

Public School vs. Classical Christian School

Worldview Issues

G.K. Chesterton wrote that, “Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.”¹ Reflect for a moment - how would you characterize the soul of modern American society? To me the soul of our society is based on entertainment, materialism, personal fulfillment, relativism, lazy agnosticism, and moral perversion.

I do not want the soul of secular society to be passed to my kids.

But wait, you say, how does a public school pass the soul of our society to children?

1. Public Schooling Has a Purposeful Agenda for Social Change

In a 2007 study of the self-reported goals of public schools as expressed in their mission statements, the most frequent goal of schools was civic development. The second most common goal was emotional development. *The third most common goal of public schools in America was cognitive development.* So if you are looking for your kids to get just the cognitive development piece of the pie at school, it is interesting to note that it is public school’s self-reported third priority. And that you can’t get the cognitive development piece without giving the school permission to shape your child into the civic and emotional being that the school thinks best.

I am all for my children being civic beings. But the big question is what kind of civic being my children are being shaped into, who is doing the shaping, and why. Two groups of people are in charge of education in America: the university and the teachers’ union. The university gains its influence by training teachers and school administrators. The union gains its influence by collective bargaining and the money it exerts politically. Both groups have specific agendas.

The ideology coming out of teacher preparation programs is that schools should become agents of change to stand up to cultural imperialism and right the wrongs of society. Celebrating diversity and promoting multicultural understanding are no longer enough. “Teaching for social justice, democracy, and inclusion is increasingly emphasized in teacher education programs worldwide... . These ideals are central to our work as teacher education faculty in the United States....”²

¹ Chesterton, G.K. Quoted. National Education Association. American Education Week Sample Quotes, November 13-17, 2017. Available at: <http://www.nea.org/grants/35593.htm>.

²Ritchie, Scott et al. Teacher Education for Social Change: Transforming a Content Methods Course Block. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, Teachers College, Columbia University 15(2): 64.

Social justice doesn't sound so bad, right? Except when you look a little deeper, you find that "Social justice education (SJE) comes from a variety of viewpoints, including Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, humanist, critical, and ecological perspectives."³

Here are some typical self-reflections of students going through teacher preparation programs today:

- "I thought I was doing enough by being tolerant and accepting of those different than myself. Now, I see that tolerance does not move this society forward. I need to be active in creating an equitable world for others."⁴
- "By not intervening we let the dominant voice and ideas of what is 'normal' get louder and louder."⁵
- "'Being a teacher is an opportunity to open new doors for kids and teach them things that they may not hear about at home,' one candidate expressed as she considered the conservative climate surrounding our university."⁶

The goal of liberal university teaching programs is radical social change. Their self-reported goal is for "teachers to challenge culturally hegemonic portrayals of history, examining how women, people of color, youth, and other traditionally excluded groups contribute to and change their worlds. They nourish students' critical literacy and consciousness by interrupting and interrogating the texts used in the classroom, and make explicit connections between historical and contemporary examples of struggle and resistance. Overall, they see their work as preparing students to critically transform their worlds."⁷

This is actually a socialist agenda and an agenda that is against religious liberty. It is the agenda that has led to the safe spaces and restricted dialogue currently plaguing college campuses. One of the proponents of Social Justice Education, writes:

³ Kunkel-Pottebaum, Holly. Mission Possible: Teachers Serving as Agents of Social Change. University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, Education Doctoral Dissertations in Leadership. 2013: p. 13. Available at: https://ir.stthomas.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1038&context=caps_ed_lead_docdiss

⁴ Ritchie, Scott et al. Teacher Education for Social Change: Transforming a Content Methods Course Block. Current Issues in Comparative Education, Teachers College, Columbia University 15(2): 72.

⁵ Ritchie, Scott et al. Teacher Education for Social Change: Transforming a Content Methods Course Block. Current Issues in Comparative Education, Teachers College, Columbia University 15(2): 72.

⁶ Ritchie, Scott et al. Teacher Education for Social Change: Transforming a Content Methods Course Block. Current Issues in Comparative Education, Teachers College, Columbia University 15(2): 74.

⁷ Dover, Alison, Henning, Nick, and Agarwal-Rangnath, Ruchi. Reclaiming agency: Justice-oriented social studies teachers respond to changing curricular standards. Teaching and Teacher Education 59 (2016) 458.

“Social justice includes a vision of society in which the **distribution of resources is equitable** and all members are physically and **psychologically safe and secure**. ... The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change communities of which they are a part.”⁸

2. The Common Core Makes it Easier to Teach Radical Social Agendas

With the advent of the Common Core, the people in control of public education have unprecedented means to ensure that their agenda gets into every classroom through textbooks, reading lists, and more.

Here’s what teachers are saying about the Common Core:

- “[The Common Core offers the opportunity] to leave Eurocentric, male-centric, straight-centric textbooks far behind and pick topics and texts that are relevant to your students and return agency to disenfranchised or objectified people’.”⁹
- “Rather than seeing standards such as Common Core as a roadblock getting in the way of my passion for social justice, I consider it an avenue to achieve my goals. I want my students to be activists in the 21st century, a role which requires a specific skill set. ... So when I am creating curriculum and instructing my students about the world around them, I can use Common Core to help guide my practice.”¹⁰
- “We are given much more flexibility in designing our courses when our target is, for example “Determine the central ideas of information of a primary of secondary source” (Common Core Social Studies.ELA-LIT-ERACY.RH.11-12.2) rather than “Describe the emergence of Romanticism in art and literature (e.g., the poetry of William Blake and William Wordsworth), social criticism (e.g., the novels of Charles Dickens), and the move away from Classicism in Europe” [the old standard] The Common Core ... does not (currently) mandate which texts and what content we select to accomplish this.”¹¹

⁸ Bell, L.A. (2007). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L.A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp 3-4). New York: Routledge.

⁹ Dover, Alison, Henning, Nick, and Agarwal-Rangnath, Ruchi. Reclaiming agency: Justice-oriented social studies teachers respond to changing curricular standards. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 59 (2016) 461.

¹⁰ Dover, Alison, Henning, Nick, and Agarwal-Rangnath, Ruchi. Reclaiming agency: Justice-oriented social studies teachers respond to changing curricular standards. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 59 (2016) 461.

¹¹ Dover, Alison, Henning, Nick, and Agarwal-Rangnath, Ruchi. Reclaiming agency: Justice-oriented social studies teachers respond to changing curricular standards. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 59 (2016) 461.

I am not for racism, discrimination, or poverty. But I am also not for breaking the economic structure of American society. With all the ills of capitalism, the world has not found a more effective method.

3. Public School Conveys an Anti-Christian Worldview

In public school, your child will be surrounded by politically correct messages that go something like this:¹²

- Homosexuality and fluid gender identity are wholesome, normal choices.
- It is evil to believe someone else is wrong.
- A person's feelings are the highest truth.
- Talking about God in public is wrong.
- Christianity is a source of oppression.
- The virtues we should aspire to are not bullying and reducing our carbon footprint.
- On the whole, we should be ashamed of America's history and should prioritize multiculturalism instead.
- There is no such thing as sin.
- No one has the right to say that one thing is better than anything else.
- Freedom is a small price to pay for improving society.

They will learn these errors not just in lectures by their guidance counselor but by what their teacher thinks worthy to focus on in art, by how their textbooks talk about American leaders, by what their textbooks choose to talk about, and so on.

Conclusion

While public education requires no tuition check, it is not free. The education of youth in public school today is intentionally contributing to the waywardness of modern American society, and undermining Christian faith. Of course, that's not to say that God doesn't draw people to himself in public schools. Just as most faithful Christians today did not go to classical Christian school, every type of school produces some graduates who go on to accomplish great things. However, Andrew Murray spoke eloquently about religious education when he said, "God forbid that I should limit the Holy One of Israel, but still I think that in the ordinary course of things education is our only hope."¹³

¹² This list includes items listed in the Political Correctness Inventory by BestSchools.org

¹³ Quoted in Water, Mark, Ed. The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotes. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Pg. 298.