, with Aletheia Christian College in Jerome, Idaho, training people from across the country to open and run small schools that can give children of all ages an excellent Christian education.

The options described in this article can be the models for a future where government no longer indoctrinates most Americans in so-called public schools. And even parents who cannot afford tuition have options, with many schools offering scholarships.

While the argument that some people are too poor to send their children to a private school is often cited as justification for the government's practical monopoly, a school in Oklahoma City — the Little Light Christian School — is proving that generous Americans can and do help those in need find a way. The school serves the most at-risk children in the community, namely the children of imprisoned parents, by offering them a tuition-free private Christian education. A tour of the school would be enough to bring tears to one's eyes.

About 30 years ago, Robin Khoury was praying. God gave her a vision, she recounted to *The New American* during a tour, that one day she would have a school for poor children. During that time, she was homeschooling her own children, and had no way of knowing what would eventually come. It would be almost two decades before her school became a reality. But it did.

"I was listening to speakers, and someone started talking about the problems that children with incarcerated mothers have," she says. "Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic-stress-disorder, and behavior problems. And then I heard God whisper, 'These are the kids for your school. These are the kids I've been talking about.'" The next day, she filed incorporation papers for Little Light Ministries. And within three years, the school would be open. Today, it serves dozens of children, and amazing



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things are happening there.

Regardless of one's faith tradition, there are great options out there for anyone and everyone. In addition to brick-and-mortar schools, there are also online schools such as FreedomProject Academy, which offers a classical education rooted in Judeo-Christian values. And there is homeschooling, a viable option favored by millions.

Buyer Beware

It would almost be hard to do worse than the government schools, which have been quite literally designed to dumb down and indoctrinate children. But while there are many incredible private, independent, and religious schools out there, there are also plenty of dangers and pitfalls that parents should be aware of when it comes to choosing the right educational program for their children.

It's an alarming sign of the times when *caveat emptor* has become the watchword even for America's Christian schools. In considering Christian schools before the creation of the Federal Department of Education (1979), there may have existed disparities between the quality of academic programs, or the degree to which faith and worldview were successfully integrated with a child's course of study. But one thing that remained reliable was the commitment of Christian schools to be conscientiously Christian, accounting for denominational differences. The same was true for Jewish schools.

Those days are gone, and, incredibly, many "Protestant" and "Catholic" and "Jewish" schools are now committed to aligning academic and social programs to public-school models. The argument is that religious-school children need to "keep up" with public-school peers, take the same dehumanizing standardized tests, and ultimately pursue the same forms of materialistic and worldly success.

And while families will still find a greater emphasis on discipline and safer learning environments in most Christian schools, they will find very little in terms of faith-building and biblical values. As costly as Christian schooling has become, administrators are wagering that faithful parents will pay exorbitant tuition for schooling that is in many respects Christian-in-name-only. Apparently, a well-placed cross here, a white blouse and plaid skirt there, are more sufficient markers of Christian authenticity than what happens in classrooms or is written in textbooks.

And this secularizing of Christian education is happening across denominations: Most Catholic diocesan schools, for instance, use Common Core-aligned materials, as do most Protestant schools, from "high church" to "low church" schools. Alarming, many Christian schools have adopted the secular and politicized social-justice curricula that is currently transforming public schools into sites of ideological indoctrination. The well-known Charlotte Christian School in North Carolina, for instance, recently came under fire for introducing the "Be The Bridge" curriculum promoting "Critical Race Theory," a far-left racist ideology completely antithetical to Christianity.

The depraved and age-inappropriate sexuality education that is sweeping public schools is also turning up in Christian schools. And things such as transgenderism, homosexuality, and drag-queen culture are embraced under the guise of dubious "anti-bullying" programs that subordinate scripture to progressive posturing. Many administrators and teachers are embarrassed by biblical morality when it comes to issues such as sexual activity outside of marriage, abortion, and gender confusion, and quietly go about remaking — unmaking in reality — Christian morality and presenting the results to unsuspecting school children as if they were gospel.



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One key factor in this move toward apologizing for Christianity — rather than teaching Christian apologetics — is the way teachers are accredited. Overwhelmingly, degrees from university departments of education — which are entirely secular, anti-Christian, and thoroughly progressive — are the primary method through which students become teachers. It doesn't matter how well-meaning or faith-driven a student may be, once entering these programs, survival often depends on compromising one's worldview, in ways that the young teacher may not even recognize. When teachers and administrators join Christian schools after being trained in godless, government-funded colleges of education, they bring that baggage with them.

It is critical that families considering Christian schools exercise extraordinary diligence when choosing a school. Job No. 1 is to ensure that your child's faith is nurtured, not undermined. Job No. 2 is to ensure that your child receives an education that is knowledge-based, not ideology-based. You can no longer simply take the word of Christian principals or teachers. We have encountered hundreds of parents who removed their kids from public schools, placing them in Christian schools that promised authentic faith formation and rigorous education, only to find out months later that they were being exposed to Common Core-aligned materials and anti-Christian social-justice worldviews.

To help navigate these decisions, here are three questions you can ask Christian school administrators that offer a starting point, provided you do due diligence and confirm the answers yourself: 1) Is your curriculum aligned in any way with Common Core or outside standardized testing? 2) Can you demonstrate, tangibly, how faith and scripture are the foundations of school administration and pedagogy? 3) Do you acknowledge that biblically and in terms of common sense parents are the primary educators of their children and have an absolute right to review all curriculum materials and to have access to the teachers and staff?

Not everyone who wants to get their children out of the government schools is willing or able to choose homeschooling. But fortunately, thanks to the liberty and prosperity enjoyed by Americans, there are many excellent private-school options for parents to choose from. The challenge is to ensure that parents are not paying thousands and thousands of dollars for a private alternative offering the same sort of dumbed-down indoctrination program imposed on Americans by government. Parents should carefully and prayerfully consider their options — after all, there are few decisions in life that will be more important, or have longer-lasting consequences, than those involving the education of children. Choose wisely.

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