



Letters to the Editor

Separating Christianity and Public Schools?

As someone who has worked in education for more than 20 years, I'd like to comment on the issue entitled "Rescuing Our Children" (February 4 issue), which is about the problems in public schools today. I read your magazine cover to cover. What is written there — about the failures and immorality of public schools — is technically right. I just wrote my own paper on Dewey's philosophy and how pervasive it continues to be in education. My disagreement is the conclusion of every article — the solution being the mass exodus from public schools.

Let me begin by commenting on the assertion that Christians should take their children out of public schools. The whole gospel mandate is summed up in the Great Commission. There was never a promise that if Christians remain in the world, but not of it, that it would continually become better and better. Actually the opposite was promised. But knowing the end from the beginning did not change Jesus' command to engage the culture. Just think of the consequences if a mass exodus of Christians from public schools had taken place at any point in history. We have hung in there, fighting back the darkness, just as we fight back in every other part of life and culture. The church is not meant to escape the world — where would Christians go as the world darkens if we assume this solution is a Godly one?

My other criticism of your "solution" is that the suggestion of mass exodus is not one that takes divine power into consideration. I do not think things are going to right themselves — this is part of end-time promises. However, I do trust God to raise up a generation out of this darkness who will be mighty warriors. The generation just now becoming young adults is already indicating that enough is enough. More than ever, we need to teach our children the truth of God's Word and help them sort out the lies they are hearing, but the difference between pulling them out of the world to do it and leaving them in it is all about the spiritual muscle and tenacity they will develop because of it. God is not impotent in any of this, but will raise up His own.

I think the magazine made an error in forwarding its own FreedomProject Academy in an issue that is saying "leave the schools" in every article. And I believe you have underestimated the calling that most homeschool families realize. The homeschool families that I have known over the years are not trying to escape the world, but are being obedient to what God has asked of them. Most have neighbors or friends in their church family who are sending their children to school because that is how God is leading them. Both are being obedient and are raising their family by faith, which is pleasing to the Lord.

One last thought, on phonics and whole-word reading. Phonics is not the be-all and end-all of teaching kids to read. It has failed a percentage of students. There needed to be an alternative to phonics because not every student learns the same way. But as is common to education and most other parts of society, the pendulum swung too far, leaving the children who did learn well through phonics in the same dire straits as the whole-word-approach kids had been in — only in much larger numbers. But this type of approach, jumping ship and drowning in the ocean, is not unlike your mass-exodus solution.

Marcia Hansen
Appleton, Wisconsin



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What I Like About You

I have subscribed to The New American magazine for about 12 years and have learned a lot of interesting, troubling, and vital things. However, the part I enjoy the most is the section “The Goodness of America.” It is easy to find bad news and evil reports, so it is easy to forget that we are blessed to be living in a wonderful country with a lot of great people in it.

Thank you for printing this section. Sometimes I need help to remember that there is still some goodness left in America.

Steven Neill

Sent via e-mail



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