

None Dare Call It Education, John A. Stormer

Dan R. Smedra – August 2008

The following comments are not intended to represent a complete book review. Overall, this book contains some valuable information for Christians. Mr. Stormer sets forth a mandate of Christ-centered education for Christians (p. 228). However, his discussion (presuppositions, analysis, and conclusions) regarding the problems with American public education (cover question “*What’s Happening In Our Schools?*” – emphasis mine) seems based on the questionable premise that a system of government-supported, common schools was once and potential can be again a workable pedagogic (educational) model.

In the *Introduction*, Mr. Stormer writes:

This book is filled with examples of horrible and outrageous happenings in America’s schools...

The “horrible examples” won’t be found in every school. However, they result from a faulty philosophy of education which influences all public schools (and many private institutions). That faulty philosophy (1) has produced schools which are failing children academically, (2) is subjecting children to wrong moral influences, and (3) establishes the foundation from which education “reformers” are working to remake our children, our society and our culture (p. ix-x).

There are multitudes of dedicated teachers in the public school system. But they teach in schools controlled by a faulty, flawed humanistic philosophy. It is a philosophy constructed years ago by “reformers” who redefined the purpose of education and based it on an incorrect view of the nature of children and their purpose in life (p. xv).

To which specific “reformers” is he referring? Chapter 3 identifies them as the “progressivists,” “disciples of John Dewey” and their “...humanistic philosophy” which they advanced in the 1930s.

The goal, which the radical educators spelled out in their writings and speeches, was using the schools to create “a new social order.” By 1934, they had enough clout and influence to control most teacher training institutions, the rewriting of many textbooks and the largest organization of teachers, the National Education Association (p. 39).

Similar to David Limbaugh’s *PERSECUTION: How Liberals are Waging War Against Christianity*¹, Mr. Stormer believes:

HUMANIST REFORMERS took control of America’s schools in the 1930s with a goal of using them to create “a new social order” (p. 113).

Mr. Stormer’s understanding of the influence of early 20th-century education elites is technically correct; however, he omits analysis of the dubious origin and first 80-year history of the public education. Why? He fails to understand or admit that public education, since its heterodox inception in the 1850s, is inherently flawed and has always been at odds with Scriptural-based Christianity². Why?

¹ See review at <http://renewingminds.net/Persecution.pdf>

² For a more detailed account, see *THE SECULAR REVOLUTION, Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*, Christian Smith, University of California Press, 2003. Also, *The Messianic Character of American Education*, Rousas J. Rushdoony, Craig Press, 1968.

The author's 'late-date subversion' view, as I describe it here, has been popular with conservatives and evangelical Christians for the past three decades. Dozens of books have been written regarding the cancer of "secular humanism." However, the view that public education was subverted by reformer John Dewey (1859-1952) contrasts sharply with the view of other orthodox Christians (e.g., Presbyterians) who forewarned Americans years earlier of the ungodly philosophies of educational theorist Horace Mann (1796-1859), dubbed America's "Father of the Common Schools," and the inherent dangers of establishing public schools in the first place³. Why does Stormer focus on Dewey to the total exclusion of Mann?⁴

Mr. Stormer, a fundamental Baptist with Methodist credentials, leaves the door open to the false notion that public schools were once, in a past era, acceptable—even for Christian children⁵. According to the author, only after the humanist subversion of Dewey, et al, did "our schools"⁶ become unacceptably corrupt. The author seems to be of two minds. On the one hand he states that a "Christ-centered education" is essential, but then says:

...the decision to enroll children or grandchildren in a Christian school [or homeschool] should not result in abandoning the system.

...reversing the worst of the dumbed down, amoral and immoral results of humanism in schools is essential. Christians who work to overturn what the education "reformers" have accomplished are the "salt and light" God leaves us here to be.

There are many fine Christians teaching in government schools. However, their schools are controlled by a humanistic philosophy of education and court decisions which are hostile to God (p. 229-230).

In what sense are these compromised and muzzled Christian teachers "fine?" For Mr. Stormer, they represent a force for counter-insurgency! A contingent problem, as he states it, is "federal involvement in education" (p. 230, 246), and thus his 'action' solution calls for reversing "centralization," "returning control to local school boards," and returning "the school curriculum to what parents and the community want" (p. 232). Does the author genuinely believe that "parents and the community" in a diverse culture at any given locality can be of one mind? There is an odd irony to the fact that Mr. Stormer, a staunch anti-Communist and long-time member of the John Birch Society, should advocate reform of a socialistic educational system that has rotted from within. Surely he knows history has proven socialistic systems are impervious to reform, but rather they collapse.

Subversion and control, in the author's mind, can be effectively countered (p. 233-248). He even goes so far as to make the quixotic and triumphal claim, "The undermining of traditional morality was stopped in Pearland, Texas" based on a dust-up between First Baptist Church Pastor Rick Scarborough and local school officials (p.

³ *The Messianic Character of American Education*, Rousas J. Rushdoony, Craig Press, 1968.

⁴ Horace Mann is never mentioned in Mr. Stormer's book. Why the significant omission? This history is well documented by both religious and secular historians.

⁵ For background on how this happened, read: "Horace Mann and the Messianic Character of American Education," *The Messianic Character of American Education*, Rousas J. Rushdoony, Craig Press, 1968

⁶ During the 19th century, American Methodists and Baptists were instrumental in supporting the establishment of common [i.e., public] schools. Might today's denominational heirs find it difficult acknowledging their forebears' monstrous error in judgment?

233-235). Is it possible the author's deficient analysis misdirects Christian energies regarding our responsibility for being "salt and light"?

Summary: Mr. Stormer's analysis of American public education is deficient and thus his related solutions are misguided. Resistance is necessary, but no child of Christian parents should be subjected to the moral, philosophic, and spiritual wasteland of public education—except in circumstances where reasonable alternatives are unavailable. Tax-supported public schools should be abandoned and progressively *disestablished* through tax revolts, not reformed. Of course, we know "pulling the plug" on tax-supported schools is idealistic due to the power of government and those with vested interest.

Addendum Notes

The literary style of *None Dare Call It Education* (1998) is similar to the author's first work, *None Dare Call It Treason* (1964). *Treason* sought to enlighten readers regarding communist (Marxist-Leninist) subversion of America, while *Education* seeks to explain similar activities of secular humanists in the realm of education. Neither book understands the error and adverse effects of heterodoxy. "*Much of the drift to socialism in Western culture, ascribed so exclusively to Marxist influence, is clearly and definitely to be trace to the natural rights and natural law doctrines*"⁷—of Unitarianism and Horace Mann, the "Father of the Common Schools."

In Chapter 4, the author introduces the reader to *Twelve Foundational Concepts* for a "stable society," which are said to have been "proclaimed in the nation's churches and taught in the nation's homes and schools," and which helped "shaped the nation, its people, its culture and its leaders" (p. 52). In an email exchange with the author, Mr. Stormer stated that he formalized these twelve "concepts" based on extracts from a collection of older "western civ"[ilization] textbooks. While his concepts do incorporate several biblical values and anti-humanist principles, together they should not be confused with or considered a comprehensive Christian worldview based on the Bible.

For example, his Foundational Concept #1, *Marriage, Family, and Home*, reflects an emphasis drawn from the deeply-flawed [Anglo-Catholic church](#) tradition⁸ and/or a [literalistic](#) (in contrast to *normal historical-grammatical*) hermeneutic, rather than from sound and careful biblical exegesis. Mr. Stormer, who was granted honorary degrees from Manahath [Breckbill Bible] School of Theology (evangelical Methodist) and Shelton College (Fundamentalist) in 1965 and 1976 respectively, combines Matthew 19:4-6 as a 'proof-text' together with a definition of marriage taken from the 1828 Noah *Webster Dictionary* to suggest that marriage is *indissoluble* (p. 54).⁹ Contrary to Stormer and possibly Mr. Webster, biblical marriage can legitimately end by biblical divorce, as surely as by death.¹⁰

⁷ "Horace Mann and the Messianic Character of American Education," *The Messianic Character of American Education*, Rousas J. Rushdoony, Craig Press, 1968

⁸ "History of Divorce: Interpretations in Church History," *DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE in the BIBLE*, David Instone-Brewer, Eerdmans Publishing, 2002. <http://www.tabs-online.com/Brewer/PPages/DRB/Book/index.htm>

⁹ In an email to me, Mr. Stormer confirmed his erroneous understanding of biblical marriage by stating the corollary belief, that he did "not advocate or approval of remarriage after divorce as long as the 'former' spouse is still alive."

¹⁰ "Till Death Do Us Part?," *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church - Biblical Solutions for Pastoral Realities*, David Instone-Brewer, <http://www.tabs-online.com/Brewer/PPages/DRC/IndexBook.htm>